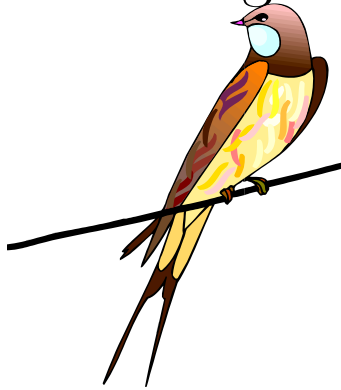


Immanuel Lutheran Church

May 2021

Messenger



Immanuel Lutheran Church

Called, Empowered, and Sent by God to Live, Love, and Learn God's Word Nuestra

Declaración De Misión

Somos llamados, autorizados, y enviados por Dios para vivir, amar, y aprender la Palabra de Dios

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From Pastor Leslie:

This week has been the Bishop's Convocation for rostered leaders in the Northwest Washington Synod. It has been a time of radical story telling. Stories from across the synod by pastors and lay leaders about their faith lives, their lives with God within the communities in which they were born and raised and where they live now. Precious stories were told about what God has been up to in their lives and in the lives of their beloveds. These stories make us all weep at the tenderness that God holds each of us in the palm of God's hands. Because the story tellers are African, Mexican, African American and Asian we had the opportunity to hear about the gut-wrenching ways racism has affected each one of the story tellers. We were caught in the upheaval of what it means to simultaneously be a child of God and a victim of racial abuse. We explored diversity in the Church from the perspective of listening deeply to the uniqueness of our diverse journeys of faith. We contemplated how our familial/cultural/denominational/personal identities and histories shape our experience of being Church Together. And following an introductory session with the Strategic Team For Authentic Diversity (STAD), we were joined by keynote speaker the **Rev. Lenny Duncan**.

Pastor Lenny is an acclaimed preacher, poet and writer. His new book, "United States of Grace" is a collection of stories from his own life documenting his experiences as the son of a Black father and a White mother, the realities of racism in the church and nation, and what it means for him as a queer man of color in the Church. His time with us, over Zoom, was deeply moving and I look forward to bringing his book to our Adult Forum this fall.

We are so blessed to have a bishop who leads us by her own example of deep listening and even deeper faith. I am grateful for the Bishop's Convocation, and I look forward to the Convocation this fall, when we hope to meet in person!

Speaking of meeting in person, it is time for us to come back together to worship in person, beginning Sunday, May 2, 2021. We will gather in the Sanctuary at 9:30. It is expected that everyone will be wearing masks. It just makes sense that because we love God, we love one another and out of that love we care for our neighbors by wearing a mask. In the same way we will sit in distance of six feet from one another. Of course, households/families will sit together. I encourage you to wear a coat or jacket and even bring a lap robe because our doors and windows will be open for ventilation. Even as the days warm up it will still be chilly! Maintaining social distance will be imperative. Church looks different in many ways, but we will gather in the name of the Triune God who loves us, who laid down His life for us and who in the Resurrection gives us new and abundant life. We can do this! The Adult Forum, following worship, will also be in the sanctuary. We will have an open time of conversation and sharing. All are welcome to participate in this open Forum.

The year 2021 seems to be the year of the story telling, and it is with great joy that we will come together to continue to tell our stories. I look forward to seeing you all in church!

Wednesday Bible Study

We will continue to have Bible Study on Wednesday nights (first 3 of the month) at 6:30 **via Zoom** through the month of May. We will take the summer off and return with fall programming. This month we will study the book of Romans. All are welcome.

WOI Gather Bible Study

Women of Immanuel will continue to have their Gather Studies on the 4th Wednesday of May at 6:30 via Zoom. All are welcome.

Community Garden

Special thanks to Dennis Workman for tilling the community garden. Dennis and Nancy are happy to serve as contacts for any questions you might have about the garden. Mid May, or so, is a good time to begin planting. We look forward to another wonderful and prosperous year of gardening! All are welcome to plant and harvest.

In-person Worship Reopening Plan

1. Pam Andrews and Laura Hookham will log the name of each person who enters the sanctuary so if there is an exposure we can contact folks for quarantine. The names will be held in a binder for ease.
2. Masks available at both doors, **so everyone is masked** in the building.
3. Hand sanitizer at both doors.
4. Sanitizer wipes at the doors as well.
5. Ron will sanitize the pews after church each Sunday.
6. Doors open in sanctuary for air exchange. (We will be cold for a few weeks so bring lap robes or warm coats, mittens, etc., ☐)
7. Singing with masks only. (No choir until phase 4).
8. Holy Communion will be distributed to congregants in the pews and taken at the same time to minimize time where masks are not worn.
9. Sharing of the peace from the pew, not shaking hands and not walking around in the sanctuary.
- 10.No fellowship before or following worship.
- 11.No hugging ☺
- 12.Maintaining 6 feet apart while seated in the Sanctuary. (Ron will mark areas so folks can easily find their seats).
- 13.Hymns will be in the bulletin for now, so we are not using the hymnals.
- 14.Offering will be at the doors, so folks are not passing the offering plates.

