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This newsletter has many contributors. If you’d like to submit an article of interest or an announcement of an upcoming event, please contact Ailene Buchtrup, Secretary, in the church office via phone or email. For those with email,

an electronic copy of the newsletter will be sent to you. For those with no email or who would prefer to receive a paper copy, we will continue to mail the newsletters via U.S. Postal Services.

FROM THE PASTOR

Ash Wednesday vs. Valentine’s Day

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day are two holidays we would not bring together due to theme, or style of celebration. But this year they are united by the month in which they are celebrated. Why do we celebrate either, and can each of these holidays have something to contribute to the other?

On Valentine’s Day we are celebrating Love, especially the love between couples. In schools, friendship is celebrated as kids go around passing valentines to each other to show how much they appreciate one another. Boyfriends and girlfriends, husbands and wives go on dates with one another to show that the love they have for one another is still there. It is a happy and joyous time for many!

Ash Wednesday, on the other hand, is a rougher holiday. In it we are marked with ashes and are told “from dust we are and to dust we shall return”. It is a holiday where we reflect on our sin, and the death that is sin’s result. Few would mark it as joyous, and unlike the joyful pink of Valentine’s Day, it takes on a mournful black tone.

Yet these two days are only a few short days apart this year, which got me thinking, “Are there any similarities in these two holidays?” At first glance no, but I do think they have much to offer one another as we celebrate both of them this month.

Valentine’s Day has much to say to Ash Wednesday, for Valentine’s Day tells of love. That wondrous love of a bride and groom. In light of Valentines Day, on Ash Wednesday we do not just focus on our sin and death but on the great groom who loves us greatly- Jesus Christ. Jesus loved us so much that he would not abandon us in dust and ashes but came down from heaven to save us. On Ash Wednesday we do not just

think about our own deaths that were caused by sin- but the greater death of Christ. He died to take away your sins, he died to join you in death, he died that you might be united with him in his resurrection! So, we do not just focus on our sin, death and ashes, but we focus on the great love of Christ that conquered these things.

Then Ash Wednesday speaks to Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day can easily become overly romanticized. It is easy to love when everything is fine and dandy and love itself is the focus. Ash Wednesday reminds us that we are not loving perfect people. We are loving broken people, people who came from dust and will return to dust. We are loving sinners. But we love them because Christ loved us in our brokenness; he loves us in our sin; he joined us in our ashes. Therefore, what we are really celebrating on Valentine's Day is the fact that Christ joined us in every respect and poured out his love to cover every brokenness and shame.

These are two holidays that, on the surface, seem like polar opposites. Yet when we dive deep into them both we find that they are both celebrating the same thing- Christ's love for broken people. What a wonderful thing to celebrate and rejoice over!

That is also why this year for Lent we will be going through the series *For Us* for our midweek services. We will be examining the great hymn *O Love, How Deep*, and seeing how everything Christ did was for our sake and done entirely for love.

I pray that you are able to join us as we celebrate the love of Christ not just on Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday, but for every midweek service this Lenten season!

Even if you are unable to worship with us in person, my prayer for you all this month is that you might know and celebrate how great the Love of Christ really is. It is a love that removes every obstacle, and binds with us despite every weakness and shame. So, this Lenten season, may you reflect on how Christ proved that love by going to the Cross, and trust that he did it for you.



Pastor Grotelueschen

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES



ONGOING FOOD DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

Food donations are accepted
9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday - Friday at
901 Portage Street (KLF)

Other donation locations are listed below:

Family Dollar (Select Locations)

Kalamazoo First Presbyterian Church
321 W South St

Rollerworld
7491 Stadium Dr., Kalamazoo

“You cannot tell a hungry child, “Sorry...I gave you food yesterday”.

Zimbabwean Proverb

Sometimes

I want to ask God
why He allows poverty, famine
and injustice in the world when He
could do something about it,
but I'm afraid He might just
ask me the

same question



In Our Prayers:

Homebound Ministry:

Marian Brugh

Ellen Plano

John Curtiss

Jerome Dirst

LONG TERM CONCERNS:

