

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
229 Eleventh Avenue West  
Grinnell, Iowa 50112

*January 2021 Newsletter*

# IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## *NEWSLETTER*

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Newsletters, calenders,  
sermons, & bulletins are published  
on our website.

Services are livestreamed on our Face-  
book page & Youtube channel.

### *Stay Connected...*

All links are on our Church Website  
<http://www.immanuelgrinnell.org/>

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

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

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>

### LET US KNOW...

If you have a change of address, have a loved one ill or hospitalized, have a new baby, would like a pastoral visit, or if you would like a special prayer during the prayers of the church on Sunday, please contact Pastor Koepp or the church office.

Church Email: [immanuellutheran@iowatelecom.net](mailto:immanuellutheran@iowatelecom.net)

Office: 641-236-6691

Pastor’s Email: [koeppj@hotmail.com](mailto:koeppj@hotmail.com)

Pastor’s Cell: 507-829-3901



# From *the* Pastor

## “The Place of Epiphany”

As you read this, you are either in the midst of Christmas celebration, or in the midst of Epiphany celebration. The season of Epiphany is almost seen as an afterthought to Christmas in the minds of many. We are familiar with Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter. How does Epiphany fit into the puzzle?

In the early days of church history, the resurrection of our Lord was heralded as the most important day. It was celebrated every week, as the believers would gather around God’s word and Sacrament in eager anticipation of Christ’s return. As the years marched on, Easter became a grand yearly celebration, and times of preparation were developed leading up to it (Lent) and celebration after (Easter Season). Starting in the second century, Christians in the East began to observe the birth of Jesus on January 6th. Western Christians later began to observe the birth of our Lord on December 25th. By the end of the fourth century, churches throughout the world began to celebrate both of these days on their church calendars. The time between December 25 and January 6th was known as the 12 Days of Christmas.

In the beginning the church in the east associated the day of Epiphany with Christ’s baptism. In the western church, since Epiphany was after their day of celebration of his birth on December 25th, they associated it with the visit of the wise men—the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. As the church year developed, over “firsts” of Christ’s ministry were associated with what now know as the Epiphany season.

The day of Epiphany is always January 6. The length of the Epiphany Season varies from year to year, as it is dependent upon the date of Easter—if Easter is early, Epiphany is shorter. There is a rather interesting aspect to the season as it is marked by two different liturgical colors. It begins and ends with white, which are the colors of festivity. As a bridge from Jesus’ birth to His suffering, crucifixion and death, it shows Jesus’ living life as God in the flesh. We trace some important events from His baptism to His transfiguration. For the Sundays between these two events, the color is green; the same color during the Trinity Season in which we mark ordinary time. Jesus lived as an ordinary man, like each of us; yet He was at the same time fully God.

This is epiphany. We use this same term today to describe a moment of revelation, or a realization of some aspect affecting our lives; an eye-opening tick of time where all the pieces come together and it just makes sense. The epiphanies spoken of are not our moments of realization; they are His revealing Himself to us.

The illuminating knowledge of Christ is the point of the texts read during the Epiphany season. We begin with the coming of the Magi, bringing gifts that proclaim to the world the very work of the Christ-child. Gold proclaims His kingly office and His divinity. Frankincense proclaims the sacrifice He was to offer upon the cross. Myrrh proclaims He was to die; die to destroy the power of sin, death, and the devil.

Following the coming of the Magi, we read of Christ's baptism. As He descends into the waters, He bears our iniquities. He takes our sins upon Himself, so that in our baptism He may bestow His life upon us.

Next we read of Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana. He demonstrates that not only does He have power over the natural forces of the world, He also upholds the honor of marriage. Why? Because He uses the marriage relationship to teach us something about His relationship to us, His bride, the Church.

Easter is early in 2021, so we will begin and end the season of Epiphany in the month of January. The Last Sunday we read of Jesus' transfiguration. In a few brief moments, the veil of humanity is lifted and the disciples behold the glory of Christ; they will need this strength to make it through the events of Holy Week. As they watch Jesus suffer, they know He will come again in glory.

