



January 2026 Newsletter



TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Pastor: "A Happy New Year"	1
Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes	2
In Our Prayers	2
Lutheran Hour Ministries	3
January Mission of Month: Westwood Free Store	3
January Birthdays	4
LCMS Blog: "How to Keep a New Year's Resolution"	4
Pictures from Winter Social Events	6
Adult Catechism Class: January 17 th , 2026	
Mary/Martha: Craft Day: January 10th	8

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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

A Happy New Year

*Sing to the Lord a New Song for he has done
Marvelous things. Psalm 98:1*

I pray you all had a wonderful year! I pray that you are hoping for a great year to come! Do you remember your hopes and dreams for the year we just had? I know it certainly didn't go the way I expected! There were triumphs and joys for sure. Students were able to graduate and move on to their next steps. Couples became married. Promotions were given, retirements achieved, and jobs well done were congratulated. But there were also a lot of struggles, a lot of failures. A lot of sickness, and yes, sadly, even a lot of death. It was a year full of ups and downs. It was a year that I had not written for myself. It was a year outside of my control.

I am willing to bet that next year will be the same. Yes, we all do have hopes and dreams for the next year. We have already made some plans and set some goals. But life never goes exactly as we planned it. There are highs and joys that we could never have imagined that await us this next year. There will be challenges and struggles to get through that we will not have foreseen. There will be griefs and sorrows that we will wish we could have avoided. We have no clue what lies ahead to be perfectly honest.

So what am I saying? That we should set aside our plans, and give up on our hopes and dreams? By no means! Make plans, have goals these things are good and proper to do. However, do not get so set on them that you miss out on what God has planned for you this year. We can become so set on our paths that we refuse to see what he is doing. He already knows what this year is going to look like, and he promises that all things will work together for the good of those who love him. (Romans 8:28). It is he who gives us the joys that we could not have expected. It is he who gives us the challenges to grow us, and the strength to get through them. It is he who comforts us when we mourn and teaches us to rely on him for all things. Indeed, that is his goal, his New Year's Resolution if

you will, that you may know him better at this time next year than you do now. And if you trust in him this year through it all and seek to see what he is doing I promise you you will.

The Psalmist wrote sing to the Lord a new song for he has done marvelous things. He truly has done marvelous things in this last year, in the triumphs and the defeats, in the challenges and the ease, the joys and the sorrow. He is in every aspect of our lives working his wonders. Forgiving us our sins, teaching us who he is, showing us his strength and his love. So even if this year didn't go for you the way you wanted, trust it went the way he needed it to. If next year begins to go unexpectedly (and it will!) trust that he is directing the year to go according to his plan, which is far greater than ours. Our plans have temporary benefits- a vacation gives momentary respite, a promotion gives a little more money, lost weight gives a little more health. His plan is for us to make it to heaven for all eternity. That is the plan that will bring lasting gain, that is the plan that will bring us true joy. So, this year no matter what is going on sing to the Lord for he is doing marvelous things.

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



In Our Prayers:

Homebound Ministry:

**Marian Brugh
John Curtiss**

**Ellen Plano
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 Dille , 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.

January 4, 2026

"Knowing and Being Known in a New Year"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#) God invites us to speak with Him in prayer and hear from Him in the Bible, to know Him and to love as we are loved. John 17:3

January 11, 2026

"Solidarity" Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#)

Solidarity is how Christians understand their relationship to Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus, the Son of God, went where we had gone so that we might go where He goes. Romans 6:5

January 18, 2026

Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#) To be announced

January 25, 2026

"Cross Words--Words of Power"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Daniel Paavola
A crossword puzzle uses an answer only once, but Christ is the answer for all people in every place and time. 1 Corinthians 1:17-18



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.

The Mission of the Month of January is....



Please read below a letter from them....

"Dear Brian, the Service Committee, and Members of Immanuel Lutheran Church:

"On behalf of the Board of Directors at the Westwood Neighborhood Food Pantry, thank you for the gift of \$750. Just a year and a half ago, we were serving an average of 12 families on each of the two Saturdays a month we are open. Just a month ago, the average was 160 families. Then due to the delay in releasing SNAP benefits from the USDA and changes at the national level of government regarding the payment of SNAP benefits to the state of Michigan, we served 197 families (711 persons) at our most recent distribution on November 15. Your gift will help us purchase food items from the South Michigan Food Bank. Again, thank you for helping us serve our neighbors in need."

Mamcu VandenBrink, Treasurer
Westwood Neighborhood Food Pantry

CELEBRATING JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sue Wagner	Jan. 6
Ninah Miller	Jan. 11
Amber Townsend	Jan. 11
Ruby Flickinger	Jan. 15
Bob Reck	Jan. 16
Hirving Hernandez-Gomez	Jan. 18
Ellen Plano	Jan. 29

THE GIVING TREE



Thank-you to everyone who gave to our single mother and her four children this Christmas. You made their Christmas day much brighter!!



"Thank-you, my Immanuel family, for praying for me during my recent illness."

Walt Eckert

How to Keep a New Year's Resolution

By Ed Kast • January 18, 2021
LCMS-MI District Blog

Do you have some bad habits you tried to address with New Year's Resolutions? Have you already given up on them?

