

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER

942 Grape Avenue, Fisher, IL 61843-8512



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

January 2026



From Pastor McPike's Desk....

On the first day of 2026, Illinois joins several other states to become a “right to die” state. That gives patients the right to seek medications and professional medical assistance specifically intended to end life. This article is not intended to give a deep explanation, but some basic guidelines.

Much of my professional career has been spent in healthcare. As chaplain for areas such as the ICU, I have spent time with patients and families surrounding the question “how much” and “how far” related to medical care.

I have not had time to read the law; I have only seen some of the reports concerning it. In order to at least put some information out there, I offer the following. This law supports medical assistance in causing death (what some call “assisted suicide”). That means it supports the legalization of obtaining and administering medications that are specifically aimed at ending life. This is not consistent with God’s Word in the Fifth Commandment that prohibits murder.

As I understand it, the law basically requires the patient wanting life to end to be diagnosed with a terminal illness with a life expectancy of six months or less confirmed by two physicians; the patient must be determined to be decisional; the patient must make the request of a physician both in person and in writing; necessary medications must be self-administered by the patient. The cause of death will be listed on the death certificate as the terminal illness, not suicide. Any coercion of the patient is a felony.

A principle that could be helpful in this discussion could be something that my long-time friend, Rev. John Fale, told me back already in the 1990s. *Intent* is important. While that might sound like equivocation, here is the background.

A major drive toward “right to die” is to address the suffering and fear of suffering that can come at the end of life. Who, after all, would choose to spend the last days in pain, waiting for the end? Many, if given the choice, would choose to go to sleep and not wake up, or something similar. As the commercial a number of years ago for a popular pain relief medication said, “When you are in pain, you don’t want to dull the pain, you don’t want to treat the pain, you want to STOP the pain.” Death stops the pain. No question about it.

The administration of pain medications, such as, for example, morphine, toward the end of life, in sufficient quantity to effectively deal with pain, has caused ethical concerns among physicians. Morphine is great at relieving pain, especially intense pain that can be characteristic of cancer at the end of life. Morphine also has a side effect of suppressing the respiratory drive, lowering blood pressure and other vital signs. In other words, give enough morphine to effectively deal with the pain will likely result in the patient's death sooner than if allowing the pain to continue.

This gets at the issue of *intent* mentioned earlier. Effective pain control can cause life to be a bit shorter in a terminally ill, actively dying patient. This has caused physicians, at times, to shy away from an effective dose of pain relief in order to avoid the "side effect" of reduced circulatory/respiratory system and, thus, ending life sooner.

To put it in rather "black and white" terms, as it were: If a dose of morphine is administered for the purpose of ending life, it is wrong. If that same drug is given to effectively address pain and life is shortened as a result, it is not.

One possible good thing to come from this law could be physicians being less concerned with litigation when it comes to the administration of appropriate levels of pain-relief at the end of life, which could reduce suffering. Reduced suffering, after all, is what many advocates of this law have promoted. "Reduced suffering" is reportedly what influenced the governor to sign the bill.

We must never lose sight of this important point: Death is the ENEMY. Jesus has defeated death. While we must pass through death to enter eternity, that passage is up to the timing of God.

Poinsettia Donations

A sincere thank you to the members who donated a poinsettia which decorated the church on Christmas Eve and the following Sundays. Those who donated were Brenda and Jerry Edwards, Brenda Hendricks, Deb and John Lammle, Melanie and Jerry Niemann, Sue and Jim Van Wakeman, Connie and Don Warsaw, Sandy and Lee Whitehouse, and Jeff and Annette Warsaw. Thank you to Melanie and Jerry Niemann who contacted local schools that were selling the poinsettias. The ones that were purchased came from Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School.

Hat, Mitten, and Glove Donations

At the November Ladies Aid/LWML Meeting, the ladies voted to donate hats, mittens, and gloves instead of having a Christmas gift exchange. This project was also offered to the congregation. The collection box on the back pew overflowed with donations. There were 40 pairs of gloves and 26 hats donated at the last count. These items will be donated to places that help the needy in our communities.

Council Meeting

The church council will meet on Wednesday, January 21st in the fellowship hall at 6:30 PM. The annual congregational meeting will be held after the worship service on Sunday, January 25th.

