



IMMANUEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALMELUND, MN

MESSENGER

March

2026



40 PNG
MARCH

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The monthly newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Almelund, MN

Lent has a reputation. For many of us it's the season of *giving something up*—chocolate, soda, late-night scrolling, the extra treat at the gas station checkout. And that's not a bad thing. Fasting has always been one of the church's ways of making room for God. But this year I keep coming back to a slightly different word: decreasing.



Not increasing my spiritual résumé. Not adding another “should.” Not making Lent one more project to manage. Instead: decreasing... by purging the clutter.

I say this with my eyes looking at my desk—papers everywhere. And my computer desktop—files stacked like a digital junk drawer. And my phone—apps upon apps upon apps. Even the TV now has apps. My bookshelves are full, and if I'm honest, some of those books have papers stuffed in them... and the papers have other papers. Somewhere in there are good ideas, half ideas, and “someday” ideas.

You might say, “Pastor, you're just busy.” And yes, life is full. Ministry is full. Family is full. The world is loud.

But if I'm going to be truthful, sometimes it's not busyness, it's deficiency. I collect books because somewhere deep down I'm afraid I'm not smart enough. Maybe that next book will finally make me “enough.”

I collect files because I'm afraid I don't have the right idea yet. Maybe if I can just find one great idea, maybe my life will count.

I collect apps because I keep hoping *this* will be the system that fixes everything, calendar, finances, health, email, habits, all of it. The promised land is always one download away.

And the result? A thousand little things competing for my attention, each one promising gold, yet most of them delivering a kind of exhaustion that feels like mediocrity with extra steps.

So this Lent I'm wondering if the most faithful thing I can do isn't just “fasting,” but letting go.

Letting go of clutter, yes.

But also letting go of what the clutter is often hiding:

Regrets. Mistakes. Old labels. The dream that didn't happen.

The version of myself I thought I had to become to be worthy.

And maybe saying, quietly, in the presence of God: It's okay.

Because the real goal of Lent isn't self-improvement. It's surrender.

It's "less of me... and more of Jesus."

My stuff takes time—organizing, sorting, saving, maintaining, moving piles from one place to another. And all that time can become a thief. It steals attention that could be turned outward—toward creation, toward neighbor, toward prayer, toward the simple gift of being present.

So yes... I'm thinking about going to the thrift shop this Lent—Macklemore style—but with a twist: instead of buying, I'm going to give away. Not because stuff is evil, but because I want to remember what's true: Jesus doesn't measure your life by how much you accumulate.

Jesus measures your life by love.

And love needs space.

John the Baptist puts it perfectly when he says of Jesus:

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

That's Lent in one sentence.

Less of me trying to prove I'm enough.

More of Jesus reminding me I already belong.

So here's a gentle Lenten invitation for all of us:

Pick one small place to purge this week—a drawer, a shelf, a corner, a folder on your computer, a handful of apps, a pile of papers. While you do it, pray something simple:

"Lord Jesus, clear what clutters, heal what haunts, and teach me to live lighter with you." "Jesus, make room in me."

Lent is not about becoming impressive. It's about becoming honest.

It's not about adding more. It's about returning to the One who already gave everything.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Justin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holy Smokes Is Back!

Mark, your calendars - Holy Smokes is coming back to Jake's on the Lakes on Thursday, March 26 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!

Parish Care Team will meet March 2, 2026, at 9:00am

Hannah Circle (ILC's new women's circle) will meet Wednesday, March 4th at 6:00 PM. This month's activity will be making floral arrangements. If you are new to the circle, please contact Amanda Cook to RSVP 612-978-1204

Prayer Shawl Update

Prayer Shawl is meeting again every 1st & 3rd Wednesday at 1:30 pm in the Fireside Room. We knit, crochet, have tea with a treat and enjoy fellowship while relaxing to music. You are invited to come and check out the array of yarn and colors, pick some out and join us. If you haven't had the opportunity of learning how to knit or crochet, and would like to give it a try, we would be happy to help you get started. All supplies are available. Shelves continue to overflow with donations of yarn!! Bundles have been put together for future prayer shawls and are available for anyone to pick up and be creative.

Please call Joanne at 651-278-2686 with any questions.

If you are creating shawls on your own and bringing them in, please put them in the bins on the floor in Room C closet so they can be blessed at the next scheduled Dedication.

Also, there are many shawls available in Room C for gifting & you are encouraged to give them to anyone in need of feeling God's presence and comfort. Please sign the sheet you'll find there and take a card for gifting. Gift bags & tissue paper are available for you to use.

Stewardship will meet on March 2 at 10am in the Fireside Room.

Sarah Circle will meet on March 24 at 9:30 at church.

