

# ITEMS

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



Volume 63 No. 5

May 2021

## OUTDOOR WORSHIP RESUMES

Outdoor worship resumes on Sunday, May 9 at 9 am, weather permitting. Bring your lawn chairs. Masks do not need to be worn outdoors. We will need some help to set-up each Sunday, starting at 8 am. Please contact Jerry Vrshek (815)469-5059 or cell (815)953-8153 to volunteer.

## MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH – RACHEL MEYER

By Sarah Bechel

Instead of spotlighting one organization for our world mission focus in 2021, the Board of Stewardship will be featuring one LCMS missionary at a time – 3 or 4 times throughout the year. Our missionary of the month for May will be Rachel Meyer – she serves through LCMS in Uganda, a land-locked country in East Africa. During the month of May, Immanuel members will have the opportunity to provide financial support for Rachel's ministry needs. Read all about Rachel's mission work and how you can support her ministry needs on page 4!



Photo credit: Erik M Lunsford/Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

## VBS - ALL ABOARD FOR THE ROCKY RAILWAY!

By Lyn Thorne



Summer is coming and we cannot wait for VBS! We have rewritten our entire playbook for this year. We will invite the whole family with children from 3 years old to 4th grade to bring their blanket and join us for an outdoor adventure from 6:00pm to 7:15pm Tuesday-Thursday, July 20-22. Registration will open on June 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be no charge this year, but one thing will stay the same, IT WILL STILL BE ALL ABOUT JESUS! Spread the word!

## FROM THE BOARD OF FELLOWSHIP

By Lyn Thorne

We are looking for fresh new ideas and will be canvassing the congregation for ideas to be COVID RESPONSIBLE but together. Be on the lookout for the ideas questionnaire. If you have any ideas to share, please send an email to lynthorne54@gmail.com. Some of the ideas being considered:

- Outdoor Movie Night
- Fishing
- Flying Kites
- Thunderbolts Baseball Game

We are always looking for volunteers who might be willing to help serve coffee after service (outdoors, weather permitting) and helping plan and execute other ideas to serve our congregation and our community.



## VOTERS MEETING

By Nasser Diab

Our Voters Meeting will be held Sunday, May 16 immediately following the 9 am church service. We plan to hold it outdoors, weather permitting. Topics to be discussed include budget, paying off the mortgage, and board reports.

## 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	MAR 2021	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	YOY Change	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	%
Offering	37,956	84,016	79,800	4,216	5
Interest	510	559	729	-170	-23
Facility	0	450	1,650	-1,200	-73
Expense	25,722	79,231	94,417	-15,186	-16
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12,744</b>	<b>5,794</b>	<b>-12,238</b>	<b>18,032</b>	<b>147</b>

> Mortgage Balance \$172,274

### 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](http://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 June *Items* are due by **May 24** and will be on our website, emailed, and mailed after **June 1st**. 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

Funeral Service – April 28, 2021:

Gail Lupe (September 6, 1934 – April 10, 2021)

Baptism – April 25, 2021:

Easton Lee Fearon, son of Mario & Ashley (Nystrom) Fearon



## 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.*

## 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

### Christians Lament

As a fan of the Chicago Cubs, I know a thing or two about lament...and I haven't been

following them as long as some people I know. But before that, growing up, I was a fan of the Detroit Tigers, so I guess that does qualify me to speak into the agony of following a sports team just a little bit. There are a whole slew of emotions connected to rooting for a group with whom you identify, and sports is one of the most overt ways we show it in our culture. We are incensed when a call doesn't go our way. We groan inwardly or emphatically express it outwardly when a respected, dependable player makes an avoidable error. We chafe at the coach or manager who fails to implement what we see as the optimal and winning strategy, and fault them loudly when the outcome of their choice leads to the failure we could have obviously predicted. We feel like things are right in the world when our team is at the top of the league or division, but fall into an emotional funk when our team's name falls to the bottom of the list. It's not easy to be a Cubs fan (or any fan, for that matter), and "at least we have next year" simply doesn't calm the notion that we could have done better this year.

Being a part of God's family isn't much different. God has placed us together, for better or worse, to fulfill His mission, and we all play a part on His team. We function as a body (1 Corinthians 12). There's no such thing as "Lone Ranger" Christians, I always say. We need each other. However, I've also been known to remind people of this fact: Family is messy. Family is good, but family is messy. Things don't always go as they should, and sometimes they're just downright hard and sharp and broken. Sin and death does a pretty effective job of throwing God's family into discord and urging them to deny their identity as His very much-loved children by their actions. And so whether it's Christian leaders highlighting the moral failings of their people or members of the family pointing out the shortcomings of its leaders, there is plenty to lament about what happens in the church. And let's not even get started with what happens out in the world...there's plenty more to lament there!

