

April 2020



The Parish Voice

First Lutheran Church
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Immanuel Lutheran Church
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A Newsletter of Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

Jeff's Jottings - Being the Church in the Midst of a Pandemic

141,000. 738,000. Those are really big numbers. Those are the numbers of confirmed Covid-19 cases in the United States and the world respectively. By the time you read this, those numbers may easily be twice that.

We are definitely in the midst of a health crisis the likes of which none of us have ever seen. Some of you have told me stories of the Polio outbreak and measles quarantines. As far as I can tell, as scary and trying as those health crises were, they did not spread as near as fast as this virus seems to be traveling across the globe.

The corona virus pandemic will affect and threaten all of us. Even if we don't contract the disease, our jobs, our way of life, our perceived future is all put in peril by necessary closures and shelter in place orders. As a citizen, I urge you to heed the orders of our public health officials so that we can together slow down and eventually eliminate this invisible enemy.

But as your pastor, I pose a different question: how do we continue to be the Church in the midst of this pandemic? We have been called together as communities of faith. But how can we continue to be "communities" when gathering as a community is a threat to our health?

Our key gathering as faith communities, of course, is worship. As of this date, however, we will not be gathering for worship through the end of April. But we are fortunate with today's technology to be able to provide worship videos that we can make accessible in a variety of ways and that incorporate our members. (See page 2 for details on this.) We will continue to explore ways to share worship as the quarantine remains in place.

Modern technology also provides means for us to personally gather that we never had before. One of the things that HOILP now has at its disposal to

gather people together is an electronic platform called ZOOM. This allows anyone with a computer or phone (even a landline) to gather together electronically. And those with smartphones and properly equipped computers will even be able to see each other. We've already used this for recent council meetings. But as I get more adept at it, I will explore ways to use it for Bible Studies, LYO, prayer meetings and whatever else may pop up.

While it is true that modern technology offers us some opportunities that have never existed before. But it is still true that being personally present with other people is the optimum, and in some instances, irreplaceable. I'm glad that we haven't had a funeral thus far during the shelter in place order. But the longer this virus persists, the more likely that will occur. But funerals and visitations complete with handshakes, hugs and tears are a very unhealthy practice in these times. So, I anticipate counseling families to have a small graveside service that includes immediate family only and then holding a memorial service at a later date when the pandemic has subsided. That means that when we are coming back together, we may find our faith communities abundantly busy as we make up for what we have missed.

In the end, even though it will be at least another month before we are able to physically gather together once again, our call as faith communities has not changed: our call to gather to worship the triune God, our call to grow together in faith, and our call to serve one another and our neighbors who mourn, who are sick, who are poor, and who are oppressed. We will have to use our ingenuity and modern technology to figure out how to continue as God's people.

Peace to you! I can't wait to see you all face to face once again.



PS

WORSHIP

Worship Videos

Hopefully, most of you have had an opportunity to view the worship videos that last few weeks. As long as the quarantine is in place, these will continue to be produced.

The learning curve on creating them is steep, but hopefully you'll see improvement from week to week.



One thing Pastor Jeff is trying to do with the videos is to make sure you all are able to participate as well. He has been asking individuals to record themselves on their phone reading the lessons. Please be ready and willing to say yes should I make the request of you. If you'd like to volunteer to do this, please pop him a text or email.

The last couple weeks he has also asked people to provide music. Care has been taken to maintain small groups when filming the music. If you are able to provide special music, whether you need to come to church to record it or you are able to record it on your own, please contact Pastor Jeff to make arrangements for that as well.

Viewing the Worship Videos

Internet

The main way to access the worship videos is via the internet. They are being posted to YouTube and the link is being sent out via *email, Facebook, and text message*. People using a computer or smartphone should be able to just tap on the link and view them immediately. For tech

savvy folks with smart TV's, there are various means of viewing them on your TV as well.

If you'd like, you can also subscribe to Pastor Jeff's YouTube channel and view the videos as soon as they're published. Just search for Jeff Schlesinger on you tube. When you find him, go to his channel and hit the subscribe button. Notices should be sent when he publishes a new video.



DVD

For those without a computer or smartphone, DVD's will be made available. Please send an email to immanuellutherancompton@live.com if you'd like to receive the worship videos via DVD.



Holy Week Communion

It is extremely unfortunate that this pandemic has hit during the most sacred time of our church year. As with Sunday's, our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services will be cancelled.

However, Pastor Jeff is providing an opportunity for you to receive communion in your house of worship. On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, he will be in the sanctuary (see schedule below) to offer family and individual communion to those who wish to receive the sacrament. The following guidelines will be maintained:



- You may come at any time during the schedule below.
- If you see more than four cars, please consider waiting in your car until someone leaves (please use west parking at Immanuel).
- When you enter the sanctuary (use west doors please at Immanuel), if others are present, please sit in the pews a safe distance from them until Pastor Jeff calls you forward.
- Pastor Jeff will disinfect communion rail after each family/individual has communed.
- Immanuel Schedule: Thursday – 9 am – noon; 1pm – 4 pm; 6 pm – 8 pm; Friday 9 am – noon
- First Schedule: Friday – 1:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Please know that every effort will be taken to maintain a sanitary and safe environment so that you can experience this holy meal in your Parish's sacred spaces. If you still don't feel comfortable leaving your home, please don't feel obligated to come.

