

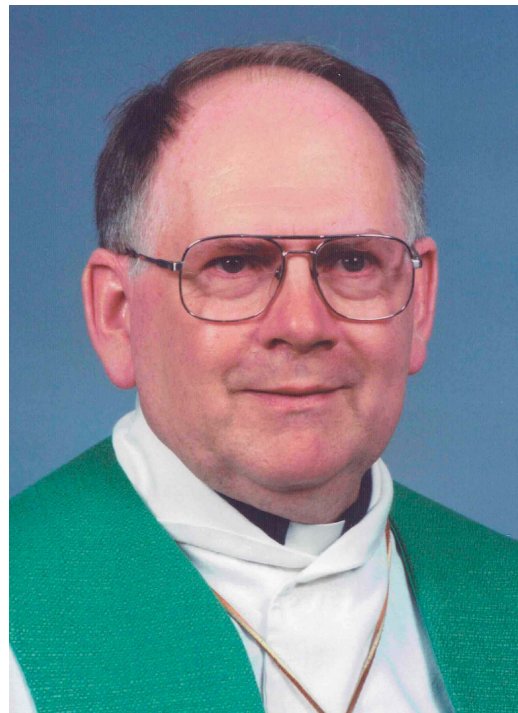
Pastor Lloyd L. Miller 1993 - 2001

Pastor David J. Baer 1994 - present

The Rev. Lloyd Lawrence Miller was called to be senior pastor of the Prairie and Pines Parish in 1993. He began his call here in September. The Rev. David James Baer was called as associate pastor in 1994. The two pastors served the three congregations of the parish together until Pastor Miller left in 2001.

Pastor Miller was born August 13, 1938. He is a graduate of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. He married Janet Winterfield in 1960. He was ordained in 1965. He served Salem-Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Long Lake, South Dakota; Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Gackle, North Dakota; Zion Lutheran Church in Eureka, South Dakota, and Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Flandreau, South Dakota, prior to accepting the call to serve our parish.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations were asked to consider a proposed social statement on human sexuality in 1993. Pastor Miller and Pastor Behrend led discussion groups in the parish starting in January of 1994. Because of disagreements in the ELCA, especially regarding homosexuality, the proposed statement was withdrawn and not presented to the 1995 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Sexuality would continue to be a major topic of discussion in the ELCA for many years.



Pastor Lloyd L. Miller

In his report to the 1994 annual meeting, Pastor Miller wrote:

Dare to dream in growing and serving in the Good News of the Gospel. We have set a goal of independence as a congregation by the year 2000 and are working toward that. That is good! It means that we must work together in outreach to our community and in support of our congregation. The purchase of a parsonage is a giant step forward, a step of faith for which I commend you. A resident pastor will be good for the life of our congregation. Let's continue to look forward.



Confirmation 1994. Front row, from left: Alesia Bohm, Kim Karlson, Julie Schmidt, Jenny Pawlowski. Second row: Ben Schwarting, Jacob Schwarting, Pastor Miller, Jason Pickett, Cory Hannah.

Bruce Flagstad began serving as the congregation's treasurer in 1994. He continued in that position until 2019 — 25 years of faithful service.

Improvements to the church property in 1994 included carpeting the basement and adding a lawn sprinkling system.

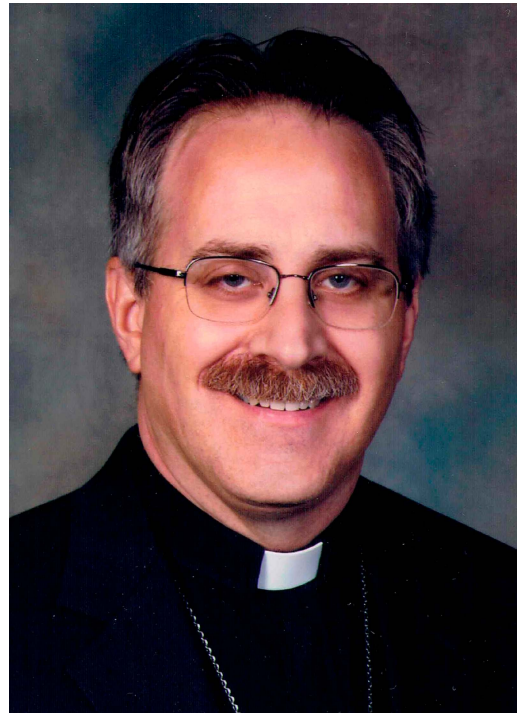
Significant remodeling was planned for the parsonage including an addition adding two bedrooms. "John Sogge had drawn plans for the remodeling of the parsonage. After discussion, it was agreed to add a 24x18 foot addition, adding two bedrooms to the first floor and enlarging the kitchen by moving an interior wall. It was agreed to go ahead with the remodeling now to be ready when a pastor comes," the newsletter reported. Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Lead agreed to provide an interest-free loan to Immanuel for the parsonage addition and remodeling.

The Rev. David James Baer was called as associate pastor of the parish in 1994. He began his call here October 1, 1994. Pastor Baer was to live in the newly remodeled parsonage in Whitewood and to assist the congregation in reaching its goal of independence by the year 2000.

Pastor Baer is a graduate of Augustana College in Sioux Falls and Luther-Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was ordained on July 2, 1989, at South Canyon Lutheran Church in Rapid City. Pastor Baer served Grace Lutheran Church in Willow Lake, South Dakota, and Good Hope Lutheran Church, rural Willow Lake, prior to his call to serve our parish.

In the fall of 1994, Immanuel began a study of the possibility of offering Holy Communion to children prior to confirmation. Younger children were then welcomed to Communion as their parents desired.

The 1995 annual meeting gratefully received word that Shepherd of the Hills would forgive Immanuel's \$12,000 loan and give Immanuel an additional \$23,000 toward the parsonage. The \$23,000 gift was applied to the congregation's loan for the parsonage.



Pastor David J. Baer

With One Voice hymnals were purchased in 1995. *With One Voice* was designed to be a supplement to the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. The hymnals are still used today. The "Bread of Life" Setting 5 from that hymnal has been used regularly since then.

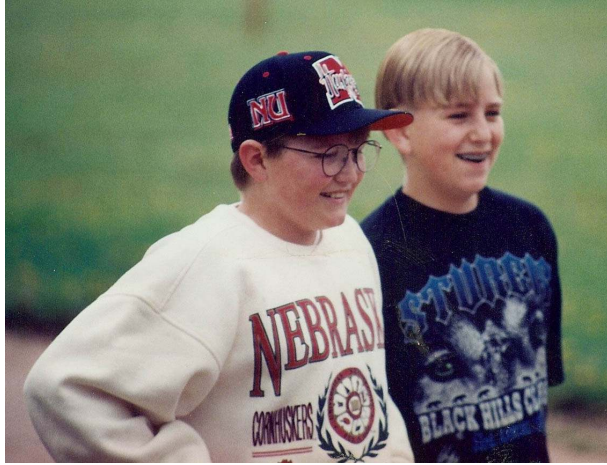
Privacy stalls were added to the restrooms on the main floor of the church in 1995. They were purchased by the Church Women's group.

