

# Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**October 2022**

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

## Why are there so many different Christian churches?

When was the last time you paid attention while walking through the cereal aisle instead of heading to where you know the trustworthy Raisin Bran sits? Why are there so many different kinds of cereals? It is all too confusing. There are cereals with marshmallows. Cereals that turn the milk chocolaty. Cereals that have fruits, nuts, or raisins. Cereals that even go snap, crackle, and pop.

How is a person ever supposed to decide? Do I choose my cereal because I like all the sugar? Do I choose my cereal because I like the tiger or honeybee or leprechaun? Or should I choose my cereal based on the nutritional value?

The cereal aisle at your local grocery store is filled with different kinds of cereals.

The street corners in your town are filled with different kinds of Christian churches. How are you ever going to decide which church is best for you?

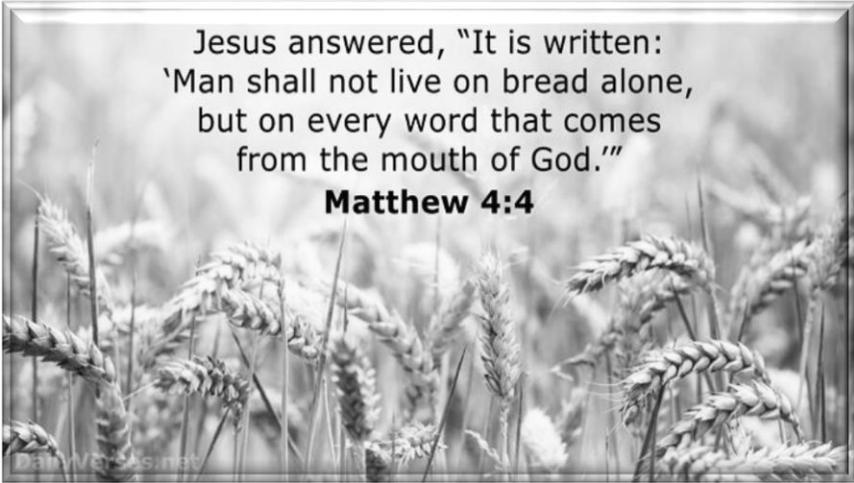
I would encourage you to choose the church that is the most spiritually nutritious.

Choose a church whose teachings are filled with the “milk” and “meat” of God’s Word. The Bible says about itself: “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2,3).

Choose a church that isn’t giving you just what you “want” to hear but what you “need” to hear. “For the time will come when people...will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear” (2 Timothy 4:3). You and I need to hear that we have led unhealthy, sinful lives. We need to hear that Jesus died for our sins and has made our lives wholesome and healthy again.

I could eat all kinds of cereals that may fill me up, but they may not always be the best physical food that I could put into my body. In the same way that I want the best

physical food for my body, I definitely want the best spiritual food for my soul. I want you to have a church that has the very best spiritual food there is—God’s truth. Again, the Bible says, “God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).



Jesus answered, “It is written:  
‘Man shall not live on bread alone,  
but on every word that comes  
from the mouth of God.’”

**Matthew 4:4**

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**Sanctify them by the truth;  
your word is truth.**

**- John 17:17**

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## Pentecost Worship

During the first half of the church year, the church's focus is on the life of Christ. During the second half of the church year, the church turns its attention to the teachings of Christ. His words establish our faith, transform our hearts and minds, and guide our lives in him. During the Season after Pentecost, we gather to let the Holy Spirit do the work Jesus promised he would do in the way Jesus promised he would do it.

## September Worship Summary

A unique feature of Luke's Gospel is the section in the middle often called "the travel narrative." This lengthy section began in chapter 9 when Luke told us that Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (v.51). While there are many events and side trips that occur during this travel narrative, Luke regularly stresses that nothing is going to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his life's mission. Jesus was very focused.

Jesus' mission and the purpose of this journey was not to gain an earthly crown. Throughout this travel narrative, Jesus makes clear that this world was not his real home. He teaches that this world is not our real home either. Jesus is focused on heaven. His mission is to get us there by going to Jerusalem and making the ultimate sacrifice to pay for our sin. Nothing would stop him. "He set his face like flint," Isaiah tells us (50:7). Jesus was focused.

As we watch the focused actions of our Savior... as we focus carefully on his words... something wonderful happens. Jesus gives focus to our lives. We finally see things clearly: how to love our neighbor, the true purpose of worship, the blessing of prayer, what is treasure (and what is not). In this series, as Christ speaks to us through his Word, may he make us properly focused.