Easter

Plans for the Easter worship video are underway. Hopes are to make it extra special with lots of participation. Pastor Jeff will be asking families to create home videos around the "Alleluia" litany. Please willingly volunteer and have fun with it when he asks.

On Easter Sunday and/or the days right after, Pastor Jeff will be delivering the lilies and tulips people donated for Easter. Most likely, in order to maintain social distance, he'll be placing them on your porch and then calling you with an Easter greeting and to let you know he has dropped them off.



COMMUNICATION

Email & Text Messages

In this time of shelter in place, our electronic devices are a true gift to keep us in touch with one another. Electronic communication is expeditious, efficient and economical (the three e's!).

In these last couple of weeks, a number of discrepancies in our records have been uncovered, particularly in regards to email addresses. The pandemic has spurred on a much needed audit of our records.

It also has become apparent how many emails we are missing. Until this crisis passes, using email communication will become more and more important. It would be much appreciated if you would send a quick email with your most current email address to the appropriate address below.

- Immanuel – immanuel@lutherancompton.com
- First – debpoterek@aol.com

Texting Snafoo

Texting is a fantastic way to get information out fast. Most people have their phones on them or nearby and get the message immediately. The link to the worship videos have been sent via text message.

But PJ reports that he has had significant problems with the apps he uses to send text messages to large groups. Apparently some people have been getting them and others have not. He is searching for a more reliable app or a solution to the issues.

On Friday morning, he hopes to send a test text to check for effectiveness ahead of the weekend. Please respond as the text directs.

Also, if you have not shared your cell phone with the church, if you would send it via the email to the left, it would be appreciated. We want to keep all communication lines open.

*****Please know that HOILP will not share your personal information with outside organizations or individuals*****

Our goal is to keep all communications lines open with you.

COUNCIL

Joint Council Meeting – March 17, 2020

- Discussed and approved the protocol going forward in light of the Corona Virus
- Approved subscription to Zoom so that online meetings can take place
- Recommended that congregations institute online giving.
- Directed Pastor to mail out the protocol to all members.

Immanuel Council Highlights – March 19, 2020

- General Treasury ending balance February 29, 2020 is \$9,792.45
- HOILP Corona Virus Protocol
- Cancellation of all services, meetings, BLAST, etc.
- Giving button on website for contributions
- E-mail account for contributions
- The next council meeting will be April 16, 2020 by internet

Immanuel Lutheran Council

Brad Ehlers – President
Jim Eich – Vice President
Charlene Zimmerman – Treasurer
Carol Kern – Secretary
Christa Edwards
Kim Menzel
Luke Ross – LYO
Pastor Jeff Schlesinger

First Lutheran Council

Mike Davis – President
Tom Thompson – Vice President
Becky Jarman - Secretary
Alex Johnson
Dave Koroscik
Julie Lovett
Rita Thompson
Pastor Jeff (advisory)

First Council Highlights – March 18, 2020

- Elected Officers – President – Mike Davis (*per his acceptance, he was not present*); Vice President – Tom Thompson; Secretary – Becky Jarman
- Church Front Doors – no update
- Roof – Last meeting this project was put on hold. Will discuss at the next meeting.
- Parsonage – Will discuss future of the parsonage at subsequent meetings.
- Community Event – no update.
- Next Council Meeting – immediately following worship on Sunday, May 17, 2020 following worship.

SERVING OUR NEIGHBOR

Paying attention to and responding to the corona virus pandemic can easily become all consuming. But let's not forget about the many people God has called us to reach out with love and care. See below the needs of own service programs and those of our partner organizations. Please continue to keep these needs in your prayers and offer your help in whatever ways you are able.

NICE is limiting its Saturday service to drive through only. During the shelter in place order they will be using only a small crew. Thus, until further notice, **Nurture Kitchen and congregational volunteer months are suspended.**

HOILP Bountiful Gardens



The bountiful garden initiative continues for 2020. The parish team asks each parishioner to prayerfully consider setting aside a portion of their garden, orchard, field (or its excess) to grow fresh produce for distribution to local food pantries and schools. In lieu of the above, prayerfully consider donating canned and dry goods on days of collection. In light of current events, it is imperative we be a leader in helping restock shelves in the food banks this summer and fall. Our current plan is to have two collections per month starting in July and going through September. We may not be able to wait until we congregate again to have a sign up sheet, so let's have everyone sign up now at home and make *bountiful garden* a 2020 parish initiative. This is an easy way to provide stewardship, evangelism, faith and hope to our community, and one at which we excel doing: **PRODUCING FOOD.**

THANK YOU.

