

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER

942 Grape Avenue, Fisher, IL 61843-8512

JOY
LOVE
PEACE
BELIEVE
CHRISTMAS

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Osman
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Reverend Jeffrey McPike, BCC

December 2024



From Pastor McPike's Desk....

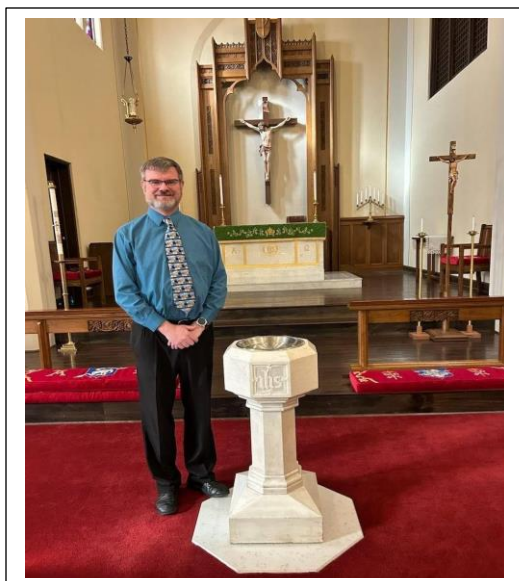
Going Home

As the weather gets colder, preparations for holiday meals are made and decorations begin to adorn just about everything from the largest big-box stores to the humblest of shops to churches to our own homes. Many think of going home. Obviously, home means different things to different people. To the youngest children, home is where they live, but also can be where parent's parents live. Many enjoy going "over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house"; nostalgic as that may sound, Charlie Brown broke the nostalgia all the way back in the 1960s; "my grandmother lives in a condominium." Many college students look forward to the break to "go home." Young adults, while finding a way to establish home where they live, look forward to being with family.

I grew up in Indianapolis, on the east side. The only church where I have memories from my earliest childhood is Trinity Lutheran Church and School, where I grew up, attended worship and grade school through the seventh grade. In 1974, we moved to Martinsville, Indiana. Trinity felt like my "home church."

From my late teen years on, my parents made me aware that I was not baptized at Trinity, but another church. St Peter Lutheran was close to where my parents had first lived when they moved from Bedford in 1958. That was where they took me, on November 20, 1960; there Rev. Ronald Zehnder baptized me in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. My sins were washed away. I became a child of God and was given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the last number of years, I have had the desire to attend a service at St. Peter. That came true for me recently, the last Sunday in November, the "Last Sunday of the Church Year". That's significant, because I was baptized on the Last Sunday of the church year 64 years ago. There I was, worshiping in the very church of which I have no childhood memory, the church where I was baptized. The pastor also informed me that the font, though it had been moved to the center aisle about 15 years ago where it now permanently stands, is the font that is original to that church building. The font is not covered. It is also always filled with water. Some Christians like the symbolism of dipping finger in water and making the sign of the cross on the forehead in remembrance of baptism. As I walked past the font headed for communion, I did that. Water, from the font where I was baptized 64 years ago on that very Sunday. It was quite moving. I had, in that sense, "come home."



It is easy to get caught up in the trappings of “holiday time” with all the hustle and bustle, causing us to lose sight of how the church year puts a focus on “going home.” Starting with the first Sunday in November, when “All Saints” is celebrated, through the end of the Church year, through Advent and then Christmas, both liturgy and lectionary point us to “going home.” All Saints emphasizes that we are all saints, not just those having already gone home to heaven, but also the rest of us still on our journey. From there, through the end of the church year, coupled with the strong pictures of the end of time or Judgment Day, we are reminded of “going home.” Advent picks up on that “going home” theme to direct our minds to the coming of our Lord - that Jesus came “once

in time” (Christmas), that He is coming again (Judgment Day), and He comes to us continually in His body and blood given in bread and wine. Jesus left His heavenly home for a time. His first “home” was a stable outside of Bethlehem. Indeed, while Nazareth had been (possibly for a generation or more) the home of both Mary and Joseph, Jesus was born in Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus in far off Rome called for a census, telling the Jews to “go home” to be counted. Jesus made His home among His people, then suffered to pay for our sins resulting in His death on the cross. Because of that death, through faith in Him, when it comes time for us to leave our temporary homes in this world, we will be taken to our true home – the mansions of heaven.

Over the last number of years, a goodly number of our long-term Osman folk have “gone home.” We have gathered with tears at the send-off of each (the funeral), while rejoicing that they are no longer in the struggle of this life but are HOME... in the mansions of heaven. We are regularly privileged to commune with them, as we gather to sing God’s praises and dine on the meal Christ gives “with Angels, and with Archangels and with all the company of heaven” as the sacrificed body and blood of our Lord come to strengthen our faith and bless us with love for each other.

