



December 2023/January 2024



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

## Christmas Season at HOILP

The Christmas season was rather odd last year as Christmas Day fell on a Sunday. It created some havoc around our normal Christmas schedule.

Well this year, it is even more chaotic as Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday in 2023. That means that December 24<sup>th</sup> is both the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. So the Parish Team struggled with what to do. Do we celebrate both Advent 4 and Christmas Eve? Do we do one and not the other? Do we have four services? Three services? Two services?

Consulting with the worship team, the decision was to celebrate both Advent 4 and Christmas Eve. But rather than hold four services on one day, the Advent 4 Sunday morning service will be online only, and we will gather together in person at our normal times in the evening to celebrate Christmas Eve.

The remainder of the Christmas fell into place with our normal traditions at HOILP: Christmas Day at Immanuel and a joint service on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas at First.

The full schedule for the Christmas season is on the right.

### HOILP Christmas Schedule

#### 4th Sunday of Advent

December 24<sup>th</sup>  
Online Service Only

#### Christmas Eve Worship

December 24<sup>th</sup>  
7:00 p.m. – Immanuel Lutheran  
9:00 p.m. – First Lutheran  
Both services are candlelight services

#### Christmas Day Worship

December 25<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 a.m. – Immanuel Lutheran  
Includes the traditional Christmas Hymn Sing

#### 1st Sunday of Christmas

December 31<sup>st</sup>  
10:30 a.m. – First Lutheran  
The traditional service of lessons and carols

### Christmas Cookie Exchange Hosted by Confirmation Class



What if you were able to make one batch of cookies and have a whole variety to share with your guests? Well now you can.

The confirmation class is hosting a Christmas cookie exchange. Here's how it works: you bake one batch of cookies (2-6 dozen) and bring it to share on December 17<sup>th</sup>. After worship just go through the line and pick a variety of cookies to take home with you. It's much easier than baking multiple types of cookies at home!

Not a baker but want to participate? You're welcome to go through the line as well.

There will be a free will offering designated to the NICE Center for all who receive cookies.

(see page 3 for the poster)

### Congregational Meetings

The new year means congregational annual meetings are just around the corner. In addition, First Lutheran will be having a brief congregational meeting beforehand to take a first vote on a constitutional change. Here are the dates to mark on your calendar:

- **January 7<sup>th</sup>** – First Lutheran Special Congregational Meeting following worship
- **January 28<sup>th</sup>** – Immanuel Lutheran Annual Meeting; 9:45 a.m.
- **February 11<sup>th</sup>** – First Lutheran Annual Meeting; 11:45 a.m.

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## Jeff's Jottings

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This summer while I was on sabbatical, I had the privilege of worshipping at numerous different congregations. It was a joy to have an opportunity to worship from the pews rather than up front. And it reinforced for me the honor of being able to lead worship on a weekly basis. When I returned in August, the excitement I had being back up in front reminded me of my early days of ordination.

As I worshipped this summer, I also had the chance to observe how other congregations do things. I noticed a common denominator in the congregations whose worship seemed the most vibrant – lay participation. The congregations that appeared to me to be most alive had lay members reading, serving communion, assisting with the liturgy, singing, doing temple talks, ushering, greeting, and various other activities during worship.

There is a theological consistency with this. The liturgy, after all, is supposed to be by the people, not by the clergy. The origin of the word liturgy is from the Greek word *liturgia* (λειτουργία) which means “work of the people.” This is why I’ve used our lectors to offer the prayers of intercession, utilized our acolytes and others to do the dismissal, and used various other means to incorporate small worship leader roles by you all.

Did you know that during the pandemic, our worship videos were complimented by clergy and lay people alike. And I’m not talking about our lay people and our clergy (which would be me, of course). I’m talking about nonmembers who watched them. Though I like to think it was because of the production quality, which I think was decent in the beginning and got better and better as time went, that is not the reason for the compliments. The accolades came on account of you all. Our worship videos were set apart from other congregations’ videos because we had so much congregational participation in them. In other words, they were the “work of the people.”

