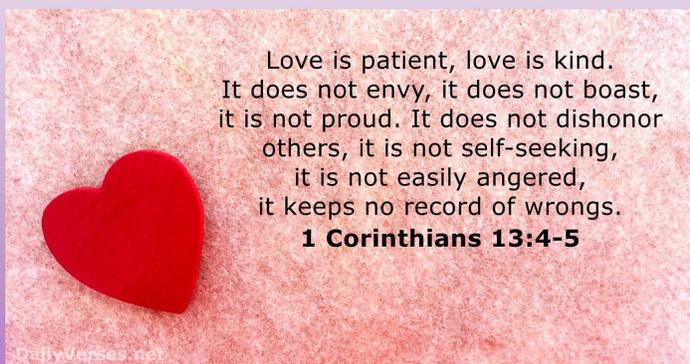


Immanuel Lutheran Church

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



1002 Powell Avenue

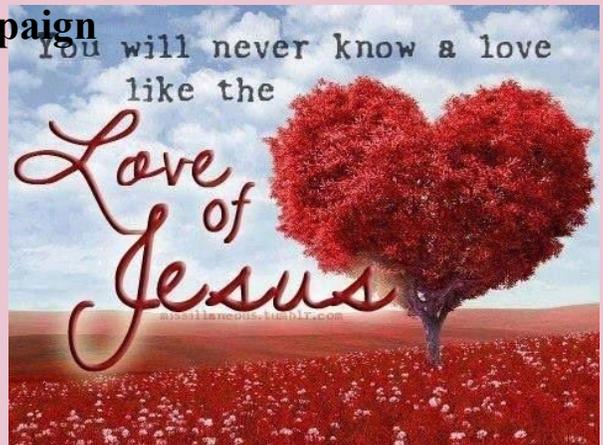
Erie PA 16505

814-833-4062



What you can find inside this edition!

- **Grace & Peace From the Pastor's Desk**
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**If you have anything
for the March
newsletter, please get
it in by March
18th .**



Grace & Peace from the Pastor's Desk

“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?” Exodus 15:11

One of the definitions dictionary.com uses to define the word “wonder” is to be filled with admiration, amazement, or awe; marvel. In this verse from Exodus the Hebrew people had just crossed the Red Sea, witnessed the Pharaoh’s army being swallowed up by the surge of water over dry land. They were overwhelmed with the wonder of God’s mighty action. Of course it didn’t take them very long to forget about their miraculous rescue and want to return to the way of life they had left. That happens to some people too. They have an amazing mountaintop experience with God followed by a deep valley where the shadows are hiding God’s presence, and they forget the wonder and awe of God. If you’re one of those people, or if you’ve never noticed the wonder and awe of God, here are some suggestions to move you in the right direction to marvel over what God has accomplished.

In this modern world we sometimes overlook wonders that are in plain sight. The first thing I think of, and maybe you do to, is a newborn baby. Sure, science can explain away the birthing process, but just looking at a tiny human can be full of awe and wonder. Then I think about how our bodies function. There are so many intricate processes that must happen for us to live, even just taking a breath... it isn’t something you think about doing, it just happens.

Look around in nature. Right now we may wonder if the snow is ever going to stop but consider each individual snowflake and how each pattern differs. According to Wikipedia, a snowflake is a single ice crystal that is large enough to fall through the Earth’s atmosphere as snow. Snow appears white in color despite being made of clear ice. This is because the many small crystal facets of the snowflakes scatter the sunlight between them. And consider how many snowflakes it takes to make an inch of snow cover the ground. Doesn’t that draw you into awe and wonder?

And soon we will be observing Canadian Geese flying back north. Canadian geese usually start nesting at 2 to 3 years of age, when they form a monogamous pair. Between March and April the female then creates a nest on the ground lined with feathers, within close reach of the water. She’ll lay between 2 and 12 light cream-colored eggs that after 25 to 28 days the chicks, hatch. At birth they have their eyes open and can walk and feed themselves immediately. Once all of the goslings have hatched, their parents lead them away from the nest and to the relative safety of the water. Sometimes, when several pairs nest close to one another, they may accidentally adopt the young of other geese, resulting in one pair looking after far more goslings than they have produced. The young grow fast and are heavily protected by their parents, or adopted parents, until they can fly at around 10 weeks old. Family groups often stay together over the winter, before the young move off in the following spring. Canadian geese usually mate for life. When the geese migrate, they form a V-shape because of it’s aerodynamic property that will help conserve their energy. When the lead goose tires, they drop back and another goose takes the lead. If one goose should be injured and require landing two more geese will stay with the one until it is well enough to resume flight. Geese truly take care of one another.

