

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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January 2020

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

Unchanging Hope for an Ever-changing World

As one year ends and another begins, columnists and commentators look back at the previous year. What changed? What stayed the same? Whose passing did we mourn? Whose new arrival did we celebrate?

At the same time, we make predictions about the coming year. What will the new year hold? What will change? What will stay the same?

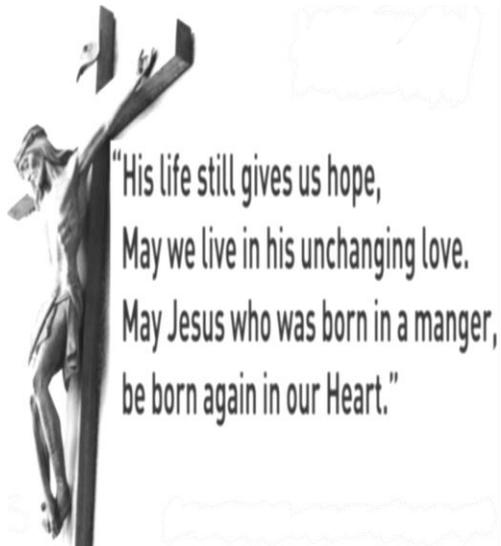
As fun and exciting as it may be to reminisce about the past and dream about the future, it can also be a little sad and scary. Things will likely never be what they used to be. Loved ones who have passed away don't come back. Jobs that are lost seldom reappear quickly. Even when broken dreams and broken relationships are repaired, they rarely return to their former glory. Many times our experiences in an ever-changing world are difficult.

Yet we sometimes look at our lives and see a need for change. Many of us make New Year's resolutions: "I'm going to exercise more and eat less." "I'm going to save more and spend less." "I'm going to love more and hate less." But too often, our good intentions disappear, and only poor excuses remain.

No matter what (or who) changes from one year to the next, there is one who never changes—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He always exists, from before time, throughout the course of time, and at the end of time for eternity. Jesus loved you before you were born. He loves you today, and he will always love you.

That's what Christmas is all about. Jesus loved you so much that he wanted you to experience his unchanging love forever. So he came into the world to live up to God's perfect demands in your place. He took the punishment for your imperfection and gave you the reward for his perfection. That reward is an eternity far away from this world's sorrows and disappointments—the unchanging peace and joy of a place called heaven.

Jesus—the same yesterday, today, and forever—promises to be with us, love us, care for us, and give perfect peace with God to all who trust in him. Only Jesus offers unchanging hope to an ever-changing world.



***Jesus Christ is the
same yesterday
and today
and forever.
- Hebrews 13:8***

Bible Readings for 2020

One year of a three year plan to read through the Bible is available in the Narthex. The schedule is worked so that you don't have to start with year one. The Spirit will bless your time in the Word!



Epiphany

January 6th is the Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord. We will observe the festival on January 5th. The word epiphany means "manifestation" or "visible display" and refers to the "revealing" of Jesus as Savior, not only of the Jews but of all the peoples of the world. The Eastern Christian churches celebrate Christmas when we celebrate Epiphany - January 6, the Twelfth Day of Christmas. This Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord is the celebration of Christ our King to whom the Magi (the Wise Men) offered gifts and worshiped. The Magi were Gentiles (non-Jewish) who worshiped the King of the Jews.

The Magi represent the end of God's separation of his chosen people, the Old Testament Israelites (Jews) from the Gentiles. Israel's Lord is God of all. We who are also Gentiles, give praise to the God of all, who revealed his love and light in the One whom the Wise Men worshiped.

The lessons for the Festival of the Epiphany are: Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-12; Psalm 72.

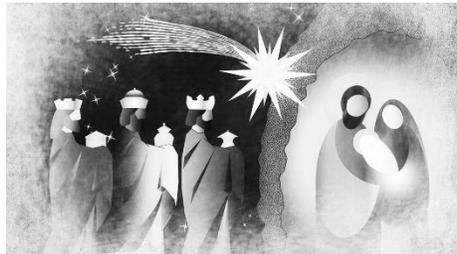
Prayer of the Day for Epiphany: Lord God, by the leading of a star you once made known to the nations your one and only Son. Guide us, also, who know him now by faith, to come at last to the perfect joy of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Epiphany Worship

