



**IMMANUEL**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ALMELUND, MN

# MESSENGER

## January

## 2026



# EPIPHANY

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*The monthly newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Almelund, MN*

## New Year, Same Gospel

It's that time of year again. The calendar flips, the gym ads get loud, and the pressure quietly creeps in: *Time to be better.*

I'll be honest with you, I kind of stink at New Year's resolutions. I've made them. I've meant them. And to be honest usually I do even start them, they just make me feel good in the moments leading up to a New Year, "this years going to be different"

And if I'm honest about the heart behind most resolutions, it usually comes down to one thing: being better.

Maybe you've asked the same question I have: *Am I better than last year?* Maybe... one percent? On a good day?

Our culture is so soaked in "new year, new you" that it's easy, very easy, for Christians to assume that's basically the message of faith too. If we're not careful, the sermon becomes: *Try harder. Do more. Fix yourself. Improve. Be better.* And I'll admit, even pastors can unintentionally echo that message, because we breathe the same cultural air.

But here's the problem: "Be better" isn't the Gospel.

The Gospel is not self-improvement. It's not spiritual hustle. It's not a divine performance review where God looks us over at the end of January to see if we're trending upward.

The Gospel is grace.

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." And last time I checked... yep. Still a sinner. Still human. Still a work in progress. Still in need of mercy.

So what if we looked at the New Year through a different lens—not a guilt-filled lens, not a "prove you're worthy" lens—but a grace-filled lens?

Maybe the invitation of the New Year isn't to *fix yourself*, but to receive again the One who already came to save you.

Maybe the faithful question isn't "How will I become better?" but "How will I live as someone already loved?"

Maybe the goal isn't to white-knuckle our way to transformation, but to stay close to Christ—the One who actually changes hearts, heals what's broken, forgives what's real, and gives strength for what's next.

Maybe, in a world addicted to improvement, the most countercultural Christian practice is simply to be.

Be where you are.

Be present.

Be honest.

Be open to God.

Be willing to begin again—not with shame, but with hope.

I haven't read it yet, but it's on my New Year reading list: *Stop Fixing Yourself* by Anthony de Mello. The title alone feels like a word many of us need. Because the Good News isn't that we finally get ourselves together. The Good News is that Christ has already come for us, right in the middle of our mess and He isn't letting go.

So as this New Year begins, maybe your "resolution" can be gentler, and truer:

Not because you will be perfect this year, but because Christ is faithful, so maybe I will just start each morning with a hymn "Morning by Morning new mercies I see"

Blessings

Pastor Justin

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Committee/Financial Reports** are due January 23 for the annual report.

Auditor's Report is due January 30.

Annual report will be published for pick up on Sunday, February 15, 2026. For the Annual Meeting on February 22, 2026.

### **Holy Smokes Is Back!**

Mark, your calendars - Holy Smokes is coming back to Jake's on the Lakes on Thursday, January 22 at 6:30 PM.

Holy Smokes is a relaxed, come-as-you-are gathering for good conversation, faith questions, and community. Grab a bite or a drink if you'd like, pull up a chair, and join us for an evening of laughter, thoughtful discussion, and connection.

All are welcome—bring a friend!

## Lamp Post Sunday — Explore Our Ministries

**On Sunday, January 11,** we're bringing back Lamp Post Sunday—a simple way to help you get to know the ministries that make *Immanuel Immanuel*. After worship, head downstairs to the Fellowship Hall and look for the lamp post. You'll find a ministry team ready to share what they do, why it matters, and how you can jump in—whether you're looking to serve weekly, occasionally, or just want to learn what's happening behind the scenes.

Come for coffee, conversation, and connection. If you've ever wondered, "*Where could I fit in?*"—this is a great place to start.

**Stewardship** will meet on January 5 at 10am in the Fireside Room.

**Sarah Circle** retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp, January 15-18, 2026.

Sarah Circle will meet on February 17 at 9:30 at church.

**Our new women's circle** is collecting magazines for our winter craft. If you would like to donate, please place them in the box in the fellowship hall. **The new women's circle** will be meeting Wednesday, January 7th at 6PM. We will be sharing a meal and working on a craft to start the new year. Please let Amanda Cook know if you are interested so we have a head count.

## New! Sermon Note Art

This fall we're trying a new way to listen to the sermon together.

As you come into the sanctuary, pick up a blank index card from the back of the narthex (or ask an usher).

