



# Immanuel News

*The newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Greeley, Colorado*

## March 2026

### **Some thoughts from Pastor Embree:**

Sometimes, in the middle of worship, I have to chuckle, or say to myself, “Oh, for the love of St Peter!”, or to the congregation, “Sorry, I just stepped on your line.” What has happened is I have lost my place, not turned on my microphone, or recited the wrong phrase of the liturgy. It is perturbing. I have been leading worship for over 50 years and ever since the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal I have worshiped with the current ELW liturgies we use at Immanuel. You would think (as I do) I would have it all down, even memorized, by now. Nope.

Certainly, aging has some role in how I function, even in familiar settings. While I was never described as “sharp as a tack”, I have slowed from previous functioning standards. So I work at little “hacks” to compensate – like setting up the altar book and reviewing the flow of the service beforehand.

Yet, aging does not explain everything. It **is** a challenge, no doubt about that. Still, I shouldn't use it as an excuse for everything. I also realize that it has been some time since I helped prepare and led worship. Which is to say, “I'm rusty.” Yes, I'm out of practice, and we all know that while 'practice makes perfect' isn't absolutely true, it improves, strengthens, smooths, and makes more rich and full and successful the activity, experience and outcome. Practice prepares us for what is to come.

Two seasons in the church's calendar were created to call us to practice and preparation for what is to come: Advent and Lent.

Advent calls us to stretch our hearts and minds to begin to see what a cosmic event the birth of baby Jesus is. In that night heaven and earth meet. The divine creator and our created world are joined and through that joining God begins to 'walk in our shoes', as it were. In Advent we practice preparing our hearts and lives to receive our infant creator, Jesus – Immanuel, “God with us.” And not simply to receive, but to begin our journey with him into the “kingdom of heaven” (as the Gospel writer, Matthew liked to say) where God's rule has absolute authority. (A rule that was powered by compassion and love, as Jesus showed us.) That journey we often call the “way.”

Lent calls us back to the journey with Jesus, back to the way. “Back” because life can be hectic, confusing, frustrating, misleading. Daily living can so consume our attention, our focus, that we – well – stray, lose contact with Jesus and the way. The habits of daily living that we create to “get through the day” can become barriers to God's presence in family, friends, creation – barriers to God's presence in our hearts.

During the season of Lent we turn our attention to fasting, prayer, and almsgiving – 'practices' meant to quiet our minds, still our hearts, and allow us to draw near to God, to get back on the way. We practice removing “things” (fasting): distractions, activities, habits that are barriers separating us from God, each other and the world. (I know, it's hard to believe chocolate can keep us from God.) And not just removing, but possibly adding things that can get us back on the way. We are reviewing whatever has control of our lives (chocolate? Anger? Exhaustion? Family? Fear?...) and leads us away from God's abundant, healing, empowering, compassionate love in Jesus. Love that is manifest and most powerfully poured out, in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our Lenten journey opens us again to **that** outpouring of love and power by renewing our connections to God, each other and the world. *(continued on next page)*

The apostle, Paul, put it this way, *“Therefore we have been buried with [Jesus] by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4*

Yep, journey to “newness of life”, that's the goal. On our way we will meet, each **Sunday morning**, some folks in Scripture who sought and found the 'way' and may be helpful examples for our journey. **Wednesday evenings (early, 6 pm, so children can join)**, with simple prayer and song, we will check out some 'exercises' we might use in practice. Our goal? Renewing our connection with God, each other (family, congregation, community) and our “Heart Songs” - melodies that rise, often unexpectedly, in your heart or mind, speaking directly to your mood, situation or emotional need. After we share a simple soup meal and fellowship before making our way home to enjoy God's renewing gift of rest.

Practice will improve my Sunday morning leadership and practice will draw us closer to God's abundant, life renewing, love in Jesus.

God's peace, Pastor Bill Embree



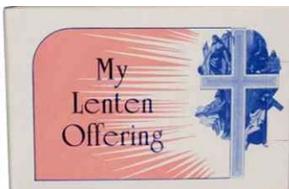
## Lenten News

### CONNECT INTENTIONALLY

Weekly Lenten Service – Wednesdays at 6:00 pm, Mar 4, 11, 18, 25

Followed by a Soup Supper! Please Join Us!

(There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex if you would like to volunteer to bring soup.)



### Lenten Offerings—2026

This year, our Lenten offerings are designated for the Rocky Mountain Synod's Veteran Servant Corp Project (V.S.C.P.)