For 1995, there were 40 students in Sunday School with an average attendance of 30. We had 61 students for Vacation Bible School.

A Paschal Candle was purchased in 1995. The candle is burned during the Easter season and at baptisms and funerals to remind us of the Easter hope and connection. John Sogge built and carved the holder for the Paschal Candle..

An electric piano was purchased in 1995 through gifts given in memory of Larry Huisenga.

A group of women began baking unleavened bread for Holy Communion in 1995.



Mike Simek and Deric Flagstad



Adria Aker and Jennifer Kok

Outlaw Ranch

1995



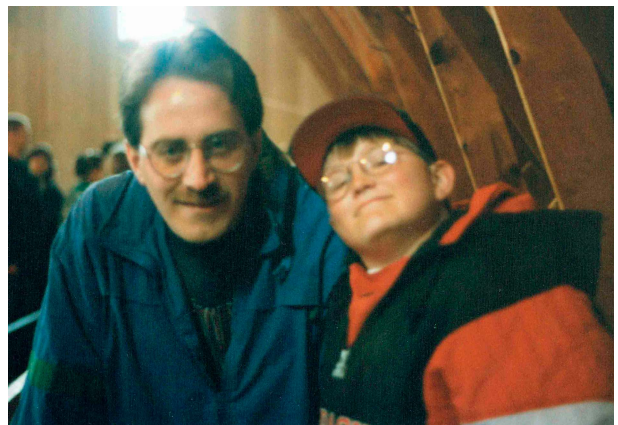
It snowed the last day of camp — in June!



Cody Haiwisk, Adria Aker and Jennifer Kok



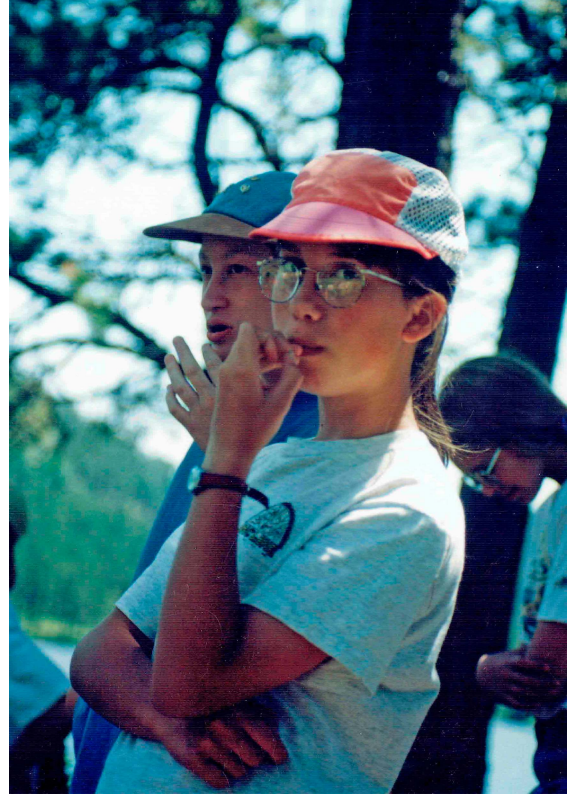
From left, Deric Flagstad, Jennifer Kok, Mike Simek, Cody Haiwick, Ryan Plunkett, Adria Aker and Jeremiah Burke.



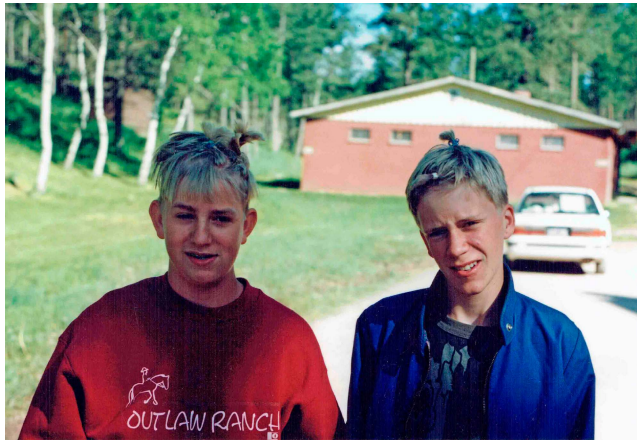
Pastor David Baer and Mike Simek



Guy Balo and Brad Gilchrist



Lindsay Heinrich



Deric Flagstad and Dustin Yuill

Outlaw Ranch 1996



Etta Balo

A banner committee was begun in 1995. Alona Westberg, Norma Dubbe and Virginia Rath made a new Christmas banner that year.

Six middle school youth went to Outlaw Ranch for church camp in June of 1995: Adria Aker, Jeremiah Burke, Deric Flagstad, Cody Haiwick, Jennifer Kok and Mike Simek.

Dorothy Pulscher attended the 1995 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis as a voting member representing the Bear Butte Conference and South Dakota Synod. Darrell Pulscher and Pastor Baer attended the Mission Festival held in conjunction with the assembly.

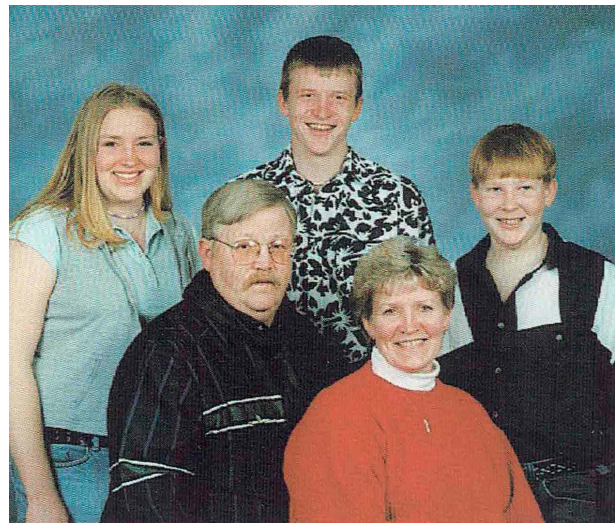
Prairie and Pines Lutheran parish had a combined budget covering the pastors' salaries and benefits and other joint expenses. Immanuel paid 22.5 percent of the parish budget for 1995, a total of \$21,323. Pastor Miller's salary for 1995 was \$30,750. Pastor Baer's salary was \$22,600. The 1996 budget proposed that Immanuel increase its share of the parish budget to 25 percent, roughly a \$1,200 increase. The total budget for Immanuel for 1995 was roughly \$50,000.

Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, newly-elected bishop of the South Dakota Synod, preached at Immanuel and Shepherd of the Hills on Sunday, October 22, 1995. A special worship service celebrating her installation as bishop was held at Grace Lutheran Church in Sturgis that afternoon for the Bear Butte Conference congregations. Members of Immanuel took part in the service and a mass choir. Joanne Rath was the organist for the service.

