

PRESCHOOL NEWS

Immanuel Lutheran Church and Preschool announces that Tracy Miranda has accepted our call to join the staff as our new Preschool Director. Tracy is a rostered teacher through our Northern Illinois District. She has extensive experience as a Director and Preschool teacher at Peaceful Hearts Christian Preschool in Plainfield, IL for fourteen years and St. John Lutheran Church and Preschool in Forest Park, IL for seven years. She has a BA in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University, Saint Paul, MN. Tracy lives in Romeoville and is married to Tim. They have 3 boys: Jeremy, Brenden and Derreck.

Tracy will be installed as Preschool Director on **Sunday, August 1** during the service. We extend a warm welcome to Tracy and her family as she joins our Immanuel preschool staff.



NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING

By Leeann Schellhas

The LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) has been held every three years since 1980. Throughout the last forty years, thousands upon thousands of youth have had the opportunity to attend this event where they have been encouraged in their faith and reminded of their identity in Jesus alongside Lutheran youth from around the country and abroad.

Next summer, July 9-13, 2022, the National Youth Gathering will be held in Houston, Texas. The theme is In All Things and is based on Colossians 1:15-20. Youth who are eligible to attend must be no younger than 13 on 7/15/22 and no older than 20 on 7/15/22. So, if you are 14-19 years old, this is for you!

We will be hosting an interest meeting on **Sunday, August 29 at 10:15 am** in the Hub for youth and their parents. Come and find out what the NYG is all about! We will talk through information about the Gathering, share with you how we will commit to growing together and fundraising, and answer questions.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

We will have a meeting for parents and students to talk about confirmation on August 22 after church to share details about confirmation instruction here at Immanuel, to clarify the process and answer any questions you may have. The first module covering the Apostles' Creed will then be held on four Wednesdays beginning with October 2, from 5:30 to 7 PM. Email the church office at office@immanuelmokena.org with questions or [register on our website by clicking here.](#)



MORE IN THIS ISSUE ON PAGE 4!

Quilters Return! Baptism Pictures Missionary of the Month & Jump on the Bus Updates

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	JUN 2021	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	YOY Change	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	%
Offering	25,262	156,449	166,899	-10,450	-6
Interest	520	1,114	1,409	-295	-21
Facility	300	1,075	1,700	-625	-37
Expense	29,269	159,830	174,296	-14,466	-8
Balance	-3,187	1,192	-4,288	15,411	147

> Mortgage Balance \$167,576.42

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

Announcement & Items Publishing

Announcements are due on Wednesdays by 9 a.m. Articles for the September *Items* are due by **August 26** and will be on our website, emailed, and mailed after **September 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

Baptism – July 18, 2021:

Michael James Darcy III, son of Michael & Lauren (Smith) Darcy

Baptism – July 25, 2021:

Natalie Lee Lyman, daughter of Jeffrey & Jennifer (Kane) Lyman

Funeral – July 7, 2021:

Edward Hoffman (March 15, 1969 – June 17, 2021)

Funeral – July 21, 2021:

John Lupe (December 22, 1938 – July 1, 2021)

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.*

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.



CONVERSATION STARTERS FROM THE PASTOR

Plans for Future Church

"For I know the plans I have for you"—this is the Lord's declaration—"plans for your

well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. You will call to me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-13, CSB). Many catechumens have learned this passage (or at least the first verse). Countless Christian speakers have included it in addresses for graduations, confirmations, and other milestone events. The reference is written in congratulation greeting cards the world over. The message of "God's got big plans for you, and a hopeful future" is such a powerful affirmation not only of His faithfulness up to this point but also His continued presence throughout the next leg of the journey. A future with God is always bright, especially in light of our final destination, the promised "new heavens and new earth."

This potent dose of Gospel is rendered even more powerful when put in its proper context. The fact that I'm starting to feel like a broken record with the following phrase doesn't change its importance: "Context is key." In this case, context is everything. God's people weren't sitting on a mountaintop vista after conquering the uphill climb, as many people may feel when they read these verses. God's people were in **exile!** Far from home. Stuck in a bad place with no movement. Scattered among the nations instead of gathered in their homeland.

Nobody has to tell us that isolation is a tough spot to be in in the year 2021. "Isolation" is a pretty compact summary of what we experienced last year and are carrying into this year. Being scattered instead of being joyfully gathered has been a common theme. Being stuck in place instead of going where we want to go hasn't been for geo-political reasons like Israel's exile by Babylon, but a medically-induced quarantine can't feel much different. The angst and uncertainty feels almost antithetical to the hopeful tone of Jeremiah's letter to God's scattered people.