Although it is short, it is a wonderful time of celebration for us; especially after 2020. As the pandemic and its effects linger, we are ever in need of the remembrance just who Christ is. He is God in the flesh. He was born. He lived a human life, was tempted and never failed. He suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. All of this so that we may be His own, and live under Him in His Kingdom for all eternity. Not pandemics, nor politicians can take Jesus away from us.

+Soli Deo Gloria+

Rev. Dr. Joel G. Koeppe

# President's Piece for Peace

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders  
District President

On the First Sunday of Advent the Scriptures rang out with Jesus' triumphal entry into the Holy City of Jerusalem. The people lined the streets with coats and palm branches. They stood in parade formation welcoming Jesus into their midst singing the Song of the Church. That song is heard throughout all generations, "Hosanna, Hosanna" which means "save us, save us." The question to be asked is, 'from what did they believe they needed saved?' There is no doubt about the misunderstanding of who Jesus was and why He had come. The vast majority wanted the Messiah to be the Son of David who would reestablish the throne of glory and honor that King David once occupied. They wanted to be out from under any foreign government tax and control. They wanted to live under the Laws of God (unfortunately believing that they could keep God's Law and earn salvation.) They called out for a savior who was a warrior, military mighty leader, and drive out the Romans as well as establish regional power once again.

I suppose they remembered the mighty works of God in the past when He led the Exodus people into the Promised Land with amazing victory after victory. They may have remembered Joshua 10 when Israel miraculously defeated the Amorites. However, did they forget the strange way it happened? It wasn't the army that won that war but God Himself who threw hail stones at the enemy and struck them down with such unusual warfare. Maybe they held onto the great battle against the Midianites. Yet do they remember that God depleted the Israelite army to a humble and unthinkable 300 men from 22,000? The armaments were not sword and arrow but trumpets and jars. With these God defeated the enemy.

Is it any wonder then that Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the humble creature of the foal of a donkey. Nothing grand about that but it is the way God works to save His people. The same is true then of the manner by which He came to carry out His mission. No fanfare except for a star in the sky. No parade of people but only a few eastern foreigners and a handful of shepherds. No palace of gold or robes studded with jewels, only a place for animals and a hewn out stone for cattle feed. There He was born, there He was laid wrapped in swaddling clothes. So humble, so unexpected. Not at all what the people were looking for, but that is just the way God does what He does to save His people.

What a lesson for us today to look for Him where He is. Our theology is a theology of the cross. There is no grandeur in His life, only perfect obedience to that which we fail at every day. There is no glow around His head at our altars, only bread and wine where He rests His Body and Blood for forgiveness of sins and strengthening of faith. No massive Roman pool for relaxation, only a font where the redemptive Blood of Jesus claimed us as His own. Nothing spectacular here, is there? Yet this is what God does to save His people.

I pray a blessed and Merry Christmas to all of you fellow servants. I do not say, "ho, ho, ho," I say "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and Earth are full of your glory." God keep you all safe from every enemy and grant the simple and humble joy that Christmas gives.

*President Saunders*



## *A Health Update from President Saunders*

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in the Service of our Lord,

I wanted to give you all an update on my health and recovery during this Advent Season. Advent is a time of reflection upon our Lord and upon ourselves. As I reflect upon myself it is clear to me that I am flesh, and a weak flesh at that. My body is subject to the ravages of a fallen human context. Little by little, I am reminded that from birth I have been headed for the day when the angels will receive my soul into eternal paradise. It is a measure of humility. At the same time I reflect upon the glory and majesty of Christ our Lord. He who sat on the seat of power and might descended into the womb of a woman who was of the same weak flesh as mine. Jesus took on our flesh, my flesh, in order to redeem my body and soul. Talk about humility. With His promise of forgiveness and life splashed all over me in baptism I have nothing to fear. I do not fear this weak flesh, in fact I rejoice in it for it reminds me of the power and might of my Savior whose flesh rose in victory over sin and death.

