

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

1816 5th Street SW, Willmar, MN 56201
Office: (320) 235-5996 • Parsonage: (320) 235-6728
Office Hours: 9:00am - 4:30pm, Tuesday - Thursday
Website: www.willmarwels.net



December 2019

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

I Need More...JOY

After hastily opening the wrapped package and making the obligatory thank yous, it certainly didn't take long to turn away from the thoughtful gift as something ho hum.

Just then three-year-old Eleanor came along and stopping by the discarded item exclaimed, "Oh, my, what a beautiful gift! Is that yours? You must be so happy?" As she walked away the child's mother thought to herself, "Why don't I have the joy of that little girl?"

At times we have those feelings which cause us to cry out, "I need more joy in my life!" That is so often true at this time of year when for one reason or another we find ourselves lacking joy. There are indications everywhere that joy should fill our lives. Decorations are going up inside and outside. Christmas music surrounds us, and cards are arriving daily.

Some days the festive joy fills our hearts as we excitedly go about our holiday shopping and schedule planning. Yet deep down we know

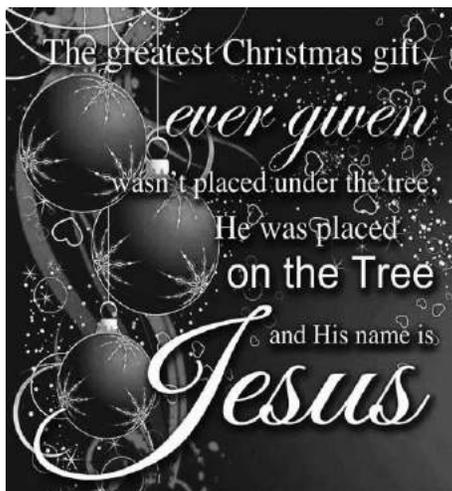
that this joy will not last. Planning becomes overwhelming, schedules start falling apart, and decorating gets tiresome. Above all, we know from experience, there will be no joy when we find we don't have enough money to purchase the perfect gift or when credit card payments come due. All of this leads us to shout out, "I need more joy! I need joy that will last!"

Here's some great news. Christmas brings us joy that does last—the true joy found in Jesus.

With a love that we cannot comprehend, our heavenly Father gave his only Son, born to be our Savior. With perfect obedience Jesus lived the life all of us are unable to live. Each and every evil thought, evil word, and evil deed we have done has been picked from us by our heavenly Father and placed on Jesus. On Calvary's cross, Jesus bowed

his head in death declaring, "It is finished." These words of Jesus bring us true joy. They mean that all is done and Easter's announcement "He Is Risen!" guarantees that God our Father has accepted Jesus' life and death as payment in full for all our sins. True joy is the forgiveness of sins that is ours through faith in Jesus.

While we are in the midst of the season when it seems hard to keep joy in our lives, focus on the true Joy Giver. Ponder again the words of the angels to the shepherds, "Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord." Come and worship the Babe born in Bethlehem and may God the Holy Spirit fill you with a joy that never ends.



But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

-Luke 2:10

Called to Eternal Glory

On Sunday, November 17th, our Savior called the soul of Gary Anderson to himself in heaven. We rejoice that Jesus has delivered Gary from this world into glory. Gary's funeral was held at Immanuel on November 23rd.

Sunday School Children Singing

The children will sing on December 15th at the Christmas Service, on December 22nd during the Divine Service and on December 25th.

Sunday School Christmas Rehearsals

We will hold rehearsals to prepare for the Christmas on December 1st and 8th. 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. The final rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 14th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The Christmas service will be held on December 15th at 4:00 p.m. A meal will follow the service.

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 midweek Vespers during Advent. These services will begin at 7:00 p.m. on December 4th, 11th and 18th. 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.

Advent Sunday Focus

A new church year begins with the season of Advent. Advent is a word that means "Coming." Advent is a season of preparation and anticipation. The Church looks for the coming of her Savior in this threefold advent: his coming in the flesh; his return in judgment; his daily coming in Word and Sacrament. The Church encompasses all these facets of the season in the single word that defines Advent worship: "Come!" Throughout the prayers, verses, and lessons that single word is our invitation, our anticipation, our sure and certain hope. Come, Lord Jesus! The following are our themes for the Sundays in Advent:

- ✠ December 1st: Your Advent King Comes to Save
- ✠ December 8th: Christ Is Near...Repent!
- ✠ December 15th: Christ Is Near with News of Deliverance!
- ✠ December 22nd: Christ, the Virgin-Born, Is with You



Jesus Cares Christmas Service

Our Jesus Cares group will have their Christmas service on Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 P.M. Cookies and coffee will be served following the service. Everyone is invited to attend.