During the sermon:

- Confirmation students: write your name on the back of the card.
- Write the sermon theme or main point somewhere on the card.
- Then respond:
  - draw a picture of something that spoke to you, or
  - write a short poem, phrase, or little story.

When you're finished, you can:

- hand your card to Pastor Justin after worship, or
- place it in his box.

If you're especially proud of your artwork or words, feel free to sign your name on the front as well.

This is for everyone, not just confirmation students!

Each week a selection of "Sermon Note Art" will be displayed in the Sunday School hallway as a way to share what God is stirring in our hearts.

## **The Women of the ELCA:**

Our planned meeting for 2026 will be held on January 12, 2026, at 10:00am with Sarah circle to lead. All Women are welcome come join us!

**The Immanuel Quilters.** Our next sewing day will be Tuesday, January 13th, 2026. If you know of anyone who could use a cozy quilt as the cold weather approaches, please let any quilter know... our bins are full to share. We donated a quilt to the person who got rid of our church mice... Pastor Justin will deliver it. Thank you to everyone who supports our ministry. We wish everyone a very blessed and happy holiday! Martha Strecker. 651-341-3885

**Youth Group News** will meet

Jan 7th & 21st and Feb 4th & 18th

Youth Group retreat Feb 20th - 22nd at Luther Point



We have registered for our mission trip in June. The youth will be going to Louisville KY for this year's trip!

## **Coming to Immanuel!**

Friday, February 6th. A no cost, Semi-Progressive dinner from 5-9pm. We start at church with appetizers, break into groups to head out to the Host homes for dinner. Afterwards, the groups return to church for dessert, conversation and music.

*All are invited!*

A sign up sheet to attend the dinner will be in the gathering area. If you'd like to take part and have children, they are welcome too, however will stay back at church with sitters and responsible adults present. The kids will be fed and play games while you are at the host home.

*Host homes.*

There will be a need for host homes. If interested in having 4-6 guests at your home for dinner, there will be a signup sheet available for that as well. You will be furnished with the entire meal, just provide a beverage.

Join us for a pleasant evening of fellowship.

The Stewardship/Season of Renewal committees

**Confirmation Classes:**

14<sup>th</sup>, Yahweh sends Prophets  
28<sup>th</sup>, By the waters of Babylon

**Tune in our Daily Texts**, Monday through Saturday on our Facebook Page [@immanuellutheranchurchofalmelund](https://www.facebook.com/immanuellutheranchurchofalmelund)  
A daily devotional time based on an Old and New Testament Bible verse based on a Moravian Church tradition and Ground Up Grace Publications Daily Texts 2026 books.

### **NOISY OFFERINGS ARE THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH**

We express our thanks to all those who provide special music with a Special Thank You to those who travel a distance to share their talents. We would like to show our appreciation by gifting these musicians with a gas card through the "Noisy Offerings". So - SAVE YOUR CHANGE and let's make a Joyful Noise Unto The Lord!!!!

### **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**

By end of day Monday, January 19; The third Monday of the month.

### **PROOFREADING:**

Of newsletter Wednesday, January 21 @ 11:00; in the Fireside Room.

### **NEWSLETTER ASSEMBLY:**

Will be Friday, January 23 @ 10:00 in the Fireside Room. Volunteers can fill newsletters with offering envelopes and labels for mailing.

Thank you for your help!

Mark Weslander

### **THANK YOUS**

**From The Stewardship Committee** We are very inspired by our youth group and their directors. Doing a Sunday service and all their involvement here at Immanuel.

The brunch, baked goodies, crafts, collecting pajamas, mitten tree. Your work; your donations; fabulous.

Again, all the youth and teachers. We felt the true meaning of Christmas as scripture was presented and congregation joining you in singing.

Immanuel is blessed by everyone here in Almelund.

**MANY THANKS** to all those who helped in any way with Almelund's Santa Day...decorating the town hall, filling the Santa Bags, donating treats for the refreshment table and bringing baked/craft items for the Amador Heritage Center Fundraiser. A Special Thank You to Immanuel for the candy donations - that was quite an assortment of treats and such a HUGE

help!! Thanks to Pastor Justin for helping Santa by visiting with families and trying to calm the little ones who weren't quite sure about Santa, handing out candy bags, taking pictures, etc. --- AND to the surprise guest, "The Grinch". Both added a lot of fun to the afternoon! It was a cold day, but the turnout was fantastic - This is community at its BEST!! ~Santa Day Elves 

**THANK YOU** so much for the beautiful pink poinsettia - it's so pretty tucked in with all my red ones! ~Pat

Thanks to all of you for your donations to **the Mitten Tree**.

