

Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Reform) was added to Immanuel's budget for 2008 to receive 1 percent of offerings. Lutheran CORE was working to uphold traditional teaching in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Immanuel was now giving 13 percent of its undesignated offerings to mission beyond the congregation: 8 percent to undesignated synod mission support, 3 percent for designated for South Dakota ministries, 1 percent for companion synod ministries in Cameroon and Nicaragua and 1 percent for Lutheran CORE.



*Stained glass window given in memory of Debra Christensen (1956-2007).*

The 2007 annual meeting approved repair of the west side of the church roof as well as the roofs of the parsonage and garage following a hail storm. The total cost was nearly \$7,500, most of which was covered by insurance. The congregation also approved a design for a stained glass window to be given by Dolly Rizzi of Spearfish in memory of her sister, Deb Christensen. Purchase of a new photocopier was also approved at a cost of roughly \$2,500.

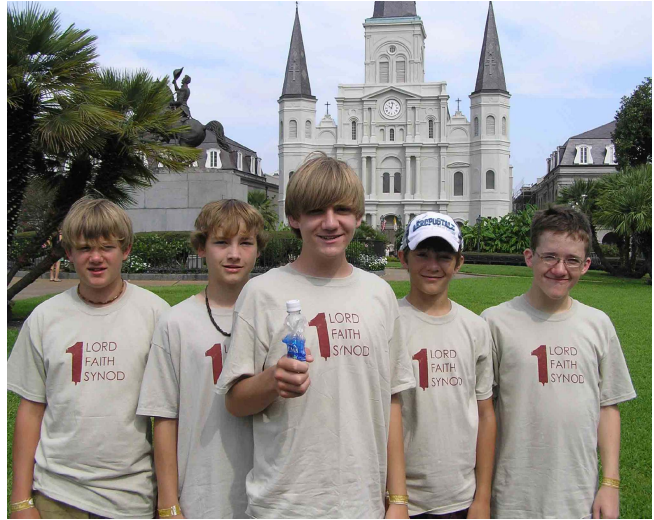
We had five youth go to Outlaw Ranch and two youth go to Atlantic Mountain Ranch in 2008.

In June of 2008, the church basement was flooded. "Church members responded well to the crisis, removing items from the basement and vacuuming up water. The water continued to fill the basement throughout the next week and members of Immanuel continued to work to remove the water while we all wondered what could be causing the water to enter the building. A week later we learned the cause of the water when the city discovered a broken water main just west of the building. The city's insurance company eventually agreed to cover the cost to restore the basement and to replace items damaged by water and mold. We were blessed to have many members of Immanuel who were a part of the efforts to clean up the water, to remove items damaged by the flooding, and to repair and replace items," Pastor Baer reported in the annual report that year.

Fourteen children and youth went to church camp in 2008. David Baer, Samantha Colvin, Tyler Covell, Brandon Karas, Cully Olson, Zach Rausch, Ariel Smith, Jordan Smith, Julie Aldren, Shannon Kymala, Shayla Kymala, Archie O'Dea, Jessica Richter and Kaitlin Smith went to Outlaw Ranch.



*Jessica Richter and Jessica Sternhagen  
(from Shepherd of the Hills in Lead).*



*Kyle Alan, David Baer, Archie O'Dea, Cory Karas  
and Adrian Karas.*



*Kaitlin Smith, Shannon Kymala, Shayla Kymala and  
Julie Aldren.*

## **2009 ELCA Youth Gathering New Orleans**



*David Baer, Archie O'Dea, Julie Aldren, Kaitlin  
Smith and Kyle Alan.*

Pastor Baer addresses concerns over the cost of camp in his report to the 2009 annual meeting. “We had 14 Immanuel members go to church camp last summer. It is great to have these numbers of kids going to camp. However, it presents a dilemma in terms of helping to make these experiences possible for our youth. The cost of a week at Outlaw Ranch is now \$360. This makes it difficult for many of our families to afford camp. We have been trying to pay a significant portion of this cost for most of our youth (usually two-thirds of the cost), but as prices rise that becomes more difficult,” he wrote.



***The paneling was removed from the sanctuary in 2009. It was replaced by insulation and finished sheet rock.***

“We now have a renewed basement that is a delight to the eyes and an excellent place for children and youth to learn about God’s love for them. The basement continues to blossom with the recent addition of a lectern made by John Jorgenson,” he wrote. Marv Hankel and John Jorgenson then installed a time-line display of Bible story paintings to complete the basement project. “God worked through the crisis of the flooding to bring the good of a renewed educational area for our congregation,” Pastor Baer wrote.

In addressing the basement flooding, a problem with the church’s constitution was discovered. The congregation needed a way to respond to emergency situations when expenditures must exceed the amount the Church Council could spend without congregational approval and when a meeting cannot be scheduled without two week’s notice to the congregation. The 2009 annual meeting approved a bylaw to address those emergency situations. Updates were also approved to bring the constitution to reflect changes in the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations.

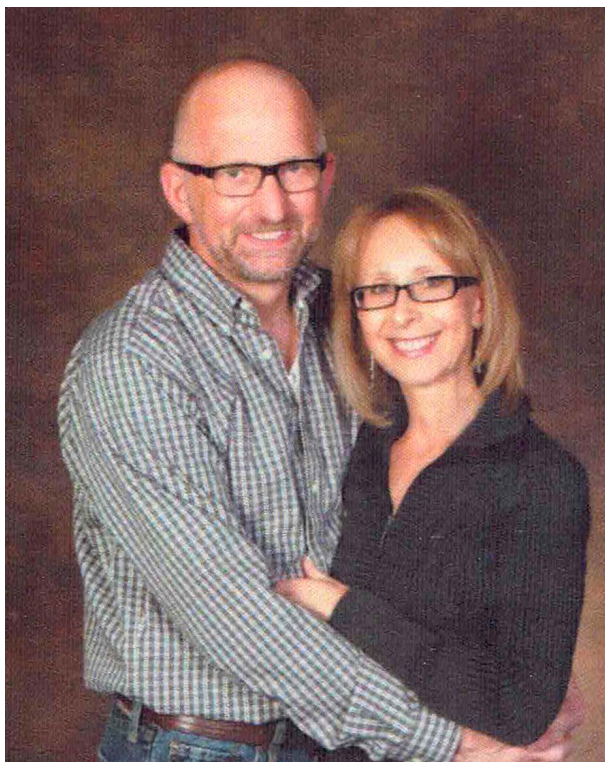
The 2009 annual meeting approved two projects that had been discussed in previous years and were addressed by an Interior Beautification Committee. A project to update the interior of the church by replacing the paneling in the sanctuary with finished sheet rock, completing the trim work around the windows and doors, and adding insulation on south exterior wall. New pew cushions were approved to replace the loose cushions. Kneeling cushions were also approved for along the Communion rail. They were made by Marty Pittman of Whitewood.

Pastor Baer noted the continued growth in giving by the congregation in his report to the 2009 annual meeting.