WELCA meeting dates for 2026-

April 12, after church - Naomi Circle in charge

July 12, after church - Sarah Circle in charge

October 11, after church - Naomi Circle in charge

January 11, 2027, Sarah Circle in charge

The Immanuel Quilters. We will meet Tuesday, March 10th, 10am-2pm, with a noon potluck lunch. If you have a 2026 high school graduate in your family be sure and notify the church office! We're busy sewing quilts for the upcoming graduates. Our group is also looking for new places to donate our many tied quilts. If you have a suggestion, please let our group know or give me a call. We're also sewing small flannel receiving blankets. If you know of anyone who could use a warm quilt during these cold winter days, please talk to any quilter-we have many to share! Stay warm and hope to see you Tuesday, March 10th!

Martha Strecker. 651-341-3885

New! Sermon Note Art

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.

Attention 2026' Graduates

Please notify the church office at (651)583-2340, if you are graduating from High School or College. We would like to know. Also, please fill out a scholarship application form outside the church office.

Attention Sunday school kids and parents

We do collect a Sunday school offering on Sundays in 2 ways. Food can be brought for the Food Shelf or a monetary offering will be given to Soldier's 6 who train dogs for soldiers and first responders.

Special events coming up:

3/22 - 8:15am, Holy Week Adventures in the fellowship hall until church starts and later at Sunday school that day, Prayer pillows at church that day for Kindergartners

3/27 - Lock in 3rd-5th grade, 5pm-9pm

3/29 - Palm Sunday - participate in worship

For Calendar

- No Sunday School on March 8th

- March 22nd - 8:15am Holy Week Adventures for Sunday school

- March 22nd - Prayer Pillows for Kindergartners

- March 27th - 3rd-5th grade lock in 5-9pm

Youth Group News

Heggies pizza sales are starting!!

There's a few new flavors this year along with all your other favorites!

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, March 16; The third Monday of the month.

PROOFREADING:

Of newsletter Wednesday, March 18 @ 11:00; in the Fireside Room.

NEWSLETTER ASSEMBLY:

Will be Friday, March 20 @ 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 YOU

Thank you to the Quilters for their donation/contribution from Alice Burnside's fabric, to the Prayer Pillows project, and thank you to Connie Linder for her donation of polar fleece to this project as well.

- Christian Ed Committee

Thank you to all of you for your cards, prayers, and well wishes following Steve's recent heart surgery. Pastor Justin for his hospital visit and the prayer shawl he received. We are truly blessed with a wonderful church family.

Thank you again,

Steve and Laurie Peterson

To: Prayer Shawl Group

Thank you so much for the beautiful shawl. Please keep me in your prayers.

Doris Mullins

Jason, Dee and Hailey, Thank you for all you do with the youth of our church and community. It is truly appreciated. The service on Sunday, February 1 was terrific,

Thank you to all the members who served on committees and boards in the church this past year. Thank you to all who will be taking on these new leadership roles next year and to all who will continue in their roles. You

are a big part of keeping our church running smoothly, lovingly, and compassionately.

Stewardship Committee

Fri., Mar 13 4:30-6:30

Community Dinner

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

*Immanuel Lutheran Church
Almelund*

Come & Bring a Friend!

2nd Friday Each Month 4:30—6:30 pm



ALMELUND SAMPLER

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT
ALMELUND APPLEFEST
Every dollar raised helps
provide LIVE MUSICAL
ENTERTAINMENT
for the Fall Festival (Applefest)

Community Event Sunday

March 1st

Come for the music. Stay for the treats. Join
the fun at the auction!



Music

1:00 PM



Live Local Music to
enjoy

Fill your bellies with
desserts



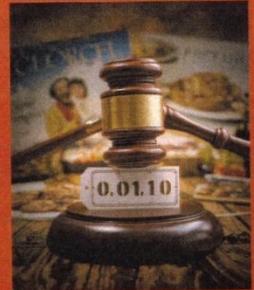
Dessert

2:30 PM

Auction

3:00 PM

Join us for the live
auction called by
LeeAnn Vandekamp
Featuring a variety of
great items including
travel, activities, and
food.



Trinity Lutheran Church – North Branch

Annual LENTEN FISH FRY

Fridays 5-7 p.m. | Feb. 20-March 27, 2026

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT

Fish
Hand-cut Fries
Coleslaw
Dessert
Coffee & Milk

Pop for \$1.50

Meatless spaghetti also available!



TRINITY

Lutheran Church
NORTH BRANCH

38460 Lincoln Trl
North Branch, MN
651-674-7047



Chisago County

Now offering

TAKE-OUT!

\$15 Adults

\$5 Kids age 5-10

Kids under 5 FREE!

Proceeds support

Viking Vittles

Weekend backpack food program

COMMUNITY EVENTS

SUNDAY HISTORY TALKS

Chisago County One-Room Schools

At one time Chisago County had 61 school districts and today there are only two! Join us for a program on Sunday, March 15 at 3 p.m. at the Amador Town Hall for more information and a wide variety of photographs. If you have Chisago County school pictures, yearbooks or other memorabilia, feel free to bring them along. If you have a story about attending a one-room school please share it with us!

Mark your calendars! These programs are free and open to the public!

