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# INTEGRATE

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



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Volume 64 No. 1

January 2022

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## NEWSLETTER NAME CHANGE!

Did you notice above that the newsletter has a new name? *Integrate* is the new name for our newsletter. Read Pastor Aaron's article on page 3 to learn more about this change.

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## STEWARDSHIP

By Sarah Bechtel

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.* - Psalm 24:1  
In January, we will be focusing on stewardship and what it means on a personal level. As we have in the past, we will be asking members/families to fill out commitment cards for 2022. However, the form has been slightly revised and will be available as a paper form and online. We encourage the use of the online form — it will be available on the website soon (to be announced at services and via email). Please prayerfully consider your commitment to the Lord, and thank you for joining your brothers and sisters in Christ in this important process.



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## PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

Registration for the 2022-2023 school year is here! Registration opens as follows:

- January 3 – Church Members
- January 10 – Current students and siblings
- January 17 – Alumni siblings
- January 24 – Open to new students



Tell your friends and families to register soon! Your recommendation is our strongest publicity!

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## HAPPY 2022 FROM THE BOARD OF FELLOWSHIP

By Lyn Thorne

We are looking forward to seeing what God is up to this year. We would like to find ways to build our relationships this year and hope you will help us find creative ways to do that.

To start the year off, you are all invited to join us for a Day at Docs, 19081 Old Lagrange Rd #105, Mokena, IL 60448. The date will be Sunday January 16th at 4:30pm. We will have a private room and each family will be able to order individually and pay

for your own bill. We will need a headcount so that we can give Doc's ample time to plan for us. Please rsvp to [lynthorne54@gmail.com](mailto:lynthorne54@gmail.com) or to the church office no later than January 9th.

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**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	NOV 2021	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	YOY Change	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	%
Offering	31,020	287,133	288,322	-1,189	0
Interest	17	1,453	2,067	-614	-30
Facility	200	1,725	2,550	-825	-48
Expense	25,116	292,872	304,568	-11,696	-4
<b>Balance</b>	<b>6,121</b>	<b>-2,560</b>	<b>-11,630</b>	<b>9,070</b>	<b>354</b>

> Mortgage Balance \$0

**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 February *Integrate* are due by January 26 and will be on our website, emailed, and mailed after **February 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

-- None in December --

### 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** \_\_\_\_\_ **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.

### 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.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS FROM THE PASTOR

### A New Name

My family and I love to play board games of all kinds, and the Christmas season all but

guarantees that new selections to our game library will be forthcoming. One that has recently become a standard is built on the premise of discovering whether the person you are traveling with through a mafia-controlled town is in danger like you or the one looking to silence you. Like other games of skill, you are playing not only the game, but also the person across from you. Who are they? How will they respond to different situations? Can you discover their hidden identity...before it's too late?

Human beings have been learning to hide from the very beginning. It started in Eden after the Fall. We don't always show all of who we are to everyone we meet... and for good reasons! Jeremiah tells us that the heart of a human being "is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?" (17:9, CSB). So part of hiding looks like pushing back against those sinful impulses, taking every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:5), and refusing to act them out in the world. This can be a deep, godly thing, and an intimate part of our walk with God.

But in other cases, hiding who we are looks like putting on a front for people around us. We are happy to present an image of ourselves that looks shinier and nicer and more kind and more generous than who we often are on the inside. There is a lack of correlation between our inner life and how we present ourselves. Sometimes it spills out in the way that we treat people in one area or space, with people in another space experiencing a whole different "side" of us.

Nobody likes a phony. Being genuine with people is a cardinal virtue of our culture these days, and people can smell inauthenticity a mile away. This creates problems for all of us. Sometimes those problems are with other people. But they're always rooted in a lack of right relationship with our heavenly Father. We have all sinned and deserve nothing from Him

(Romans 3:23), but He calls us His family and invites us to live out that identity in the real world. Jesus was born, lived, died, and was raised so that this incongruity can and will be finally rectified when all things are put right someday. But this side of heaven, living out the family name "Christian" in every situation is a brave but impossible task to complete perfectly, as God commands us (Matthew 5:48). We can envision the ideal, but always fall short of achieving it. This in turn makes us appear to those around us as people who don't often live out what we say we believe.