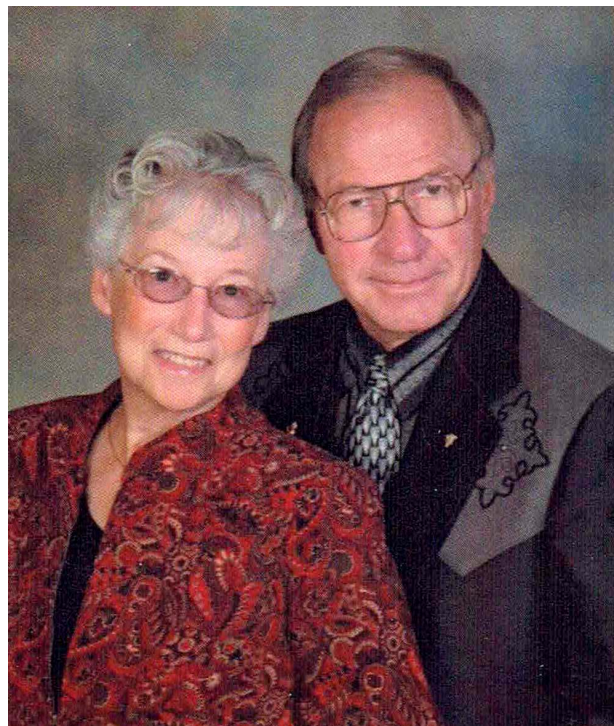
*I continue to be impressed by the financial stewardship demonstrated by members of our congregation. Giving to Immanuel has almost doubled in the nearly 15 years I have served as your pastor. You worked hard to achieve your goal of independence, and you have continued to be faithful in your giving to God through Immanuel.*

*It is also remarkable that Immanuel's giving beyond the congregation has grown during these years. The proposed 2009 budget recommends that we increase our giving beyond the congregation to 14 percent of our regular (not designated) income: Eight percent of that total will go to the South Dakota Synod as regular mission support ... which includes the South Dakota Synod, ELCA churchwide, and synod partnership ministries. Two percent of our giving supports projects in the South Dakota Synod's Companion Churches in Cameroon and Nicaragua. We help to provide funds to enable children in Cameroon to go to school and to support a church medical clinic in Nicaragua. An additional three percent of our income is designated as Local Mission funds. One percent of our income will go to each of the following: Lutheran Campus Ministry at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City, to a new Lutheran Campus Ministry at Black Hills State University in Spearfish; to St. Dymas Prison Congregations in Sioux Falls and Springfield; and to Lutheran CORE.*

*It is also worth noting that members of Immanuel donated nearly \$9,000 to Lutherans Outdoors in its "All Are Welcome" capital campaign conducted at Immanuel in 2008.*



***Rick and Deb Heinrich. Rick served on Church Council and as vice president 2002-2004. Deb served on Church Council and as secretary 2000-2002.***



***Dianna and John Jorgenson. Dianna served on Church Council and as secretary 2013-2016. John served on Church Council 2016-2019.***

Pastor Baer also addressed the sexuality study taking place in the ELCA in his report to the 2009 annual meeting.

*The ELCA has been in the process of preparing a social statement on human sexuality since 2001. The first draft of a social statement was released in March. There was much that was good in the statement and much that could be improved. ELCA members had the opportunity to respond to the statement and to suggest changes. The Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality will release its second draft of a proposed ELCA Statement on Human Sexuality on February 19, 2009. This “final draft” will be considered by the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August. ...*

*I remain committed to the settled biblical teaching on marriage and sexuality. I have been working with others to maintain Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality in the ELCA. I encourage you to join in this work. Please read the proposed social statement when it is released. It will be available online at [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org). I also encourage you to read responses to the draft provided by Lutheran CORE at [www.lutherancore.org](http://www.lutherancore.org). We will also make copies of the*

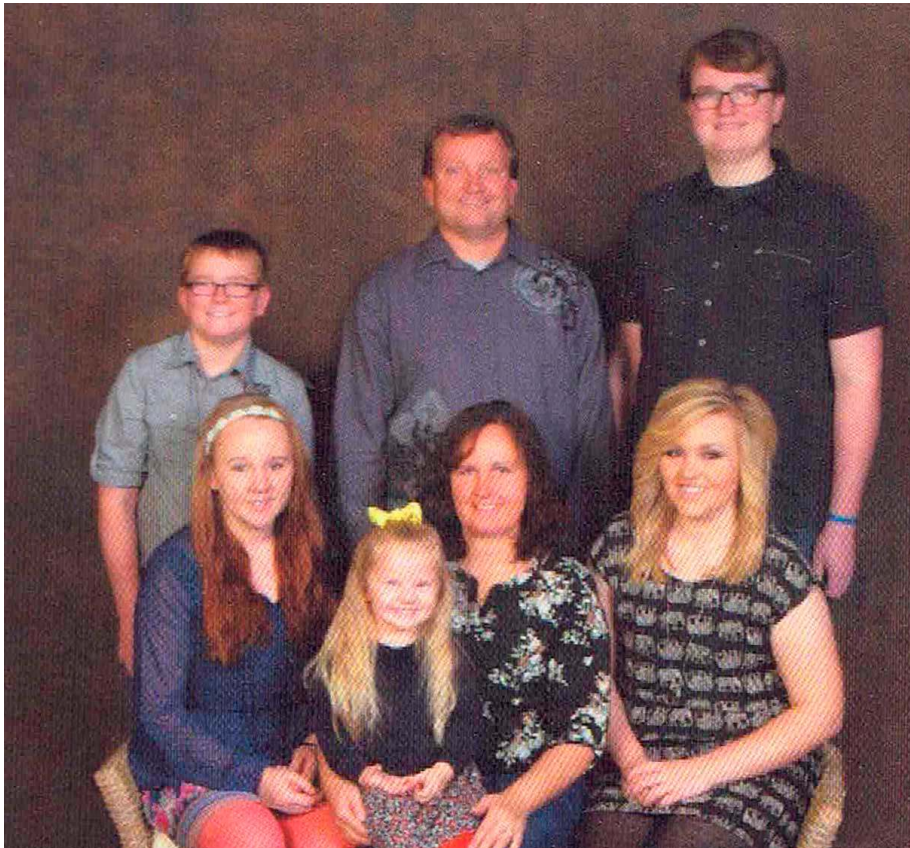


***Clarence Rath (1930-2010) and Virginia Rath (1929-2013) began attending Immanuel in 1980 and moved to Whitewood in 1987. Clarence and Virginia were both very involved in the congregation. Virginia served as president of the Church Women for six years and as treasurer for 13 years. Later several of their children moved to the Whitewood area and joined Immanuel as well. Their children are, from left, Tony Rath, Toby Rath, Jeanne Petersen, Tim Rath, Joanne Baer, Eric Rath and Conroy Rath.***

*statement and of some of the responses available at the church. This is a significant moment for Lutherans. We all must work together to keep our church faithful. I see God working now to bring good out of the crisis of teaching facing the ELCA to call its members to reclaim their church and call it to faithfulness.*

In his report to the 2009 annual meeting, Pastor Baer also noted the beginning of his work as editor of a monthly newsletter for Lutheran CORE.