During the Epiphany season, our lessons carry forward the emphasis we heard in the Christmas season: Christ is revealed as God and Savior. Watch and listen, especially in each

Sunday's appointed Gospel, how the words and works of Christ reveal who he is and what he has come to do, even as his glory remains hidden. Rejoice that in a miracle of epic proportion, the Holy Spirit has opened your eyes to receive the One adored by the Magi, baptized in the Jordan, silencing the devil, doing everything well and revealing himself in glory. The themes for the Sundays in January are:

- January 5th - Jesus Is Revealed as Savior of All
- January 12th - Jesus Is Revealed as the Lord's Anointed One
- January 19th - Jesus Is Revealed as the Lamb of God
- January 26th - Jesus Is Revealed as the Light Shining in the Darkness



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.

Mission Festival Meal

There will be a meal served following the mission festival presentation on January 26th. Please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. There is no charge for the meal but we need to know how many plan to attend.

Baptism of Our Lord

On January 12th, we will celebrate the Baptism of Our Lord. God reveals his glory in Jesus' baptism and in our baptisms. Because of the importance of this tremendous gift of God, the following from Luther's Catechisms is offered for your meditation.

³⁷So you see plainly that there is no work done here by us, but a treasure, which God gives us and faith grasps [Ephesians 2:8-9]. It is like the benefit of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, which is not a work, but a treasure included in the Word. It is offered to us and received by faith. Therefore, the "new spirits" violate us by shouting against us as though we preach against faith. For we alone insist upon it as being so necessary that without it nothing can be received or enjoyed. ³⁸So we have these three parts, which must be known about this Sacrament, especially that God's ordinance is to be held in all honor. ³⁹Now there is not only God's commandment and injunction here, but also the promise. Because of this, Baptism is still far more glorious than whatever else God has commanded and ordained. It is, in short, so full of consolation and grace that heaven and earth cannot understand it. ⁴⁰But it requires skill to believe this, for the treasure is not lacking, but this is lacking: people who grasp it and hold it firmly. ⁴¹Therefore, every Christian has enough in Baptism to learn and to do all his life. For he has always enough to do by believing firmly what Baptism promises and brings: victory over death and the devil [Romans 6:3-6], forgiveness of sin [Acts 2:38], God's grace [Titus 3:5-6], the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts [1 Corinthians 6:11]. ⁴²In short, Baptism is so far beyond us that if timid nature could realize this, it might well doubt whether it could be true. ⁴³Think about it. Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death or, even though they died, could restore them quickly to life so that they would afterward live forever. Oh, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone's door such a treasure and medicine that it utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive. ⁴⁴We must think this way about Baptism and make it profitable for ourselves. (Continued on next page)

Church Council Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2019

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

Pastor opened with a reading from Philippians 4:1-9 and the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 11:36 a.m.

Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.

Secretary's Report: Minutes for the September 15, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted..

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Elders Report:

- Motion was made, seconded and approved to release from membership Joyce Kalkbrenner.
- Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept by Holy Baptism: Kara Ann Hayes (10/13/19).
- The November and December special services schedule was reviewed.

Trustees Report:

- Trustees reviewed the caulking in the front of the sanctuary around the stucco – it is clear caulk so even though you can see daylight it is sealed up. No action needed.
- Trustees have been discussing repairs needed on the shed; the door has been repaired to open and close easier; trustees will provide a recommendation for repairs needed; consensus from council is to continue with mowing by volunteers next year (this year went well); consensus by the Council seemed to be to fix up the old shed (door, siding, roof) and clean it out (add to spring cleanup list)
- Furnace in the church was repaired with a new coil by Bruce Anderson who did not charge us for labor or materials; Bruce indicated the furnaces are 20 years old but he expects we can get more years out of them; the fellowship hall furnace is one of the better furnaces; Bruce is checking all of the furnaces; Justin will send a thank you to Bruce for the donation of his time and materials
- Elevator maintenance was done on the door
- Snow removal contract came in mail – same rate as last year; consensus by the Council to sign the contract; Pastor will sign and return

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

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

Pastor's Report: Pastor will be gone October 30-November 1 for Reformation Lectures in Mankato. Pastor reported on calls completed in September and those planned in October to members despising means of grace and to shut ins. Pastor also reported that per previously adopted policy, Jo (church

secretary) is planning to use the fellowship hall for a private event. Consensus from Council that would be fine.