A "postal patron" mailing was sent to all in the Whitewood Zip Code inviting people to worship at Immanuel for Christmas of 1995.



Lonuld "Lonny" Balo (1960-2018) and Mona Balo, Guy and Etta. Lonny served on Church Council 1997-2002 and was president 1998-2002. He was also the first person baptized in the new church building.



Gene and Kyla Thompson, Trampus, Katy and Rocky. Kyla served as Church Council 1981-1983. She was secretary 1981-1986. Gene served on Church Council 1998-2001.

1996 marked a change in the congregation's budget process. A unified budget was created rather than having separate budgets for the general fund, mission fund and building fund. Offering envelopes no longer had separate funds, but one fund for the congregational budget.

A pictorial directory of members of Immanuel was published in 1996.

A donor offered to pay for paving of the parking lot east of the church. The congregation gratefully accepted.

New lighting was added to the sanctuary in 1996. Clarence Rath oversaw the project. The congregation worked to raise \$1,000 for the project.

Etta Balo, Guy Balo, Deric Flagstad, Brad Gilchrist, Lindsay Heinrich, Jennifer Kok and Dustin Yuill went to camp at Outlaw Ranch in June of 1996.

Immanuel celebrated its 75th anniversary with a special worship service on September 8, 1996. The service was followed by a dinner and an informal service of remembrance. Pastor Jeff Sorenson, assistant to the bishop of the South Dakota Synod, was the guest speaker. The anniversary theme was "Built on Faith."

In 1997, the parking lot was expanded and paved — nearly doubling the size of the previous lot.

The 1997 annual meeting authorized the purchase of glass doors for the church to be installed on the front and east entrances. The total cost of the project was \$4,500.

At the 1997 annual meeting, the congregation affirmed the goal of independence. An Independence Task Force was appointed by the council.



Barb and Jim Bowles. Jim served as president in 2003 and on Church Council 2001-2003. Barb served on Church Council and as secretary 2006-2008.



Dale and Dottie Ball. Dale served on Church Council 1999-2002.

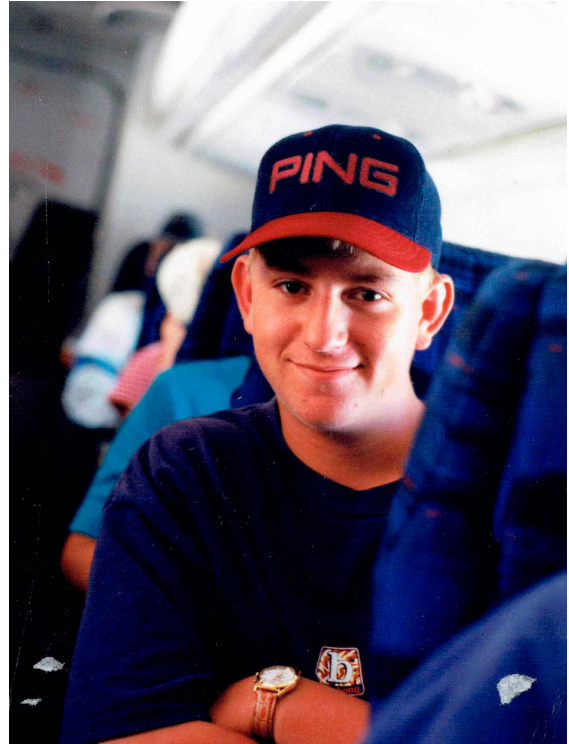


**Vacation Bible
School
1996**





Deric Flagstad, Mike Simek and Pastor Baer with 14 youth from Shepherd of the Hills at 1997 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.