Every month, two Rocky Mountain Synod pastors go to two Colorado Veterans' Homes (in Rifle and Denver) to conduct worship services for veterans. Your offerings will help to cover the pulpit supply and mileage costs to continue serving our veterans.

## Connect Intentionally - Midweek Lenten Emphasis

This season of Lent will give us an opportunity to strengthen old bonds, form new ones and nurture the connections that give life meaning. Based on an article found in the December 2025, January and February 2026 *Gather* magazine, each week our Lenten worship will look at different ways to intentionally connect. Each week you will be given a list of suggestions for you to intentionally connect. You are encouraged to intentionally connect even if you do not attend the weekly worship and soup supper. Whether you choose to focus on one intentional act every day for the first week of Lent or try a different intentional act every day, may you find the physical, mental and spiritual well-being that scripture promises.

### Week One – Connect with God – Suggested acts of Connection

1. Begin each morning with a short prayer of gratitude.
2. Read one Psalm a day and reflect on its meaning for you.
3. Set aside 10 minutes of silence to simply listen for God’s presence.
4. Take a “prayer walk” blessing the people and places you pass.
5. Memorize a Bible verse each day and recite it throughout your day.
6. Keep a journal where you note moments when you felt God’s nearness.
7. Create a worship playlist that lifts your spirit. Listen to it while you get ready for the day.
8. End your day by naming three ways you saw God at work that day.

### Week Two – Connect At Home – Suggested acts of Connection

1. Share a meal without distractions (phone, tv, etc.)
2. Ask a loved one for share their favorite childhood memory.
3. Write a note of encouragement for someone in your family.
4. Pray together before bedtime or before you leave your house in the morning.
5. Cook up a new recipe together.
6. Start a family “gratitude jar” and fill it daily with blessings.
7. Surprise someone by doing their chores.
8. Plan a tech-free evening to play games, read aloud or talk.

### Week Three – Connect with Caring – Suggested acts of Connection

1. Call or message a friend you haven’t spoken to in a while.
2. Send a “thinking of you” card or text to someone.
3. Invite someone to coffee or lunch.
4. Share an encouraging devotional with a friend.
5. Celebrate a friend’s achievement with a small gift or note.
6. Bring snacks or coffee to share at your next meeting.
7. Ask someone how you can pray for them and follow up later.
8. Send a playlist of uplifting songs to someone.

### Week Four – Connect with Community – Suggested acts of Connection

1. Greet someone new at church and remember their name.
2. Volunteer for a ministry or community project.
3. Deliver a small baked good or treat to a neighbor.
4. Join a small group Bible study or discussion circle.
5. Offer a ride to church or an appointment.
6. Attend an event to support a community cause.
7. Invite neighbors for a casual meal or outdoor gathering.
8. Pray over your city or town while driving through it.

Week Five – Connect with Song – Suggested acts of Connection

1. Share with someone a song or hymn that has been meaningful to you.
2. Ask a friend what song inspires them and listen to it.
3. Create a “Lent playlist” of worship and encouraging songs.
4. Visit a church member that is sick or shut-in and share music with them.
5. Use a favorite song as a journal prompt.
6. Send a friend a link to an uplifting song.
7. Learn a new hymn or praise song. Sing it during personal devotions.
8. Host a small “praise and prayer” night with family or friends.

## EASTER NEWS



### Easter Egg Treats Needed

Our Easter egg hunt will be on Easter Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. We are asking for donations of small toys and candy to fill our empty Easter eggs.

Please bring your goodies by March 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will fill the eggs during coffee hour that morning. Everyone is welcome to help.

If you have any questions – please call me.  
Janet Crespin 970-397-5104

## EASTER SUNDAY ACTIVITIES



**8:30 - 10:00 a.m. - Easter breakfast  
in the Fellowship Hall**

*Featuring Swedish Pancakes, Waffles and Pancakes*

Easter Egg Hunt



**9:30 - 10:00 a.m. - Easter Egg Hunt  
on the Annex lawn**



**10:30 a.m. - Holy Communion**

# WORSHIP

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*March 1—Second Sunday in Lent*  
*March 4—Midweek Lenten Service*  
*March 8—Third Sunday in Lent*  
*March 11—Midweek Lenten Service*  
*March 15—Fourth Sunday in Lent*  
*March 18—Midweek Lenten Service*  
*March 22—Fifth Sunday in Lent*  
*March 25—Midweek Lenten Service*  
*March 29—Palm Sunday*

## WORSHIP

The Worship and Music Committee has heard your requests and comments regarding worship and is considering some changes. To help the Committee, on March 1, April 12 and May 3 we will be using a Worship & Praise Liturgy on a trial basis. This is a more upbeat setting and will include changes in wording and music choices. After the trial, we will be asking for your opinion regarding this liturgy; likes and dislikes. Your opinions will help us shape worship at Immanuel in the future.