OLD BUSINESS

Church Sign –

- Everything is on schedule as far as we know for completion by approximately the end of October
- As of today, donations appear to have met the total amount needed with the approved funding from the Trust Fund

Called Worker Compensation Committee – The committee will be scheduling a meeting

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 – A presentation will be made to the Voters next week. WELS Connection is the last week in October with a focus on MLC. Justin will talk about ECW to the congregation briefly afterwards.

NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming meetings:

- October 20th after meal – Voters
- November 10th 11:30 am – Council
- December 8th 11:30 am – Council

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10. Pastor closed with the Blessing

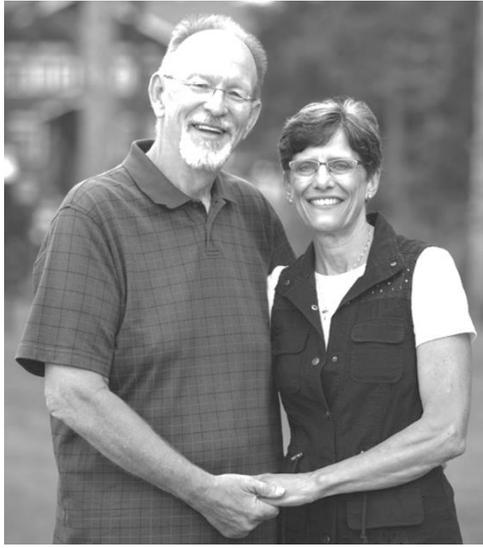
Respectfully Submitted,
Justin Kannas, Secretary

Baptism of Our Lord *(Continued from previous page)*

So when our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say, "Nevertheless, I am baptized. And if I am baptized, it is promised to me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body." ⁴⁵For that is the reason why these two things are done in Baptism: the body—which can grasp nothing but the water—is sprinkled and, in addition, the Word is spoken for the soul to grasp. ⁴⁶Now, since both, the water and the Word, make one Baptism, therefore, body and soul must be saved and live forever [1 Corinthians 15:53]. The soul lives through the Word, which it believes, but the body lives because it is united with the soul and also holds on through Baptism as it is able to grasp it. We have, therefore, no greater jewel in body and soul. For by Baptism we are made holy and are saved [1 Corinthians 6:11]. No other kind of life, no work upon earth, can do this. (The Large Catechism)



SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



Ross and Joanne Malkuch

Joanne and I have been members at Immanuel since moving back to the Willmar area after finishing college and our nursing programs.

We met while in nursing school and after getting married, lived in the cities for a few years after finishing school and our first child Rachel, was born.

In 1983 we had an opportunity to move back to the Willmar area where I grew up. We bought an old farm place north of Pennock, not far from where I grew up, and built a new home there which allowed me to help my father some with the farming when I wasn't working at the hospital.

As time passed God blessed us with three more children Heidi, James and Anne. We were so thankful to be part of a congregation with so many young adults and kids!

In 1988 I got accepted into a graduate program for nurse anesthesia and I lived in the St. Paul area for 2+ years while attending graduate school while Joanne kept the "home fires" burning! Joanne and kids would come visit me on the weekends when I couldn't come back home to Pennock.

Joanne continued to work at Rice part time all the while. I wouldn't have been able to have gone back to school had it not been for her hard work as a partner in that endeavor!

The next 25 years were spent with me working as a CRNA at Rice Hospital and Joanne working part time there too. God blessed us greatly! We are both now retired.

As far as hobbies go, Joanne is an excellent seamstress with quilting as her forte. She is an avid reader and excellent proofreader! All things music holds a special place in both our hearts.

Ross' interests include anything with wheels and motors! His dream is to learn to fly and is working on building a runway in his retirement.

As Joanne was brought up in the WELS, and with her father being a professor at MLC, Christian education has been very important to us. Our children were able to attend Immanuel Lutheran School and CCS for their grade school years and then all four went off to Luther Preparatory School for their high school years. Our oldest Rachel chose to continue in Christian education and taught in Waukesha, WI for many years.

Finding opportunities for service at Immanuel has never been a problem! There are so many needs. Our prayer is that the Good News will inspire a new crop of church leaders to fill in as us retired folk head "south!"

Joanne and I have been extremely blessed to have been able to raise our family in a church and synod that has held true to the Word, not changing with the whims of the world around us and by providing an unshakable foundation for life.

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.

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.

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