

# Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**November 2020**

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

## Hallelujah!

This year in our monthly articles we are considering favorite verses from the Bible.  
This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Psalm 118:1**

***"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."***

Psalm 118 is an "Hallelujah" psalm, meaning "Praise the LORD!" Long ago, God's people sang the words of this psalm toward the end of their Passover meal. It was a special occasion time for the God's people to remember how he had rescued their nation from slavery in Egypt; it was a picture of God's rescue of all people from their slavery to sin. The Passover meal reminded each generation how much God truly loved them. Year after year as it was celebrated, it was an opportunity to reflect on the goodness of God and his saving activity and give thanks for it. It was a yearly object lesson for fathers to use to teach their children what God had done to save his people and provide for their every need.

Would disaster continue to interrupt their lives? Would prosperity be withheld? Would earthly death continue to pick away at their loved ones? Yes, yes, and yes. Yet the people sang out praise and thanks to their merciful God for deliverance from all these trials of life. . . and more: "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4,5).

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***Enter his gates with  
thanksgiving and his  
courts with praise; give  
thanks to him and praise  
his name.***

**- Psalm 100:4**

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It is the custom in North America to gather this time of year to celebrate Thanksgiving. Whether you are with family, friends, or celebrating alone, take the time to give thanks to our Savior-God for his mercy and deliverance from death through Jesus. Jesus shows us that God is good. Even when times are dark and hard, Jesus proves that his love for us endures forever.



## November Divine Service Schedule

We will continue to hold a service on Thursday evenings in November. Please note that there will not be a Thursday evening service on Thanksgiving Day, November 26th. Starting November 1st, we will hold one service on Sunday morning starting at 9:00 a.m. Pews will be cordoned off so that people may sit and maintain recommended distance. Chairs will also be available in the Narthex. Sunday school will meet from 10:10 until 11:00. We will have an adult Bible class that will meet from 10:15 until 11:00 in the fellowship hall. We will be reevaluating this schedule monthly.

## Thanksgiving

Our Thanksgiving service will be on Wednesday, November 25th, starting at 7:00 p.m. Due to COVID restrictions, we will not serve pumpkin pie following the service.

## 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. In the final month of the church year, those results of Jesus' saving work bear fruit as believers await his glorious return. Here are the themes for the month:

- ✠ All Saints Day, November 1 - Saints...You are Blessed...Here and in Eternity
- ✠ Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, November 8 - Love Is the Fulfillment of the Law
- ✠ Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, November 15 - Lord, Keep Us in Loving and Faithful Service
- ✠ Last Sunday of the Church Year, November 22 - The Shepherd King Is Our Righteousness
- ✠ Thanksgiving Eve, November 27 - Our Many Reasons for Thanksgiving

## Sunday School Christmas Rehearsals

We will hold rehearsals to prepare for the Christmas service starting November 29th. On those Sundays, we will teach a slightly shorter lesson and hold rehearsal from 10:40 until 11:10. Rehearsals will also be held on December 6th, 13th and 20th. We will also meet on Saturday, December 19th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The Christmas service will be held on December 20th at 4:00 p.m. Due to COVID restrictions, we will not be serving a meal this year.

## 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 Vespers will be held on December 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

## Thanksgiving Devotion

**Psalm 103 (selected verses) - Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion. . . . The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. . . . But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD'S love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his**

**bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, my soul.**

If we would spend this whole day meditating on this psalm, we would but scratch the surface of the reasons it gives us to give thanks to God for all of his blessings. Nevertheless, let us on this special day do at least that—scratch the surface of this beautiful hymn of praise that God himself has inspired with the many reasons in it that God gives us to be thankful.

The first verses alone overwhelm us: "Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Oh, that I could just do that! Oh, that all within me—every wish of my heart, every bone and muscle of my body, every thought of my mind, every breath I take—oh, that all of it could focus just on this: *Praise the Lord!* That's really what I want to do today, as impossible as it is. Yes, the impossibility is underlined for me when I tell my soul to *forget not all his benefits*. How in all the world can I even count them, much less never forget them! The psalm goes on for 22 verses just listing summary benefits that I do not want to forget and for which I have reason every moment of my life to exhaust myself in giving thanks. Here we can consider only a summary of the psalm.