We thank you in advance for your participation and opinions.

## Time of Transition and the Call process

Pastor William “Bill” Embree continues to serve as a Bridge Pastor.

In February, the Call Committee met twice. On February 17, we had a Zoom meeting with Pastor Sara Wirth, our Synod liaison. During the meeting, we discussed our thoughts regarding the meeting we had on January 18 with the potential candidate. We expressed our interest in the candidate, and also the questions we had about the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) method of calling a pastor.

On February 24, the Call Committee met by Zoom again. We seem to be in consensus about the candidate, but still have questions regarding the logistics of how well a TEEM candidate will work out with our congregation. We continue to be in contact with Pastor Sara with our concerns and questions.

Blessings, Immanuel Council/Call Committee

# YOUTH & FAITH FORMATION

## *Bible Study*

Adult Sunday Bible Study group  
is using the Luther Seminary series "God Pause."  
We meet at 9:15 am in the Library (room next to kitchen).  
If you would like to receive the emailed study,  
please contact Paula Powell at [ppowell76@gmail.com](mailto:ppowell76@gmail.com)



## **FIRST SUNDAY YOUTH GROUP**

Sunday, March 1st

### **SCHEDULE:**

- 9:00am – Snacks Together in Annex Youth Room
- 9:15am – 5th Grade & Younger (Youth Room)
- 9:15am – Middle School & High School (Annex - Upstairs)
- 10:00am – Back Together for Fun & Games in Youth Room

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE! Sign up to help with Youth Group!**

We need two (2) volunteers each month to sign up to help with the young group for First Sundays Youth Group, February, March and May. If you are available or have questions, please contact the office (970) 352-3003 or Julie Elmquist (970) 371-2734. Resources are available for lessons!

# GIVING & SERVICE

## Free Little **Red Barn** Pantry

Please consider bringing shelf-stable, non-perishable food items to place in the barn each Sunday so our pantry will stay stocked and continue to be a blessing for our neighbors in need! Please just make sure your donations are not past their expiration date.

Travel-sized shampoo & conditioner, toothbrushes, and bars of soap are also appreciated.



Let's work together to **FILL THE BARN!**

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## LUTHERAN EPISCOPAL CAMPUS MINISTRY

### **Support Campus Ministry: Bring a Meal to Sunday Dinner Church**

Support campus ministry and students in Greeley for the spring semester by signing up to bring a meal for our Sunday evening Dinner Church gatherings. These meals are a weekly anchor in our community, and students look forward each week to eating together. Your help providing the food for these meals makes this time together possible. Thank you! Find more details and open dates on our Meal Train page:

<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/ynk9ey/updates/lm0dw6>

If you are able, please plan to eat with us!



# PRAYER & CARE

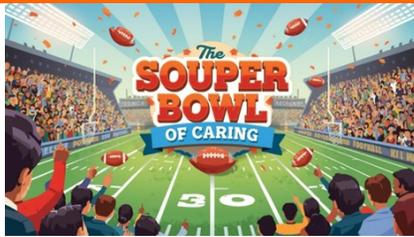
## *Always Say A Prayer Team*



The Prayer Team is here for you. If you have a request, you can fill out a prayer card and leave it in the box at the back of the church or contact anyone on the prayer team or call the church office with your request. We are keeping you all in prayer, especially during this time of transition.

Roma Arithson    Connie Deines  
Sharrol Bernahl    Diane Filipe  
Janet Willis

# THANK YOU



**Thank you Immanuel friends and family for your Souper Bowl of Caring donations benefitting our own Free Little Pantry. There was enough to fill our supply storage bin and then some!  
- Immanuel Council -**



Thank you, thank you, thank you for all the prayers, cards, hugs and smiles during my cancer journey. Your love and support kept me going, especially through the tough times. As I continue to heal, your kindness will not be forgotten. Blessings! Janet

# **CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION**

## **Audio/Visual (AV) Committee**

An audio/visual (AV) committee was formed to determine how best to leverage the grant our congregation received. Committee members include: Pete Budde, Matt Denman, Stan Elmquist, John Larson, and Lelyn Larson.

