



## 2020 Vacation Bible School is Back On Track & Virtual

Register Online Today!

**Virtual VBS runs July 27 - July 29th with an In-Person Closing July 30th**

We are so excited to be back on track! Rocky Railway VBS 2020 will be FREE and will be offered VIRTUALLY Monday, July 27 through Wednesday, July 29. View recorded Bible lessons, music videos and complete crafts at home. On Thursday, July 30, join us for our VBS

closing with a Family Treasure Hunt at Immanuel Lutheran Church - Mokena at 10731 W. LaPorte Road. Social distancing Guidelines will be followed.

Registration deadline is July 15 and classes are for children ages 3 through entering 5th grade. Register online at [immanuelmokena.org](http://immanuelmokena.org), click Ministries and select Vacation Bible School.



**Register Today for Interim Communion Services Hosted Wednesdays from 3:00 - 5:30 pm**

We are trying something new! On Wednesdays, Pastor Aaron hosts Interim Communion Services. These will only be available to a limited number of participants per each scheduled time slot. Each person attending must register individually. To keep with the strict guidelines of social distancing space is limited,

attendees *must wear a face mask* that covers their mouth and nose, and we ask that there be no congregating within the lobby space before or after the service. Each service will last approximately 15-20 minutes. At the completion of the service please exit the space promptly so we can clean and prep for the next scheduled group. Interim Communion Services will continue weekly on Wednesdays until further notice. We ask that you only attend once a month to allow others the chance to sign up. **Register at [immanuelmokena.org](http://immanuelmokena.org) under the story on the home page.** Don't have a computer? Please call the office at 708-479-5600 x 1.

## SERVING THE LIVING LORD AT IMMANUEL

**Mission Statement:** "Caring and sharing since 1850, the mission of the family of God at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mokena is to effectively teach the Word of God. promote the spiritual growth of the Christian family, and continuously reach out with love and service."

Connecting people in loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, with each other in contagious Christian community, and with our calling of servanthood in the world.

## Financial Summary

YOY Comparison	MAY 2020	2020 YTD	2019 YTD	YOY Change	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	%
Offering	23,552	130,425	145,477	-15,052	-10
Interest	64	857	858	-1	0
Facility	0	1,650	2,420	-770	-32
Expense	26,806	146,347	143,659	2,688	2
<b>Balance</b>	<b>-3,190</b>	<b>-13,415</b>	<b>5,096</b>	<b>-18,511</b>	<b>-360</b>

> Mortgage Balance \$192,977.96

**IN-PERSON SERVICES RESUMED**  
Saturdays at 5:00 pm  
Sundays at 9:00 am

**ARE YOU IN NEED OF FINANCIAL,  
PASTORAL OR OFFICE SUPPORT?**

**Please Contact Us:**

Pastoral Support: 708-479-5600 x2

Office Support: 708-479-5600 x1

**Please check [immanuelmokena.org](http://immanuelmokena.org) for updates, to view Pastor's Video Blog Messages, and Live-Stream of Weekend Worship Services.**

## **NEW!** Live-Streamed Weekly Worship

Tune in to Facebook, YouTube Channel or [immanuelmokena.org](http://immanuelmokena.org) (click connect, live stream) to view the weekend services live from the comfort of your home. Service times are Saturdays at 5pm and Sundays at 9am.

## Bulletin & Items Publishing

Bulletin articles are due on Wednesdays by 9 a.m.

Articles for the August *Items* are due by **July 22** and will be on our website, emailed, and mailed after **August 1**. The *Items* Newsletter is also available online at [immanuelmokena.org](http://immanuelmokena.org)

**\* Please consider signing up on our website to receive the newsletter via email.**

## Official Acts

**Deaths:** Rod Nagy & Lydia Paterek

**Baptism:** Jake Beechy

## Elders

Immanuel has elders who assist the pastor during the worship service and outside of worship. Their job is to be of service to you in any cares/concerns you may have with the congregation and within your family. Here are your elders:

**Ider 1: Marty Olsen 815-464-4373**

**Ider 2: Jim Bubeck 312-952-1727**

**Ider 3: Bruce Bechtel 815-485-5455**

**Ider 4: Nick Whittier 815-485-9269**

**Ider 5: Jerry Vrshek 815-469-5059 (Director)**

*Please contact these Elders should you have any needs/concerns/questions.*



**Have you moved or  
has your contact**

**information changed recently?**

If the answer is yes, please call or email the church office with your new information so you don't miss out on our communications for church events/info!

