

## Easter Victory

St. John Chrysostom (347 - 407) is considered one of the church's greatest preachers. The following Easter sermon is his. Ponder the beautiful language used to proclaim Easter victory. It is with good reason that the church dubbed him "Chrysostom" which means "Golden Mouth."

"If any be a devout lover of God, let him partake with gladness from this fair and radiant feast. If any be a faithful servant, let him enter rejoicing into the joy of his Lord. If any have wearied himself with fasting, let him now enjoy his reward. If any have worked from the first hour, let him receive today his rightful due. If any have come after the third hour, let him celebrate the feast with thankfulness. If any have come after the sixth hour, let him not be in doubt, for he will suffer no loss. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him not hesitate but draw near. If any have arrived only at the eleventh hour, let him not be afraid because he comes so late. For the Master is generous and accepts the last even as the first. He gives rest to him who comes at the eleventh hour in the same was as him who has worked from the first. He accepts the deed, and commends the intention.

"Enter then, all of you, into the joy of our Lord. First and last, receive alike your reward. Rich and poor, dance together. You who fasted and you who have not fasted, rejoice together. The table is fully laden: let all enjoy it. The calf is fatted: let none go away hungry. Let none lament his poverty; for the universal kingdom is revealed. Let none bewail his transgressions; for the light of forgiveness has risen from the tomb. Let none fear death; for death of the Savior has set us free. He has destroyed death by undergoing death. By descending into hell he has made hell captive. Isaiah foretold this when he cried: Hell was filled with bitterness when it met thee face to face below; filled with bitterness, for it was brought to nothing; filled with bitterness, for it was mocked; filled with bitterness, for it was overthrown; filled with bitterness, for it was put in chains. Hell received a body, and encountered God. It received earth, and confronted heaven. O death, where is your sting? O hell, where is your victory?"

*Where, O death, is your  
victory? Where, O death,  
is your sting?*

*- 1 Corinthians 15:55*

1816 5th Street SW  
Willmar, MN 56201  
Pastor Craig A. Engel

Office:  
(320) 235-5996

Parsonage:  
(320) 235-6728

Cell Number  
(320) 444-7641

Office Hours:  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Tuesday-Thursday

Website:  
[www.willmarwels.net](http://www.willmarwels.net)

Emails:  
[pastor@willmarwels.net](mailto:pastor@willmarwels.net)  
[secretary@willmarwels.net](mailto:secretary@willmarwels.net)

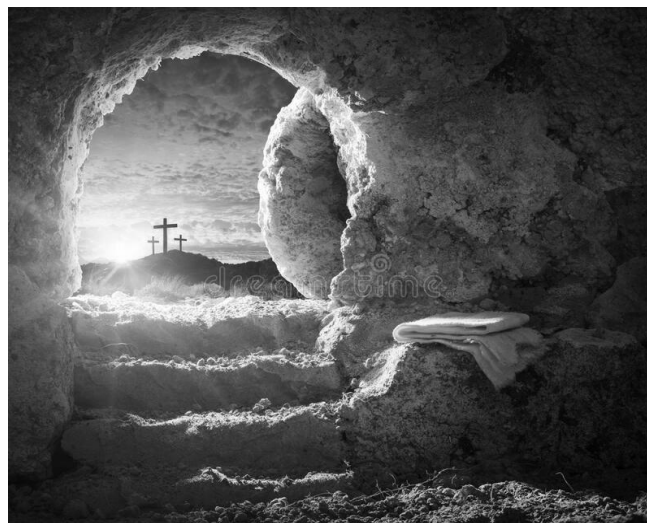
### UPCOMING DATES

April 2  
Holy Thursday

April 3  
Good Friday

April 5  
Easter Sunday

April 13  
Church Council



"Christ is risen! And you, o death, are annihilated! Christ is risen! And the evil ones are cast down! Christ is risen! And the angels rejoice! Christ is risen! And life is liberated! Christ is risen! And the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To him be glory and power, now and forever, and from all ages to all ages. Amen!"

## Holy Week

Holy days have the power to alter our normal conception of time. When a day is holy, the normal, relentless march of time slows down. We set aside our usual routines to call attention to whatever event makes the day holy. The world around us might not slow down in the slightest for the holy days of Holy Week. The church, however, has every reason to do so. Consider first how these days alter our normal conception of time in the four gospels. In the four biographies of one man's 33-year life, a single week consumes nearly a third of the ink. When the Spirit gets to this week in Jesus' life, it is as if time slows to a crawl.