To date, the committee has met twice to outline several goals of the project, including:

- Leverage the existing AV equipment we already have
- Improve sound quality of live stream and recorded services
- Display select visual content to the entire congregation in the sanctuary
- Explore range of solutions potentially including mounted cameras, mics, and TV monitors/screens in the sanctuary
- Eliminate waste in printing (hardcopy) materials, e.g., bulletins
- Potentially replace existing speakers (more aesthetic and subtle)
- Add presentation capabilities in the Fellowship Hall

There is progress on receiving bids from a number of vendors to meet the above requirements. All estimates will consider the recurring maintenance & staffing costs in final proposals. Next step, after the holiday season, is to summarize options and present them to the congregation for consideration.

Please reach out to Pete Budde if you have any questions in the interim.

# CHURCH COUNCIL



<u>NAME</u>	<u>COMMITTEE</u>
Budde, Cindy	Secretary
Clausen, Cheryl	
Crespin, Janet	
Elmquist, Julie	President
Johnson, John	
Larson, John	Vice President
Sickles, Katy	

## EFTF – Endowment Foundation Trust Fund

The Endowment Foundation Trust Fund (EFTF) uses interest earned on the donations in the trust fund to support special needs and work of the church that is not covered by the church budget. If you have a special need in mind, please submit a request for fund disbursement. The EFTF Committee considers requests quarterly. Please see an EFTF Committee member if you have questions or pick up a request form from the EFTF mailbox in the church office.

Committee members: Janet Crespin, Amy Herold, Elaine Holbrook, Janet Johnson

## GIA Clothing Bank



Several Greeley-area churches sponsor and help operate the Greeley Interfaith Assn. Clothing Bank, located at 228 N. 9th Ave., Greeley.

**The hours open are 10:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.**

The Clothing Bank accepts gently used items of clothing and sells them to the public at a reasonable cost. Proceeds of the sales cover operating expenses and then go toward community scholarships and grants.

Volunteers are always needed. Volunteers sort clothing, price the clothes, place on the racks, and check out customers at the cash register. Volunteers also receive a discount for clothing purchases when they work.

See Julie Elmquist, Cindy Thompson, Brenda Turnwall or Katy Sickles for more information. Love to see you there.

## CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

### Council Highlights

- We officially welcomed Janet Crespín and Katy Sickles to Council. Thank you for serving!
- Worship changes for Youth Sundays highlighting Immanuel's youth beginning March 1st for a 3 month trial period. Thank you Worship and Music Committee!
- Souper Bowl of Caring was a big success. Thanks Immanuel!

**Please join us for our next meeting on  
Tuesday, March 10th @ 6:30 p.m.**

### Tied in Faith...

**Will meet on Tuesday, March 3,  
Thursday, March 19 &  
Saturday, March 28**



## Women <sup>of the</sup> ELCA

Our logo—with the cross, water and a white lily—identifies women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God; baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty, and vitality that rises out of that life-giving baptismal water. It is also a reminder of the mission of the church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please call the church office so that we can update the records

# Thanks to our Volunteers!

## March 2026

### March 1:

Greeter: Vera Sylvester  
Ushers: Ron & Cindy Thompson  
Assisting Minister: Cindy Budde  
Lector: Luke Larson, Jack Larson  
Communion Setup: Cindy Thompson  
Tellers: Marvin & Connie Deines

### March 8:

Greeter: Julie Elmquist  
Ushers: Matt & Molly Ward  
Assisting Minister: Janet Willis  
Lector: Molly Ward  
Communion Setup: Molly Ward  
Tellers: Vera Sylvester, Brenda Turnwall

### March 15:

Greeter: Vera Sylvester  
Ushers: John Johnson & Sally Stewart  
Assisting Minister: Janet Willis  
Lector: Janessa Padilla  
Communion Setup: Sue Morse  
Tellers: Linda Sample, Janet Johnson

### March 22:

Greeter: Katy Sickles  
Ushers: Katy Sickles, Juan Cruz  
Assisting Minister: Julie Elmquist  
Lector: Janessa Padilla  
Communion Setup: Linda Cruz  
Tellers: Janet Crespin

### March 29:

Greeter: Janet Willis  
Ushers: Katy Sickles, Vera Sylvester  
Assisting Minister: Cindy Budde  
Lector: *Various*  
Communion Setup: Cindy Thompson  
Tellers: Bob & Sue Morse

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Bridge Pastor: Pastor Bill Embree  
Secretary: Denise Pollard Stricker 970-352-3003  
Office Hours: M —Th 9:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Offices closed on Fridays

### Executive Council:

President: Julie Elmquist  
Vice President: John Johnson  
Secretary: Cindy Budde  
Treasurer: Connie Deines  
Financial Secretary: Bob Morse