The previous four paragraphs were a long-winded way to get to the point of this column. As your pastor, I am encouraging each and every one of you to find a way to participate in leading worship over the next year. There is no shortage of opportunities. In fact, here are worship leadership opportunities for each congregation:

**Immanuel** – usher, ring the bell, lector (read the lessons), serve on altar guild, learn and volunteer to man the sound system, learn and volunteer to man the projector, provide fellowship treats, play in the chime choir, sing or play an instrument for special music, volunteer to chant liturgy, put together power points for service, participate in 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday filming, learn and help produce worship videos, help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas, Easter, Harvest Sunday, and other special services, bake communion bread

**First** - usher, acolyte, lector (read the lessons), serve on altar guild, learn and volunteer to man the sound system (no one does that now, it would help if PJ does not have to run back and forth), learn and volunteer to man the projector (give Kristen a break every so often), play in the chime choir, sing or play an instrument for special music, volunteer to chant liturgy, put together power points for service, participate in 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday filming, learn and help produce worship videos, help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas, Easter, and other special services, bake communion bread

Of course, we have people already volunteering to do many of these things. But the reality is, in virtually every one of these activities, there are too few to share the work. And in all situations, more people are welcome.

So let me be a little more specific on my pastoral request to you. I encourage every single one of you to find at least one way to help lead worship over the next year. If you are already involved in one or more of the things listed above – thank you, please keep up the good work. But those of you who aren’t, I ask you to find one thing and do it at least once. For example, if you volunteer to read, or man the projector/powerpoint, or participate in 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday Filming, and you only do so once during the year, two things will be accomplished: you will find it is a privilege to lead others in worship, and you will help assure that the liturgy is the work of **all** the people, not just *some* of the people.

See you in worship on Sunday!

*PJ*



*HOILP with the help of the Confirmation Students  
invites you to join in our*

# **COOKIE** *exchange*

*Sunday, December 17 after both services*

*Please bring some of your favorite cookies to  
share. Everybody is welcome to pick & choose  
cookies to take home (even if you didn't bring  
any cookies)!*

*Freewill donation basket.*

*All donations will go to the N.I.C.E. Center.*

# Creation Care “Corner”

## Creation Care Corp

The CCC is coming to HOILP. Not to be confused with or similar to the Civilian Conservation Corp of the Depression Era, nor confused with but somewhat similar to the Creation Care Committee of the synod, HOILP’s Creation Care Corp will do its best to help us to love our neighbor Earth as we love ourselves.



The CCC will initially be led by Pastor Jeff and its first task will be to define the Creation Care Corner of the newsletter. This month, as it is introduced, it is pretty much turning into a whole page, but in the future the intention is for it to take up just

the bottom third to half of a page. The full contents of the Creation Care Corner will be determined as the CCC forms, the one set piece being the picture of the month as described at the right.

The Creation Care Corp is not intended to be a standing committee of either congregation or the parish. There will not be a requirement or expectation of a certain amount of members. Anyone who loves the world God has given us is welcome to attend any or all meetings of the group.

Neither will the tasks and business of the CCC be put upon the group. The group will determine its own activities and programs based on what they are reasonably able to accomplish. The objective of all they do will be to foster concern for and care for God’s good Creation by Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish.

So who can be on the CCC? You can. Or any member or friend of HOILP who loves Creation. The organizing meeting will be Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel and/or via Zoom (weather dependent). It will be helpful but is not necessary to let Pastor Jeff know that you are interested and whether you will be able to be present on the ninth.

In the meantime, grab your camera (which today for many is your phone) and capture some photos of Creation to share in the “It is Good” Images project (see article on the right).

*God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.*  
-Genesis 1:31



## “It is Good” Images

According to the first chapter of Genesis, at the end of each day of creative activity, God looked at what God had created and said, “It is good.” We have the ability at our fingertips to create images of that goodness.

The image above is one of PJ’s favorite from this last summer when he was at Glacier National Park. Each month the Creation Care Corner of the newsletter will contain an image that captures the goodness of Creation.

You are invited to participate in the “It is Good” Images project by submitting photos around the topics below. The favorite image submitted each month will be displayed in the Creation Corner while all submissions will be included in a slide show that will be shared during worship.

The hope is that pictures submitted are recent, the idea being to encourage you to get out and appreciate Creation. So we ask that you submit photos you’ve captured in 2024 (can be late 2023 for Jan and Feb), preferably no more than 90 days old. Please submit your Furry Friend photos by January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### “It is Good” Images - Monthly Categories

January  
Furry Friends (pets)

February  
Winter Scene

March  
Earth Scenes\*

April  
Spring has sprung

May  
Mountains and Hills\*

June  
Flowers

July  
Sky\*

August  
Humans in Nature\*

September  
Wild Critters

October  
Fall Colors

November  
Harvest

December  
Sunrise/Sunset

\*These categories are the 2024 Season of Creation themes. Images will be utilized for SOC power points and videos.