Starting on the second Sunday in October, the focus will shift and we will see how Jesus' words produce the faith that he seeks at his return.

## October Worship Themes

- 10/2 – The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost – Increased Faith Increases Duty; Increased Duty Increases Delight
- 10/9 – The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Generosity Produces Gratitude
- 10/16 – The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Promises Produce Persistence in Prayer.
- 10/23 – The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – The Law Produces Total Dependence
- 10/30 – The Festival of the Reformation (Observed) – Truth Produces Freedom

## The Festival of the Reformation

**Isaiah 66:1,2 (ESV) - Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word."**

Do you catch the arrogance of anyone who insists that, instead of what God says, what *we* say should determine truth: "If God would just listen to us, then all would be well and he could live among us in this man-made house of peace"? Yes, and just as bad, do you see the wickedness of declaring a limit to how much of God's Word we will accept or teach or consider important? Indeed, this last may be the worst of all; for by teaching just some, be it a little or a lot of God's Word, many are seduced into thinking that we are free to pick and choose where God's Word might be right or wrong—we ultimately get to be our own bible! Is that not blasphemous? Would a government put up with such a perverse notion: "Here's the law; do whatever you please with it! Obey what you like and ignore the rest!" There are a lot of people in prison who cherished just such a foolish notion. But God who is almighty—should he endure such an insult?

Is it not clear that *Thus says the LORD!* is largely missing from much of what calls itself the "church," the house of the Lord on earth? The errors of Rome in Luther's day haven't gone away. Rome still teaches what it did back then about purgatory and indulgences—though fewer and fewer Catholics may realize it. Today many non-Catholic church bodies have gone just as far from the Scriptures and some even further in their denial of biblical teaching. Just consider for a moment what so many modern self-appointed builders of God's house have as the foundation for their "faith traditions," their house of opinion. What do they teach? Do they teach that Jesus is the one and only and all-sufficient Savior? Certainly not! They teach that the way to heaven is whatever way you choose; if you think Christ began the work, that's fine. If you think that he didn't even begin it but that he was just a noble teacher of a higher morality, that's fine too. If you think that, to some extent, man must earn his way to heaven, that's okay. If you have decided that ultimately, if there is a heaven, everybody will end up there, well, that too is alright. If you come to the conclusion that our heaven and hell is of our own making here in this life and that death ends all, well, we can work with that idea too.

In fact, there are just a very few left who have as their foundation: *Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone—the* three great watchwords of the Reformation. If anything, a recommitment to the truths of the Scriptures restored at the time of the Reformation is more necessary today than it ever was!

Where, then, should we begin if we want to dwell in a house of God's own building? Where else but there where God has said he wants to dwell. He hasn't left it up to us. He declares, "But this is the one to whom I will look: he who

is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." And who is it that is humble in spirit? How can I tell if I am one of them? Take the pattern of Samuel who, when he was still a boy, declared, *Speak Lord; your servant is listening!* Take the model of the virgin Mary who, at the shocking announcement of the angel that she was to be the mother of her Savior and ours, declared, *May it be to me according to your word!* The humble in spirit do not invent doctrines. The humble in spirit do not presume to tell God, "Well, this much of your Word I'll listen to and accept, but the rest just doesn't fit my way of thinking, so it will have to go. Maybe I won't outright deny it; I'll just not make an issue of it." That's the opposite of humble in spirit.

And who is it that is contrite in spirit? It is the one who listens to the shattering voice of the law that condemns all of our nature and our own righteousness. It is the one who confesses with Luther's echo of the apostles and prophets in the Bible; with them he taught that we all are by nature lost and condemned creatures; we cannot even believe God's Word and embrace Jesus' saving work without the miracle of faith created by God himself through his Word and sacraments. Yes, and wonder of wonders, such a contrite spirit is at the same time one that rejoices with joy unbounded. For the faith created by God's gospel message declares that our sins have been fully paid for by Jesus. Such a faith delights in the sure and certain promises of God in his Word that by faith, we are adopted sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of one another and of Christ himself. Such a faith doesn't want to claim any merit of its own; it is altogether content and most happy indeed to claim the perfect merit that Jesus gives to us in the Word and sacraments. Yes, a humble and contrite spirit trembles at the prospect of losing any part of God's Word to arrogant and fallen human opinion.