*I was asked by leaders of Lutheran CORE to edit a monthly newsletter for the organization. Lutheran CORE is a coalition of reform movements in the ELCA that are working to maintain biblical authority and traditional Christian teachings in the church. I have a background in journalism and saw this as an opportunity to use some of those gifts for the sake of the Church. I began editing their newsletter in March. Copies have been available at the church or can be read online. ... I have also served Lutheran CORE as a communications consultant by helping with press releases, documents, and synod assembly resolutions. Lutheran CORE has asked me to work for them at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly August 10-16 in Minneapolis. I have found it rewarding to be a part of this renewal movement and to work with its leaders. I pray that God will use our work to help keep the ELCA faithful to Scripture. I ask you to remember those who are working for renewal in the church in prayer.*



***Vaughn and Ginger Smith, Jordan, Ariel, Grace, Gavin and Stella. Vaughn served on Church Council 2004-2007. Ginger has been a Sunday School teacher and superintendent for many years.***

Julie Aldren, David Baer, Adrian Karas, Cory Karas, Shannon Kymala, Shayla Kymala, Archie O’Dea, Jessica Richter, and Kaitlin Smith attended the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. They traveled with two bus loads of youth from area churches.

Julie Aldren, David Baer, Jacob Beyer, Samantha Colvin, Tyler Covell Abby Grismer, Cully Olson, Zach Rausch, Ariel Smith, Jordan Smith and Kaitlin Smith went to Outlaw Ranch in 2009.

A special meeting of the congregation was held on November 22, 2009 to address some of the issues created by the decision of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to depart from traditional Christian teaching on marriage and homosexual behavior.

The special meeting voted 51-3 that the congregation become a member of Lutheran Coalition for Reform (CORE). The congregation also voted 48-4 to amend its mission support budget for August through December of 2009 to reduce the amount of support for the South Dakota Synod from 8 percent to 5 percent of regular offerings and to increase the percentage share of offerings for the special ministries supported by the congregation from 1 percent to 1.5 percent each.

The special meeting also approved amendments to Immanuel’s constitution. One amendment indicated the congregation’s membership in Lutheran CORE. Another amendment requires pastors of Immanuel to uphold biblical teaching on marriage in their public ministry and private life and to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships. Amendments were also made removing some references to the faith and practice of the ELCA and encouraging the use of ELCA materials. The amendments were approved separately with votes of 46 or 47 members voting in favor and five members voting against.

Another amendment added the text of *The Common Confession* of 2005 from Lutheran CORE to Immanuel’s constitution. The amendment (approved 48-4) stated that “this congregation accepts The Common Confession as a summary of teachings in the Lutheran Confessions.” *The Common Confession* addressed several areas of Christian teaching that were being debated or denied by the ELCA. This confession highlights that the concerns regarding the ELCA’s teaching and practice involved much more than its teaching about homosexual behavior. *The Common Confession* is reprinted on the next page.

The 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly promised that the ELCA would respect the “bound consciences” of those who continued to believe traditional Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality. A dozen years later, it is clear that promise was long since forgotten as the ELCA had adopted much of the radical homosexual agenda. The ELCA had also elected bishops who identified as gay and lesbian and were in same-sex “marriages.” In 2021, an ELCA synod even elected as its bishop a woman who identifies as trans-gender — a woman who identifies as a man.

The amendments approved by the special meeting were ratified at the 2010 annual meeting of the congregation.

# The Common Confession

## **1. The Lord Jesus Christ**

We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

## **2. The Gospel of Salvation**

We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ — a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak his Word and build his kingdom.

## **3. The Authority of Scripture**

We believe and confess that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.

## **4. A Common Confession of Faith**

We accept and uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.

## **5. The Priesthood of All Believers**

We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts he has given through the priesthood of all believers.

## **6. Marriage and Family**

We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.

## **7. The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation**

We believe and confess that the church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the church is carried out within the context of local congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.



Pastor Baer reflected on the ELCA's decisions in his report to the 2010 annual meeting:

*The 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to make significant changes in ELCA teaching on sexual ethics and to change the ELCA policy to permit pastors to be in committed same-sex relationships. The ELCA Churchwide Assembly actions on sexuality have raised significant concerns about the ELCA's commitment to the authority of Scripture. The ELCA's Confession of faith — which is also included in our congregation's constitution — states that the ELCA “accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.” Somehow, the Churchwide Assembly was able to make its decisions on sexuality in spite of the clear teaching of the Bible on same-sex sexual relations. There are synods and church leaders who are seeking to overturn the sexuality decisions as violations of the ELCA's Confession of Faith. There are others in the ELCA who claim that the disagreements are about the interpretation of Scripture rather than its authority and that it is possible to interpret the Bible in ways that support committed same-sex relationships. I will be joining others in the South Dakota Synod in proposing a resolution challenging the validity of the ELCA's actions on the basis that they violate the ELCA's Confession of Faith. I think there is little likelihood of changing the ELCA's new teaching and policy. However, I think that there may be ways of maintaining Biblical teaching and practice in the South Dakota Synod.*



***The steeple of Central Lutheran Church was toppled by a tornado as the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly was deciding to depart from traditional Christian teaching on marriage and same-sex sexual behavior. Central Lutheran Church is a large ELCA congregation located next to the Convention Center in Minneapolis where the assembly was meeting. Those who were trying to uphold biblical teaching on marriage and sexuality saw it as a sign that God was also grieving the ELCA's actions.***

Pastor Baer also addressed Immanuel's church body affiliation in his report:

*There has been discussion at Immanuel about what church body affiliations best serve our mission and reflect the teaching and values of our congregation. Many members of Immanuel have wanted to end our affiliation with the ELCA as soon as possible. Because of the*

*importance of keeping our congregation together, our church council has suggested a more gradual approach to questions of our congregation's affiliation:*

*1. We have taken action as a congregation to affirm Biblical teaching by adopting the Common Confession which affirms basic Lutheran teachings and includes a clear statement that marriage is between a man and a woman.*

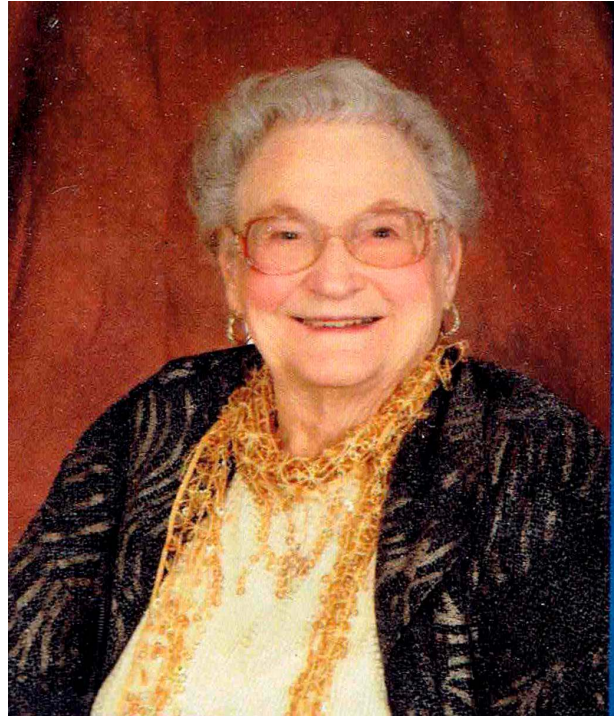
*2. Our congregation has joined Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Renewal), an association of individuals and congregations committed to the authority of Scripture in the life of the church. We can be a member of Lutheran CORE whether or not we continue as a part of the ELCA.*

