

# NEWSLETTER

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Earlville, Illinois

February 2009  
Donald L. Knowles, Pastor

From the Pastor:

*God of abundance, all that we have is yours. Receive these gifts and all who gather at your table, for the sake of the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The above is the offering prayer we are using during this Season after the Epiphany. It is spoken immediately after the offering is brought forward. Although the words may change from season to season, the basic message of the offering prayer is always the same.

The prayer begins by acknowledging that everything we have comes from God. These are words that remind us that God is God and we are God's creatures. To God we owe everything. This phrase is reminiscent of Luther's explanation of the first article of the Apostles' Creed. Luther writes, "I believe that God has created me and all that exists." And so to recognize that everything we have is God's, we must also recognize that includes the offerings are brought forward. We are not offering to God what is ours, but we are returning to God that which is God's.

The next sentence in our prayer, then, asks God to receive these "gifts" for God's purposes. We humbly ask God to take what is His own to be used by God as God sees fit. We turn them over to God with no strings attached. The gifts are given to God to further God's kingdom; so that the love of God may be known throughout the world. As we return to God that which God gave to us, we pray that God will use those offerings for the ministry of the church in the world.

But notice in this prayer that our offerings are not limited to the checks or cash inside our envelopes. In fact, our offerings cannot be contained in the offering plates. In our prayer we ask God to "receive these gifts and *all who gather* at your table..." What we place in the plates as they pass by us is just a token of our true offering. When we place our envelopes or currency or coins or whatever in those offering plates, what we are really offering to God is ourselves. We are, in a sense, saying, "Here, God. Take me!"

Our true offering is our heart and soul and time and talents. And in our offering prayer we ask God to receive us and use us "for the sake of the one who gave himself for us..." Our prayer is that God take us and put us to work for the sake of the kingdom, proclaiming the kingdom in word and deed.

When I place the offering plates on the altar at each worship service, the image in my mind is not one of laying down my money before God. Rather I picture my *self* being laid on the altar, offering my whole being to God's service. I invite you to see your self on the altar as well, as an offering to God for the sake of the one who gave himself for you.

In Christ,  
**Pastor Knowles**



Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten Season is Wednesday, February 25. The Ash Wednesday Worship

Service, starting at 7:00 p.m., will include the imposition of ashes and the sacrament of Holy Communion for those who wish to participate. You are encouraged to come and worship the Lord as we begin a season in which we focus on our need for forgiveness and the loving sacrifice that provides the blessing of forgiveness.



**Soup Suppers served prior to Lenten** mid-week services start on Wednesday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. and will continue through April 1. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin

board in the narthex for those who wish to share a favorite soup.

The meal is meant to be a meager one, soup and bread, so appropriate for the Lenten season when we pause to count the many blessings we have been given and think about those less fortunate. Please consider being a part of this great time of fellowship.

**The bus trip** to see *Church Basement Ladies* at Circa 21 in Rock Island, IL has been changed to May 15, 2009. Church Basement Ladies is a musical comedy celebrating the church basement kitchen and the women who work there. Circa 21 is a dinner theater. The cost of the trip is \$79 and includes transportation, lunch and the play. The bus will depart from Immanuel at 9:00 am. If you are interested in going on this trip please sign-up on the sheet on the table in the narthex at church or call Dolores Kaminky at 246-9593. A limited number of seats are available so sign up as soon as possible to reserve your space. Payment will be due in April.

### Midweek Lenten Services

The midweek lenten services will start on March 4, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. The theme will be announced.

**Why Ash Wednesday?** Traditionally, the Christian church has observed the seven weeks before Easter as a time of penitence and spiritual self-examination.

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, derives its name from the ancient practice of marking the foreheads of worshipers with ashes from the unused palm branches of the previous year. Ashes historically have had a dual significance.

First, they are Old Testament symbols of sadness and humility. Job, in the midst of all his troubles, cried out to God from the ash heap.

The second symbolic meaning of ashes is as a reminder of our mortality. Each of us faces the inevitability of physical death. Our bodies and material possessions eventually will turn to dust and ashes. This is a reminder that we dare not trust in things that crumble. But Lent does not leave us on the ash heap. It begins with Ash Wednesday, but ends with Easter. And Easter proclaims that, through Christ, God resurrects us from our dust and ashes, makes us new creatures and brings life out of death!

### Immanuel Lutheran Church

Pastor: Donald L. Knowles  
415 East Street  
P.O. Box 598  
Earlville, Illinois 60518  
(815) 246-9642  
[www.immanuelearlville.net](http://www.immanuelearlville.net)

### Regular Worship Schedule

8:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
Worship Services  
9:15 a.m. Sunday School

### Deadline for copy:

The 20<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

### Summer Worship Schedule

(Memorial Day Weekend -  
Labor Day Weekend)  
5:00 p.m. Sat. Worship Service  
9:00 a.m. Sun. Worship Service  
No Sunday School

# Senior Saturdays

All seniors of the community are invited to Immanuel Lutheran Church (located at 415 East Street) on the Saturdays listed below for a meal, fellowship and fun beginning at noon. Bring a friend!