Thus our celebration of the Reformation is a celebration of what God has done for us in Christ and in us through his pure Word. Far be it from us to ever want to depart so much as a hairbreadth from that Word. Does that Word say things at times that hurt our feelings? Of course! So what?! Our feelings are more than salvaged by the gospel. Does that Word say things at times that fly in the face of fallen reason and majority opinion? Of course! So what?! It is the Word of the God who created all things and who knows all things; to take his Word instead of my own or that of anyone else should seem the obvious choice.

For this is the one on whom God looks; this is where he is pleased to dwell: with the one who despairs of his own merit and by faith embraces the merit of God's own Son, our only Savior. Thus it is with the one who believes and holds fast to all that God, his Creator and Redeemer, has said, even if the whole world thinks it nonsense. Our celebration of the Reformation is our small way of declaring to the whole world that that's where we want to be—in the house God builds, in the church where *"thus says the LORD"* is everything!

# Church Council Meeting Minutes

## August 14, 2022

**Members Present:** Rollie Nissen, Jim Buffington, Ross Malkuch, Scott Clausen, Justin Kannas, Pastor Engel, Jay Remmele

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 10:40 a.m.

Pastor opened with a reading from Hebrews 7:1-10 followed by the Lord's Prayer.

**Agenda:** Add item b. July 31, 2022 Member Assistance Council Meeting under Secretary's Report. MMSP to accept the agenda as amended.

### Secretary's Report:

- MMSP to accept the minutes from July 10, 2022 council meeting as presented.
- MMSP to accept the minutes from July 31, 2022 special meeting as presented.
  - There was some discussion on having a dedicated fund to support this. Currently it is a line item in the budget and comes out of general operating expenses when it is needed.
  - There was discussion on how far the current \$1,000 limit goes now compared to when this was began.
  - Counseling comes out of this line item, but should be a separate line item to accurately reflect when it gets used.

### REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

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

**Elders Report:** No report.

#### Trustees Report:

- The high electric bill is still being evaluated.
- There is a 110 volt outlet in the shed. Ross will bring a 110v blower to be used to blow the grass off of the new lawnmower.

**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
- Justin has not received the parking lot invoice yet.

**Planned Giving:** No report.

**Pastor's Report:** There are additional financial needs for the member. Anyone may contribute to member assistance above and beyond the budgeted amount to help this member.

### OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION COMMITTEES

**Equipping Christian Witnesses** – recruitment, financial aid, and facility improvement at MLC.

#### AV Committee:

- Had a meeting last week.
- Ross will meet with the video guy this week.

- The screens will be installed on the east wall for a better viewing experience.

#### Bailey Estate Gift:

- Do not want the gift to impact offerings.
- Do we set a percentage to support special outreach projects?
- Community meal, canvassing, soccer camp with help from MLC students.
- Passive outreach: yearly Christmas, Easter and new community member mailings at approximately \$10,000 annually.
- Need to set a baseline so we don't have a long discussion every year.

#### Project List:

- Replace lawnmower shed (2023)
- Lighting for the parking lot
- Water heater
- Replace bulbs in church and parsonage with LED
- Improve sanctuary lighting
- Put a canopy over the driveway at east entrance
- Expand the parking lot
- Expand the Sunday school and fellowship hall on grade to the west

#### NEW BUSINESS

None.

#### Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- **September 18, 2022** at 11:30 a.m. council meeting.  
**Note change of date.**
- October 9, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. council meeting
- November 13, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. council meeting

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Closed with the blessing.