*3. We have approved an amendment to our constitution requiring the pastor of Immanuel to refrain from sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage. The language of this amendment was taken from the ELCA's standards for pastors prior to the actions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.*

*4. We have decided to expand our focus as a congregation in our giving to the mission of Christ beyond our congregation. Instead of giving primarily through the ELCA, we are choosing specific ministries and missions to support. This was done, in part, because many of our members are no longer comfortable providing funds to the ELCA churchwide organization. This was also an exiting opportunity to seek the best ministries and missions for our congregation to include in its budget.*

*5. We will consider joining the new Lutheran church body being formed by Lutheran CORE. The proposed church body is to be constituted at the Lutheran CORE Convocation August 25-26 in Columbus, Ohio. It would be good if some members of Immanuel could be present for this historic gathering. Hopefully, Immanuel will be able to join this new church body and to discern if it is a good fit for our congregation before making any formal decisions on our affiliation with the ELCA.*

*The responses to the survey of the congregation and the votes at the November 22 special meeting show that a significant majority — more than 90 percent — of our members oppose the changes in ELCA teaching and policy. Even with such a significant majority, it is important that*



***Muriel Seifert (1921-2016) joined Immanuel in 2010. She is the daughter of Ben Millis (1892-1957) and Amelia Millis (1896-1972) who were members of Immanuel and very involved in the life of the congregation. Ben was president of Immanuel 1952-1955. Amelia Millis was involved in the Ladies Aid and Sunday School.***

*we move slowly, prayerfully, and deliberatively in facing significant decisions. We want to honor both the members of our congregation who remain supportive of the ELCA and those with serious concerns about its faithfulness. We also want to see what actions will be taken by the South Dakota Synod Assembly in June. We are blessed to be in a more traditional synod. It may be helpful for us to continue a relationship with the South Dakota Synod for the sake of shared ministry opportunities in South Dakota.*

*The actions of the Churchwide Assembly have caused ELCA congregations throughout the country to assess their relationship with the ELCA. Many ELCA congregations are deeply divided. My hope and prayer is that as we discern the best church body relationships for us at Immanuel, that our commitment to work together as a congregation will enable us to move through this difficult time together and to remain together as a congregation.*

Pastor Baer's report to the 2010 annual meeting also included an update on his work with Lutheran CORE. Lutheran CORE changed the meaning of its name from Coalition for Reform to Coalition for Renewal to reflect its new reality after the 2009 ELCA actions.

*I have been serving Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Renewal) since April 2008 as editor of its monthly newsletter. I have appreciated this opportunity to use my education and experience in journalism in service to God and the Church. I have appreciated even more the opportunity to work with the leaders of Lutheran CORE and to see their commitment to Christ and his Church. The faithfulness of these individuals in the face of tremendous opposition is truly inspiring.*

*It was especially inspiring to work with Lutheran CORE at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. There I assisted in working with the news media and in providing a daily Lutheran CORE newsletter for those at the assembly and for those around the country via the internet. Most inspiring was the faithfulness of voting members of the Churchwide Assembly who stood with Lutheran CORE. They gathered each morning for prayer and each evening to hear speakers, to consider strategy, and to encourage each other. They point to the reality that there remain many faithful Christians within the ELCA who have not consented to the actions by the assembly. Lutheran CORE leaders prayed that the Churchwide Assembly would provide clarity about the direction the ELCA desires to go to aid Lutheran CORE leaders and others in determining the best future directions for the Lutherans who continue to uphold traditional teachings. Our prayers were answered. The future course of the ELCA churchwide organization is clear.*

*Perhaps most inspiring was Lutheran CORE's Convocation Sept. 25-26 in Indianapolis. Here more than 1,200 Lutherans gathered to consider future directions for faithful Lutherans in North America. The gathering had to be moved to a large Roman Catholic Church because of the significant number of people who wanted to attend. Even then people were unable to attend because of space limitations. The speakers were inspiring and the hymn singing robust. It was a reminder that we do not stand alone among Lutherans in the United States. It was a time to look forward to a shared future for faithful Lutherans. Lutheran CORE organized as a "free-standing synod" for all Lutherans in North America — a way for traditional Lutherans to work*



***Confirmation 2010, from left, Adrian Karas, Brandon Karas, Pastor Baer, David Baer, Tyler Covell.***

*together regardless of their church affiliations. The Convocation also voted to study options for a possible “reconfiguration of Lutheranism in North America.” August 25-26, 2010, Lutheran CORE’s Convocation will gather in Columbus, Ohio, to make decisions about the future.*

*Lutheran CORE’s Steering Committee is recommending a two-pronged approach to its future ministry. Lutheran CORE will continue as a “free-standing synod” for all Lutherans regardless of their church affiliations. Lutheran CORE is also responding to requests that an alternative denomination be formed for those congregations that choose to leave the ELCA. This would provide a church body in the theological middle of Lutheranism in North America — between the ELCA and the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.*

*I am very grateful to Immanuel for providing the time and opportunity to work together with Lutheran CORE. This has been a gift to me personally and I believe it has been a faithful outreach to Lutherans in North America.*

In 2010, the City of Whitewood decided to improve Fillmore and Ash Streets by paving the streets and adding curb and gutter. The church is located on Fillmore Street and the parsonage on Ash Street. The cost estimate for our congregation was \$2,400 per year for 20 years as an assessment on the church and parsonage properties.

Going to Outlaw Ranch for camp in 2010 were David Baer, Tyler Covell, Brandon Karas, Jordan Smith, Dylan Arehart, Abby Grismer, Joan Knutson, Mitchell Knutson, Cully Olson, Seth Papenfuss, Desirae Pulling, Ariel Smith and Khyler Smith.

On July 11, 2010, a special meeting of the congregation voted 42-0 to join the North American Lutheran Church. The congregation also voted 40-2 to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This was the first of two votes required to leave the ELCA. A second special meeting was held on October 10, 2010, for a second vote to leave the ELCA. The vote was 48-2 to leave the ELCA. Between the two meetings, Bishop David Zellmer of the South Dakota Synod came to meet with members of Immanuel for a constitutionally-required consultation with the bishop. Because Immanuel was a member of the Lutheran Church in America prior to the merger that created the ELCA, synodical approval was required to terminate its membership in the ELCA. The South Dakota Synod Council granted that approval.

The North American Lutheran Church was formally constituted on August 26-27, 2010, at the Lutheran CORE Convocation in Grove City, Ohio (a suburb of Columbus). Pastor Baer was among the 1,100 people taking part in the convocation. Immanuel was one of the first 17 congregations to join the North American Lutheran Church and is considered a charter member. The NALC now has more than 450 congregations.

