

August 2020



First Lutheran Church
240 W. Hardanger Gate
Lee, IL 60530
815.824.2356

THE PARISH VOICE

A NEWSLETTER OF HEART OF ILLINOIS LUTHERAN

Immanuel Lutheran Church
398 Church Road
Compton, IL 61318
815.539.6567

A Change in In-Person Worship Schedule for August

Beginning August 2, 2020, there will be only one regularly scheduled worship service each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Both councils agreed on this as the attendance thus far has not justified the time, resources, and logistical complications to continue with two services. The procedures for calling in, entering and exiting the building, and seating will remain in place.

"In normal times, these low attendance numbers would bother me greatly," Pastor Jeff said when asked about the change. "But they don't bother me at all now. Part of that is because I know many people are taking advantage of our on-line worship. But part of it is because of our very unique situation. If people don't feel safe amongst others, or if they have health concerns which dictate caution, then by all means, they should take advantage of the worship video. But at the same time, if people are craving being in the presence of those in their community of faith, and they feel they can maintain appropriate and safe social distance, then we are happy to provide an in-person worship opportunity that is as safe as we are able to make it."

Pastor Jeff did go on to say that in the event a specific week fills up during the week, they will offer a second worship opportunity on Sunday evening for those who would otherwise be turned away. "That would be a fine problem to deal with," he said. "If it happens more than once, it will tell us that we need to reevaluate our worship time again."

August Worship Schedule

Sundays – 9:30 a.m.

August 2nd – Immanuel

August 9th – First

August 16th – Immanuel

August 23rd – First

August 30th - Immanuel

Communion is Coming Back!

Heart of Illinois Parish has not celebrated Holy Communion since Ash Wednesday! Having "put it away" for Lent and then the resulting pandemic has meant that it has been over six months since we celebrated the sacrament. That may be the longest either congregation of HOILP has ever gone without communion being available. But on August 9th, the fast will come to an end.

Pastor Jeff has found means by which communion can be offered safely, be part of a community gathering, and be available to all parishioners. "As the one called to see that the sacraments are administered in the right and proper ways, I did not feel comfortable having communion," PJ said.

The safety aspect is met by an item called a "fellowship cup." These little cups have both a communion wafer and a single serving of grape juice.



continued on page 3...

Pics for Praise

For the hymn of praise the last two months, a slide show of pictures has run while the song is sung. The pictures have primarily been from PJ.



"I started with a series of water pictures," he said, "since the hymn of praise followed from the thanksgiving of baptism.

From there I just expanded to various subjects that leads me to praise God."

The final couple of weeks of July Pastor Jeff invited Norm Hanson to provide some pictures for the hymn of praise. He submitted a series of flower photos and some shots of birds.

Now Pastor would like to invite you to participate. Do you have a series of six to ten pictures that cause you to say, "Thanks be to God"? If so, you're invited to share them on the video/screen as we hear the hymn of praise sung. Just let PJ know and he'll arrange a week for your "pics of praise" to be featured.

Jeff's Jottings: Being Flexible Even Though I Can't Touch My Toes

Can you touch your toes? I don't mean can you bend your leg up so that you can put your shoe on. I mean, can you bend over from a standing position and touch your toes without bending your knees? I can't. And I haven't been able to for a very, very long time.

The rest of my family enjoys doing yoga. It is not unusual to find four mats crammed into our living room topped by four Schlesingers who are following the stretching instructions emanating out of the TV from a guy named Steve Ross. They've invited me to join them time and again. I did once. Once. I did not enjoy it. Perhaps it's because I'm not very flexible.

Flexibility has never really been my strong suit. At least from a physical standpoint. However, I hope that is different when it comes to my professional and social life.

I have to say, this pandemic has tested my patience at times. Not only has there been the pressure of having to suspend worship in our sanctuaries, but there has been the hectic pace of learning a whole new medium to provide shelter in place worship experiences. And when those things don't go as planned, my patience at times has been tested and has even run out.