We all have bad habits, but the holiday season, beginning with Thanksgiving, launched us into a long season of over-eating and over-spending. That generates a lot of New Year's Resolutions about losing pounds or debt or both. The pandemic made both of those categories even worse this year for many people.

Bad habits are more tenacious than good habits. Why? Because we humans have a "negativity bias" or, as the Bible puts it, a "sinful nature." Doing evil is easier than doing good. Criticism comes more readily than compliments; just listen to public and political discourse. Eating junk food is more appealing than eating vegetables. Ever since Adam and Eve, forbidden fruit is hard to resist. What God says about our sinful nature is based on hard evidence.

But forming good habits is not hopeless. Here's some practical wisdom about how to keep a resolution.

1. **Set only one goal.** Pick the one thing that is most important to you. More than one is overwhelming and self-defeating. It becomes a handy excuse to give up.
2. **Make it a positive goal.** "I want to be 140 pounds" instead I want to lose 40 pounds. Or 170 pounds instead of losing 50 pounds. Picture how you'll look at that ideal weight. "I'll find some good recipes and develop a taste for vegetables" instead of I'll stop eating ice cream. Picture how good you'll feel by eating and drinking nutritious food and beverages. "I want a fully-funded emergency fund" instead of I'll deny myself stuff I enjoy. Imagine how smart you'll feel when you outsmart ads enticing you to buy stuff you don't need. Picture your relief when

you're out of debt, and an adequate emergency fund is in place.

3. **Set a date.** Open-ended goals allow us to kick the can down the road forever and fuel procrastination.
4. **Plan baby steps toward your goal and stay focused on them daily.** Start with a three-minute walk; do two push-ups. Hit the pause button before indulging. Before I eat or drink it ... or before I buy it, how will I feel about it an hour ... or a year from now? Cravings for sugar/salt/fat and impulses to buy ... subside if we wait them out. The same is true of an urge to lash out with angry criticism. A typical scenario is that I succumb to an impulse to buy a big, expensive toy; it stops giving me the anticipated pleasure after a few weeks or months, but I'm still paying dearly for it. The result is that I'm less happy than I was before I bought it. So ask yourself: Am I taking daily baby steps toward ... or away from my goal? Keep your eye on the goal!
5. **Write down your goal and exactly what you want to change.** The whole family needs to be on board with your goal and the strategic steps to get there. This makes you more likely to succeed with your new habit.
6. **Tell others, and report to them your progress.** Social support is beneficial. Positive feedback will strengthen your will to keep going. Willpower is a muscle that gets stronger with daily incremental exercise.

Jesus had a human side that struggled just like us. Faced with the agony of His impending scourging and crucifixion, what motivated Him to forge ahead and do what God the Father wanted Him to do? It was the joyful goal set before Him—the salvation of God's precious children! Seeing ourselves reach a glorious goal can move us to walk across burning coals.

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Just think of the joyful relief you will experience when you are out of debt, financially free, and able to give generously to meet the needs of others. Or how superbly good you will feel with a fit, firm, healthy body. Picture what your life will be like when God sees your faithful stewardship and says, "Well done!" Bad stewardship will not stop God from loving you and forgiving you, but it is good stewardship of what God has entrusted to you that reaps the rewards of doing His will on earth as it is in heaven.

After all, the most important goals are spiritual goals with their eternal ramifications. The Apostle Paul said, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal of winning the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things" (Philippians 3:12).

That's my main goal: being content and compassionate, growing daily in Christ-like maturity, wise in salvation through Christ and wise in Christian living. It involves living every day in the power of the Holy Spirit, reflecting the light of Christ in everything we do and living in the power of our baptism.

Offerings and Gifts

There are plates offered at the back of the church. If you would like to donate via ACH from your checking or savings account (through the Vanco Mobile App or the Vanco Website) or by Credit/Debit Card (through the Clover website), please scan the appropriate QR code below. A credit card reader is available upon request. Please ask an usher for assistance.

ACH Donations
(Mobile App)



ACH Donations
(Website)



Credit or Debit Card
Donations



ADVENT WREATH- MAKING



CHILI COOK-OFF



MORE CHILI PLEASE.....



*IF YOU WEREN'T THERE, YOU
MISSED SOME GOOD FOOD AND
GOOD FELLOWSHIP!! DON'T
MISS IT NEXT YEAR!!!*

EASE INTO CHRISTMAS WITH MARY/MARTHA AND THE LADIES...



January 17th, 9:00am: Adult Catechism class 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 sessions will be as follows-

- ☐ 1st article of the Creed and 10 Commandments
- ☐ 2nd article of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer
- ☐ 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 1st article of the Creed, the Law and the 10 commandments. We will be discussing such topics as; what does it mean that we are created by God and not here random? How do we differentiate between different types of laws found in the Bible? What role does the Law play in my life?

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

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH



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

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**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*



*Please join us for Craft Day and Lunch
(Everyone is welcome!)*

On Saturday, January 10, 2026

10am- 3:00pm



Come create with us!!

**Bring your crafting supplies with
you and we will feed you
LUNCH!!**

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.

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

SIGN UP TODAY!!!