Pastor Baer began serving as editor of the *NALC News*, the newsletter of the NALC, with the formation of the new church. For a time, he edited both newsletters before handing over the *CORE Connection* to a new editor in 2011. "I am grateful to the congregation for allowing me time to serve Lutheran CORE and the NALC in this way. It has been fulfilling to combine my journalism background with my service of the church. I believe it also has been a faithful outreach from our congregation to other Lutherans in North America," Pastor Baer wrote in his report to the 2011 annual meeting. He continues to serve as editor of the *NALC News* in 2021.

Pastor Baer addressed the change in church body affiliation in his report to the 2011 annual meeting.

*We give thanks for our congregation's new affiliation with the North American Lutheran Church. We give thanks that we have been able to complete the process of discerning our church body affiliation without dividing our congregation. Many congregations have been deeply divided as they have discerned their response to changes in teaching and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, our former church body. We give thanks that we have avoided this division. We give thanks that God has blessed our faithful response to this difficult situation by sending new members to our congregation. We look forward to growing in our relationship with the other congregations of the NALC. I have been very impressed with the*



**Vacation Bible School  
Day Camp  
2010**





*Abby Grismer, Seth Pappenfuss, Ariel Smith, Cully Olson, Khyler Smith.*



*Ariel Smith and Abby Grismer*

## **Outlaw Ranch**

**2010**



*Seth Papenfuss and Cully Olson*



*Joan Knutson and Desirae Pulling*



*Church women pose with a quilt that they had made in 2011. Pictured are, from left, front row: Pat Walz, Kathie Flagstad, Kathy Kampfe, Mary Lee Geiger. Back row: Marilyn Bader, Mimi Swisher, Dianna Jorgenson, Dorothy Pulscher, Doris Richter, Peggy Flynn.*



*Youth and adults shopping for those in need at Christmas in 2010 were, from left, Marvin Hankel, Pat Walz, Lance Sandidge, Linsey Sandidge, Julie Aldren, Ariel Smith, Brandon Karas, Adrian Karas, Jordan Smith, Cory Karas, David Baer and Alona Westberg.*



*other pastors and congregations who are a part of the NALC and look forward to our shared future carrying out the mission Christ has given to the whole Christian Church.*

Immanuel was blessed with many new members as a result of its decision to leave the ELCA and join the NALC over the next few years. The new members were very committed to the life of the congregation. Offerings continued to grow as God blessed the direction Immanuel was taking. This meant that Immanuel was able to increase its mission giving and complete some projects around the church building.

The 2011 annual meeting authorized a project to replace the roof over the flat part of the original structure of the church building at a cost of more than \$15,000. The congregation also authorized the council to borrow the money if necessary.

A pictorial directory of members of Immanuel was published in 2011.

Julie Aldren, David Baer, Adrian Karas, Brandon Karas, Cory Karas, Archie O'Dea, Ariel Smith, Jordan Smith, and Pastor Baer took a trip to Chicago, Illinois, to take part in the Youth Encounter Impact event in the summer of 2011.

Going to Outlaw Ranch for camp in 2011 were Dylan Arehart, Jacob Beyer, Madison Beyer, Joan Knutson, Mitchell Knutson, Cully Olson, Seth Papenfuss, Alex Pulling, Desirae Pulling, Ariel Smith and Khyler Smith.

A special meeting on July 17, 2011, approved constructing sidewalk next to the newly-finished Fillmore Street at a cost of about \$1,700. The meeting also approved installing a new concrete driveway at the parsonage. Dave and Aaron Arehart installed the sidewalk at church. The driveway was completed by Hemeyer Construction.

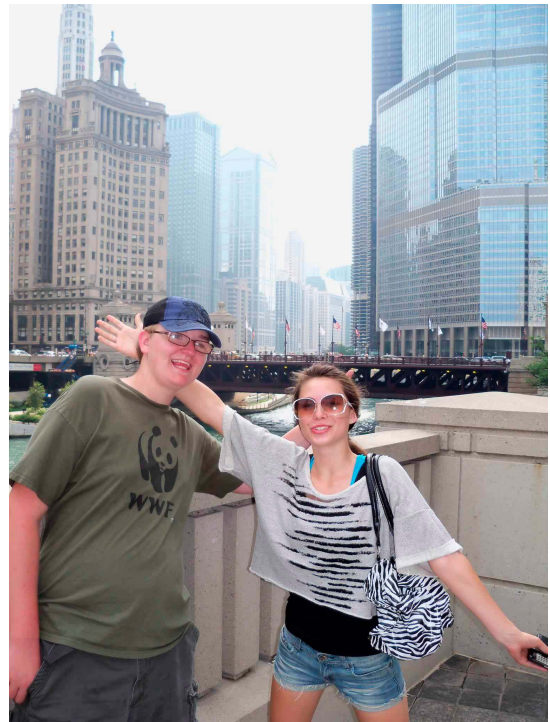
The sound system was updated in 2011. Updates included new microphones and speakers. John Jorgenson built a cabinet to house the system.

Immanuel's mission giving was updated in 2011 to reflect the congregation's membership in the NALC. The NALC encourages congregations to directly support both domestic and global mission. For 2011, 5 percent of Immanuel's offerings was budgeted for the NALC. An additional 9 percent of offerings was given in 1 percent shares each to: Friends of Madagascar Mission, Global Health Ministries, Institute of Lutheran Theology, Lutheran CORE, Lutheran World Relief, Lutherans Outdoors, St. Dysmas Prison Congregations, Whitewood Food Pantry, World Mission Prayer League.

Marvin Hankel, Pat Walz, Darrell and Dorothy Pulscher and Pastor Baer attended the 2011 NALC Convocation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was the convocation that elected the Rev. John Bradosky as Bishop of the NALC.



*Participants in 2011 trip to Youth Encounter Impact event in Chicago, Illinois, were, from left, David Baer, Jordan Smith, Cory Karas, Brandon Karas, Pastor Baer, Julie Aldren, Ariel Smith, Adrian Karas, Archie O’Dea.*



*In downtown Chicago*

## 2011 Youth Encounter Impact in Chicago



*On the shore of Lake Michigan*



*Packing food for the hungry at Feed My Starving Children.*



*Palm Sunday breakfast in 2011.*



*Choir 2011.*



***Kathie Flagstad, Pat Walz, Mimi Swisher and Marilyn Bader at the 2012 “Lydia’s Legacy” Women’s Tea.***

The January 29, 2012, annual meeting approved several projects and proposals. The congregation authorized paying down the principle on the debt for street improvements on Fillmore and Ash Streets. Paying the debt in advance would save the congregation more than \$10,000 in interest over the 20-year assessment. The congregation authorized the installation of a wood floor in the overflow area similar to the floor in the sanctuary at an estimated cost of \$8,000. The congregation also established a fund to raise money for air conditioning.

The 2012 annual meeting also approved joining Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). This was done to connect us to other Lutherans who had left the ELCA and to provide an option for insurance benefits for the pastor.