**Church Office Contact Information:**

708-479-5600 | [office@immanuelmokena.org](mailto:office@immanuelmokena.org)

## Donations To Special Groups

Please follow the below instructions for submitting donations via check to any of the following groups.

**GROUP**

**Rays of HOPE**

**God's Kids Club**

*Include on Memo: God's Kids Club*

**Ruth Society**

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE**

**Rays Of Hope**

**Immanuel Lutheran**

**Ruth Society**

*\* For Special Group Donations: Clearly write on the outside of your offering envelope where the funds should be designated.*



## CONVERSATION STARTERS FROM THE PASTOR

### *Orthopraxy*

(July 2020)

For any of you who are looking for a window into where my heart and mind have been recently, I'd direct you to the vlog I've been keeping since March. The newest entries are now under "[Pastor's Vlog](#)" (as opposed to "COVID-19 Pandemic Vlog"). For those of you who don't have access to those forms of communication, to summarize, I've been focusing on a couple of crucial topics. First, we've been working our way through the book of Acts, the story of the early church, paying special attention to the way Peter, Paul, and other church leaders handled the difficulties they faced. I am convinced that their struggles can be helpful and instructive to us as we seek likewise to follow in Jesus' footsteps as the 21st-century church. Second, Leeann and I have been reading through and commenting on a book by John Mark Comer, [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry](#). It's analysis of our culture's breakneck pace and a godly, practical response has been life-giving for us as a couple, as a family, and (we pray) for those who have been journeying with us on the vlog.

Aside from those insights, I have just one other to point out here, and it follows closely on what I just said about Comer's book. It offers **practical** ways to engage in being less hurried and, as a result, more intentional about a meaningful life lived with and for God. Now, the word "practical" can be used in both trendy, unhelpful ways, or it can be used in ways the lead us to the life Jesus intended for us as a reflection of Him and His Father. At its worst, the "practical" Christian life can be an unfaithful substitution for justification by faith alone and become a desire for works-righteousness (sanctification over justification). To be clear: Jesus died on a cross for wretched, hell-bound sinners like you and me. Period. Full stop. No equivocation. But Jesus saved us not just **from** sin, death, and hell. He saved us **for** a life to be lived **with** God, walking in His ways. A life of practicing the ways of Jesus. And this is where we find a helpful, healthy, Father-honoring definition of the "practical" Christian life.

Jesus Himself summed it up pretty well in His famous parable in [Matthew 7](#) (of Sunday school song fame): "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash" (vss. 24-27). The critical difference between the two men and the two houses? It wasn't a failure to hear God's Word. It was a failure to put it into practice.

My point is this: many of us know more than we need to **know** to follow Jesus. Many of us understand more than we need to **understand** to follow Jesus. So the way forward as a 21st-century church is not knowing or understanding more, but it is found in putting into practice what we ALREADY know or understand. A friend of mine recently debunked a serious myth about discipleship by putting it this way: "Discipleship starts on Day 1 of a relationship with Jesus." SO true.

Jesus says, "Come, follow me." So we follow. We certainly listen to His voice and learn from His teaching, don't get me wrong. But our lives are shaped to look more like His by following closely in His footsteps. Put another way, we are called not only to *orthodoxy* ("right belief"), but also to *orthopraxy* ("right practice"). May God richly bless you and me as we seek to follow the Jesus we know, who lived and died and rose for us, and still urges us to follow Him into a world that desperately needs His presence, light, and life. Don't be afraid. He'll lead the way into places where He's already working, because...

*Adventure is out there!*  
*Pastor Aaron*

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## Stewardship in a Pandemic

By Sarah Bechtel



As we navigate this time of being only partially back in our worship space, we also work together to sustain the church, both physically and spiritually. Please continue to reach out to your church family, your

neighbors, your family members, and your community. We need each other even if our contact is limited to phone calls and video conferences! Thank you to all who have continued to present their offerings – the vast majority of Immanuel's expenses continue even in a pandemic (personnel, mortgage, utilities, etc.).

