

February 2025



# The Parish Voice

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

A Newsletter of Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
398 Church Road  
Compton, IL 61318  
815.539.6567

## Confirmands Host Bingo Blitz

The HOILP confirmation class will be hosting their second annual Bingo Blitz. Come on over to church on Saturday afternoon to enjoy a lunch or an afternoon snack. Have fun marking the squares on your card as you anticipate being the first to shout out that wondrous word: BINGO! At the same time, be amused as a certain pastor belly aches about not getting any squares covered.

There is a sign up sheet at each church, but don't hesitate to come if you haven't had a chance to sign up. They are just looking for a rough estimate so that there is ample food, and of course ample prizes.



## Lent 2025

**Ash Wednesday Worship**  
**March 5, 2025**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**Immanuel Lutheran**

The worship team will be firming up plans for the remainder of Lent at their February meeting. Look to next month's Parish Voice and/or the weekly announcements for details as they become available.

## Adult Confirmation

Pastor Jeff is planning on conducting an adult confirmation course. This is a great opportunity for adults who have not had any formal instruction in the Lutheran understanding and practices of the faith, as well as an opportunity to long time Lutherans to renew the dive into Lutheranism.

There will be a sign up sheet at each congregation to indicate your interest. Once he has an idea of how many people there will be, Pastor Jeff will make suggestions for dates. He is hoping to provide child care for those who need it.

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# Worship

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## Ways to Share HOILP Worship

- Share our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/@hoilp](http://www.youtube.com/@hoilp)
- Ask people to subscribe to YouTube channel
- Share and like the weekly Facebook post to worship
- Forward weekly email about worship to others.  
*And most importantly...*
- Invite people to worship with you on Sunday morning

## Worship Team Schedule

February 6, 2025  
6:30 p.m. at Immanuel

## 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday Filming

February 27

Readers – 10:00 a.m. at Immanuel

Singers – 6:30 p.m. at First

Contact Pastor Jeff if you are interested in reading and/or singing. Please know that all are invited to help with this. Keep an eye on weekly announcements for updates on this.

## Sunday Fellowship

Please consider providing simple little treats for fellowship time following worship at Immanuel or before worship at First. Sign up today!

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## WELCA

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### WELCA President's Desk – Sarah Pfeifer

- Items needed for PADS: All paper products, all cleaning supplies, all personal care items (new, not used), bottled water, sack lunch snack items, drink mixes. Place donations in the PADS totes in the room next to the office. **Thank you!**
- Quilting continues. Check weekly announcements for dates.

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## Discipleship & Fellowship

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

- Food/Miscellaneous Items Needed – soup, Kleenex, tuna, ketchup, mayo, salad dressings, spaghetti's, ravioli (canned).

### Church Office Hours

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

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

### HOILP on the Internet

*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](http://www.youtube.com/@hoilp)

# Around the Parish

## Immanuel

## First

### Dec & Jan Council Highlights

- The General Treasury ending balance on Nov. 30, 2024 was \$1,162.38. The General Treasury ending balance on Dec. 31, 2024 was \$151.26.
- \$5,000.00 was transferred from the Capital Improvement Fund in November to cover operating expenses. \$15,000.00 was transferred from the General Treasury to the Capital Improvement Fund in Dec. to repay a portion of the money borrowed from the Capital Improvement Fund throughout the year to cover operating expenses.
- In December the procedures for the Helping Hands Fund were discussed. The council approved updates to the procedures for the Helping Hands Fund. The pastor can now write a check in a circumstance where a debit card cannot be used, such as a request for assistance paying a utility bill.
- The net loss for the General Treasury for 2024 was (\$17,653.37).
- The council approved adding communion paraments to the Memorial Fund list. They will be purchased in memory of Karla Eames.
- The 2025 budget was discussed in December and finalized in January in preparation for the congregational annual meeting.
- Immanuel's Sunday attendance for 2024 was up 4.6%. Sunday attendance for the Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish was up 2.9%.

### **Immanuel Annual Meeting Highlights January 26, 2025**

- The net farm income for 2024 was \$38,278.06. after \$18,000.00 is paid toward the 2024 Northern Illinois Synod commitment, the amount remaining for distribution is \$20,278.06. A motion was approved to put that money in the AMDEX account.
- Greta Bates & Scott Schlesinger were approved to be the delegates at the Synod Assembly in June. Jill & John Hoelzer are the alternates.
- The Building & Grounds Team does not have any large projects for 2025. Smaller projects include having the carpets cleaned and following up on the recommendation to seal & re-stripe the parking lot.
- The congregation approved \$20,000.00 as the 2025 Northern Illinois Synod commitment. A maximum of \$18,000.00 can come from the Farm Account and any shortfall after member contributions will be paid from the General Treasury.

### Council Highlights – January 19, 2025

- 2024 offerings were better than prior year.
- Tenants in parsonage will be asked to renew for another year, as current rental lease will expire in April, 2025.
- Preliminary budget for 2025 was reviewed and discussed, for presentation to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- March/April benevolence recipient is Lutheran Disaster Response.

## Annual Meeting

First Lutheran  
February 9, 2025  
*(following worship)*

### **Church Farm Work Day #3**

We are planning to have another work day in late February or early March weather permitting. Watch for future announcements.

### Immanuel General Treasury – Dec. 2025

	Month	YTD
Receipts for Dec.	\$24,226.53	
Expenses for Dec.	\$16,499.65	
Receipts YTD		\$195,387.16
Expenses YTD		\$222,707.94
Net/(Loss)	\$ 7,726.88	(\$ 27,320.79)

*Weekly need for budget: \$3,885.00*

*Dec. average weekly offering: \$4845.00*

Let's keep up the good work! Thank you for your continued support.

*Respectfully submitted – Harlan G. Eames*

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# Messages from Your Bishop

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Northern Illinois Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



## ILLINOIS ELCA BISHOP'S ISSUE PASTORAL MESSAGE ON EXECUTIVE ORDER

January 25, 2025

The Gospel according to Luke 4:

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

*-Luke 4:16-18*

In churches across Illinois, this gospel will be read on Sunday, January 26. It is a moment in which Jesus reads the words of the prophet Isaiah as the guiding light, the mission, for his work on earth.

It is also the mission of his church.

Called by Christ’s mission and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we call on followers of Christ consider these words as we walk with and love our neighbors in these - and any other - times. The New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures guide us through exhortations to welcome the stranger and the alien, to show hospitality to others, and to reach beyond our comforts to care for and love our neighbors.

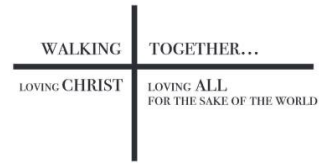
Through scripture, our faith teaches us that every human being is created in the image of God. That image transcends nations and boundaries, and calls us to see the dignity and value inherent in each of us. That image binds us together in a common humanity and concern for one another.

It is out of this faith commitment that we are concerned with immigration policies and the means by which they are enforced.

We call for an immigration policy and its enforcement that shows care for the neighbor. We call for an immigration policy and its enforcement that respects the dignity and humanity of all. We call for an immigration policy that reflects the values of justice and mercy and care for our



Northern Illinois Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



common humanity. We call for an immigration policy and its enforcement that does not exploit vulnerable people or dehumanize the stranger or alien in our midst.

We call for an immigration policy and its enforcement that respects and does not target places of worship, education, and medical care, traditionally sites where basic human needs are met. We call for an immigration policy and its enforcement that honors those in law enforcement who strive to live out their vocation faithfully.

As a church, the ELCA will continue to advocate for laws and policies that show respect and care for our common humanity. This includes fair, equitable, and just immigration laws that provide paths to citizenship and entry; opportunities for asylum and refuge; and concern for the dignity and safety of all.

In holy care for all beloved humanity who bear the image of God,  
The Rev. Stacie Fidler, Bishop, Northern Illinois Synod - ELCA  
The Rev. Yehiel Curry, Bishop, Metro Chicago Synod – ELCA  
The Rev. Greg Busboom, Bishop, Central/Southern Illinois Synod – ELCA



Northern Illinois Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



*“See what great love God has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”*

– 1 John 3:1

Dear Ones,

This past week, the President of the United States declared that there are only two genders: male and female. This declaration does not only go against what we understand about science and about who we are as created beings, but it tries to erase the humanity of our transgender, non-binary, and non-conforming siblings.

As people of faith, our identity is directly related to who God is; it is in 1 John that we are reminded of our calling as children of God. There is no executive order or person who can take away the identity that is the core of our being. Our identity as a beloved child of God transcends the two genders contained in the executive order issued recently.

In 2019, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America published a social statement entitled *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. It is in this social statement that we are reminded, “Studies of humans reveal rich diversity, showing that individuals do not neatly fall into two categories. Some people are intersex: their bodies are neither male nor female. People have a diversity of characteristics, most of which cannot be assigned exclusively to one sex or gender or another. Among humans, sex and gender are more accurately characterized as multidimensional.” (pg. 32). This political action has left our siblings who do not fit inside the binary feeling erased and afraid.

As your bishop, and as a beloved child of God, I stand with my transgender, non-binary, and non-conforming siblings who have wrestled and struggled and wept and wondered about their gender identity. They remain beloved children of God, who are deeply and powerfully known by God, as attested to by Jesus. In the remarkable complexity of human experience and creation, we trust that the beauty of God’s handiwork is made known in each person and in their experience of their own gender identity and expression.

At the 2024 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly, a resolution passed that invited us into discernment on becoming a Reconciling in Christ synod. The Task Force will lead several conversations in the coming months that will discuss what it means to be a Reconciling in Christ synod and how we are called to being a place where all feel and understand their identity as a beloved child of God. The work that this team has been tasked to do has not changed given the recent executive orders.

What we will not debate is the full humanity and beloved identity of God’s children, the ones that look like us and the ones that are inviting us into seeing the beautiful tapestry of God’s creation. We all live and move and have our being in the image of God.

To those who are transgender, non-binary, or non-conforming: I see you. I love you. Know that you are precious and that your life is valued.

To the families of those on this journey: I walk with you. The church is not a perfect place, but I am here to support you and continually remind you that God has declared not only you but also the ones you love as beloved.

The Rev. Stacie Fidler  
Bishop, Northern Illinois Synod - ELCA

P.O. Box 443 Moline, IL 61266 • 309-794-4004 • nisynod.org



**Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish**

**Immanuel Lutheran Church  
398 Church Rd. – Compton, IL 61318**

(First Lutheran – 240 Hardanger Gate – Lee, IL 60530)

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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**Return Service Requested**

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**February 2 – Immanuel (8:30)  
First (10:30)**

**February 9 – Immanuel (8:30)  
First (10:30)**

**February 16 – Immanuel (8:30)  
First (10:30)**

**February 23 – Immanuel (8:30)  
First (10:30)**

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You can also check us out on Facebook!