

# Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**NOVEMBER 2018**

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

## God's Encouraging Word ... when I'm suffering

**A**re you familiar with tunnel vision? Someone experiencing tunnel vision can see an object directly ahead, but they often fail to notice what's around it. Maybe age or injury has robbed them of their peripheral vision. Maybe they grow fatigued during a long drive. Do you know what that's like?

We're also prone to tunnel vision when we're suffering. Face it, we've all been there. No one is immune from problems and pain. Everyone experiences hurts or hang-ups. But when we're hurting, is the bad all we can see? Do we focus on the problem so much that we ignore everything else? We can see no help. No hope. No good. No God. Do you know what that's like? It's not a happy place to be.

It can be especially tough as we prepare to enter the holiday season. How can we put on a smile for Thanksgiving and pretend that we are just fine?

No need to pretend. Listen to the psalmist: "My comfort in suffering is this: your promise preserves my life" (Psalm 119:50). Remember how God worked so wonderfully to solve our greatest problem. The burden of sin we could never carry. The consequence of guilt we could never dodge. The sentence of death we could not avoid. So Jesus stepped in for us and shouldered them all. The cross and the tomb—both empty now—mark Jesus' great victory.

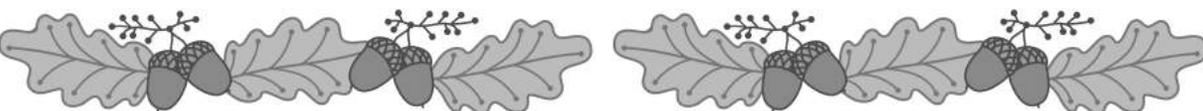
And his victory is your victory. So resist the urge to give in to those feelings of defeat. Don't shrink back in fear. Don't separate yourself from others. Don't become bitter. Don't give up. Otherwise you will miss the help God wants to give you.

All around the problem of suffering, God's help is ready and waiting. Over and over again, God works through suffering to make us realize how powerless we are to help ourselves. God works through suffering to expose our great need and then in his mercy fills the very need he has exposed. Look up and find confidence: "My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth"

(Psalm 121). Look in to God's Word where he promises, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Look back and recall how God has helped you through past challenges. Look around and find

Christian friends eager to give you a hand and fold hands for you in prayer. Look ahead and see the open heaven God has in store for you through Jesus.

God promises to bring you safely through the tunnel of trouble. Trust his goodness! ☒



CHURCH NEWSLETTER



# November WORSHIP THEMES

During the month of November, we conclude the non-festival portion of the church year, sometimes called “The Time of the Church.” Though Jesus remains front and center where he should be, the themes of the lessons shift from those great events of the life of Christ in his work of redemption to the blessed results of that work of redemption in the hearts and lives of the members of his Church. Here are the themes for the month:

- All Saints Day (Observed), November 4 – *Struggling Saints Will See God’s Glory*

- Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost, November 11 – *The Blessing of Christian Giving*

- Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost, November 18 – *We Look for the Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Life*

- Thanksgiving Eve, November 21 – *Receive God’s Gifts Thankfully*

- Last Sunday of the Church Year, November 25 – *Be On Guard! Be Alert! Keep Watch!*

## Thanksgiving Service

A Vespers service of thanksgiving will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 21st, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Pumpkin pie and coffee will be served in the fellowship hall following the service. The Sunday School children will be singing in the service.

## Thanksgiving Eve Pies

There is a signup sheet on the shelf in the Narthex for bringing pies to serve after the Thanksgiving Eve service.

## Now Thank We All Our God

We will sing this hymn in our Thanksgiving service on November 21st. The following background is provided to give insight into the hymn.

This famous hymn, written by Martin Rinkart, is typical of those



written during the period of the Thirty Year’s War (1618-1648). Rinkart wrote the hymn in anticipation of the end of the war, about 5 years before the Peace of Westphalia. After about 30 years of war, bloodshed and pestilence, physical, spiritual and mental exhaustion abounded and Germany longed for the day of peace as never before. Great was the joy and thanksgiving in the hearts of God’s people when eventual peace first began to look possible, then probably and then finally real. Rinkart was certainly in a position to look forward to the end of hostilities. The thirty-two years of his ministry almost exactly coincide with the years of the war. The walled city in which he lived and served was naturally a haven for refugees as well as a magnet for attack. Actual warfare and the result of disease were the daily experience for Rinkart. At the depth of dark experience, Rinkart buried up to seventy people a day, and 4800 in that year. In addition to his pastoral work, the management of relief work in the city fell on his shoulders and the townspeople looked to him for leadership. In spite of this, the town unfairly and ungratefully taxed Rinkart’s property out of his hands and permitted him to become destitute himself. In spite of danger, death, ingratitude, disease, hunger and overwork, this pastor managed to find time to exercise his poetic gifts and has given the church a true treasure in this hymn.