I remember in March staying up just about all night trying to deal with upload issues. We thought we had them solved but then at Easter, of all times, they reared their ugly heads. On the Saturday before Easter I was sitting in McDonald's parking lot usurping their Wi-Fi to make sure our Easter service would be available on Easter Sunday morning. To this day, I maintain a fair bit of tension until I see that message on my computer screen on Saturday that says, "upload successful."

Or there was that one week when I went nuclear on a Friday night because I could not locate the video that I had been working on all week. I was just putting the finishing touches on it and suddenly, it was not on my screen. I searched every folder on my computer, but could not find it. The tension boiled over and I started yelling at my computer, at my desk and at the air. My wife will tell you that words came out of my mouth that you not only don't want to hear from your pastor, but that you don't want to hear out of anyone's mouth. I went to bed really late that night very, very frustrated and resolved to the fact that on Saturday I was going to have to start from scratch. At 7:00 a.m. the next morning, I sat down to begin the video anew when I clicked on a file whose name I did not recognize. Poof – there it was. All that time screaming and yelling, and my video was there all along. Just under a different name.

So perhaps I'm not all that flexible professionally. But, this last month may show that I'm learning. As we've returned to in-person worship, there have been some new challenges, especially as we use clips from our videos as part of our in-person worship. I thought I had them all figured out, but each time I took the files over to the computer at First Lutheran, there were some major snags in the process. But I'm happy to report, I dealt with them without having a temper tantrum and I'm pretty sure without my blood pressure even rising. I think I've learned to expect the fact that things will not go as planned and to be ready and willing to move on to plan B or C or D.

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for all of us to be flexible during these times. None of us have ever experienced a pandemic before so we are all going through this for the first time. Some things will go right and some won't. We need to be flexible and ready to change paths as needed.

Our in-person worship change is an ideal example. We thought we'd need two services to accommodate our congregation. We didn't. So we're being flexible. For now, we're moving to one service a week. But we're prepared to be flexible enough to add another service some week if we need to. We're also prepared to suspend worship should this virus spike and things change again. We simply need to allow our worship times and our ministry practices to be fluid and flexible so that the gospel can continue to be proclaimed.

We need to be flexible. Maybe I will do yoga with my family again. Actually, I probably won't. But I will be flexible as your pastor. And I will be flexible for the sake of the gospel. For grace still happens even in the midst of a pandemic.

Peace be with you all!

PS

WORSHIP

Worship By The Numbers

Wondering what worship attendance has been like as a result of the pandemic? Here's the attendance figures thus far for 2020:

	<u>Immanuel</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>Total</u>
5-Jan	67	17	84
12-Jan	60	12	72
19-Jan		15	15
26-Jan	65	14	79
2-Feb	60	12	72
9-Feb	56	16	72
16-Feb	50	43	93
23-Feb	66	14	80
1-Mar	58	8	66
8-Mar	64	13	77

Average: **60.7** **16.4** **77.1**

	<u>1st Week Views</u>	<u>Additional Views</u>	<u>ELCA Report*</u>
15-Mar	145	90	290
22-Mar	223	40	446
29-Mar	159	51	318
5-Apr	251	63	502
12-Apr	355	43	710
19-Apr	146	41	292
26-Apr	275	29	550
3-May	196	55	392
10-May	124	29	248
17-May	143	32	286
24-May	117	20	234
31-May	116	24	232
7-Jun	130	19	260
14-Jun	123	17	246
21-Jun	103	12	206
28-Jun	163	15	326

Average: **149.0** **25.2** **298.0**

	<u>1st Week Views</u>	<u>Additional Views</u>	<u>ELCA Report*</u>	<u>8:30</u>	<u>10:30</u>	<u>Total</u>
5-Jul	99	24	198	22	11	33
12-Jul	109	10	218	15	8	23
19-Jul	95	10	190	18	12	30
26-Jul	99		188	12	14	26

Average: 100.5 14.7 201.0 16.8 11.3 28.0

*For attendance reporting purposes, the ELCA has instructed us to multiply the 1st week views of our on-line worship by two. This assumes in many cases multiple people are watching the video together.

