

# ***Immanuel Inspirations***

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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Rev. Wayne Bernau

## ***Growing through Tough Times***

The past couple months have been days like no others. We have been told to stay at home and practice “social distancing.” Large gatherings have been strictly prohibited. Which means normal Sunday worship in churches is out. What a problem! What frustration! What good can come out of this Coronavirus mess?

I firmly believe that our sovereign God has all things in His control, and this pandemic is no exception. God has this, and us, in His powerful, loving hands. I also believe that God does not waste, so there must be some good reasons for this, with certain good to come out of it. Scripture assures us that God causes all things to work for good to those who love Him. So let's examine this a bit.

Having more time at home is not all bad. It gives us extra time to rest, read, and reflect, to organize things, and to build family relationships.

In reading through the prophets at the end of the Old Testament with our confirmation class recently, it struck me how often the prophets rebuked God's people for wrongdoing and urged them to return to their Lord.

People of God were told repeatedly to seek the Lord God. How do we do that? Primarily in two ways. First, we seek the Lord as we listen to Him speaking to us in His Word. Have you used extra time these past few weeks to let God speak with you in His Word, the Holy Bible? A second way to seek the Lord is to speak with Him in prayer and tell Him the concerns on our heart. As God speaks to us and we speak back to Him, our relationship is built and strengthened. I am much blessed when members tell me that they are spending more time than normal in Bible reading and in prayer during these days.

What are some other thoughts to think on at this time? Here are a few notes from my journal.

- *This is a time & call for repentance, prayer, and simplicity. Do we have too much?*
- *Seek God while He may be found and where He may be found. (Isaiah 55:6)*
- *Read some good books, the Good Book, and get some exercise & fresh air.*
- *Consider what great things God has done. Ponder the mighty works of God.*
- *We are in this together, and together we will make it through—better and stronger as God refines us & builds His character in us.*
- *Realize sanctification and character come from struggles and suffering.*
- *Memorize Scripture, hymns, and the catechism.*

- *Strategize for the future. Time to update & use technology.*
- *Develop the discipline of prayer/devotions. Search the Psalms.*
- *Write a note of encouragement or call someone. Brighten their day!*
- *Realize the importance of face-to-face gatherings. We are social beings.*
- *Rest in the protection, providence, presence, pardon, power, & peace of God.*

Though the future is uncertain, our God is faithful, sure, dependable, and unchanging. We hope to be back in “regular” worship soon. Meanwhile, let’s not waste these days! Let’s not only **go** through them, but also **grow** through them!

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

[illegible]

### *The StewardShip Corner*

In our last newsletter, stewardship dealt with the theme of time and how we used it. In this article we would like to dwell on the theme of our talents God has given us. It seems that everyone has been affected by this virus in one way or the other. It also seems we have had to learn new ways to get common things done. Who would of thought a couple of months ago that our kids would not go back to school or that we would not be able to attend church? It really is mind boggling to think how much this has affected our lives. We all know God has a plan, and yes, it is hard to understand, but we do know He is in control.

When we look at the big picture it is amazing what we have accomplished at Immanuel these last weeks. We have been able to continue our children's education and have got our partial church services on line. All this took talent that a lot of people contributed to, that maybe some didn't know how to do at first, or had to brush up on their skills to get the job done. I think we can all say with certainty that God had a hand in this and was with us all the time as He has promised.

This brings up the point that when we need our God to help us in a situation and need skills to get the job done, we just need to trust Him to give us these skills to do these jobs. He will never let us down as long as we trust in Him. So the next time you face a situation that you don't know if you can handle because of the lack of talent, just ask God for help and He will most certainly be there to help and give you the ability to get the job done.

On the stewardship side, just a note that our treasurer has borrowed \$18,000 so far and we still encourage our members to keep supporting our church and school through your gifts by either mailing them in, dropping them off at church and sliding them under the office door, or use the On-Line Giving link on the web site. We would like to thank everyone for your support and prayers.

**Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church**  
**During these past troubling weeks,**  
**here are lists of . . .**

**Prayer Requests:**

- For Ken Bode who celebrated his 90th birthday on May 4th.
- \* For the family of Lloyd Grams, 96, who passed away April 30 and was buried May 6th in New Ulm.
- \* For the family of Chad Bode, 45, son of Gary and Karen Bode who passed away April 27, and will be buried in Fort Snelling Cemetery.
- \* For the family of Jean Goff, mother of Rick Goff who passed away April 24, and was buried in New Ulm.
- \* For the family of Lyle Bode, 81, husband of Lynn Bode, who passed away May 7 and was buried here at Immanuel on May 12th.
- \* For Jessie Voges & Heather Steffer, who were united in marriage, May 16th on the Lynn & Nancy Farm.
- \* John & Joleen Berbrich, who celebrated 50 years of marriage March 7th.

