

Immanuel Lutheran Church
229 Eleventh Avenue West
Grinnell, Iowa 50112

December 2020 Newsletter

Let's Get Social...

All links are available on our website

<http://www.immanuelgrinnell.org>



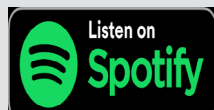
<https://www.facebook.com/ImmanuelGrinnell/>



<https://www.youtube.com> Rev. Dr. Joel Koepp



<https://anchor.fm/ImmanuelGrinnell>



<https://open.spotify.com>



<https://www.google.com/podcasts>



<https://pca.st/jkhh18k8>



<https://radiopublic.com>

Reference Information

HAVE YOU...moved? ...changed phone numbers? ...changed email addresses? ...need to update birthday/anniversary dates? Let the office know! Thanks!

LET US KNOW...If you have a loved one ill or hospitalized, have a new baby, would like a pastoral visit, or if any pastoral need arises.

PRAYER REQUEST...If you would like a special prayer during the prayers of the church on Sunday, please contact Rev. Dr. Koepp:

Office: 641-236-6691

Email: koeppj@hotmail.com

Cell: 507-829-3901

Home: 641-260-8394

DO YOU...want to put something in the bulletin or newsletter? Have a prayer request? Birth/Anniversary/Graduation announcements? Upcoming events? If so, please submit the information as you want it to appear in the bulletin or newsletter by the deadlines listed below to the church secretary at immanuelutheran@iowatelecom.net.

Deadlines:

Bulletin – 12 noon of each Wednesday

Newsletter – 15th of each month

For those of you without email access, please call or submit your written request to the church secretary.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

***“Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Positive Partying”***

December has come, finally! With Thanksgiving in the rearview mirror, Christmas looms on the horizon. As the weather gets colder, and the darkness hangs around for a while longer each day, where do we turn for tidings of comfort and joy? The world quickly moves from Thanksgiving to Christmas. There is no time set aside to prepare, in fact, many celebrate Christmas since before Halloween! The decking of halls and rocking around the Christmas tree are fun things to see. The world builds this festival in a month long merry bash that ends on December 25, which then needs to find its joy in the turning the page on the calendar (for this year, 2021 can't come soon enough). Then the reality sets in by coming back with a vengeance. The bills come in the mail and the bank accounts are left in sad emptiness. Then just to rub salt in the wound, the scale somehow got really bad at math and added a few numbers.

This seems backwards—celebrating in Advent and the repentance during Christmas. The church has historically taken times of preparation to fully celebrate the joyful times of the church year with just that—joy! Advent and Lent are important times of preparation. Just as every party does well if properly prepared, so we discipline ourselves to prepare; this will give us full freedom to enjoy the festal celebration at the right time.

Advent is the time for preparation and repentance. We reflect upon the recently concluding church year, and the beginning of the new church year. At Immanuel, we follow the historic one-year lectionary for our Sunday readings. These help us to retain the rich tradition handed down to us from our fathers in the faith by fixing our eyes on Jesus, ***“the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*** (Hebrews 12:2)

Advent has taken many shapes throughout church history. Between 400 and 500 AD., Pope Leo the Great tied in baptism to Christmas connecting our baptismal beginnings to Christ and His humble birth. Pope Leo wrote, "By the same Spirit, through whom Christ was born from the body of an undefiled mother, Christians are reborn from the womb of the Holy Church." The word Advent means to come, and the traditions of Advent come really in three forms—scriptural, ascetic, and eschatological.

The scriptural form grounds the preparation in the birth narrative of Jesus. It takes the hearers from the Annunciation to the Nativity. The annunciation to Mary, Mary visiting Elizabeth, and the angel visiting Joseph would all be heard.

The ascetic form focused on self-discipline and abstaining from selfish indulgences. There would be practices of fasting, confession and repentance. The hearers would hear the preaching of John the Baptist, and would be encouraged in many forms of charity. Rather than giving to the self, the Christian was encouraged to give to others.

The eschatological form is one the focused on the end times. The word eschatology means the study of the last things. Here Christians would focus not only on Christ's first coming, but they would also join with themes looking to His final coming in judgement. These would keep in line with the readings of the final weeks of the church year.

The texts of our lectionary combine all three of these themes in a beautiful tapestry of proper prior preparation. The first week we hear of Jesus' triumphal entry; a reminder of just why Jesus must come to His people. The second week we hear Jesus speak on the destruction of Jerusalem; this is the eschatological focus on the end times of Jesus coming in judgment. In the last two weeks, we hear of John the Baptist. These last two weeks focus on the ascetic approach, which focuses on self-discipline.