More First Lutheran Events, TF

Quilting 9:30am - 11:00am First and Third Wednesdays of the month. No experience needed! New quilters welcome!

Hello!

My name is Eleanor Brinsko and my dad, David Peterson, was in a few years ago to do research on my Carlman family members. Many of my Carlman ancestors are buried in the church cemetery.

My great-grandmother, Anna Carlman, grew up in Almelund and was just featured in a social media video made by The Nordic Genealogist, Shanna Lund (cc'd in this email). The link can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1ATvm8yWVp/>

Shanna used the information from Anna's personal memoirs, and it is accompanied by pictures of the farm, confirmation picture from the church, and additional family photographs of the Carlman family. In the memoirs, Anna referred to Immanuel Lutheran as "Almelund Church" and we kept that in the narration.

Is this file/video something that you might be interested in? Shanna gave me access to the original file so it wouldn't have to be saved off of Facebook.

Thanks!

Eleanor Brinsko



Easter Memorial

Funds will be used for altar flowers & worship supplies throughout the year; or you may give to a memorial fund of your choice. Please return this form to the church, along with your contribution by or before Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026 Make check to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Easter Memorial Garden.

Thank you.

*Note: Forms turned in by the deadline will be included in the Easter Sunday memorials brochure in the bulletin, those turned in after Palm Sunday will be listed in the bulletin on the Sunday after Easter.
Thank You.*

Your Name: _____

Name of person(s) to be remembered or honored:

Easter Memorial Garden Fund

Sanctuary Flowers & Worship Supplies, including Candles, Communion Supplies, Linen upkeep, etc.

Other memorial fund, (please Circle one)

Christian Education; Building Fund; Youth Group Mission Trips; Scholarships; Prayer Shawl Ministry; Immanuel Quilters; Parish Care Team; Africa Support/African Student Scholarships; Archives; Technology; Library; Music; Landscaping; Cemetery Perpetual Care; Altar Guild; Undesignated donations will be placed in the Easter Memorial Garden Fund.



March Birthdays

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 Kelsey Anderson
- 3 Janice Elkerton
- 4 Carol Freed
- 5 Richard Wagner
- 7 Amanda Massey
- 8 Kurt Wyandt, Charlotte Newman, Brackon Kennedy
- 9 Travis Mohn, Evalynn Parades
- 10 Teresa Carlson, Mikayla Jasmer, Jessica Thelander, Deborah Olson
- 11 Lori Haag, Alicia Still
- 13 Mark Weslander
- 17 Valerie Lutz
- 18 Destani Peltier, Rose Rambo
- 20 Max Swenson
- 21 Bri Tompkins
- 22 Christine Schumacher, Julie Weller
- 23 Linda Peterson
- 24 Kristy Elkerton, Daniel Klinke, Fred Peterson
- 29 Wyatt Wiberg
- 30 Alan Olson, Nick Rothe, Franklin Woodruff

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue 9:00-3:00 Office Hours
<p>1 Second Sunday of Lent Food Shelf Sunday 9:00 Wors Live and online W/Noisy Offering; Sunday School after Children's Sermon. 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service 1:00 Almelund Sampler</p>	<p>2 9:00 Parish Care Team Meets 10:00 WOW Practice 10:00 Stewardship Meets</p>	<p>3 9:00 Worship Team 5:00 Choir Practice @ FELC</p>
<p>8 Third Sunday of Lent DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIME 9:00 Worship Service Live and Online; 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service</p>	<p>9 10:00 WOW Practice 5:00 Property Meeting 6:00 Council Meeting</p>	<p>10 9:00 Worship Team 10-2 Quilters meet W/potluck at noon 5:00 Choir Practice @ ILC</p>
<p>15 Fourth Sunday of Lent 8:15 Holy Week Adventures 9:00 WOW Communion Worship Live and Online W/Sunday School after Children's Sermon 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service 3:00 <u>SUNDAY HISTORY TALKS</u> <u>Chisago County One-Room Schools</u></p>	<p>16 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:00 Chris. Ed.</p>	<p>17 ST. PATRICKS DAY 9:00 Worship Team 9:30 Naomi Circle Meets 5:00 Choir Practice @ FELC</p>
<p>22 Fifth Sunday of Lent 8:15 Holy Week Adv. For Sun. Sch. 9:00 Joint Choir Worship Service Live and online; Sunday Sch. after Child's. Serm. Prayer Pillows for Kindergartners 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service PICK-UP NEWSLETTERS</p>	<p>23 5:00 Worship & Music Meets</p>	<p>24 9:00 Worship Team 9:30 Sarah Circle Meets 5:00 Choir Practice @ ILC</p>
<p>29 Palm Sunday - First Communion 9:00 Joint Choir Wors. Live and online; Sunday School after Children's Sermon. Youth Breakfast after church 11:00 First Ev. Lutheran Service</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 9:00 Worship Team 5:00 Choir Practice @ FELC</p>