## Shepherding Plan

Pastor and the elders continue working toward implementing a new process that we feel will be of great benefit for our congregation. The purpose and goal are that we better feed our members’ souls with God’s life-giving Word. We are making plans to have a regular and standard means to contact those members who have been absent from the service. We would like to begin this endeavor as the new church year begins in December. Watch the December newsletter for more information. Look in your

mailboxes on the Sundays in November for more information.

## Advent Preparation

Unlike the world, the Church does not prepare by frantic doing or frenzied promises to get something done. Instead, the Church prepares by receiving. To help us receive the gifts of Christ and be prepared for his threefold coming, we offer mid-week Vespers during Advent. These services will begin at 7:00 p.m. on December 5th, 12th and 19th. The Vespers service is the church’s evening prayer. The word “vesper” comes from the Latin word which means “evening.” The service is meditative and repentant in tone and fits in well with the penitential and preparatory nature of the Advent season. The theme for this year’s Advent Vespers is: Your King Is Coming. Each week we will be reminded that we wait, pray and live by faith in God’s promises. This is a message that is completely counter-cultural yet one that is completely necessary. Make plans now to receive Christ’s Advent gifts as you look forward to celebrating his return.

## Sunday School Christmas Rehearsals

We will hold rehearsals to prepare for the Christmas service starting November 25th. We will feed lunch to the children at 11:30 and our rehearsal will begin at noon. The children will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. Rehearsals will also be held on December 2nd and 9th. The final rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 15th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The Christmas service will be held on December 16th at 4:00 p.m. A meal will follow the service.





### **MLC Ladies' Auxiliary**

The MLC Ladies' Auxiliary opened with a devotion by Rev. Nathan Scharf on Psalm 139:7-12. The theme of the meeting was "We are in good hands; we are in God's hands! Emily Schmidt played the organ for the MLC Women's Choir.

We heard from Student Body President, Matthew Zeng. He spoke about coming to America with his mother not knowing the language or knowing anyone in the United States. His mother was befriended by a church family. They attended church and became members. He is so thankful for being able to hear the Good News of Jesus and is studying to be a pastor.

An MLC report was given by Dr. Jeff Wiechman. He talked about numbers of students and their choices at the college. Many students are getting their master's degrees from MLC.

Thank you letters from scholarship recipients were read. A second career family thanked the ladies for the gifts of food donated to the food bank.

The Auxiliary voted on the project list for next year. All of the projects on the list are funded by donations like the gift our Women of Immanuel sent.

After a sneak peek of the fall musical, "Crazy for You" we enjoyed a delicious lunch in the cafeteria

In the afternoon we could choose 2 of 3 workshops. They were "Spanish Immersion Trips", "Music Program" (with our Emily as one of the presenters), and Pre-seminary Training at MLC.

Visiting Martin Luther College is always so uplifting. The students are welcoming and personable and looking forward to sharing Jesus. Please pray for workers.

## **Church Council Meeting Minutes**

September 16, 2018

Members Present: Jim Buffington, Norm Riediger, Scott Schultz, Steve Kremin, Bruce Schriener, Justin Kannas, Martin Fabrizius, Dwight Munneke, Pastor Engel, Steve Iverson, Todd Marxhausen

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Iverson at 11:25 am.

Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.

Secretary's Report: Motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the August 12, 2018 council meeting minutes as submitted.

### **Reports of Officers and Standing Committees**

Elders Report:

- Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept by profession of faith Haylee Hastad.
- Elders reported they are working on a standardized way of regularly contacting those members who have not heard God's Word recently. We will be hearing more details about this in the future.

Trustees Report:

- The front entry way concrete ramp has been completed. Ben Zimmer, of Zimmer Brothers Concrete, donated all labor and materials for this project. The council officially thanked Ben and his business for their very generous donation. A thank you card will be sent to Ben.
- Two parsonage items were reported: the pull out slide on the kitchen garbage has broken and will be fixed by the trustees. The R.O. system is not working properly. Pastor will try a few items suggested by the Trustees.
- Youth Group has completed the plantings of hydrangea bushes and daylilies in the front of the church (south side).
- A company will be spraying for bugs around the church. The cost is around \$200.
- The hand vacuum is in need of replacement. A new one will be purchased.