Congregational Christmas Caroling

The congregation is welcome to go caroling Sunday, December 8th, at local nursing homes and to the shut-ins. Meet at the church at 3:00 p.m.

Women of Immanuel Christmas Party

Sunday, December 8th, at 5:30 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. Bring hors d'oeuvres for supper and a gift to share. Gift exchange approximately \$10. All women of the congregation are welcome.

Women of Immanuel Craft and Bake Sale

Craft and bake sale will be Sunday, December 8th, in the large classroom beginning after the Divine Service. Crafts, baked items, and garden produce will be sold. All are welcome to participate. See the pricing guide insert in the bulletin for additional information. Hope to see you there!

Christmas Worship

Our Christmas Eve service will be a service of lessons and carols beginning at 5:30 p.m. We will have Divine Service on Christmas Day at 9:00 a.m. to celebrate the Word made flesh to save.



Sunday School

There will be no Sunday School classes on Sunday, December 22nd and December 29th. Sunday School teachers will send lessons home with the children to complete there. There will be a brief Bible class on the last two Sundays in December.

New Year's Eve

Worship is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve.

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 19th, beginning at 12:15 p.m.

Mission Festival

Rev. Paul Prange, Chairman, Joint Mission Council will be presenting on Grace, Hmong Outreach in Vietnam at Immanuel on January 26, 2020 for our mission festival.



Church Council Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2019

Members Present: Norm Riediger, Justin Kannas, Pastor Engel, Ross Malkuch, Rollie Nissen, Bruce Schreiner, Scott Schultz, Aaron Butenhoff, Todd Marxhausen, Jim Buffington, Scott Claussen, Martin Fabrizius

Pastor opened with a reading from Philippians 3:12-21 and the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 11:32 a.m.

Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.

Secretary's Report: Minutes for the August 11, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted. Minutes for the September 8, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Elders Report: Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept by Holy Baptism: Benjamin Joseph Pedersen

Trustees Report:

- Parsonage and church were sprayed for bugs.
- A new dishwasher has been purchased and installed at the parsonage.
- Scott Claussen did some extra clean up in the NW corner of the property.
- Jim reported he has been working on obtaining trash cans with lids for the bathrooms; Jan Krueger has purchased a portable vacuum for the front of the church.
- Trustees will look into the gap on the south wall of the sanctuary – can see daylight through the wall when sitting by the organ.

Board of Education Report:

- Sunday school teacher positions have been filled – some new teachers which is encouraging
- Fairly large preschool class of 10 students

Financial Secretary's Report: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the report for August 2019.

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

Planned Giving Committee:

- Request for a new lawn mower was made to the committee and the committee recommended not approving this request. They felt it was more of an operation and maintenance item that should be purchased through the general fund if a new mower is desired
- A request for up to \$10,000 for the new sign was made to the committee. The committee recommended approval of this request.

OLD BUSINESS

AV committee – The committee did not have any updates. There was discussion about enlisting additional volunteers to video the services. The committee will develop a document on the process to record and upload the videos which can then be used to enlist volunteers. It was noted Ross has an iPad available to use if needed. .

Church sign committee –

- A 50% down payment has been made
- Norm will withdraw \$10,000 from the Trust fund. Any additional offerings that come in above what is needed will go back into the Trust fund.
- It was reported that the City of Willmar will take down what trees we want removed in the boulevard along 19th Ave. It was decided to wait and see which trees we want removed until after the sign is installed.

Budget Committee: The committee has met and will meet again in November.

NEW BUSINESS

Called Worker Compensation Committee: The Council designated Bruce Schreiner, Todd Marxhausen, and Ross Malkuch to serve on the committee.

Review list of projects: Trustees will update and prioritize the ongoing list of projects and report back to the council with their recommendations.