The following was donated to Santa Anonymous:

53 hats, 10 pairs of mittens, 31 pairs of gloves, 28 pairs of socks, 6 scarves, 1 scarf and hat set, 5 hat and glove sets, 1 hat and mitten set, 1 blanket and 1 pair of boots.

**Thank you so much** for the great Christmas program and all the hard work that went into it, Katie, Amanda, Cami and Val. It is very much appreciated by me and the rest of the Christian Ed Committee.

- Teresa & Christian Ed

**Thank you to all the parents and kids** for their involvement with the Christmas Program. Kids, you did a great job! Parents - thanks for supporting the program and for bringing cookies to share (no Jenny and I did not make all those cookies, only a few).

- Christian Ed

**Immanuel**, Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia that my friend Gwen delivered to me.

I am glad I can worship with Immanuel online  
Love,  
Lois.

**For blessing my life in such a great way!**

Thank you, for the beautiful poinsettia  
Jim

# Luther Point BIBLE CAMP

## Winter Camp

February 6 - 8, 2026

6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

\$95/camper

### Theme

Building Community  
How very good and pleasant  
it is when kindred live  
together in unity!

-Psalm 133:1



*Fri., Jan 9, 4:30-6:30*

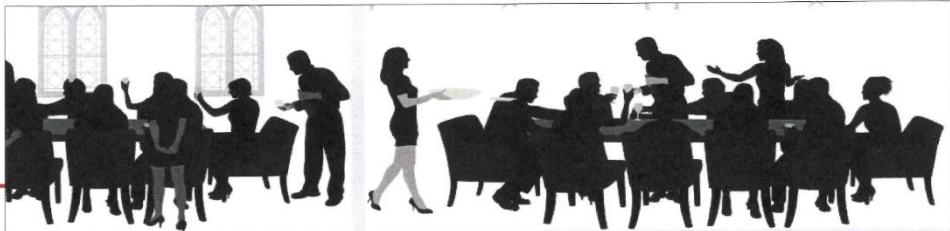
# Community Dinner

***Free!***  
***Everyone Welcome!***  
***Great Fellowship!***  
***Meet your friends & neighbors!***

*Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Almeland*

*Come & Bring a Friend!*

*2nd Friday Each Month 4:30—6:30 pm*





As you celebrate your Birthday, remember to celebrate your Spiritual Birthday each year.

Light a candle to remember your Baptism, too. God Bless you on your special days!

- 2 Barb Lindberg, Norm Peterson, Bob Rothe, Joseph Flodquist
- 5 Derrik Beede, Greta Ortega
- 6 Nathan Oknich, Arthur Carlson
- 7 Richard Meyer
- 9 Tora Carlson
- 10 Logan Ellifritz, Dan Schleusner
- 11 Roberta Tauer, Norman Johnson
- 12 Shanna Geslin
- 13 Rebecca Haag
- 14 Samantha Burnside
- 15 Kirstin Haag, Diane Johnson, Brandon Carlson, Joseph Rambow
- 16 Spencer Newman
- 17 Regina Sapp
- 19 Alexa Thorsen
- 20 Tracy Anderson, Seth Hunter
- 22 Cody Schultz, Rose Wiberg, Vincent Berger, Kora Johnson
- 25 Jessica Ryberg
- 27 Cathy Anderson
- 29 Joanne Johnson, Ryan Tauer, Maureen Peterson
- 31 Alexie Koran, Jordan Larkin

## Thank you to those helping with the Worship Services!

	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	
<b>Scripture Reader</b>	Lynn Schultz	Marco Sherve	Tracy Tolzmann	Youth Group	
<b>Ushers</b>	Zach Rivard	Zach Rivard	Zach Rivard	Youth Group	
<b>Sound Tech</b>	Dave Rue	Lorraine Rue	Nancy Nadeau	Julie Johnson	
<b>Camera Tech</b>	Matt Oknich	Dave Rue	Jodi Johnson-Waldemar	Vern Johnson	
<b>Children's Sermon</b>	Jeske Noordergraaf			Youth Group	
<b>Coffee Servers</b>				Youth Group	
<b>Teachers</b>	No Sunday School	Dana Johnson Amanda Cook or Cami Peltier Teresa Carlson	Valerie Lutz Cami Peltier or Amanda Cook Katie Fenger	Amanda Cook or Cami Peltier Dana Johnson Teresa Carlson	