Board of Education Report: Classes are underway and Jesus Cares classes will be starting shortly.

Financial Secretary's Report: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the report.

Treasurer's Report: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor reported that this Friday will be his 1st Governing Board meeting for MLS. He will leave Thursday and return Saturday. Pastor will also be gone for Pastor's Conference in Bemidji Monday and Tuesday (Sept. 24 & 25)

### **Old Business**

AV Committee: The camera trial period is over and it has been decided to keep the camera as it meets our needs well. There was direction given to the committee to develop a written policy to include such things as what services will be filmed, who will be in charge of filming the services, procedures for filming and uploading the video and/or distributing the video on DVD, retention schedule for video files, licensing and copyright requirements, etc.

Called Worker Compensation Committee: The committee has previously been appointed consisting of Martin, Todd and Justin. Some preliminary discussions have started regarding health insurance. The committee will be meeting shortly to further discuss health insurance options.

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### Jesus Cares Christmas Service

Our Jesus Cares group will have their Christmas service on Tuesday, December 4th at 7:00 p.m. All of the congregation is invited to attend. Cookies and coffee will be served following the service.

### Daily Devotions

On our home page (willmarwels.net), there is a link for daily audio devotions. These devotions were written and prepared by a group of WELS pastors over the course of the last year. Take a listen to them and tell your friends about them.

### Volunteers

We are in need of some volunteers for the following: folding bulletins and newsletters and preparing the elements for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Please consider helping out in this way. The sign-up sheets are on the shelf in the Narthex.

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### Bible Quiz

After Cain killed Abel, their parents, Adam and Eve, had another son. What did they name the baby?

- A. Seth
- B. Enoch
- C. Shem
- D. Lamech



Answer: See Genesis 4:25

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Psalm 146:5, NIV

### Church Council Meeting Minutes *continued from page 3 (insert page)*

#### Church Sign Replacement Update:

• In August, our insurance asked for a 2nd quote on equitable sign replacement. Pastor called the driver's insurance company (American Family) to get an update from them on the claim review and approval process. They too wanted a 2nd quote on equitable sign replacement but never contacted us previously to ask for the 2nd quote. Pastor received a 2nd quote for an equitable sign replacement but the quote was not identical to the 1st quote because it didn't include real brick for the base. This quote was sent to American Family in late August with the caveat that it wasn't identical due to the different material for the base. We are waiting to hear back from American Family. Pastor will contact them again to get an update. The quotes for sign replacements equitable to our old sign were:

- \* \$11,500 – Quick Signs (Include electrical)
- \* \$9,434 – A company in St. Cloud (Does not include electrical or real brick for the base)

• A quote from Quick Signs in the amount of \$31,070 was obtained for an upgraded sign to include a digital sign below the fixed Immanuel sign panel, with an approximate digital message sign panel size of 31" x 97". The fixed panel on top would be similar in size to our old sign panel size (3'x8').

• A motion was made, seconded and passed to form a committee with Scott as a Trustee chairing the committee plus 3 other lay people from the congregation to be selected by Scott and the Trustees. The committee will further develop design options and cost estimates for consideration by the Church Council and Voters.

#### New Business

**Budget Committee:** A budget committee was appointed by the consensus of the Council consisting of Norm Riediger, Dwight Munneke, Aaron Buitenhoff, and Steve Kremin with Norm acting as the Chair of the committee.

**Newsletter Routing:** There was some discussion and questions with a member of the congregation on the routing of the newsletter and if we could save money by not mailing it out. Due to bulk postage rates that we would not get if we didn't mail out all newsletters, it ends up being about a no net cost to mail out the newsletter. Further discussion occurred about the timeliness of council meeting minutes in the newsletter. Since it has been policy for a long time to not publish the minutes until after they are approved, the minutes in the newsletter will always be somewhat out of date by the time they are published. It was decided that the Secretary should put together an un-official summary of the minutes for publishing in the bulletin after each meeting to improve providing information to the congregation in a timely manner.

**Process for Paying Bills:** There was discussion about the process for approving bills and who signs the checks. All checks are signed with the Treasurer's (Norm's at this time) electronic signature. Norm reviews all bills paid in detail every month. After discussion, the consensus was the Council is still comfortable with this process and does not desire to change it at this time.

Upcoming meeting dates were reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. We closed with the Blessing.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Justin Kannas, Secretary*

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

...SO THAT  
THROUGH THE  
CHURCH  
THE  
MANIFOLD  
WISDOM OF  
GOD  
MIGHT NOW  
BE MADE  
KNOWN...

EPHESIANS 3:10, ESV