

# Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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July 2020

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

## A Gift to Enjoy

This year in our monthly articles we are considering favorite verses from the Bible.

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Romans 6:23**

*"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

His first paycheck. \$100! A ONE with two zeroes behind it! It didn't matter that he spent a week pulling weeds with thistles in a 45-acre field. It didn't matter that he sweltered under a hot July sun. It didn't matter that he earned minimum wage. It had his name on it. He earned it.

There is another paycheck that he's not so excited about. It comes in the form of guilt pricking his conscience far deeper than a thistle could ever penetrate his skin. Sometimes he sees it when his temper flares hotter than the summer sun. He feels it when he knows he should be more considerate, more caring, more loving toward others around him. So he works harder to do what's right and try harder to do better than before, but still, it never seems to be enough. And it isn't enough, because the Bible tells him the wages of his sin is death—and it's your paycheck, too.

But, thank the Lord, the Bible also tells us that God is not going to give us what we have earned with our sins. Instead, he gives us something we have not earned—eternal life. It's a gift that has been bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus and earned by his death on the cross.

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**he does not treat us  
as our sins deserve  
or repay us  
according to our  
iniquities.  
– Psalm 103:10**

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That takes all the pressure off, doesn't it? Instead of the failures of our past, we can look to Jesus' perfect life of love. Instead of the pressures of tomorrow, we can look to the promise of eternal life that is already won for us by Jesus' dying and rising from the dead. As a result, life is not a burden, but a gift to enjoy always.

## Worship

We will continue to meet in groups of 40 or less. In July, we will start to include congregational singing into our services. Please sign up for a time slot on the website ([willmarwels.net](http://willmarwels.net)). There is one time slot to attend on Thursdays and two on Sundays (if the two times on Sunday fill up, we will add a third). If you are unable to access the website, please call the secretary at 235-5996 or pastor at 444-7641 to schedule your time. If you are not feeling well, please refrain from attending. While at church, please follow recommendations for hand washing, distancing and face coverings. If you are uncomfortable meeting at church, please contact pastor to schedule a private meeting, either at your home or at church.



## Electronic Giving

We are now able to offer electronic giving as an alternate means of giving your offering. Look for the red circle on the right side of any page on our website that says "Give." You may give a one-time or recurring offering. You may designate a fund for your offering. If you would like your offering to go to two different funds, there are two ways to accomplish this. The first would be to make two separate transactions. The other way would be to include a note indicating how you would like your offering split. You may give using your bank account or a debit card. Please note that there are no fees charged when you set up an ACH transaction from

your bank. There is 1.9% fee to make a debit card transaction. If you have any questions about setting up an account or questions about using the electronic giving option, please let pastor know.

## Starting a Church During a Pandemic

The following article was written by Pastor Dave Koelpin, a home missionary serving Foundation Lutheran Church in Folsom, CA. (<https://wels.net/starting-a-church-during-a-pandemic/>)

Folsom is in northern California, between Sacramento and the Sierra Nevada mountains. It's a beautiful place to live and an exciting place to start a church. I arrived in Folsom in the fall of 2019, with an energetic family ready to meet a fantastic core group. We had a year before we were scheduled to launch public worship. The next twelve months would be spent doing the important foundational work of starting a church.

The first phase would focus primarily on building strength and trust within the core group. The second phase was to unleash the group on the community. Invitations, canvassing, community service projects, etc. would all lead up to a grand worship launch with many new faces from the community.

Things were moving right along. We met regularly to plan. A logo was chosen, and we ordered all kinds of swag. The website was coming along and God provided a great place of worship to rent for our launch. We even had several prospects in Bible information class. Momentum was building. We were all set for phase 2, and then it happened. . . COVID-19.

How do you canvass when you can't leave the house? Can you publish a launch date when your rented worship facility is indefinitely closed? How do you volunteer at community events when they've all been cancelled? Are we losing momentum? Questions were mounting. Frustration was building. Discouragement was a daily companion. **How do you start a church during a pandemic?**

Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah who was to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The work was going great at first, and then there were obstacles. Zerubbabel was no doubt frustrated.

Here's what God had to say to his frustrated servant, "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit", says the Lord Almighty." Zerubbabel's task would not get done by inner courage or fortitude, nor would it get done by the power of a huge army or a well-coordinated core group. No, to do the Lord's work, human strength and wisdom alone would fail. God says, "My Spirit must do it; my Spirit is able to overcome all hurdles no matter how large they loom. By my Spirit's power, any obstacle will become an opportunity." And of course, that's exactly what happened. God's Spirit, molding and moving human hearts, got the work done.