# Worship

## Fourth Thursday Filming

Join us to record the readings, liturgy, and music for our online worship videos. Details about the times are available in weekly announcements.

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday Dates: December 28  
January 25  
February 22  
March 21\*

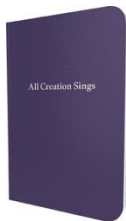


\*3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in March due to Maundy Thursday

## Bell Choir

The HOILP Bell Choir prepares a piece for Easter and Christmas as well as for joint worship services when possible. All are welcome to participate – no experience is needed, Ron Duval is a great teacher. The Christmas piece is prepared and ready and you can look forward to hearing that Christmas Eve. Look for future announcements regarding opportunities to participate in this fun musical ministry.

## Did you know?



Did you know we have a new hymnal? The ELCA has published a new hymnal called “All Creation Sings” that adds hymns to our repertoire using new and old tunes. You won’t find this hymnal in the pews as we have not purchased enough hard copies for the

congregations. But we do hold the digital rights to it so you will see words and sometimes music, printed on the screen so we can continue to use this valuable resource. So if you see a hymn marked as ACS with a very high hymn number, it is from this new hymnal. Now you know.

## 2024 Worship Liturgies

Here are the liturgies the worship team is planning for the liturgical seasons during this coming year:

**Epiphany** ..... Setting 10 (ELW 203-209)  
**Lent** ..... Spoken Liturgy  
**Easter** ..... Setting 6 (ELW 165-174)  
**Pentecost** (Summer 1) ... Setting 8 (ELW 184-192)  
**Pentecost** (Summer 2) ..... Lord Listen Setting  
**Season of Creation** ..... SOC Liturgy  
**Pentecost** (Autumn) .Setting 3 & 4 (ELW 138-155)

## After Worship Fellowship

Please consider providing simple little treats to enhance the fellowship time following worship.

## Worship Team

All are welcome to participate on the HOILP Worship Team as it strives to plan meaningful and inspirational worship experiences. Meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, here is the tentative schedule through 2024:

- January 4, 2024
- February 1, 2024
- March 7, 2024
- April 4, 2024 – *if necessary*
- May 2, 2024
- June 6, 2024
- July 4, 2024 – *do not meet*
- August 1, 2024
- September 5, 2024
- October 3, 2024
- November 7, 2024
- December 5, 2024 – *if necessary*

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# WELCA

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## **WELCA President's Desk – Sarah Pfeifer**

In the kitchen by the popcorn machine are dishes left from past dinners. Please take them home if they belong to you.

We will continue to have quilting days. Announcements will be made on Sundays.

Still available are Immanuel's Cookbooks – old (125<sup>th</sup> anniversary) & new (2007) - \$5.00 each and Immanuel's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Christmas Ornament – \$2.00. They make great Christmas gifts! (see Debbie in the church office).

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## Discipleship & Fellowship

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### **N.I.C.E. Center Update**

- Food/Miscellaneous Items Needed – condiments, cream of mushroom soup, cream of chicken soup, chicken noodle soup (please NO tomato or vegetable).
- For the Christmas Room: pajamas are needed this year, sized 6 months and larger.

### **Night on the Town:**

*December – month off*

*January – Being planned*

*Look in weekly announcements for details.*

### **Can you host a NOTT?**

Responsibilities: Choose a Friday or Saturday, location, sign-up sheet, make reservations

Open Months – **Putting 2024 schedule together**

Interested? Contact Theresa Schlesinger:  
[tschlesinger@comcast.net](mailto:tschlesinger@comcast.net) or 815.878.8372

To Immanuel Lutheran Confirmation Class:

A Big Thank You

So very thoughtful and appreciated. The turkey cookies were very tasty. The turkey was very special. You are very talented. I very much enjoy looking and thinking of all you Young Adults excellent work.

The Lord Be With You,  
Marion Barnickel

To: Pastor Jeff and the confirmation class!

Thank you very much for the pine cone made into a turkey and the Bible passages. Thank you also for the delicious rice crispie turkeys. Your thoughts are greatly appreciated.