Ways you can help make worship better...

- ... say yes when asked (or volunteer) to read a lesson for the video.
- ... come out and say “peace be with you” when PJ drives up and asks you to share the peace for his camera.
- ... join in the parish hymn singing each month (good singing not required).
- ... help deliver home communion bags.
- ... share the worship videos on social media with your friends and family.

Worship the Lord with gladness. Come into God's presence with singing.
Psalm 100:2

...COMMUNION continued from page 1

They are packaged in a way that maintains sanitary conditions as well as provides flexibility in communion distribution.

On August 9th, those attending worship will pick up a fellowship cup as they enter. Then at the appropriate time in the worship at the direction of Pastor Jeff, worshippers will receive the bread and wine at their pew.

“It’s important not to exclude people from the sacrament,” PJ said. “So we will deliver communion to anyone who wishes following that service. In this way, it will truly be an extension of the service.”

Those who wish to receive communion on August 9th but will not be attending in-person worship simply have to call the Immanuel office during the week and let Debbie know you’d like to receive communion. A home communion bag will be prepared for you and placed on the altar during in-person worship. Then following worship, PJ or another volunteer will deliver the home communion bag to your door. It will literally come from the community gathering directly to you.

For August and September, mainly due to logistics, we will have communion only once each month (2nd Sunday). We will reevaluate the frequency after that and consider whether we are able to move to every Sunday communion.

WORSHIP

HOILP Readers for August

	<i>First Lesson</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>Second Lesson</i>
August 2, 2020	Julie Lovett	Karla & Harlan Eames	Emily Betz
August 9, 2020	Cheryl Simpson	Randy Schlesinger & Brad Ehlers	Becky Jarman
August 16, 2020	Connie Avery	Theresa & Kim Schlesinger	Ashley Clayton
August 23, 2020	Rosina Bittner	Connie & Stephanie Ganz	Larry Aska
August 30, 2020	Susan Goetz	Carol Kern & Jim Eich	Jill Ross

HOILP Song Leaders for August

	<i>Leader(s)</i>	<i>Accompanist</i>
August 2, 2020	Sam Schlesinger	Sarah Goetz
August 9, 2020	Shayne Prodzenski	Ron Duval
August 16, 2020	Congregation hymns	Sarah Goetz
August 23, 2020	Steve Simpson	Ron Duval
August 30, 2020	Fran Sellers	Special Guest

Parish Hymn Sing

You're invited to join in the Parish Hymn Sing for the August 16th worship service. We're not able to sing when we gather together, but no one can stop us from singing when we're alone and combing our voices on the computer to sound like we're together!

The songs this month will be "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (ELW 858) and "Go My Children, with My Blessing" (ELW 543). Email instructions will go out by email around August 3rd and are also available by calling Debbie at the Immanuel office.



If it is easier for you to have PJ record you, just pop him a text or email.

The more voices the merrier!

Planning on Coming to In-Person Worship?

Please remember to...

Call
[815.539.6567](tel:815.539.6567)

-or-

Email
immanuel.lutheran.compton@live.com

Link to the in-person worship procedures:

<https://www.ilccompton.org/uploads/2/3/9/1/23910355/coming-to-worship.pdf>

COMMUNICATION

Are you getting our emails about links to the worship video and other information? If not, we probably do not have your email or we have the wrong email for you. Please let either Debbie (Immanuel) or Kristen (First) know what your current email is.

What about text messages – are you getting them? That may be because we don't have your mobile number. Please consider sending that as well so we can use this means of communication also.

These means of communication become much more important now that we are unable to meet in person.

- Immanuel – immanuel@lutherancompton.com
- First – fclinlee.com

*****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.



Please note that HOILP has its own YouTube channel. You'll be able to see our current and past worship videos here. Please subscribe to this channel to stay up to date on our videos.