There was the answer to my question. The Lord will get his work done no matter what the obstacle. His Spirit works through the Word read in e-mailed devotions, just as well as spoken in person. His Spirit builds the church through Zoom bible studies, just like he does in a classroom. Words of comfort carry the same Spirit over the phone, as they do spoken face-to-face. The Spirit can get work done through "shares" and "likes" on Facebook, just as well as knocking on doors. Serving our community with the love of Christ from six feet away is still serving our community with the love of Christ. God's Spirit molds and moves human hearts, and he'll get the work done.

## How do you start a church during a pandemic?

The same way you start a church when there isn't one. "Not by power, not by might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."



# Church Council Meeting Minutes

## May 10, 2020

**Members Present:** Rollie Nissen, Martin Fabrizius, Scott Claussen, Norm Riediger, Todd Marxhausen, Ross Malkuch, Jay Remmele, Pastor Engel

Rollie opened with roll call at 11:32 a.m. for the teleconference meeting due to the covid-19 crisis.

Pastor followed with a reading from Colossians 2:16–3:4.

Following the opening reading, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 11:35am.

**Agenda:** MMSP to approve the agenda as presented.

### **Secretary's Report:**

- MMSP to accept the minutes from the April 5<sup>th</sup> council meeting with no corrections.
- MMSP to accept the minutes from the May 3<sup>rd</sup> special council meeting with no corrections.

## Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

**Chairman's Report:** There is a lawsuit stating churches are an essential service so the rules of having less than ten people gathering should not apply. We are not part of this lawsuit but will see where it goes.

**Elders Report:** Todd reported that e-giving has been rolled out and there is a "give" button on our website if you want to use the e-giving resource for your gifts to the church. It has been tested a few times and is verified as working.

### **Trustees Report:**

- Pastor reported the repairs to the surround on the base of the church sign had been completed.
- Ross asked what the current plans are to make sure lawn mowing is completed since the sign-up sheet may be ineffective with church services being on hold. Trustees will look into this.
- Ross volunteered to spray the dandelions this spring.
- Martin asked if the lawn mower had been serviced yet. It appears it has not. Scott C will follow up to make sure it gets serviced.

**Board of Education Report:** No report

**Financial Secretary's Report:** MMSP to accept the Financial Secretary's report as presented.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

- The copier payment is a bit high this month but is a normal occurrence this time of year due to the semi-annual billing of extra copies.

- There was discussion on the \$300 in the building fund. Last year any building fund contributions went towards the new church sign. It was the consensus of the council that the sign project was complete so building fund gifts would no longer be used for the sign. All building fund gifts will stay in the building fund.

- MMSP to accept the Treasurer's report as presented.

**Planned Giving:** No report

### **Pastor's Report:**

- It has been difficult not being able to visit with members in need at the hospital.
- Members who need pastoral care are still able to meet with pastor at church.
- Pastor's May vacation was postponed due to covid-19 crisis. He tentatively has vacation rescheduled for June 1-4.

## Old Business and Action Committees

**AV:** Currently on hold due to the circumstances with covid-19

### **Equipping Christian Workers:**

- This campaign has been put on the back burner until the covid-19 crisis has passed
- We will keep this on the agenda as a place holder until we can pursue it again

**Nominating Committee:** The committee is working on finding nominations to fill the following position – Trustee.

**Online Giving:** See Elder's report above.

## New Business

**WELS VEBA Premium Holiday August 2020:** In light of the covid-19 crisis WELS VEBA will not be charging premiums in the month of August so we will not have to pay the premium.

**Quarterly Meeting:** Wait until covid-19 passes before any more plans are made.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates:**

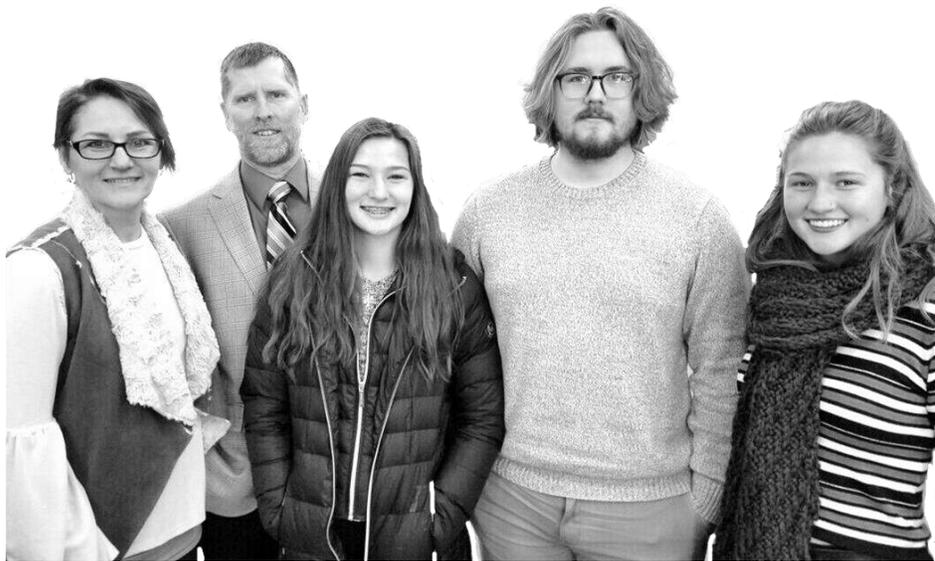
- June 14, 2020 at 10:30 am council meeting
- July 12, 2020 at 10:30 am council meeting
- July 19, 2020 at 10:30 am voters meeting

MM to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Pastor closed with the blessing.