Deric Flagstad

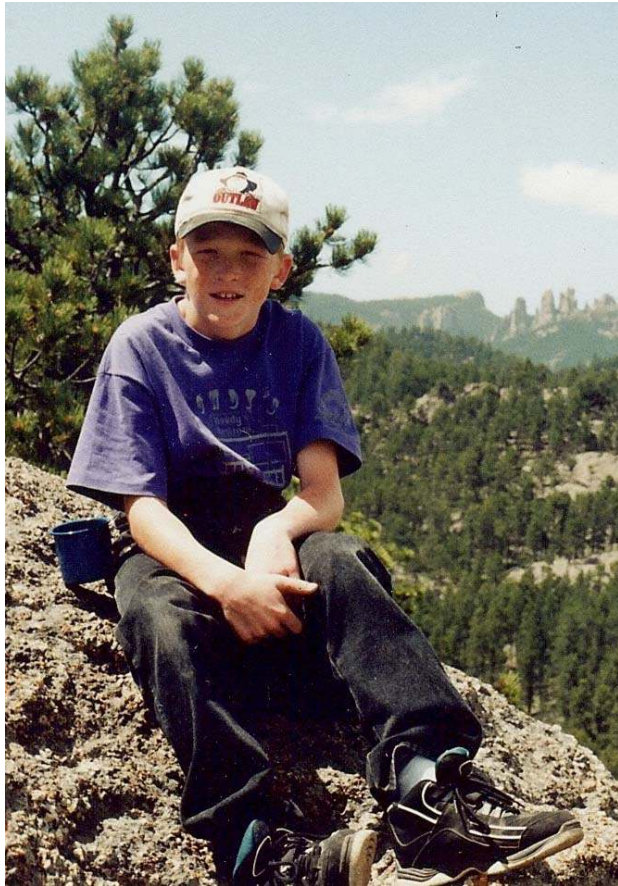


Mike Simek, Jason Quaschnick, Deric Flagstad

1997 ELCA Youth Gathering

New Orleans





Trampus Thompson

Outlaw Ranch 1997



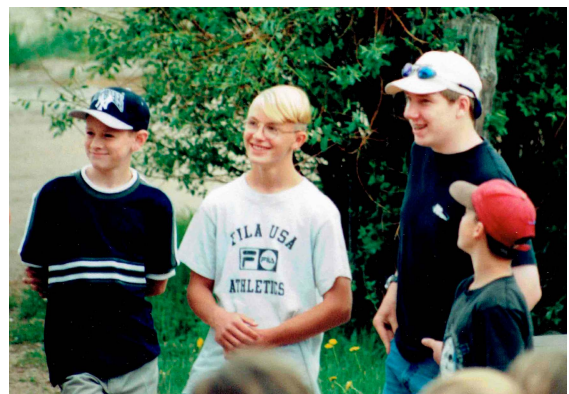
Tiffany Yuill and Etta Balo



James Robbins and Jonah Pickett



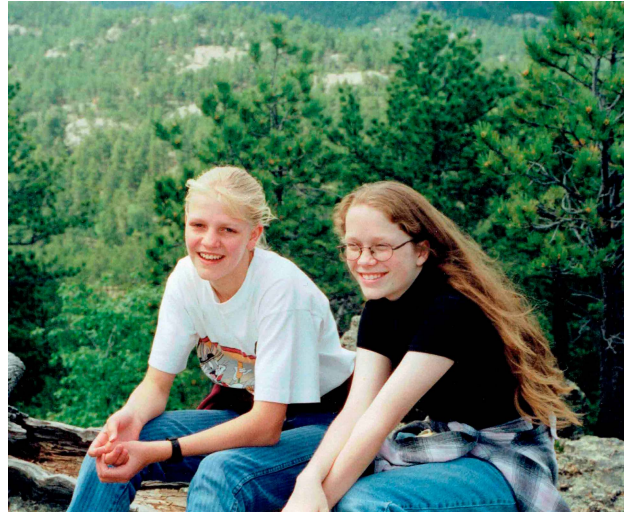
Amber Ball and Lexi Robbins



Jeremiah Pickett and Brad Gilchrist



James Robbins



Etta Balo and Tiffany Yuill



Amber Ball and Lexi Robbins

Outlaw Ranch 1998-1999



Rocky Thompson



Ryan Aldren



Etta Balo



Derek Hart, James Robbins and Ryan Aldren

Outlaw Ranch

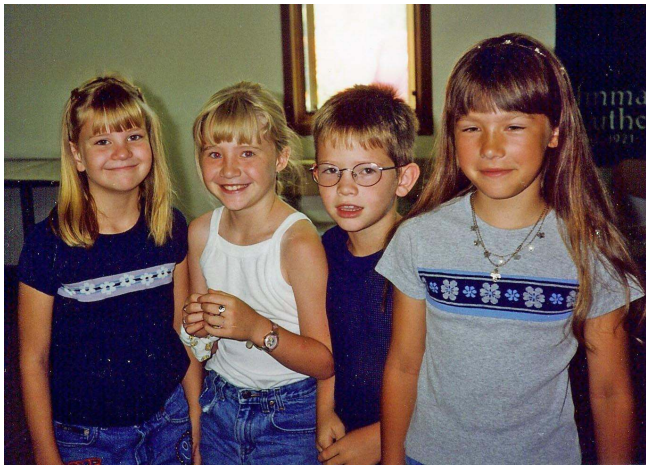
1998-2000



Brooke Hairychin



Katy Thompson



**Vacation
Bible School
1999**



Etta Balo, Brad Gilchrist, Jeremiah Pickett, Tiffany Yuill, Jonah Pickett, James Robbins, Trampus Thompson, Amber Ball and Lexi Robbins went to church camp at Outlaw Ranch in the summer of 1997.

Deric Flagstad and Mike Simek joined Pastor Baer and 14 youth from Shepherd of the Hills to attend the 1997 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

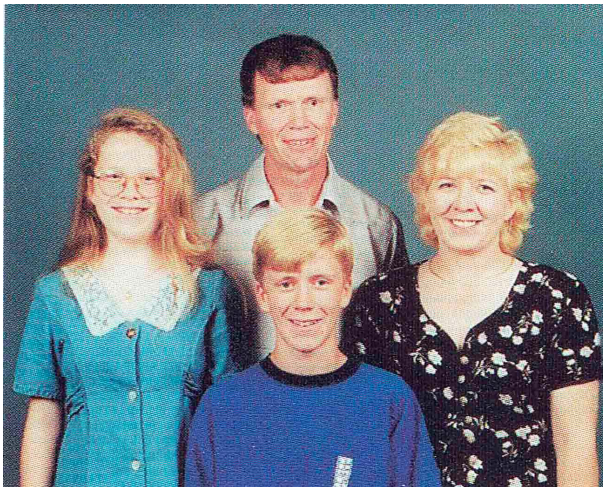
Improvements were made to the church sound system in 1997.

In 1997, there were 35 students in Sunday School and 45 children for VBS.

A mailing was sent to all Whitewood postal patrons inviting people to worship with us for Easter 1997.

In his report to the 1998 annual meeting, Pastor Miller noted concerns about reductions in mining at the Homestake Mine in Lead and how they will affect both Immanuel and Shepherd of the Hills. He also encouraged Immanuel to move forward toward independence:

I feel it is time to review seriously our parish arrangement. I feel it is a time for all of us to move toward independence. I have been very happy with the arrangement, but I feel it is time for us to move forward. I know a timeline has been established for independence when I retire in about five years. If we stick with this timeline, I feel we will spend the next five years "marking time" and that is not progressing, moving forward. There was a time (even recently) that I felt that it would be necessary for both Pastor Baer and I to resign this parish before independence could take place. I now think it can be accomplished by revised job descriptions and a step by step process set in motion for Shepherd and Immanuel to establish themselves as independent congregations.



Russell and Linda Yuill, Tiffany and Dustin. Russell served on Church Council 1993-1995.



Darrell and Dorothy Pulscher. Darrell served as president 1994-1996 and 2010-2012. He also served on Church Council. Dorothy has served as secretary of the Church Women for ten years.

The 1998 annual meeting received three options for independence goals. The Independence Task Force reported that its members thought that independence was financially feasible now. They encouraged expediting the process. The annual meeting affirmed its preference for reaching independence in 2000. Three options for independence were presented. The option preferred by Immanuel members included a recommendation that Pastor Baer assume administrative responsibilities at Immanuel. It included increasing the number of Sundays each pastor would lead worship at the site where he lived. It also proposed increasing Immanuel's share of the total cost of the pastors' salaries. The plan also stated that full independence would be set in motion by the resignation of one of the pastors with the other pastor leaving over the following year.

Oil candles were purchased for the altar in 1998 to replace the wax candles that were used previously.

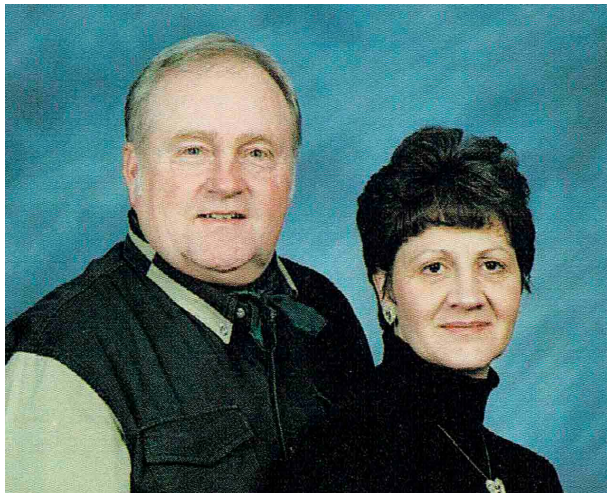
A new photocopier was purchased in 1998.

Seasonal hymns and "hymns of the month" were chosen by the Worship Committee in 1998 and 1999 as a way to introduce new hymns.

Holy Communion was celebrated weekly during the Easter season beginning in 1998. The Sacrament continued to be offered on the first, third and fifth Sundays of each month during other seasons.

