



September 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

## Season of Creation to Begin in September

Fall has become the time when we celebrate "Season of Creation" at Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish. This year will be no different.

Season of Creation is a period when we incorporate the goodness of God's Creation in the liturgy, lessons, and messages of our worship. It is not a time when we just talk about and learn about Creation, but a time when we join with Creation in worshipping the God who is creator of us all.

The "Season of Creation" varies for each year of our traditional cycle. This year (year A in the cycle) the worship themes along with the dates we will be doing them are as follows:

- September 10 – Season Overview
- September 17 – Forest Sunday
- September 24 – Land & Prairie Sunday
- October 1 – Wilderness Sunday
- October 8 – River & Stream Sunday

Final plans for this year's activities around Season of Creation are still being made. But on the right you can see what we are hoping to do. If you have other ideas, please let PJ know and we'll see if we can get those underway as well.

### Photo Offering

As has been our tradition, we ask you to submit photos of our weekly themes – Forest, Land & Prairie, Wilderness, River & Stream – to be used as part of our worship powerpoints and videos. You can begin sending them to PJ anytime. Please submit them at least a week beforehand if you wish them to be include.

### September 16, 2023

#### Nachusa Grasslands – Autumn on the Prairie

In preparation for Land & Prairie Sunday, all who would like can gather at Immanuel and we will caravan together to this annual event at this incredible nature area to our north.

### Leaf Peeping & Mississippi River Museum

This year's leaf peeping trip will be combined with a trip to the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, IA. The date will be in October and is TBD. Sign up if you are interested to help in our planning.

### Night on the Town

Friday, September 15 – 5:30 p.m.  
Beaver Den in Paw Paw

Host – Christa Edwards

Sign up at Immanuel & First if you can join us!

### Can you host a NOTT?

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

Open Months – October - December

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

## Confirmation

A new confirmation class will begin this fall. Any young person from grades 5 through 8 are welcome to begin this journey of growing in faith.

There will be a very important organizing meeting for both parents and young people on:

Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>

7:00 p.m.

at Immanuel

We will be making decisions on how the program will be structured. Please make sure to get this on your calendar.

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## Jeff's Jottings

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A week ago Sunday, I was sitting in worship at Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church in Gretna, Nebraska. I was sitting with the Reverends Lucy and Dan Wynard, former colleagues from the Northern Illinois Synod who had just moved to the Omaha area and would not be starting at their new call until September. It was a joy to worship together with them. And it was interesting, as no one there knew that the three of us were pastors.

After worship while eating lunch, Dan asked me if my sabbatical was a success. I wasn't exactly sure if I could qualify whether it was a success or a failure, but I did share with him what worship was like that morning. "You know," I told him, "in worship this morning when we were doing the liturgy, I was able to just do it along with the rest of the congregation and not default to my leader voice. I don't think I've been able to do that in over 25 years."

So in the sense that my sabbatical, which literally means "time of rest," was intended to give me a rest from my labors as a pastor, yes my sabbatical was a success. It has been the case since about 1996 that when I'm worshipping within the congregation, I find myself defaulting to my leader's voice and have to restrain myself. Over the last month or so of my sabbatical, that default did not arise. I was able to "simply be" part of the worshipping assembly.

I am glad to be back. It felt wonderful to lead worship again this week – to preach again. And I am ever so grateful for being gifted with the sabbatical. I do believe it will offer benefits to both to Heart of Illinois Lutheran and me as a pastor, many of which we may not even recognize.

Have you ever felt really crappy, either physically or emotionally, and then got a good night's sleep and suddenly everything is 100% better? God has built into Creation our need for rest. In fact, our Creation story itself models rest when, on the seventh day, God completes everything and then takes a rest. The Hebrew word for that rest is Sabbath, the word we often use to refer to Sundays and the word from which sabbatical is derived. And of course, God builds rest right into the law with the third commandment: remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

Note that God refers to that seventh day as the sabbath day – that is the day of rest. Have you ever thought of our Sunday mornings as our time of rest? (No, I'm not talking here about napping through the sermon.) When we come to worship, it is part of our rest from our labors, rest from the chaos of our lives. Worship is a time to rest – to take a deep breath and come before our God to hear the good news that we are beloved children of God, that we are forgiven of our brokenness, that we are valuable in God's eyes. Worship is a time to refresh – to hear the good news of Jesus, to nurture our faith – so that we can go out and live as God's people the rest of the week. Worship, my dear friends, is as vital to our faith as a good night's sleep is to our physical health.