Wed	Thu	Fri 9:00-3:00 Office Hours	Sat
<p>4 11:00 Service @ First W/Lunch following 1:30 Prayer Shawl Meets 5:30 Lenten Supper @ ILC 6:30 Service @ ILC 6:00 Hannah Circle Meets 6:00 Youth Meets</p>	<p>5 Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran</p>	<p>6 Bulletin Printed World Day of Prayer</p>	<p>7 2AM SET CLOCKS AHEAD 1 HOUR</p>
<p>11 11:00 Service @ First W/Lunch following 5:30 Lenten Supper @ ILC 6:30 Service @ ILC</p>	<p>12 Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran</p>	<p>13 Bulletin Printed 4:30-6:30 Community Meal</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>18 11:00 Newsletter is ready for proof reading 11:00 Service @ First W/Lunch following 1:30 Prayer Shawl Meets 5:00 Memorial Meeting 5:30 Lenten Supper @ ILC 6:30 Service @ ILC 5:30-7:00 Confirmation 6:00 Youth Meets</p>	<p>19 Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran</p>	<p>20 Bulletin Printed 10:00 Newsletter Assembly</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>25 11:00 Service @ First W/Lunch following 5:30 Lenten Supper @ ILC 6:30 Service @ ILC 5:30-7:00 Confirmation</p>	<p>26 Bulletin Deadline 9:00 am Wisdom Seekers @ First Lutheran 6:30 Holy Smokes @ Jakes on the Lakes</p>	<p>27 Bulletin Printed 5pm-9am 3rd -5th grade Lock-in</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>1 1:30 Prayer Shawl Meets 6:00 Hannah Circle Meets</p>	<p>2 MAUNDY THURSDAY 6:30 Service @ILC</p>	<p>3 GOOD FRIDAY Bulletin Printed 3:00 Service @ FELC</p>	<p>4</p>

Thank you to those helping with the Worship Services!

	Mar 1	Mar 8	Mar 15	Mar 22	Mar 29
Scripture Reader	Norm Peterson	Vickie Johnson	Marco Sherve	Youth Group	Chris Schumacher
Ushers	Zach Rivard	Zach Rivard	Zach Rivard	Zach Rivard	Zach Rivard
Sound Tech	Nancy Nadeau	Loraine Rue	Nancy Nadeau	Julie Johnson	Julie Johnson
Camera Tech	Matt Oknich	Dave Rue	Jodi Johnson-Waldemar	Vern Johnson	Vern Johnson
Children's Sermon	Amanda Cook	Jason Fredlund	Hailey Rivard	Youth Group	None
Coffee Servers		Cami & Linda		Hannah Circle	Youth
Teachers	Valerie Lutz Cami Peltier Katie Fenger	No Sunday School	Dana Johnson Cami Peltier Teresa Carlson	Valerie Lutz Amanda Cook Katie Fenger	Cami Peltier Teresa Carlson Dana or Val

Communion Servers:

Sunday, Mar 1st- Clay Ryberg, Julie Weller, Amanda Cook

Sunday, Mar 15th- **TO BE ANNOUNCED**

Communion Wine - Wild Mountain Winery

Communion Wafers now used

Reader Coordinator **March:** Pat Noyes

Altar Guild: **March:** Loraine Rue & Julie Weller

Financial Recorder's Report for Year to Date of January 2026

Code	Fund	1/31/2026	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
1	GENERAL	\$ 12,041.00	\$ 12,041.00	\$17,408.00
2	UNDESIGNATED	\$ 242.50	\$ 242.50	\$455.00
3	SYNOD	\$ 450.00	\$ 450.00	
4	LUTHER POINT	\$ 170.00	\$ 170.00	
5	LUTH. SOC. SERV.	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$20.00
6	ITONYA TANZANIA MISSION	\$-	\$-	\$100.00
7	WORLD HUNGER	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00	
10	LOOSE	\$ 340.00	\$ 340.00	\$453.00
11	FELLOWSHIP DINNERS	\$-	\$-	
12	LENT	\$-	\$-	
13	MAUNDY THURSDAY	\$-	\$-	
14	GOOD FRIDAY	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	
15	EASTER	\$-	\$-	
16	THANKSGIVING	\$-	\$-	
17	CHRISTMAS	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	
18	USE OF CHURCH	\$-	\$-	
20	NOISY OFFERING	\$ 101.79	\$ 101.79	
21	BUILDING FUND	\$ 194.50	\$ 194.50	\$105.00
22	CdFee	\$ 28.50	\$ 28.50	\$11.70
23	SAMPLER			
24	CHRISTIAN ED			
26	SHARE MINISTRY	\$ 2,130.00	\$ 2,130.00	\$-
27	Grants			\$-
30	YOUTH GROUP	\$-	\$-	\$-
31	YOUTH MISSION TRIP	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$-
33	WELCA	\$-	\$-	\$-
34	WORSHIP & MUSIC	\$-	\$-	
36	QUILTERS MINISTRY	\$-	\$-	
40	FOOD SHELF	\$-	\$-	\$-
50	ENDOWMENT FUND			
60	SPECIAL DONATIONS			
90	MEMORIAL	\$-	\$-	
91	MEMORIAL GARDEN	\$-	\$-	
92	ALL SAINTS	\$-	\$-	
97	Fund Transfers	\$-	\$-	

Totals

\$ 16,068.29 \$ 16,068.29 \$18,552.70

A background image showing a bright sun on the left side, with rays of light shining across a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall color palette is warm, with yellows, oranges, and soft blues.