Holy days have the power to alter our normal conception of time in another important way. They keep us close to certain events in a way that time cannot affect, no matter how many years pass. They make the events that took place years ago seemingly contemporaneous. Our annual commemoration of these holy days leads us to join the crowd of pilgrims carrying palms and singing "hosannas." We dine with the disciples at the heavenly meal Christ hosts and serves. We stand in darkness with the centurion as we contemplate the horror of God's Son being hung the accursed tree.

Just as the Passover remained part of Israel's identity for centuries to come, so do the events of Holy Week. We were slaves of sin, death, and Satan, but the Lord delivered us with a mighty hand. Before our eyes he did great and terrible things to our captors. These aren't just holy days. These days are ours.

### Holy Week Worship Summary:

- April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. – Holy Thursday: Look Up To Get A Glimpse Of Heaven
- April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 p.m. – Good Friday: Look Up To Find The Source Of Salvation
- April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. – Good Friday: Service of Seven Words from the Cross

### Holy Saturday

On the Sabbath Day of Holy Week, the Lord Jesus rested in his tomb. Take some time on Holy Saturday to contemplate this mystery: God lies dead in a tomb and thus he sanctifies my own grave. Use the following hymn by Timothy Dudley Smith to guide your meditation:

And sleeps my Lord in silence yet,  
within the darkness laid away;  
where none remember nor forget,  
where breaks no more the sunlit day?

and sleeps my Lord in silence yet,  
where cold his lifeless body lay?

And does the sting of death remain  
to work unchanged its bitter will?  
were cross and passion all in vain,  
no battle won on Calvary's hill?  
and does the sting of death remain,  
and gapes the grave in triumph still?

Have faith in Christ, the risen Son,  
who reigns eternal, glorified!  
who death destroyed, who triumph won,  
who flung the gates of heaven wide!  
Have faith in Christ, the risen Son,  
the living Lord of Eastertide!

### Easter Sunday

We will celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord in a Divine Service on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. Easter breakfast will be served after the service.

### Easter Invitations

There are invitations available for you to share with others. They are on the shelf in the Narthex.

### Easter Worship

Life is full of either/or moments. Some of them are of little long-term consequence. I will have either the chicken or the fish. Some of them matter more. I will accept the new job offer or keep my current job. One either/or moment is life-changing for every human being. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus claimed he would rise from the dead. "The Son of Man must suffer many things, be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). So if Jesus remains dead, he is both a failure and a fraud. If Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sin.

But Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! It makes all the difference! He lives! The season of Easter is a 50-day celebration of that fact. Our worship series for the Easter season is: What Difference Does It Make?

The Sundays in the Easter Season have these themes:

- April 5<sup>th</sup> – The Resurrection of Our Lord – He Lives to Take Me from Death to Life
- April 12<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday of Easter – He Lives to Give Me Proof and Peace
- April 19<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Easter – He Lives to Restore My Hope
- April 26<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Easter – He Lives to Be My Good Shepherd

## Easter Season Worship Notes

While the timing of Christmas is determined by the movement of the sun, the date of Easter is determined by the phases of the moon. In the Western church, Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. The day of Easter is the start of the season of Easter. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of 50 days on the Jewish calendar between the Passover and the Feast of Weeks (known in Greek as Pentecost, which means “fifty”). The church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. As the season reaches its close, the church remembers Jesus’ ascension into heaven and the keeping of his promise to send the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

- ✠ Easter Sunday has the place of prominence in all of the Sundays of the Christian Church year.
- ✠ Scripture records that Christians continued to gather for worship on Sundays in remembrance of the Resurrection.
- ✠ The fifty days of the Easter season make up the oldest season of the Christian Church year.
- ✠ The Sundays of Easter and the Festival of Ascension all highlight the victory of Christ’s resurrection and the temporal and eternal blessings the resurrection imparts. Our worship in the Easter season strives to rejoice in this.
- ✠ During the Easter season, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lesson read in the Service is from the New Testament book of Acts. These lessons highlight and proclaim the power of the Risen Christ.
- ✠ The Paschal Candle has been used in the Christian Church since the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century.
- ✠ During the Easter season, the Paschal Candle will be lit for all of our services.
- ✠ On Ascension Day, the Paschal Candle will be extinguished after the Gospel. This symbolizes and emphasizes the visible removal of Christ’s physical presence from his disciples after his ascension into heaven.
- ✠ During the rest of the year, the Paschal Candle will be lit at baptisms and funerals. It serves as a visual reminder of the close connection between Easter and baptism; Christ’s resurrection and our resurrection to life everlasting.
- ✠ At the beginning and conclusion of our services during the Easter season, pastor will address the congregation with the words, “Christ is risen!” The congregation responds, “He is risen indeed! Alleluia!”