Etta Balo, Tiffany Yuill, James Robbins, Katy Thompson, Amber Ball, Lexi Robbins and Rocky Thompson went to church camp at Outlaw Ranch in June of 1998.

A balloon payment of \$32,400.93 was due to the bank on October 20, 1998, for the loan on the parsonage. A system of no-interest bonds was created to begin paying off the \$28,500 debt on the parsonage. The congregation received donations of \$2,500 and sold \$26,000 in \$500 no-



Dennis and Jeanne Mohni. Dennis served on Church Council 1996-1998.



Dudley and LeAnn Nelson. Dudley served on Church Council 1995-1996. LeAnne was active in Altar Guild, Choir and Church Women.

interest bonds. The mortgage on the parsonage with First Western Bank was satisfied on October 23, 1998.

In December of 1998, the council decided to hire a church janitor. Prior to that annual bids were received to do janitorial work at the church. The decision to hire someone for the position was made because no bids were received for 1999.

The Independence Task Force issued this report to the 1999 annual meeting:

The major project of the task force this year was the issuing of non-interest bearing promissory notes to members of the congregation to pay off our parsonage loan. The acceptance of and participation in the project were well received by our members. We were able to sell all of the notes necessary to raise enough money to pay off the loan. This will reduce the time necessary to pay off the debt on the parsonage from ten years to just over four years.

At the beginning of the year, we also increased our share of the Prairie and Pines budget by two percent.

The cooperation and support of the members of the congregation have been tremendous. We have, so far, been able to meet challenges in our quest for independence.

By December of 1999, the balance due on the parsonage was reduced to \$17,000 (34 notes).



Kathie and Bruce Flagstad, Deric and Kirsten. Bruce served as Immanuel's treasurer for 26 years 1994-2020. He also served on Church Council. Kathie served on Church Council and has been active in the Church Women. She sings alto in the choir.



Tony and Alona Westberg, Perry, Andrew and Tammy. Alona Westberg served as Sunday School Superintendent 1980-2006, president of the Church Women and a volunteer church secretary for many years. Tony Westberg served as congregational president 1968-1969 and 1990, building fund treasurer 1970-1990. He also served on Church Council.

Immanuel continued to increase its share of the parish budget which covered the pastors' salary and benefits to 29 percent in 1998 and 31 percent in 1999. Immanuel's proposed 1999 budget was \$61,780 — an increase of \$6,000 over the 1998 budget.

It was noted in the March 1999 council minutes that Holy Communion would be offered each Sunday during the Easter season. This may have marked a move to more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Ryan Aldren, Etta Balo, James Robbins, Amber Ball and Lexi Robbins went to church camp in 1999.

The east roof of the church building was replaced following a storm in 1999. Total cost was \$2,347.37. Insurance paid \$1,440 of that cost.

Three special meetings of the congregation were held in the fall of 1999. A 2000 Independence Resolution was presented for discussion on September 26. A second discussion meeting was held on October 3. The congregation voted to adopt the independence resolution on October 10, 1999. Some of the provisions of the resolution were:

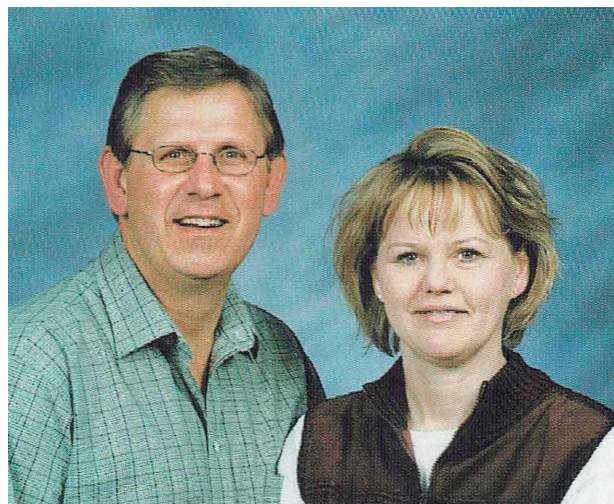
WHEREAS, the congregations of this parish have enjoyed a good relationship and have been supportive of Immanuel's goal of independence; and ...

WHEREAS, the congregations would like to facilitate Immanuel's goal of independence in 2000 while maintaining relationships that have been established with Pastor Miller and Pastor Baer; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Prairie and Pines Parish be dissolved effective January 1, 2000; and be it further



Marlyn and Judy Haiwick. Marlyn served on Church Council 2008-2013.



Steve and Carletta Vasknetz. Carletta served on Church Council 2006-2008 and 2015-2017.

RESOLVED that Cave Hills, Immanuel, and Shepherd of the Hills be separate congregations without any formal parish relationship but with continued care for each other because of our prior relationship and because of our connection as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED that Pastor Miller continue as administrative pastor of Shepherd of the Hills; and be it further

RESOLVED that Pastor Baer become administrative pastor of Immanuel; and be it further

RESOLVED that Pastor Baer continue to serve as associate pastor of Shepherd of the Hills with primary responsibilities in overseeing the congregation's ministry with and for youth including participation in the congregation's confirmation ministry (this responsibility should amount to approximately one or two days per week); and be it further

RESOLVED that Pastor Miller become associate pastor of Immanuel with normal responsibilities limited to one weekday per month and one Sunday per month effective January 1, 2000; and be it further

RESOLVED that each congregation will be financially independent (preparing its own budget and responsible for its own expenses); and be it further ...

RESOLVED that Immanuel be responsible for paying Pastor Baer's salary and benefits; and be it further

RESOLVED that Shepherd of the Hills be responsible for paying Immanuel an amount equal to the amount of Pastor Baer's pension and insurance as compensation for Pastor Baer's additional time at Shepherd of the Hills; and be it further ...



Julie and Jeff Westberg, Bryan, Jody, Zach and Jamie. Jeff Westberg served on Church Council in 1974. Julie Westberg served on Church Council 1994-2000.



Larry and Ann Kymala. Larry served on Church Council 2003-2005.

RESOLVED that Pastor Miller will lead worship at Immanuel once a month (normally on the second Sunday of each month) and will provide office hours at Immanuel one day per month; and be it further ...

RESOLVED that Pastor Miller and Pastor Baer both will be authorized to officiate at regular pastoral acts (baptisms, weddings, funerals) at both Immanuel and Shepherd of the Hills; and be it further ...

RESOLVED that the arrangement established by this resolution between Immanuel and Shepherd of the Hills will be terminated upon the resignation of either Pastor Miller or Pastor Baer; and be it finally

RESOLVED that upon the resignation of either Pastor Miller or Pastor Baer, the following will take place:

1. The remaining pastor will resign his position at the congregation where he is associate pastor and will begin serving as an interim pastor in that congregation until that congregation calls another pastor or arranges for another interim pastor. This interim arrangement may continue for a maximum of four months.