This year we have the added benefit of added masks/veils into our preparation. We are not going to get into the politics of mask wearing; instead, we are going to look at how masks/veiling are controversial in the Scriptures, finding its fulfilling end in the person of Jesus.

As we spend our time in proper prior planning, when Christmastide comes (December 25-January 5), we will wonderfully positively party. As the world rushes to skip to the next party, I encourage you enjoy this season of preparation. It doesn't have to be dark and dreary, Christ has come and will come again. His coming to you in Word and Sacraments, regenerates your dead, sinful hearts to live in all places in all times in faith towards God and in love towards your neighbors, as seen in acts of charity; not just this time of year.

As we prepare, I look forward to our time singing together:

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

- 1) HARK how all the Welkin rings "Glory to the Kings of Kings,
"Peace on Earth, and Mercy mild, "GOD and Sinners reconcil'd!
Joyful all ye Nations rise, Join the Triumph of the Skies,
Universal Nature say "CHRIST the LORD is born to Day" *Refrain*

Refrain: Hark! The herald-angels sing "Glory to the new-born king"

- 2) CHRIST, by highest Heav'n ador'd, CHRIST, the Everlasting Lord,
Late in Time behold him come, Offspring of a Virgin's Womb.
Veil'd in Flesh, the Godhead see, Hail th' Incarnate Deity!
Pleas'd as Man with Men t' appear JESUS, our Immanuel here! *Refrain*
- 3) Hail the Heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and Life to All he brings, Ris'n with Healing in his Wings.
Mild he lays his Glory by, Born—that Man no more may die,
Born—to raise the Sons of Earth, Born—to give them Second Birth. *Refrain*

Welkin is an old English word meaning "all the vault or heaven, or sky;" hence all the heavens join in cosmic celebration, reminding us of the words in the Sanctus sung in the Divine Service.

- 4) Come, Desire of Nations, come, Fix in Us thy humble Home,
Rise, the Woman's Conqu'ring Seed, Bruise in Us the Serpent's Head.
Now display thy saving Pow'r, Ruin'd Nature now restore,
Now in Mystic Union join Thine to Ours, and Ours to Thine. *Refrain*

- 5) Adam's Likeness, LORD, efface, Stamp thy Image in its Place,
Second Adam from above, Reinstate us in thy Love.
Let us Thee, tho' lost, regain, Thee, the Life, the Inner Man:
O! to All Thyself impart, Form'd in each Believing Heart. *Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88; Tune Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-47; setting: William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

+Soli Deo Gloria+
Rev. Dr. Joel G. Koepp

President's Piece for Peace

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders
District President

At this writing I am preparing for heart bypass surgery in less than a week. Many blessings and prayers are being offered up for me and messages of comfort have been sent to me by my Brothers in the Office and friends in the Faith. All of this is so greatly appreciated and beneficial to my soul as well as my body. I enter this endeavor with no worry and with complete confidence in Our Lord Jesus Christ. The words of Psalm 41:1-3 speak volumes every time I devote upon them.

"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak. The Lord delivers him in times of trouble. The Lord will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes. The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness."

The question I have been getting from many is, "How is this happening? You eat right, exercise regularly, and your blood pressure and heart rate are excellent. How is it that this bypass surgery needs to take place?" My simple answer: I inherited these genes from my father. I say that not with disgusted voice nor angry disposition. I say it with honor and pride on behalf of what I also inherited from my father which is of greater importance.

The sin given from Adam and Eve to all humanity has worked its way through my father and also to me. This is I know all too well. It is the reason my body breaks down and from time to time requires medical attention. It is because of this, and sin's ultimate consequence, that my father saw to it that I received the cure for the condition of sin. It was He who made sure that each of his children were brought to the baptismal font where we received forgiveness of sins, where the Holy Spirit took residence and created faith in Jesus. It is also there that the promise of everlasting life in Christ was granted. My father took us to church, he assisted us every Saturday night as we prepared for our Sunday school lessons. He oversaw our catechism preparation for confirming the Faith we were baptized into. Together, as a family of God, we would approach the Table of our Lord and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of faith, and the promise of life everlasting. I can vividly remember sitting on the footstool beside his chair and listening to him read Holy Scripture to us with astounding wisdom explaining what it meant.

