

February 2022



The Parish Voice

A NEWSLETTER OF HEART OF ILLINOIS LUTHERAN

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

Immanuel Lutheran Church
398 Church Road
Compton, IL 61318
815.539.6567

Immanuel Annual Meeting

On January 30th 31 people gathered following the regularly scheduled worship service for Immanuel's 2022 Annual meeting.

After being led in prayer by Pastor Jeff, people viewed a video greeting from Northern Illinois Synod Bishop Jeffrey Clements. He thanked us for our continued offerings for the work of the ELCA and informed us that he would be retiring and a new bishop will be elected at the synod assembly in June.

Following that, Keith Zoeller, the farm manager of the church's farm presented the plans to create a CRP pollinator plot this spring. For those unfamiliar with CRP, that is a program in which farmers set aside portions of their land to plant native grasses and flowers that are both good for the environment and will help renew the soil after years of repetitive planting. The state reimburses the farmer (in this case Immanuel) at an agreed upon rate for this act of stewardship.

Following the presentation, Pastor Jeff passed around clipboards for volunteers for ushering and reading, president Brad Ehlers walked through the various reports with the congregation, and the budget was adopted. The budget represented a 3.47% increase over the 2021 budget.

New business followed highlighted by two key things. The remaining income from the farm was designated between the capital improvement fund, the Amdex fund which is used to cover shortfalls in general funds, and as benevolence dollars for the council to designate as needs arise.

The other new business item included a discussion regarding the need for a new roof for the main part of the church. There were no specific decisions made regarding the roof, just discussion that it needs to be done and that plans should be made and money raised to make that happen in 2023.

These are not official minutes, just a recap.

First Lutheran Annual Meeting

Some think of it as Super Bowl Sunday, but to members of First Lutheran it is known as Annual Meeting Sunday that happens to have a football game later in the day.

That is said in jest, of course, but **First will be holding its 2022 annual meeting Sunday, February 13th** following worship.

In addition to regular items such as reports and budget, First will also be discussing a new roof for their sanctuary. Who would have thought when the parish was formed in 2017 that one of the things the two congregations would share is roof replacement? Pastor Jeff wonders (only half jokingly) if there might be a multi-roof discount if the two congregations hire the same contractor.



Dean Rowan Phelps
Baptized – 12/12/21
First Lutheran Church

Jeff's Jottings

The picture at the right is one I took at Rickett's Glen State Park. I've spoke of this park in the past. Nestled in the hills of Central Pennsylvania, its twenty-two waterfalls make it one of my favorite places to hike and to capture photographs. This shot of Cayuga Falls has become one of my favorites. Originally captured in color, I converted it to black and white on the computer and then added a vignette to give it a vintage look. It's the closest I can emulate Ansel Adams and other early pioneers in outdoor photography.



It's curious that this old style photo is one of my favorites. I usually like to be forward thinking in my photography – trying new things and new techniques. As I analyzed

why this picture has captured my eye, I have landed on two reasons: 1) It makes the best image of a less than ideal time to capture this scene and 2) these days lend themselves for pining for the “good old days.”

Let me talk a little bit about making the best of the situation. This picture was captured in late April. The trees were barely budding and the lush forest floor was had yet to bloom. In fact, as you can see if you look up in the hills, there was a late spring snow covering the ground. The result was that the brilliant greens of late spring and summer weren't present, nor the diverse colors of fall foliage. This scene was too drab to make a compelling color image. But by eliminating the color from the scene, the focus pointed to the peace and tranquility of the location. In fact, the snow fades into the background and is barely noticed, removing any sense of coldness about the image. This image represents my best effort at what I had before me.

In life, we don't always get to face ideal circumstances. In fact, rarely is that the case. And there are times when we face downright unfortunate circumstances. But when that happens, we can't just run away and bury our heads in the sand. We need to make the best of our circumstances, no matter what they may be.

That's what we've been called upon to do over these last two years as we've dealt with this incessant virus. We have altered the way we have done things in our personal lives, in our work places, in our community spaces, and of course in our churches. In order to keep our neighbors safe, we have dealt with inconveniences, learned new skills, and simply persevered through these times.

I used to think negatively about those people who longed for the days gone by. It is part of who I am to look forward, virtually always ready to try something new for the sake of progress. But these days have caused even me to wish we could go back to the way it was. I want to be able to sing in church without the incumbrance of a mask, to go to a restaurant or movie theater or sporting event without fear of sitting too close to a stranger, to simply shake hands with my friends and acquaintances when I see them. I think maybe this longing for the past has given me a greater appreciation of the art of black and white photography than I ever had before.