Not surprisingly, the first and foremost reason that God himself gives us for thankfulness is that he forgives all our iniquity, that dread plague of sinfulness which he heals and completely removes with the balm of his mercy. To recount all of the sins we know of that he has forgiven would take our whole life's span. That still would not take into account the sins we don't remember or the transgressions that we were not even aware of. They are all more than the grains of sand on the seashore.

So it is of no small consolation to us that we do not have to remember them all or even dwell on the ones we do remember. For look at what God assures of in the psalm: He himself chooses not to remember them! Some sins were accidents; some were sins of ignorance. And yes, some were sins with a fist raised in his face—we knew they were sins and committed them anyway. All of them, no matter how great or small, were acts of rebellion, crimes of insult to his majesty, acts of ingratitude for all of his blessings—great and small. But again, look! God  
*(Continued on Page 5.)*

# Church Council Meeting Minutes

## September 13, 2020

**Members Present:** Rollie Nissen, Martin Fabrizio, Scott Claussen, Norm Riediger, Ross Malkuch, Jay Remmele, Jon Heller, Tom Jurgenson, Todd Marxhausen, Pastor

**MMSP = Motion Made, Seconded, Passed**

Pastor opened with a reading from 1Thessalonians 1. Following the opening reading, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 11:32 a.m.

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

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

MMSP to accept the minutes from the August 9<sup>th</sup> council meeting with no corrections.

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

**Chairman's Report:** No report.

### **Elders Report:**

- MMSP to transfer in Caleb Bedner from St. Paul's, Litchfield, MN
- MMSP to transfer out Bruce and Kate Schreiner to King of Kings, Apache Junction, AZ
- Elders have been discussing service and education/Sunday school schedules.

### **Trustees Report:**

- There was a question inquiring if there is lighting needed for the church sign.
  - The sign committee is still considering if it needs any.

**Board of Education Report:** No report.

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

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

**Planned Giving:** No report.

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

- Pastor will be attending WLS symposium September 21 and 22
- The fall conference is September 29
- Pastor will be off on October 11 and 15

### **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.

**WELS Pension Premium Holiday August 2020:** In light of the covid-19 crisis WELS pension will not be charging premiums in October, so we will not have to pay the premiums.

### **New Business**

#### **6a. Budget Committee was appointed**

- Trustee: Scott Clausen
- Elder: Todd Marxhausen
- Treasurer: Norm Riediger
- Chairman and Committee Chair: Rollie Nissen

#### **6b. Called Worker Compensation Committee was appointed**

- Ross Malkuch, Todd Marxhausen (Chair), Martin Fabrizio

#### **6c. Update and discussion on divine service schedule**

- The elders will meet on Wednesday and are looking for any and all thoughts and ideas for adding Sunday school
  - Have three age groups for classes instead of 5.
    - This would reduce the number of teachers needed as there is also a great potential of smaller class sizes due to members not feeling comfortable attending
  - Have different service times? 9 and 10:30?
  - Will/should singing be allowed for Sunday school?
  - The elders will discuss the church service and Sunday school start times.
  - Will snacks still be provided for the students?
  - Try to keep a sense of the old normalcy or routine would be good for the children.

#### **Upcoming Meeting Dates:**

- October 11, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. council meeting
- October 18, 2020 at following the meal??? voters meeting
- November 8, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. council meeting

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

Pastor closed with the blessing.

Respectfully,  
Jay Remmele, Recording Secretary



# SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



## **Ron and Pat Lesteberg Family**

Ron and Pat have three adult daughters, Rachell, Lindsay, and Morgan. They have been members since 1986. Ron is a life-long resident of Kerkhoven. Pat is from Wisconsin and is a life-long member of WELS.

