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UPCOMING DATES

May 3
Elders

May 10
Church Council

May 13
Women of Immanuel

May 14
Ascension Vespers

The Ascension of Our Lord

We have come now to the close of the festival half of the church year. From Advent to the great festival of our Lord's ascension, we have considered with wonder and awe the love of God for us and the astonishing, always amazing ways that he has had of proving that love. For behold, God became man for us. God lived among us for some 33 years; concealing his almighty power and glory, he walked among sinners, looking like any mere mortal. He was tempted. He suffered abuse and rejection from those he came to save. He endured misunderstanding from relatives and friends who should have known better. Church and state conspired to kill him and then crucified him. He was betrayed, he was denied, he was abandoned in his suffering. Even God forsook him as he hung on the cross to redeem our guilty and thankless race.

And now his earthly pilgrimage has come to a glorious conclusion. He has risen victorious from the dead. He is ready to ascend into heaven with his human and divine natures still perfectly and forever joined. The man who is God is, as the psalmist had prophesied, ascending amid shouts of joy in heaven, rising to heaven amid the sound of trumpets (Psalm 47:5).

Aren't you happy for him? At last he will receive there his due. His human nature will share in the glory that his divine had before the beginning of time. He himself says it in his final words to us: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." St. Paul sings of this his glory so beautifully in Ephesians 1 and so often elsewhere in his epistles. Jesus has gone to the right hand of the Father. No more will he be subjected in his body to abuse and torture. Never again will he hang exposed on that dreadful cross. Now instead of ridicule and mockery he will forever enjoy the chants and praises of saints and angels. Yes, aren't you happy for him on this his coronation day?

And yet—the day for us may be tinged with sadness. The disciples on Thursday of Holy Week felt that sadness when Jesus spoke of his soon to be finished work and his return to the Father (John 16:5,6). On one side of our soul we can say, "Good for you, Lord Jesus! You will finally be rid of all that the sinful world did to you! After all, we don't want to hang around people who have made our lives miserable either." But the other side, our soul shares with the disciples this sadness: "But now we cannot see you. Would that you would stay just a little while longer, just as long as we are here below. It would be easier then to overcome temptations to doubt and all the other temptations that plague us our whole life long." (See how we can never get over it? We always have to give him our opinion, our advice!)

But as in John 16, so in his parting words Jesus anticipates our sadness. As always when he speaks to us it is with compassion, with love, with comfort so astonishing and so far above anything we could have asked for or imagined.

He says it plainly: "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Oh, wondrous grace! Oh, matchless love! We would have thought that he would be glad to be rid of us and all our foolish advice. But no; he assures us that he, our God and Savior, true God and true man, will always be with us. That's not just the sentimental thought that we have of departed loved ones—that they are sort of with us in our memory of them. No, he means just what he said. He, true God and true man, has gone to fill all

*"All authority in heaven
and on earth has been
given to me. . . . And surely
I am with you always, to
the very end of the age."*

— Matthew 28:18,20

The Ascension of Our Lord *(Continued from previous page.)*

things in heaven and earth. He has in his person as God and as man all the attributes of God, including omnipresence; that is, he miraculously and according to both his divine and human nature is wherever he chooses to be. For it is just as he said: He has all power in heaven and on earth. Nothing is impossible for him. Nothing—neither time nor space—can limit or contain him in any way.

So it is that this great festival is like everything else in Jesus' Word and work: It is for us! He did not ascend to leave us orphans. He did not ascend to be rid of us. He did not ascend so that in eternity, he could forget about the ingratitude of humanity and its cruelty. He did not ascend so that the noise of the world would be drowned out by the songs of the angels and the praises of the saints. No, it's all just the opposite. He ascended for us. He ascended—paradox beyond all paradox—so that he could and would always be with us.

His presence moreover is not a fractional or divided presence. His words are plain and clear: I, he says, am with you always! He who does not lie and can never deceive gives us this amazing promise. When you get up in the morning and go to bed at night and during every moment in between, Jesus is there. He is there not as a fraction, not even just in his divine nature as a spirit, but wholly and completely. For that's who this "I" is: Jesus, true God and true man, one undivided person. When you open your Bible to read it and bow your head to pray, Jesus is right there. When you enter his house to worship, it is Jesus who invites you; it is Jesus who speaks to you in the liturgy, in the readings from his Word, and in the sermon. When you kneel at his altar it is the real, the true, the living Jesus, true God and true man, who reaches out to you and feeds you with his real body and true blood.

Could there be anything more amazing, anything more comforting or joyful than all of that? His presence and his attention to you and to your need is never interrupted by a phone call. No text message takes his eyes off of you. The doorbell doesn't ring with someone more important requiring his attention. How rare such attention is among us! His love and devotion is perfect, is constant, is without interruption. Could there be a better reason than that for singing at the top of your voice on this great festival of our Lord's ascension? And so we note it now for the final time as we have noted it so often before: For us this great event is all about Jesus, and for Jesus this great event is all about us!

