

# 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)

May 2020

## **FROM PASTOR WRIGHT**

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup>not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. 1 Peter 5:1-4*

It's been a long time since we've been together. The Covid-19 stay at home order in Illinois started on March 16 and has been through one (contested) extension. We won't be getting back to public worship until June. We are waiting to worship together and receive the Lord's Supper. Our thirteen confirmands are still waiting for their first communion.

In thirty-two years of public ministry I've never been through anything like this before. We've had Sundays where we had to cancel church for weather. One time I had the flu and the other pastor had to handle the services, but never in my life have I missed going to church for six Sundays in a row. I don't suppose many of you have either.

It's difficult to be your pastor under this situation where you can't come to me and I can't come to you. I read 1 Peter chapter 5 this morning and it strikes me as difficult to obey. How can I shepherd the flock entrusted to me if we can't meet together?

I am doing my best to come to you in your home through internet and television and telephone. But it's just not the same, is it? By now you've thought of

Jesus' words in a new way, "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst." That's a promise that when God's holy Word is before us, He is visiting us himself by the power of the Holy Spirit. So it is enough for now.

I have been thinking of those Old Testament people who were carried off into slavery in Babylon in the year 586 B.C. They could not go to the temple in Jerusalem any longer. It wasn't there anymore—destroyed by the invading army from the east. For seventy years they were in servitude to their foreign masters, meeting only in the home and later in the synagogues. They didn't forget about their God. Then one day they were allowed to go back to Jerusalem by a new emperor, Cyrus the Mede. God had sustained their faith during all that time, and they were able to rebuild their temple and worship God again with the sacrifices.

God will sustain your faith as well, if you continue under my shepherding and open the Bible for yourself. If you live with a family, make it a point to have devotions together. Use Portals of Prayer. I have been posting some daily video devotions on Facebook with our Immanuel group. Find us and join for updates. If a computer or smart phone is not your thing, that's okay. You can open the Bible for yourself. Try reading a chapter a day through one of the four gospels or one of Paul's letters in the New Testament. Say the Lord's Prayer and offer some petitions of your own. Now is not the time to drift away from faith. We need faith in Jesus now more than ever!

In your search for fulfilling spiritual guidance during this time, be careful not

to be led astray from the right teaching of God's word though flashy internet sites or television programs. Adhere to the true teaching of God's Word with doctrinally correct Lutheran materials. There is a list following my article of some suggestions where to look.

We have decided to offer communion on Sunday mornings through a sign-up process. We will obey the government as good citizens. Therefore, we cannot have more than 10 people together at any one time. We are to stay 6 feet apart. We can do it this way.

1. Sign up through the link on our website ([immanuelaltamont.org](http://immanuelaltamont.org)) or our Facebook group.

2. If you don't have a computer, call us at 483-6395 and register.

3. Come to the church at your appointed time and wait to be welcomed into the north door of the Parish Hall.

4. I will have a brief service of communion for about 10 minutes.

5. Exit through another door and go back to your car. We will sanitize the room after each group.

We will continue to offer communion like this each Sunday until this shelter at home order is lifted. We will meet in fifteen minute intervals for four hours. If you can't get a time because the sign up is full, contact me and we will schedule another time on Monday evening. My phone number is 217-994-1116.

Some people think that this passage I quoted at the beginning of the article says that as a shepherd of God's flock I will receive a special crown in heaven. Revelation says that every believer will receive the crown of eternal life. I have learned not to look for honors. I usually get humbled shortly after receiving them. However, I do look forward to eternal life with you. We won't need a church building there, for the Lamb of God, the chief Shepherd, will be with us in person all of the time. You won't need a pastor or a church. Jesus will shine on you directly. Until then I struggle to be

your under shepherd, and I look forward to seeing all of you back in church when this is over. It's so much easier when you can come to hear me at the church! God bless all of you, and I miss you very much. I give my love to you, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Pastor Wright* 217-994-1116

### **Here are some doctrinally correct internet resources for worship at home.**

- Our worship services weekly on our Youtube channel at [immanuelaltamont.org](http://immanuelaltamont.org)
- Our Facebook group (do a search for Immanuel Lutheran Altamont)
- Worship Anew (worship for shut-ins) at [worshipanew.org](http://worshipanew.org)
- Daily devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries at [lhm.org](http://lhm.org)
- Religious materials, catechisms, hymnals available for purchase at Concordia Publishing House at [cph.org](http://cph.org)
- Lutheran Radio KFUE St. Louis at [kfue.org](http://kfue.org)
- Lutheran Public Radio for the best of music and theology at [lutheranpublicradio.org](http://lutheranpublicradio.org)

**How is the church doing?** We are meeting our offering goals for the past two weeks. Thanks for your contributions. ALIS has secured a government forgivable loan to cover payroll, benefits, and utilities for April and May. That helps a lot. People have been mailing in their offering envelopes, dropping them at the church in the new secure mail slot by the carport, and using online giving through Vanco Giving Plus. You can reach it through the website or download the app on your phone. It's easy to use. Please continue to support our church and school through regular offerings to God.