But hope remains! Hope prevails! Jeremiah doesn't sweep the hard circumstances of exile under the rug. He acknowledges them, and provides hope and direction in the midst of them. Listen to this: "This is what the Lord of Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles I deported from Jerusalem to

Babylon: 'Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce. Find wives for yourselves, and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters to men in marriage so that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. Pursue the well-being of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the Lord on its behalf, for when it thrives, you will thrive'" (Jeremiah 29:4-7, CSB). In other words, "Don't give up on life until God plants you back in your homeland. Don't forget to live and thrive while you're in exile...because home can be found wherever God dwells with His people."

I really resonate with the plight of these exiled people of God. Not only has the current tone of isolation and disconnection in our culture made the growth of God's Kingdom difficult, but cultural forces throughout the world have also made me feel like the church has been exiled from crucial, mainstream conversations. I do my best to listen to what God is trying to tell me, as I trust you do, too. By His Spirit and for His glory alone, I seek to communicate what I'm hearing to those around me. But I often wonder if people are listening, following.

Yet hope remains! I trust in the power of God that has always led His people through good seasons and bad, through wilderness and Promised Land, in battle and peace. He's always faithful to us regardless of our great orthodoxy or devastating heresy. The future of the church has always depended upon nothing less than Jesus' power to take dead people, conflicted families, disheartened communities and broken nations...and make them alive and vibrant. The Kingdom comes when God's people humble themselves, turn back to the King, confess their weakness and sin, and find healing and wholeness at the foot of the cross (2 Chronicles 7:14). The great Good News is that even sitting in exile, feeling hopeless, God's people can find hope in the final resurrection of all flesh, and all of the tiny reminders in everyday life that it WILL happen someday. God promises; God delivers. Praise God!

I've been reading a really good book recently about how the church needs to reclaim some of its roots to find a way back to being what Jesus has always wanted it to be. It's called *Future Church*, and it says many things that I've noticed or tried to express in the past, but with a clarity I have often lacked. You should read it, too. Chapter 7 in particular should encourage any dyed-in-the-wool Lutheran with its strident defense of the Gospel over cultural relevance. While it's not hard to read,

the concepts the book presents are incredibly challenging to digest and embrace. It forces the reader to confront many of the unhealthy patterns the church has fallen into over the years. Making healthy changes is never easy (Luther could tell you a bit about that!). But if we're going to thrive as God's people, hearing His call to mission and faithfully answering it, we're in for some hard work and some hard conversations.

Nevertheless, I have hope (Can you sense a recurring theme here?). My hope isn't in a book or human wisdom. It's not in the fortitude of the human spirit. It's not in earthly power or intelligence. My hope is in the saving, majestic grace of a Man hanging on a cross, showing you and me what it will take to reach a dying world. My hope is found in the nail-scarred hands of the same, resurrected Man, who beckons you and me to follow Him into broken places where resurrection is the only repair. My hope is in the power of the Spirit of Jesus residing in His people, whether in exile or at home, whether in cultural prominence or disgrace, that leads us to do the things Jesus taught us, shaping and moving us as His disciples. So embrace the journey! Take on the challenge! I am confident and hopeful that you'll find joy in following Jesus, because...

Adventure is out there!
Pastor Aaron

JULY MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

By Sarah Bechtel

Thank you for your support of July's Missionary of the Month -- Rev. Dr. Jonathan Naumann and his wife, Deaconess Cheryl Naumann, who serve through LCMS and are based in the Dominican Republic. We hope you found inspiration in learning about their journey and the challenges they face as they serve not only in the Caribbean but also in Latin America and South America.

To date, we have collected \$577 in support of their mission work. We will continue to accept any donations toward their ministry through the first week of August. If you haven't had a chance to learn about their work – you can visit our website at www.immanuelmokena.org/world to find out more and watch the interview with Pastor Aaron and Rev. Dr. Naumann.

JUMP ON THE BUS DONATIONS

By Barb Malm

Thank you for your donations to MorningStar Mission's Jump on the Bus! We collected 38 hoodies, 19 earbuds, and \$60. Thank you!



QUILTERS ARE BACK!



The quilters will be meeting in person again every second Friday of the month at 9 a.m. We would love to have you join us! Contact Delynn Flannery at 708-217-7094 for more information.

JULY BAPTISM PICTURES



July 18 - Michael James Darcy III, son of Michael & Lauren Darcy



July 25 - Natalie Lee Lyman, daughter of Jeffrey & Jennifer Lyman

CONNECTION CARD

- 1 Mission: Make Disciples**
- 2 Places: Temple & Table**
- 3 Key Relationships: Up, In, Out**

CONNECTION CARD

Check out our new connection card! It has the weekly Launching Point from the sermon, Bible readings and prayer for the week, and our prayer list. Pick one up at the Welcome Center each week or find it on the homepage of our website immanuelmokena.org

FOLLOW US ... ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



Immanuel has been on Facebook for many years, but we recently increased our activity, and we are now on Instagram as well. Please follow us (you can click the logos above to find us) and share our posts on Facebook to increase our reach into the community.