Going to Outlaw Ranch for camp in 2012 were Dylan Arehart, Taylor Arehart, Joan Knutson, Mitchell Knutson, Alex Pulling, Desirae Pulling, Grace Smith and Gavin Smith.

Participants in a summer 2012 trip to Youth Encounter Impact event in Nashville, Tennessee, were David Baer, Samantha Colvin, Archie O’Dea, Cully Olson, Seth Papenfuss, Lance Sandidge, Linda Sandidge, Linsey Sandidge, Khyler Smith and Kaitlin Smith.



*Taylor Arehart, Garrett Grismer, Alex Pulling, Gavin Smith with their counselor and cabin mates.*



*Desirae Pulling, Grace Smith pose with their counselors and cabin mates.*

## Outlaw Ranch 2012



*Taylor Arehart*



*Dylan Arehart and Mitchell Knutson pose with their counselor and cabin mates.*





*Congregation at worship in 2012*

New external windows were installed on the narrow windows on the south side of the sanctuary and new basement windows were installed in 2012. New lighting was installed in the sanctuary with the cost covered by the Clarence Rath memorial. Tony Rath and family handled the installation. New tables and chairs were purchased for the fellowship hall with much of the cost covered by gifts in memory of Andy Ridley.

The 2013 annual meeting approved installing air conditioning in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. Air conditioning the sanctuary had been discussed for many years. Roughly half of the \$16,000 cost of air conditioning the sanctuary had been received as designated gifts prior to the meeting. The annual meeting also approved a project to air condition the fellowship hall. It was decided to add duct work and a full forced-air furnace and air conditioning system for the sanctuary and fellowship hall. A special meeting on August 18, 2013, approved a split system air conditioning proposal for the fellowship hall with two blowers in the fellowship hall, one in the kitchen and one in the pastor's office. The special meeting also authorized replacement of the older windows at the parsonage and repairs to the church parking lot.

Going to Outlaw Ranch for camp in 2013 were Taylor Arehart, Joan Knutson, Mitchell Knutson, Kaden Olson, Kelton Olson, Alex Pulling and Peter Pulling.

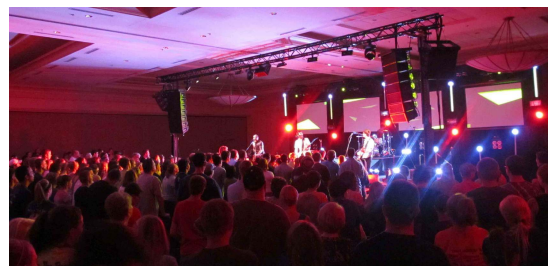
**2012  
Youth  
Encounter  
Impact  
Nashville**



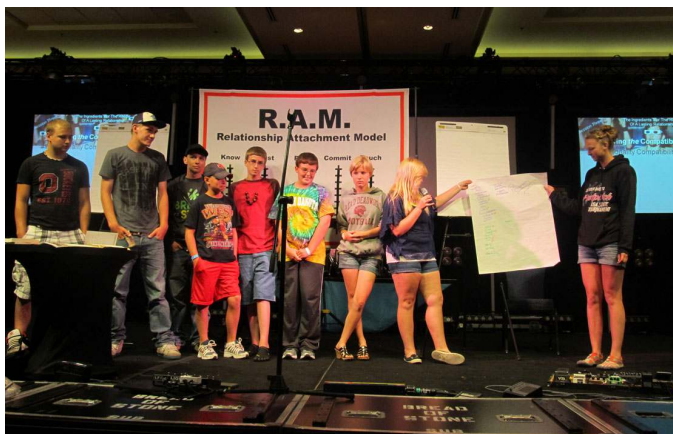
*Participants in 2012 trip to the Youth Encounter Impact event in Nashville were, from left, David Baer, Lance Sandidge, Samantha Colvin, Linsey Sandidge, Linda Sandidge, Cully Olson, Seth Papenfuss, Khyler Smith, Kaitlin Smith, Archie O’Dea. They posed for this group picture in Kansas City.*



*The youth packed meals for starving people.*



*Visiting the Grand Ole Opry*



*Our youth on stage presenting their work from a group exercise.*

Immanuel's mission giving increased from 16 percent of offerings in 2013 to 19 percent for 2014. Among the additions to the budget were the NALC Theological Education Fund, Water Missions International, and a new Special Local Mission Fund to support local needs.

The installation of new floor coverings for the fellowship hall, kitchen and social room was approved by the 2015 annual meeting at a cost not to exceed \$12,000.

Peter Iverson completed his Eagle Scout project at the church in 2014. The Boy Scouts landscaped the east side of the church and installed a drainage system. Additional landscaping on the north side of the building was planned for 2015 including the installation of rock and other decorative landscaping. Other projects that year included the installation of flooring and additional insulation in the parsonage basement as well as remodeling the basement bathroom.

Immanuel's budget topped \$150,000 for the first time in 2015 — reaching \$157,000. Immanuel's mission giving budget for 2015 was 20 percent of regular offerings, roughly \$33,000.

A pictorial directory of members of Immanuel was published in 2015.

Eight youth and Pastor Baer went on a mission trip to Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 2016. Garrett Grismer, Peter Iverson, Joan Knutson, Mitchell Knutson, Alex Pulling, Grace Smith, Gavin Smith, Nathan Westberg and Pastor Baer took part in a Youth Works service event. Their service included working in Kids Clubs and a nursing home, as well as working in partnership with African American youth on a nature trail.

The congregation received a bequest of more than \$26,000 from Muriel Seifert following her death in 2016. The 2017 annual meeting authorized the Church Council “to pursue the design and installation of stained glass windows for the church building with the understanding that costs for the windows will be paid from the Memorial Fund or from other gifts designated for the windows and that any designs will be presented to the congregation before purchase or installation.” A Stained Glass Task Force was formed to consider possibilities. No stained glass window project has been approved thus far because of the cost of the windows.

In 2016, new shingles were installed on the roof of the church building following damage to one side of the roof. It was decided to complete both sides of the roof and to change the type and color of the shingles. Tan shingles were chosen to match the siding on the gable ends. That marked a change from the gray shingles that had covered the church since it was built in 1960.

Our mission support continued to increase in 2017 and 2018, to 24 percent and 27 percent of offerings, respectively.