Equipping Christian Witnesses Campaign: Justin presented a summary of the campaign that the Synod is embarking on for Martin Luther College. The three main focus areas of the campaign are student recruitment, student financial aid, and student facilities. The Council decided to have Justin present a summary of the campaign to the Voters at the October Quarterly Meeting.

Upcoming meetings:

- October 13th 11:30 am – Council
- October 20th after meal – Voters
- November 10th 11:30 am – Council

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20. Pastor closed with the Blessing.

Respectfully Submitted,
Justin Kannas, Secretary



Equipping Christian Witnesses

With support from the WELS Conference of Presidents, this two-year capital campaign will celebrate the 2020 silver anniversary of Martin Luther College. The title, "Equipping Christian Witnesses," reflects not only the mission of our institution— to train a corps of Christian witnesses to meet WELS ministry needs—but also the pillars of this campaign. Pray boldly that we use this celebration to recruit with rigor countless Christian witnesses . . . to increase our financial support of our students . . . and to provide the necessary facilities to equip our students for their future ministries. Watch for ways that we as a congregation and our individual members may participate. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Justin Kannas.

SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



Tom Schroer

Tom and his father, mother and brothers were charter members of Immanuel from the time of being exploratory mission to our congregation now. They came from St. Luke's Winfield township near Danube. He taught Sunday School right away as a sophomore. He also helped with VBS from then through summers when he came home from attending DMLC. He graduated from Willmar High, attended DMLC, and began his teaching career. He was assigned first to Christ Lutheran in Big Bend, WI grades 3, 4, and 5. Then he was called to teach in an ELS congregation at Norsland Lutheran near St. Peter, MN K-8 with 11-17 students through the five years he taught there. One of those years four of his students were missionaries' children who were home on leave from Peru, and one student's father was in government service home from Indonesia. Then he received a call to St. John's Lutheran in Wrightstown, WI where he taught for 20 years.

Tom moved back to Blomkest to help his mother, Adeline, in 1998. After returning, he was manager of the 1 hr. Photo department at K-Mart for seven years. Next he worked at WCI as a supervisor for five years. WCI is a JobLinks for mentally and physically handicapped clients. At age 62 he took early retirement.

Tom has remained very active in the work of the Lord. He teaches Jesus Cares, directs the children's music, and serves the church in many ways behind the scenes. He is also active with the Blomkest Community Center.

Winter Weather and Worship

Please be reminded that we will hold our regularly scheduled services for those who are able to make it to church. If conditions are poor enough, we may cancel Sunday School, Bible classes and other activities but we will always hold our services. Check Operation Snowdesk for cancellations. Please use your sound judgment to determine whether or not you should travel to and from church in hazardous conditions.



Prayers

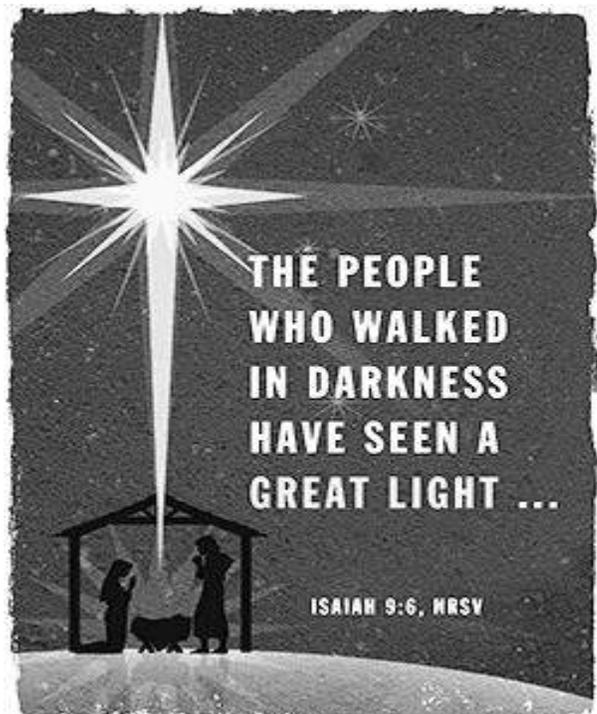
Please remember our shut-ins in your prayers: Lolla Schiffman, Kathy Gould, Ricky Westby, and Richard Thimijan.

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.

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. Take a listen to them and tell your friends about them.



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