I fill rested and ready to go as we discover where God will lead Heart of Illinois Lutheran in the future. I hope that as I lead you forth in worship, you find worship to be a mini sabbatical in your week – a time to take a deep breath, rest in the presence of your loving God, and be renewed for another week of being a disciple in your daily life.

See you in worship for a sabbatical on Sunday. *PS*

### Fourth Thursday Filming

As we go forth, we plan on making changes to our video service format. But as we were unable to instigate them prior to my sabbatical, and a variety of other circumstances will delay them for a while, we will continue to provide prerecorded worship videos as we have.

In order to use my time efficiently and also incorporate others in the video, for the remainder of 2023 I'm going to begin "Fourth Thursday Filming." On the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month I'll be video recording folks reading the lessons and prayers. I'll be specifically inviting the assigned readers for the month, but if you don't usually read at in-person but are willing to volunteer to read on video worship, please let me know so you can be included.

*Things to look for (in the near future) from my sabbatical:*

- A short video sharing my travels and activities
- The video that is part of my project focusing on multipoint parishes
- Photos, photos, photos – many which will be part of Season of Creation.

## Discipleship & Worship



### *And Blessing of the Backpacks Service*

**Let's Celebrate the Start of Sunday School on September 10th!**

#### **Blessing of the Backpacks**

On Sunday, September 10th students will be invited to take their backpacks to the front of the church (as they arrive). The backpacks will be blessed during the service and students can pick them up after the service.

#### **Pancake Breakfast with Add-Your-Own Toppings Bar**

This will be held after the 8:30 Church Service for the **entire congregation**. It is also **Grandparents Day**, so make sure to invite your grandparents.

#### **God's Work Our Hands Project and Meet Your Teachers**

After the breakfast, Sunday School students will be invited to meet their teachers and make cards for the God's Work Out Hands Project.

#### **Fellowship Time returns!**

Treats for fellowship time at Immanuel (after 8:30 worship) and First (before 10:30 worship) will begin again in September. Sign up if you would like to provide treats, juice/coffee.

#### **Online Bible Study**

You may have noted that our schedule no longer includes Friday morning Bible Study. Do to dwindling and no attendance, it has been discontinued.

Pastor Jeff is exploring formats to use online video for Bible Study that will give more of the parish access to the study. Look for a soft introduction of that during September or early October with a more formal beginning of that in October or November.

#### **Members of the Sabbatical Team**

Greta Bates, Sarah Goetz, Alex Johnson, Julie Lovett, Deb Poterek, and Jill Ross, send their **thanks** to the many members and friends of HOILP who assisted with worship and communion visiting during the sabbatical.

I'd like to convey my deep sense of gratitude to the Sabbatical Team for all the work they did both in front of and behind the scenes in my absence. In addition, thanks to those who led worship, visited our homebound, created power points, and did the many other tasks that are part of my duties.

Because of all of your work, I was able to not worry about the ongoing ministry of HOILP. In fact, I was reminded that the ministry is by all of us, not just me.

And finally, a special thanks to Pastor Joy Alsop who was on call, as well as Pastor Andrew Kayes and Pastor Michael Hodge who filled in for funerals.

PS

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# WELCA

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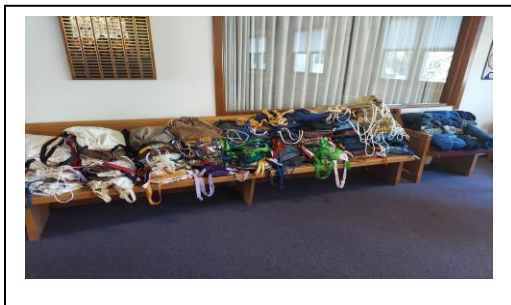
## **WELCA President's Desk – Sarah Pfeifer**

The Illinois Valley Pads in Peru is opening now for the season.