### Ways to submit an offering during this time:

- **Drop off** a check (or cash in sealed envelope with your name) in the secure black lockbox by the church office entrance door.
- **Mail** a check to the office: 10731 W La Porte Rd, Mokena, IL 60448
- **Electronic Giving** – go to the website, [www.immanuelmokena.org](http://www.immanuelmokena.org), and click on Electronic Giving under the Giving menu. Fill in the secure form with either credit card or checking account information to submit offering.
- **Joyful Response:** many members already use this service which automatically debits their checking account at a specified interval (weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc.) for a specified amount. The form can be found on the Electronic Giving page on the website – just fill it out and drop off or mail to the church office.

## Immanuel Gives Back During Covid

By: Board of Stewardship, Lyn Thorne



During this critical time there are far greater needs to help others and the Food Pantry drive and the Morningstar Mission's "Jump on the Bus" school supplies drive are two of them that would've been in process right now. Given our current limitations of being together and collecting these items, the Board of Fellowship felt led to use some of the financial resources that they were blessed with from the Cookie Walk and provided both organizations with donations to support them.



## Altar Flowers By Barb Belanski

During the Covid-19 shut down from March through May many of you had signed up for Altar Flowers and we are asking you to consider signing up for an alternate date for 2020.



Each bouquet is \$20. Please contact Barb Belanski, (773) 704-1416, if you would like to sign up for Altar Flowers. Checks should be made

payable to the Ruth Society and placed in the offering plate or lockbox by office entrance. Be sure to write Altar Flowers on the memo line.

The Ruth Society would like to thank all those that have ordered flowers in the past and for honoring the Lord.

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## Faith at Home Via Live-Stream

By Nicolette Fitzpatrick

Not ready to join us in-person? Thanks to Rod Nagy and a few helpers, we're excited to rollout our Live Streaming Worship Services! You can access the Live Stream on our website under the Connect tab, facebook page or our YouTube Channel. So if you are not ready to come back in-person there is an option for you to view services from the comfort of your own home. Check it out on Saturdays at 5:00pm or Sundays at 9:00am! Playbacks of the service will also be available if you can not watch live!

### How to find the Vlog and Worship Services

- [www.immanuelmokena.org](http://www.immanuelmokena.org) – Go to Connect, Select Faith@Home or Live Stream
- Facebook – Follow us @ImmanuelMokena
- YouTube – Our channel is Immanuel Lutheran Mokena (you can subscribe to the channel to be notified when new videos are posted)

### Got Vlog Questions?

If you have a question that you'd like to ask Leann & Pastor to answer on the Vlog about life, ministry, what it means to follow Jesus and what that looks like in their household please send him an email at [aaron@immanuelmokena.org](mailto:aaron@immanuelmokena.org). They're hoping a window into the way they do life in their home might be helpful to others.



# JULY

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

03 Maetha Smith	18 Zackery Hayes
06 Jim Bruner	19 Cody Fenn
07 Michael Dudczyk	19 Jill Smith
07 Andy Lopez	20 Gary J. Banser Sr
08 Beth Loucks	20 Jake Hostert
08 Mike Navratil	20 Colleen Maranto
09 Ryan Banser	21 Peyton Burke
09 Kalie Bartnik	21 Joan Fleckenstein
09 Riley Saltzman	22 Dakota Perrin
10 Nina Heidkamp	22 Jarred Schellhas
10 Bob Karpola	23 Delynn Flannery
10 Zane Zellers	25 Jacob Kruspe
11 Jessica Podgorny	25 Colin Nass
13 Carson Fleckenstein	26 Tyler Maranto
14 Alyssa Bell	27 Daniel James Foiles
14 Jordan Horneij	28 Zachary Bubeck
15 Keith Karpola	28 Naomi Nagy
15 Jason Nagy	28 Kathy Temple
16 Chelsea Chiaro	29 Gary Smith
17 James Nagy	30 Sarah Bechtel