We are preparing to launch a new website that will have added features. Andy Wending, our new Director of Youth

and Family, has been busy offering Bible studies, children's talks, and devotions on a number of internet platforms. Our youth have the opportunity to meet though online video conferences. Anita has been busy working from home shaping up our church database, and Barbara has been working at home on bookkeeping and getting the online giving operational. Kenny has been keeping the building and the grounds maintained.

Our people seem to be doing the best they can. Pastor has been calling around to check on families. He is not allowed into the hospital or nursing homes. Funerals are very limited in what can be offered. The food pantry we share at the Methodist church is back to regular hours 1-3PM Tuesday & Thursday afternoons if people need food. It was fortunate that our youth had a fundraiser for it in February. Another place for food is Enduring Freedom Ministry in Shumway. They have been serving many families in time of need.

Recently our CID district president wrote to the governor asking that churches might be considered to be essential services. It was a very respectful and thoughtful letter. We will be having a voters' meeting sometime in June to catch up on some necessary business. We hope you can make it.

Some of our members have had to put off medical procedures. Many of us have been furloughed, laid-off, or even terminated from work. There's plenty of suffering and uncertainty going around. But God is greater than all of this. He will help us in our time of need, just as He promised.

**No Rummage Sale this year.**

### **Prayer Corner**

- For healing of Curtis Baginski, Freda Beccue, Heath Beccue, Adel Bluschke, Gail Bryan, Tiffany Dunaway, Abbey Franzen, Wayne Franzen, Gert Heiden, Pam Kepley, John Lowe, Cathy Marble, Joe Matthewson, Judy Mercier, JR Newby, Angela Kull Ohnesorge, Deb Pagel, Gary Pryor, Walter Ruding, Evelyn Shumaker, Norma Siebert, Barbara Smith, Elverna Tappendorf, Ken Trigleth, Jim Voelker, Nora Wendling, Craig Wolff and others.
- For our pastor, church staff, ALIS school staff as they work from home.
- For Lutheran missionaries Ted Krey and Britt Odemba and for their families.
- For our government for protection of unborn children and elderly.
- 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.

**The Lord's Supper** will be offered at Immanuel Church to small groups of Immanuel members only of 9 or less in compliance with state pandemic orders on Monday, May 4 from 5:00 to 8:00PM. (Sunday morning communion is full). You MUST sign up using the following link. *Select the number using the drop down tab to the right of your name.*  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b4ba8a62aa0fa7-communion>

If you do not have internet, you can call the church at 483-6395 to reserve a spot. Proper social distancing will be required. Facemasks are encouraged. Do not come if you are experiencing flu symptoms. The sacrament will be distributed in 15 minute intervals. Come to the north door of the Parish Hall only. Use "Christian Questions with Their Answers" by Martin Luther (Catechism) to prepare beforehand.

**CEFS Meals** If you plan to pick up a meal call 618-483-6912 the day before to reserve your meal for pick up.  
**(Immanuel delivery schedules – check your email for May 4-15. Several were sent by mail.)**

**Online giving** is now available through Vanco Giving Plus. Please continue to support the ministry of Immanuel through regular offerings as you are able. Go to [immanuelaltamont.org](http://immanuelaltamont.org) for the web link or download the app on your phone and search your location for Immanuel Altamont. You may wish to cover the 3% service charge for this option. You can also contact your bank for free transfers.

**Drop Slot at Church** We now have a secure mail slot by the carport on Division street where offerings and correspondence may be left safely. Thank you Trustees.

If you prefer you may mail offerings to:  
 Immanuel Lutheran Church  
 203 E Division St  
 Altamont, IL 62411

**The Altamont Food Pantry** at the Methodist Church is back to regular hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3pm.

**CAMP CILCA SUMMER 2020:** The summer program is moving forward and still accepting registrations! Of course, much depends upon the possible extension of government restrictions. CILCA will take every possible precaution to keep campers safe. Sign up today to spend some quality time in God’s creation!  
 Find out more on-line at [www.cilca.org](http://www.cilca.org)  
 Email [camp@cilca.org](mailto:camp@cilca.org) / Call 217-487-7497.

**Offerings Since Shelter in Place order**

Envelope	\$63,036.00
Loose	3,290.00
Lent	492.00
Maunday Thursday	320.00
Good Friday	805.00
IRA Thrivent	7,851.91
Memorials-Dorothy Meier Unified	1,425.00
Memorials - D. Meier: ASC	185.00
ASC	100.00
United Way donation to ASC	1,488.56
Thrivent - ASC	2,030.00
Thrivent - Kitchen Maint. & Repair	387.00
Thrivent - General Fund	3,418.00
Traditional E-giving	8,112.00
Vanco Giving	<u>2,177.60</u>
	\$95,118.07



**“As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.”**  
 (Isaiah 66:13a)

[www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)