However, the depth of God's love, grace, and mercy is deeper than our inabilities. Our failure to live out our Christian identity doesn't automatically exile us from the family. Living in repentance, Jesus' challenge to follow Him remains, even in the aftermath of our failure, especially as a way forward, a meaningful life of forgiveness and restoration. What Jesus wants from us is a life that is fully integrated, so that who we are in every setting is authentic, true, and consistent.

As people of the truth, who side with the language of Jesus, we have to be authentically us wherever we go. There should never be a version of us who shows up in God's house, with another image that we display to the world for one reason or another. Jesus lived a fully integrated life. He was consistently HIM wherever He went. He lived His life with His Father, with His followers, and with the crowds openly, and He invites us to do the same. God wants a strong relationship with you, one that carries over from times of being in His Word and with His people to your day-to-day life. He wants to transform you. He also wants you to live in community with other members of His family who will love you through every circumstance but also challenge you to grow in ways that will grow the Kingdom. All of this is not just for the benefit of His own family, but to all people who will join in the joy of knowing the goodness of a Father who loves unconditionally, gives generously, and always keeps His promises.

"What's in a name?" It's a question I've been asking myself as I've considered an appropriate change in the name of our newsletter. I wrestled with that question a lot. It's a much more involved conversation than I have space for

here, but if you'd like to hear the story and join me in that continued wrestling, I'm in! This is an open invitation to come have a cup of coffee with me and talk it through. I'm serious. Shoot me a message or call me and we'll set it up.

For brevity's sake, here's the short version: at the heart of my internal conversation has been how to properly express what we want to be about as a church. What we have been about for decades, and how we need to reframe and refresh that mission as we move forward. To me, it looks like living a fully integrated life. Being open and honest about who we are and Whose we are, even the things we'd like to hide, and bringing the conversations that start in the four walls of the church building into our daily lives in ways that bless people around us and benefit the growth of God's kingdom.

The great good news that Jesus would have us hear is that as we strive to discover the shape of that integrated life in a constantly-changing world, He doesn't change. His love, grace, wisdom remains consistent, even when we fail to be. His forgiveness for our missteps and mistakes is deep, and He stands ready to affirm us and cheer us on when we take bold steps to follow Him. *His name for YOU remains, "Beloved," regardless of how well-integrated His love is in your life.* When all is said and done, He remains the true Lord of the Church, and we can find true joy as we work with Him in the Kingdom as we learn what it means that...

Adventure is out there!  
Pastor Aaron



*Altar Poinsettia*

#### POINSETTIA DONORS

The Ruth Society would like to thank all of the people who so graciously donated a poinsettia to adorn the altar for Christmas:

Given to celebrate the birth of baby Jesus by:

- JJ & Elliot Beechy
- Rich & Barb Belanski
- Leo & Kathy Cleary
- Nancy & Norman Kaczmarczyk
- Bruce & Barbara Malm
- Judy & Gary Smith
- Jean & Troy Smith
- The Schwer Family

Given to the glory of God by:

- Miriam Wilson & family in honor of Solomon & Hazel and in memory of Chester & Dorothy Ebert
- Don & Donna Bakken in memory of Art Bakken & Anna Doogan
- The Bowlds Family in memory of Grandma Joyce, Grandma Evie, Uncle Bob, and Laurie
- Lynn Gilmore in memory of parents Bob & Charlotte Gilmore and wife Kate Lopez-Gilmore
- Ron & Janice Hamning in memory of parents Dorothy & Bernie Fleming and Virginia & Rudy Hamning
- Naomi Nagy in memory of her husband Rod Nagy
- Mary & Harold Oesterreich in memory of parents Frances & Walter Phelps and Burnette & Harold Oesterreich
- Kevin & Maetha Smith and families in loving memory of Bill & Hazel Mutsch, Bob & Betty Smith, and Bill Palmer
- Karen & Ed Tatro in memory of Leola Klode and Helen Tatro
- Kathy Temple in memory of her family members
- Cheryl Thompson in memory of longtime friend Ann Van Henkleum and family friend Paul Knez
- Lyn Thorne in memory of Mel & May Krohse
- George & Deb Tolsky in memory of John & Rosemarie Warren and George P. Tolsky
- Bev & Nick Whittier in memory of parents Ed & Elsie Walsh and N.T. & J.L. Whittier and brother Greg Whittier





## 2022 NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING NEWS

By Leeann Schellhas

### National Youth Gathering Update

Thank you so much for all of your support with our fundraisers at the end of 2021. The wooden Christmas trees and quilt raffle raised \$870. Susan Chiaro was the winner of the quilt!