OFFERINGS

Thank you to all who have made a point of sending in their offerings during this shelter in place period. Even though we aren't gathering, our pastor and staff are still working hard, and there are still utility bills and upkeep expenses to take care of with the buildings.

If you are a bit behind in your offerings since we haven't gathered for worship, please consider sending them in via mail or using an electronic means to donate.

Both congregations now have donation buttons on their websites through which you can use your credit or debit card to make your donations. If you'd like to give this way, you can use the QR codes below or go to www.fclinlee.com or www.ilccompton.org.



First
Lutheran



Immanuel
Lutheran

CHURCH BUSINESS

First Council Highlights – June 15, 2020

- Pastor Jeff appointed to national Lutherans Restoring Creation committee
- In Person Church services have begun and Communion will begin August 9; appointed Pastor and council presidents to decide to move to a single weekly worship service for August if appropriate
- By consensus agreed that weddings and funerals can take place inside sanctuary following same protocol as in-person worship

Immanuel Church Office

Debbie is in the church office from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Monday-Friday until we get back to a normal schedule. She will be working from home in the afternoon. If you need anything, call or text her at 815-866-6690 or email the church: www.immanuel@lutherancompton.com

Immanuel Council Highlights – July 16, 2020

- General Treasury ending balance June 30, 2020 is \$11,559.30
- Pastor Jeff appointed to national Lutherans Restoring Creation committee
- In Person Church services have begun and Communion will begin August 9; appointed Pastor and council presidents to decide to move to a single weekly worship service for August if appropriate
- Wedding protocol and protocol for small group gatherings in time of pandemic
- Five applicants received scholarship funds, Caytlin Prodzenski, Alex Schlesinger, Marie Barnickel, Brittany Menzel and Julia Hoelzer
- Next council meeting August 13, 4:30 p.m. in church

*This month's benevolence offering is for
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC).*

SERVING OUR NEIGHBOR

N.I.C.E. Center Update

We continue to serve our needy each Saturday morning. We are well staffed and the parking lot distribution is very efficient. Our clients are extremely appreciative. We have had a few new families attend but our overall service remains at an average of 25 families each Saturday.

N.I.C.E. is in need of **jelly, packaged cookies, paper goods, canned veggies, and canned chicken.**

Saturday mornings from 8:00-11:00 a.m. at N.I.C.E. would be a safe, social distancing, opportunity to drop-off our collected donations. Or, please notify Kristen Edecker or Debbie Rebholz if you have donations to be picked up and we will get our N.I.C.E. Board on it or leave them in the room next to the office at Immanuel.

N.I.C.E. Center School Supply Drive

Thank you, Michelle Fay, for offering to head up the school supply drive again this year. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be distributing supplies differently than prior years. Supplies will be bagged up in advance, with categories for K-4, 5-8, and high school.

We will also be collecting differently this year in order to minimize the number of people out shopping for school supplies. Rather than encouraging parishioners to shop, we are asking that all donations be made to the N.I.C.E. Center in the form of monetary donations.

Michelle and Audra will determine what the needs are (based on school supply lists per school district and grade) and have agreed to shop or order online for the items we will need.

Tuesday Tea Time – 3:00 p.m.

via **computer or smartphone** use this link:
- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82956300588>.
via **phone**: dial **(312) 626-6799** then when prompted enter meeting ID: **829 5630 0588**

HOILP Bountiful Gardens



Fellow Parish members: Bountiful garden collection dates are scheduled for August 16th and 30th, and Sept. 20th and maybe the 27th.

During in-person services, collection will occur between the 8:30 and 10:30 services in an area to promote social distancing. If you are unable to provide produce, please donate dry and canned good items. During phase 4 and to reduce contact with donations/supplies, we will not create food bags for delivery to the schools and deliver direct to the food pantries in Mendota and Lee. However, if you know of a specific person/family in need to which we can safely do same day delivery, please provide the name and address to Pastor Jeff. Thank You for helping the community and watch future services/newsletters for any updates.