I say with the deepest appreciation thank you for your many prayers and comments of encouragement during this time. They have all meant a great deal to me. I am improving with each day and getting a little stronger as was told me by my doctors. I really do feel much better. The surgery was a success and in short order I should be back to regular routine. I am in the office part-time this week and hope to make that pretty much full-time by next week. Rehab begins this week so I will know where I am recovery-wise. I have no pain or discomfort to speak of. The usual time for a breast bone to heal is 6-8 weeks. I am 4 weeks out and all is healing quite well. I am allowed to drive again and have preached one sermon which went fairly well. All in all, I am very blessed by our Lord and by you who have been lifting me to the Throne of Grace in prayer. Karen and I are grateful for your support and caring messages. God bless you all and keep you safe.

President Saunders



## The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter article – January 2021

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

- *Who are you?*
- *To whom do I give?*
- *And how much?*

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the Luther's Small Catechism informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

- *Regularly* (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
- *Proportionally* (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- *Generously* (2 Cor. 8:20);
- *Of our first fruits* (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
- *With a spirit of eagerness* (2 Cor. 9:2), *earnestness* (2 Cor. 8:7), *cheerfulness* (2 Cor. 9:7), and *love* (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside before-hand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It’s that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.



# ONGOING NEEDS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH

In a recent article in the Reporter, it stated that in the next 15 years the number of Pastors in the LCMS will decrease from 6000 to 3000. That is something that each of us ought to be concerned about. I have said for a long time that we need to do a better job of recruiting men to go to one of our Seminaries, either in Fort Wayne or St. Louis. I would like to think that I will have a Pastor to minister to me as I grow older.

Recall the words of Jesus: "And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." Matthew 9:36-38. As our nation becomes more and more secularized and has less and less people confessing Christ Jesus, the need is tremendous for more Pastors. The need which the church addresses never changes. St. Paul states: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23.

It is Christ's Church. He provides shepherds for His people. A faithful shepherd feeds His people with Word and Sacrament. The faithful shepherd addresses sin by the preaching of the Law and frees people from those sins by proclaiming Christ Jesus, crucified and risen for the sins of the world! COVID-19 is still wreaking havoc in our nation. It has caused the death of many people, but "sin" is the real reason why we have death in the world. It is Jesus Christ who is God's answer for our sin and our victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil. We find our hope and comfort in the fact that in Him we have forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

In the development work that I do here in the District I also see a pressing need to connect with donors who are younger than our present aging donor base. I am thankful for the donors I have been privileged to work with over the past 8 years. I have developed friendships that I would never have had without the opportunity to serve the District in this manner. I am thankful for each of our donors but each year we acknowledge that some of them become part of the church triumphant.

The donors I have worked with are faithful and generous supporters of their own congregations and also have a heart for the work of the Lord which the District does beyond the local congregation. Most people won't remember the Lord's work in their estate and will planning unless they are asked to consider it. It is time to begin cultivating the next generation of people who want the Lord's work to flourish here in the District and in places like Spain where the District is currently involved. St. Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ' and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20.

Rev. Dr. Dean Rothchild  
Assistant to the President





# Iowa District East

## The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

### STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION

December 18, 2020

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
229 11th Ave W  
Grinnell, IA 50112

Dear Members of Immanuel:

St. Paul wrote, ***"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich."*** (2 Cor. 8:9)

Thank you for your donation in the amount of \$499.00 for the Scholarship/Student Aid fund. Your generosity to further the work of Iowa District East Missions is greatly appreciated.

Please retain this letter with your important tax documents and provide a copy to your tax preparer. No goods or services of any value were or will be transferred to you in connection with this gift.

May God continue to richly bless you in and through our Savior Christ Jesus.