Our current fundraising total is \$1988.78 -- almost halfway to our \$4000 goal!

#### Upcoming Fundraisers:

For one weekend only, February 12/13, we will be selling Valentine candy with Scripture tags. We hope you will help support our Gathering fundraiser and bless your family, friends, and neighbors with these sweet treats.

During the month of January, the NYG Immanuel Team is asking you to consider donating a book or two for our Used Book Fundraiser. There will be a donation box in the Lobby for you to place your paperback and hardcover books. Beginning the weekend of February 5/6, we will be selling the books for \$5 each, with all proceeds supporting Gathering expenses. Thanks for your help!

### Getting to Know YOUTH attending the Gathering

#### Riley Saltzman

Favorite Colors:  
Reddish Orange or  
Pink

Favorite Season:  
Summer

Favorite Dinner:  
Lasagna or Tacos

Favorite class at  
Lincoln-Way  
Central: Biology

Favorite place she's  
been on vacation:  
San Diego

Last book she read for fun: *The Night Circus* by  
Erin Morgenstern

Sweet or Salty Snack: Salty

When she has an hour of free time, she likes to watch TV, especially *Gilmore Girls* and *Greys Anatomy*.

Riley is looking forward to attending the National Youth Gathering and playing volleyball in 2022.

One thing that excites Riley about the NYG is going to all of the different events. She's also excited to get to travel to Houston, Texas!



**Natalee Schellhas**  
Favorite Colors:  
black, gray, navy,  
and almost anything  
that is muted



Favorite Season:  
Winter

Favorite Dinner:  
Salad and cheesy  
pasta

Favorite class at Lincoln-Way Central: English

Favorite place she's been on vacation: Walt  
Disney World

Last book she read for fun: The Hawthorne  
Legacy by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

Sweet or Salty Snack: it depends, but usually  
sweet

When she has an hour of free time, she likes to  
read, write, sing, play games, or watch a  
show/movie.

Natalee is looking forward to attending the  
National Youth Gathering, continuing to learn  
and thrive in school, and discovering what God  
has planned for her in 2022.

One thing that excites Natalee about the NYG is  
being able to try some of the activities that will  
be available. She's also excited to spend time  
and grow with those going on the trip and thinks  
it's pretty cool that much of the Gathering will  
be held in a baseball stadium!



**EXPLORE THE WORLD WITH LCMS  
INTERNATIONAL MISSION THROUGH  
"MISSIONS UNPACKED"**

Each week, you'll have opportunities to learn  
about the mission work in one region of the  
world, meet missionaries in a live Zoom  
presentation, and experience local culture  
through language, food and more! Get a

group together or tune in solo, attend every  
session or watch some here and there.  
Registration is free and is open now.  
For more information, see the flyer on the last  
page of this newsletter!

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### **IMMANUEL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH PASTOR'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

A generous donation has been given to our  
church to start a Scholarship Fund to be used by  
the Pastor's children when they go to college.  
The church is following up on this donation,  
starting the Scholarship Fund, and asking our  
members if they would like to donate to this  
fund. The money will be kept in a savings  
account until the time that it is needed for  
college expenses. It will not go with the Pastor if  
he accepts a call to another congregation. The  
money is to be used by the children of the  
current Pastor of Immanuel.

If you would like to donate to this Scholarship  
Fund, please make your check out to Immanuel  
Ev. Lutheran Church and write Scholarship Fund  
on the memo line. You can also use one of the  
envelopes in your offering box and write  
Scholarship Fund on the envelope. This will be  
an ongoing fund. You can donate as often as you  
like, weekly, monthly, or annually.

The Elders thank you for your generosity in  
supporting this endeavor.

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### **I missed last weekend – what was the sermon about? What will next weekend's sermon be about?**

Did you know you can find the answer to both  
questions on our Facebook and Instagram  
pages? A video excerpt of the sermon is posted  
on Mondays and a "sermon teaser" is posted on  
Wednesdays (usually). If you are not already  
following Immanuel on social media, we hope  
you will start. Just search @ImmanuelMokena  
to find us! Also, you can find recordings of each  
indoor service and separate sermon videos on  
our YouTube channel. Links on our website will  
take you directly there!