While my father was a terrific baseball player (much better than his son) and an honest and successful mechanical engineer, his most important vocation was being a faithful husband and dutiful father. As such I have inherited from his guidance and direction the very cure for what ails me most. I am brought by grace into the Holy Kingdom of God and a Child of Salvation. That is why I can face this challenge and any other set before me with confidence in the promises of God. I know my sin is ever before me yet I also am sure and certain of the price that was paid for my sins has covered me in the Blood of Jesus.

Some might think I am saying my father was a saint. Well, he was. Just as I am a saint and you are a saint. We are saints by He who has cleansed us from all unrighteousness. We are saints by He who never loses sight of our greatest need and fulfills it. We are saints even on our sickbeds and when we are laden with illness. We are saints because the Cross of Christ has redeemed us, restored us, and rescued us from sin, death, and the devil.

President's Piece for Peace

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders
District President

In these days leading up to my surgery I am anything but patient. At the same time I am at ease. My health will be better than it has been for years. I will be stronger and in better shape than recent past. Be it God's will I will recover in short time and back at all my duties which I love and adore as a servant of the Word. I am sustained by your prayers and devotional words. Thank you for them all. I am also ready for whatever outcome there is because of the faithful and committed efforts of my father for his son.

President Saunders

A Update on President Saunders

Dear Fellow Servants of Christ our Lord,

President Saunders is now home from the hospital. His surgeon was very pleased with the procedure. He now has several weeks of home recovery coming up and hopes to be back tending to some of his regular duties sometime in December. President Saunders along with Karen and their family feel gratitude and are humbled by the many prayers and thoughtful display of support.

My hope is built on nothing
less Than Jesus' blood
and righteousness
No merit of my own I claim
but wholly lean on Jesus' name
on Christ the solid rock I stand
all other ground is sinking sand.

Advent 2020

With the many controversies and strange events happening in the year 2020, I wanted to address this head-on for the people of God. This Advent, we will be looking at masks/veils in the Word of God. The aim is not to get into politics, but rather to clearly proclaim how God uses masks. Through veiled references, we will connect Jesus veiled in flesh, as proclaimed in Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, with the veil of the tabernacle, the veiling of the sun at His crucifixion, and the veil that covers all nations. The goal is not to say whether masks are a personal freedom or fifth commandment issue; instead, it is to see how masks can serve as reminders of God's eternal mercy.

You will notice that we will be singing a different version of Hark! The Herald Angels Sing. We will be singing the original version of this hymn, as written by Charles Wesley. The original hymn had five stanzas; which included a confession of the doctrine of the fall into sin, and kept closer to the Biblical text. First, a confession of the whole cosmos, the heavens and the earth, celebrate the birth of God in the flesh. Luke records one angel serving as a herald of good news, while the rest of the heavenly host praises God. The composite lists, "Herald Angles" making it seem as though Luke was wrong. Luke also speaks of the angels singing praise to God the Father, or the Trinity, not to Jesus. The composite hymn seems as though they are singing directly to Jesus. The original also emphasizes the meaning of "Immanuel," by stressing the location of Immanuel, God in the flesh, is here, with us. The original also correctly confesses the "Heav'nly Prince of Peace." Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, is not heav'n born, He is eternally begotten of the Father from eternity, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary on this earth. Jesus is eternally begotten and earth born.

So why only three verses in our hymnal? George Whitefield, a leader of the Calvinistic branch of British Methodism, deleted the stanzas concerning the fall into sin, and changed the words to the current form of our hymnal. The composite hymn became widely popular and beloved. Even knowing the history and the omitted stanzas, it has been difficult to reinsert these verses, as once something as been handed down and beloved, sentimentalism and emotions typically rule the day. Many are willing to look away from history, simply because the hymn is something that we have liked since childhood.



We are meeting together in the building for Divine Services on Sunday's at 9:00am, but also have online options for those who are not ready or not able to attend in person.

Keep checking the Facebook and YouTube links,
as the services will be soon be streaming live!

<https://www.facebook.com/ImmanuelGrinnell/>

[https://www.youtube.com Rev. Dr. Joel Koepp](https://www.youtube.com/Rev.Dr.JoelKoepp)

Podcast Links:

Anchor Podcast: <https://anchor.fm/ImmanuelGrinnell>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com>

Google Podcast: <https://www.google.com/podcasts>

Pocketcast: <https://pca.st/jkhh18k8>

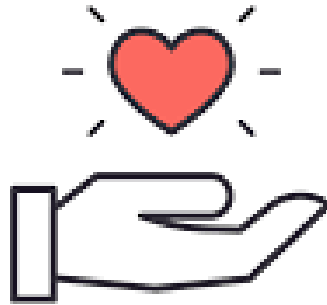
RadioPublic: <https://radiopublic.com>

All links are available on our Church Website:

www.immanuelgrinnell.org

Gather your family and join us!

