

PARISH NEWS



People of God,

Every time I look at the news, I feel a mix of anxiety, fear, and hope. Whenever I pop open a browser, I'm nervous at what the numbers might look like, how many lives have been impacted by COVID-19, just waiting for the days when the numbers finally start falling. When we can visit family again, when we can go out to eat safely again, and when we can come back together and worship together in person again. I don't think I'm alone in missing gathering in our sanctuary—it's more than just a room of stone, wood, glass and plaster, it is holy ground. It's a place where God meets us, every time we gather there, and it's been heart-wrenching, to keep away from that place. Places all over the country are beginning to reopen, some more safely than others. While I cannot wait for the day when we can come together in person again, we also have a duty to care for one another, especially those in our community most susceptible to illness. Myself and the Immanuel Congregation Council have begun planning for what a reopening of our doors to in-person ministry might look like. Guided by the advice of ecclesiastic leaders of the ELCA and the Central States Synod, as well as local and national public health experts, we've developed an outline based on the three-phase model produced by the CDC. Our current planning is still in early stages, and will be subject to review and approval by the Congregation Council, so if you have any feedback on the rough sketch below, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, or any member of council.

JUNE 2020

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The Parish News is a monthly publication of ILC. Articles or information pertinent to the life and mission of the congregation may be emailed to the office at office@immanuelkc.org. Space limitations may require editing of material. Deadline for **the July 2020 issue is Thursday, June 18, 2020.**

To be removed from our mailing list or submit a change of address, contact the church office at 816-931-8483 or office@immanuelkc.org.

Pastor's Bookcase

The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms
by N. K. Jemisin

The Proposed Plan

Phase I will begin after 14 days of declining cases of COVID-19 in the Kansas City metropolitan area, when area hospitals are able to treat all patients without crisis care, and robust testing is available to track new cases. The suspension of in-person ministry will continue (with the exception of occasional services, such as funerals), but staff members will begin working in the office with staggered shifts, allowing aspects of the building to be open. Phase II will begin once there have been 28 days of declining cases in the Kansas City metropolitan area without resurgence, hopefully 2 weeks after Phase I is enacted. This will allow for gatherings of no more than 50 people, provided at least 6 feet of distance is kept between people. Masks will be required, but we will begin to gather again for worship, likely in Luther hall. The services will be limited, with no celebration of Holy Communion or congregational singing, but we will be able to pray together. We'll pay special attention to sanitation and hygiene, with an abundance of caution and hand sanitizer, doors propped open, and cleaning the worship space between services. Phase III will begin after there have been 42 days of declining cases in the Kansas City Metropolitan area without resurgence. It will mark a return to the full liturgy, with changes made to adapt our practices for safety concerns (e.g., revise communion distribution, discern whether congregational singing is safe, etc). We'll re-evaluate when certain other in-person ministries should re-convene, such as Sunday School and Nursery care.

Why Are We Doing This?

This plan is heartbreaking, in a lot of ways. It seems almost draconian, at first glance, even unnecessary. Other churches have been meeting again, businesses are opening, people are gathering closer together than we were a month ago. Why isn't Immanuel following suit? The simple answer is that it isn't safe. Most of us would survive, if we went back to the way things were before—but not all of us. I miss being in worship together with you all, I miss pot-lucks and coffee hours and committee meetings. But if we come back together before it's safe to do so, it could cost the lives of valued members of our community, and that's just not a risk worth taking. We grieve what we have lost, but as many other faith leaders have pointed out, including our own Bishop Susan Candea, "There's no going back." It might seem like an overreaction to some, but there are simply too many cautionary tales of churches gathering despite the danger, and people dying as a result, both in the early days of this pandemic, and more recently.