2. The remaining pastor may provide pastoral care, including officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals, until a pastor is installed at the other congregation. Following that installation, the pastor will be expected to follow the synod guidelines for pastors relating to previously-served parishes.



Rodney Reed and Eileen Reed (1934-2019). Rodney served on Church Council 2003-2004.



Pat Walz and Marvin Hankel. Marv served as president of the congregation 1992-1993 and 2004-2005 and on Church Council 1992-1994 and 2003-2005. Pat was treasurer for the Church Women 2006-2019. She also served as the congregation's financial secretary 2001-2019.

Pastor Miller addressed independence in his report to the 2000 annual meeting:

When I came to this parish in September of 1993, the goal of independence by 2000 seemed so far away. But now it becomes a reality, in its limited way. It has been a joy to watch Immanuel grow, in numbers and in confidence. What seemed like a “pie in the sky” goal at times has now become an attainable goal. While I know there are doubts among some if you can handle it financially, I am convinced you can. You have grown greatly in your stewardship, you have met budgets that have grown significantly (I am especially pleased at how you have grown in your benevolent support beyond the congregation). I believe this is all under the direction of God’s gracious leading in answer to prayer. The boldness of your faith has led you this far and continues to lead you onward in your role as an independent congregation serving the Whitewood community and as an effective part of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Immanuel’s budget for 2000, its first year of independence was \$75,120. That was a significant increase over the 1999 budget of \$61,780. Roughly \$9,000 of the new budget was the cost of Pastor Baer’s pension and insurance which was to be reimbursed by Shepherd of the Hills.

In 2000, the Committee for Evangelism reported collecting items for Lutheran World Relief kits. LWR School Kits and Personal Care Kits have been a regular congregational project every years since then.

Pastor Baer married Joanne Rath, our church organist and choir director on April 8, 2000, in a small family service at the Chapel of the Hills in Rapid City. A reception was held a week later at Immanuel.

A brick patio was installed at the parsonage in 2000.



Pastor David Baer and Joanne Rath were married on April 8, 2000, in a small family service at the Chapel in the Hills in Rapid City. Joanne served as Immanuel’s organist and choir director. She has also served on Church Council.

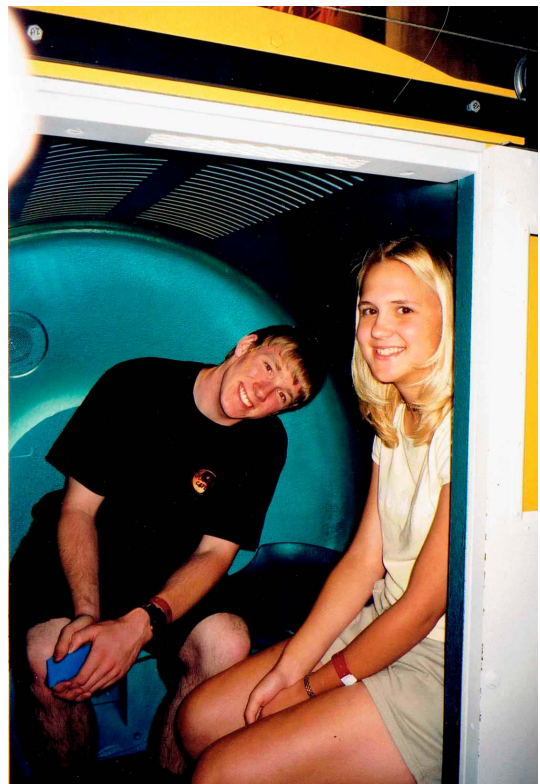


Brad Gilchrist, Lindsay Heinrich, Dustin Yuill, Tiffany Yuill and Pastor Baer went to the 2000 ELCA Youth Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri.



Lindsay Heinrich

2000 ELCA Youth Gathering St. Louis



Brad Gilchrist and Meredith Huber

The frequency of celebration of Holy Communion increased in 2000 to celebrating the Lord's Supper weekly for festivals and on Sundays during the seasons of Advent, (anytime the paraments are not green). Holy Communion is offered on the first, third and fifth Sundays during "ordinary time" — the Sundays after Epiphany and the Sundays after Pentecost.

James Robbins, Amber Ball, Lexi Robbins, Brooke Hairychin and Rebecca Robbins went to church camp in 2000. Etta Balo was a part of the Counselor in Training Program at Outlaw Ranch that summer as well.

Brad Gilchrist, Lindsay Heinrich, Dustin Yuill, Tiffany Yuill and Pastor Baer went to the 2000 ELCA Youth Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri. They traveled with youth from Shepherd of the Hills and other area congregations.

The congregation voted to amend its constitution in 2001 to allow the council to elect a vice president from among its members rather than having the pastor serve as vice president of the congregation. An amendment to the bylaws allowed the Church Council to appoint a financial secretary to receive offerings and keep a record of giving by members. Previously those duties were all handled by the congregation's treasurer. The amendments were ratified the following year.

Angie Sedig retired as organist at Immanuel in 2000. A special reception was held after worship on Sunday, September 10, 2000, to honor Angie for her 34 years as organist. She also directed choirs in our congregation for many years. She began playing at Immanuel in the summer of 1966.

John Sogge made an altar for the Sunday School children's chapel. The altar included a carving of Jesus in the center. The cross and collection plate from the old church were used with the new altar.

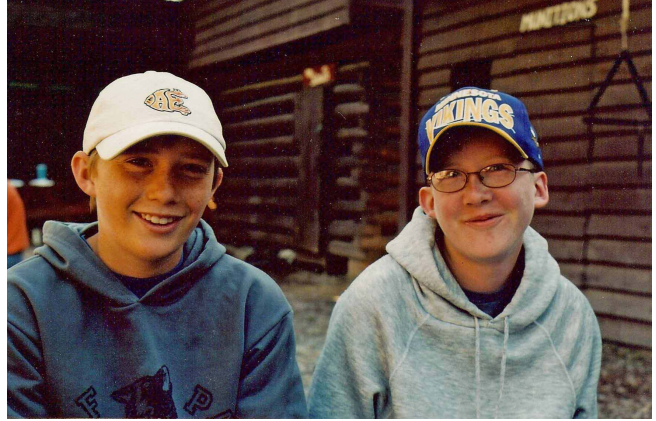
A Wednesday Afternoon Club for children was started in 2001 to reach out to the children of Whitewood in 2001.



