
ITEMS

A newsletter for the family and friends of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church



Volume 63 No. 4

April 2021

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Maundy Thursday April 1 7 pm With Communion
Good Friday April 2 7 pm
--No Saturday Service--
Easter Sunday April 4 9 am Indoors – **RESERVATIONS FULL**
11 am Outdoors – weather permitting
No reservation needed
Service will be on the back parking lot
BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIR!



On Monday, April 5, the church office will be closed.

SPRING FOOD DRIVE

By Sarah Bechtel

Thank you for your generous donations to the Frankfort Township Food Pantry. The lobby filled up with paper goods and non-perishable items which the food pantry was very grateful for! Thanks for being the hands and feet of Jesus in this way!



EASTER BUNNY EVENT A HOPPING SUCCESS!

By Sarah Bechtel

Over 60 families stopped by on Saturday, March 27th, to visit the Easter Bunny and bring donations for the local food pantries. Each family was able to take photos with the bunny, and each child received a special goodie bag with items to help them learn more about Jesus and Easter. The families appreciated the event, and we received a wonderful amount of food donations (mostly canned veggies, because the Easter Bunny loves vegetables!). See more pictures on page 5!



PRAYER PATIO BRICKS

By Lyn Thorne

We are putting in another order of engraved bricks for the prayer patio. If you would like to honor someone in this way, order forms are in the lobby and by the church office. Brick sizes and prices are \$75 for a 4"x8" brick, \$150 for an 8"x8", and \$250 for a 12"x12" brick. Order forms and payments are due by April 15.

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	FEB 2021	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	YOY Change	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	%
Offering	20,585	46,060	51,734	-5,674	-11
Interest	23	49	155	-106	-168
Facility	450	450	1,400	-950	-68
Expense	25,433	53,508	65,144	-11,636	-18
Balance	-4,375	-6,949	-11,854	4,905	41

> Mortgage Balance \$173,844

IN-PERSON SERVICES CONTINUE Contemporary Saturdays at 5:00 pm Traditional Sundays at 9:00 am

We have limited congregational responses and singing during worship to help keep the spread of germs to a minimum. The praise band and organist will still perform in a limited capacity.

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

Live-Streamed Weekly Worship

Tune in to Facebook, YouTube Channel or immanuelmokena.org (click connect, live stream) to view the services live from the comfort of your home. Service times are listed above.

Bulletin & Items Publishing

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

Articles for the May/ *Items* are due by **April 26** and will be on our website, emailed, and mailed after **May 1st**. The *Items* Newsletter is also available online at immanuelmokena.org

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

Official Acts

Funeral Service – March 19:
Gary Banser, Sr. (July 20, 1942 – March 13, 2021)

A very warm welcome to our New Members:
Judith Geovanes
Laura Stubbe

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:

Elder 1: Marty Olsen 815-464-4373
Elder 2: Jim Bubeck 312-952-1727
Elder 3: Bruce Bechtel 815-485-5455
Elder 4: Nick Whittier 815-485-9269
Elder 5: Jerry Vrshek 815-469-5059 (Director)
Elder 6: Lynn Gilmore 815-600-6855

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



Update Your Info!

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

Donations To Special Groups

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

GROUP **MAKE CHECK PAYABLE**

Rays of HOPE

Rays Of Hope

God's Kids Club

Immanuel Lutheran

Include on Memo: God's Kids Club

Ruth Society

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

Seeing AND Speaking

I recently asked a couple of friends how they would describe hope. Not surprisingly, they had to think about it for a bit. I have, too. Most specifically, I've wrestled with how to describe the difference between faith and hope. The best way I can think to describe the dynamic between these two words that are connected by solid trust in God is that faith is a solid place to stand in the present, but hope is what empowers us to step boldly, bravely into the future reality that God is bringing to us.

Hope is a powerful force. Many thinkers and writers have expressed the strength of the human spirit that God has placed in each of us to varying degrees, and how integral hope is to facing the suffering that naturally accompanies human life in a sin-broken world. G.K. Chesterton put it this way: "Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances that we know to be desperate." The Roman statesman Cicero put it quite succinctly: "While there's life, there's hope." The English novelist George Eliot said, "What we call our despair is often only the painful eagerness of unfulfilled hope." And much to my point, the well-known preacher Charles Spurgeon proclaimed, "Faith goes up the stairs that love has built and looks out the windows which hope has opened." It seems to me that both committed followers of Jesus and secular thinkers alike would probably have a hard time disagreeing with St. Paul's assessment in 1 Corinthians: "Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love" (13:13, CSB).