Online Giving



We are incredibly grateful to those who give so regularly, especially during these challenging times. Many of you are diligent to bring your offering each week or give online.

But sometimes life gets crazy. Kids get sick or you're out of town on business. Life just happens. And we get it. We want you to continue to give to what God is doing in and through our church. That's why you can setup recurring gifts through our online giving platform. It is fast, easy and secure.

Electronic Giving is a convenient, consistent way to help our church grow. With VANCO Online Giving, you can choose how and when you want to give. You will no longer need to write out checks and prepare envelopes every week. Even with travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, your electronic contributions will continue to be received on an uninterrupted basis.

As you are able, please continue to give your offerings to the church. The giving envelopes you have are designed to be able to mailed. We also can arrange someone to pick it up.

Ask for an authorization form from the church secretary today

The Last Piece of Ground!

There is a folder which sits on my desk which is labeled with the words: cemetery plot. It contains some information about where my wife and I plan on being buried when we die. I am writing this article on October 29th and tomorrow I will conduct the funeral for a departed saint from St. Mark Lutheran Church in Garrison, Iowa.

I remember it was about 25 years ago when I was visiting my parents. My father said, "Dean, get in the car, I want to show you something." We drove to Persilla Watts cemetery on the west side of Rugby, North Dakota. We stopped on the south side and my father said, "That is the last piece of ground I will ever buy." Now both of my sainted parents have their remains entombed there.

My wife and I have decided that we will retire in Cedar Rapids and have found funeral plots at a cemetery in Marion, Iowa. We just have not gone and purchased them. It is not as if we are somehow going to avoid death! The Bible is quite clear: "For the wages of sin is death." "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 6:23, 3:23. There is no getting around death unless Christ Jesus comes while we are still living. As I look down the road, I know that by having those plots purchased that it will be one less thing for my family to deal with when the time comes.

It doesn't matter which cemetery one is buried in, it is all "resurrection ground." St. Paul states: "But we do not want you to be uniformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

Sin and its consequence of death will put me in that grave. The death and resurrection of Christ Jesus which has defeated sin and death and the power of the devil will bring my body out of that grave on the last day. Our baptism united me with made His death and resurrection out. As Paul says, "Comfort one another with these words."

After those plots have been bought, maybe I will have the opportunity to take my children and grandchildren to that cemetery in Marion and say: "That is the last piece of ground I will ever buy." I can then share the words of St. John: "And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:11-13.

Rev. Dr. Dean Rothchild
Assistant to the President

**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter article – December 2020**

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (*Luke 2:10-11*). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (*Luke 2:14*)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God’s people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (*Deuteronomy 16*). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (*Deut. 16:10, 15, 17*).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.

CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER5th/6th Grades

December 2*	Second Article and meaning (all of it); Christmas Program Piece	Lesson 11-12	Matthew 15-16	
9*	Second Article and meaning (all of it); Christmas Program Piece	Lesson 13	Matthew 17	
16*	Christmas Program Piece	Lesson 14	Matthew 18	
23	NO CLASS	NO CLASS		
30	NO CLASS	NO CLASS		

7th/8th Grades

December 2*	9 th /10 th Commandments	Large Catechism 392-395	SCQ 88-92	
9*	Close of Commandments	Large Catechism 395-398	SCQ 93-102	<i>TEST OVER COMMANDMENTS</i>
16*	1 st Article and Meaning	Large Catechism 398-401	SCQ 103-130	
23	NO CLASS			
30	NO CLASS			

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Monthly Meeting of the Church Council Sunday, August 9th, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Church Council was held on August 9th, at 8:00 AM. Present: Pastor Koepp, Steve Haase, Chris Christinson, Ken Mergen, Kevin Schultz, and Pam Sittig. President Steve Haase called the meeting to order and Pastor Koepp opened with prayer.

Minutes from the July 12th, 2020 council minutes were presented approval. Chris motioned to approve and Ken 2nd. Motion carried.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARDS

Board of Elders: Steve Haase

- The list for absentee/delinquent members is decreasing. Continue to search for absentee member addresses and reach out to them.