My point is this: we all experience losses, and we may often feel ill-equipped as God's people to handle the big emotions that go along with those losses in a way that honors God and leads us closer to healthy relationships with Him and others.

Does sin's brokenness find a way to slither into the church and cause trauma and divisions in God's family? Unfortunately, yes. Does this world and its leaders often make choices for all of us that makes us feel like we don't belong and that our beliefs are antiquated? Yes. Are some of the parts or formats of our life together as God's people that we hold dear and have been strongholds in our lives as long as we can remember slowly (or sometimes strikingly quickly) passing away? It's almost physically painful to admit that they are. Are there big emotions attached to these developments? Of course there are! Anger? Sorrow? Indignation? Disgust? Frustration? Fury? Groaning? Discontent? Check, check, check...and the list could go on. If you've felt some of these big feelings in the church before, I'm with you. I've experienced them too. Being a follower of Jesus often involves engaging the wide spectrum of human emotion. But how are we to start finding our path toward a healthy expression of these big feelings...and maintain our integrity all the while? We know we've been called to orthodoxy ("right belief"); how do we also move toward orthopathy ("right feeling")?

I firmly believe that it begins and ends with the two most important events in Jesus' life: His death and resurrection. These two events should inform and encapsulate our approach to the complex art of Christian lament. It starts with a firm resolve to lament the only thing in this world that truly deserves an outpouring of sincere lament: the unjust death of the only God-Man who didn't deserve it. We don't just mourn our own sins on Good Friday. We also mourn the results of them, and our complicity in this genuine tragedy. If Christian lament starts with the laser-focused sorrow over the death of God's own Son, we'll be starting down the right path. The Greek word for "sin" is properly used as an archery term, and expresses the idea "missing the mark." Not only do our actions, words, and thoughts miss the mark or fall short of God's intent and glory (Romans 3:23), but even our lament over the things we have lost are often untargeted and unintentionally wound those around us. But Jesus' death on the cross and the great love He showed in those moments lead us not only to lament the effects of sin in this world, but also to be eternally grateful that we have a God who handles them, full-force, no holding back.

When we truly lament Jesus' death, we'll also be in the right posture to celebrate with unfettered joy what came after it: the resurrection of God's Son. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! No more lament! The great destroyer is destroyed!

"Death has been swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54d-55). Mourning and weeping at the cross of Jesus gives us all the emotional fuel we need to dance at His empty tomb, to celebrate the victory He has won for us.

This side of heaven, separating out these complicated mix of emotions will never be easy. But we have Jesus' promise that one day, in the new heavens and new earth, all lamenting tears will be wiped away (Isaiah 25:8), and the only thing left will be the joy of knowing God, living always in His presence. That *will* come to pass. We have God's Word. But until that day, we look to God to lead and direct our path through lament and sorrow, giving us glimpses of Easter joy, because...

*Adventure is out there!*  
Pastor Aaron

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## Missionary of the Month Rachel Meyer



Photo credit: Erik M Lunsford/Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Instead of spotlighting one organization for our world mission focus in 2021, the Board of Stewardship will be featuring one LCMS missionary at a time – 3 or 4 times throughout the year. Our missionary of the month for May will be Rachel Meyer – she serves through LCMS in Uganda, a land-locked country in East Africa.

Rachel serves the Lord as an education consultant in Uganda -- she works alongside the Lutheran Church of Uganda (LCU) to develop Christian education in their Lutheran schools. She teaches Bible classes and the music of the church to students. She also assists the LCU in equipping others to teach the faith through teacher training and curriculum development. Rachel is thankful for

the opportunity to share Christ with children, as well as to walk alongside pastors, teachers and school administrators to help strengthen the ministry to children in congregations and schools.

Rachel's hometown is Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She received bachelor's degrees in elementary education and music education from Concordia University Chicago, and a master's degree in education with a specialization in elementary reading and literacy from Walden University. Before serving in Uganda, she taught at Lutheran schools in California, Illinois and Taiwan. In her free time, Rachel enjoys reading, music, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.

During the month of May, Immanuel members will have the opportunity to provide financial support for Rachel's ministry needs. Throughout the month, the stewardship free will offering box will be located in the lobby. You may write checks payable to Immanuel Lutheran and note Rachel Meyer on the memo line. Online donations will also be accepted – go to [immanuelmokena.org/electronic-giving](http://immanuelmokena.org/electronic-giving) and choose World Missions (under Select Fund) to make a one-time donation.

We can also support Rachel through our prayers. Pray for the ministry in the Lutheran schools in Uganda, that God may work through His Word to build faith in the hearts of the students, teachers, families and communities. Ask God to continue to nurture Rachel in the faith and give her wisdom and encouragement to humbly share Christ's love in word and deed.