I stand in wonder and awe at how God has entered into our everyday life, wants to be in a relationship with us, and all we have to do is be open to God’s presence. As always I am looking forward to visiting with you. You can give me a call at the church office most Tuesdays from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m., or Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. 814-833-4062. I am always available on my cell phone 724-557-2386. Please leave a message if I don’t answer and I will get back to you.

Grace and Peace,

Pr. Karen





NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

Office of the Bishop _____ Rev. Kristen M. Papson, Bishop

January 20, 2026

Dear beloved siblings in Christ in the NWPA synod,

I write to you today, knowing that the recent news in both our country and the world can feel overwhelming and bring anxiety and fear. I am grieved by the news of escalating tensions in our country's relationships, both among our neighboring countries and also among those who live in our own communities and cities.

However, the Good News of Christ calls us to proclaim the truth in the midst of these situations: in Christ's love, there is no stranger. We are all beloved children of God, all created in the image of God, and all are inherently worthy of dignity, respect, compassion, and care. In a world where what divides us is often most emphasized, we need to remember the unity of Christ that we find in the waters of baptism.

In these times, we cling to the hope of Christ, the support of the communities that surround us, and the enduring presence of Christ whom we see most clearly among the oppressed, fearful, forgotten, and marginalized. We are called to be a people who beat our swords into plowshares, following the example of Christ who refused to wield power or might, but instead became a servant, aligning himself with those most in need.

To this end, let God's calling guide your actions. I encourage you to pray for one another, speak out as you are able, care for those most impacted by these rising tensions and violence, support one another in these difficult times, and advocate for justice for all our neighbors. Please take care of yourselves, pray for God's kingdom and justice to be fulfilled, and seek out those who especially need the Good News today.

May God's abounding love and peace surround you and sustain you, and know that my prayers are with you in your ministry and in your callings.

Bishop Kristen Papson

Worship & Music

9:30 AM
**Sunday
Worship**



*Lenten Bible Study will begin
on February 19th at 10:45 AM.
This is a video Bible Study,
“Why Easter Matters”
presented by Andy Stanley.
Please join us!*

The first Sunday is
Quarter Sunday each
month. Please bring
in a handful of
quarters and drop
them in the collection
plate.

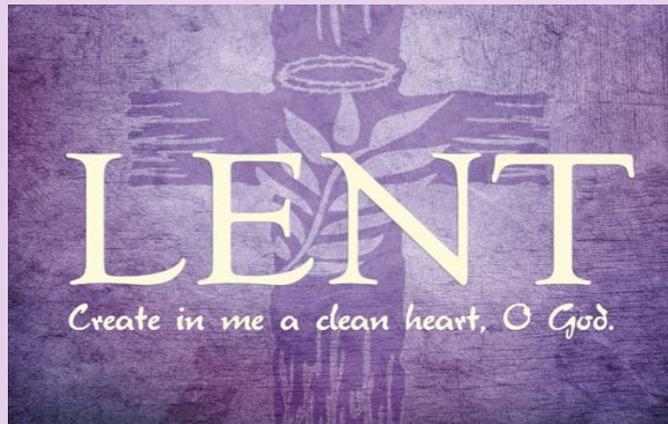
A basket filled with pink hearts, surrounded by a sea of pink hearts on a pink background.

The first Sunday of each month, you are invited to join
your Church Family in the lounge for coffee and
conversation. Pop in the lounge grab a coffee, a sweet
treat and say hello to everyone!!!!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Coffee hour

A white coffee cup filled with dark coffee on a white saucer, next to a bouquet of red roses and two heart-shaped cookies on sticks (one pink, one white) against a pink background.