Respectfully,  
Jay Remmele, Interim Recording Secretary

# SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



## **Martin and Virginia Fabrizius**

Martin and Virginia became members of Immanuel in 2013 along with their children Margaret (23), Jonah (21), and Clara (17). Martin's work brought them to Willmar. He works as a senior scientist for Corteva Agriscience developing new corn hybrids for Pioneer that are adapted to Minnesota and the Dakotas. Virginia worked hard raising three kids and since arriving in Willmar has also worked part-time at Elmquist Jewelers.

Virginia hales from Columbia Heights in the cities metro area, and Martin from Hutchinson, KS. Virginia was working as a typesetter in the Twin Cities when Martin arrived to study for his Ph.D. in plant breeding and genetics at the University of Minnesota. They met while pursuing their summer weekend passion of skydiving. They both have about a thousand jumps from a perfectly good airplane, from Kansas to Minnesota and the blue skies of Australia, including over the ocean. This summertime passion also explains their winter-time marriage (January 22) since skydivers wouldn't miss a weekend of jumping to attend a wedding. That day was in 1994, 26 years ago.

Upon completion of his Ph.D., Martin and Virginia moved to Toowoomba, Australia where Martin worked as a wheat breeder while on a fellowship at the University of Queensland. Virginia again pursued her career in typesetting/graphic design. They lived there for two and a half years, and Margaret was born about six months before they moved to Redwood Falls, MN. They moved to Minnesota so Martin could work as a soybean breeder for Pioneer Hi-bred – now Corteva. They enjoyed 15 years in Redwood before moving to Willmar.

Virginia was raised Roman Catholic, Martin was raised in an LCMS congregation. They have been blessed to have been members in four confessional Lutheran synods: LCMS,

Australian Lutheran Synod, ELS, and now WELS. Many faithful pastors on their journey so far. Martin also teaches the high school youth, and his favorite podcast is Issues, etc. Tune in for a confessional Lutheran perspective on the world. Martin and Virginia want the members of Immanuel to know that they feel very fortunate to have both a faithful Pastor and wonderful fellow parishioners to share their trials during this, our time of grace.



## **Easter Flower Donations**

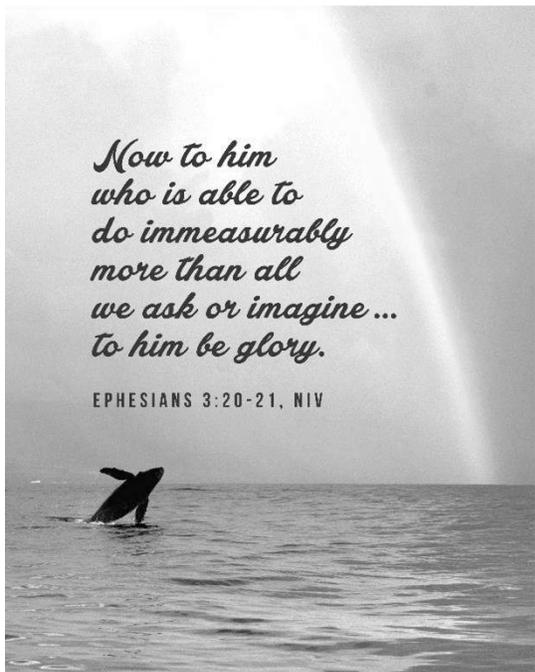
Because no flowers were purchased for Easter, we are returning all donations. Look in your church mailbox. Thank you to all who donated.

## **Lawn Mowing**

There is a list on the bulletin board for volunteering to mow the grass. Please consider taking a turn. If you have questions about equipment or getting into the shed, please speak with Scott Schultz, Scott Claussen or pastor.

## **Graduation Celebration**

For Morgan Lesteberg, Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, from 4:00-8:00 p.m., 1525 90th St. SE, Kerkhoven. Please join us!



*Now to him  
who is able to  
do immeasurably  
more than all  
we ask or imagine ...  
To him be glory.*

EPHESIANS 3:20-21, NIV

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

God decided  
in advance  
**TO ADOPT US**  
into his  
own family  
by bringing  
us to himself  
through  
Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 1:5, NLT