### There's an app for that! Vanco Mobile

Electronic giving options can be found on our website, but you can also add an app on your phone or tablet which will allow you to give to Immanuel

directly. Search for "Vanco Mobile" and look for the image above. Once you have added the app, search for Immanuel Ev Lutheran Church and make sure you choose the one in Mokena, Illinois!! The app will guide you through all the steps of giving and you can even schedule a donation ahead of time.

### Giving Tree and Tornado Relief

Thank you to those who donated to organizations through our Giving Tree and to aid the victims of the recent tornadoes. We collected \$920 for tornado relief and \$815 to assist St. Matthew Soup Kitchen, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Bible Translators, Bethesda, and Lutheran Disaster Relief. Your generosity shines brightly!

## 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)

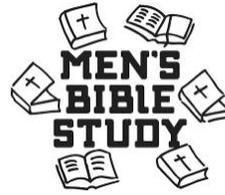


### Women of the Word

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 [dceleanno4@yahoo.com](mailto:dceleanno4@yahoo.com). We will continue looking at the Sermon on the Mount. Newcomers are welcome!

**Meeting Dates:** January 10 & 24



### Men of the Word

Men of the Word will be meeting via Zoom and will be discussing Chapter 8 of the book Saturate.

**Meeting Dates:** January 3 & 17

## PORTALS OF PRAYER

The January-March issue of Portals of Prayer are available in the Welcome Center and in the blue bin outside the church office entrance. Both regular print and large print are available.



## OFFERING ENVELOPES

### 2022 OFFERING ENVELOPES AVAILABLE

Offering envelope boxes for 2022 are available in the Welcome Center.

Each box has a family's name on it. If you have

not had envelopes in the past but would like a box of envelopes for 2022, please contact the church office at [office@immanuelmokena.org](mailto:office@immanuelmokena.org) or 708-479-5600.



# JANUARY

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

- 1 Dee Culbertson
- 3 Evan Perrin
- 4 Billy Nagy
- 6 Grayson Youngberg
- 7 Garrett Flesch
- 9 Max Loucks
- 9 Candy Whittier
- 10 Jake Beechy
- 10 Bruce Malm
- 11 Savannah Bubeck
- 11 Randy Krause
- 11 Marilyn Miller
- 12 Nadia Kruspe
- 12 Nancy Mirocha
- 13 Marie Victor
- 16 Austin Bubeck
- 17 William Nagy
- 19 Donald Schwer
- 23 Mark Fuka
- 24 Emily Baker
- 24 Ted Obis
- 25 Matt Howard
- 25 Judy Mentzer
- 25 Maryanne Schultz
- 27 Amanda Hutson
- 28 Ryan Klode
- 28 Nicole Mackey
- 29 Dave Proskan
- 29 Kelly Zellers
- 30 Mackenzie Burke
- 30 Steve Magnani
- 30 Steve Malm
- 31 Ben Howard
- 31 Harold Oesterreich

### Anniversaries

- |                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 10 Bill & Carole Sluis         | 51 years |
| 25 Tom & Lisa Bartnik          | 36 years |
| 25 Michael & Gina Dudczyk      | 28 years |
| 26 Russ & Arianna Fleckenstein | 30 years |
| 27 Joe & Pam Bakken-Miller     | 9 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.*

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### 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; table centerpiece \$35. 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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### Ways to Submit an Offering