### Communion Servers:

**Sunday, Jan 4<sup>th</sup> -** Clay Ryberg, Julie Weller, Amanda Cook

**Sunday, Jan 18<sup>th</sup> -** Norm Peterson, Jeff Lutz, Julie Weller

### Communion Wine - Wild Mountain Winery

### Communion Wafers now used

**Reader Coordinator**                    **January:** Pat Noyes

**Altar Guild:**                            **January:** Julie Weller & Lorraine Rue

# January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue
<b>4 Second Sunday After Christmas - White</b> 9:00 Comm Wors Live and Online; W/Noisy Offering; after Children's Sermon. No Sunday School 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service	<b>5</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 10:00 WOW Practice 10:00 Stewardship Meets In the Fireside Room	<b>6 EPIPHANY</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 9:00 Worship Team 5:00 Choir Practice @ ILC
<b>11 Baptism of our Lord - White</b> 9:00 Worship Service Live and Online; Sunday School after Children's Sermon Lamp Post Sunday 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service	<b>12</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 10:00 WOW Practice 10:00 WELCA Meeting lead by Sarah Circle 5:00 Property Meeting 6:00 Council Meeting	<b>13</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 9:00 Worship Team 10:30 Parish Care Meets 10-2 Quilters meet W/potluck at noon 5:00 Choir Practice @ FELC
<b>18 Second Sunday of Epiphany – Green</b> 9:00 WOW Communion Worship Live and Online W/Sunday School after Children's Sermon 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service Sarah Circle retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp	<b>19</b> <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 6:00 Chris. Ed.	<b>20</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 9:00 Worship Team 5:00 Choir Practice @ ILC
<b>25 Third Sunday of Epiphany- Green</b> 9:00 Joint Choir Worship Service Live and Online by our youth group; Sunday School after Children's Sermon 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service <b>PICK-UP NEWSLETTERS</b>	<b>26</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 6:00 Worship & Music Meets	<b>27</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 9:00 Worship Team 5:00 Choir Practice @ FELC

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1 NEWYEARS DAY</b> Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran	<b>2</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours Bulletin Printed	<b>3</b>
<b>7</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 1:30 Prayer Shawl Meets 6:00 New Women's Circle Meets 6-7 Youth Group Meets	<b>8</b> Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran	<b>9</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours Bulletin Printed 4:30-6:30 Community Meal	<b>10</b>
<b>14</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours 5:30-7:00 Confirmation	<b>15</b> Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran Sarah Circle retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp	<b>16</b> Bulletin Printed 9:00-3:00 Office Hours Sarah Circle retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp	<b>17</b> Sarah Circle retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp
<b>21</b> 9:00-3:00 Office Hours <b>11:00 Newsletter</b> is ready for proof reading in the Fireside room 1:30 Prayer Shawl Meets 6-7 Youth Group Meets	<b>22</b> Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran 6:30 Holy Smokes @ Jakes on the Lakes	<b>23</b> Bulletin Printed 9:00-3:00 Office Hours <b>10:00 Newsletter Assembly</b> End Of Year Reports Due	<b>24</b>
<b>28</b> 5:30-7:00 Confirmation	<b>29</b> Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran 6:30 Holy Smokes @ Jakes on the Lakes	<b>30</b> Bulletin Printed 9:00-3:00 Office Hours Audit Reports Due	<b>31</b>