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 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!

Worship & Music Minutes - January 26, 2026

Present: Pastor Justin, Tora Carlson, Dayna Geisbauer, Diann Huber, Nicki Klanderud, Pam Larson, Kim Raschke, Pat Remer

Absent: Beth Berger, Momoh Freeman

Tora called the meeting to order and gave devotions.

Reviewed November 24, 2025 minutes – MSP to accept.

Old Business:

Children's Sermons:

- Jan. 4 – Jeske * Jan 11 – Sharon * Jan. 18 – Jason * Jan. 25 – Amanda

- Feb. 1 – Youth Group * Feb. 8 – Amanda * Feb. 15 – Hailey Rivard * Feb. 22 –

None

Recap Worship Services/Events:

Advent/Christmas: The Youth Group started the season by leading the Worship Service for the first Sunday of Advent. The Youth and 5 families participated in Lighting of the Advent Candles. After reading their lighting liturgy, families were asked to give a 1-2 minute reflection on that candle's theme - their sharing moments were especially nice and from the heart! Thank You to all those who helped with this special part of worship! Sunday School's Christmas Program was GREAT – always a treat to hear and see the kids playing those colorful Kristal Bells – that same Sunday, First Lutheran had their Congregational Sunday School Christmas Program with the Joint Choir adding to this LOVELY service. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Joint Choir presented the Christmas Story through "Lessons and Carols" in preparation for Christmas Eve – many compliments on this service! Candlelight/Communion Worship Services! Several times were available for worship – First Lutheran offered 4:00 & 9:00 – Immanuel...5:30 & 10:00 with Marco Sherve & Mark Weslander as worship assistants. **For 2026** - Decided to change ILC's late service time to 10:30, allowing Pastor Justin time to get from First to ILC. "*Christmas Lessons and Carols with Reflections from Martin Luther*" with Tracy Tolzmann providing music with various "Street Organs" and Merrie adding her voice made for a Very Special Sunday after Christmas.

- Jan. 4 – 9:00 ILC Worship/Communion/Noisy Offering [**\$101.79**]...11:00, First

- Jan. 7 – Welcome Hannah Circle!! About 9 attended.

- Jan. 9 – Community Dinner, 4:30-6:30 @ ILC – Good Turnout with about 47.

- Jan. 11 – 9:00 ILC Lamp-post Sunday...11:00, First

- Jan. 18 – 9:00 ILC WOW Service/Communion...11:00, First

- Jan. 25 – 9:00 ILC Worship...11:00, First – Joint Choir @ both. Enjoy and appreciate the choir!

- Jan. 25 – 2:00 Ecumen Worship

Upcoming Dates:

- Feb. 1 – 9:00 ILC Worship/Communion/Noisy Offering/Youth Leads Service...11:00, First

- Feb. 6, Friday – ILC Progressive Dinner, 5-9:00
 - Feb. 8 – 9:00 ILC Worship/Blessing of the Prayer Shawls...11:00, First
 - Feb. 13, Friday – Community Dinner, 4:30-6:30 @ ILC
 - Feb. 15 – Lions Sweetheart Breakfast! 8-Noon @ Shafer Township Hall
 - Feb. 15, Transfiguration Sunday – ILC WOW Service/Communion...11:00, First
 - Feb. 18, Ash Wednesday – 11:00, First...6:30, ILC
 - Feb. 22 – 9:00 Shortened ILC Worship Service/**ANNUAL MEETING** immediately following...
11:00 First – Joint Choir @ Both
 - Feb. 22 – 2:00 Ecumen Worship
 - Feb. 25, Wed. Lenten Worship, 11:00 - 12:00 Meal First...ILC 5:30 Meal, **Group D**, 6:30 Worship
- As per Worship & Music, it was decided that whatever group is in charge of the upcoming Memorial Day Dinner will have the 1st Lenten Supper.
- Feb. 26 – 6:30, Holy Smokes @ Jakes on the Lakes
 - Feb. 27, Friday – 3-5th Grade Lock-In – **DATE MOVED to March 20.**
 - March 1 – 9:00 ILC Worship/Communion/Noisy Offering...11:00, First
 - March 1 – **ALMELUND SAMPLER**...1:00 – Concert...To Be Asked: Chisago City Ukulele Band – haven't heard back yet - (they provided music for 2025 World Day of Prayer @ Ecumen), Good Neighbors Ukulele Band, Trinity Lindstrom Praise Band (would like more music from them this year!), Don Moyer, Bell Ringers from Rush City First Lutheran, Joint Choir, WOW group...3:00 – Auction w/ LeeAnn Vande Kamp... Need to get serious about items for this! A 36" Blackstone Grill, Silver Tea Set, two Wild Mountain Super Passes for 2, Quilt, Pie of the Month, and Bread of the Month have been donated. Worship & Music to serve refreshments.
 - March 4, Wed. Lenten Worship, 11:00 - 12:00 Meal First...ILC 5:30 Meal, **Group E**, 6:30 Worship
 - March 8 – Day Light Saving Time Begins
 - March 8 – 9:00 ILC Worship...11:00, First
 - March 11, Wed. Lenten Worship, 11:00 -12:00 Meal First...ILC 5:30 Meal, **Group A**, 6:30 Worship
 - March 13 – Community Dinner, 4:30-6:30
 - March 15 – 9:00 ILC WOW Service/Communion...11:00, First
 - March 18, Wed. Lenten Worship, 11:00 – 12:00 Meal First...ILC 5:30 Meal, **Group B**, 6:30 Worship
 - March 22 – 9:00 ILC Youth Leads Worship/Prayer Pillows to Kindergartners...11:00, First
 - March 22 – 2:00 Ecumen Worship
 - March 25, Wed. Lenten Worship, 11:00 – 12:00 Meal First...ILC 5:30 Meal, **Group C**, 6:30 Worship
 - March 26, Thursday – 5:30-7:30, Holy Week Adventures...6:30, Holy Smokes @ Jakes on the Lakes
 - March 29 – 9:00 ILC Palm Sunday/Sunday School Skit at beginning of service/Youth Group Breakfast...11:00, First – Joint Choir @ Both!