Their most frequently needed items are: bottled water, sack lunch snack items, drink mixes, ALL paper products, cleaning products, gas cards. A complete Needs List is in the overflow hallway. Please put these items in the totes in the room next to the office. Thank you!

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

NIS-WELCA Convention, Saturday, October 7 at St. John's Lutheran Church, 2000 Luther Drive, Peru. "Be the Body of Hope". Registration Fee: \$40.00. Coffee & Registration: 8:00 a.m. Registration forms are on the table in the overflow with more details.



Approximately 100 school bags for Lutheran World Relief were packed after church on Sunday, August 6 along with 15 personal care kits.

### **Harvest/Quilt Sunday September 24**

Home-grown fruits, vegetables, or flowers can be brought to church before Friday, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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

- Food/Miscellaneous Items Needed – Ketchup, mustard, mayo, BBQ sauce, any kind of salad dressing, cake mixes, muffin mixes, and cookie mixes.
- **September is the month that the members of HOILP volunteer on Saturdays from 8:00-11:00 a.m.** Sign up at both churches if you are able to help.

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

### **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: [immanuel.lutheran.compton@live.com](mailto:immanuel.lutheran.compton@live.com).*

### **Benevolence Offering**

**Immanuel:** September – Back Pack Blessings. Please use the envelope found in this newsletter.

**First:** September – TBD. Please use the benevolence box at church or designate it on the memo line of your check.

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# Immanuel News

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## Immanuel's General Treasury for July 2023

	Month	YTD
Receipts for July	\$18,193.08	
Expenses for July	\$17,665.43	
Receipts YTD		\$107,155.49
Expenses YTD		\$134,075.10
<b>Net/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$527.54</b>	<b>(\$26,919.61)</b>

To meet our budget for 2023 our goal is \$3965.00 a week, we had 5 weekly offerings of \$3024.00 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  
July - 43

## Church Farm Rental

Letters will be going out shortly to potential church farm rental lessees. This notice is for anyone not on the current list or unaware of the process who would like to participate. Eligible lessees include all members of Immanuel Lutheran Church who are defined as active members. Basic active membership eligibility requires communing in the past year and making a contribution of record, i.e., an IDENTIFIABLE contribution by check, numbered envelope, PayPal, etc.. Applicants must also be "operators" according to the FSA registry. If you meet the eligibility requirements and wish to participate in the lottery process, please contact the church office before September 10 if you have not received a letter. We will get you the application packet. Deadline for applications is September 15. The drawing will be at the September 21 Council meeting. Eligibility of the winner of the drawing will be verified.

## Immanuel Council Highlights August 17, 2023

- General Treasury ending balance July 31, 2023 was \$2,779.98.
- It is anticipated that up to \$6,000.00 will need to be borrowed from the Capital Improvement Fund to cover operational expenses in August.
- The council voted to donate \$1,000.00 from the Council Discretionary Fund to Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry's fundraiser for their new building.
- Pastor Jeff provided an overview of his travels during his sabbatical. He plans to complete his sabbatical project video within the next month.

*Scholarship Committee,*

*Thank you for the generous gift of \$750. I will be using this money to continue my education at the University of Missouri at St. Louis. I truly am grateful & appreciative of the support. I hope to see you all at church when I'm home on breaks.*

*Thank you!  
Trysta Foster*

## **Immanuel's "Raise the Roof"**

*Pledge forms and envelopes can be found on the table in the overflow.*

*Donations can still be made by mailing to Immanuel or place in the offering plate.*

***Thank You!!***

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## First News

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### First Council Highlights July 16, 2023

- Work on preparing parsonage for being rented continues. Painting, new flooring in kitchen and bath, and window repairs complete.
- Repair of March 30 wind damage to church and parsonage is defined, but may not be on the schedule to be done for two months.
- Work on 2024 budget was requested to begin this summer. Too many important decisions are needed that cannot wait until the budget recommendation is made during the January Council meeting.



**Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish  
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**SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**September 3 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)**

**September 10 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)**

**September 17 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)**

**September 24 – Immanuel (8:30) First (10:30)**

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You can also check us out on Facebook!