

# Immanuel Lutheran News

203 E. Division St., Altamont, Illinois ph. 618.483.6395

James F. Wright, Senior Pastor ph. 217-994-1116

Visit our web site at [www.immanuelaltamont.org](http://www.immanuelaltamont.org)

March 2020

## *From the Pastor*

A recent email from the LCMS office in Springfield said a new law required me to take a course on mandatory reporting of child abuse. I have known for some time that church workers are required to report suspicion of child abuse. But I had never taken a course like this. "Another government regulation," I thought to myself.

The link in the email led me to a blog from a legal centers website, which stated the following ominous announcement.

*On January 1, 2020, significant changes to the Illinois mandated reporter law will take effect for addressing child abuse and neglect issues. These changes are particularly important for all persons who care for children, such as in houses of worship, schools, and social service organizations. New training requirements apply for all mandated reporters, with clarification that all child care workers qualify as "mandated reporters." Clergy members' reporting obligations are now expanded, but their privilege not to report remains under certain circumstances.*

My reluctance to comply fell away as I took the online course. It only took about 45 minutes to register and read the information. I was enlightened and relieved that this is what I had been doing for the past 31 years of ministry. It wasn't that much of a bother, in fact, everybody who has anything to do with children should take this online course. It's good for us to know what is considered child abuse or neglect and what is not.

The state wants ALL people who work with children in schools, churches, and children's social groups to take this simple course. So if you are a volunteer Sunday school teacher, youth leader or chaperone, or an adult that works with our vacation Bible school or after school care, you should take the course. It will help you to know what you are required to report. You are NOT supposed to investigate, interrogate, or gather facts on suspected child abuse. Just know the signs and when to call.

Sometimes we may be afraid that if we report something, we will be responsible for parents losing custody of their children. In most instances this is not what happens. DCFS tries to keep children with their family before enlisting foster care. Shouldn't we

be more fearful of ignoring the signs of child abuse and allowing a child to suffer? The government provides someone with training and experience to ask questions of the child and family to see if there is cause for concern. Unless we have some training in what child abuse is and when we should report it, we won't know when and how to make a report.

So if you work with children at the church, please take the training. When you finished, print out the certificate and sign the acknowledgment of mandated reporter status. You can do this on the internet by going to <https://mr.dcfstraining.org>

You may be wondering what *the clergy's privilege not to report* means. That refers to the court's reluctance to force a pastor to report the sins confessed to him in private. Most pastors take a vow not to disclose the sins confessed to them in private to anyone. For the most part our government has always respected this "pastoral privilege." It actually makes us better citizens by encouraging us to confess our sins to someone. So I would not testify against you in a murder case if you confessed to me in private that you committed this murder. I would, however, strongly encourage you to turn yourself in to the authorities so that you do not endanger other people, live on the run for the rest of your life or in fear of being discovered, and give some assurance to your victim's loved ones and society in general that there is not a murderer moving about freely. I would also encourage you that you can trust your God to help you bear any penalty for your crime, knowing that your sins are forgiven in heaven and you will be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven for the sake of Jesus, your Savior. *Pastor Wright*

**Confirmation Sunday** will be April 26 at 10:00 AM. There will be a regular service that Sunday at 8:30 AM.

**Lent Begins** Services will be held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 now through April 1. Our theme will be "Eyes on Jesus," *O come, let us fix 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* (Gradual for Lent, based on Hebrews 12:2).

When the characters in the Passion narrative look at Jesus, what do they see? In most cases,

people misunderstood who He is and what He was doing. In some cases, by faith, people recognized Him aright. Our Lenten series this year, based on the Gospel according to St. Mark, will examine how the various people around Jesus viewed Him—and how we should view Him. We will “fix our eyes” on what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death, and celebrate what God sees on account of His work: our justification for His sake.

The service will be brief; two hymns, readings, a sermon, prayers, and a benediction. A meal will be served afterward about 7:15 PM for all to join in fellowship and holy conversation. Donations will benefit our youth groups who will be preparing and serving the food with the help of parents.