Rose Maxum , requested by Chuck and Amber Townsend	Susan & Gregory Fritz , Stephanie Beck's parents
Amy Stillwell , sister of Dave Reynolds	Mary Ann Massey , friend of Dotty Smith
Bob Perri , brother of Phil Perri	Craig Rennhack , requested by Bob & Maryalice Reck
John Blasko , requested by Elizabeth Blasko	Mindy Mitchell , sister of Shelly Reynolds
Kyle Reinbold Family , requested by Kyle's sister, Sonya DeVary	James Leo Brown , requested by Shelly and Dave Reynolds
Karen McDougall , requested by Sue Steuer	Jim Sabo , friend of Susan Steuer
Katie VerKow , former member of Immanuel, requested by Phil Roekle	Lucille and Lawrence Fritz , requested by Jonathan Fritz
Vicki Dilley , requested by Christa & Phil Perri	Bill Brink , Christie Sidwell's brother
Joanne Cleason , Esther Cleason's daughter	Melissa , friend of Dotty Smith and daughter Laura
Marie Winberg , godmother of Bill Bennett	Hannah Bayer , requested by her father
Lisa and David Wentzel , Sue Steuer's cousins	Jerry and Sandi McKenzie , friends of Dotty Smith
Ware Washam , requested by Brian Long	Sandy Hale , requested by Stephen Presdorf
Caroline Barkow	Jeri Noneman
Gene Jennings	Kay Hecht , John Hecht's mother
Deb —Friend of Sue Steuer	Beth Mitchell
Sharon S. , requested by Dotty Smith	Charlie Miller , Marian Brugh's brother
Loren Gerber , Sue Anderson's father	Jason , son-in-law of Sue & Craig Anderson
Deb , friend of Sue Steuer	Ruth Krueger
Sophie Rose Verile , Brindley's grandniece	Justin Nickels , requested by Justin Beck
Linda & Scott Spurlock , req. by Esther C.	Karen Petersen , daughter of Cathy & Tom Mollet
Mae Westphal , Westphal's granddaughter	Lynne Partridge , friend of Christa Perri
Thomas Nault , Sue Wagner's cousin	Merry Linn , Sally Crawford's sister
Mary Reynolds , mother of Amy Stillwell	Gus Reck , 3 y.o., Maryalice & Bob Reck's grandson
Marilyn Borgeson , Annie Hecht's grandmother	Candace Graham , former ILC member
Otto , Pastor Quardokus' grandson	Helen Roekle
Theo Yoakam , Cheryl Schreiber's great grandson	
Kim N., Kim M., Emilie H., & Sydney B. , all friends of Kim Sharp; and River Lint , Kim's cousin's baby	
All Crossroads Prison Ministry students from all congregations around the country	
Immanuel members: Gail Stewart, Dolly Bryan, Shelly Reynolds, Tina Lauer, Jerome Dirst & John Miller	



The Lutheran Hour (LHM) is broadcast every Sunday morning at 6:30 a.m. on 105.7 FM or accessible anytime on the Web at www.lutheranhour.org.

February 1, 2026: **"Rotten Tomatoes"**
 Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#) Boasting gone wrong—it's the rotten fruit of rightful praise. It happens when we forget that everything we have is a gift, even the things we think we've earned and deserved.
 1 Corinthians 1: 30-31

February 8, 2026: **"Type C"**
 Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#) In the Bible, the Holy Spirit meets us, gives us the mind of Christ, and leads us back into the world as children of God.
 1 Corinthians 2:12

February 15, 2026: **"Up and Down the Mountain"** [Guest Speaker: Rev. Michael Schutz](#) Many voices compete for our attention, but above all, listen to the voice of Jesus and hear what He's done for you. Matthew 17:1-9

February 22, 2026 **"As Through Fire"**
 Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#) To be baptized into Christ, to trust in Him, is to die with Him, to be raised by Him, to pass through the fire under His shelter.
 1 Corinthians 3:13



If you prefer more modern music with the Lutheran Hour message, a special broadcast has been developed for the AFN at

www.lutheranhour.org/AFN.

*Our mission of the month in
February is...*



**SOLID
GROUNDS
STUDENT
MINISTRIES**

On the campus of Western MI University

In 1955, while serving at Zion, Pastor Louis Grother began a weekly worship service for the Lutheran students at Western Michigan University. In 1958, Dr. Paul Maier was called as the full-time campus pastor and served in that position until his retirement in 2000. In 2001, Pastor Mark Couch was called by Zion to continue that ministry and he serves in that position now.

Zion operates this ministry in partnership with the Michigan District of the LCMS. The District owns the property and house from which this ministry is based. Called "Solid Grounds", Pastor Couch's emphasis with the students is centered on spiritual growth, fellowship, and servant projects in the community.

There are various Bible Study opportunities as well as fellowship and service opportunities. For more information please reach out to Pastor Mark Couch at pastormarksg@gmail.com or visit the [Campus Ministries Facebook Site](#).



Thank-you to Immanuel Lutheran Church for your February gift of \$900 in support of our ministry!



Happy Birthday February Folks!!