John S. Hoelzer, Rita Thompson, Melissa Blum

WELCA

August WELCA Events have been cancelled for this month. Please watch for updates.

JUSTICE (Mission Action) - *Charlene Zimmerman*

We are collecting school supplies for the LWR back packs.

Each school bag is to contain the following:

- 4 – 70 sheet spiral bound notebooks
- 1 – 30 centimeter ruler or ruler with centimeters on one edge and inches on the other
- 1 – pencil sharpener
- 1 – blunt scissors
- 5 – unsharpened pencils secured together with a rubber band
- 5 – black or blue ballpoint pens secured together with a rubber band (no gel ink)
- 1 – box of 16 or 24 crayons
- 1 – 2 ½” eraser

All these items are on sale now, so let's really support this project. Please put these items in the LWR tote in the room next to the office.
THANK YOU!

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prayer Corner

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

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

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

Mourning Families - 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), Peter Poterek Family (6/12)

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

August Birthdays

1 – Kim Delhotal, Nathan Lovett
2 – Nick Ganz, Sarah Sensenbrenner
4 – Jim Eich, Damon Musgrove
5 – Farrah Collins
6 – Sherri Heiman, Becky Jarman
7 – Bill Giberson, Gary Holle
8 – Pearl Taylor
9 – Cortnee Jones
10 – Glen Fagerman
11 – Derek Sellers, Nancy Walzer, Taryn Schmidt-Sarver
12 – Jacob Eich
15 – Bud Archer, Rick Gladd, Jill Hoelzer
16 – Roger Grinka, Velma Schmidt
17 – David Heiman, Ben Neal
19 – Kim Kofoid, Randy Schlesinger
20 – Christa Edwards, Kaitlynn Frazer, Nathan Giberson, Joan Benner
21 – Ann LeRette, Olin Simpson
22 – Lauren Collins, Mackenzie Knoblauch, Kody Hoadley
23 – Doug Bettner
24 – Ben Ganz, Dan Kaiser, Lily Rogers, Marla Sommerville
26 – Don Sellers, Brianna Betz, Josh Koroscik
27 – Linda Hahn, Merv Schlesinger
28 – Andy Kromm
29 – Kale Post

August Anniversaries

1 – Eric & Lexy Rebholz
2 – Bill & Marianne Bittner
5 – Joel & Jean Johnson
12 – Jeff & Theresa Schlesinger
15 – Rick & Sue Beckstrom
23 – Kevin & Kim Ganz
30 – Earl & Marion Barnickel

IMMANUEL NEWS

At its July meeting, Immanuel's Council decided that as long as we are in phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan, it would be alright for organizations of the church to meet, but using the following guidelines:

Immanuel Lutheran Small Group Gatherings in time of Pandemic

- Groups limited to 10 in size
- Only organizations of the parish and or partner organizations (such as NICE board, etc.) during the time of pandemic; no social events such as wedding receptions/rehearsal dinners, showers, family gatherings; no outside groups
- Masks and appropriate social distancing required while in the building
- Must let Pastor and/or Debbie know that meeting is taking place
- During regular office hours, must meet in basement and enter via the south doors
- After meeting, must turn in a report that lists attendance (for accountability in case a covid 19 case arises) and states every portion of the building utilized (for cleaning/sanitizing purposes)

Not discussed was the issue of having food at these gatherings. Generally, if serving food, it should be prepackaged food.

**Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish
Immanuel Lutheran Church
398 Church Rd. - Compton, IL 61318**

(First Lutheran - 240 W. Hardanger Gate - Lee, IL 60530)

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Return Service Requested

AUGUST WORSHIP
SCHEDULE

Sundays – 9:30 a.m.
August 2nd - Immanuel
August 9th – First
August 16th – Immanuel
August 23rd – First
August 30th – Immanuel

OR watch our worship video at your
convenience.

Call Debbie at 815/539-6567 or email:
immanuelutherancompton@live.com
by 1:00 p.m. the Friday before that
Sunday if you plan to attend.

Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

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You can also check us out on Facebook!