Whatever years or era in the past it was, we all have a tendency to look back and wish we were still in those good times again. But reality tells us that those days are gone and it will never be that way again. That does not mean, though, that all things from those days have to go away. In fact, the challenge of any point in time is to figure out what to keep doing that we have always done, and what to change and do in a new way. Which brings us right back to the first point: we need to make the best of the situation we're in.

I don't know what the future holds, brothers and sisters. I'm hopeful that we're near the end of the pandemic. There are signs of that – but then again, there were signs of that last summer as well. But whatever the case, whether we continue mired in the world of masks and boosters, or we find ourselves on the other side of the era of Covid, we will make the best of our situation. For that is what God would have us do.

Peace be with you!

PS

Dealing with the Pandemic

Thank you to all for your patience through these times and for abiding by mask policies. It remains the goal to maintain the safest environment for everyone while still joining together in worship. Recently worship was suspended for a week due to a known Covid case in worship. It's difficult to say if it was absolutely necessary – but it's better to err on the safe side than to find out via an outbreak that worship “should have” been suspended. Here are the most recent protocols that guide the decision making process at HOILP:

Ongoing guidelines for worship out of concern for the effects the variants of the Covid 19 Coronavirus.

The HOILP pandemic protocol approved in June of 2020 helped guide the parish well over the last 18 months. But since that document was conceived in an entirely different phase of the pandemic, and it has become apparent that we need to be flexible and nimble in our decision making regarding our worship practices, the following guidelines will advise us as we navigate the new environment created by various variants of the Covid 19 Coronavirus.

Current Worship Practices

- For in-person worship, HOILP will continue to abide by the mask and gathering size recommendations of the County Health Departments (Lee, LaSalle, and DeKalb counties), the Illinois State Health Department, and the CDC.
- Pastor Schlesinger, seeking advice of the worship team and altar guilds, will continue to make decisions on the safest worship practices regarding singing, communion, sharing of the peace, etc.
- As the pandemic has not yet subsided, HOILP will continue to provide online worship opportunities for those who do not yet feel comfortable gathering in communal settings and for those who, due to health reasons, ought not gather in groups. This is particularly important as the colder months are now upon us.

Suspension of Worship

- ***It is the intention of HOILP not to suspend in-person worship again.*** But, if it becomes apparent that it is best for the health of the members HOILP and the community at large, in-person worship will be suspended as it was for much of 2020 and early 2021.
- These guidelines will be considered when making a decision regarding suspending worship:
 - If area schools have suspended in-person learning, this is a definite indication that in-person worship probably should be suspended as well.
 - If municipal bodies and county health departments make recommendations or mandates prohibiting group gatherings, indoor dining, and other communal activities, that will serve as an indicator that HOILP consider suspending in-person worship. Secondly, if the state health department and/or CDC make similar recommendations, that will be taken under advisement.
 - If there has been an exposure during HOILP worship (i.e. someone tests positive within four days after attending worship) there will be an automatic temporary suspension of worship of one or two weeks. Any outbreak due to an exposure will result in a longer suspension of in-person worship.
 - Procedure:
 - The pastor and council presidents of HOILP will make the initial decision to suspend in-person worship
 - Both congregations of HOILP will suspend in-person worship even if it is driven primarily by the context of one of the two member congregations
 - After the first week of suspended in-person worship at HOILP, a joint council meeting will be called via Zoom to decide on continued plan of action.

*Approved - Immanuel Council 12/16/21
First Council 12/19/21*

Worship

A Look Ahead to Lent

Lent starts right after we turn the calendar in March. Ash Wednesday is March 2nd and the Ash Wednesday service will be at Immanuel this year.

Midweek Lenten services will take place as long as it is viable to gather in-person. They will alternate between the congregations. There will not be meals beforehand, we hope to reclaim those in 2023.

Regarding online services during Lent, we will continue our Sunday morning practices and will make sure online videos are available for our Holy Week services. We are seeking someone to record the midweek services via Facebook Live or YouTube Live. If you are willing to work on that please contact Pastor Jeff.

A Look Way Ahead in Worship

Pastor Jeff just returned from the workshop for pastors and other leaders of the synod to develop resources for Season of Creation. He can't wait for its arrival, even though it won't be until September and October. But prior to that, two ways which you can help:

Volunteer for Season of Creation Task Force

PJ is putting together a task force to plan and make Season of Creation even better. Please let him know if you're willing to volunteer.