**ASH WEDNESDAY (Feb. 18th)
SERVICES**

NOON & 7 PM

HOLDEN EVENING SERVICES

WEDNESDAYS AT 7PM

**Feb. 25th, March 4th, 11th, 18th,
25th and April 1st.**

MAUNDY THURSDAY (April 2nd)

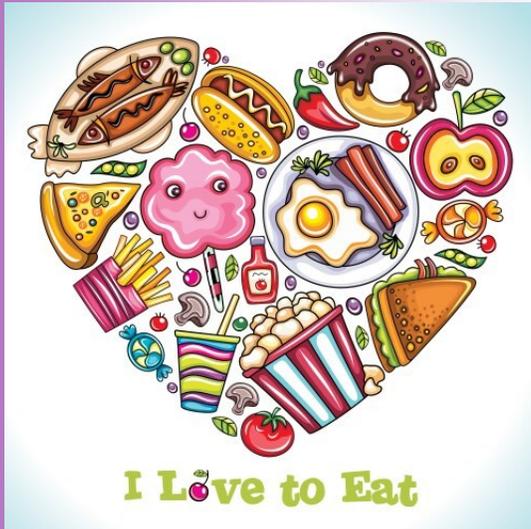
GOOD FRIDAY (April 3rd)

7 PM

EASTER SUNDAY (April 5th)

9:30 AM

****EVERYONE is welcome!****



February 22nd Monthly Fellowship Brunch Following Worship!

ATTENTION EVERYONE!

We want you all to join us after worship for our monthly Fellowship meal! This is a time of getting to sit with your church family and have a meal and some conversation. This is a wonderful way to share some connections together.

We really would love for everyone to join. This is a monthly meal that you are invited to be a part of! We want to see ALL of your smiling faces!



If you are able bring a dish to pass. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!



FEBRUARY 8TH

This year the “Souper” Bowl of Caring will be on February 8th. We will be taking a special collection or the Holy Trinity Pasta Soup Kitchen to help them with their mission of helping feed those in need. On Sunday, February 8th look for the soup pots at the front and the back of the church. Place your donations in one of the pots. If you are paying by check, write it out to Immanuel **but please be sure to designate in the memo line “Souper Bowl”**.



Do you have a bunch of empty prescription bottles that you don't know what to do with? Please consider donating them to Matthew 25 Ministries.

They will either send the empty bottles to countries that are unable to get prescription bottles or they will recycle those that are unable to be shipped.

PLEASE REMOVE THE LABELS!!!

There is a collection bin in the hallway. Once we have enough we will forward them on to Matthew 25 Ministries.



Thank you to everyone who donated to the Erie City Mission collection. We collected more than 300 items that included, gloves, hand warmers, body wash, shampoo, razors, deodorant and various other needed toiletries.

**As always, the generosity that the Immanuel Family shows their community members is appreciated.
~THANK YOU~**

JANUARY 19TH SPECIAL COLLECTION.....

We took a special collection on Sunday, January 18th for the St. Paul's Free Clinic in Erie for those who do not have health insurance.

We collected \$140.00 to help support their mission.

THANK YOU to all who donated!

Thank You!





ARE YOU

ARE YOU
AFFECTED BY
SOMEONE
ELSE'S
ADDICTION?

NAR-ANON
OFFERS HOPE

Nar-Anon Family Groups

for those affected by
someone else's addiction.
are a worldwide fellowship

As a twelve step program, Day
+ Time we offer our help by
sharing our experience,

strength, and hope.

FAITH LUTHERAN, [c.140ec.H.](#)

5414 EAST LAKE RD, ERIE, 16:

Location + Address

THURSDAYS, [00. 2:00 P.m.

1altee@erle23456@gmail.com
814-897-5900

Contact Information

STARTING JAN. 22, 202

* TOGETHER we HEAL - NEW 6-gouP TAN.

Please remember the members of Immanuel who are “shut in,” or having some health challenges and cannot make it to service, you may want to offer them a ride, give them a friendly call, send them a card. Maybe just stop to share a moment of your time.

The current Shut-In Mailing List is available in the office.



If you are sick or in the hospital, please notify the church office.

If you would like home communion or a copy of our newsletter, please contact the office.