Many of you may have noticed a conversation that has been occurring quietly in little pockets of our congregation, in connection with the social media hashtag #seehope. Essentially, it's a simple reminder to all of us here at Immanuel to have our eyes peeled for how God is bringing hope to our lives during the continually-unfolding situation with the pandemic, and even to notice ways in which God may be leading us to bring hope to people that we meet, whether well-known or just encountered. When you slow down a bit and intentionally observe the world around you, it's not hard to see the work of Jesus, bringing the Kingdom, and the people to whom He is bringing it, sometimes through people like you and me. It starts with seeing opportunities for hope to break in.

But hope is also expressed most poignantly in the work and person of God Himself in the flesh, Jesus. You can place your hope in a lot of things. Like an economy or government. A March Madness team. A bank account. Your own ability to figure things out. But at the end of the day, when human ingenuity and power have exhausted themselves and lie lifeless on the floor, it's only the resurrecting power of Jesus that can pick dead, lifeless things off the floor and make them come alive. It's not a fairy tale. It's a promise, bought with a sacrificial death on Good Friday and sealed with overwhelming evidence of resurrection victory on Easter. It's our mission, our duty, our joy as Christians not just to see the hope of this great story, OUR story, but also to speak about it.

So as we all bask in the glory and joy of Easter during the season immediately following it, we're going to have a conversation about how we can raise our competency in not only seeing hope, but also speaking up about it. Jesus gave us plenty of metaphors to describe Himself and what He does, and learning to have those words on our lips regularly so we can naturally speak them into the lives of others will help us accomplish the mission Jesus gave us. Even in the midst of a great deal of death and mourning the loss of both people and patterns we treasure, we want to embody the hope we have, not to grieve like others do who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). The truth is, this hope is for everyone. We just have to get the Word out.

Ironically, Sir Frances Bacon, the English philosopher and statesman, expressed a truth about hope in this way: "Hope is good for breakfast, but it is bad for supper." I know that some will argue with me that bacon is not just a breakfast food, but neither is hope. My prayer this Eastertide is that God gives us eyes to see His work in the world, and that spring gives us plenty of reminders of His resurrection power to make all things new. May we be so well-fed by the feast of hope that is the Easter season that we are able to express the great news of Jesus' triumph over death, not just at breakfast, but whenever we break bread and celebrate the eternal life He gives us. The journey's not done yet, and our Savior gives us abundant provision for the road. There's plenty of hope to go around, and plenty of ground yet to cover before we reach our Father's House, because...

Adventure is out there!
Pastor Aaron



PRESCHOOL NEWS

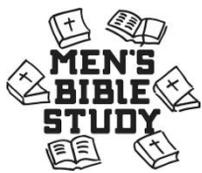
Registration begins April 1. Tell your friends and neighbors to check out the [preschool webpage](#) for a virtual tour and information on how to enroll. Pray for our preschool, our staff, and our students as we re-open and share the love of Christ with these little ones.



Women of the Word

We've resumed meeting using Zoom. If you would like a link to be invited to our virtual Women of the

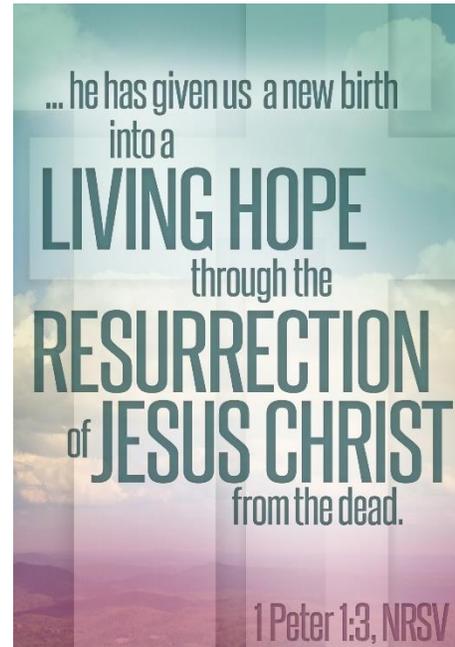
Word, please send an email to Leeann at dceleann04@yahoo.com. We will continue looking at the Sermon on the Mount. Newcomers are welcome! **Meeting Dates:** April 12 & 26



Men of the Word

We are studying the book of Mark, The chapters will coincide with the sermon of the week. If you would like a link to the online meeting, contact Pastor Aaron.