Start Taking Pictures

As always, we'll have slide shows for the Sunday themes. Here's the topics for you to start capturing pictures:

- Oceans and Lakes
- Animals
- Cosmos
- Storms and Weather

WELCA

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*)

When you are shopping, please continue to think of the people who have to use PADS in these cold winter months. **Items needed are:** All paper products, all cleaning supplies, all personal care items (new, not used), bottled water, sack lunch snack items, drink mixes. Also new adult socks, underwear and pajama pants.

Please put your donations in the PADS totes in the room next to the office. **Thank you.**

This and That

Benevolence Offerings

Immanuel's benevolence offering for February-Northern Illinois Synod. Please use the envelope found in this Newsletter.

Copies of the annual report from both congregations are available at the respective buildings.

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.

HOILP on the Internet

Websites & Facebook

First – www.flcinlee.com

www.facebook.com/firstlutheranchurchlee

Immanuel – www.ilccompton.org

www.facebook.com/ilccompton



www.youtube.com/channel/UCxhzbUM EeE1C2SIsP-YI65A

This and That

N.I.C.E. Center Update

- Food/Miscellaneous Items Needed – lotions, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, pudding mixes, ketchup, pickles and large bag of chips.
- N.I.C.E. has been able to make improvements in their building (A/C, rebuilt the heating system, etc.)
- March is Immanuel's month to volunteer at N.I.C.E. from 8-11 a.m. Sign-up in the overflow, call Debbie, or show up on Saturday's.

Thank you for all the special birthday cards and notes. It was very thoughtful and appreciated.

-Marion Barnickel

Immanuel Council Highlights

December 16, 2021

- General Treasury ending balance November 30, 2021 is \$3,898.63
- Guidelines for worship concerning effects the variants of the Covid 19 Coronavirus
- Thank you letters from Compton Fire Dept. for benevolence gifts and from Lincoln School Principal for Back Pack Blessings donation
- Working on nominations for Church Council and delegates to Synod Assembly
- Approved payment of \$9,000 from Farm Account to Northern Illinois Synod
- Worked on Budget issues and the agenda for Annual Meeting
- Immanuel Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2022 at 9:40 a.m.

Immanuel Council Highlights

January 13, 2022

- General Treasury ending balance December 31, 2021 is \$9,351.40
- Guidelines for worship during Lent and Holy Week
- Decision to purchase external hard drives to back up video services
- Distribution of 2021 Farm Income and Commitments
- Working on nominations for Church Council and delegates to Synod Assembly
- Worked on Budget issues and the agenda for Annual Meeting
- Immanuel Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2022 at 9:40 a.m.

Joys and Concerns

February Birthdays

- 1 – Tracy Ganz
- 4 – Savannah Wade
- 5 – Jacqueline Klauer
- 7 – Ben Ross
- 8 – Brady Johnson, Erin Johnson
- 12 – Jessica Gladd, Logan Sellers
- 14 – Sue Montgomery, Jonathan Gladd
- 15 – Mike Eames, Breanne Davis Bergerson
- 16 – Korey Kromm
- 17 – Kay Grinka, Paul Heiman, Sandy Davis, Devin Cole
- 18 – Connor Reppin
- 19 – Liam Crumpton
- 20 – Earl Barnickel, Brad Ehlers
- 22 – Scott Schlesinger, James A. Johnson
- 23 – Deona Collins
- 24 – Rick Beckstrom
- 25 – Penny Winterton
- 26 – Dave Koroscik
- 27 – Jean Johnson, Phyllis Larsen
- 28 – Julia Wade, Robyn Miller
- 29 – Alex Cole

February Anniversaries

- 15 – Duane & Kathy Kaiser
- 17 – Jerry & Rhonda McCormick

Congratulations to Stefanie

Klauer & Ciara Ruddy on the birth of a son, Oscar Klauer-Ruddy, born Dec. 17 in Australia. Stephanie is the daughter of Jackie Weitzel-Klauer also from Australia and a member of Immanuel.

Prayer Corner

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

Monthly Requests – Jim Eich, Sharon Kellen, Whitley Clayton, Gary Holle, Ed & Joan Benner, Judy Moller (Gary & Randy Holle's sister)

Newly Baptized – Masyn Jaymes Rebholz (4/25)

Tucker Slade Olson (5/23) Dean Rowan Phelps (12/12)

Mourning Families - Dennis Weiler Family (2/2), Bud Archer Family (3/25), Richard Bettner (9/8)

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

**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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Return Service Requested

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

February 6 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
February 13 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
February 20 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
February 27 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)

Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

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Pastor Jeff Schlesinger
(Cell) 815/878-4503
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You can also check us out on Facebook!