



February 2023



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

Lent to Kick Off at the End of the Month

Though the Worship Team has not yet completed planning for Lent, it will still happen as it has for nearly 2000 years now. Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday which this year is February 22nd. Service this year will be at First Lutheran at 7:00 p.m.

As has been the practice the last seven years, Wednesday Lenten services following Ash Wednesday will alternate between the congregations, with the first, third, and fifth Wednesdays taking place at Immanuel and the second and fourth at First. The time for those services will be 6:30 p.m.

It is still being decided if there will be a small meal before the services. Keep an eye on weekly announcements and next month's Parish Voice for details on that.

Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, February 22
7:00 p.m. First

Lenten Wednesdays (6:30 p.m.)
March 1 – Immanuel
March 8 – First
March 15 – Immanuel
March 22 – First
March 29 - Immanuel

HOILP Souper Bowl Soup Swap

Mark your calendars! On Sunday, February 12, HOILP will conduct a SOUPER Bowl Sunday Food Swap AND collection.

For the soup SWAP, bring containers of your favorite fresh homemade frozen soup and/or quart jars filled with all the dry ingredients (and directions), to make warm soup at home. Please label the containers with the type of soup.

For the soup COLLECTION, we want all parishioners to bring cans of soup for delivery to local food pantries.

Sunday School is Back!

Sunday School has returned at Immanuel and gathers each week following worship. Come join us in the basement for a time for fun and learning about the gift of faith we have received in our baptism. If you are able to lend a helping hand please contact Kim Menzel or Kathy Ross.

Raise the Roof Campaign at Immanuel

The members of Immanuel voted at their annual meeting (January 22) to have a new roof installed this year. In order to help pay for the project a special capital campaign will be conducted called the "Raise the Roof Campaign." All members of Immanuel should have received a letter regarding it. If you did not or you would like more information regarding it, please contact the church office.

First Lutheran Annual Meeting
February 12, 2023
Following Worship

Jeff's Jottings

A few months ago, a man whom we had never seen before showed up in worship at First Lutheran. He was a man in need of help, having had much go wrong in his life. He told me that he was thinking of ending his life before he came into worship that day.

After worship, a few members of First talked with him and then I sat and listened to him for quite a while. I took him over to NICE center where the Korosciks helped me set him up with a few days' worth of food. I drove him up to Rochelle where we put him up in a hotel.

The next couple of days I searched for places where we might get him longer term shelter and additional help. After a number of phone calls, the PADS shelter in Peru turned out to be the right place to go.

While I drove him from Rochelle to Peru, he reiterated to me how we had saved his life as he was seriously considering ending it on Sunday. He told me that no one had been so kind to him in his whole life. I had an opportunity to share with him the news of God's grace. He had never heard that before.

For a meager cost of \$150 or so for the hotel room, some food from the pantry, and our care and concern for a stranger, we literally saved a man's life. And as I reflect upon it, I realize that we lived out God's call to us that we heard last week in worship from the prophet Micah: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

You may have noted that I said **we** saved the man's life. It is because of the ministry that **we** do together that I, on your behalf, was empowered to carry out the events that happened over those couple of days. If I had to do everything on my own, there would not be many (if any) people who would be sheltered in a hotel for a couple nights. Individually, \$150 a pop is a fair amount of money. But together (especially since we have a line item in the budget at First for situations such as this and at Immanuel we have a Good Samaritan fund to help people in need) we are able to just see a man in need of help and help him.

Doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God – that is a wonderful mantra for our lives as individuals. But how much more powerful it becomes when we do so together. Let's go forth and continue together to strive for justice, act with kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

PJ

Worship

Video Worship Task Force

HOILP has identified our video worship services as a vital ministry to continue as we transition to post pandemic life. An incredibly useful tool to keep us unified during the ins and outs of the pandemic, though it is not the same as gathering together in-person for worship it has a great number of benefits.

The result is that a taskforce has been formed to help guide how to most effectively and efficiently go forth with video ministry. They met for the first time on January 28th and will be meeting again on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. at First Lutheran.

There are currently five members on the task force (John Hoelzer, Jim Johnson, Rachel McCormick, Olin Simpson, and PJ) but it is not a closed group. If you would like to be part of the group, or if you have thoughts and suggestions, please contact any one of them.