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Denise Arnold

Vince Belinski—Diane’s Nephew

Karen Byrd

Janice Kreger

MaryAnn Long and Russ Long

Penney Maloney

The Botwright family

Connie Cooper

Jim and Lorraine Hornaman

Rich Hornaman

Kyle Husted

Carol Ketchel

Diane McGranor

Brenda Matson

Katie Coughlin-Palotas— Wally Coughlin’s niece

Carole Rickrode

Bob Roemer

Leslie Woodruff—Carole Rickrode’s Granddaughter

Logan Wrisley —Brenda Matson’s son

All of our members & friends who are grieving;

Who are in nursing homes;

All who are ill at home

We pray for those in the military.

Pray for the homeless & those who are hungry & those who are cold.

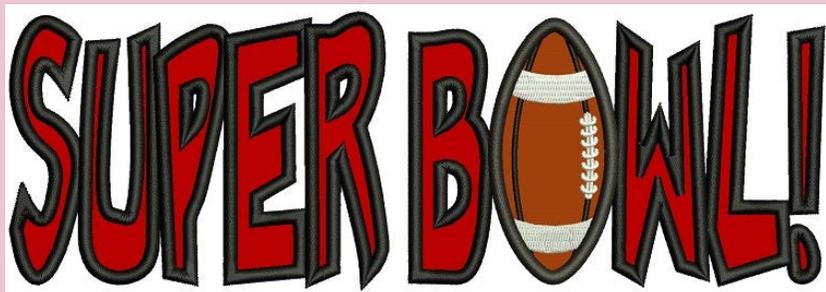


And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 4:7 -

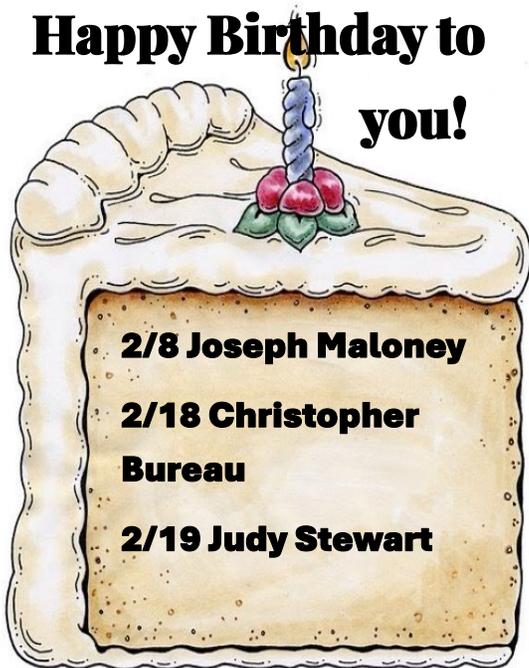
SUPER BOWL FACTS

- ⇒ The first Super Bowl was held January 15, 1967. The game was played at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The Green Bay Packers defeated Kansas City 35-10.
- ⇒ Super Bowl Sunday is the second largest day for food consumption in the United States, only to be outdone by Thanksgiving.
- ⇒ In 2011 111 million viewers watched the game making it the most watched television broadcast in American History.
- ⇒ For 20 years, the most watched television show in history had been the last episode of M*A*S*H. The 2010 Superbowl broke that record.
- ⇒ Roman numerals are used in the Super Bowl because the football season falls into two separate calendar years.
- ⇒ Every year there are 72 footballs used for the Super Bowl. There are more than 700,000 footballs purchased for the NFL every single year!
- ⇒ The Lombardi Trophy given to the winning NFL Super Bowl team, weight seven pound, stands 21” tall and is worth \$25,000. Vince Lombardi was the coach of the Green Bay Packers who won the first Super Bowl in 1967.
- ⇒ The undisputed champion of Super Bowl food favorites is chicken wings. More than 1.4 billion wings are consumed on game day.
- ⇒ More than \$1.3 billion is spent by Americans on beer on Super Bowl Sunday.



February Celebrations of Life and Love

Happy Birthday to you!



2/8 Joseph Maloney

2/18 Christopher Bureau

2/19 Judy Stewart

A very
Happy Wedding Anniversary
to a wonderful couple!