As most of you know, Ron's hobby is golfing!!! Pat enjoys card-making, jigsaw puzzles, and playing Sudoku (digital version only!). Both enjoy camping and playing cards. They are adjusting to becoming "empty-nesters" this fall.

Ron is self-employed and has been blading roads since he was 14 years old. After his dad passed away, he and his brother took over the family business at that time.

After 24 years of working in the marketing department for Impact Innovations in Clara City, Pat decided to follow her heart and landed a job at West Central Industries in Willmar where she is the Activity Coordinator/Marketing Assistant. (She absolutely loves her job!!!)

They value the truth and purity of God's Word that WELS provides and find it comforting to know we have a God that we can turn to and count on in good times and not so good times. At Immanuel, they feel especially blessed to belong to a close-knit church where we have members who reach out and support other members in times of need and have themselves been on that receiving end a couple of times.

## **Thanksgiving Devotion**

*(Continued from Page 2.)*

removes them from his sight as far as the east is from the west. He lays his anger aside and concentrates on his love and on his compassion that is as vast as the measureless distance between heaven and earth. That's how he shows himself to be the perfect Father with compassion that endures forever. Would that all earthly fathers were as compassionate as he is! Indeed, how blessed the children are who have a father who reflects and imitates this most compassionate Father. How blessed is that father who looks to aside and concentrates on his love and on his compassion that is as vast as the measureless distance between heaven and earth. That's how he shows himself to be the perfect Father with compassion that endures forever. Would that all earthly fathers were as compassionate as he is! Indeed, how blessed the children are who have a father who reflects and imitates this most compassionate Father. How blessed is that father who looks to God as the model for his parenting, who knows how to discipline and knows even better how to lay his anger aside and let the past be past. On the other hand, how sad for children whose father only knows how to discipline and that usually in anger, often in anger out of all proportion to the offense. How sad when such a father never lets go of his memory but always finds ways to humiliate his children with the recalling of past foolishness, past mistakes, past sins. Let all fathers take heed! Let all children who have fathers that imitate God's fatherly compassion never cease in giving thanks to God, and yes, to their earthly fathers as well. And let those children whose lives are scarred by cruel fathers lift up their heads to that Father whose compassion never ends. Let them focus not on a father whose compassion seems never to begin but on the Father whose love for them began already in eternity, whose love extended all the way to a cross for them, and who one day will take them forever to himself in his home in heaven.

Then look at this too: *He remembers that we are dust!* Again, we can only scrape the surface of all the beauty in that one line. Dust is what we were made of in the Garden of Eden. But it was perfect dust, dust that came alive at his touch and his voice, dust that was supposed to live forever in perfect harmony with God and the holy angels. That we are just dust now, dust destined for the cemetery—that's our own fault and the fault of our first parents. That's the result of sin that brings the wages of death. But God looks on our fallen-returned-to-dust condition. And in compassion he overcomes our loss, our death, our reversion to dust with his forgiveness. Only after we have returned to dust will we again be fully restored in the resurrection to bodies that will never die or go back to dust again.

O God, where should I begin in pouring out my heart and soul in thankfulness to you, my so gracious God and Father? For the moment, let me bask in the greatest of your blessings, blessings that you planned for me in eternity and won for me by the sacrifice of your Son, blessings that will last beyond all time and eternity. Let me delight in this: You have adopted me as your own dear child and an heir with Jesus of all that you are and have. Let my joy know no end as each day I remember what you have forgotten—all my sins and iniquities, all my foolishness and forgetfulness of your Word. And as I call all that to mind, fix in me by your compassion a renewed desire to live as your child, a child devoted to my Father's Word and determined to behave as one whose home was bought with blood and will last forever. For the sake of all of your compassion, hear me Father, dear Father in heaven! Amen.

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Since ancient  
times ... no eye  
has seen any  
God besides  
you, who acts  
on behalf of  
those who  
wait for him.

ISAIAH 64:4, NIV