May Messenger Council Update

Many people have been busy, behind the scenes, at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The Council is grateful for the many things that are being done to prepare for our first in person worship service in 14 months! Thank you to:

- Ron Bruland, for all of your custodial work and for all the things you do that you notice around the church building.
- Mike, Dennis and Steve, for all the pruning, power washing, hauling mulch, rototilling the garden and cleaning up around the outside of the buildings.
- Candace and her friends Marge and Penny, for all the weeding, mulching and planting to enhance our grounds.
- Denny F. for mowing the lawn.
- The many musicians who will be providing music for our May 2 worship service.
- The Women of Immanuel who have made quilts and kits to send to LWR and thank you, also, for the flood of cards Joanie has received while in the hospital recovering from COVID.

The Council has been meeting on Zoom and is working on a “Grace Grant” for a new sound system for our church. We are excited to think that we may be replacing our sound system that was new in the 1980s!

I will be starting a Cancer Support Group that will be meeting at Immanuel, beginning on Thursday, May 20 at 6:30. Penny has created a beautiful poster advertising the first meeting. It will be open to those who have had cancer and those who are going through treatments currently. Caregivers are welcome, also.

Watch for the June date of our Congregational meeting. We welcome everyone back to our Immanuel community. Thank you for supporting our ministries with your gifts.

God’s Blessings to you,

Nancy Workman, Council President



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL (Unapproved) MEETING MINUTES - APRIL 11, 2021

Present: Nancy, Pam, Mike, Laura, Ron, Pastor Leslie, Dawn

Devotions: Ron read from Christian In Our Home —Through Christ we have moved forward into a new beginning!

Secretary's Minutes: accepted as amended with specific names of folks removed.

Pastor's Report: Add 5 Vespers to the submitted report! It was great that people did come by on Ash Wednesday and to pick up Palm fronds. The Faith stories for Lent were so good, no two stories were the same. Thanks to everyone! Next year we will welcome stories from all the congregation. Zoom could possibly be continued in the future to bring new people in.

Treasurer's Report: Ron's report was accepted as read. Giving was down but so were expenses. Pastor, Nancy and Ron met to discuss our financial situation. Only 40% of the congregation are participating in giving to the church. Once we are meeting in person again we are praying this will get better. Current Deficit is \$7,270. Income needed monthly to meet budget is \$10,390.41. A MOTION was approved to purchase a lawn sweeper with memorial funds.

Worship & Music Committee Report: We need to contact members, especially those without email, about opening up and meeting in person at the church in May. Kim will also put in the Messenger that we are coming back and whatever your circumstances are we welcome you! In June we need to provide a budget update to the congregation both verbal and in writing to show them the numbers. We may consider in September or October asking for a pledge drive. Worship and Music Committee needs to meet maybe Wednesday after Bible Study to discuss people who might want to provide/play music. We need to remind Kim to include Ushers & Readers again in the Bulletin.

Facilities Committee Report: Mike — Cemetery Clean-up was great for Easter. Now we are focusing on getting the church grounds looking spiffy. Candice & friend will be spending time on the church landscaping. Ron has compiled a list of what's involved in his custodial and all the other duties he performs in case at some point for any reason he can't do them.

Old Business: Evangelism group calls are ongoing.

Grace Grant — Laura suggested updating to newer microphone and speakers system with newer technology like headphone microphone etc. She will research the cost.

Synod Registrations are completed and fees paid.

New Business:

A MOTION was passed to have Cemetery services for April 18th & 25th weather permitting. An email will go out Saturdays before the Sunday Service to further advise whether it's live or Zoom.

In Person church will begin May 2nd. Pam & Laura will be at both entrances to list names of attendees and hand out masks and hand sanitizer. Ron will measure and check out seating for safe-distancing . There will no fellowship indoors before or after.

A MOTION was passed that council supports Nancy's forming a Cancer Support Group that could meet as a monthly event. This could also be posted on the sign so all would be welcomed.

April 11/21 Pg2

A MOTION was passed that Council recommend to the congregation that we pursue the opportunity of a Thrift Store in the Monsen Center and there will be a small group of people forming a task force. Most likely it will have clothing and small appliances only. Purchases will be considered as donations to the church.

Next Council meeting will be May 16th after Service. Pam will do devotions.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

UPCOMING EVENTS and IMPORTANT DATES AT IMMANUEL:

- **May 2** – In Person Worship begins – 9:30
- **May 3** - WOI Walk and Talk at Hovander Park at 10:00 a.m.
- **May 20** - Cancer Support Group meets at 6:30 at Immanuel.
- **Bible Studies** - Wednesdays at 6:30 - Bible Study via Zoom. 4th Wednesday is the *Gather* Study, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.



Scripture Readings

May 2 - 5 Easter

Acts 8:26-40

Psalms 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

John 15:1-8

May 9 - 6 Easter

Acts 10:44-48

Psalms 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

May 16 - 7 Easter

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Psalms 1

1 John 5:9-13

John 17:6-19

May 23 - Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b

Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 30 - The Holy Trinity

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalms 29

Romans 8:12-17

John 3:1-17

WOMEN OF IMMANUEL NEWS

Join WOI on Monday, May 3 for their "Walk and Talk" at 10:00 a.m. at Hovander Park in Ferndale.