Treats After Worship

There is a sign-up sheet in the overflow at Immanuel for coffee fellowship. If you can provide a simple treat and put coffee and juice out, it will be much appreciated. It is time to return to sharing fellowship around your preferred beverage and sweet treat. It also helps provide fellowship for those families with Sunday School age children.

There is not a formal sign-up at First, but if anyone would like to offer a little bit of refreshments to enhance our post worship fellowship it would be most welcome. After all, there is nothing wrong with a little "appetizer" before heading off to lunch.

Some Notes on Sabbatical

For the first time in the History of HOILP (as well as both congregations of the parish), the pastor is being offered a sabbatical leave. So that the congregation might better understand the reasoning behind this, Greta Bates, a member from Immanuel who serves on the Parish Team and the newly formed Sabbatical team, has composed a three-part article that will be published in this and the next two Parish Voices. Pastor Jeff will include a short note of comment for each of the articles.

Rostered Minister Sabbatical by Greta Bates

From an article from the May 16, 2013 issue of Living Lutheran, *A Passport to Good Health*: “The idea of a sabbatical has biblical origins. The very root of the word is the same as that of ‘Sabbath’. Throughout the Old Testament, God instructs people to work six days and rest on the seventh. In Leviticus, God instructs people to allow the land to rest every seventh year – meaning no farming, no planting, no harvesting.” Along the same lines, a clergy sabbatical of 3 to 6 months is suggested by the compensation guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Northern Illinois Synod (NIS) to sustain clergy health and promote renewal through a break in routine. The sabbatical is defined as a period in which the pastor has no contact with the congregation, and the congregation operates independently of the pastor for the duration of the defined period.

Congregation/Parish Benefits/Aspects

A clergy sabbatical has potential value to the Church and its congregations, beyond the value to the individual pastor.

A sabbatical period of renewal extends the length of time that a pastor may spend in a particular call, reducing the frequent need for new call processes within the congregation. The call process is typically long, and most congregations find it stabilizing to have long term pastorates over those which are short term and result in frequent vacancies and repeated call processes. The existence of sabbatical offerings in the personnel policies of a congregation can enrich future call processes when they do occur because this is a great benefit to be worked toward during the call.

In addition, the sabbatical is a contribution to the whole church and the welfare of the pastor who is called by God to serve the wider church as well as the individual one called to and prevents the pastor from leaving the pastorate too soon.

The sabbatical time may be used by the pastor for continuing education activities including workshops, seminary courses, or personal study. These activities are likely to be in-depth study of 1 or 2 topics directly related to the pastor’s call. After the period of renewal, the pastor is likely to return with new perspective and clearer vision related to the congregational ministry.

During the clergy sabbatical, the congregation will continue the vital activities of the church: worship, service, outreach, and governance. Members will continue in their familiar roles as well as branching out to provide for worship leadership and filling other roles normally filled by the pastor.

The congregation may choose a special project to bring people together, and special offerings may be taken to support the special project and the expenses of the sabbatical. Clergy compensation continues unhampered throughout the duration of the sabbatical.

A Note From Pastor Jeff...

For 25 years a Sunday has not passed when I haven’t awoken thinking about my pastoral duties. I’ve had vacations, but even then I wake up wondering how things are going back at home: if I’ve left sufficient instructions for the supply preacher, if someone was able to figure out how to unlock the doors. I am hoping with this extended period of “sabbath” when I am simply attending worship, that at some point I can feel like you do on a Sunday morning, simply going to worship because that’s what Christians do, not because it is my vocation.

I’m also curious to hear your experience in my absence. It is not my choice to make, but if I were to decide worship and other ministry continue during my absence, I would recommend that members of the parish do them rather than hiring supply preachers. I do believe we are called to do our ministry together. It is also true that one of my faults is that I just do things myself rather than share them or give them over. I think this sabbatical can prove to be not only a benefit for me as a pastor, but for First and Immanuel as congregations and HOILP as a parish.

HOILP Sabbatical Team

First – Alex Johnson, Julie Lovett, Deb Poterek
Immanuel – Greta Bates, Sarah Goetz, Jill Ross

This and That

N.I.C.E. Center Update

- Food/Miscellaneous Items Needed – sugar, cake mixes, hamburger helper, shampoo.
- We need help for food pickups in DeKalb on Friday mornings (leave N.I.C.E. at 7:20 a.m.) and/or help sort produce and other food items at 9:30 a.m. For more information, call Dave Koroscik at 815-751-0401.