### Anniversaries

03 William & Karen Rohder	32 years
03 Don & Gayle Snedden	49 years
04 Paul & Wanda Dillberg	26 years
08 Ray & Doris Fleckenstein	31 years
17 Eileen & Art Hostert Jr	49 years
20 Ben & Amy Greenspan	29 years
20 Bruce & Barb Malm	35 years
23 Donald & Linda Jeffrey	32 years
26 Gary & Betty Dortmann	51 years
27 Nick & Brittany Pattenau	07 years
29 Keith & Colleen Maranto	43 years
30 Greg & Marsha Flesch	32 years
30 Kim & Stephen Thompson	15 years

*We wish God's blessings on all these people celebrating a birthday or anniversary. If we have forgotten anyone's special day or it is in error, please contact the church office.*

### Christian Symbol



**Jerusalem Cross:** This complex cross, also called the Crusader's Cross or Fivefold Cross, has several interpretations. The main cross is composed of four tau (T) crosses representing the Old Testament law. The four small Greek crosses symbolize the fulfillment of the law in the gospel. The five crosses together represent the church's mission: to spread the gospel to the four corners of the earth. They're also said to symbolize Christ's five wounds (hands, feet and side).

### Lutheran World Relief

*By Sarah Bechtel*

In the midst of a pandemic, charitable organizations around the world need support more than ever. Immanuel's world mission focus for 2020 is Lutheran World Relief. This organization is working to help at-risk populations around the world. Here is information from their website regarding their response to the pandemic:



**Lutheran  
World  
Relief**

*Your love reaches the people most in need. Here's how:*

*Our poorest neighbors are most at risk. Your gift gets them clean water to drink and wash their hands — a first defense against COVID-19. You are delivering emergency food packs to families living where market shelves are empty. And you are equipping health workers with the protective gear they need to stay healthy and getting health networks accurate, up-to-the-minute information about COVID-19 and what to do to stay safe.*

We encourage you to learn more by visiting their website – [lwr.org](http://lwr.org).

**On July 25th and 26th, we will have a free will offering to support LWR.** We know many members are not yet attending in-person services. Please consider mailing in or dropping off a donation to LWR. Make checks payable to Immanuel Lutheran Church and put LWR in the memo line. Thank you for any help you can provide!



## Sunday Morning at 8:00 AM on Chicago's CW station WPWR channel 50 (Comcast 184)

Tel: (260) 471-LOVE (5683) | Toll-Free: (888) 286-8002

[www.worshipanew.org](http://www.worshipanew.org) (Sermon Summaries)

Email: [info@LMMinc.org](mailto:info@LMMinc.org)

Lutheran Ministries Media, Inc. 5 Martin Luther Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46825-4996  
Chicago and Northwest Indiana

### **July 5, 2020 – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

Psalm 145:1-14; **Romans 7:14-25a**; **Matthew 11:25-30**

“Rest for Your Souls” - Sermon Text: **Matthew 11:25-30** - Rev. Paul Shoemaker

In life, we “labor and are heavy laden.” Jesus says in Him, “You will find rest for your souls.” Join us as we talk about the rest we find in Jesus.

### **July 12, 2020 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**

Psalm 65:9-13; Isaiah 55:10-13; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

“Sowers of the Word” - Sermon Text: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 - Rev. William Mueller

The Parable of the Sower is one of our Lord’s most familiar parables. It begs us to answer two questions. First, what kind of a job of sowing the Word of God have we been doing? Second, what is the condition of our “soil”? Are we guilty of crowding out the message of Jesus or are we eager and ready to hear? He who has ears, let him hear!

### **July 19, 2020 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**

Psalm 119:57-64; Romans 8:28-39; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

“Would-Be Weed-Puller?” - Sermon Text: Matthew 13:30 - Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

Are you a *Would-Be Weed-Puller*? Is there that certain someone or situation that drives you to the point of wanting to give up, to remove the offending party? Our God is a patient God and His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, patiently endured suffering, even to the point of death, to give us eternal life! When tempted to be a “weed-puller,” never forget that our loving God does some of His greatest work at the point where we are ready to rid ourselves of people and predicaments.

### **July 26, 2020 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

Psalm 125; Romans 8:35-39; Matthew 13:44-52

“Never Separated” - Sermon Text: Romans 8:35-39 - Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

No one and nothing can separate us from Christ’s love. This means that despite all the suffering and grief we go through in life, we will be conquerors. Not only that - we will be more than conquerors.