**February 14**

**March 14**

**April 18**

If you need a ride, call the church office at (815) 246-9642

**Offering Statements** with your contributions to the church for 2008 are available. If you would like to receive your statement, please contact the church office at 246-9642.



**Prayer Shawl Ministry** - Can you crochet or knit or always wanted to learn? We are starting a Prayer Shawl Ministry to crochet and knit afghans, caps, wraps, etc. No matter what your experience level is - come and have fun doing what you love. No age requirement, no experience required, no reason not to come! If you have your own crochet/knitting supplies, please bring them with you. If not, come and share what we have to offer. Please join us on Monday, February 2 and February 16 at 7:00 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

**The Ruth Circle will meet** on Monday, February 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The Bible study leader will be Wilma Boltz. We will be studying the **January lesson** at our February meeting. Everyone is welcome.

#### **Thank You's received from:**

- Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center for our gift of \$63.00 from our Christmas Offering
- Mendota Lutheran Home for our gift of \$59.00 from our Christmas Offering

#### **Immanuel Lutheran Preschool News**

The month of February brings lots of learning and growing and more fun times together. To help increase our youngsters' vocabularies, and help promote their language development and fine motor skills, we are going to learn to say words in sign. We will use sign language just right for our active preschoolers to practice and share. Children love special days of the month and this month we have Valentine's Day Parties, Teeny Tiny Day, Smile Day, Hug Day and Chocolate Day. This is just a little of what we will be busy working on this month.



Registration for Fall 2009 classes will begin on Monday, February 2 for Immanuel Lutheran Church members and those preschoolers already enrolled. Registration opens to the public on Sunday, March 1 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., the date of the Open House. Registration forms are included in this month's newsletter. More information can be obtained by calling the church office at 246-9642 or the Preschool at 246-7069 (please call the preschool number between 8:00-9:00 a.m. any week day or 11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. on M-W-F or after 11:30 a.m. on T-Th, so not to disrupt class time). **This year for registration:**

- ★ **State law requires a certified birth certificate (not hospital) be provided by every registered student. This needs to be turned in before the first day of classes.**
- ★ **Monthly tuition fees are: \$65/month for Tuesday-Thursday classes, \$85/month for Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes.**
- ★ **Registration fee is \$25 and is non-refundable.**

If you are interested, you need to get your registration form in on Monday, February 2 so you are able to get the time you want. Classes fill up fast and the public can begin to register on Sunday, March 1.

Thank you to everyone who donated milk caps! *Supplies needed for the month of February are: 16 oz plastic water or pop bottles, cinnamon, food colors, white lunch bags, clear or black film containers with lids and small styrofoam trays.*

**The True Story of the Four Chaplains** - on Sunday, February 8, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. at Earlville United Methodist Church, the Earlville American Legion Post 549 will present a Memorial Service in honor of the Four Chaplains who gave the ultimate sacrifice...their lives, on February 2, 1943, after the military transport ship, they were on was struck by a torpedo from a German U-Boat. Learn their personal background prior to their decisions to become Military Chaplains. Hear the story of their heroic response to "Serving God and Country" that fateful night. This is a non-denominational service. Pastors from area Churches will participate. For more information, see the bulletin board in the narthex.

**President's Corner  
February 2009**

***"We must become the change we want to see." –Mahatma Gandhi***

Well, we did it. We survived another Annual Meeting of the Congregation. I think we're off to a promising start for 2009. We got some good things accomplished at the meeting, and had a couple of interesting conversations. We passed a very solid budget, and, with God's continued blessing, we pray our income should again cover our expenses in the coming year. I thank God for each and every one of you who so faithfully support our ministry as a congregation. We also had time to share an excellent meal, and some quality fellowship. All in all, it was a pretty good day.

What continues to trouble me is how few of us actually participate in the "official" business of the congregation. In 2008, we averaged about 100 people at worship services. I counted 54 people at the Annual Meeting, a few of whom didn't stay for the meal. Of the 54 at the meeting, 5 people responded to my invitation to see me after the meeting and tell me something about what they were interested in doing in the coming year. I am very grateful to those 5, and I will be in touch with you. As for those of you who choose to remain silent, please don't! I ask that you let me, or one of the other Church Council members, know what is on your mind. It's been said that the only thing that is constant is change. It is not a question of if there will be change, but when there will be change. Change is always uncomfortable at best. Our goal then becomes to shape the inevitable changes so that we become the best we can possibly be for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It will take all of us working together with the help of the Holy Spirit to do this. And, God willing, we will never accomplish our goal fully here on earth.