2/1 Cindy & Dave Eckman

2/14 Sue & George Pfeiffer



Capital Campaign - Boiler:

Funds for the boiler campaign currently show

\$35,642.38

toward our goal of \$58,803.



Pennies for Poverty collection is an ongoing effort in support of the Women of the ELCA – donations welcome in the Donation Center canister.



LITTLE FREE PANTRY AT IMMANUEL

IF IN NEED – TAKE SOMETHING

IF YOU CAN SHARE - LEAVE SOMETHING

Feel free to bring items to church office & we will make sure they get in the pantry for you.



God's Valentine Gift

God's Valentine gift of love to us

Was not a bunch of flowers;

It wasn't candy or a book

To while away the hours.

His gift was to become a man,

So He could freely give

His sacrificial love for us,

So you and I could live.



He gave us sweet salvation, and

Instruction, good and true—

To love our friends and enemies

And love our Savior, too.

So as we give our Valentines,

Let's thank our Lord and King;

The reason we have love to give

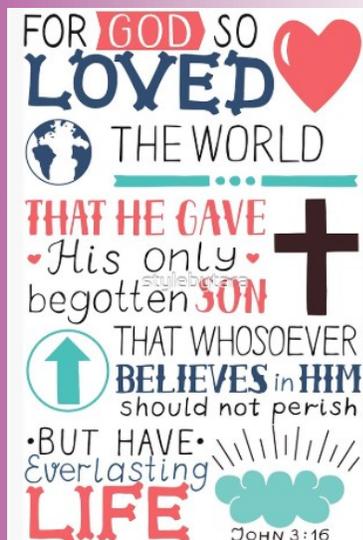
Is that He gave everything.

By Joanna Fuchs

February Worship Calendar



Date	Presider	Assistant	Lector
02/01/2026 9:30 AM	Pastor Kostur	Bob Dorler	Bob Dorler
02/08/2026 9:30 AM	Pastor Kostur	Debbie Redditt	Barb Coughlin
02/15/2026 9:30AM	Pastor Kostur	Anita Byrne	Debbie Madurski
02/22/2026 7:30 PM	Pastor Kostur	Bob Dorler	Brenda Matson





8 THINGS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT GROUNDHOG DAY

- ⇒ **The tradition of Groundhog Day began with the Germans and the holiday, Candlemas.** Early European Christians believed if the sun came out on Candlemas (February 2nd), winter would last for six more weeks.
- ⇒ **The groundhog really can predict the end of winter.** Just not with his shadow. Because groundhogs hibernate through the winter, when he leaves his den, it is a natural sign that spring is just around the corner.
- ⇒ **Punxsutawney Phil is just a nickname.** His full moniker is "Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinary."
- ⇒ **The original Groundhog Day involved eating groundhogs.** After sightseers celebrated Punxsutawney Phil's weather prediction in 1886, they all headed to Gobbler's Knob to dine on a feast that was made up of various groundhog dishes and toasting with groundhog punch.
- ⇒ **Punxsutawney Phil isn't the only weather predicting groundhog.** There are a few other states that use their own groundhogs to celebrate the holiday rather to rely on Phil. Atlanta has General Beau Lee, Sir Walter Wally of Raleigh, NC and Birmingham Bill who makes his home in Birmingham, AL.
- ⇒ **The 1993 movie "Groundhog Day" starring Bill Murray is what grew the crowds turning out on February 2nd for groundhog day.** After the movie, the crowds grew to almost 30,000 people.
- ⇒ **Did you know that flipping a coin to predict the weather has a better chance than Phil's prediction?** The National Climatic Data Center compared the US national temperatures from 1988-2012 and found that only 39% of Phil's predictions were correct . That is significantly worse than chance!
- ⇒ **Groundhogs only live up to 6 years.** Since the inception of groundhog day in the US in 1886, there have been numerous Phil's that have had the opportunity to predict our weather.

What Does the Bible Say About Love?

It is that time of year that everyone is thinking about love. Or maybe they are trying to plan how to surprise their sweetheart with a grand gesture of love. Love is special, but the love that Jesus showed us and the words of love that shine throughout the Bible are the most generous gestures we could ever be graced with.