## Easter Greeting

During the season of Easter, we will use the Church’s traditional greeting at the beginning and close of our services. The pastor will say, “Christ is risen!” The congregation responds, “He is risen indeed! Alleluia!” These words are sometimes called the Paschal Greeting. In following this ancient custom of the church we share in the certainty and joy of the resurrection.

## Church Notes

Please mute your phone or turn it off before the Service. Parents, if you would like a sheet that helps identify the major parts of the service to use with young children, please talk to pastor. It can be used to help children follow the flow of the service as well as reinforcing what is spoken and sung. Please ask children to use the bathroom and get a drink of water before the service. There are certainly times when one must leave the Service to use the bathroom. This should not be something that happens every week.

## Stingers Picnic and Game

If you would like to attend a pregame picnic before attending a Stingers’ game this summer, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. The cost is \$25 per person and we need at least 25 people to attend.

## Confirmation

Ella Kannas, Sophia Kannas, and Shelby Larcom will be confirmed on April 26<sup>th</sup>. A reception in the fellowship hall will follow the service. Everyone is invited to attend and join in the joy of this day.

## Volunteers

We are in need of some volunteers for the following: giving rides to church on Sunday, folding 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.



# Church Council Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2026

**Members Present:** Martin Fabrizio, Jim Buffington, Aaron Butenhoff, Matt Sindelir, Justin Kannas, Pastor, Scott Claussen

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 11:37 a.m.

Opened with the Lord's Prayer.

**Agenda:** MMSP to accept the agenda as presented with new business added of online offering

**Secretary's Report:** MMSP to accept the January 11, 2026 council minutes as presented

## Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

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

### **Elders Report:**

- Keep members not able to physically attend church in our prayers
- Voters tasked the elders with disbursing the rest of Jesus Cares funds. Elders distributed funds to Olivia's Jesus Cares.

### **Trustees Report:**

- Matt finished installation of mechanical front door openers
- Trustees are looking into a quote for having some painting done in the Narthex and basement in 2027. There was some discussion on what funds to use.
- There was some water damage in the parsonage basement. Trustees are looking into the cause of the water damage.
- Trustees would like to remind church members to keep the modem in the kitchen area plugged in.

**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:** Planned Giving will meet soon.

**AV Committee:** No report.

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

- Pastor does not think it likely he will attend the MLS Governing Board meeting due to no one signing up to cover at Immanuel on February 15th.
- Aaron will open and close church on February 22nd.
- No report on Olivia vacancy.
- Lent begins on February 18th. Midweek services as usual.

## Old Business and Action Committees

**Church Operation Manual:** The Church Operation Manual has been distributed, and the Council will allocate time to review its contents.

**Updates in Narthex:** Kyle Marks will patch the drywall in the water cooler area, painting of the drywall is being done by Virginia Fabrizio, Ross Malkuch has donated the new water cooler, and a plumber has been lined up to install the new water cooler.

**Lenten Meal:** The Council will provide a meal prior to the midweek service on March 25th.

## New Business

**Online Offering:** Discussion on providing a QR code in the announcements for online offering for visitors and members to be able to utilize. It was recommended by Council to have the QR code for online offering in the announcements.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates:**

- March 8, 2026 after Bible class
- April 12, 2026 after Bible class
- May 10, 2026 after Bible class

FINANCIAL REPORT					
January 1st through February 28th, 2026					
GENERAL FUND					
January 1st			February		
Balance	Contributions	Expenditures	28th Balance		
\$ 57,257	\$ 36,219	\$ 42,186	\$ 51,290		
WELS CONGREGATIONAL MISSION OFFERING		MLC - CONGREGATIONAL PARTNER GRANT		LUTHERAN INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY ASSOCIATION (LIMA)	
2026 Commitment	Year to Date Contributions	2026 Commitment	Year to Date Contributions	2026 Commitment	Year to Date Contributions
\$ 34,000	\$ 5,402	\$ 1,600	\$ 220	\$ 2,200	\$ 466
Average Monthly Commitment	YTD Average Monthly Contributions	Average Monthly Commitment	YTD Average Monthly Contributions	Average Monthly Commitment	YTD Average Monthly Contributions
\$ 2,833	\$ 2,701	\$ 133.33	110	\$ 183	\$ 233

Meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully,  
Scott Claussen,  
Recording Secretary

## QR Code for Online Giving



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



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