**Financial Recorder's Report for  
Year to Date of November 2025**

Code	Fund	11/30/2025	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
1	GENERAL	\$ 16,227.08	\$ 180,075.94	\$ 174,515.38
2	UNDESIGNATED	\$ 332.00	\$ 2,527.00	\$ 1,926.25
3	SYNOD	\$ 450.00	\$ 4,085.00	\$ 3,875.00
4	LUTHER POINT	\$ 52.00	\$ 350.25	\$ 441.00
5	LUTH. SOC. SERV.	\$ 125.00	\$ 390.00	\$ 177.00
6	ITONYA TANZANIA MISSION	\$ -	\$ 555.00	\$ 755.00
7	WORLD HUNGER	\$ 75.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 101.25
10	LOOSE	\$ 592.00	\$ 6,067.50	\$ 4,267.62
11	FELLOWSHIP DINNERS	\$ -	\$ 1,569.00	\$ 1,601.69
12	LENT	\$ -	\$ 534.00	\$ 1,020.00
13	MAUNDY THURSDAY	\$ -	\$ 25.00	\$ 40.00
14	GOOD FRIDAY	\$ -	\$ 48.00	\$ 60.00
15	EASTER	\$ -	\$ 1,003.00	\$ 808.00
16	THANKSGIVING	\$ 453.00	\$ 453.00	\$ 120.00
17	CHRISTMAS	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	
18	USE OF CHURCH	\$ 225.00	\$ 1,845.00	\$ 890.50
20	NOISY OFFERING	\$ 139.76	\$ 2,052.95	\$ 1,497.24
21	BUILDING FUND	\$ 320.00	\$ 3,265.47	\$ 2,983.25
22	CdFee	\$ 5.50	\$ 134.90	\$ 177.75
23	SAMPLER			\$ 4,287.00
24	CHRISTIAN ED	\$ 50.00	\$ 247.00	
26	SHARE MINISTRY	\$ -	\$ 21,810.00	\$-
27	Grants	\$ -	\$ 830.00	\$-
30	YOUTH GROUP	\$ -	\$ 354.00	\$-
31	YOUTH MISSION TRIP	\$ -	\$ 2.00	\$-
33	WELCA	\$ -	\$ 10.00	\$-
34	WORSHIP & MUSIC	\$ -	\$ 25.00	\$ 76.25
36	QUILTERS MINISTRY	\$ -	\$ 302.00	
40	FOOD SHELF	\$ -	\$ 25.00	\$-
50	ENDOWMENT FUND	\$ -	\$ 2,031.25	\$ 50.00
60	SPECIAL DONATIONS	\$ 31,574.46	\$ 42,600.66	\$ 12,818.72
90	MEMORIAL	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,330.00
91	MEMORIAL GARDEN	\$ -	\$ 2,605.00	\$ 1,220.00
92	ALL SAINTS	\$ -	\$ 700.00	\$-
97	Fund Transfers	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 22,348.04	
	Totals	\$ 52,645.80	\$ 299,205.96	\$215,038.90

# TITHES & OFFERINGS

## Three Ways to Give!

Thank you so much for your financial gifts which support Immanuel's ministry. We ask you to prayerfully do what you can to support Immanuel's mission.

### **Give in Person**

When you attend worship in person, you are welcome to place your offering in the offering plate as it is passed during the service. Offering envelopes, like the one included in this newsletter, are available in the pews.

### **Give by Mail**

You can also mail your offering to the church, using the offering envelope provided in this newsletter at:

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
37515 Park Trail  
Almelund, MN 55012

### **Give Online**

Giving through our website is a quick and easy way for you to give and for the church to receive your gift. Go to [www.ImmanuelAlmelund.com](http://www.ImmanuelAlmelund.com) and click on "Make a Gift." You can designate how you want it used and if you want to make a one-time gift or ongoing contribution. It is recorded just as if you had placed it in the offering plate. Whatever way you give your gifts, thank you for your support of Immanuel's ministry. We couldn't do it without you!

E.L.C.T - DIRA,  
LUTANGILO SC SCHOOL,  
P.O. BOX 523  
IRINGA.  
17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

E.L.C.T - DIRA,  
BEGA KWA BEGA,  
P.O. BOX 511,  
IRINGA.

Dear Sir/Madam,

REF: THANKS GIVING FOR SCHOLARSHIP.

Consider the heading above, I hope your good physically and mentally health, to my side also iam fine. I would like to say thanks for what your doing for us May God bless your and regain for you where your have reduced for paying to us.

For your faithfull.

S. F. Mehwa

Shabrack. farao. Mehwa.

Itonya

Emmanuel Almeluno

E.L.C.T - DIRA  
BEGA KWA BEGA  
P.O. BOX 511  
IRINGA

E.L.C.T - DIRA  
LUTANGILO SECONDARY SCHOOL  
P.O. BOX 523  
IRINGA.  
17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Dear sir/madam,

REF: THANKS GIVING FOR SCHOLARSHIP

Consider the heading above, for helping me for study I would like again to say thanks to your begakwa begar because you for your cooperation for giving us chance four our future my God help you

Your faithfull

Signature

DAIPESS CHALALE

E.L.C.T-DIRA,  
BEGA KWA BEGA,  
P.O.BOX 511,  
IRINGA.