Here is the **Walk & Talk schedule** for Spring, Summer, and Fall 2021:

Always the first Monday of the Month at 10 a.m. We'll meet in the parking lot of the parks. Rain cancels. Bring a mask, water, and something to eat (if you would like).

May 3 - Hovander Homestead Park (not the interpretive center), 5299 Nielsen Ave., Ferndale.

June 7 - Big Rock Garden, 2900 Sylvan St., Bellingham.

July 5 - Boulevard Park, 470 Bayview Dr., Fairhaven.

August 2 - Lake Padden, 4882 S. Samish Way, Bellingham.

September 6 - no meeting due to Labor Day

October 4 - Berthusen Park, 8837 Berthusen Rd., Lynden (last walk for 2021)

Also, please note our **spring/summer book reading recommendation list** on the Events Board in the Parish Hall. You'll see suggestions for great reads and you can also write down your own suggestions.

Thank you, Immanuel quilters! They sent 16 quilts, 28 health kits, and 5 fabric kits to Lutheran World Relief.



*I thank you God for this most amazing day,
for the leaping green spirits of the trees,
and for the blue dream of sky, and for
everything which is natural, which is infinite,
which is yes. - e. e. cummings*

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May Birthdays

5/4 Scott Piper
5/6 Landon Campbell
5/9 Ron Roman
5/14 Michelle Pattison
5/19 Mike Score
5/20 Bob Graham
5/23 Tim Pattison
5/27 Bill VanderYacht
5/29 Gary Chadwick
5/29 Kathleen Toivola
5/30 Shelly Culver
5/30 Helen Roe



May Anniversaries

5/9 Caree & Tom Brownfield
5/16 Penny & Charles McInnis
5/23 Marv & Kris Fullner



Bishop's Message 05/21

In the book *Anxious People*, the author, Fredrik Backman, crafts a humorous, poignant, and wise story of a group of people thrown together because of a bank robbery. But the bank robbery is

the least interesting part of the book. The characters, who seem flighty and weird and strange or just unlikeable at the beginning of the book, change into complex humans with such rich inner lives that you love each of them by the end of the story. This was one book that I was sad to see end because I wanted to continue with each character in their journey.

I finished this book during Holy Week. And I couldn't help but reflect on the flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable people that surrounded Jesus that we get to know in the Gospels. These men and women who leave everything to follow Jesus – and who end up leaving Jesus after his arrest – only to once again connect with Jesus after his death and resurrection – are (we must admit) flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable.

- Thomas who is skeptical throughout the Jesus story and who won't recognize Jesus until seeing his wounds.
- Mary Magdalene who can't recognize Jesus until he calls her by her name.
- The disciples locked in a room, afraid to go out, and finally just going back to fishing until Jesus shows up once again.
-

I mean, ask yourself:

- Would we really have wanted John the Baptist over for a barbecue?
- Would we really have accepted a woman who washed Jesus' feet as being justified when she extravagantly wasted an expensive bottle of perfume?
- Would we have embraced the woman who bled for over a decade and invited her to our book club even after she assured us that she was cured and clean?

I finished this book during Holy Week. And I couldn't help but reflect on the flighty, weird, strange and unlikeable people around me – on the news, on social media, in my neighborhood – and how I have judged

them based on a very superficial understanding of who they are and what makes up their story. I call them ignorant or lazy, bigoted or uncaring, dirty or smelly or unclean in some way.

But as I continue to reflect on Backman's compelling story of seven "idiots" (as he calls them), and, as I continue to reflect on Holy Week, (even though it is now way past Holy Week), I see Jesus kneeling down and washing feet. I hear Jesus saying, "Peace be with you." I experience Jesus embracing disciples on a beach, offering them fish, and saying, "Feed my sheep." Loving and caring and forgiving – even though these humans are flighty, weird, strange and, at times, unlikeable.

None of us are Jesus. None of us can embrace the other as Jesus did. And yet, we are called, as sinners and as beloved children of God, to hear another's story. To listen. To reflect. To forgive. To ask for forgiveness. To engage. To be silent when needed and speak when necessary.

For my part, I repent. I repent for my judgment, for my verdict that I render without knowing the complexity of another's story, for my blindness to my complicity, for my withholding forgiveness in the name of self-righteousness, for my refusing to acknowledge my need for forgiveness, and for my judgment on who God loves and who God does not love (because, as I have been taught, if God only loves those I love, than I have remade God in my image).

So I ask you, dear Beloveds of NWWA Synod, with all of your stories, how may your stories be joined into the One Story? How may your hearts be open to the flighty, weird, strange, sometimes unlikeable (but always God's beloved) people that we are called to love? What are your thoughts, feelings, explorations, attempts, experiments? I'd love to hear how you are living into God's Holy Community of love, grace, compassion, justice and peace.

As for you, you are called. By name. Embraced, loved, and cherished – in all your flighty, weird, strange, sometimes unlikeable ways. And always, always, God's beloved.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee