

June 2020



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

The Parish Voice

A Newsletter of Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

Immanuel Lutheran Church
398 Church Road
Compton, IL 61318
815.539.6567

When Can We Gather Again?

Last week the President said that places of worship should reopen. I completely understand his motivation for wanting churches and other parts of society to resume activities. I so badly want to gather in-person with you again. Humans are communal beings. It is pretty much in our DNA to desire to be together in-person.

But out of concern for your health, it is not time just yet for us to reconvene for in-person worship. I remind myself daily that worship is suspended not because we aren't able to come together, but rather out of love for our neighbor. Sometimes I say to myself, "We live in a great wide open area, we aren't at great risk," but then remind myself that we are just a short distance from the Chicago area where the virus has spread quite rapidly (115,000+ cases in the state as I write this, a vast majority of them in Chicago and suburbs). One of the reasons there aren't a preponderance of cases here in Lee County is because we have followed safe distancing and shelter in place protocol.

Northern Illinois Bishop Jeffrey Clements responded quickly sharing his recommendation that we do not reopen (I emailed his letter to y'all on 5/23 and also include it in this newsletter). The IDPH recommendations have us just moving into Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois Plan which still limits gatherings to 10 people and suggests those only take place as needed. So, despite a strong desire to be back together in-person, worship in our sanctuaries will remain suspended through the month of June.

So when? When can we expect to come back together? I wish I had an answer for you. I don't. But I remain hopeful that at the beginning of or during July we may move to Phase 4 which makes provisions for larger gatherings and allows us to begin to gather in person again. During June, I will be working with the councils to make plans for when and how we might gather in-person again, whether that be in July, August or September.

But you need to know this: even when we do gather again, it won't be the same as before. Until there is both an effective treatment and a vaccine, health precautions will be taken. This will not only mean limiting the number of people present, maintaining social distance, and wearing masks, but it will also mean altering our liturgical practices. The ELCA is providing a guide of things to consider as we return to worship. Here are just a few things included in that document which will drastically change our worship:

- Singing together, even from a distance, is one of the riskiest behaviors due to the spread of aerosol and droplets that can carry the virus a significant distance and remain suspended in the air. A cloth mask is unlikely to protect you or your neighbor.
- Similar caution applies to unison speaking, such as reciting the Lord's Prayer and other communal speech.
- Remove materials from the worship and gathering spaces such as bibles, hymnals, pens, information cards, welcome pads, children's bags, etc.
- Remove any items made with soft/porous materials (rugs/chairs/cushions), if possible, to reduce challenges for cleaning and disinfecting them.

These are just a few of the things I pulled from the seven page document which you are free to read on the ELCA website – www.elca.org (poor Brad and Mike, I'll be expecting them to read this whole thing).

So – when will we be gathering in-person again. I wish I knew. I miss you all. In the meantime, we will continue to do our best to create meaningful and helpful online worship experiences that keep us connected to our Lord and one another. Read on in this newsletter for new ways we will be trying to connect with each other.

Peace be with you all!



To the people of the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA

May 23, 2020

Dear Church,

I hope this holiday weekend finds you well and living in God's amazing grace.

Yesterday, the President of the United States said something that you and I have known all along. The church is essential. Every aspect of our lives has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, the ministries of the church have continued in significant ways and the work of your congregation has gone on in ways that have made me proud of our synod.

President Trump also said that churches should reopen this weekend. Let me be very clear. Church buildings should remain closed this weekend. I affirmed this in a communication with the rostered ministers of this synod yesterday afternoon. I believe, and have repeatedly said, that we must take our medical advice from doctors and health departments and not rely on those who make politically expedient decisions.

In Illinois, we will not enter Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois plan until Friday, May 26. The state will issue guidelines to assist congregations next week. The CDC issued revised guidelines for communities of faith yesterday afternoon. We must continue to make smart decisions as we move forward and protect the health and wellbeing of God's people. Our return to the sanctuary is not imminent.

The medical community continues to tell us that physical distancing and other precautions are critical to keeping COVID-19 under control. I expect that our return to the sanctuary will occur slowly and in phases. For now, online worship provides a much more satisfactory experience for worshipers than in-person worship can or will for some time to come. Unfortunately, there are few things that are as conducive to spreading a disease like COVID-19 than our normal Christian worship.

Even after we return to the sanctuary, we should consider online worship to be a permanent addition to our congregations' ministries. We are reaching new people in new ways with the love of Jesus Christ.

I know these are difficult days. I want to be back in a pew as much as you do. I remind myself as I remind you, it is out of our love for our neighbor that we must be part of the solution to this pandemic rather than part of the problem.

May God bless you and grant us patience and hope.

Walking with you,

The Rev. Jeffrey Clements Bishop Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA



In order to keep spreading the word about the good work being done by the committees, sub-committees, and ministry groups of the synod, we are thrilled to announce that the Northern Illinois Synod is offering a "Forum Day" when our ministries will lead forums for all interested members of our congregations and the wider community to inform you about the work going on in your name! Pastor Jeff will be one of those conducting a forum.

This Forum Day, Saturday, June 20, will be held via the Zoom meeting platform. It will offer three sessions of forums featuring twelve of our ministries.

The first forum will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the last one finishes at 1:15 p.m. Forums will be limited to the first 100 registrants.

Please [register today](https://nisynod.org/nis-2020-forum-day) for this great opportunity by going to <https://nisynod.org/nis-2020-forum-day>. The forums will also be recorded and available on the synod website after the event, so even though you are only able to attend three that day, you will be able to view the others soon thereafter.

If you have any questions, please contact Deacon Cheryl Erdmann at CErdmann@nisynod.org.

WORSHIP

Pastor Jeff and the worship team have been working hard to find ways for many people to participate in the worship videos. It helps keep us connected when we are not able to gather in-person for worship. During June, there will be two new ways to participate in worship:

LYO Sponsors: “Picture of the Week”

The members of LYO miss seeing you all each week. So they’ve come up with a way that we can see each other – through photos.

Here’s how it will work. Each week PJ announce theme for the upcoming week. Your job is to snap a picture (or selfie) of you and/or your family in that theme. For instance, the theme for June 7th is “outdoors.” Your job is to snap a picture playing or working outside. Be creative and have fun, but make sure we can see your faces – that’s the goal of the project.

When you have your shot, text or email it to Olivia Ross (oliviamarier13@gmail.com or 815.993.8168) by noon on Thursday. She will then put the pictures into a slideshow which will be shown at the end of the worship video each week.

The hope is that every family submits a photo at least once during the month. There is even talk of awarding prizes for the best photos at the end of the month – so stay tuned.

Congregational Hymns

On May 3rd, the first attempt at electronic hymn singing was conducted. It was a fun and new way to provide music for our videos, as well as offered a chance for further participation. Our second attempt at that will be for the June 14th worship with the hymns “I Love to Tell the Story” and “Gather Us In.”



The worship team is hoping for greater participation. Anyone who enjoys singing hymns in church can do this. And just like singing the hymns, your voice will not stick out so you can sing out and enjoy it.

An email will be going out explaining how to participate either by June 1 (you may already have it). Please join the parish in making a joyful noise to the Lord.

“Drive By” Passing the Peace

You may have noticed the worship videos have been missing the sharing of the peace. “That’s because we aren’t together to pass the peace from one to another,” says PJ. “I miss being able to share the peace of Christ with my church families.”

But he did not let our shelter in place practices keep his mind from devising new liturgical methods. PJ has come up with what he is calling “drive by passing of the peace.”

“I’m going to get in my car, give one of our members a call, and drive to their house. Then with my mask on, I’ll roll down my car window and film them in their yard or driveway saying, ‘Peace be with you!’ That way we’ll get to see and hear from one another even though we won’t be worshipping in person.”



He says he hopes to have 5 or 6 for each week. He also said he’d be happy to include “peace” videos people send him as well.

So be ready with a greeting of peace should PJ call you soon and ask if you can come out and share the peace.

Join a Watch Party

Though we are unable to gather in-person for worship, the worship team is looking for ways to gather us together for worship. They are exploring having Sunday morning “watch parties” on Facebook. These are scheduled times when we all get together on Facebook and watch the service simultaneously. The worship video would still be available to watch anytime, but this would offer us a chance to watch it together and we can interact via the Facebook comments. Pastor Jeff has mentioned in the announcements during worship and you’ll see it referenced in the council highlights.

Look for this to launch sometime in June.

Zoom gatherings in June will occur once each week:

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

WORSHIP

Worship Videos

We will continue to worship through the videos published via YouTube as we suspend in-person worship due to the corona virus. The video goes live each week at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Here are the ways to access it:

- Subscribe to the Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish YouTube channel
- Click on the link on the Facebook page of either First or Immanuel
- Use the link sent by email or text message
- Contact PJ or Debbie or Deb to get on the list to receive a DVD

It is technology, so occasionally there are snafus (as there were on May 24). Please just text PJ and be patient. Things can usually be fixed rather quickly.

Don't forget to hit the "share" button on Facebook and/or YouTube so that we can reach out to our friends and neighbors!

THANK YOU to everyone who has sung, played, read or provided liturgy for the worship videos!!! If you have not had a chance to help yet and would like to, please contact PJ via text, email or good ol' phone call.

HOILP Readers for June

	<i>First Lesson</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>Second Lesson</i>
<i>June 7, 2020</i>	Sarah Pfeifer	Christina & Marie Barnickel	Randy Schlesinger
<i>June 14, 2020</i>	Diane Englehart	Rosina Bittner & Kristen Edecker	Holly Phalen
<i>June 21, 2020</i>	Sarah Goetz	Hoelzers	Jill Ross
<i>June 28, 2020</i>	Brad Ehlers	Emily Ross & Mary Wackerlin	Greta Bates

HOILP Song Leaders for June

	<i>Leader(s)</i>	<i>Accompanist</i>
<i>June 7, 2020</i>	Julia Hoelzer	Sarah Goetz
<i>June 14, 2020</i>	Congregational Hymns	Ron Duval
<i>June 21, 2020</i>	Ron Duval	Sarah Goetz
<i>June 28, 2020</i>	Steve Simpson	Special Guest*

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 Deb (First) know what your current email.

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 – debpoterek@aol.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. Worship videos will now be posted there rather than on PJ's channel. 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.flcinlee.com or www.ilccompton.org.



First
Lutheran



Immanuel
Lutheran

Vacation Bible Camp at Immanuel is cancelled for this year. Plan on reviving it next June.

CHURCH BUSINESS

This month's benevolence offering is for Local Outreach (N.I.C.E. and Mendota Food Pantry).

Immanuel Church Office

Starting May 1st Debbie will be 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.

If any member is interested in working 7-10 hours per month as the secretary of First Lutheran, please contact Pastor Jeff or Council President Mike Davis by June 15th

Immanuel Council Highlights – May 14, 2020

- General Treasury ending balance April 30, 2020 is \$9,848.99
- Suggested Watch Party for Sunday church video.
- Thank You from Lincoln School for Backpack Blessing funds
- Church Painting and bell tower repair in June
- Next council meeting June 11, 2020 by internet.

First Council Highlights – May 19, 2020

- Discussed Facebook watch party for Sunday church videos
- Received planned resignation/retirement of Deb Poterek as church secretary; agreed to work toward an August 1st transition
- Approved \$500 donation to the Whitley's Warriors benefit

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.

We have a request as some foods are becoming difficult to purchase in bulk. Would you please collect canned vegetables for N.I.C.E. to distribute? Any are needed except beans other than green beans.

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 Deb P. or Debbie R. if you have donations to be picked up and we will get our N.I.C.E. Board on it.

HOILP Bountiful Gardens



Once again this year, our parish is sponsoring a Bountiful Garden Program by which members donate fresh produce to the church

for delivery to the local food pantries and/or direct to school children. Last year, we delivered to Mendota and Lee pantries and to Paw Paw Schools as well as direct to families when a name was provided. A big thank you to all members who donated from their garden or with dry/canned goods in lieu of a garden. Though we cannot have a sign-up sheet in the overflow, I ask for even more members to participate and share your bounty with the community in need. At current, we plan to have two collection Sundays per month starting in July. Look to our newsletter for more information including a way to non-publicly notify us of a family in need.

Let's all work together to help our fellow neighbors thrive more than survive.

Applications for Immanuel's Scholarship Fund are now available. Contact Debbie if you would like one and an application will be mailed to you. Deadline is June 15.



Saturday, June 13 4:30-6:30 p.m. Pork Chop BBQ Drive-Thru Dinner at Paw Paw Community Center. This is the main event. All tickets purchased will be honored. Silent Auction will be on-line. Check out Facebook for details.

Tomato Plants Available

Remember PJ's tomato seeding video from his Easter service (if you don't – check it out at the new HOILP YouTube channel!)? Well, he's pleased as could be to brag that they are blooming and blooming like crazy. It took 17 days before the first plant pushed it's way above the surface, but now they are growing like... tomato seedlings.



These plants are available for you to plant this summer. You can have as many as you'd like. FREE!

Don't have a garden? Feel free to grab a couple and plant them alongside your house or garage. Make sure they get some sun water them every so often, and before you know it, you'll have plenty of tomatoes.

He will be happy to deliver them to you. Just let him know. But the stipulation is this: you get to keep half the tomatoes and are asked to donate the other half to a local food pantry, our "Bountiful Garden" program, or some other worthy food charity.

WELCA

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

JUSTICE (Mission Action) - Charlene Zimmerman

Even though we are not able to be together at church, here is one of our mission/stewardship projects. Abigail Women's Center would like us to consider donations to help with their budget as they continue to help women and babies in need. If you want to make a donation please write a check and mail it to P.O. Box 28, Mendota, IL 61342 and write Immanuel Compton on the memo line. Also if you have not already donated to the WELCA Bakeless Bake Sale, please consider doing so now. Thank you for your support of these projects.

WELCA PRESIDENT'S DESK - Sarah Pfeifer

I have enjoyed the videos for our weekly services. I planted some of pastor's tomato plants. Soon we will assemble health care kits, then we will fill school bags. Look for bargains on: rulers, crayons, scissors, pencils & pens, pencil sharpeners, erasers, and spiral notebooks.

Headstone Cleaning

Brooklyn Township Lutheran Cemetery Association

For a limited time the cemetery association is offering headstone cleaning to remove moss and restore shine for stones located within the Brooklyn Township Lutheran Cemetery (adjacent to the church). The cost is \$10 for a single inscription stone, \$15 for a double inscription headstone and monuments are \$40.

A signup sheet is in the overflow or call Gale Barnickel at 815-497-3862. Lot number and stone inscriptions will be needed. Prepayment is required by July 19. Checks are to be made out to Brooklyn Township Cemetery Association and can be left at church in an envelope marked "Stone Cleaning" or mailed to 398 Church Rd., Compton, IL 61318.

Cleaning will occur sometime after July 19 to early August depending on the weather.

Any questions or to sign up, contact Gale Barnickel at 815-497-3862 or any other cemetery association member: David Bittner, Harlan Eames, Roger Grinka, Allan Zimmerman, Stanley Hoelzer.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prayer Corner

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

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

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

Mourning Families - Sarah Fassig Family (6/22), 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)

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

June Birthdays

4 – Connie Schlesinger
5 – Rosina Bittner
7 – Dan Walzer, Lori Rebholz, Zac Giberson
Chloe Walzer
8 – Marilyn Ward
9 – Tammy Bittner, Kathy Kaiser
12 – Tony Brooks
13 – Vernon Pfeifer, Chase Sellers
15 – Jill Ross, Ethan Wade
16 – Walter Barnickel, Bonnie Childs
17 – Norm Fassig
18 – Allan Zimmerman
19 – Connor R. Bergeson
20 – Delores Heiman, Wyatt VanDrew
21 – Richard Bettner, Devin Post Huffman
22 – Larry Schlesinger, Aiden Znaniecki
23 – Matt Fassig
24 – Kayla McCormick
26 – Greta Bates
28 – Margaret Ross, Connie Williams
29 – Gay Sellers, Michael Davis
30 – Mike Fassig

June Anniversaries

1 – Marty & Tracy Ganz
9 – Wes & Diane Englehart
12 – Daryl & Lisa Rosenkrans
16 – Corey & Julie Iversen
17 – Ted & Janet Muncy
Bill & Alice Giberson
20 – Steve & Kim Kofoid
25 – Mark & Sheri Clayton
26 – Tom & Kim Menzel
30 – Ron & Rita Lilja
Erin & Marnie Wade

**Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish
Immanuel Lutheran Church
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(First Lutheran - 240 W. Hardanger Gate - Lee, IL 60530)

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Return Service Requested

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship services have been suspended through the month of June.
See inside for a variety of worship opportunities.

Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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You can also check us out on Facebook!