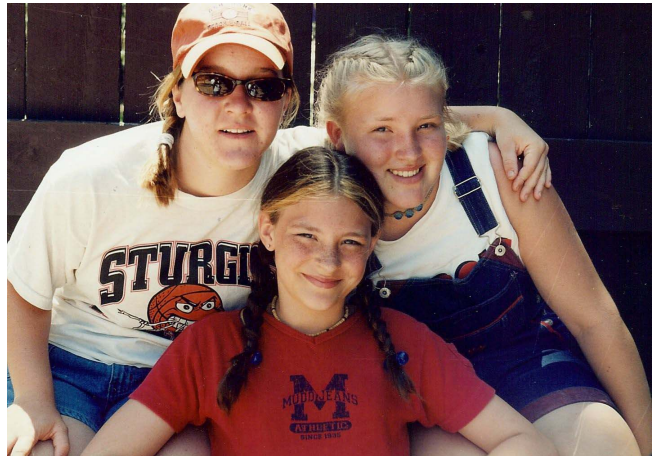
Angela Sedig (1918-2009) was organist and choir director for 34 years. Angie began playing the organ at Immanuel in 1966 and served as an organist for the congregation until 2000.



Katy Thompson



Kelly Aldren and Joshua Ailts



Amber Ball, Lexi Robbins and Katy Thompson



Kelly Aldren and Joshua Ailts

Atlantic Mountain Ranch 2001



The roof over the fellowship hall was repaired 2001. Cost of the repairs was more than \$11,000.

Pastor Miller left our parish in June of 2001 and accepted a call to serve Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Redfield, South Dakota. He retired in October of 2005 and lives in Eureka, South Dakota. In retirement, he served eight years as mayor of Eureka and also served five interim pastorates and did pulpit supply in about 15 different congregations within a radius of 80 miles of Eureka.

Pastor Miller's new call meant the beginning of the end of Immanuel's parish relationship with Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Lead. Pastor Baer continued to serve both congregations — now officially as interim pastor until the Lead congregation could call a new pastor. Worship times were changed to allow him to be at both congregations each Sunday. Shepherd of the Hills decided to pay Immanuel an extra \$100 per Sunday for Pastor Baer's services at their congregation during the vacancy. The Lead congregation also decided to continue paying for the benefits for Pastor Baer for two months after he finished his ministry there.



A reception honoring Pastor Lloyd and Jan Miller was held on their last Sunday at Immanuel.

In 2001, Joshua Ailts, Kelly Aldren, Amber Ball, Lexi Robbins and Katy Thompson went to church camp at Atlantic Mountain Ranch. Rebecca Robbins went to Outlaw Ranch as a camper and James Robbins went for the counselor in training program.

September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks were noted by the congregation with special offerings. In the October parish newsletter Pastor Baer addressed the attacks:

The Sunday after the attack, I reminded our congregations of God's promise from Paul's words in Romans: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose." I then challenged you to watch for the good that God would bring out of this evil We have already started to see the good God is bringing from 9-11.

...

We have witnessed our nation come together in renewed commitment to our country. People throughout the United States have responded to this tragedy by offering their blood, their time, and their money.

We have witnessed a revival of faith in God among Americans. In the face of unimagined evil, our people have turned to God as the one who can sustain us and comfort us when nothing else can do so. ...

Over the coming months and years, we will watch with eyes of faith to see how God is at work in our world to transform evil into good. May we be among those God uses to make our country and our world a better place.

A door was installed between the sanctuary and fellowship hall near the pastor's office in 2002 to help with energy costs and reduce drafts between the two areas when the temperature is kept lower in the sanctuary. A built-in dishwasher was installed in the church kitchen that year as well. A bay window was installed at the parsonage to replace an existing window that was inefficient and decaying. The range, washer and dryer at the parsonage were also replaced in 2002.

Immanuel paid the last of the notes on the parsonage in May of 2002.

Pastor Baer stopped offering Sunday worship services at Shepherd of the Hills in Lead in September of 2002. The decision was made to allow Immanuel to return to a more normal schedule for the fall of 2002. He continued to teach confirmation in Lead and to provide some pastoral care for that congregation while they continued to seek their next pastor.

Pastor Baer addressed Immanuel's goal of independence in his report to the 2003 annual meeting:

In 2002 we completed our first full year of independence. Independence has been one of Immanuel's goals since the time I was called to be your pastor in 1994. You can be proud of the progress you have made as a congregation. We are grateful for members who have increased their giving to help make this dream a reality. ...

A significant milestone for the congregation was reached in May when the last of the notes on the parsonage was paid. The congregation is now debt free. The time of the completion of our loan payments with Immanuel's independence has worked well. Money that was used for payment of debt may now be used for general expenses including portions of my compensation previously paid by Shepherd of the Hills.

What now? One of the dangers of achieving a goal is that you don't know what to do next. What will independence mean for Immanuel? Now that we are independent, what will be our next goal? How will we use this new reality to help us move into the future?



The Cave Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church near Buffalo finished its ministry with a closing service on Sunday, May 26, 2002. Pictured are, from left, Pastor Hans Sacrison, Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, Pastor Lloyd Miller, Pastor Jack Hill, Pastor David Baer and Pastor Ken Dugan.



Cave Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church north of Buffalo, South Dakota

The Cave Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church voted to close their congregation on June 24, 2001. Pastor Baer, Pastor Dugan, Pastor Hill, Pastor Miller and Pastor Hans Sacrison (a native of the Buffalo area) took leadership roles in a service of thanksgiving for the congregation's 84 years of ministry on May 26, 2002. Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl of the South Dakota Synod preached and presided at the service. Some members of Immanuel came to be a part of the closing service.

A pictorial directory of members of Immanuel was published in 2003.

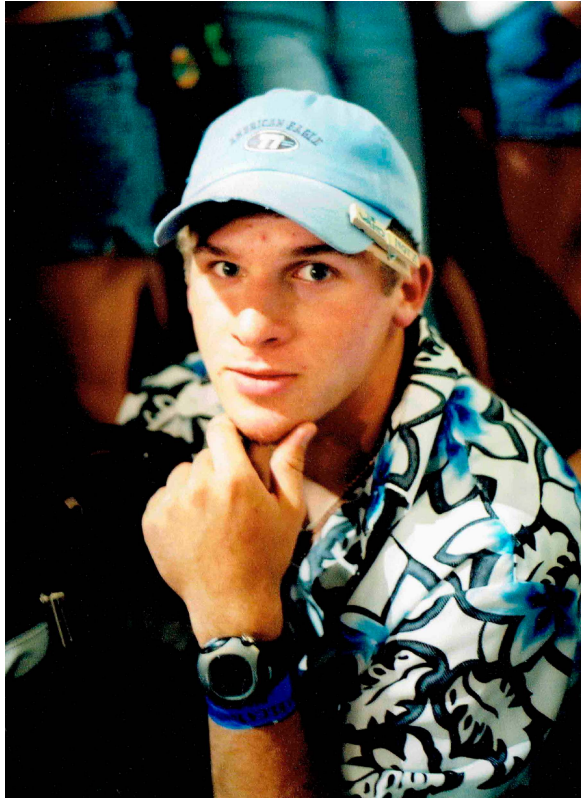
In 2003, camp staff from Outlaw Ranch came to Whitewood to lead Vacation Bible School Day Camp. That marked the beginning of a tradition of holding a day camp each summer at Oak Park.