Margaret Ross

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### **HOILP on the Internet**

#### **Websites & Facebook**

- First – [www.flcinlee.com](http://www.flcinlee.com)  
[www.facebook.com/firstlutheranchurchlee](https://www.facebook.com/firstlutheranchurchlee)  
Immanuel – [www.ilccompton.org](http://www.ilccompton.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ilccompton](https://www.facebook.com/ilccompton)  
HOILP YouTube - [www.youtube.com/@hoilp](https://www.youtube.com/@hoilp)

### **Immanuel Church Office Hours**

Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Church office: 815-539-6567

Debbie will be available from home in the afternoons. If you need anything, call or text: 815-866-6690 or email: [immanuellutherancompton@live.com](mailto:immanuellutherancompton@live.com).

# Immanuel News

## Immanuel's General Treasury for Oct. 2023

	Month	YTD
Receipts for Oct.	\$20,755.41	
Expenses for Oct.	\$17,036.96	
Receipts YTD		\$149,826.11
Expenses YTD		\$185,782.25
Net/(Loss)	\$3,718.45	(\$35,956.14)

To meet our budget for 2023 our goal is \$3965.00 a week, we had 5 weekly offerings of \$3186.00 this month.

Let keep up the good works here at Immanuel. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Harlan G. Eames  
Financial Officer

Avg. Sunday  
attendance in  
October - 47

**A Friendly Reminder** to remain active members of Immanuel you need to "receive communion & make a financial contribution of record" **before Dec. 26, 2023**. Contributions can be mailed or dropped off at church, or can be made through Immanuel's website: [www.ilccompton.org](http://www.ilccompton.org)

## Immanuel Council Highlights November 16, 2023

- General Treasury ending balance October 31 was \$7,743.45.
- \$4,000.00 was transferred from the Capital Improvement Fund in October to cover operating expenses.
- The semi-annual joint council meeting will be Sunday, November 26, at First.
- Thank you notes were received from the Compton Fire Department and LOMC.

**Immanuel's**  
**"Raise the Roof"**  
*Donations can still  
be made by mailing  
to Immanuel or place  
in the offering plate.*  
**Thank You!!**

**Immanuel's 2024  
Weekly Offering  
Envelopes,**  
calendars, and church  
directory are now  
available! Please pick  
yours up!

Please submit **Annual Reports** from Immanuel's committees & organizations to the church office as soon as possible. Immanuel's Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 28, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.

## Parish Happenings

### First News

#### First Council Highlights November 19, 2023

- Parsonage Refurbishment: Work on property in preparation for rental is almost complete with just a couple small indoor tasks remaining.
- Parsonage Rental: With positive background and financial checks complete, a lease from 12/1/23 through 6/30/2024 has been signed.
- Storm Damage: All needed repairs to church, parsonage, and grounds are complete except for church rain gutters (2023) and steeple cross & parking lot light (2024).
- Congregation Meeting – January 7, 2024: Needed change to Congregation Meeting quorum requirements and issues related to finances and the church's future.

#### HOILP Joint Council Highlights November 26, 2023

1. By consensus of the councils, the video recording process and access will remain as is, with all council members seeking to help Rev. Jeff Schlesinger find volunteers that can record, edit, and place videos online for viewing.
2. Mr. James Johnson provided an update on the financial situation at First Lutheran and possible future ramifications for HOILP.
3. Agreed to raise pastor's cash salary according to the recommendations of synod. Other benefits (social security, pension, etc. will increase accordingly).
4. Motion made and passed to invite Immanuel Lutheran of Amboy into discussions regarding joining Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish.

#### Benevolence Offering

**Immanuel:** December – LSSI (Lutheran Social Services of Illinois), January – Local Outreach. Please use the envelopes found in this newsletter.

**First:** December & January – Lutherdale Bible Camp. Please use the benevolence box at church or designate it on the memo line of your check.

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

(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**

December 3 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)  
December 10 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)  
December 17 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)  
December 24 – Sunday morning worship  
(on-line only)

#### **Christmas Eve Services with Holy Communion**

7:00 p.m. Immanuel 9:00 p.m. First  
December 25 – 10:00 a.m. at Immanuel  
December 31 – First (10:30) only 1 service

January 7 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)  
January 14 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)  
January 21 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)  
January 28 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)

### **Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish**

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Pastor Jeff Schlesinger  
(Cell) 815/878-4503  
E-mail: [photo.pastor1965@gmail.com](mailto:photo.pastor1965@gmail.com)

You can also check us out on Facebook!