Ladies Aid/LWML Christmas Party



Thirteen Ladies Aid/LWML members and guests enjoyed a lunch at Jack's Café in LeRoy on Thursday, December 11th. After the delicious meal was enjoyed, several games were played such as Christmas BINGO, Christmas Family Feud, "How Well Do You Know Your Pastor", and Christmas Bow Toss which proved to be a challenge to most who played. Those attending were in front row (left to right) Deb Lammle, Annette Warsaw, Diana Zimmerman, Addi Warsaw, Connie Warsaw, and Marsha Warsaw and in back row (left to right) John Lammle, Brenda Hendricks, Bob Zimmerman, Don Warsaw, Jeff Warsaw, Brenda Edwards, and Steve Warsaw.

Officers Needed!

The church officer's sign-up sheet still has LOTS and LOTS and LOTS of empty blanks for officers for the ballot for 2026. The positions that will need to be filled on the council will be a chairman, treasurer, two elders, one assistant finance secretary, and one trustee. These officers will be elected at the annual voters' meeting on January 25th. Be thinking about how YOU can use your talents to serve the congregation.

Altar Flowers

Please sign-up on the bulletin board if you would like to donate altar flowers in memory of a special person or occasion or pay for the eternal flame candle for a specific month. The flowers donated will be used for two Sundays. There is also an Altar Guild sign-up sheet on the side bulletin board if you would like to help prepare the altar for worship services. Please know that your assistance will be very much appreciated! If you are interested, see Debbie Lammle.

Church Undecorating

The church will remain decorated for Christmas through Epiphany. All members of the congregation are invited to take down decorations after the worship service on January 4th and store them neatly in totes to take to the storage shed.

Quilting

The ladies will be quilting again in the new year. The first dates for quilting in 2026 will be January 5th at 12:30 and the 7th at 8 AM in the fellowship hall. All ladies of the congregation are invited to help tie quilts that are given to Lutheran World Relief and Orphan Grain Train to be distributed all over the world to needy people.

Benefit Check Presented



Dwight Hooker, Terri Hooker, and Brenda Hendricks on behalf of the Stewardship Committee presented the check from the November soup supper benefit to Casey Thomas on December 17th at the home of Bob and Diana Zimmerman. Since church was cancelled twice due to weather, other arrangements were made to present the check instead of at church. The check totaled \$10,136. This is the total from the freewill offering taken at the supper and the Thrivent Choice Dollars that have been given to our congregation in 2024 as well as the money given to the church specifically designated for benefits. We thank all the members who volunteered at the supper as well as those who donated food. Casey was totally aghast at the amount of the check and with tears in her eyes, she exclaimed how grateful she was.

Notes of Thanks

Thank you for all the love and support you have given my family during my father's last illness. When we would tell Dad that you were praying for him or that someone had asked about him, it would make his day. Thank you for your prayers, kind words, listening ears, cards, and being there for us at the funeral. Losing a parent/grandparent to cancer is hard, but your love and care has been a great comfort to our family. Thank you! The Haggin Family

To the members of Immanuel Lutheran Church,

Thank you all for your heartwarming generosity for my expenses of clearing the lot north of your parking lot. It was such a blessing to receive from all of you. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and thank you from the bottom of our hearts! Sincerely, The Robbins Family

Christmas Tree Dedication



On Sunday, December 21st, the new artificial Christmas tree and lighted greenery was dedicated in the worship service. The greenery was late arriving so it was still in the packaging, but it will be used for the 2026 Christmas decorating. Both the greenery and the tree were purchased with memorial money that was given to the church in memory of Jeri Bidner and Myron Zimmerman. Pastor McPike stated that during the summertime, paraments (clothes that are on the altar, pulpit, and lectern) and vestments (worn by the pastor) are green. Green is the color of life in nature, reminding us of how the faith that we express by doing works that please God is similar to the green shown in deciduous plants that are green during the summer months. Green leaves shows life in plants. Evergreens have been used at Christmas time, winter in the northern hemisphere, to show that despite how “dead” things look around us, God’s life came into the world of sin and death when Jesus came to save us.

Christmas Treat Bags



Thank you to the members who packed the Christmas treat bags that were distributed on Christmas Eve. Those helping from left to right front row -Annette Warsaw, Jeff Warsaw, Joy Johnson, Connie Warsaw, Addi Warsaw, Terri Hooker, Dwight Hooker, and Brenda Hendricks. Those helping from left to right in back row – Darwin Warsaw, Bob Zimmerman, Wade Warsaw, and Don Warsaw.

