

# **Our Vision for Ministry**

*October 12, 2021*

**MISSION STATEMENT:** United by the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament, we boldly live out God's promise of grace, hope, and love in our community and world.

Core values, identified through listening to the congregation, that have guided the Steering Committee in creating this vision for Immanuel's ministry:

God's grace through Christ

The living Word of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ

Dignity of human life

Unity in diversity

Inclusion

Curiosity

Love – care and support

The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion

Fellowship (relationships, community-building)

Welcoming

Prayer

Worship

Justice as a way to peace

Prioritizing the vulnerable

Faith formation

Hospitality

The arts

Commitment and then follow-through

Service

Caring Evangelism

Wrestling with tough questions

## **Ministry Area I: Worship**

*Worship is at the core of Immanuel's existence. As we gather to worship, we experience God's abiding love. Through worship, we are equipped to live out the gospel in our daily lives.*

### **Objective 1: Create opportunities for meaningful worship.**

- 1.a: Offer praise, thanksgiving, and lament to God.
- 1.b: Proclaim the good news of our Lord in ways that engage all of our senses.
- 1.c: Contextualize the gospel as relevant to our lives and communities.
- 1.d: Ground us in our sacred story.
- 1.e: Invite all who are gathered in worship to participate in ways they find life-giving.
- 1.f: Share the comfort of Christ's love and the challenge of living the gospel every day.
- 1.g: Welcome all people to receive the sacraments of baptism and holy communion.

### **Objective 2: Honor the liturgical tradition of Immanuel.**

- 2.a: Enrich the existing musical program (e.g., choir, organ, additional musicians, Bach cantatas).
- 2.b: Uplift the role of lay ministers in worship.
- 2.c: Continue to worship using the ancient pattern of Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending.
- 2.d: Offer ample opportunities for communal singing.
- 2.e: Find ways to deepen people's understanding of our worship practices.

### **Objective 3: Expand worship experiences.**

- 3.a: Incorporate a wider selection of music and liturgical formats (e.g., different settings of the liturgy, non-organ instrumentation, different musical genres, services of the word, drama, dance).
- 3.b: Provide opportunities for worship in addition to the Sunday Assembly (e.g., Bach Cantata Vespers Series, healing services).
- 3.c: Invite people to shape the liturgy in new and different ways, offering ideas to support and supplement the worship life at Immanuel.
- 3.d: Create opportunities for those who participate in worship to contribute their gifts and talents (e.g., chancel drama, slam poetry, liturgical dance).

### **Objective 4: Make worship more accessible.**

- 4.a: Examine the layout and use of our liturgical space.
- 4.b: Provide opportunities for education that increase understanding of worship.

- 4.c: Design bulletins that make worship easy to follow.
- 4.d: Enhance our ministry of hospitality (e.g., greeters and ushers).
- 4.e: Regularly examine the use of technology to allow greater accessibility (e.g., streaming services, hearing assist devices).
- 4.f: Be proactive in finding ways to eliminate barriers to worship (e.g., automatic doors, talk with homebound members about how best to distribute recorded services, address accessibility within the service itself, like providing large-print worship materials).

## **Ministry Area II: Relationships**

*Recognizing that strong relationships are an essential part of God's plan for humanity, we value relationships for their own sake and strive to be a community that truly welcomes and loves all people within and outside our walls.*

### **Objective 1: Maintain, strengthen, and celebrate existing relationships.**

- 1.a: Recognize our unity in the face of our differences.
- 1.b: Listen to and get to know one another.
- 1.c: Create opportunities for relationships to flourish throughout the community, especially across boundaries that have naturally grown over time.
- 1.d: Communicate and care for one another in times of crisis.
- 1.e: Support and promote efforts to minister to one another (e.g., teleministry, virtual gatherings, fellowship events, Stephen Ministry, informal conversations).

### **Objective 2: Invite and receive everyone with hospitality.**

- 2.a: Adapt our premises to be approachable and accessible (e.g., clearer signage, functional entrances).
- 2.b: Consider ways we can publicly and explicitly communicate welcome, especially to those who might otherwise feel unwelcome.
- 2.c: Evaluate what it's like to be a first-time visitor, and adapt our practices to reflect a culture of hospitality.
- 2.d: Offer a personal connection to everyone who comes to Immanuel.
- 2.e: Improve exterior lighting and signage, especially with regards to parking.
- 2.f: Expand our publicity tools, including improved use of social media.
- 2.g: Recognize that welcoming unfamiliar people or communities can be uncomfortable, but also an opportunity to encounter Christ in their presence.