Feb 1	Gail Stewart
Feb 12	Sue Steuer
Feb 15	Matthew Johns
Feb 15	John Miller
Feb 15	Juan Salinas
Feb 16	Robert Brindley
Feb 16	Felix Mandrick
Feb 19	Maggie Steuer
Feb 20	Chad Lawrence
Feb 20	Alex Lustila
Feb 23	Jane Schley

*You know
you're getting
old when
happy hour
is a nap.*



Please join us for
"Gallentines"
Craft Day and Lunch

(Everyone is welcome!)



On Saturday,
February 14, 2026



10am- 3:00pm



Come create
with us!!

Bring your crafting supplies with you and we'll have lunch together.

To reserve your spot, and to make sure we have plenty of lunch to share, please sign up in the narthex. Let us know you're coming and how many people will be coming with you. If you can help provide soup for the group, please sign up for that too.

(Feel free to invite your family, friends, and neighbors!)

Keeping Holy Week with Children



In childhood faith formation, practicing faith at home is just as important as being involved in a faith community. Here are some additional suggestions for keeping Holy Week together with children:

- A few days before Easter, tell one other, "This is a special week, because we are just a few days away from the great mystery of Easter. A mystery takes time to unfold! This week is all about getting ready."

Maundy Thursday

- If you bring your children to worship on Maundy Thursday, invite them to notice what is different. **"Tonight is all about Jesus's command for us to love one another. I wonder what signs of God's love you can notice during worship?"**
- If you are not coming to worship on Maundy Thursday, consider washing one another's feet as a family practice at home. It is a special opportunity especially for younger children to get to offer an act of love. Read the story of Jesus washing the disciple's feet from your children's Bible. As you gently wash and dry one another's feet, say, **"Jesus gave us a new commandment, that we love one another. Just as Jesus loves us, we also love one another."**

Good Friday

- The crucifixion is a difficult story to explore with adults, let alone with children. Paired with the resurrection story, the crucifixion is the central story of the faith. **We have to share it...** When we deny children the opportunity to explore the crucifixion, we do them a great disservice."

- If you bring your children to worship on Good Friday, help them notice how the church takes this story very seriously. When the assembly is invited to interact with the cross, help the child come close, touch, and pray at the cross, (after the service if needed.)
- **The hymn “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord”** uses simple language and repetitive phrases that can help children grasp the story. Try listening or singing together at home,
- Watch a video together — a Good Friday message can be shared via video with your young children using *The Easter Story Egg* by *Natalie Ard*.
- Read the story of the crucifixion together from your children’s Bible. After you read the story, wonder together about what it might mean. Children can ask big questions about a story like this! Remember that adults don’t need to know all the answers. It’s okay to say things like:
 - *“That is a really deep mystery. This story is bigger than any of us can understand.”*
 - *“That is a wonderful question. I really don’t know.”*
 - *“Let’s wonder together. Wondering is an important part of faith.”*

Resurrection of Our Lord - Easter Sunday

- As you do your Easter egg hunt, tell your children, “The surprise inside of each egg reminds us of God’s Easter surprise. On the third day the women went to the tomb expecting to find Jesus dead, but they found the tomb open and Jesus was resurrected. Usually eggs are white and when you crack them open you find an egg yolk. These eggs are colorful and when you crack them open you find a treat. That is also a surprise!”
- Read the story of the resurrection from your children’s Bible. The great mystery of Easter is here!

This excerpt is taken from a blog from St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square, Chicago 4/2025.

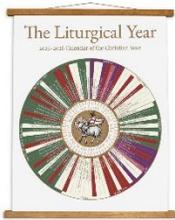
Third Saturdays of the Month-- Adult Catechism class in the Immanuel Fellowship Hall

Have you been curious about what it means to be a Christian? Have you recently started coming to Immanuel and have lots of questions about what we believe? Has it been a while since you opened up your catechism? Do you enjoy conversations about God? Then this class might just be for you! Each month we will be exploring a different topic from the Catechism, or other religious topics to help us live out the Christian faith in our lives. They can be taken in any order, so do not fret if you miss the first one! The remaining sessions will be as follows-

- 2nd article of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer (February)
- 3rd article of the Creed and the Sacraments
- The Bible, and the History of God’s People
- World Religions and Worldviews (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Rationalism, Nihilism)

This month we will be discussing the 2nd article of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. As we go forward, we will discuss many different topics and questions that many of you have, regardless of your Christian experience, training, curiosity, and tenure in the Christian faith!

If any of these discussions sound interesting to you, join us in the fellowship hall January 17th at 9:00am on the third Saturdays of the month. Let Pastor Josh know if you are planning on attending!



Did You Know.....NOT ALL CALENDAR YEARS ARE THE SAME?

We have a Church calendar that is distinct from the daily Gregorian calendar?

The Church Year

The church year (also known as the Liturgical Year or the Liturgical Cycle) divides the calendar year into a series of seasons and special festivals that reflect the story of Jesus and of the church Jesus founded.