- April 2, Maundy Thursday – 6:30, ILC/Joint Choir/First Communion for Third Graders/Stripping of the Altar
- April 3, Good Friday – 3:00, First
- April 4, Saturday – Possible 7:00pm Easter Vigil at Becky Hulden’s home
- April 5, Easter Sunday – 6:30 ILC Sunrise Service starting at the Labyrinth, Worship & Music serves coffee/treats – 9:00 Easter Service/Communion/Joint Choir/Brass...11:00 First Easter Service/Joint Choir/Brass

Sampler – March 1, 2026, Fundraiser for Apple Festival Entertainment

- 1:00 – Concert...need an MC
- 2:30 – Refreshments served by Worship & Music. Time to get bidding numbers.
- 3:00 – Live Auction called by LeeAnn Vande Kamp - **anyone can donate or help get items**...have 36-inch Blackstone Grill; Silver Tea Service; 2 “Superday Passes for 2” to Wild Mountain; Quilt; Pie of the Month; Bread of the Month; - need a flyer...Pastor Justin will do this
- need 2 people to hand out bidding numbers - need people to help LeeAnn with auction

New Business:

Worship Team:

- Service formats/hymns are done through February 22nd
- Holden Evening Prayer and Lent in the Box will be used for Wednesday Lenten Services.

St. Croix Sacred Ensemble: Immanuel has an opportunity to host a unique worship service – available dates are April 12, 19 or May 3. They suggested 2 formats - decided on a service of hymns interspersed with reflective readings as a “Singing Sermon”. Discussed May 3 as Pastor Justin will be gone for a military commitment. Would they be interested in going to First, if First is interested in having them come? Pat has been in contact with their director, Deborah Fristad and will get more info.

Order Banners for Christmas & Epiphany: Decided on three – Nativity & Epiphany scenes which go together and a white banner for festivals/celebrations etc. Cost is \$188 each with monies coming from the Worship & Music budget.

Prayer Concerns: Pastor Justin led us in prayer for all concerns mentioned.

Next Scheduled Meeting: February 23, 2026

Devotions: Momoh

Memorial Committee Meeting Minutes January 25th, 2026

Meeting called to order at 10:10 AM by Chair Gwen Swenson
Present: Joanne Johnson, Vickie Johnson, Ashley Larkin, Connie Linder, Gwen Swenson, and Clay Ryberg (Church Council Representative)
Minutes of the November 10th meeting were approved, the Treasurer's report was accepted.

Old Business:

Memorial received 3 applications from last fall's mailing of the Mission Investment program. Going forward, parents of all children baptized at Immanuel Lutheran will receive Mission Investment program information when they meet with Pastor to prepare for their child's upcoming baptism. Scholarship funds have been disbursed to three of the 2025-2026 Memorial Scholarship award recipients.

Memorial Committee provided a dedicated hand-out for the Lamp Post Sunday event held January 11th. Additional copies are available for distribution as needed/requested throughout the year.

Committee briefly discussed the 2026 Annual meeting (Sunday, February 22nd) and the submitted Memorial Committee report.

New Business:

Scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 school year are available from the church office; information to be included in the upcoming monthly newsletters. All applications must be received by late April.

Memorial Committee is requesting that the new donation fund categories be used for the 2026 Easter Memorial Garden form. Committee would like this document to appear in both the March and April newsletter's. Vickie will reach out to Mark regarding.