Treasurer's Report: Chris Christinson

- No report available due to technology failure. Giving and balances are good and no concerns.
- No new information forgiveness of the PPP loan. It is a slow process and Immanuel used the \$10,000 within the timeframe.

Board of Trustees: Kevin Schultz

- The City of Grinnell is close to completing the drainage project. Future cleaning of the pipe will be the city's responsibility.

Board of Evangelism: Pastor Koepp and Steve Haase for the Board

- Visitor welcome bags are ready
- A request to the city for a sign on 11th Ave is on hold
- With no 4th of July parade the plans will be used in 2021.
- May do camp twice next year.
- Steve reported the Orphan Grain Train sent 1500 boxes of clothes and supplies to the Ukraine.

Board of Education: Pastor Koepp for the Board

- Sunday school Rally day is August 30th. Materials will be handed out and snacks.

Board of Stewardship: Pam Sittig

- Nothing to report

Board of Fellowship: Not Active

Pastor's Report: Pastor Koepp

- Report provided listing official acts and Pastoral Duties including 2 confirmations and 1 funeral.
- Pastor is writing the 2020 Christmas program and chosen the theme "Masks".

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

- June 2021 is the date for IDE Convention. Pastor and one Lay person will attend. A Lay person should be an elected official of the church. Election of circuit visitors at the circuit form but no date has been set.
- Ken Mergen motioned to remove Susan Schoen's name from the youth group and women's group bank accounts. Pam Sittig 2nd. Motion carried. Pastor will ask the Board of Education and Women's group for Susan's replacement on the accounts. Chris's name is currently on both accounts.

Pastor Koepp closed with prayer.

Next Council Meeting: September 13th, 2020 - 8:00 AM

Voter's Meeting: October 18th, 2020 - 10:30 AM

Submitted by:

Pam Sitting

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Monthly Meeting of the Church Council
Sunday, September 13th, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Church Council was held on September 13th, at 8:00 AM. Present: Pastor Koepp, Steve Haase, Chris Christinson, Ken Mergen, Ben Loudon, Kevin Schultz, Keith Thorpe, and Kathy Stanek.

President Steve Haase called the meeting to order and Pastor Koepp opened with prayer.

August 9th, 2020 council minutes will be presented to the council for approval at the October meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARDS

Board of Elders: Steve Haase

- The list for absentee/delinquent members is decreasing. Continue to search for absentee member addresses and reach out to them.

Treasurer's Report: Chris Christinson

- Written reports attached for July and August. All bills have been paid and the current balances are reflected.
- Working on the forgiveness portion of the PPP loan that was received earlier this year.

Board of Trustees: Ben Loudon and Kevin Schultz

- Trees were cleaned up and hauled away after Derecho
- 12-13 Evergreen trees were damaged and will be removed
- Some siding and roof damage will be repaired and replaced

Board of Evangelism: No Report

Board of Education: Pastor Koepp for the Board

- Sunday school starts today and birthdays will be celebrated.
- Student memory work will no longer be done at the end of worship service with parishioners but with the Board of Education.
- Christmas program preparations have begun.

Board of Stewardship: Keith Thorpe

- Nothing to report

Pastor's Report: Pastor Koepp

- Pastor's report provided listing official acts and Pastoral Duties including. The Windsor Manor Nursing Home is still not allowing visitors.

Unfinished Business:

- Immanuel will host the circuit forum scheduled Nov 8th at 3:00 pm. All pastors from the circuit and a lay person from each congregation will be in attendance. Nominations for district officers, questions, recommendations and election of a lay person from Immanuel will be discussed at the October 16th voter's meeting.
- Steve Haase has been working with the insurance company regarding damage caused by Derecho. Estimates for repairs on the roof, shed, siding, limbs, playground equipment, and 1 outside table is \$32,700. The policy does include tree removal due to a disaster. The deductible was lowered to \$500 for the tree/limb removal already completed.

New Business:

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters closed their program in Grinnell and moved to Marshalltown. A new mentoring program called "LINK" which is much the same as Big Brothers/Big Sisters is replacing it. The board chose to leave the \$300 already given to Big Brothers/Big Sisters to be left with them and not ask for a refund.
- Any requests for additions for the 2021 Budget should be submitted to Chris Christinson ASAP.
- Election of 2021 officers and board members will be conducted at the October voters meeting.

Pastor Koepp closed with prayer.