Dear Sir/ madam,

REF: THANKS GIVING FOR SCHOLARSHIP.

Dear Sir/ madam we say thanks bega kwa bega for giving us the scholarship. We are happy for that. We will show cooperation on studying. We are asking them to continue giving us the scholarship. We say thanks for being faithfully.

Yours faithfully

ATHENA KIKOTI

A. Kikoti.

E.L.C.T DIRA  
BEGA KWA BEGA  
P.O.BOX 511,  
IRINGA.

Dear Sir/ Madam;

REF: THANKS GIVING FOR SCHOLARSHIP.

Consider the heading above, I would like to say thanks to you the one who doing this big work of giving me this scholarship may God bless you and my God bless your work in order another day you can help us thank to that.

yours faithfully  
H. R. Mbilinyi

Hebron Rajesh mbilinyi

E.L.C.T DIRA,  
BEGA KWA BEGA,  
P.O.BOX 511,  
IRINGA.

Dear Sir/ madam

REF: THANKS GIVING FOR SCHOLARSHIP

Consider the heading above I would like to thank you for your support since you are doing greatfull job and we all see God bless you all bega kwa bega members for what you did and you are still doing for us and it is my promise that I will work hard and do better in my studies as more as I can so as to make your support valuable. May God bless you all  
Yours faithfully DANIEL KIKOTI

D. Kikoti

## Worship & Music Minutes - November 24, 2025

Present: Pastor Justin, Tora Carlson, Momoh Freeman, Dayna Geisbauer, Diann Huber, Nicki Klanderud, Pam Larson, Kim Raschke, Pat Remer  
Absent: Beth Berger, Julie Johnson

Tora called the meeting to order – Pastor Justin gave devotions.  
Reviewed October 27, 2025 minutes – MSP to accept.

### Old Business:

Children's Sermons :

- Dec. 7 – Sharon Thiel
- Dec. 14 – NONE...Sunday School Christmas Program
- Dec. 21 – NONE...Joint Choir, "Lessons & Carols"
- Dec. 24/5:30 -
- Dec. 28 – Tracy Tolzmann

### Recap Worship Services/Events:

- November 2, All Saints Day...9:00 ILC Worship/Communion/Noisy Offering  
[\$139.76]...11:00, FLC
- November 9...9:00 ILC Worship/Reception of New Members – *Daniel Klinke & Lola Munson, Tyler, Amanda, Cora & Jay Massey, Sara Ohman Family, Mike & Marcy Paulson, Fred & Maureen Peterson, Bri Tompkins*...11:00, FLC
- November 16...9:00 ILC WOW Worship/Banks to 4<sup>th</sup> graders/Communion...11:00, FLC
- November 19, Wednesday...5:30 Advent Family Adventures at ILC. 7 families participated.
- November 23...9:00 ILC Worship...11:00, FLC. Joint choir at both churches
- November 23...2:00 Ecumen Worship with Pastor Justin

### Upcoming Dates:

- November 25, Tuesday...6:30 Joint Thanksgiving Service @ ILC with choir
- November 29...4:30 Taylors Falls Community Choir Vespers Service, Methodist Church
- November 30, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent...9:00 ILC Worship led by Youth Group...11:00, FLC
- November 30...3:00 St. Croix Valley Orchestra Concert @ Methodist Church, Taylors Falls
- November 30...3:00 Decorate Town Hall for upcoming Christmas activities – volunteers, needed
- December 5, Friday...Parent's Shopping Night, 4:30-9:00
- December 6...9:00 – Youth decorate church

- December 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent...9:00 ILC Worship/Communion/Noisy Offering/Holiday Brunch with Craft & Bake Sale...11:00, FLC
- December 12, Friday...Community Meal, 4:30-6:30
- December 13...Santa Day, 2-4:00 at Town Hall
- December 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent...9:00 ILC Worship/SS Christmas Program...  
11:00, FLC Worship/SS Christmas Program
- December 20...Confirmation Lock-In (grades 6-8) – 5:30, Saturday to Sunday morning after worship
- December 21...9:00 ILC Worship/Joint Choir Christmas Service/Communion...11:00, FLC – Joint Choir Christmas Service
- December 24, Christmas Eve...4:00, FLC...5:30 and 10:00 Candlelight Worship/Communion with homemade bread, ILC
- December 28, Pastor Justin will be gone...9:00 ILC Worship – “Christmas in Amador” with Tracy Tolzmann...11:00 FLC
- December 28...2:00 Ecumen Worship – Pat to ask Tracy if he would like to bring a couple of his small band organs for this service