Thank you for your continued support for the N.I.C.E. Center.

First Lutheran Council Highlights **January 8, 2023**

- The Sabbatical Committee members from First Lutheran are Deb Poterek, Julie Lovett, Alex Johnson
- Furnaces (3) and air conditioners (2) will be replaced this year. Details will be presented in the budget at the 2023 Annual Meeting
- March/April Benevolence will go to the Lee Fire Department
- Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 12, after services

Benevolence Offerings

Immanuel: February – Northern Illinois Synod. Please use the envelope found in this newsletter.

First: February - PADS Homeless Shelter in Peru, IL. Please use the benevolence box at church or designate it on the memo line of your check.

Fellowship Hour returns at Immanuel after 8:30 a.m. worship. Sign up in the overflow or let Debbie know if you would like to provide baked goods, cookies, etc., juice and/or coffee.



*Congratulations
Jeff/Dad on 25
years of ministry
February 1st!*

*Love,
Theresa,
Sam, Kim & Alex*

Immanuel Council Highlights **January 19, 2023**

- General Treasury ending balance December 31, 2022 is \$9,378.03
- A Video Worship Task Force is being planned with 3 members from each church
- A change in insurance coverage for Pastor was approved
- Church roof bids are ready for congregational annual meeting
- A Sabbatical Team is being planned with 3 members from each church
- Farm Account breakdown for recommendation to congregation at annual meeting

Joint Council Highlights **November 18, 2022**

- The Parish Team presented a couple of proposals before the joint-council. Additional rewording of the Parish Covenant was passed, particular to how a Parish Meeting can be called.
- The joint-council approved the addition of a Sabbatical Policy to the Parish Covenant.
- Rev. Schlesinger presented his request for a Sabbatical from May 16-August 14, 2023. After some discussion, this was approved. During the Sabbatical, the pastor will rest, travel, and not be contacted for any pastoral needs.
- A Sabbatical team will be formed to consider how the congregations will each handle the pastoral duties during Rev. Schlesinger's absence.
- The pastoral compensation package was increased for the 2023 budget.

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/@hoilp

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.**

WELCA President's Desk – Sarah Pfeifer

NIS WELCA is looking for a Central conference rep to begin in September. Greta Bates is filling a 1-year position, and she does not want to do the 2-year term. Pam Wohlrabe held this position, before she moved. Anyone interested, please talk to Greta.

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

Parish Team

November Meeting Notes

The HOILP Parish Team met on November 9 at First Lutheran. A final edit review was made of the Parish Covenant documents updates, and the Team approved the Covenant to be presented to the Joint Council at the November 20 meeting. A final review was made of the Parish Sabbatical Policy document, and the Team approved the proposed Policy to be presented to the Joint Council at the November meeting. Pr. Jeff's Sabbatical Proposal was reviewed, and the Team endorsed the proposal to be presented to the Joint Council at the November meeting. The Team reviewed the progress of the Joint Mission Service Projects: 1) Sunshine Meals (see info on right) Members of both congregations are sought to continue this ministry. 2) Food Swap events took place throughout the summer; the last will be November 20. A Christmas Cookie Swap is planned for December 18. January 22 will be Soup Day; details will be shared in newsletters and weekly announcements. Thank You's were expressed to John Hoelzer and Rita Thompson whose terms on the Parish Team will be completed with the annual meetings. One new representative is sought from each congregation for a 3-year term on the Parish Team.

Lasagna for "Sunshine Meals"

Nine Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish members worked together recently to assemble twelve pans of lasagna. This pasta along with salad and garlic bread are available to give to members of our communities or congregations who are sick, returning home from the hospital or just need a "perk me up". If you know of anyone who could use a ray of sunshine in their lives, give Debbie at Immanuel a call or if it is after office ours, contact Pastor Jeff.

Thanks for a Lasagna "Sunshine Meal" as delivered by Sarah Pfeifer, and prepared by HOILP members, after returning from the hospital in Grand Junction, CO. It was greatly appreciated. This kindness received was helpful and delicious.

*Sincerely,
Brian & Holly Phalen*

**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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SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

February 5 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
Sunday School (9:30) Immanuel
February 12 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
Sunday School (9:30) Immanuel
February 19 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
Sunday School (9:30) Immanuel
February 26 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)
Sunday School (9:30) Immanuel

Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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You can also check us out on Facebook!