God be with you,

*President Saunders*

Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders  
President

# THANK YOU

**Thank you to many, many people for their efforts and contributions towards the Children's Christmas Program**

- *The students for their voices in word and song*
- *Sunday School teachers for working with the students*
- *Board of Education for working with the students*
- *Fellowship hall decoration*
- *Cookie providers and servers*
- *Treat bags donators and preparation*
- *Program editing, rehearsing, directing and even more*
- *Music practice and accompaniment*
- *Costume fitting and modifications*
- *Parents for transportation and memorization assistance/encouragement*

## ***Confirmation Schedule for January***

### ***5th & 6th Grades***

***January 6 Third Article & Meaning (all of it)***

***January 13 No Class***

***January 20 Third Article & Meaning (all of it)***

***January 27 Lord's Prayer: Introduction & Meaning***

### ***7th & 8th Grades***

***January 6 1st Article & Meaning  
Large Catechism 398-401 SCQ 131-139***

***January 13 No Class***

***January 20 1st Article & Meaning  
Large Catechism 398-401 SCQ 140-147***

***January 27 2nd Article & Meaning  
1) Large Catechism 401-402  
2) Formula of Concord Article VIII. The Person of Christ –  
Book of Concord 491-495, 581-596 SCQ 148-161***



# Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca



## IDE Middle School Retreat & Snowlympics

It is our hope that our first youth retreat of the 2020-2021 season will be with IDE Middle School Retreat and Snowlympics. We're exploring both the possibilities of a regularly scheduled event or a one-day event on Saturday, January 30. Stay tuned for more information at <https://lcmside.org/msretreat/>.

## Camp Presentations

Would you like to know more about Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca? Camp Director Daniel Sanchez is available to speak to congregations and groups about Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca's mission, facilities, and programs. Call 319-848-4187 to schedule a speaker!

## Support Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca Your Congregation's 2021 Mission Budget

Though many of Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca's donations come from individuals and families, we also rely on congregations for financial support. Some congregations are generous enough to add Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca as a line item in their mission budget. Other congregations have groups such as their LWML societies make financial contributions.

Congregational contributions make the mission of Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca, that is, providing Christ-centered recreation, education, and inspiration for all, a reality. It isn't merely about keeping the lights on or paying the heating bills, but it ensures that Camp's guests have a quality experience at a quality location. Does your congregation currently support Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca? We hope that is will!

Also, check out our new *I Believe in Camp* monthly giving program. It's a great way for your household to make support Camp's important mission for as little as \$25/month. Details are available at our website!

## Important Dates

*Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, these retreats are subject to change, postpone, or cancel.*

January 29  
*Summer Camp Registration Opens*

January 29-30  
*IDE Middle School Retreat and Snowlympics*

June 16  
*Summer Camp Begins*

# THANK YOU!!!!!!

# Be Like Sophie

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. James 5:7-8 NIV



Have you heard this story yet? There is a story of a man who noticed the great patience that a mother was displaying with her crying daughter at the grocery store. At each outburst, the mom continued to respond calmly, "Don't be upset Sophie. We'll be home soon." "It's OK, Sophie, we're almost done, then you'll get a break." Just be patient a little longer, Sophie. It will be over soon." The man finally said to her, "I am so impressed with how calmly and patiently you responded to your daughter! How old is Sophie?" The woman replied, "Oh no, you've misunderstood. My daughter's name is Ashley. My name is Sophie."

How do you feel about waiting at the doctor's office? The fast food drive-thru lines (unless it's Chick-Fil-A)? your students to take their seats after recess? A recent poll by Priority Management, Inc. stated that, "In a lifetime, the average

American will spend six months sitting at stoplights, eight months opening junk mail, one year looking for misplaced objects (I think that's an underestimate), two years unsuccessfully returning phone calls, and five years waiting in line."

Besides a more casual kind of waiting there are more serious forms of waiting. Waiting for a diagnosis from the doctor. The person struggling with depression who is waiting for a morning when things start to feel happy again. Waiting for a check from the insurance adjuster to see how much of the damage will be covered after a storm. Waiting for relief from the pandemic. Waiting with a loved one who is days or hours away from being with Jesus forever.