Lately, we are more painfully aware than ever that long-time members “going home” to heaven is leading to ever smaller worship attendance. At the same time, there are any number of our own members who, for whatever reason, are choosing not to “come home” to gather to worship with us. It becomes incumbent on each member of our church to reach out. Reach out to those who were once among us, but for whatever reason have chosen not to come home. Reach out to those who have no “church home” and invite them to ours.

Poinsettias for the Altar



Please sign up on the sheet on the back bulletin board by December 11th if you want to donate a poinsettia to adorn the altar on Christmas Eve and the Sunday after Christmas. The cost is \$17, and the checks should be made out to Debbie Lammle. Please make payment when you sign up.

Christmas Treat Bags

There will not be a need this year to donate to the Christmas treat bags that are given out on Christmas Eve. There will be a \$250 Thrivent Action Team Card used to purchase some of the items, but the majority of the items will be purchased by the Bill and Moneta McCleary Memorial Money Fund which was designated by the family for this project because they loved their Christmas Eve traditional apple and orange and various treats. The treat bags will be assembled on Tuesday, December 24th, at 8:30 AM in the fellowship hall. Everyone is invited to help assemble them.

Christmas Decorating

This year, as has been the case for quite a few years already, the church will be decorated in a sort of “progressive” manner. What that means is unlike many places that decorate for Christmas by getting all the decorations out at once, we will be doing it more slowly. The point is to remind ourselves that the original Advent was a few thousand years, a time in which God slowly, over time, gave more and more details about the coming of Jesus. When Adam and Eve first fell into sin, God promised that someone, someday, would come and do something as a remedy to the mess they had made. Slowly over time, through the pages of the Old Testament, God unraveled the mystery of Who, What, Why and How. So, the first Sunday in Advent (December 1), the Advent Wreath and a few greens will be in the church. On the Second Sunday in Advent, more greens and the tree. Volunteers will be needed on Saturday, December 7th at 9 AM to help with the greens and tree. Not until the Third Sunday in Advent will the full decoration be realized. Volunteers will be needed on Saturday, December 14th to finish the decorations. While this seems to be so different than everything around us, it also serves to remind us that the church is “in the world, but not of the world.”

As has been a very long-standing tradition, the decorations will then remain until the celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany, which this year will be Sunday, January 5, 2025 (the day before actual Epiphany, January 6).

Offering Envelopes

If you have never had offering envelopes and would like some for 2025, please see Susan Martin or Barb Whitehouse Gercken. If you usually had offering envelopes and do NOT want any, please notify them, too. Please contact them during the first week of December so the 2025 envelopes can be organized and prepared to be handed out.

Church Council Meeting

The next church council meeting will be on Wednesday, December 18th, at 6:30 PM. This is a change to avoid the week of Christmas.

Church Officers Needed

In January 2025 the church council will be needing names to fill the election ballot. The positions that will need to be filled on the council will be a secretary, two elders, one trustee, and one assistant financial secretary. Be thinking about how YOU can use your talents to serve the congregation. According to our constitution, women can hold all offices except chairman and elder. There is a sign-up sheet on the back bulletin board.

Operation Christmas Child Boxes



On Sunday, November 24th, the Sunday School Children packed twenty-four boxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. Terri Hooker and Connie Warsaw purchased toys, personal care items, and school supplies using a Thrivent Action Team Card. A twelve lesson program entitled **The Greatest Journey** is added to the boxes at the headquarters before they are shipped to many countries. This program teaches the children about Jesus and His great love for them. Right after church the boxes were taken to Gibson City Bible Church which is the nearest

collection place to Osman. The shipping cost for each box which is \$10 was also paid with a Thrivent Action Team Card. Posing in front of the finished boxes on the left are James Amdor and Blaine Martin. Before the packing began, they watched a video about some of the children who receive a box and the excitement of learning about Jesus. Thank you to all of the members who added items to the contribution box that was at the back of the church in August and September. Thank you to Terri Hooker and Connie Warsaw for organizing this project. It is a great program to teach our children about mission work. Thank you to Brenda Hendricks, Susan Martin, and Connie Warsaw who also made boxes.

Soup Supper Benefit

The Soup Supper Benefit, which was held on Saturday, November 16th, was an evening of good fellowship even with a smaller crowd. We served 81 hungry people with a delicious meal of soups, sandwiches, desserts, and drinks. Over twenty volunteers helped on that evening to serve our guests. Even Santa came to enjoy our meal! Many church and community members made food for the event. The recipient was Emily Fuqua of Oakwood. The freewill offering collected \$4404. Church donations and Thrivent Choice Dollars will be added to this amount. The check will be given to Emily at a date to be determined.