Per Clay (Council Liaison) a request has been made for \$300 in Memorial funds for the purchase of a small (Roomba-style) automatic vacuum for use in the in areas of the building which are not part of the current cleaning contract (ie. under the pews in the sanctuary, etc). Request was approved with funds coming from Undesignated category of Memorial monies.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM

Next meeting dates are scheduled as follows: Wednesday, March 18th at 5:00 PM (Fireside Room), and Monday, May 4th at 5:00 PM (Fireside Room)

Christian Ed meeting Minutes - 2/16/26, 6pm

Attended by: Pastor Justin, Teresa, Val & Jenny

Old Business: Reviewed January Meeting minutes

New Business:

Sunday School

- Holy Week Adventures
 - 8:15am, Sunday March 22nd for lesson with Pastor, meet in fellowship hall and have donuts (Teresa will pick up donuts)
 - Then kids go up for church with parents
 - At Sunday School time, kids will go downstairs for that week's lesson time and for a Holy week craft together
 - Communications to families - Justin will announce in church each Sunday, leading up to it, and Teresa will ask Mark to put in the March newsletter, and all bulletins leading up to that day. Justin will also send out a postcard to families
- Palm Sunday 3/29 - Sunday School participates with a skit at the beginning of church from the back, then process with Palm branches
 - Should we have the kids play bells? If so, who wants to do it with them?
 - Teresa found the skit in an email, saved in Word and printed, made copies for each teacher, each part & a couple extra, left in Classroom B and Teresa texted the teachers so that they can pick up their copies. Will talk about which kids would be available to read, etc. and make sure they have copies before that day. Give a copy to Worship & Music, since we don't know about choir/congregation Parts & songs.
 - No Sunday School on March 8th (North Branch and Chisago start Spring Break week) Will have Sunday school on March 15th.
 - Easter, April 5th - no Sunday School
 - Will do an Easter Egg Hunt again, outside if weather permits, otherwise in church But still splitting age groups
 - Have plenty of Easter eggs, Teresa has some toys (60 or so) and will order more to fill the eggs, and maybe some candy too.
 - Can fill eggs at the March 16th CE meeting
 - Soldier's 6 - offering will go there again, and have reached out to see about a visit on April 19th or May 17th, which are good days for Pastor as he would like to meet them this time. Would like to do a special offering for them that day as well.
- New leadership

- Will start with VBS, which Beth may help with again or may be interested in doing

That will be Aug 10th-14th (after Threshing show again)

- New Sunday School leader may lead VBS as well

Milestones

- March 22nd - Prayer Pillows for Kindergartners, we have, and there are 3 kids this time Special Thank you from CE for the donation/contribution of fabric from the quilting group that came from Alice Burnside's fabric donation and to Connie Linder for the donation of polar fleece for this project too.

- Lock in for 3rd-5th Graders w/Lord's Prayer lesson will be March 27th, 5-9pm

- Food - Julie 40 hot dogs, watermelon & brownies or bars

Val - hot dog fixings, buns & juice

Teresa - chips & help Julie with brownies/bars

- Help - Julie, Val & Teresa should be able to be there

- 1st Communion bread making, Pastor Justin and families on Palm Sunday afternoon

- 1st Communion for 3rd graders - Maunday Thursday, April 2nd

Adult

- Confirmation/Youth Retreat this weekend, Feb 20-22 at Luther Point, Confirmation class on hiatus until after Lent, kids and families should come to Lent Wednesday eve services

- Lent services start this Wednesday for Ash Wednesday, with 11am at TF and 6:30pm at Immanuel

- Holy Smokes - at Jake's by the Lakes, Thursday Feb 26th, 6:30pm

- Chosen Bible Study to start in March

Other

- Cradle Roll - still need to follow up with JoAnne Johnson

- Laptop is ready to use for Sunday school, has lessons and the related videos on it

- Pastor will order the new cubicle storage for all classrooms

Stewardship Meeting February 2, 2026

Members Present Kris, Natalee, Cami, Linda, Julie and Pastor Justin

Devotions: Natalee

Old Business:

Progressive Dinner will be February 6. Next year we will plan one for later in the year and include First Lutheran when planning it.

Community Dinner will be February 13, and menu will be chili.

Next Community Dinner will be March 13, and the menu will be hot dishes.

The church directory will be updated and printed after the annual meeting. It will include membership information plus other church information. It will be updated yearly.

New Business:

Thanks this month will go to Jason, Dee, and Hailey. It will also go to those who have played leadership roles in our church this past year and to those who will be leading our church next year.

Season of Renewal Meeting: February 16, 10:00.

Synod Conference of Assembly Meeting will be held February 14, 2026. We can send 6 delegates from our church. This is where names are suggested for our new synod president. Some from our church will be going, On April 12, there will be a meet the candidates meeting. During the May 15 Synod Convention, the new bishop will be elected. Our Synod delegates will be going to this.