### **Objective 3: Be active members of the wider community.**

- 3.a: Communicate and honor invitations to participate in community life.

- 3.b: Find ways to visibly represent the values and mission of Immanuel outside the church walls.
- 3.c: Seek out relationships with other organizations.
- 3.d: Establish ecumenical and interfaith partnerships with other communities of faith.
- 3.e: Seek out community needs, especially ones not currently being met.

**Objective 4: Use our resources to the benefit of the world we share.**

- 4.a: Engage in acts of service, locally and globally.
- 4.b: Explore ways to enhance our building to better serve the needs of the community (e.g., using the Old Kitchen for more than storage space).
- 4.c: Explore how to use our current resources more intentionally (e.g., using Luther Hall to serve regular community meals, sharing library resources with those outside Immanuel).

**Objective 5: Work for justice for all of God's creation.**

- 5.a: Establish a Committee for Justice and Peace, representative of the congregation.
- 5.b: Engage in deliberate self-reflection on our place in the community, and systems of power and privilege.
- 5.c: Make our voices heard when there is injustice in the community.
- 5.d: Leverage the privilege and power we have to create a just society.
- 5.e: Walk with and support disenfranchised communities.

### **Ministry Area III: Faith Formation**

*Faithful to the promises of baptism, we commit to helping all people grow in Christian faith and life.*

**Objective 1: Establish structures and practices to empower, develop, and support leaders, both lay and rostered.**

- 1.a: Seek out and lift up potential leaders, and help them recognize their gifts and strengths.
- 1.b: Help leaders develop and reflect on their faith stories.
- 1.c: Provide leaders with the training and resources they need to faithfully carry out their calling.
- 1.d: Support and encourage people discerning their vocations, including those whom God is calling to rostered ministry.
- 1.e: Affirm with gratitude the work of leaders.
- 1.f: Seek feedback using every tool that makes sense (e.g., surveys, listening sessions).

**Objective 2: Continue the work of the Reformation, calling for change and renewal within the universal Church.**

- 2.a: Provide opportunities for people to grapple with difficult questions, discerning how the gospel calls us to action in the face of a broken world.
- 2.b: Celebrate the diversity of opinion within our community, challenging and learning from one another to deepen our faith, while showing Christian love and mutual respect for one another.
- 2.c: Identify and confess the sins of the Church, and repent for the ways we, as the people of Immanuel, have failed to live out the gospel.
- 2.d: Invite and equip people to participate in the renewal of the Church, working to repair the harm the Church has caused.

**Objective 3: Become more deeply rooted in our sacred story.**

- 3.a: Read the Bible.
- 3.b: Provide good tools to help us be more effective readers of the Bible (e.g., give context through educational opportunities, commentaries and access to literary, historical, and textual criticisms).
- 3.c: Promote individual and communal engagement with scripture (e.g., Bible study, age-appropriate programming for Sunday Schoolers, Confirmants and Youth, Theology on Tap conversations).

**Objective 4: Develop a rich understanding of our Lutheran confessional heritage, and a familiarity with Christian history and theology.**

- 4.a: Publicly affirm formative Lutheran theology rooted in grace alone.
- 4.b: Discern and proclaim our theology in ways faithful to the gospel and meaningful in our current context.
- 4.c: Encourage everyone to engage with questions of theology, and provide opportunities and resources to guide them (e.g., Sunday School and Confirmation programming, Immanuel Symposium, Adult Forum, mid-week Lenten Studies, “What does it mean to be Lutheran?” classes).
- 4.d: Engage in thoughtful, respectful conversation with communities from other denominations and religious traditions.
- 4.e: Continue to emphasize the importance of the arts as historically and theologically significant to the life and faith of the Immanuel community, and expand opportunities to connect with that heritage. (e.g., Bach Cantatas, hymnody, visual arts).

**Objective 5: Pursue spiritual growth and renewal, personally and communally.**

- 5.a: Encourage a congregational culture where faith practices are understood as joyful expressions of faith.