New Paraments and Vestments

Easter Sunday was the first time we used newly crafted paraments and vestments. Thanks to the committee who made the plans: Bonnie Watson, Jodee Okins, Wendy Kluver, and Marilyn Larson. A special thank you is in order for Marilyn Larson who made them. The new vestment that pastor is wearing is called a chasuble. This eucharistic garment has a long history in the Christian church. By the seventh century, clergy wore three specific garments: the alb, the stole, and the chasuble. The chasuble is the main vestment for the presiding minister at services where Holy Communion is celebrated. The name "chasuble" comes from a Latin word that means "little castle" or "little house." The chasuble may be worn for the entire service or the presiding minister may wear the alb for the Service of the Word and put on the chasuble for the Service of the Sacrament. The cross on the chasuble is called the Jerusalem Cross. Two of the more popular explanations of the Jerusalem Cross say it symbolizes Christ and the four evangelists or the five wounds of Christ.

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:

- May 3rd – Fifth Sunday of Easter – He Lives to Be the Only Way to Heaven
- May 10th – Sixth Sunday of Easter – He Lives and Calls Me to Live for Him
- May 14th – The Ascension of Our Lord – He Lives to Rule All Things for the Church
- May 17th – Seventh Sunday of Easter – He Lives to Give Me Eager Expectation of Glory
- May 24th – Day of Pentecost – He Lives to Pour Out His Spirit

Ascension Day Vespers and Notes

When the church gathers in Jesus' name, it regularly remembers his Ascension. The words "He ascended into heaven" are found in each of the three ecumenical creeds we use to confess our Christian faith. The church also sets aside a day each year on which this important

event takes center stage. All of this is for good reason. Jesus' Ascension marked the fact that his work was complete. This sitting at the right hand of God is a permanent reminder that the work of our redemption is finished (Hebrews 10:11-14). At the same time, Jesus' Ascension also marked the fact that his work was just beginning. The good news of our redemption is to be taken to the ends of the earth. This is the assignment Jesus gave to his church before ascending to the right hand of God. We will celebrate our Lord's ascension on May 14th with a Vespers service starting at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday School

The last Sunday of Sunday School for the spring will be May 17th. We give thanks for our teachers and music leaders who served our children this year.

Graduation Recognition

On May 17th we will recognize our high school graduate, Bria Marxhausen. Everyone is invited for cake in the fellowship hall after the Service. Join us to congratulate Bria.

Summer Schedule

Our summer schedule will begin starting May 24th. Service time will remain the same. A short family Bible class will be held after treats and coffee. The first Thursday evening service will be held on May 21st at 7:00 p.m. The Thursday service is the same as the Sunday that follows it. Plan to attend the Thursday service when summer plans will take you away for the weekend. The final Thursday service of the summer will be on September 3rd.

Season of Pentecost Divine Service Themes

"Say It Out Loud" will be the church year focus for May and June. The Season after Pentecost features what Christ teaches, and Christians in every vocation are encouraged to say it out loud. The truths of God's Word are good for the soul, useful for life, and more reliable than anything else in the world. Watch out for false teachers who come with wise sounding words and pious promises, but who do not base everything on the Word of God! Give thanks to the Lord for faithful servants in the ministry of the gospel and those who support them!

- May 31st – First Sunday after Pentecost – Holy Trinity – God Is Triune

Christian Life Ministries Baby Bottle Fundraiser

We will again do the baby bottle fundraiser for Christian Life Ministries beginning Mother's Day, May 10th to Father's Day, June 21st. You can either take a baby bottle home or give a donation, writing a check to Immanuel with Christian Life Ministries on the memo line.

Mother's Day

As we give thanks to God for his gift of mothers, consider the following:

Now observe that when that clever harlot, our natural reason (which the pagans followed in trying to be most clever), takes a look at married life, she turns up her nose and says, "Alas, must I rock the baby, wash its diapers, make its bed, smell its stench, stay up nights with it, take care of it when it cries, heal its rashes and sores, and on top of that care for my wife, provide for her, labor at my trade, take care of this and take care of that, do this and do that, endure this and endure that, and whatever else of bitterness and drudgery married life involves? What, should I make such a prisoner of myself? O you poor, wretched fellow, have you taken a wife? Fie, fie upon such wretchedness and bitterness! It is better to remain free and lead a peaceful, carefree life; I will become a priest or a nun and compel my children to do likewise."