Next Meeting: March 2, 10:00 Devotions: Cami

Property Committee Minutes February 9, 2026

Present Don Noyes, David Rue, Norm Peterson, Scott Olson, Bob Rotnhe, Pastor Justin, Julie Weller, Perry Lindberg

Meeting Called to Order by Norm @ 5:00 pm

Old Business

Dan Anderson has started working on renovation in old Kitchen

Discussion what to do with floor in old Kitchen

Unwanted desk in class room will be removed

Mats have been placed outside south west & north west entrances

New Business

Question on Heating in old Basement [slow to heat up]

Countertop in fellowship hall going to be temporary repaired

Meeting adjourned @ 5:21

Submitted by Perry Lindberg

Immanuel Church Council Minutes

February 9, 2026

Members present:

Amanda Cook, Pastor Justin Fenger, Clay Larson, Jeff Lutz, Norm Peterson, Clay Ryberg, Julie Weller

The meeting was called to order by Julie Weller at 6:05. Devotions: Led by Norm Peterson

A Motion to approve Prior Meeting Minutes was made by Amanda Cook and seconded by Clay Larson. MSP

Old Business:

Season of Renewal (SOR) will meet on 2/16 and vote In the 3 goals and discuss breakout plans.

Shared Ministry will meet 3/26 to discuss what will be brought before the congregation prior to vote in April.

The Robotic Vacuum purchase has been approved for use in high traffic areas. Once ordered, a reimbursement will be issued to the purchaser from Memorial.

Restoration is underway and Dan is working on demo and clean up.

Lamp Post no updates were presented but the table is open to any group to present each Sunday.

Compostable Coffee Cups & Garbage Bags are being used and more are to be ordered.

Office hours will be reduced to Tuesday and Friday for the time being.

New Business:

Conference assembly is Saturday 2/14, Beth Berger, Linda Peterson, and Julie Weller are scheduled to attend.

A request for use of the church was submitted by Momoh and Amy for wedding rehearsal and dinner June 19, and 4-H sewing in February.

Requests were approved.

Hiram Lodge is collecting and matching donations for family pathways. A motion to donate \$500 from tithing outside our walls was made by Norm Peterson and seconded by Clay Larson. MSP.

All monthly reports and meeting materials were reviewed and a motion to approve all committee reports was made by Amanda Cook and seconded by Norm Peterson. MSP.

Offering Securer:

Mar 1 Clay R; Mar 15 TBD; Mar 22 TBD; Mar 29 TBD

Wed Lenten Services at ILC Amanda

Communion Servers: (3 needed unless otherwise indicated)

Feb 18 Julie W, Amanda; Mar 15 TBD

The next meeting will be held March 9, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Devotions for next month's meeting: Julie W.

A motion to adjourn was made by Norm Peterson and seconded by Amanda Cook MSP and meeting adjourned at 7:15

The meeting Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Lenten Theme for Worship: "Longing"

This Lent we'll name something we all carry—longing. Longing for healing. Longing for connection. Longing for courage when life feels heavy. Each week we'll listen for how God meets us right where we are—not with shame or pressure, but with mercy, truth, and the steady love of Christ.

Sundays in Lent & Holy Week

- Lent 1 (February 22) — *Longing for Wholeness* — Matthew 4:1–11
- Lent 2 (March 1) — *Longing for Mystery* — John 3:1–17
- Lent 3 (March 8) — *Longing for Relationship* — John 4:5–42
- Lent 4 (March 15) — *Longing for Community* — John 9:1–41
- Lent 5 (March 22) — *Longing for Authenticity* — John 11:1–45
- Palm Sunday (March 29) — *Longing for Courage* — Matthew 21:1–11
- Maundy Thursday (April 2) — *Longing for Intimacy* — John 13:1–17, 31b–35
- Good Friday (April 3) — *Longing for Solidarity* — John 18:1–19:42
- Easter Sunday (April 5) — *Longing for New Life* — John 20:1–18

Midweek Lenten Theme: Joseph — "Bound... and Set Free"

Our midweek services will begin on Ash Wednesday, then follow the story of Joseph from Genesis—an honest, human journey through what binds us: jealousy, violence, broken systems, family pain, and guilt. Week by week we'll see how God works even in the mess, loosening what holds us and opening a path toward grace.

Midweek Services

- Ash Wednesday (February 18) — Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

After Ash Wednesday: Joseph in Genesis

- Week 1 (February 25) — *Bound by Jealousy* — Genesis 37:3–11
- Week 2 (March 4) — *Bound by Violence* — Genesis 37:12–36
- Week 3 (March 11) — *Bound by Dishonest Systems* — Genesis 39:1–20
- Week 4 (March 18) — *Bound by Family* — Genesis 41–42
- Week 5 (March 25) — *Bound by Guilt* — Genesis 50:15–21

Immanuel Lutheran Church March 2026

37515 Park Trail

Almelund, MN 55012-7511

Change Service Requested

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Companion to Itonya Congregation -

Tanzania, Africa

Contact Info: 651-583-2340; office@immanuelalmelund.com

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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.l.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