The Seasons of the Church Year

The Lutheran church observes two cycles of seasons:

- The Christmas cycle begins with the first Sunday of Advent four Sundays before December 25, the Nativity of our Lord, and concludes with the Epiphany on January 6. The Christmas cycle is “fixed,” because it falls on the same dates each year.
- The Easter cycle begins with Ash Wednesday, which is forty days before Easter and concludes with Pentecost on the fiftieth day of Easter. The Easter cycle is “moveable” because it is determined by the date of Easter which is set by the lunar calendar and varies from year to year.

The time after Epiphany and before Ash Wednesday, and the time after Pentecost and before the first Sunday of Advent is called “Ordinary Time” or “Time after Epiphany” and “Time after Pentecost.”

The Festivals of the Church Year

The Lutheran church also observes a number of festivals during the church year. The main festivals include:

- The Nativity (Christmas)
- The Epiphany
- Ash Wednesday
- Palm Sunday
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- The Resurrection (Easter Sunday)
- The Ascension
- Pentecost
- Holy Trinity Sunday

The Colors of the Church Year

- **Advent:** “**Blue** is associated with Advent, suggesting hope. This association originated in Scandinavia, probably because purple dye was too expensive for churches to use. Some assemblies use **purple** in Advent, a color associated with royalty as the church awaits the newborn king.”

- **Christmas:** “**White**, calling to mind the purity of the newborn Christ, and to our light and joy in him. Some also use Gold.”
- **Epiphany:** **White**
- **Baptism of Our Lord:** **White**.
- **Sundays after the Epiphany:** “**Green** is used for its symbolism of our growth in Christ. Green, in a sense, is a “neutral color,” used when more festive or more somber color is not appointed.
- **Transfiguration:** **White**
- **Ash Wednesday:** “**Black** is the preferred color, since it is the color of the ashes to which we will all return. **Purple** is the alternate color for this first day of Lent.”
- **Lent:** “**Purple** is typically associated with Lent, suggesting repentance and solemnity.”
- **Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday):** “**Scarlet** is the preferred color of this first day of Holy Week, as it suggests the deep color of blood. (Scarlet is to be distinguished from the brighter color of **red**, which is appointed for the Day of Pentecost, martyrs’ days, and certain church celebrations). If a parish does not have scarlet vestments, **purple** may be used.”
- **Days of Holy Week:** “**Scarlet** or **purple** may be used for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week.”
- **Maundy Thursday:** “For this fourth day of Holy Week, celebrated as the institution of the Lord’s Supper, **scarlet** or **White** is used.”
- **Good Friday:** “No vestments or paraments are used on this day, after the stripping of the altar on Maundy Thursday night.”
- **Vigil of Easter:** “**White** or **Gold** suggests of joy in the Resurrection is used on this night.”
- **Easter Day:** “**Gold** or **White** is suggested for this day. The **gold** color symbolizes that this day is the ‘queen of feasts,’ unique in the entire church year.”
- **Sundays of Easter:** “**White** suggests the joy of the resurrection.”
- **Day of Pentecost:** “**Red** as the color of fire is used on this day when we remember the tongues of fire descended on the crowd in Jerusalem. In contrast to the color of **scarlet**, Pentecost’s **red** is a bright color.”
- **The Holy Trinity:** “**White** is suggested, the expression of joy in the mystery of the Triune God.”
- **Other Sundays after Pentecost:** “**Green** is used, to indicate our growth in faith as we follow the teachings and ministry of Christ. Some assemblies use differing shades of **green** throughout the Sundays after Pentecost, a lighter **green** in summer and a darker **green** in fall.”

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
3000 West Main Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49006

February 2026 Newsletter
Volume 55, No. 2



**Immanuel
Lutheran
Church**

(269) 345-8090

**10:00 am
Sunday Communion
Service**

**11:30am Adult Bible
Study**

**11:30am
Children's Choir
Practice**

NOTE:

All services will be
live-streamed on:
*Facebook and
YouTube*



*Mid-week Lenten services will begin on
Ash Wednesday, February 18th and will
continue through the Lenten season (6 weeks).
Services are held on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.*



*Soup Suppers will precede the service
and will start at 6:00p.m.*

These shared meals allow all of us to forego fixing a full supper and enjoy this time to join other members for a light supper and attend the Lenten Service afterwards.

This is a “donated” meal so we encourage you to sign up to bring food or help in some way whenever possible. (See the sign-up poster in the Narthex.)

We look forward to seeing you at supper and at worship on these Wednesday evenings during Lent!

Discipleship, Fellowship, Outreach, Property, Service and Worship Committees