- 5.b: Expand and support current ministries that care for the spiritual health of our community (e.g., the Prayer Team, the Immanuel Library).
- 5.c: Explore a broad range of spiritual disciplines and devotional practices to deepen our experience of God's grace revealed in Christ. (e.g., spiritual direction, modes of contemplative prayer, nature walks, prayer labyrinths).
- 5.d: Establish a program of peer mentorship ministry, aimed toward new members but open to all, giving an opportunity to renew and affirm their baptism (e.g., the program suggested by *Faith Forming Faith* by Paul Hoffman).
- 5.e: Help each other talk about our faith, so we can articulate it meaningfully in conversation, both at Immanuel and with those beyond these walls.
- 5.f: Emphasize the importance of the arts as expressions of faith and expand opportunities to experience, learn, and create (e.g., new compositions, creative writing, storytelling).

### **Ministry Area IV: Faithful Administration.**

*Recognizing that all we have comes from God and belongs to God, we strive to be good stewards of all that God has entrusted to our care.*

#### **Objective 1: Nurture a congregational culture rooted in love, committed to thoughtful and proactive change in service to the gospel.**

- 1.a: Foster a willingness to talk about hard topics, listening to each other with love and respect.
- 1.b: Communicate clearly with each other, recognizing that leaders should hear and be heard, and that the whole community has a role in discerning where God is calling Immanuel.
- 1.c: Find meaningful ways to include and listen to all voices, providing safe channels for people to give honest feedback, and respond appropriately.
- 1.d: Encourage and empower committees, task forces, and other groups to minister boldly, leading us into innovative and experimental ways of being God's church in the world.
- 1.e: Proactively and intentionally review our ministries and practices, discerning whether they serve the mission of Immanuel.
- 1.f: Be willing to let go of things that are no longer contributing to the ministry of Immanuel.
- 1.g: When change happens, find ways to both grieve the loss of the old and celebrate the new.
- 1.h: Be nimble when adapting to changing circumstances, and frame adversity as an opportunity to grow.

## **Objective 2: Be faithful stewards of all God has given us.**

- 2.a: Inspired by the Parable of the Sower, focus on building “good soil,” working toward sustainable, enriching, and life-giving ministry.
- 2.b: Maintain and improve Immanuel’s property (buildings, grounds, assets, hymnals, books, etc.) in ways that honor it as a gift from God.
- 2.c: Use Immanuel’s space creatively to further the mission of the church.
- 2.d: Respect and direct offerings of time, talent, and treasure, making wise use of what we have together for the sake of the gospel.
- 2.e: Be mindful of our impact on the world around us, especially the health of creation.

## **Objective 3: Demonstrate care for those engaged in the mission of Immanuel.**

- 3.a: Invite everyone to participate in the life of the congregation in ways that honor and make use of their gifts.
- 3.b: Show everyone that their contributions to the work and life of Immanuel are valued and appreciated.
- 3.c: Empower and equip those carrying out the mission of the congregation (development, training, mentorship, preventing burnout).
- 3.d: Provide ongoing support for staff and rostered leaders, recognizing their special role in the life of Immanuel.
- 3.e: Work to ensure that the diversity of the Immanuel community is represented in the leadership and activities of the congregation.

## **Objective 4: Conduct parish affairs responsibly.**

- 4.a: Implement effective processes rooted in the values of Immanuel, ensuring that we are upholding the mission of the congregation in all that we do (e.g., hiring practices, personnel policies, financial decisions, lay leadership support).
- 4.b: Provide clear expectations for leadership roles and staff positions.
- 4.c: Ensure that there are effective transitions between leaders.
- 4.d: Prevent a hostile or unsafe environment for all members of our community by maintaining effective policies and procedures, and quickly addressing any issues that arise.
- 4.e: Be transparent and honest in our ministry. Seek appropriate input, communicate clearly how and why decisions are being made, and keep records for posterity.
- 4.f: Hold ourselves and each other accountable, intentionally reflecting on and evaluating our actions as part of the ministry of Immanuel in order to best fulfill our mission in the future.
- 4.g: Take intentional action as a congregation to put this document into practice, guiding the ministry of Immanuel.