#### LOOKING AHEAD 2026

- Jan. 11 – Lamp-post Sunday
- Feb. 6, Friday – Progressive Dinner, 5-9:00
- Feb. 18 – Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 27, Friday – 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade Lock-In
- March 8 – Day Light Saving Time Begins
- March 22 – Prayer Pillows to Kindergarten
- March 26, Thursday – 5:30-7:30, Holy Week Adventures
- March 29 – Palm Sunday/Sunday School Skit at beginning of service
- April 2 – Maundy Thursday
- April 3 – Good Friday
- April 5 – Easter...6:30 Sunrise Service

Message Board – THANKS to Kim for getting information regarding a vinyl sign and for her design. Worship & Music thought this issue, including new wrought iron lettering and the white front lawn sign should go to Property Committee. However, on further discussion, decided this should go to Church Council. [FYI – Pastor Justin will look at the lawn sign – Pam will check on cost of new letters – Clay will put them up.]

Sampler – March 1, 2026. Not too early to start getting donations for the auction. Do have a 36” Blackstone Grill – a silver tea set was donated, also. We will take donations closer to the event as we do not have room to store them right now. First Lutheran, Rush City has a bell choir which Marco is a ringer...invite them to participate in The Sampler.

Mouse Exterminator – he did not charge. Tora made an Apple Pie, Quilters donated a quilt and he was also to receive a \$100 gas card. Pastor Justin was going to

deliver, but as it worked out, Troy Timmermanis stopped at Immanuel (to check things out) while the Youth Group were making wreaths. Pastor Justin gave him the pie and quilt – a gas card will have to be mailed to him. He was very moved by Immanuel's kindness!

**ILC Band:** Talked of inviting the community to take part – who would take this project on?

**New Business:**

**Worship Team**

- Service formats/hymns are done through December 21, working on Christmas Eve.

Tracy, Merrie & Pat will meet to “freshen up” Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> “Christmas In Amador” service.

**- Advent Season**

- Advent Candle Lighting...Pastor Justin would like participants to share how their theme has affected them in the past year.

Nov. 30/Hope– Youth

Dec. 7/Peace – Tyler, Amanda, Cora & Jay Massey

Dec. 14/Joy – Fenger Family

Dec. 21/Love – Matt & Soua Carlson Family

Dec. 24/Christ Candle

5:30:10:00 – Adam & Amanda Cook Family

December Meeting? NONE

Oil Based Altar Candles – Should be a decision for the Altar Guild – Pat will talk to Diane Rothe.

**Prayer Concerns:**

Pastor led us in prayer for all concerns mentioned.

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 26, 2026

Devotions: Beth

**Christian Ed meeting Minutes – 12/15/25, 6:00pm**

Attended by: Pastor Justin, Teresa, Val, Jenny & Julie

**Old Business:** Briefly reviewed the November minutes

**New Business:**

**Sunday School**

- Christmas program – very simple and it went well
- Advent Adventures – went well, about 30 kids attended along with parent(s), very nice craft – thank you to Cami
- Parent's Night Out on 12/5 went well, there were about 10 kids (5 families)

- Sunday School on 12/21 will be crafts and fun for Jesus's Birthday – all kids will be together in the fellowship hall
- 12/30 – no Sunday School
- Teresa will pack away the extra gifts/bags from Sunday school to the kids (ornaments) – this was completed with help from Jenny & Julie after the meeting
- Talked about moving the costumes – Jenny & Cami have talked about going through the costumes and keeping what gets used, Teresa consolidated items in the big bins in classroom B so that one is empty for costumes, another smaller bin containing leftover candy from Tractor or Treat will be empty after Sunday – we will give the kids the candy at Sunday school
- Coffee money from the Sunday of the program will be given to Sunday School
- Need to get the message out again about offering for Sunday School – they can bring items for the food shelf and/or a small offering of money. The money will go to Soldier's 6 again. Teresa has reminded the kids about this at Sunday school and will ask the other teachers to do the same. It is in the newsletter as well.
- Palm Sunday this year is 3/29 – kids will do a short skit at the beginning of the service again
- Will have Holy Week Adventures again during Holy Week – will look at dates
- Easter is 4/5 – no Sunday School and will do Easter egg hunt for Sunday School after service