What then does Christian faith say to this? It opens its eyes, looks upon all these insignificant, distasteful, and despised duties in the Spirit, and is aware that they are all adorned with divine approval as with the costliest gold and jewels. It says, "O God, because I am certain that thou hast created me as a man and hast from my body begotten this child, I also know for a certainty that it meets with thy perfect pleasure. I confess to thee that I am not worthy to rock the little babe or wash its diapers, or to be entrusted with the care of the child and its mother. How is it that I, without any merit, have come to this distinction of being certain that I am serving thy creature and thy most precious will? O how gladly will I do so, though the duties should be even more insignificant and despised. Neither frost nor heat, neither drudgery nor labor, will distress or dissuade me, for I am certain that it is thus pleasing in thy sight."

(Luther, Martin: Pelikan, Jaroslav Jan (Hrsg.) ; Oswald, Hilton C. (Hrsg.) ; Lehmann, Helmut T. (Hrsg.): *Luther's Works, Vol. 45 : The Christian in Society II*. Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1999, c1962 (Luther's Works 45), S. 45:39-40)

Vacancy Update

On Sunday, April 19th, Zion, Olivia, along with St. John's, Renville and St. Matthew's, Danube voted to merge the three congregations in Renville. Work now begins to transition to this new congregation. Please keep this work in your prayers.

MLC Day

May 6th is Worldwide MLC Day. It is an invitation to support the men and women training to serve in ministry. Gifts made on MLC Day support the matching fund of the Congregational Partner Grant Program. Gifts given on May 6th (up to \$75,000 total) will be matched dollar for dollar. If you would like to support MLC in this way, go to mlcday.com.

Church Council Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2026

Members Present: Martin Fabrizius, Jim Buffington, Aaron Butenhoff, Matt Sindelir, Kent Larson, Pastor, Scott Claussen, Todd Marxhausen

MMSP = Motion Made, Seconded, Passed

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 11:35 a.m.

Opened with the Lord's Prayer.

Agenda: MMSP to accept the agenda as presented

Secretary's Report: MMSP to accept the February 8, 2026 council minutes as presented

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Chairman's Report: No report.

Elders Report:

- Holy Thursday – April 2nd at 7:00 p.m.
- Good Friday – April 3rd at 3:00 p.m. (Divine Service) and 7:00 p.m. (Service of Seven Words)
- Easter Divine Service – April 5th at 8:00 a.m. Breakfast at 9:00 a.m.
- Confirmation Day – April 26th
- Ascension Day – May 14th at 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday Divine Services begin on May 21st.
- Summer schedule begins May 24th.

Trustees Report:

- Drinking fountain is a nice addition to the church. Council would like to thank Kyle Marks, Virginia Fabrizius, and Ross and Joanne Malkuch for their time and donations towards the project.
- The trustees determined that the parsonage basement water resulted from a tripped circuit stopping the furnace water pump. No structural damage was found in the basement from the water.
- Water sensors were added in the basement to catch the problem sooner in the future.
- Trustees are still looking into different options for the partition between the fellowship hall and the youth room.
- The refrigerator in the kitchen was found to not be working. Trustees are looking at either repairing or buying a new one.

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 Committee Report: Plan on meeting soon.

Church IT/AV Committee:

- Have taken inventory of old computers and what new ones may be needed.
- New HDMI splitter is needed.

Pastor's Report:

- Pastor will be away from Willmar April 13th – 16th for spring pastors' conference in Baxter.
- Olivia vacancy: The 212 congregations will be acting on consolidated ministry plans at their spring voters' meetings.
- Immanuel's congregation does not pay for guest speakers when pastor is gone.

Old Business and Action Committees

Council will serve a meal before midweek service on March 25th.

New Business

- Members of the church notified the council that it was important to continue providing an Easter breakfast.
- Council discussed food choices, breakfast time, and needed utensils.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- April 12, 2026 after Bible class
- May 10, 2026 after Bible class
- June 14, 2026 after Bible class

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully,
Scott Claussen, Recording Secretary

Seminary Chorus

The Seminary Chorus, a 59-voice choir composed of men studying for the pastoral ministry at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI, will present a sacred concert at Martin Luther College on May 10, at 3:00 p.m. The choir presents hymns and anthems in traditional and contemporary styles, accompanied by various musical instruments, and includes congregation participation.

Synodical News

Call Day at Martin Luther College where teachers are assigned will be at MLC on May 16th. Pastors will be assigned on May 21st at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

QR Code for Online Giving



FINANCIAL REPORT					
January 1st through March 31st, 2026					
GENERAL FUND					
January 1st			March 31st		
Balance	Contributions	Expenditures	Balance		
\$ 57,257	\$ 57,058	\$ 58,699	\$ 55,616		
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	\$ 9,337	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,065	\$ 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	\$ 3,112	\$ 133.33	355	\$ 183	\$ 155

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church
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John 14:27, NRSV