**Thank You's:**

The family of Steven B. Fluegge would sincerely like to thank the members of Immanuel who had a kind word to say and offered their sympathy and prayers and gave flowers or a memorial. A special thank you to Pastor Bernau for his kindness, prayers and special funeral service. We would also like to give a special thank you to Emily Heintz for the beautiful job she did singing. Steven will always be dearly loved and missed and in our hearts forever.

*Very sincerely, Bonnie Jean, Melissa,  
Daniel and Brian Fluegge and family*

*I would like to thank Pastor Bernau and everyone for all the phone calls, cards and prayers sent.*

*My wish for you in these uncertain times: Please take a moment and let us all look at the Good Shepherd stained glass window in the front of our church and all feel safe in the arms of Jesus.*

*Naomi Voges*

1 - Matthew Hermel  
1 – Travis Vogel  
3 - Abbigail Voges  
3 - Kellen Bode  
4 - Jenna Krueger  
4 - Nicholas Sanford  
4 - Timothy Struss  
4 – Claire Voges  
5 - Dustin Bode  
5 - Sarah Gieseke  
5 - Sandra Kollmann  
6 - Curtis Bode  
7 - Jodi Goff  
8 - Kathy Blank  
8 – Gary Bode  
8 - Cheryl Volk  
9 – Linda Ostermann  
11 - Marcia Kral  
13 - Sandra Gieseke  
14 - Andrew Renner  
14 - Brooklyn Corbett Crawford  
17 - Ralph Compart  
17 - Scott Flowers  
17 - Marsha Wills  
19 - Terry Bode  
21 - Nicole Dittrich  
21 - Declyn Flitter  
21 - Donna Mielke  
22 - Samuel Bernau  
22 - Derek Wills  
22 – Cameron Davis  
23 - Lynn M. Bode  
24 – ReNee Bode  
24 - Crystal Janssen  
24 - Megan Thompson  
25 - Patricia Mans (Mrs. Lyle)  
26 - Ross Bode  
26 - Dwight Flitter  
27 - Jordan Riggs  
27 – Kjerstin Hulke



**Church Worship Service Options Meeting  
May 18, 2020**

Meeting Called to Order

Pastor opened with reading the book of Acts 1 – in recognition of May 21 being Ascension Day. Jesus had completed His early work: He lived. He died. He rose.

This meeting was called together by the Elders with concerns that the crisis of Covid -19 virus has mandated the absence of church services for several weeks. Due to Covid – 19 restrictions regarding gatherings, attendance for this meeting was limited to 10 members.

The finances of the church were briefly discussed. Currently, the church has a loan of \$18,000 with Alliance Bank. The Church/School has received monies through the Covid -19 Government Grant for teacher wages. The Church may be able to make a major payment towards the loan with the offering monies that have been received during the Covid-19 shut down.

It was discussed that it is difficult to make decisions without knowing what the Governor is going to present on June 1 regarding shut downs and restrictions. It was hoped that our first Church Service could be June 7 in which we could celebrate Easter and share communion in the church. An evening service for the Confirmands' questioning with only family present will be held on June 3rd. Also would like to do something with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders and the seniors graduating from high school. This may not be feasible due to the proposed restrictions.

Members reviewed the proposed protocols for beginning Public Worship Services during the Covid-19 crisis. This would include personal separation of six feet, sanitizing before and after each service, one way traffic patterns, facemasks, signage, limited use of hymnals, ventilation, restroom limitations as well as gathering limit of 1/3 of church capacity. It possibly would mean more than one service and possibly held on other days of the week than Sunday. It was felt this would be very difficult to be in compliance.

There was further discussion on how other churches have handled Church services over the past few weeks doing parking lot services. It was decided that the Elders will plan a parking lot Church Service to be held on May 31. The tentative plan will be to use a microphone system and borrow Redeemer's transmitter as a backup. Church service would begin at 10:30 am and last about 40 minutes. There will be need of ushers (possibly council members) directing traffic, distributing bulletins, and collecting the offering. Communion possibly would be included as a drive up for future services.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Brenda Hermel, Secretary



# ***Our Missions***

## **Guatemala Mission Team (contd)**

*My life here in the 1st world is full of anxiety...and yet while in Guatemala I saw that the people had next to nothing and yet were still so content. Jesus says, "Which of you by worrying can add a single cubit to his stature?" I saw the truth of this reflected in our trip. Through extensive planning based on (inaccurate) numbers, we planned games, activities, and a gift of an Easter arch book for each child and yet I was still anxious that we wouldn't be prepared. When we arrived, we learned that...we were indeed not prepared. There were nearly 100 more students enrolled in the PreK-6th grade school than we had thought! Cue more worry and anxiety. Through some frantic math, we realized that we had EXACTLY enough arch books for all kids in grades 1-3, EXACTLY enough Garden Bibles for 5th grade + teachers, and enough T-shirts for the other kids. It was not what we had planned at all but it worked out PERFECTLY, reminding us that God's ways are better than our ways.*

***Madeline Lloyd***

## **Pastor Bernau's Reflections on Las Cruces Mission Trip #4**

It has been almost 3 months since we returned from our fourth mission trip to Guatemala, and in many ways this trip was the best. The people of Las Cruces were so happy to see us and welcomed us gladly. They even had a special celebration for us the last day we were there.