### **Milestones**

- Lock in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders w/Lord's Prayer discussion/activities on 2/20/26
- Prayer Pillows for Kindergartners – 3/22/26
- First Communion - will be on Maundy Thursday 4/2/26

### **Adult**

- Confirmation – Wed Evenings, alternating with Youth Group, 5:30pm-7:30pm with light supper
- Confirmation Overnight lock in on Saturday night, 12/20 starting at 5:30pm
- Holy Smokes will not meet in December, will start again on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in January – it will be at Jake's by the Lakes in Center City, in the Igloos
- Chosen Bible Study will probably resume in January

- We have decided on the Christian Ed committee budget, which Pastor will let council know – it will be used for Sunday School curriculum, adult Bible Studies, Bibles for kids and confirmants and activities
- Cradle Roll – need to get the information to Jenny – will have access to some of that on the new Sunday School laptop that was gifted

## **Other**

- Talked about some cubicle storage so that the crafts and things on the current desk could all be stored together, just differently – the desk is falling apart and no one really uses it as a desk. Jenny will take measurements and research where to get it – online, Menards or Walmart. Jenny and Cami have also discussed going through craft items again.

Next meeting will be 1/19/26 at 6pm

## **Stewardship Committee Meeting-December 1, 2025**

Members Present: Cami, Linda, Sharon, Julie, Kris, Pastor Justin

Season of Renewal: Zoom Meeting, January 10, 2026. 9:00

Progressive Dinner: February 6, 2026

Community Dinner; December 12, 2025, 4:30-6:30

Further Community Dinners will be held once a month on the second Friday of the month

Time and Talent Sheets are being compiled. No pledge cards will be used. Members are encouraged to make a personal commitment of giving.

Lamp Post Sunday will be the second Sunday of January.

Thanks will be giving for the Sunday School Program, Community Meal and Advent Brunch.

Next Meeting: January 5, 2026, 10:00

## **Property Committee Minutes December 8, 2025**

No report sent at this time

**Immanuel Lutheran – Church Council Meeting**  
**12/8/25, 6:00 PM**

Members: Amanda Cook, Jeff Lutz, Norm Peterson, Clay Ryberg, Julie Weller, and Pastor Fenger.

Visitor: Marvin Lindgren

Devotions; Julie Weller

Old Business: 1. Community Meal: To start on December 12th and continue on the second Friday of every month.

2. Kitchen in the old basement was cleaned out and made ready for Dan Anderson to start the remodel. 3. Door on the northeast has been replaced.

4. Donations of over \$5,000 will be deposited into investment account.

New Business:

1. Motion made and seconded to pay Carlie Lindgren of First Lutheran who has been doing our power points for our church \$1700 per year out of our Shared Ministries account.

2. MSP to purchase biodegradable cups to be used for hot liquids. These will be purchased from a donation, for this specific use.

MSP to accept committee reports.

Offering securer:

Sunday January 4- Amanda Cook

January 11-Clay Ryberg

January 18-Clay Ryberg

January 25-Julie Weller

Communion Services

January 4th Amanda Clay Ryberg Julie Weller

18 Norm Peterson Jeff Lutz Julie Weller

Next meeting January 13th at 6:00pm

Devotions: Norm

Adjourned, closed with The Lords Prayer

# Immanuel Lutheran Church      January 2026

37515 Park Trail  
Almelund, MN 55012-7511  
Change Service Requested

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Companion to Itonya Congregation -  
Tanzania, Africa  
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web site: [www.immanuelalmelund.com](http://www.immanuelalmelund.com)

Pastor: Justin Fenger 651-308-7717; pastor@immanuelalmelund.com

Administrative Assistant/Financial Recorder:

Mark Weslander 651-431-8941; office@immanuelalmelund.com

Financial Secretary: Kyle Hendrickson

651-717-8804; financial@immanuelalmelund.com

Custodial: Kim's Kleaning

Organist/Choral Director: Momoh Freeman

Accompanist: Pat Remer

Cemetery Groundskeeper: Daryl Abrahamson  
(651)674-2419; Julie.I.abrahamson@gmail.com

Youth Group: Jason Fredlund 651-208-5915,  
DeeDee Fredlund 651-206-1190

Sunday School: Teresa Carlson 651-214-9531

Our Mission Statement:

**A welcoming community rooted in Christ,  
Growing in faith and serving with joy!**

Non-Profit  
Organization  
Permit #5  
Center City, MN  
55012