Another way to increase our online visibility is with 5-star reviews on Facebook and Google. Please leave a 5-star review sharing how Immanuel has helped you in your faith journey. (If you don't feel you can leave a 5-star review, please contact Jerry Vrshek, director of the board of elders, to discuss any issues. You can reach Jerry at 815-953-8153 or jkvrshk@comcast.net.)

To leave a review, use these links:

[Facebook review](#)

[Google review](#)

Thank you for helping us improve our online presence so we can more effectively reach our community and share the love of Jesus.

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

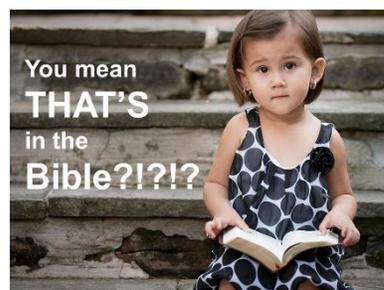
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Preschool is ready to reopen in the fall! Tell your friends and neighbors to check out the [preschool webpage](#) for a virtual tour and information on how to enroll.

Thank you to those who were able to join us in wishing a fond farewell to preschool director Linda Marquardt and teacher Tina Beugger. We will miss them! Our thanks also to Bev Whittier for 40 years of teaching our Sunday School students!



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!!



SUMMER SERMON SERIES

This summer's sermons will focus on things we might be surprised to find

in the Bible. Fill out a short form in the Welcome Center or email Pastor Aaron if there was ever something that you were surprised to learn was in the Bible. Or search your Bible this week and tell us something you were surprised to find in the Bible.

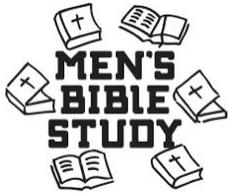


Women of the Word

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 dceleeann04@yahoo.com. We will continue looking at the Sermon on the Mount. Newcomers are welcome!

Meeting Dates: On summer break – resumes August 23



Men of the Word

We are planning on meeting together outdoors. Stay tuned for the location!

Meeting Dates: On summer break – resumes August 16

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT TRINITY LUTHERAN, TINLEY PARK - Opening for an Extended Care Coordinator for the 2021-22 school year is now being advertised. The part-time position would require an individual to work from 2:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Extended Care Coordinator is responsible for the supervision and coordination of Trinity's after school program and the Extended Care staff. Responsibilities include planning and organizing activities. A full job description for the Extended Care Coordinator is available by contacting Trinity Lutheran's school office at 708-532-3529 or school@tlcs.org.

Also, openings for hourly, after-school Extended Care workers for the 2021-22 school year are now being advertised. You may contact the school office at 708-532-3529 or school@tlcs.org for additional information.



LCMS-U AT SIUE

Know a college student attending SIU in Edwardsville? LCMS-U at SIUE provides young people with a weekly Bible study on campus, regular opportunities for fun and fellowship, and a church home-away-from-home. Scan the QR code above or contact Pastor Jess Biermann at jbierrmann@trinitylutheranministries.org or at 314-255-8066 (cell) for more information.

AUGUST

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

- 1 Donna Bakken
- 3 Carly Kruspe
- 4 Eleanor Golden
- 4 Mason Loucks
- 5 Jake Dudczyk
- 5 Kimmy Limanowski
- 6 Jillian Spargo
- 7 Sharon DeSanto
- 7 Jill Gerken
- 8 Julie Banser
- 9 McKenna Malley
- 9 Kimberly Nykrin
- 10 Gretta Schellhas
- 11 Lexie Wojno
- 12 Joseph Banser
- 13 Hannah Grebic
- 14 Erik Strilich
- 16 Joan Baker
- 16 Leann Yunker
- 17 Mikayla Hohl
- 17 Kayci Klode
- 17 Dan Knight
- 18 Barbara Weidner
- 19 Jessica Nilsen
- 19 Stephen Thompson
- 20 Easton Fearon
- 20 Arianna Fleckenstein
- 21 Sara McNally
- 22 Cheryl Thompson
- 23 Ron Hamning
- 23 Jason McNally
- 24 Leeann Schellhas
- 25 Susan Chiaro
- 25 Joanne Teske
- 26 Tammi Carlson
- 26 Elizabeth Limanowski
- 26 Ian Proskan
- 26 Erich Sneideraitis
- 27 Melissa McNally
- 28 Brett Bartnik
- 28 Shannon Hamning
- 29 Jean Smith
- 29 Linda Steinbrenner
- 30 Betty Dortmann
- 30 Mike Saltzman
- 31 Marcia Proskan

Anniversaries

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 2 Ryan & Rachel Klode | 8 years |
| 5 Becky & Robert Burke | 10 years |
| 12 Jim & Theresa Bubeck | 32 years |
| 21 Sid & Marie Victor | 39 years |
| 30 Dave & Deb Ebert | 35 years |
| 30 Noah & Tina Kruspe | 7 years |
| 31 Bob & Maryanne Schultz | 30 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, 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 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)