Confirmation Class of 2021

Alyssa Mae Bell  
Tyler Jacob Bell  
Benjamin Thomas Howard  
Riley Renee Saltzman  
Natalee Rose Schellhas  
Paige Lee Seivert  
Reagan Lee Seivert



## PRESCHOOL NEWS

Registration has begun! Tell your friends and neighbors to check out the [preschool webpage](#) for a virtual tour and information on how to enroll.

Our preschool director, Linda Marquardt, will be leaving us this year. We are sad to see her go but know that she will be a blessing in her new endeavors. We are searching for a new director as well as an assistant director/teacher.

**Preschool Director position** - Part-time Director position is available (25 hours per week) for the 2021-2022 school year, with availability to start June 1, 2021. Position may lead to full-time employment as enrollment increases. Director leads and administers staff of 5 for approximately 60 preschool students. Preschool has 2-day, 3-day and 5-day AM classes. Please submit resume to: [education@immanuelmokena.org](mailto:education@immanuelmokena.org)

**Job Requirements:** Required qualifications include: Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development; 4 years minimum teaching experience in early childhood education. Preferred qualifications: Bachelor's degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or a related field.

**Assistant Director/Teacher position** - Part-time Assistant Director/Teacher position is available for the 2021-2022 school year. Up to 25 hours per week mid-August through June. Preschool has 2-day, 3-day and 5-day AM classes. Please submit resume to: [education@immanuelmokena.org](mailto:education@immanuelmokena.org)

**Job Requirements:** Required qualifications include: Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development; teaching experience in early childhood education.

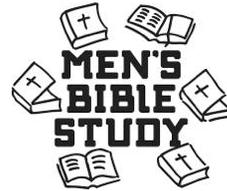


Online Bible Study

## Women of the Word

We are 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](mailto:dceleann04@yahoo.com). We will continue looking at the Sermon on the Mount. Newcomers are welcome! **Meeting Dates:** May 10 & 24



## Men of the Word

We are meeting online but are looking toward meeting together outdoors soon. If you would like a link to the online meeting, contact Pastor Aaron.

**Meeting Dates:** May 17 @ 7pm

## CONTACT information



## Update Your Info!

New cell phone number?  
New email address?

**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)



Mite box offerings will continue to be collected on the first weekend of each month. Pick up a mite box (bank) from the LWML table in the narthex and encourage all members of your

family to participate in this "super-easy" way of supporting missions – thanking you in advance for your support in sharing the love of God around the world!!



...his faithfulness continues through all generations.

PSALM 100:5, NIV

We give thanks on Mother's Day for the mothers who have shared God's love and faithfulness with each generation.



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

- 1 Alyssa Johnson
- 1 Kaitlyn Zohfeld
- 2 Raelyn Daly
- 5 Nathan Seputis
- 5 Sharla Wojno
- 6 Rachel Klode
- 6 Caden Malley
- 7 Laura Threewitt
- 9 William Baker
- 9 Joshua Welzen
- 14 Scott Malm
- 14 Greg Marnul
- 15 Kyle Klode
- 15 Brett Seivert
- 16 Daniel Foiles
- 17 Caitlyn Greenspan
- 20 Lindsay Strobel
- 21 Tom Bartnik
- 21 Lucas Liberty
- 22 Ray DeVivo
- 22 Gayle Snedden
- 22 Jenna Welzen
- 23 Donald Jeffrey
- 23 Robert Krause
- 23 Carole Sluis
- 27 Ashley Johnson
- 27 Laura Saltzman
- 28 Lillie Burkhardt
- 28 Sharon Durkin
- 29 Sarah Limanowski
- 29 Jamie Smith
- 30 Jessica Welzen
- 31 John Hornej

### Anniversaries

- 6 David & Marita Navratil 43 years
- 7 Doug & Terri Hutson 33 years
- 10 Nick & Bev Whittier 52 years
- 14 Ron & Jan Hamning 38 years
- 18 Morris & Laura Threewitt 47 years
- 29 Norman & Nancy Kaczmarczyk 45 years
- 31 Robert & Marlene Cupp 8 years
- 31 Matt & Lou Dawn Howard 44 years
- 31 Lee & Amy Zagrakalis 35 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

Please contact Barb Belanski, (773) 704-1416 or sign up in the Opportunity Book in the church lobby. Each bouquet is \$22.50; both bouquets for \$45. For the summer it will be one flower arrangement for \$45. 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](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.

### Faith at Home Options

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

- [www.immanuelmokena.org](http://www.immanuelmokena.org) – Go to Connect, select 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](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

### **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.