Did you know that love is mentioned over 500 times in the Bible—and with good reason! Scripture reveals to us a love that is not shallow or sentimental, but all powerful, enduring, and transformational. It is a love that flows from God that transforms our hearts and overflows into our relationship with others.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 *“Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs.”* These are the words that were written by Paul to a divided Corinth church. These are the words that describe agape love—unconditional, sacrificial, Christlike love. This is the kind of love that God shows all of us through Jesus. And this is the kind of love that we are called to extend to others.

On our own we are unable to produce this type of love. Through the power of the Holy Spirit this love becomes the fruit of our lives. **Galatians 5:22-23** *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”*

5 Ways to Practice Biblical Love

- ⇒ ***Practice Patience***—pause before reacting. Show grace in place of frustration.
- ⇒ ***Show Kindness***—A small gesture like a smile, a helping hand or a kind word.
- ⇒ ***Celebrate others***— Replace envy with encouragement. Cheer others on.
- ⇒ ***Stay Humble***—Serve without seeking attention. Let others go first.
- ⇒ ***Live Selflessly***—Give to others without expecting anything in return.



February 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Worship 9:30 Quarter Sunday Coffee Hour SOUP COOKOFF	Ground Hog Day Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Tops 9:30 am AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Bible Study 10:45 am Choir 12 pm	AA 7 pm	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Worship 9:30 am Council Meeting	Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Tops 9:30 am AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Bible Study 10:45 am Choir 12 pm	AA 7 pm	Valentine's Day
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Worship 9:30 am	President's Day Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	Mardi Gras AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Tops 9:30 am Worship 7:30 PM AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Bible Study 10:45 am Choir 12pm	AA 7 pm	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Worship 9:30 am FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH	Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Tops 9:30 am AA Mtg 7:30 pm	Bible Study 10:45 am Choir 12 pm	AA 7 pm	



Fun Facts About the Month of February

- February was originally the last month of the Roman calendar year. It remained the last month of the year until the time of decembris (c. 450 BC), when it became the second month.
- Once every 6 years February has four full 7-day weeks. When this occurs it is called a rectangular month.
- The name of the February full moon is “The Snow Moon.” However, February doesn’t always have a full moon.
- Mardi gras is always in the month of February. It is called a “floating holiday.” Mardi gras is always 47 days before Easter. The colors that represent Mardi gras are purple, gold and green with each color signifying something important. Purple represents justice, gold is power and green is faith.
- February 3rd will always be known as “The Day the Music Died.” February 3, 1959 Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and “The Big Bopper” J.P. Richardson , along with their pilot Roger Peterson died in a plane crash. The song “American Pie” inspired the day of remembrance.
- According to folklore, if we have fog in February, we will have frost in May.
- It has been said that if bees come out in February the next day there will be wind and rain.

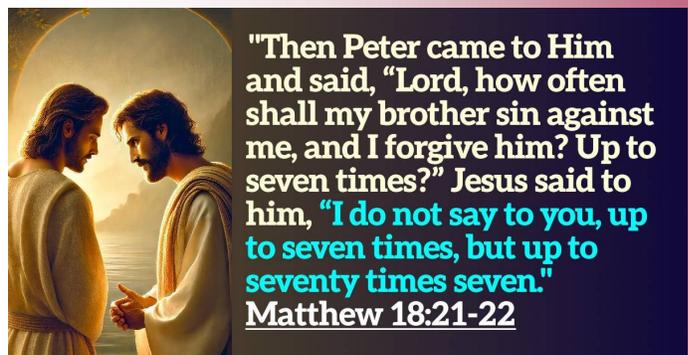
Do you know and understand the significance of 490 in the Bible?

In the Bible, 490 primarily signifies complete and perfect forgiveness and redemption stemming from Jesus telling Peter to forgive "seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22), which equals 490, indicating unlimited forgiveness.

Numerically, 490 also relates to Hebrew words like tamim (perfect/complete) and Bethlehem (House of Bread), linking the Messiah's perfect sacrifice to forgiveness and sustenance and appears in Daniel's prophecy of 70 weeks (490) years for Jerusalem's restoration.