What Can We Do

We are still church together, even when we are apart. These are words that begin the video description of every one of our live-streams on Sunday morning, as we gather for worship on our Youtube channel. Following each service, we've held informal Bible studies over zoom, led by Don Arney, on the lectionary texts for the day. We also been gathering for a community video chat on Zoom every Tuesday morning at 10 and every Thursday evening at 7, for informal conversations, taking time to catch up with each other. Theology on Tap will be on Zoom again as well, on Thursday, May 28th, at 7pm, taking the place of our 'virtual happy hour' for some more structured conversation. All of these meetings can be found at the same place, using the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5143355703>

Meeting ID: 514 335 5703

One tap mobile: +13017158592,,5143355703#

If you want to provide more feedback on what we're doing, or what you think we should be doing, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. My e-mail address is msievenpiper@gmail.com and my cell phone is (262) 366-7680.

I also have a special request, to anyone who has advanced training in medicine, epidemiology, or public health. I know there are a lot of health care workers in this community, and one of them recently suggested forming an ad hoc advisory committee, who can help me navigate the unknowns of a pandemic. You might be surprised to learn that epidemiology isn't a required course for seminary students, so if you have training or expertise in that field, or know someone who is, and are willing to take some time to help me understand what we could be doing better, I would appreciate it.

As I've said in prior updates, we're beyond the point where clichés are helpful, but in the midst of these uncertain, anxiety-ridden times, we look to abundant life promised by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We will continue to proclaim that hope, and I pray that you might find the grace of God moving in your life.

Peace,
Pastor Micah Sievenpiper

IMMANUEL LEADERSHIP

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Ter'Ranay Teague - Administrative Assistant

Suzanne Anderson - Music Director

Robert Barthel - Organist

Kevin Fewell - Building Manager

Council & Executive Committee

Mary Jo Moore - President

Connie Benolkin - Vice President

Terry Kueker - Secretary

Mindy Rash - Treasurer

Rick Sundell - Financial Secretary

Lynden Peters

Scott Thompson

Jack Umbach

Kathy Boehmer

Deborah Crawford

Janie Fee

Kate Hauber

Mason Carey

IN OUR PRAYERS...

Members of Immanuel

Gretchen Bishop | Lori Clanin | Andree Cuthbertson
Theresa Draper | Ann Erickson | De Pfofner
Naomi Karmeier | Gerry Niewald | Deanne Schlehuber
Paula Simonich | Jackie Turner | Carolyn Wilson

Friends of Immanuel

Jack & Mary Kantola, friends of Doug & Peg Himebaugh

Paula Weir, friend of Betty Pera

Bakeberg Family, friends of Betty Pera

Kat M., Janice M., friends of Peggy Dollard

Lee Hass, grandmother of Catie Tomlin

Lance Hill, brother of Deborah Crawford

Baby Reylyn & Family, friends of Peggy Dollard

Major, friend of Linda Taylor & Peggy Dollard

Kim R & Family, friends of Peggy Dollard

Eleanor Daniels, daughter of Clay & Martha Bowden

Julia Mills, niece of CeCe & Tracy Atherton

Rock Westfahl, friend of Kevin & Linda Fewell

Janet & Randy Spicer, friends of Mary Coleman Renoe

Carol Gillespie, friend of CeCe & Tracy Atherton

Karen Wuertz, sister-in-law of Linda Taylor

Liz Wuertz, sister-in-law of Linda Taylor

Darla Wolters, family of Carmen Norris



Mike Finn, family of Mary Jo Moore

Kerrington Jones, family of Mary Jo Moore

Harry Roth, friend of Henrik Andersen

James Clanin, family of Lori Clanin

Lauren James, friend of Lori Clanin

Judy Robinson, friend of Mary Jo Moore

Chloe & Carley Engler, great nieces of Sally Baehni

Vickie Little, friend of Kevin and Linda Fewell

Normajeane Holtje, cousin of Mike Ortmann

Margaret Kohler, aunt of Lori Clanin

Jim & Ethel Clanin, parents of Lori Clanin

Pinky Brauer, sister-in-law of Carolyn Brauer

Eric Gustafson, brother of Vicki Swanson

Audrey Mueller, Aunt of Mike Ortmann

Nancy A., friend of Linda Setterburg

Allan Boardman, friend of Kevin and Linda Fewell

Lois Blobaum, Melodee Blobaum's mother-in-law

From the President



Faith Formation, Faith Expression, and Fellowship

In our household, the Covid-19 pandemic has produced some positive effects. With Bill working from home now, we've had more opportunity for meaningful conversations. Lately, we have been talking about how we are going to decide our level of participation in public life. Since we are seniors, the age group considered most vulnerable to the virus, health and safety concerns are first and foremost in our thinking.