Why is this? One of the reasons may be that we have gotten so used to being "instantly gratified" in being able to have the item or the answer right now. Perhaps another reason is that we're not very confident about what tomorrow might bring. We don't like being in the "waiting room" of a hospital because we're uncertain of the outcome of our stay. We don't want to take the time to get to know that parent of one of our needier students because we might hear something we don't want to hear.

James gives us a great illustration of patience when speaking about the coming of our Lord. We know that if farmers don't have patience, they are in the wrong vocation! They have to wait for the rain. The meteorologist can predict the upcoming rain, but can't make it happen. Farmers can't control temperatures and they can't control drought. Farmers have to wait for the development of the crop from seed to harvest. Fretting about the process won't make it happen any faster or raise the yield. Farmers understand there are seasons of growth and seasons when it looks like nothing is happening. Ultimately, the farmer is resolved to the fact that he has no control over the weather. He is a steward of the ground doing his part, waiting for God to do His. Waiting means leaving room for God to act in His way, in His time, and according to His plan.

The season of the church year that centers around the theme of waiting and preparation is Advent. "The Advent season is a season of waiting, but our whole life is an Advent season, that is, a season of waiting for the last Advent, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth."<sup>1</sup> How do we help our students look to Jesus as their Savior through all the seasons of life? How do we help them wait patiently? It is the



# Be Like Sophie

Holy Spirit that empowers and guides us to nurture our students' faith and understanding that this Jesus is their personal Savior and Shepherd. Going back to the farmer illustration: it's hard to see the seed for the dirt. We may not see the invisible works God is doing behind the scenes but something is happening. Be patient. Be encouraging. Be hopeful.

Are you an Ashley or a Sophie when it comes to waiting? We see the end of the line at the grocery checkout, but we just don't know when Jesus is going to return again. We might have even asked our Lord a few times these past few months if He could make arrangements to speed up the process and come sooner than later. We just don't know His timetable, but we do know that it won't be an ambush. No, instead it will be a fulfillment. While we wait, we live and walk by faith every day. Where you are right now is the time for faith and rejoicing. We have what we need to sustain our "wait" until He comes again. While we wait, we have promises and commands to heed. While we wait, we are reassured of these promises and we also share them with our students for they are certain and true:

- the promise that our future in Christ is secure.
- that we are beloved children.
- that ours is the kingdom of God.
- that there's a place already prepared for us.

"The message of Advent is that God isn't just a light at the end of a dark tunnel, but that God is with us IN this tunnel." As we are waiting and keeping watch, be a Sophie but don't rely on yourself. Rely on our heavenly Father for love and support. Keep pointing your students to the manger and the cross so that when their and our last day arrives, no matter when it is, they and you are ready to meet our Lord and King. At just the right time God sent Jesus: *<sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.* (Galatians 4:4-5)

Be patient. Be hopeful. Wait well.

God be with each of you and your loved ones, and grant you a blessed Christmastide!

Jan Doellinger  
Assistant to the President, Schools



# Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc.

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## Office of the Executive Director

December 16, 2020

Rev. Joel G. Koepp  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
229 11th Ave. W  
Grinnell, IA 50112-8217

Dear Pastor Koepp & Immanuel Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your 12/7/2020 donation of \$100.00 to the Poweshiek County Family Development Center! As you know, the need in our communities is great, and it's only with your help that MICA can provide its vital services to so many struggling families.

Please know that the children, families, and seniors who will benefit from your generous gift are sincerely grateful as am I, our board of directors, and our staff. We truly appreciate your partnership in helping people, changing lives, and building communities!

Sincerely,

Amanda McCoy  
MICA Interim Executive Director

*MICA is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization (EIN 42-0923311).  
No goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution.*

***Helping People. Changing Lives. Building Communities.***

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1001 South 18th Avenue, Marshalltown, Iowa 50158 • Phone: 641-752-7162 • Fax: 641-752-9724

# **2021 Immanuel Officers & Board Members**

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Joel McDonough

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Pastor Koepp

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Pam Sittig

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