- ⇒ Jesus' instruction to Peter (Matthew 18:22) to forgive 70x7 times (490) signifies unlimited, perfect forgiveness, emphasizing the "finished work" of the cross for salvation.
- ⇒ Tamim (Perfect/Complete) the Hebrew word tamim, meaning "without spot or blemish," also numerically equals 490, connecting to the perfect Passover Lamb (Jesus) and the call for a perfect heart (1 Kings 8:61).
- ⇒ Bethlehem ("House of Bread") the Hebrew name for Bethlehem (*Beit Lechem*) also totals 49, linking Jesus, the Bread of Life, to His birthplace and the ultimate source spiritual sustenance and forgiveness.
- ⇒ Daniel's 70 weeks equals 490 years. In Daniel 9:24-37 the outline of God's plan for Israel's redemption, culminating in Messiah's coming and forgiveness is described.

While you won't find "490 times" written out specifically in the Bible, the number appears in significant prophetic, linguistic and symbolic contexts throughout Scripture.





Cheesesteak Potato Skins

Are you looking for the perfect Super Bowl snack that your guests will love? This recipe just might fit the bill! Cheesesteak toppings and potato skins merge to make one hearty and tasty treat!

Ingredients

6 russet potatoes, scrubbed clean

Kosher salt

1 large onion, thinly sliced

1 1/2 lb. flank steak, thinly sliced

2/3 cup shredded provolone

3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided

Freshly ground black pepper

2 bell peppers, thinly sliced

1 tsp. dried oregano

1 Tbsp. Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°. Pierce potatoes all over with a fork, then rub with 2 tablespoons oil and season with salt and pepper. Place potatoes on a baking sheet and bake until skin is crispy and potatoes are tender, about 1 hour. Let cool slightly until cool enough to handle.

Meanwhile, make filling: In a large skillet over medium heat, heat remaining tablespoon oil. Add onion and peppers and cook until soft, 5 minutes. Add steak and season with oregano, salt, and pepper. Cook until steak is cooked through, 5 minutes for medium.

When potatoes are cool enough to handle, cut them in half lengthwise. Scoop out flesh with a spoon, leaving a ¼ inch border. (Reserve scooped out middles for a different use.) Return potatoes, cut side-up, to baking sheet. Divide steak mixture evenly among potatoes, then top with provolone.

Bake until cheese is melty, 10 minutes.

Garnish with parsley before serving.

Immanuel

Church Office 814-833-4062

Office Hours

8:30—12:30 Monday—Thursday

Staff

Pastor Karen Kostur 814-833-4062

or Cell#: 724-557-2386

Pastor's Office Hours – Tuesday 1:00-3:00

Thursday, 9:30am-2:00pm

Church Caretaker: Wally Coughlin

Organist/Music Director: Allan Slovenkay

Admin. Ofc.: Brenda Matson

Sunday School

Coord: Anita Byrne & Janice

Kreger

Teachers: Anita Byrne & Pastor

Kostur & Brenda Durst

2026 Congregation & Church Council Officers

Pres: Rick Kuntz 814-572-3719

VP: Joe Byrne 814-397-7319

Sec.: Brenda Durst 814-873-0451

Fin. Sec.: Bob Dorler 814-449-1855

Treasurer: Debbie Redditt 814-833-9756

Church Council Committees

We invite all members of Immanuel to join any of these committees and/or offer your gifts where you can – many hands make light work!!

Fellowship, Outreach & Growth

Council liaisons: Sally Leubin

COFFEE HOUR 1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

ONGOING COLLECTION FOR LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Finance

Council liaison: ANNUAL Budget

Property

Council liaison: Rick Kuntz

Committee Chair: Debbie Redditt

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

RENTAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

ONGOING BOILER CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Stewardship

Council liaison: Dave Mays

Social Ministry Committee

Committee chair: Debbie Madurski

Council Liaison: Brenda Durst

Worship & Music

Liaison to Worship: Joe Byrne

Christian Education

Council liaison:

Check out our website and "FRIEND" us on [Facebook](#)

Did you miss church? Need to keep updated and want easy access to the church calendar, newsletter or annual report?

Check out our website <http://www.ilc-erie.org/>