After safety comes other important considerations. Not surprisingly, relationships with people near and dear to us are important. One son and his family live in the area, but other family members live out of state. We have learned how to use Zoom for video chats to keep family and friends close. These are fun, often quite lively and something we plan to continue in the future.

Other relationships that are important to us center on God, the people of God, and others we are to love and to serve. This includes our church family at Immanuel. With Council making plans to re-open, Bill and I have had lengthy discussions about the important role church plays in our life. We concluded there are three very important roles for church with a capital C and for congregations like Immanuel. These are faith formation, faith expression, and fellowship.

We came to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior early in life and, through participating in congregation-based Sunday School and Confirmation, we learned to place our trust in God's truth (faith). Growing up, our faith found expression in different denominations, which had their own teachings, doctrine and orders for worship. Throughout our lives, we have experienced fellowship with other believers through worship and ministries and the friendships made with the faithful. We both believe that our true and fulfilling purpose in life is born out of our relationship with God and, by extension, other Christians. This is why participating in a community of faith is important.

Let us remember this as we plan Immanuel's future together. Let us be open to different ways of forming our faith, expressing our faith, and gathering in fellowship.

As Luke writes in Acts 20:28:

Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God[a] that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.

Acts 20:28 NRSV.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights of the May 19, 2020, Council Meeting

- Due to Covid-19 concerns, Youth Works has elected not to hold their summer program at Immanuel. They will be missed, and we look forward to a 2021 visit.
 - Immanuel was approved and has received \$26,300 under the Paycheck Protection Program. This will cover our payroll for 8 weeks and potentially assist with utilities and mortgage interest.
 - The Welcoming and Hospitality committee is working with the Property Committee on design and placement of Reconciling in Christ banners on the property.
 - The council discussed a first draft of a three phase re-opening plan prepared by Pastor. The goal of which is to meet all governmental, Synod, and health concerns. There are many issues yet to be finalized, such as temporary changes to our worship activities, and the logistics of sanitizing the church. The critical initiation date for Phase I is also to be determined. Look for more information to follow through a communication from Pastor Micah.
 - In preparation of ILC's re-opening of in-person services Pastor and the Property Committee are researching and hopefully installing audio/visual equipment in the Sanctuary. The goal is to allow members who wish to continue on-line worship to participate more fully.
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June WEEKLY READINGS

June 7, 2020

FIRST READING

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

PSALM

Psalms 8

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

GOSPEL

Matthew 28:16-20

June 14, 2020

FIRST READING

Exodus 19:2-8a

PSALM

Psalms 100

SECOND READING

Romans 5:1-8

GOSPEL

Matthew 9:35--10:8 [9-23]

June 21, 2020

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 20:7-13

PSALM

Psalms 69:7-10 [11-15] 16-18

SECOND READING

Romans 6:1b-11

GOSPEL

Matthew 10:24-39

June 28, 2020

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 28:5-9

PSALM

Psalms 89:1-4, 15-18

SECOND READING

Romans 6:12-23

GOSPEL

Matthew 10:40-42

Social Ministry

Who: The Social Ministry committee

What: Explore and act on ways to minister to our brothers and sisters locally, nationally, and globally

When: First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

Where: ILC neighborhood eateries

Why: Because we are called to serve others

Questions: See Pam Edvalds, Rick Sundell, Janie Fee, Linda Fewell, Lori Kueker or Gretchen Bishop

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE 2020

Christmas in July

July 5 | 12 | 19 | 26



Ingathering of gifts for needy individuals/families in the Kansas City area. Gifts will be distributed during the annual MLM Christmas Store, held at ILC in December