Several memories that stand out in my mind: We attended a Lutheran church service in Guatemala City the day after we arrived there. Though it was in Spanish, we could still get a lot of benefit from it. Teaching the books of the Bible in Spanish to the 200 school children in Las Cruces in the mornings and also teaching the children about Jesus' saving death and resurrection in the afternoon Bible School were other highlights. In addition, I enjoyed being with the children, and being a bit of a kid myself at recess times by playing with the precious children there. Another special memory was presenting a Spanish Bible that we had all signed to Principal Gladys, the day after her brother died.

Whether and when we get to go on the fifth and final trip to Guatemala, remains up in the air at this time. Please continue to pray for this mission, and thank you for your support so far!

***Pastor Bernau***

# ***Our Missions***

## ***Immanuel Lutheran School***

**We** have 2 days left in the 2019-2020 school year at Immanuel Lutheran School! Although the last 2 plus months have proved quite challenging, I am very confident that our school children are getting a top notch Christian education! That is in big THANKS to numerous people! First and foremost, the biggest thanks has to go to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for granting us all the patience and perseverance to work through these tough times! A huge thanks goes out to all of our teachers for the extra time and effort that they have put in to make the end of the school year a success! Also, the parents are to be congratulated for stepping in to the role of helping their children with their homework on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis. And of course this learning experience could never have happened without the students at ILS! They were also very patient and eager to learn! So, thanks to ALL!!!

We are still waiting to find dates for our 8<sup>th</sup> grader's examination Sunday, Confirmation, and graduation. These are all important events in their lives. We will schedule these days when we can.

### ***September 1                      First Day of School***

Have a great summer and thanks for keeping Immanuel Lutheran School in your prayers!!!

## ***Guatemala Mission Team***

**Seems** like our February trip was a long, long time ago. We were actually visiting, not knowing there was a pandemic brewing. Probably best we did not. Now it puts a hold on planning, or even considering, a trip next year. We will see how things unfold, but if we should, we will find a way to make it happen. One way or another, the trip in February was in many ways a pinnacle of our relationship with the village of Las Cruces. I have visited them three times, and noticed a growing dramatic, heartwarming closeness each time. For example, Gladys, the school principal, who was originally a bit aloof during our first visit seemed to be wondering, "Who are these people, and what are they up to?" Conversely, on the last trip, she was extremely thankful and fully opened the school to us. Their closing ceremony was generous beyond their means. And I think much of the financial generosity was out of the individual teacher's pockets (not unlike our own Immanuel teachers). I believe the word of God touched every family in the village through their school, just as it touched every team member from our churches.

***Norman Kopp***



## ***Our Missions*** Guatemala Mission Team (cont'd)

During our stay-at-home orders, my mind often turns to our precious friends at Las Cruces in Guatemala. I wonder how they are working through this and if they are affected with sickness and knowing what the world is going through. When we were there in February, there were a dozen people in the community of Las Cruces that went through Red Cross first aid training. They learned many new things to help their community in times of need. Now with the difficult circumstance that are upon them, I wonder who is there to care for their needs. I know that our good Lord is watching over them and reassuring them at this time. He is with them and will always be with them. Our God is loving, gracious, and compassionate. While there, we were like the hands, feet, and mouths of Christ to share His love.

*Donna Bernau*

### **Worship Services Update**

Many of us have missed public worship since our last service on March 15. That was over two months ago! We have posted a sermon and a couple devotions each week on our Immanuel Church Facebook page and on YouTube Immanuel Courtland Mn. In a limited way, this has gotten God's Word out.

But many of us miss the fellowship opportunities as well as receiving the Lord's Supper. Since church gatherings inside are still limited to groups of 10 people, some of our Church Council members discussed this on May 18<sup>th</sup> and came up with the idea of having a **Drive In Service on Sunday, May 31 at 10:30 a.m.** The plan is to have people stay in their cars, or bring lawn chairs and sit spread out on the lawn, weather permitting. We still need to practice social distancing, to assure the safety and health of all. We will have a speaker system for outside so everyone can hear, with an FM transmitter backup to listen on your car radio, if the weather is bad.

We hope to be able to share the Lord's Supper also in the near future. If we cannot do so in church, we may have a drive-up communion at the end of a future service, for those who so desire. Again, we want to take every precaution to prevent any spread of the deadly, dreaded COVID-19 virus.

We look forward to seeing many of you on May 31 at 10:30 AM.

*God be with you!*