Meeting Dates: April 19 @ 7pm



“Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter clinched it for Paul. If God’s Son, divine and holy from all eternity, would take on human flesh for me, obey the commandments for me, suffer and die for me, and rise again to guarantee my forgiveness and resurrection, there can be no doubt. He loves me.” *Rev. Mark Jeske, Time of Grace – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*



HELP NEEDED WITH STREAMING!

Did you know that we only have three members currently helping stream our services?

The Elders are looking for two or three more members to help with the Streaming during church Services. Very minimal computer knowledge is needed. We will teach you everything you need to know. Please contact Jerry Vrshek at (815) 469-5059.

EASTER BUNNY EVENT A HOPPING SUCCESS!





Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

- 1 Barb LaRocco
- 2 Patrick Lydic
- 2 Jessica Malley
- 3 Jim Bubeck
- 3 Amy Greenspan
- 4 Kimberly Perrin
- 5 Virginia Miller
- 5 Sarah Smith
- 6 Edith Albers
- 6 Bruce Bechtel
- 6 Hayley Grebic
- 7 Kalie DeVivo
- 7 Lauren Smith
- 8 Peyton Hohl
- 8 Maddie Roberts
- 10 Nick Whittier
- 11 Patty Lipscomb
- 17 Lisa Baker
- 17 Linda Jeffrey
- 17 Jessie Nykrin
- 19 Laurie Fuka
- 21 Solomon Fargo
- 21 Tim Malm
- 24 Corey Diab
- 28 Marsha Flesch
- 30 Rebecca Keen
- 30 Phyllis Seno

Anniversaries

- 4 Marty & Susan Olsen 34 years
- 4 Mike & Kimberly Perrin 26 years
- 13 Richard & Barbara Belanski 14 years
- 16 Gary & June Bogard 61 years
- 17 Karl & Emma Wohler 39 years
- 20 Ted & Laura Fenn 30 years
- 24 Tim & Lisa Baker 36 years
- 25 Ray & Linda Steinbrenner 35 years
- 28 Tom & Delynn Flannery 9 years
- 28 Craig & Janice Nass 32 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.

Altar Flowers By Barb Belanski

We have three Sundays open in April if you would like to sign up for Altar Flowers. Please contact Barb Belanski, (773) 704-1416 or sign up in the Opportunity Book by the church office. Each bouquet is \$20. 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.

Ways to Submit an Offering

- **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, 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.

Faith at Home Options

How to find the Vlog and Live Streaming Worship Services...

- 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)

Portals of Prayer

The April-June edition of Portals of Prayer are available in the lobby and in the blue bin outside the church office entry. Large print editions are also available.



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 (Sermon Summaries)

Email: info@LMMinc.org

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

April 4, 2021 – Easter Sunday

Psalm 16; **Isaiah 25:6-9**; **Mark 16:1-8**

“**Life on The Mountain**” - Sermon Text: **Isaiah 25:6-9** - Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation on this glorious Easter! He takes us from the valley of the shadow of death and gives us *Life on The Mountain* where death is swallowed up forever and tears are wiped away from all faces.

April 11, 2021 – Second Sunday of Easter

Psalm 148:1-2, 11-14; 1 John 2:1-2; John 20:19-31

“That You May Believe” - Sermon Text: John 20:30-31 - Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

The Apostle John wrote his Gospel for this purpose: that you may believe. Two questions arise. Believe what? Why believe?

April 18, 2021 – Third Sunday of Easter

Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; **Luke 24:36-49**

“The Job of the Church” - Sermon Text: **Luke 24:47** - Rev. Thomas Eggold

Because of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. This is why Jesus came, and sharing this message is precisely the job He has given to His church.

April 25, 2021 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Psalm 23; Acts 4:1-12; John 10:11-18

“The Good Shepherd” - Sermon Text: John 10:11 - Rev. Shayne Jonker

“I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” The Good Shepherd, Jesus, has gone ahead of you through suffering and death to resurrection, life, and glory. Your Shepherd lives, and in Him, you live too. The grave couldn't hold Him, and it can't hold you either.