Christmas At Osman



Summary of December Council Meeting

Ten elected church officers attended the meeting on December 17th. The meeting began with a Bible reading by Pastor McPike, followed by prayer. Chairman John Lammle called the meeting to order. Debbie Lammle read the minutes from the last council meeting. After a correction was made, the minutes were approved as read. Terri Hooker read the treasurer's report with total expenses for the month as \$9501.97 and total income as \$9674.35. The balance for the end of November was \$48,291.82. Treasurer's report was approved.

Pastor McPike informed the council that the amplifier is working fine, and he reprogrammed the computer that records the sermons, so all is working fine. He gave an update on the Confirmation classes. He also reported that the adult Bible class is going well with the hymn study.

An elder told the council that the decision to cancel church is not an easy one. The age of our congregation and the location of our church influences the decision. Safety is always a deciding factor in this decision. Chairman Lammle asked Jerry Niemann to compile an insurance report to hand out at the next voter's meeting. Chairman Lammle will hand out a document asking for Voters to pick one Vision Statement they feel best applies to our church to go with the mission statement, which is taken directly from our constitution. Findings will be reviewed at the next council meeting.

Chairman Lammle informed the council of some new purchases for the mission outreach goals - a rack full of books for younger children to read in the back of the church and a cabinet to be purchased soon which will hold gifts for visitors. Due to weather, the stewardship committee presented the money made from the benefit in the amount of \$10,136 to Casey Thomas and asked her to church at Osman and upcoming benefits as well. A thank you card from Chris Robbins for the amount given in helping clean up the lot north of the church was read. Chairman Lammle will be attending the "Small Town Lutheran Church" summit held at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lexington, IL on February 21st

The 2026 budget was then discussed at length. Following this, the council discussed Christmas gifts for paid staff. It was also decided to also give a memorial in memory of Craig Zeilenga, Alicia Haggins's father.

The Mission Outreach committee is looking at the area towns surrounding our church to advertise and participate in upcoming events.

The next council meeting is Wednesday, January 21, 2026, and the Annual Church Meeting is set for Sunday, January 25, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned followed by reciting of the Lord's Prayer.

Newsletter

When printing color pictures on a black and white printer the clarity is not always the best. To see a brighter version of the Christmas pictures in the newsletter look at it on the church website.



January Birthdays

Joey Haggin..... 01-02
Sara Kunde..... 01-05
Brad Lutz..... 01-10
Anne Amdor..... 01-18
Megan Bidner..... 01-21
Bryce Martin..... 01-23

January Anniversaries

Christie and Leonard Delaney..... 01-07

Statistics

Date	Worship Service	Bible Class	Sunday School
November 30	0	0	0
December 7	38	11	2
December 14	0	0	0
December 21	73	12	3
December 24			



Happy new year 2026

Every year, I always make a long list of New Year's resolutions, but since I never keep them, I have decided this time to make just a few. Does the Bible say anything about making resolutions?

Yes, the Bible certainly encourages us to examine our lives and resolve to change them if necessary (although not just at the beginning of a new year). The Psalmist, for example, made a resolution to keep his speech pure: "I have planned no evil; my mouth has not transgressed" (Psalm 17:3).

Why, however, do so many of our resolutions fail? Sometimes it's simply because they aren't realistic. Instead, they're only wishful thinking, with no way to make them actually happen. For example, you might resolve to make a million dollars this year, but if you don't have any way to earn it, it probably isn't going to happen. Other resolutions fail because we aren't willing to make the sacrifices necessary to reach them.

But the real problem is within us—within our own hearts and minds. We'd all like to be better people, but no matter how hard we try, we find ourselves tripped up by our own moral failures and weaknesses. Even the Apostle Paul experienced this: "I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Romans 7:18).

What is the solution? The solution is to turn to God, confessing our sins to Him and seeking His help to live the way we should. Begin the New Year by turning to Jesus Christ and inviting Him into your life. Then ask Him to help you become the person He wants you to be. This is what Paul did, and that's why he could say, "I can do all this through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

(Taken from <https://billygraham.org>)