John Hoelzer, Rita Thompson and the entire Parish Team

To respond to the appeal from Another Child Foundation go to:

anotherchildfoundation.org



Or scan the QR code at the right with your cell phone.



The benefit for Whitley Clayton has been rescheduled
June 13, 2020
as a street dance in Paw Paw
Check out Facebook for details and updates



EMERGENCY APPEAL

Dear Immanuel Lutheran Church,

I found out from Dacian Moldovan that due to recent events the Point of Hope Center has lost funding from the European Union at least temporarily. These funds are used to feed the children. Unlike our communities, these children do not have schools providing meals.

Dacian has arranged a plan for weekly food bags to be distributed to 86 families that are connected to our school at a cost of \$15 per bag. These bags will also contain hygiene products. He cannot do this without cancelling salaries of 8 employees or receiving extra funding.

We have 4 of the planned 8 weeks covered at this point. Leaving us needing generous people like yourself to assist with one to four weeks of support for the above programs. I am praying that you can help.

Humbly,
Tim Oloffson- ACF Director

WELCA

APRIL EVENTS:

WELCA Bible Study, Quarterly Meeting and Sewing Day have been cancelled for this month. Please watch for updates.

JUSTICE (MISSION ACTION) - Charlene Zimmerman

*What does the Lord require of you but to do **justice**, love kindness and walk humbly with your God?*
Micah 6:8

We are continuing to collect items for:

PERSONAL CARE KITS: light or medium weight, dark color, bath towels, sturdy combs (no fine tooth combs or picks), 4-5 oz. size bars of bath soap in individual wrappers.

PADS: paper plates, napkins, coffee cups, brown lunch bags, sandwich bags, paper towels, toilet paper, plastic wrap, shampoo, conditioner, solid deodorant, toothpaste, combs, brushes, asst. socks & underwear, toilet cleaner, laundry soap, bleach, dish soap.

Anything you can donate is greatly appreciated. The totes for donations are in the room next to the office.

WELCA PRESIDENT'S DESK - Sarah Pfeifer

Hopefully by the time you read this, we will be back on schedule and the health risk will be over. This month we celebrate Easter (hopefully!). Several events have been cancelled or postponed. Bible studies are suspended for the immediate future. Our quarterly WELCA meeting will be rescheduled to early May. Saturday, April 18 the NIS Spring Retreat at LOMC has been cancelled. Finally we will have our monthly sewing day on Tuesday, April 21 at 12:30 p.m. (cancelled). Save the date: Friday, May 15 will be the Spring Brunch for the Central Conference at St. Paul's in Dixon. This event is still on, but a final decision will be made in early April. More information will be available after Easter. Please stay safe and healthy. See you in church, when we can safely gather.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prayer Corner

Homebound – Joan Benner, Harold Schlesinger, Arlene Archer, Nathan Eich, Gene Williams, Marilyn Ward, Phyllis Larsen

Monthly Requests – Whitley Clayton, Gary Holle, Ron Rebholz, Ed & Joan Benner

Newly Baptized – Whitley Grace Clayton (4/14)

Affirmed in Baptism - (November 24, 2019) Cyndie Prodzenski, Caytlin Prodzenski, Shayne Prodzenski

Mourning Families - Sarah Fassig Family (6/22), Christy Lilja Family (8/3), Marilyn Goetz Family (8/5), Keith Eich Family (8/31), Jean Albert Family (9/9), Dorothy Burkart Family (9/13), Donna Albers Family (9/22), Lucy Nicholson Family (10/14), Paul Albers Family (11/26), Paul Betz Family (12/11)

Our Leaders - ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, NIS Bishop Jeffrey Clements, HOILP Pastor Jeff Schlesinger

April Birthdays

3 – Nathan Eich
6 – Rebecca Bond
7 – Tom Eich, Stefanie Klauer
8 – Norman Rogers
9 – Trysta Foster, Alex Schlesinger
10 – Rylan Scott
12 – David Schlesinger, Pam Wohlrabe, James McCormick, Loren Rosenkrans, Raelynn Albers
13 – Craig Ganz, Karina Ganz, Tom Menzel, Dave Walzer, Jacob Johnson
14 – Donna Flowers
15 – Madison Walzer
16 – Dawn Myers
17 – Karen Sterchi, Bentley Milus
18 – Mary Jo Rosenkrans, Janet Muncy
19 – Becca Wackerlin, Dean Winterton
20 – Melissa Blum
23 – Danny Rosenkrans, Theresa Taylor
24 – Justin Sell
25 – Jennifer Schaefer, Cheryl Simpson
29 – Jacob Gladd
30 – Danny Menzel, Tony Schaefer, Andy Walzer

April Anniversaries

4 – Mark & Jill Ross
28 – Vernon & Sarah Pfeifer
Loren & Mary Jo Rosenkrans

**Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish
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(First Lutheran - 240 W. Hardanger Gate - Lee, IL 60530)

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
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Compton, Illinois
Permit No. 1

Return Service Requested

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship services have been suspended through the month of April.
See inside for a variety of worship opportunities.

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You can also check us out on Facebook!