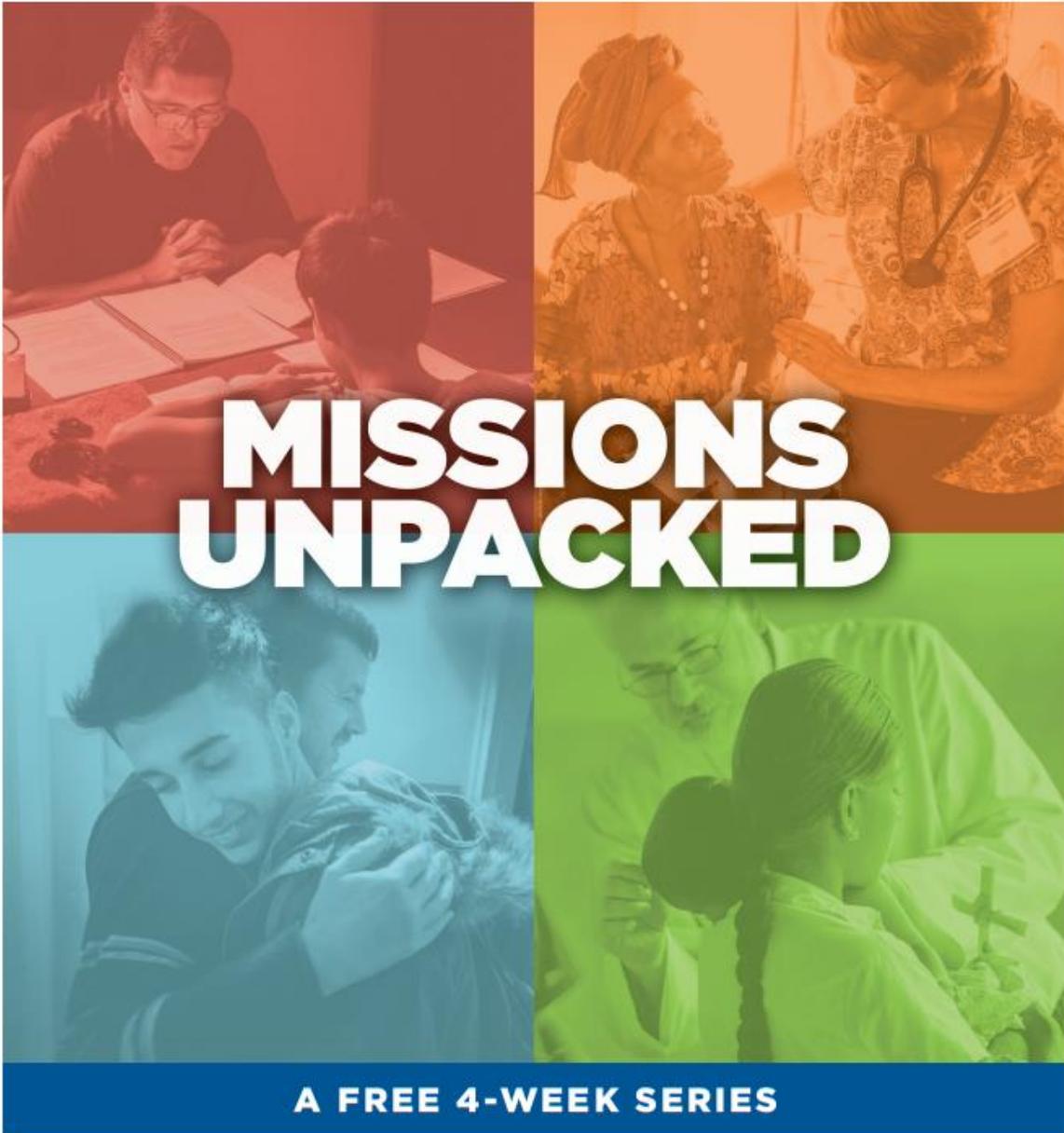
- **Drop off** a check (or cash in sealed envelope with your name) in the secure black lockbox by the church office entrance door.
- **Mail** a check to the office: 10731 W La Porte Rd, Mokena, IL 60448
- **Electronic Giving** – go to the website, [www.immanuelmokena.org](http://www.immanuelmokena.org), 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.

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### 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)



# MISSIONS UNPACKED

**A FREE 4-WEEK SERIES**

**ASIA**

Jan. 24-30

**AFRICA**

Jan. 31-Feb. 6

**EURASIA**

Feb. 7-13

**LATIN AMERICA AND  
THE CARIBBEAN**

Feb. 14-20



**Explore the world with  
LCMS International Mission  
through MISSIONS UNPACKED.**

Each week, you'll have opportunities to learn about the mission work in one region of the world, meet missionaries in a live Zoom presentation, and experience local culture through language, food and more! Get a group together or tune in solo, attend every session or watch some here and there. Registration is free and is open now.

**REGISTER TODAY!**

[international.lcms.org/missions-unpacked](https://international.lcms.org/missions-unpacked)