*Kaden Olson, Peter Pulling and Kelton Olson*

## **Outlaw Ranch 2013**



*Mitchell Knutson and Alex Pulling*



*Joan Knutson*



*Taylor Arehart and Peter Pulling*



# Annual Fall Supper

*From left, Rodney Reed, Dianna Jorgenson, Tony Westberg and John Jorgenson working at 2010 Fall Supper.*



*Mimi Swisher and Doris Richter making  
gravy*



*2019 Fall Supper*



*Participants in 2014 trip to Youth Encounter Impact event in Cleveland, Ohio, were, front row, from left: Dylan Arehart, Grace Smith, Desirae Pulling. Top row: Joan Knutson, Peter Iverson, Dylon Colvin, Mitchell Knutson. This photo was taken at Notre Dame University.*



## Youth Encounter Impact 2014 Cleveland



*Packing food for the hungry*





***Choir in 2014. Front row, from left: Kristi Wagner, Alona Westberg, Linda Beulke, Rita Shewmake, Alyssa Yuill, Peggy Flynn, Audrey Zwingelberg, Dianna Jorgenson. Second row: Shelley Iverson, Renae Besler, Pat Walz, Kathie Flagstad, Erin Burke, Lois Rath, Kim Ridley, Mimi Swisher, Joanne Baer. Back row: Darrell Pulscher, Toby Rath, Jon Iverson, Loren Christensen, Marvin Hankel, Tony Rath, Pastor Baer.***

Immanuel celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. In addition to a special Reformation Sunday worship, adult Sunday School focused on the Reformation throughout the year. Pastor Baer wrote about the anniversary in his report to the 2018 annual meeting. His thoughts at that time may also be helpful as we consider 100 years of Immanuel's history:

*2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. October 31, 1517 — when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany — is often considered the start of the Reformation. As Lutherans, we often take pride in the Reformation and in our history. But the Reformation was a failure if what is important from it is just the history. The Reformation was about Jesus and it still is. The Reformation is about the Gospel of what God has done for us in Jesus. It is about justification by grace alone through faith alone. The Reformation is about the authority of Scripture in the Church. It is about the great “Solas” — Word Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone.*



***Confirmation 2015. Front row, from left: Alyssa Yuill, Desirae Pulling, Grace Smith, Joan Knutson. Back row: Mitchell Knutson, Dylan Arehart, Pastor Baer.***

*We have been studying the Reformation — its history and its significance — in our adult Sunday School class this year. Our thoughts about the Reformation may be helpful as we evaluate ourselves and ponder our past and future. The way we think about the Reformation might provide a framework for us as we think about our own time. We can remember what has happened and give thanks for the good and repent of the bad. We can dream about what we would like our future to be. But in both evaluating the past and planning for the future we must always remember that it's always about Jesus. We must keep Jesus at the center of what we are about as a congregation and what we do. The proclamation of the Gospel is the reason we exist. Everything else may be good, but it is not central.*

Immanuel used drama series for Lenten services in 2017, 2018 and 2019.



*2016 youth mission trip to Chattanooga, Tennessee, participants were, front row, from left: Joan Knutson, Nathan Westberg, Mitchell Knutson, Peter Iverson, Pastor Baer. Second row: Alex Pulling, Grace Smith, Gavin Smith, Garrett Grismer.*



*Serving at inner city kids club*



*Cleaning trail of overgrowth weeds*



## **2016 Youth Works Chattanooga**



*At St. Louis Cardinals baseball game*



*Visiting Parthenon in Nashville*

Linda Beulke began working on Immanuel's website in 2017. She secured a new domain — [www.immanuellutheranwhitewoodsd.com](http://www.immanuellutheranwhitewoodsd.com) — has continued to keep the site updated.

LED lighting was installed in the basement and library social rooms in 2017. LED lighting was added to the fellowship hall and restrooms in 2018. Ray Follum spearheaded the project with help from Tony Rath, Jason Rath and Darrell Pulscher. As part of the electronic upgrades, new “smart thermostats” were installed in 2018 that can be controlled via the internet.

John Jorgenson built a new guest book stand for the church in 2018 to match the sound system cabinet that he had previously built.

A new accordion door divider was installed between the fellowship hall and library social room in 2018. This divider provides additional sound reduction when activities are taking place in both places.

The three churches in Whitewood began a cooperative ministry called Churches Care for Whitewood. The ministry provides a united effort to help those in need in our community.

The three churches in Whitewood resumed a previous tradition by gathering together on the fifth Sunday of each month for a time of music, food and fellowship.

The church bell was automated in 2018. Equipment was purchased that enables the bell to be rung automatically and set to ring according to a schedule. The bell is set to ring before our Sunday worship services as well as at 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. each day. The bell ringing device was purchased with money from Lonny Balo's memorial. In addition to automating the bell, the new system allowed the hole leading to the bell tower to be sealed. The hole for the rope for the bell had long been a source of water leaks.

Bruce Flagstad retired as treasurer in January of 2020 after serving in that position for 25 years. Charles Follette agreed to take the position and was elected as Immanuel's treasurer.

Immanuel's budget for 2019 was nearly \$200,000 for the first time. Giving to mission beyond the congregation increased to 30 percent of offerings.

Six youth from Immanuel and Pastor Baer went on a mission trip to New Bern, North Carolina, May 27-June 6, 2019. Tyson Arehart, Kaden Olson, Kelton Olson, Paul Pulling, Peter Pulling, Gavin Smith and Pastor Baer helped clean up damage caused by Hurricane Florence in the small town of Pollocksville, North Carolina — tearing down a building to prepare for a women's ministry center. They were hosted by an NALC congregation in New Bern. On the way there and back, they visited a variety of sites including the Atlantic Ocean; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, Illinois; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Durham, North Carolina.

A pictorial directory of members of Immanuel was published in 2019. This new directory was designed to be a perpetual directory. It featured loose-leaf pages in a three-ring binder that can be updated as new members join the congregation or changes are made in



***Confirmation 2018. Front row, from left: Paul Pulling, Kelton Olson, Peter Pulling, Kaden Olson. Back row: Gavin Smith, William Westberg, Rylan Westberg, Pastor Baer.***

families and their contact information. Church member Linda Beulke brought the idea for the loose-leaf directory from a congregation in Sturgis where she worked as a church secretary.

Pastor Baer's report to the 2020 annual meeting addressed the centennial celebration that would be coming up in 2021:

*A new year is a time of thinking about change. It is a time of looking back at the past and forward to the future. Our thinking about the past includes nearly 2,000 years of Christian faith and tradition as well as 500 years of the Lutheran Reformation tradition. It includes countless numbers of people and events that have shaped our lives and our faith over nearly 2,000 years.*

*Immanuel Lutheran Church will soon celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. According to a booklet prepared for Immanuel's 50th anniversary, the congregation traces its*





*2019 youth mission trip to New Bern, North Carolina. From left, Pastor Baer, Tyson Arehart, Kelton Olson, Gavin Smith, Peter Pulling, Paul Pulling and Kaden Olson.*



*The youth helped to tear down this house damaged by Hurricane Florence.*

## 2019 Youth Mission Trip



*Visiting downtown Chicago*



*Enjoying time on the beach and in the Atlantic Ocean in North Carolina.*



*Posing in front of the White House while touring Washington, D.C.*

*origins to worship services held in Whitewood in 1920. Immanuel was formally organized as a congregation in 1921. Our centennial celebrations will be a time of remembering and honoring the past — those faithful ones who founded our congregation and those who have served in and through our congregation over the past 100 years. We need to make decisions on the best ways to celebrate our centennial. ...*

*There is something good about remembering and honoring the past. But the most important way that we honor our past is to build on the foundation of faith that has been left behind so that the Gospel continues to be preached and the faithful continue to gather at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Whitewood and that the work of this congregation makes a difference in the world for Christ.*

Property changes for 2019 included a new church sign, a new boiler heating system and water heater at the church.