Respectfully,  
Jay Remmele, Recording Secretary



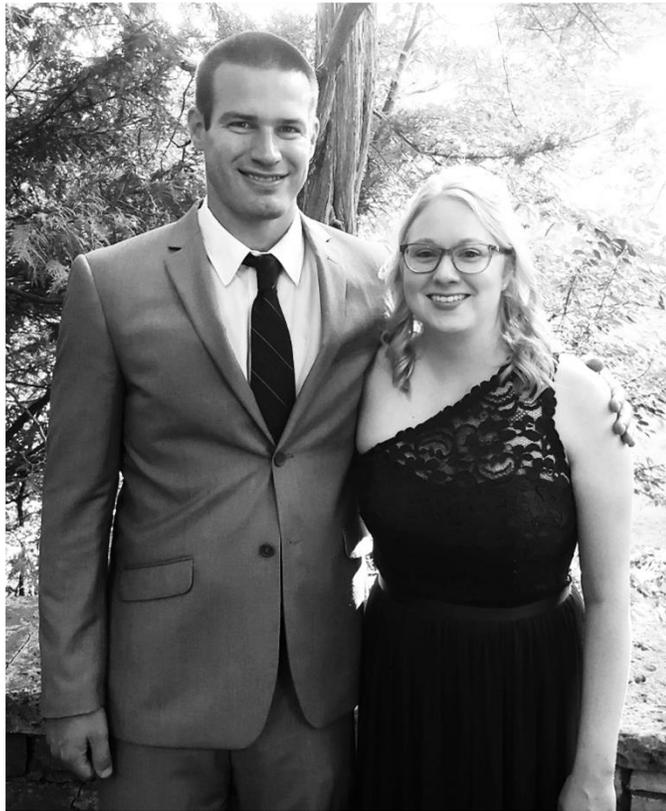
#### Lawnmower

The congregation has purchased a new lawn mower. At the July meeting, the voters approved a recommendation to use \$2300 from the trust fund to help fund the purchase. Additionally funds in the lawnmower fund will be used (currently \$2432). If you would like to contribute to the fund, please mark it on your offering envelope. The old lawnmower was sold in an auction and the proceeds were put into the lawnmower fund.

#### 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.

# SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



**Tara and Dan Timm** have been married for four years. They moved to our area from Glenwood Starbuck lakes area just one year ago in August.

Dan is a Phy-Ed teacher for elementary students in Litchfield. He also coaches football and track.

Tara started her own business as a contractor for vocational rehab services serving a wide variety of clients with various disabilities, learning, mental, and physical.

Tara enjoys cooking and baking. She also enjoys outdoor activities biking, walking, and lake sports. Her parents live on a lake near Alexandria. Dan likes sports and outdoor activities also.

Dan was brought up WELS, and Tara joined when they were married. They value that it is faith based and a caring community. Tara serves during fellowship.

Make them feel welcome, please.



## MN Prairie OWLS

Will meet Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> in Redwood Falls at St. John's School at 9:00 a.m. for a tour, then go to St. John's Church in Redwood Falls for devotion, coffee and meeting. Those who want to, will dismiss to Pizza Ranch for lunch on your own. All over 55 are welcome. Contact Tom Schroer if interested.

## From The President MLC Announces A New Strategic Plan

May I give you a lens to view everything in this report? It's this: partner with us and pray for us as MLC focuses on *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross*.

Let me explain! MLC's *Equipping Christian Witnesses* campaign ended June 30. That campaign gave our on-campus family many reasons to give thanks for our synodical MLC family! We thank God for women and men you encouraged to study for ministry. We're overwhelmed by gifts that helped our graduates' educational debt decline for four consecutive years! We rejoice to see campus improvements your gifts made possible, especially as we dedicate the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse.

But if we allowed that campaign's momentum to die on July 1, we would've dishonored MLC's mission. Raising up the next generation of called workers isn't a 3-year campaign. It's the work of every generation until Christ returns. So, we continue to partner with you to ensure that faithful messengers proclaim the alone saving gospel within our synod and to the world around us.

That's why, on July 1, we launched a new strategic plan. It's not a short-term campaign. It's a broad emphasis that guides everything on our campus for years to come.

*Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross* is its theme, and *three foundational beliefs* support this effort:

- We pursue excellence not as slaves trying to earn God's love, but *under Christ's cross* as loved sons and daughters;
- We *pursue excellence* to offer our best to him whose grace showered each of us with unique talents; and
- We pursue excellence *under our cross* by daily dying to mediocrity and apathy and rising with godly courage to take risks for the gospel.

We pray *pursuing excellence* shows itself in *four key initiatives*:

- *We embrace our family's identity* as a Confessional Lutheran college wholly dedicated to preparing and supporting gospel ministers for our synod and its mission fields.
- *We empower our family's formation* as we seek to help everyone we serve to grow spiritually and academically while also supporting their emotional and physical health.
- *We expand our family's reach* as we seek to reflect on our campus the every nation, tribe, people and language reality of the Church before Christ in eternity.
- *We endow our family's home* as we seek to make MLC even more affordable while simultaneously providing an excellent college experience on a beautiful campus.

Please partner with us and pray for us as we are Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross. We eagerly anticipate how God will choose to bless this!

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church  
1816 5th Street SW  
Willmar, MN 56201



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**The law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.  
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.  
The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.**

**Psalm 19:7-8**

*She Lives Worthy*