Council Meeting: October 11th, 2020 - 8:00 AM

Voter's Meeting: October 18th, 2020 - 10:30 AM

Submitted by:

Kathy Stanek

Church Council Secretary

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Monthly Meeting of the Church Council
Sunday, October 11, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Church Council was held on October 11, 2020 at 8:00 AM.
Present: Chris Christinson, Pastor Koepp, Steve Haase, June Routier, Keith Thorpe, and Markie Koepp.
President Steve Haase called the meeting to order and Pastor lead us in prayer.

Minutes from the August 9th council meeting were presented and approved. Minutes from the September 13th council meeting were presented and approved.

Reports of Officers and Boards

Board of Elders: Steve

The board is continuing to keep our membership list as current as possible. Four children were baptized yesterday.

Treasurer's Report: Chris

Written report attached for September. The current balances are included.

Board of Trustees: No report

Board of Evangelism: No report

Board of Education: Markie

Working on Christmas program. Parts will be handed out soon.

Board of Stewardship: Keith

3rd quarter statements are in the mailboxes.

Pastors report: Printed report listing official acts and Pastor Duties.

Unfinished business: We will need to elect a lay delegate to the Circuit forum at the voters meeting next week. The Nominating committee will have a slate of candidates for the elections next week.

New business: We talked about the budget for the 2021 year. The Synod has some money available for members who have money problems because of the windstorm. If you need help contact Pastor.

The meeting was adjourned. Pastor closed with a prayer.

Council meeting: November 8, 2020

Submitted by Steve Haase



Advent & Christmas Services

MID WEEK ADVENT SERVICES

**A Potluck Supper will be 5:15pm to 6:00pm
with services starting at 6:30pm**

Wednesday, December 2

‘Covered to Prevent Fear’

Wednesday, December 9

‘Covered to Separate the Holy and the Common’

Wednesday, December 16

‘Covered: The Veil that Conceals and Buries’

Wednesday, December 23

‘Covered No More: Jesus Removes the Veil for Eternal Breath of Fresh Air’

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 13th at 10:30am

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Thursday, December 24th at 4:00pm

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

Friday, December 25th at 9:00am

NEW YEAR’S EVE SERVICE

Thursday, December 31st at 4:00pm

Judging Others

by Barbara Lane Geistfeld, D.V.M.
Lutherans For Life Regional Director of Texas

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1-5 NIV)

I think many of us find it difficult to avoid judging others when their circumstances and behaviors are different from our own. For example, take the topic of unplanned pregnancies and abortion. It may give us a warm and fuzzy feeling to help an unmarried pregnant woman choose life through our efforts—and it should—but when it happens a second or even a third time, we might find ourselves becoming judgmental and censuring.

Why can't she live a life of purity? Why can't she get married if she is going to keep getting pregnant? Why should we continue to support her if the father(s) will not support her and her children? I had to fight those thoughts at a pregnancy center fund-raising banquet I attended. An unmarried young woman was introduced as one who chose life, but in her testimony, it was revealed that she had done so more than once. A Lutheran pastor once said to me in a very negative, judgmental tone, "Why don't they just use birth control? There is no excuse for unwanted pregnancies and abortions." And when we are talking multiple abortions, not just pregnancies, then the judging may take on an even sterner tone.

I believe that lurking inside our thoughts was the insidious and all too common belief that this woman (and the father of her child) are less decent persons than the pastor and me because of their behavior. Bigger sinners, so to speak. Furthermore, they are using up our good will, compassion, and resources, so we have a right to be annoyed at their continued irresponsible behavior.

Jesus nips those thoughts right in the bud! His humorous hyperbole shames us into recognizing that all of us have sinned. In fact, He wants me to personally recognize that my sin is bigger than her sin or his sin or your sin. A speck and a plank? Can Jesus make it any plainer that we are not who we might pretend to be and that we need Him, too?

Another important facet in all this judging is "circumstance." We have no idea of the physical, emotional, or financial conditions a young woman may be living in; no idea of personal relationships, good and bad, that impact her life; no idea if the father wants the baby or not. We often know absolutely nothing about a situation except the obvious, so how can we judge? Can we call sin "sin"? Certainly. Can we speak the truth in love? Of course. But Jesus makes it crystal clear that we cannot judge righteousness in another. We cannot read their heart as He can.

What we are called to do is to show love, mercy, and grace to others in response to the love, mercy, and grace God had given us in Jesus. We can speak the words of the Gospel to plant seeds of change in their lives. We can pray for them. And as Jesus says, we can even help get that speck out of their eye ... **after** we allow Jesus to take the plank out of our own!

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