In His service,  
Don Sawicki, Council President

## **Annual Congregational Meeting Highlights**

- Election results:
  - Church council (3 year terms)
    - Skip Nanzer
    - John Nielsen
    - Val Norton
  - Church council (2 year terms)
    - Michelle Beetz
    - Kerry Tillman
  - Church council (1 year terms)
    - Deb Larson
    - Carol Taylor
  - Mendota Lutheran Home Reps.
    - Dorathea Wilkins, Carlene Svendsen
    - Norma Nelson & Darlene Rose
  - Preschool Board
    - Jennifer Pickert
  - Trust Fund Committee
    - Fred Kaminky
  - Nominating Committee
    - Marcia Farley
    - Dennis Nielsen
    - Judy Rosengren
    - Kurt Larson
    - Wilma Boltz
- Passed a budget of \$153,911
- Approved two Trust Fund Committee project recommendations
  - Purchase and install a commercial dishwasher in the kitchen (approx. \$4000)
  - Complete the replacement of our light fixtures with new, brighter, energy efficient lights. (approx. \$7000)
- Engaged in a helpful discussion regarding worship and worship times.

## **CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES DECEMBER 17, 2008**

The December 17, 2008 meeting of Immanuel Lutheran Church Council was called to order by President Don Sawicki. Present were Val Norton, John Nielsen, Cathy Setchell, Judy Rosengren, Linda Hanley, Marcia Farley, Dennis Nielsen, Don Sawicki, and Pastor Knowles.

Pastor Knowles opened with devotions.

The Secretary's minutes were approved as written as motioned by Judy Rosengren, seconded by Linda Hanley. The motion passed.

The Treasurer report was gone over. The motion to accept the report as written was made by Val Norton and seconded by Judy Rosengren. The motion passed.

### **PASTOR'S REPORT**

- Pastor reported that Carol, Mike, and Elliott Greer are transferring to Immanuel from Bethany, Leland.
- Stu Bloom transferred to St. John, Somonauk.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Congregational Life and Fellowship**

- Linda Hanley and Marcia Farley reported Senior Saturdays are going well. There was a good turn out in December. Thank you to the choir for leading the singing!

### **Evangelism and Mission**

- Judy Rosengren reported on the Live Nativity which will be December 20.
- Thirty-five attended the Thanksgiving dinner. There was a Thanksgiving Table Runner given as a memorial for Mary Nielsen.

### **Memorial**

- John Nielsen said there is monies to pay for the P.A. system (portable, cordless microphone headset) which Pastor has been using.

### **Parish Education**

- The Christmas Program will be at the 10:30 Service on December 21.

### **Property**

- Dennis Nielsen will get bids on getting the lights all energy efficient.
- The west unit furnace (parish hall) was not working and Pastor made the decision that heat is a necessity and got the furnace fixed.
- Gary Ohme will look at the water fountains.

### **Youth**

- Val Norton reminded us about a brunch after the Christmas program that will have matching funds by Thrivent. The monies will go to the Youth for the National Gathering in New Orleans in July.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- There was a discussion on a pay raise for Pastor. There was a motion by Linda Hanley for a 3% raise for Pastor. It was seconded by John Neilsen. The motion passed. This will now be presented in the budget for approval at the Annual meeting.
- It was motioned that the 2009 Budget be approved to be presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. It was so moved by Judy Rosengren and seconded by Dennis Nielsen. The motion was approved.
- A motion to approve the Annual Meeting agenda was made by Dennis Nielsen and seconded by Linda Hanley. The motion passed.

The Annual Meeting will be on January 18th. A dinner will follow the meeting.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Judy Rosengren. It was seconded by Dennis Nielsen. The motion carried.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marcia Farley, Secretary

## February Worship Assistants

Job	8:00 a.m. Worship Service	10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Acolyte	Molly Torman	Carrissa Miller
Lector	Judy Rosengren	Betty Grimm
Greeters: (2/1)	Sam & Judy Schlesinger	Al & Judy Ohlson
(2/8)	Elwood & JoAnn Kidd	Kurt & Deb Larson
(2/15)	Kerry & Deb Tillman	Marge Cantlin
(2/22)	Adam & Carrie Browder	Bryan & Melissa Sanford
Ushers	Kurt Larson & Carol Taylor	Kathy Beuster & Michael Beuster
Communion Asst. (2/1)	John Boltz	Kathy Beuster
(2/22)	John Nielsen	Skip Nanzer
Ash Wednesday (2/25)	Don Sawicki	
Offering Counters	Linda Hanley, Norma Nelson and Fritz Nelson	
Altar Guild	Louise Ketchum and Kathy Beuster	