We will also celebrate the Lord’s Supper at all Saturday and Sunday services up to Easter. Lent is a time of self-examination, confession, and forgiveness. Take the extra time to prepare yourself and be blessed as you receive the Sacrament of the Altar.

**Church Safety** In order to assure we keep everyone as safe as possible, the doors to the church will be locked after the first hymn or song during all services. If you are late for the beginning of a service, as may happen to anyone at some time, come and enter at the narthex doors by the bell tower. All of our doors are designed to open from the inside at all times. You are not locked in, but if you leave through a door during services, you will have to come to the bell tower to get back in. Doors are unlocked during Sunday school time (9:45-11:00 AM). At all services there are two trained safety volunteers to help with medical emergencies and lost children.

**March to the Arch** Life Team of Immanuel will sponsor a bus to the pro-life event in St. Louis on Saturday, March 7. The four mile walk ends with a rally at the St. Louis arch. Bus leaves Immanuel at 9:00 AM. Cost is \$25 per seat. High school youth may attend for free. Sign up in the narthex. You do not have to be a member of Lutherans for Life to attend.

You are invited to the **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Grilled Pork Dinner** at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Altamont, on Sunday, March 1, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Pork Loin Dinner: \$10; Porkburger Dinner: \$6; Hot Dog Meal \$5; Children ages 4 and under eat FREE. Meal includes: whole pork loin, pork burger or hot dog; baked beans/green beans; baked potato/chips; coleslaw; applesauce; pie/dessert; dinner roll; drinks. ***Come and enjoy good food and fellowship with friends!***

**Sunday night Bible Class** March 15, 6:30p.m. will meet at V/R Spilker’s (rather than G/V Robinson).

**Director of Youth and Family** Andrea Wendling has agreed to serve Immanuel as Director of Youth and Family. Andrea is the third oldest daughter of Tom and Diana Wendling. She attended Texas A & M University and has been working for the institution in hospitality services. Andy will be taking courses online through Concordia University, Irvine, California to receive her certification as a director of Christian Education. Andy will be helping us organize our ministry with youth and families. Please welcome her with a meet and greet on March 8 at 9:45 as she begins her work in early March.

**Porkburger Sale on Altamont Triangle Saturday, March 21, 2020**, 10:30 – 1:00 pm. Members of Immanuel will be hosting a fundraiser (for a roof repair) on the Triangle in Altamont. Porkburgers, chips & drinks will be available and the Ladies Aid of Immanuel will feature homemade pies and other baked goods available for purchase.

A target date of **Saturday, March 28** has been set to repair a member’s roof if enough funds are available. Volunteers are needed for both March 21 & March 28. Please give generously of your time & talents. If you can help, please call the church office at 618-483-6395.

#### **Prayer Corner**

- For healing of Curtis Baginski, Herb Berg, Gail Bryan, Tiffany Dunaway, Abbey Franzen, Wayne Franzen, Gert Heiden, Pam Kepley, John Lowe, Joe Matthewson, Judy Mercier, JR Newby, Deb Pagel, Gary Pryor, Larry Quandt, Walter Ruding, Evelyn Shumaker, Norma Siebert, Elverna Tappendorf, Jim Voelker, Nora Wendling, Craig Wolff, Helen Zeigler and others.
- For our pastor, church staff, ALIS school staff.
- For Lutheran missionaries Ted Krey and Britt Odemba and for their families.
- For our government for protection of unborn children and elderly.
- For all who travel
- For peace in the world, an end to violence in the name of God, and for harmony among nations.
- For those persecuted for their faith in Jesus.
- For police, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel, and those who serve in our military and their families; Chelsea Giovannetti and Michael Weishaar

**Large Print** helpers needed for Tuesday, March 3. Call Eloise 618-483-6439 to volunteer.

**Altamont First United Methodist Church** Soup Supper Tuesday, March 10, 2020, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm. Free Will Donation.

**37th Annual Hog Roast at Zion Lutheran Church**, 5534 E 600<sup>th</sup> Ave, Altamont, Sunday, March 15, 4:30. Cost is free will donation. Bulk BBQ for sale.