Ladies Aid/LWML

Ten ladies met on November 14th for the Ladies Aid/LWML meeting at 1:30 PM in the fellowship hall. The group enjoyed delicious refreshments served by Brenda Edwards and Deb Lammle before the meeting started. After the meeting was called to order, the first two verses of the LWML song was sung. A devotion was given by Deb Lammle based on Genesis 35:10. Marsha Warsaw presented the topic about how to spend time with God. Roll call was answered by a Bible verse on peace. Deb Martin read the minutes from the September meeting, and they were approved. The mites were collected. Diana Zimmerman gave the treasurer's report which showed a balance of \$2456.83 which included a check given to her minutes before the meeting. The treasurer's report was approved. There was no correspondence from our adopted student, Jacob Bergstedt. There were two thank you notes read. Wilma Grussing reported she had not sent any cards in the last month. Terri Hooker reported that seventy-seven quilts were taken to the Lutheran World Relief truck in late October. Brenda Hendricks reported that fourteen quilts were taken to the Orphan Grain Train truck in early October. The group completed a total of 93 quilts as several were held back for the start of next year. The group tied quilts thirteen times from October 2023 to September 2024 and nine different ladies volunteered.

In old business Brenda Hendricks thanked all the members who helped with LWML Sunday. She thanked Connie Warsaw and Diana Zimmerman for being greeters and Marsha Warsaw for being the reader for the worship service. She also thanked Deb Martin and Terri Hooker for decorating the church with quilts and dresses. The food committee schedule was discussed. Brenda Hendricks gave a short report on the CID retreat which was held at Camp Cilca in early October.

In new business the Christmas Dinner which is scheduled for December 12th was discussed. The members voted to have a lunch at Jacks Café in LeRoy. They also agreed to have a hat and mitten collection instead of exchanging gifts among the members. This collection will also be offered to all the members of the congregation with a collection box being placed on the back pew. The group voted to give \$100 to Lutheran Child and Family Services and \$75 to the Fort Wayne Seminary for their Christmas services to the student. Suggestions for a new adopted family were given by the members present. The members were asked to give all ideas to Brenda Hendricks before the new year starts.

Planning ahead the group was asked to think about Ash Wednesday events. Ash Wednesday is March 5th so by next meeting think about if group wants to have a soup supper before the worship service.

The LWML National Convention will be held in Omaha, Nebraska, June 26 – June 29. All members interested can ride the CID bus but the deadline to sign up is December 1st. The registration material will be in the winter edition of the Quarterly.

A motion was made to raise the amount that our group gives as a memorial for each member of our congregation at the time of their death from \$10 to \$25. The motion passed.

The next meeting will be on February 13th at 1:30 PM. The topic presenter and the hostess committee will be named when the 2025 program booklet is printed.

Organ Recital/Sing-Along/Reformation Fest

On October 27th forty-six members and friends of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Osman came out on a Sunday afternoon for an organ recital to highlight our newly purchased organ. Even though the organ did not cooperate, everyone had the opportunity to hear three talented organists play on our old organ. Alicia Haggin, Patty Downey and Scott Gercken had a chance to play favorite hymns suggested by those present. Pastor McPike informed the group about historical facts of each song. The evening ended with the Evening Vespers, and then the group proceeded to the fellowship hall for a delicious meal provided by the church members. Some of the food was German. The evening ended with Nick Haggin singing the Reformation Polka, and the other guests joining in on the refrain. Even though the course of events was changed, everyone left happy from the enjoyable evening of singing their favorite hymns. Thanks goes to the talented cooks at Osman. Thanks also goes to Alicia for all the time she put into the planning of the evening's agenda and to Pastor McPike for preparing a worship service at the last minute.



Church Sign



The lighted church sign located west of the church on the Bellflower/Mansfield Road did not survive the high winds in the middle of November. The Plexi glass cracked, and one side of the message board was found by a neighboring farmer with all the letters still attached. Since then, one side of the board has been slipped behind the Plexi glass so presently it is a one-sided sign. The lighting unit also has been malfunctioning, so it is not always lit at night. The entire unit was evidently not very well made (installed in July 2021) so repairs and/or new purchases are being considered. It definitely is a great landmark in the middle of the dark countryside for visitors to know where to turn to reach our church.



Myron Zimmerman..... 12-02
 David Hasty.....12-05
 Debbie Martin 12-09
 Bella Ford12-14
 Alicia Haggin12-17
 Diana Zimmerman12-21
 Nathan Hooker12-25
 Deb Johnson12-28
 John Grussing12-31

Statistics

Date	Worship Service	Bible Class	Sunday School
October 27	38	8	1
November 3	41	17	0
November 10	39	11	2
November 17	35	11	0
November 24	37	0	5



Martha and Darwin Warsaw – 12-31-1966

“Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day.”
 Helen Steiner Rice

Happy Birthday, Jesus!