In 2020, the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic affected the world. The United States government asked businesses and churches throughout the country to close for a time to slow the spread of the virus. Like most congregations in the country, Immanuel stopped having in-person worship services in mid March. The congregation streamed worship services over the internet. Church member Linda Beulke streamed the service live on “Facebook” using her cellular phone. Members were able to watch the service live or watch a recording of the service at a later time. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday services were all streamed over the internet in 2020 with no congregation present.

In late April, the congregation began to allow members to return to worship as they were comfortable doing so. Worship services continued to be streamed on the internet. Changes were made to the service to reduce physical contact between members. For example, offering plates were not passed and members did not kneel for Holy Communion. Communion was also served in ways that avoided touching hands and by using wafers and disposable cups. Members gradually returned to in-person worship, but worship attendance at the church remained significantly lower than average. A Wednesday night worship service was added starting in July to provide a smaller service with significant “social distancing” for those who preferred that option. Streaming the worship service online was very popular, so the congregation decided to purchase equipment to enable the online services to continue into the future and to increase the quality of the webcast. The online service was also moved from “Facebook” to the “YouTube” platform. By Palm Sunday of 2021, worship attendance was nearing pre-pandemic levels.

Property improvements for 2021 included upgrades to flooring, counters and toilets in the main floor restrooms at the church. A new sprinkling system was installed for the church lawn that spring.

The congregation celebrated its centennial beginning in Advent of 2020. Hymns and liturgies from older worship books were used seasonally until the formal centennial celebration on June 13, 2021. Sources of the hymns and liturgies included *The Lutheran Hymnary* (1913); *The Concordia Hymnal* (1932); the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958); and the *Lutheran Book of*

*Worship* (1978). Pastor Lloyd Miller was the guest preacher for the June 13 centennial worship service. Pastor Lloyd Ziebarth also took part in the celebration.

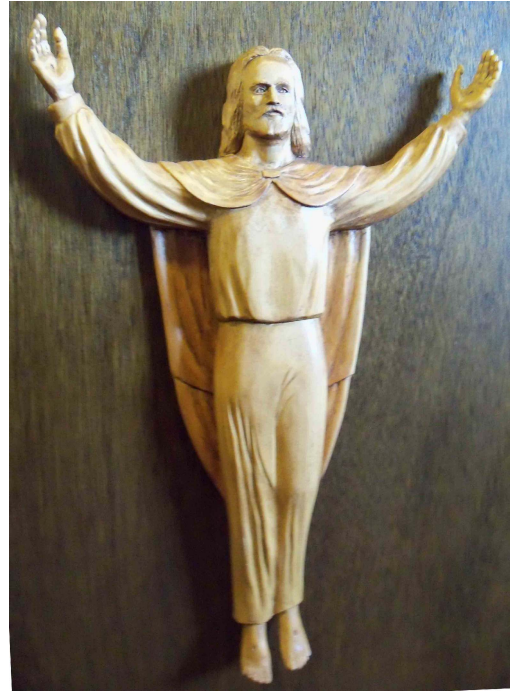
This hymn was sung at the worship service celebrating Immanuel's centennial. It remains our prayer of thanks to God for the past 100 years and our prayer for the future God has in store for this congregation.

*1. For many years, O God of grace,  
This church has been your dwelling place  
And we your congregation.  
Upon the precious cornerstone  
Our faith is built, and Christ alone  
Is still our one foundation.  
Today we pray:  
Let us greet you,  
Lord, and meet you  
Here with singing.  
All our praises to you bringing.*

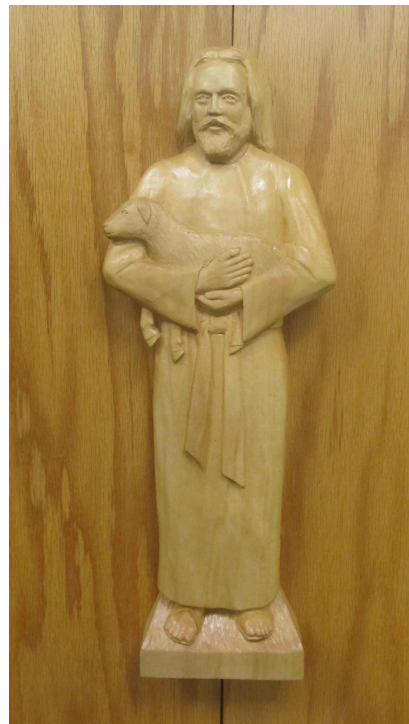
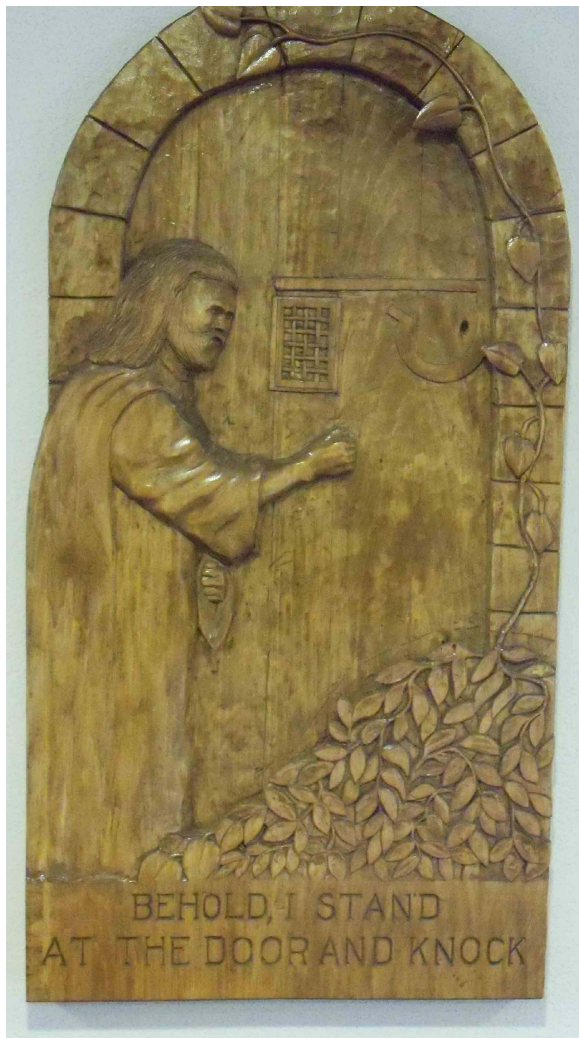
*2. Here children have been born anew;  
Their parents brought them unto you,  
Your promises confessing.  
Here many found a table spread;  
They ate Christ's body with the bread  
And drank the cup of blessing.  
Today we pray:  
Banish sadness  
As with gladness  
We adore you,  
Gladly worship here before you.*

*3. Here when the marriage vows were made,  
Both bride and bridegroom sought your aid,  
Your love their own transcending.  
Here mourners with their troubled hearts  
Have found the peace your Word imparts,  
The joy that has no ending.  
Today we pray:  
May the story of your glory  
Here resounding  
Be a song of grace abounding.*

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## Carvings by John Sogge





*New church sign installed in 2020*