September 13

Look for information mid-year regarding this year's activities

God's Work.
Our Hands.
Sunday

CROP Hunger Walk Sign Up

September 13 | 20 | 27

October 4 | 11

You may participate by walking or making a donation to support ILC walkers. Our donations benefit people in our local community, as well as folks around the globe who struggle with hunger. This year's walk is scheduled Sunday, October 11, 2020



MLM Christmas Store

November 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | 29

Gift donations are accepted through the entire month of November for families in the KC Area

December 6 | 7 | 8

Volunteer to set up and stock the Store

December 9 | 10 | 11 | 12

Volunteer to greet guests, restock the floor, and/or become a shopping assistant for KC families.



Click the title to go to each site

VIRTUAL SERVICE

While we haven't been able to gather in person recently, we're still finding ways to be the church together. We continue to gather for worship on Sunday mornings, at 9:30 on the Immanuel Youtube channel.

BIBLE STUDY

Join us on Zoom after our virtual church service. Follow the link and check out *page four* for the weekly readings. We should be convening around 10:00 AM every Sunday. Everyone is welcome to join the conversation. Please visit our Facebook page or in the Youtube video description for up to date information.

THEOLOGY ON TAP

All interested adults are invited to gather virtually for an evening of thoughtful theological discussion with Discussion Leader, Mason Carey. Given the uncertainty of when and how local businesses will be reopening, the plan for the evening of the 25th is as follows:

- If possible, we will gather outside in the Bier Garten at KC Bier Company (310 W. 79th Street – 1 block east of 79th & Wornall Road in Waldo)
- If KC Bier is not accepting group reservations the week of the 25th, we will meet via Zoom.

So mark your calendars for Theology on Tap on June 25th and stay tuned for details regarding where/how this gathering will take place. Meeting information will be sent out via Constant Contact and email a few days before.

Stay tuned....

Questions? Contact Janie Fee at 816-444-5492

FEEDING 800

Due to the Coronavirus, our sack lunch packing event has been *postponed*. The Social Ministry Committee will reschedule the event once we get a better sense of when we will be allowed to resume in-person church activities.

In the meantime, consider gathering non-perishable food items that will be included in the sack lunches. The single-serving, packaged items we need include:

- Tuna/chicken kits
- Beef jerky sticks
- Fruit snacks (cups, strips, or gummies)
- Granola bars
- Crackers or cookies

Our goal is to include two protein non-perishable food items (marked above) in each sack lunch, in addition to a fruit, granola bar, and cracker/cookie item! We need 800 of each item listed about to meet this goal.

As you venture out to run essential errands or place your online grocery order, please consider adding at least one of the items listed above to your cart. Thanks in advance for helping us get a jump start on this important ministry!



Christmas in July



During the month of July, the Social Ministry Committee will be collecting gift donations for the annual MLM Christmas Store, which is held at Immanuel in December. The Christmas Store provides holiday gifts to Kansas City individuals/families in need. Last year, the Christmas store served close to 900 families and 100 homebound individuals! Gifts are needed for people of all ages.

Assuming that Immanuel has resumed in-person gatherings, a Christmas tree will be set up in Spong Common Room beginning Sunday, July 5th. The tags on the tree are supplied by MLM and note the items most needed. Feel free to take a tag(s) for your shopping convenience. If you are not a shopper but would still like to help, MLM seeks Wal-Mart gift cards in the amount of \$15. All unwrapped **gift** donations should be placed around the Christmas tree on/before July 30th. Wal-Mart **gift cards** may given to a Social Ministry committee member (Pam Edvalds, Janie Fee, Rick Sundell, Linda Fewell, Gretchen Bishop, Lori Kueker) or turned in to the church office.

Note: If we, as a community of faith, are still practicing social distancing the beginning of July, instructions will be sent out regarding how/when you may safely drop your gift donations at church.



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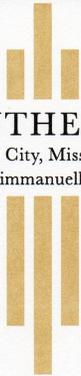
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