

Immanuel Lutheran News

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Visit our web site at www.immanuelaltamont.org

July 2020

From Pastor Wright

A recent poll by the Associated Press showed that Americans are the unhappiest they have been in fifty years. We can understand why. This has been such a strange year. We heard about Coronavirus in China in January. We thought, "They had SARS years ago. Mexico had H1N1 in 2009. Nothing much came of it here." Now we look at New York and Chicago that way. I'm very thankful that the spread of COVID-19 hasn't overtaken our local counties the way it has major US cities. Over a hundred twenty thousand people have died in our country. Twenty-five percent unemployment is nothing to laugh at. My own family has a largely unemployed generation below me in age. Belts have been tightened.

Add to that the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, the protests across the country, and the rioting and violence in its wake, and it seems unbelievable. I can go on about the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24 about the signs of the end of the world, but you've heard it many times from me. The end of the world is near. I hope you believe it is happening before us. Take time to prepare, not by prepping with guns and freeze dried food, but with sackcloth and ashes, that is, repentance for your sins and faith in Jesus to help you. Treat other people the way you want them to treat you.

That's been the message of the Christian Church throughout the existence of the world. We have continued to look to Jesus during this time. We met in small groups for worship. Now we meet in larger groups of twenty-five percent capacity of our sanctuary. Small group Bible studies have resumed meeting. Nursing homes and hospitals are still closed to visitors. I have been meeting with people by appointment if they feel safe against infection. We are interpreting the Word for our times. We are praying for justice, for those leading us in government to do so wisely, for peace and for contentment in all people. We aren't shaking hands and passing the plate, but God's Word

lifts us up from the present suffering to a place of peace by the promises He makes and fulfils before us. The first promise is to send a Savior. The rest follows. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior" (Isaiah 43:2-3).

While working on a funeral sermon, I stumbled into Psalm 73. "Truly God is good to Israel (the church) to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." The psalm continues at verse 23, "Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

There it is. We can go on and on about the problems around us. We can worry and get angry about how we or other people are treated. But those who know the true God are strong, because God is the strength of their heart. He is their portion. Their life will end, but the life to come when Christ returns will never end. That is what supports us through this difficult time. And we support each other. It is a joy to me when I see that happening in the congregation.

I was honored to receive the recognition for "leading the congregation through the Covid-19 epidemic" you bestowed on me on June 13-14. I really did not do anything that any pastor would not normally do. We merely need to adapt to the situation the world is in and keep the teaching of God's word pure. May the Lord bless you all.

Pastor Wright

Pastor Wright will resume Sunday morning Bible class on the Book of Revelation on July 5 at 9:45 in the Parish Hall.

Small Group Communion - Those who would like small group communion may come Wednesdays at 5 PM starting July 1. Please notify Pastor that you are coming.

Safe During Worship

We have resumed our regular worship schedule on Saturdays and Sundays. We practice the following safety precautions to keep everyone safe:

- Sanitize hands upon entering.
- Avoid all physical contact with those outside your household.
- No handshaking.
- Face coverings are encouraged.
- Offerings are gathered at the door.
- Doors are open for arrival and departure times.
- Hymnals, attendance cards, and pencils are not being used currently.
- Seating and surfaces are sanitized after each service.
- Those who have flu-like symptoms, have compromised immune systems, or those with small children who cannot social distance are encouraged to continue to worship at home with Immanuel's Youtube channel (find it on our website, immanuelaltamont.org) or watch Mediacom channel 81 at 6 PM on Sunday.
- For individual communion or encouragement, call Pastor Wright (217-994-1116).
- No one should think they are sinning if they worship at home until this epidemic is over to keep themselves safe from infection.

Thanks to our friends at the Lutheran Care Center who have kept COVID-10 away for the residents. We are grateful for your service to our loved ones. We look forward to visiting with the residents and holding services there when it is safer.

Elders/Trustees meet: July 13, 7:00 PM

Church Council Meeting: July 13, 7:30 PM

Voters' Assembly: July 19: 1:30 PM.

Consider sending a card of comfort to member Don Ousley at the death of his wife, Wilma. Don's address is: Aperia Care Center, 221 E Cumberland Rd, Saint Elmo, IL 62458.

Carol Kassel suffered a fall and is recuperating. Please send cards to their home: 1542 Ontario Dr., Waterloo, IL 62298

Confirmation Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the following students received individual questioning and first communion in June. Their confirmation service will be at a later time. Their banners are displayed in the nave. Immanuel welcomes to the Sacrament of the Altar: Della Berg, Riley Berg, Claire Boehm, Kaden Davis, Dillan Elam, Gavin Flack, Dillon Hankins, Aden McManaway, Kaidyn Miller, Grace Nelson, Peyton Osteen, Ethan Robbins and Nathan Stuemke. Be faithful unto death, and you shall receive the crown of eternal life.

Prayer Corner

- For healing of Freda Beccue, Heath Beccue, Claudia Berg, Adel Bluschke, Gail Bryan, Tiffany Dunaway, Mary Frailey, Abbey Franzen, Carol Kassel, Pam Kepley, Cathy Marble, Judy Mercier, JR Newby, Angela Kull Ohnesorge, Deb Pagel, Pam Paszotta, Gary Pryor, Walter Ruding, Evelyn Shumaker, Norma Siebert, Barb Smith, Elverna Tappendorf, Nora Wendling, Roxie Wendling, Craig Wolff, Gina Wolff and others.
- Comfort to the families and friends of Hildegard Moll, Wilma Ousley and Joe Mathewson
- 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.



Online Rainforest Explorers VBS

Thank you for your patience as we figured out the best way to bring the VBS experience to your kids this summer!

The Board of Christian Education met and we have decided that because of

- The large number of children that attend VBS each year and the struggle it would be to keep them social distanced and
 - the ever changing guidelines on social interactions in Illinois
- it is in the best interest of Immanuel to hold an online VBS with no in-person VBS. What won't change is the fact that your children will learn more about Jesus and have a fun time!

This will consist of 5 days worth of Bible story, Bible verse challenge, and music provided to you online. All VBS videos will be available on our website on July 19th. Families can still register their children to receive creative snack and craft ideas, and some additional VBS content in our VBS packets. VBS packet pickups will take place throughout the week of July 19th.

Register at our website now or during church with a paper signup sheet! Note: This

Registration form is to supply you with a VBS packet that has extra content. You do not need to sign up in order to participate in VBS as all videos will be on our website and youtube page.

This is an amazing outreach opportunity. If you feel comfortable gathering with more people, you can host neighbors, friends or extended family to join in on the fun! It's such an easy and fun way to share the good news of Jesus with our community!

Volunteer Opportunities

The LYF needs volunteers to help us out! If you are interested in making dinner and dessert for around 20 people on Wednesdays by 5:30 OR if you would like to chaperone some LYF events please contact Andy Wendling. You do not need to be a parent or grandparent of a youth to help us minister to them!

Usher Schedules for July through September are on the usher's table in the narthex.

Immanuel CEFS Meal deliveries are scheduled for July 27 – August 7.

Online giving is available through Vanco Giving Plus. Please continue to support the ministry of Immanuel through regular offerings as you are able. Go to 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 Use the secure mail slot by the carport on Division Street where offerings and correspondence may be left safely. If you prefer you may mail your offerings to:
Immanuel Lutheran, 203 E Division St, Altamont, IL 62411

ALIS Registration July 15 & 16, time TBA.
Kindergarten Orientation planned for July TBA.