Etta Balo, Jacob Smith, Katy Thompson and Pastor Baer attended the 2003 ELCA Youth Gathering in Atlanta, Georgia. They traveled with youth from Shepherd of the Hills.

Jennifer Aldren, Clint Christensen, Markus Heinrich and Bailey Mammenga went to Atlantic Mountain Ranch and Alyssa Haiwick and Shannon Kymala went to Outlaw Ranch for camp in 2003.

The 2001 ELCA Churchwide Assembly asked that the ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America began another study of sexuality. Pastor Baer addressed this study in his report to the 2004 annual meeting. "As most of you know, the ELCA is in the process of studying the possibility of blessing same-sex unions and ordaining homosexual persons who are in committed relationships. ... As part of this study process, ELCA members and congregations have been encouraged to study materials prepared by an ELCA task force and to respond with their convictions regarding these questions. ... I am concerned about the divisive nature of this discussion. ... It is important that you know that this study is not something that 'church headquarters' thought up. It is happening because people in the church have asked for it. It is also important to know that you have an opportunity to be involved in this discussion and to clearly express your convictions regarding these topics."

Immanuel's 2004 annual meeting approved two resolutions which were sent to the South Dakota Synod Assembly regarding the ELCA sexuality study. The resolutions were then overwhelmingly approved by the Synod Assembly and sent to the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and to the ELCA's Task Force for ELCA Sexuality Studies. One resolution asked that the synod affirm and endorse what were the ELCA's current standards regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers and regarding the question of blessing same-sex unions and asked the ELCA to formally adopt and affirm the current ELCA policies regarding the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships." The other resolution asked the synod and ELCA "to affirm the understanding of homosexuality and homosexual behavior as articulated by The American Lutheran Church ... and to adopt no changes in current ELCA policies."



Jacob Smith

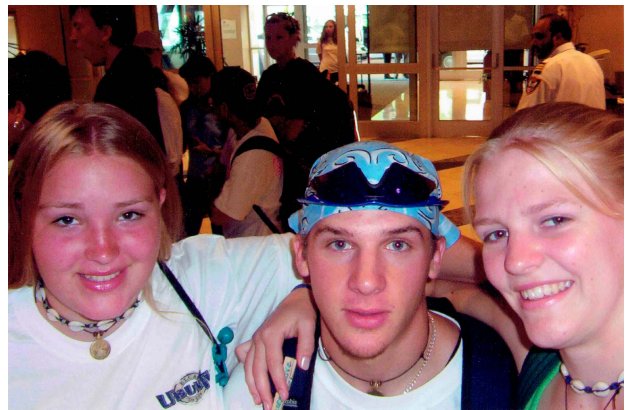


Katy Thompson and Etta Balo

2003 ELCA Youth Gathering Atlanta



The youth helped clean up a park in Atlanta.



Pastor Baer began a three-year Doctor of Ministry degree program in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary in 2004. Pastor Baer was at the seminary for three weeks of June for three years. Much of the work for the degree included sermons and feedback from the congregation. Some members of Immanuel agreed to be a part of a group to provide feedback on sermons. He completed the degree in 2007.

Cory Karas, Timothy Karas, Shannon Kymala, Shayla Kymala, Archie O’Dea, and Jessica Richter went to Outlaw Ranch for church camp in 2005.

In 2004, new carpet was installed in the social room, windows in the social room and bathrooms were replaced, and window blinds were installed in the sanctuary. New shingles were installed on the parsonage and three windows were replaced at the parsonage that year as well.

The congregation began to cover the cost of sending *The Lutheran* magazine to all members beginning in 2004. Prior to that the cost of the magazine was covered by the South Dakota Synod.



John Zwingelberg (1931-2017) and Audrey Zwingelberg moved to Whitewood in 1965. John and Audrey and many of their children and grandchildren have been involved in Immanuel since then. John served on Church Council and as congregational president. Audrey served eight years as Ladies Aid vice president. Pictured are members of the immediate Zwingelberg family, from left, Julie and Jeff Westberg, Janelle and Dave Arehart, David Zwingelberg, Rick and Tracy Zwingelberg, Jeff and Holly Ailts, Jon and Heidi Aldren, Scott and Rhonda Zwingelberg and Kathi Karas.



2006 ELCA Youth Gathering San Antonio





Cully Olson and Zach Rausch



Shayla Kymala and Julie Aldren

Outlaw Ranch 2007-2008



Brandon Karas and Jordan Smith



David Baer and Archie O'Dea



Ariel Smith and Samantha Colvin

A North Side Task Force worked to find ways to beautify the north side of our church building. Dave Arehart built a cross for the north gable end of the sanctuary. Lights were added to illuminate the cross at night. The hope was to help people to identify our building as a church. Shrubs were planted on the north side of the building. Most of the shrubs came from the Post Office when they were removed to help with foundation settling issues.

Immanuel began the process of increasing its mission support in 2005. That year 10 percent of offerings was given to the South Dakota Synod. One percent was given to companion church projects in Cameroon and Nicaragua. A local mission fund was created to receive an additional 1 percent. In 2005, that money was given to the St. Dymas congregations in the South Dakota State Prisons at Sioux Falls and Springfield.

Alyssa Haiwick, Cory Karas, Timothy Karas, Shannon Kymala, Shayla Kymala, Archie O'Dea and Jessica Richter went to Outlaw Ranch for church camp in 2005.

A new Johannus Opus 7 organ was purchased at a cost of \$9,000. Half of the cost was already available in designated memorial gifts for a new organ. The congregation approved the purchase at a special meeting on May 7, 2006. The congregation also approved adding insulated steel siding to the gable ends of the sanctuary. Difficulties with the contractor brought the siding proposal back at the annual meeting in 2007. The project was again authorized by the congregation at a cost of \$3,000 paid from memorial funds.

Jennifer Aldren, Clint Christensen, Brooke Hairychin, Markus Heinrich, Rocky Thompson and Pastor David attended the 2006 ELCA Youth Gathering in San Antonio, Texas. They traveled with youth from other area churches.

In 2006, we had 42 students in Grades 1-6 and 14 preschoolers for Vacation Bible School. There were 26 students in children's Sunday School. Janelle Arehart became Sunday School Superintendent in the fall of 2006. Alona Westberg retired as superintendent after serving in that role since 1980 — 26 years.

A hearing assistance system was added in 2007. It provided a way for those with hearing difficulties to use a receiver to increase the volume of the worship service.

The lights in the fellowship hall were replaced with more modern fixtures in 2007. Sheet rock was installed in the basement bathrooms, Sunday School and storage rooms.

Shannon Kymala and Jessica Richter went to church camp at Atlantic Mountain Ranch in 2007. Julie Aldren, David Baer, Shayla Kymala, Archie O'Dea and Samantha Colvin went to Outlaw Ranch.

For many years the youth sold Hutterite chickens to raise money for youth gatherings and church camp.