



# The Immanuel Herald

Publication of Immanuel United Church of Christ

May 2026

## Pastor's Corner

### A Message from Pr. MaryBeth

"In response to all he has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good.

Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near."

~ *Hebrews 10:24-25*

Many of us remember the days when the whole family was in church at least twice a week. As a Lutheran, we were in church each Sunday morning for Sunday School, worship and, of course, treats afterward. Then, we were all there every Wednesday evening starting with confirmation class, Bible study and choir practice. As kids, we got to see our friends from other schools and by high school, at worship, we all sat together in the back pew. We kept up with the liturgy, but we also made up new words to the hymns and got the giggles laughing at our own humor, hoping not to get caught. The pastor was an old-school German preacher, Rev. Schlachtenhaufen, who gave long (and boring) sermons, but we kept coming back. Not because our parents "made us" but because it meant we belonged to a community of care.



My hope for folks at Immanuel is that you know you belong to a community of care. Together, we rejoice in God's grace, peace and in the bread and cup of communion; we trust one another to share both joys and concerns for family, neighborhood, the nation and this earth. Immanuel is called to be a safe place for everyone, even for kids like me who'd rather sit in the back and make up new words to old hymns, who doze into parts of a sermon that seem irrelevant, boring, even challenging.

The writer of the New Testament letter to the Hebrews urges: "Let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and doing good. Let us not neglect our church meetings" to encourage one another, especially now. Life-long and new to Immanuel, visitor and every-now-and-then at Immanuel: as Pastor, I hope you always find your belonging in this place.

*As always, your friend in Christ,  
Pr. MaryBeth*

## President's Message

Please, allow me to share this story with you. It is my off chance meeting with a cat in need and what she taught me.

Heading into work one evening, I stopped at the local PetSmart to pick up grub for the group back home. I entered and a rescue group (Animal Care League) was having an adoption event, what I saw from my vantage was the rear end of a cat scrunched against the back of the cage. Immediately, I knew I had to rescue her.

I spoke with the rep and found out the cat was dropped off between the closed clinic's door anonymously. The cat was found to be in critical need of medical help as she was very abused. The clinic brought the cat back to health and was now looking for a home. I said, I want her BUT I cannot pick her up till the morning. He said I could get her at Sunday's event. I got the address and did.

I brought Bonnie home (Bon Bon to me) and she hissed and spit all the way. I set the carrier down at home to let the other cats meet her. Bonnie hissed and spit at them. The other cats stepped back and sat down, they let her adjust to them, which eventually happened. I too, let Bonnie adjust at her own pace which was very slow: much hissing and spitting. I allowed Bonnie to come to me when she got ready.



One day, Bonnie was laying on the bed. I stood gently talking to her, I reached out to touch her and she instantly started hissing and baring her teeth and I pulled back. It was then, I looked in her eyes. I did not see hatred, no, I saw fear.

Here is what I did. I talked gently to her. I did, I said calmly I'm not going to hurt you and you don't wish to hurt me. And as I talked I gently reached my hand right by her nose and let her sniff. She did and gave me a lick.

**Bon Bon** and I became inseparable for the rest of her days. Bonnie never did learn to purr. When she was happy it was a low hissing and spitting instead. But, in our hearts, we understood each other.

What did Bonnie teach me? Bonnie was scared, she was lost. Coming from an unknown abused past and now in an unknown world frightened and perhaps, looking for kindness. I read that in her eyes and gave her that kindness all the while Bonnie was giving me her kindness back in spades.

If one person and an animal can generate that much love, consider, how much Love and Kindness, we, together, the congregation of Immanuel can create.

Bob O

A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself.

~ Proverbs 11:17 ~

## Worship & Friendship at Immanuel MAY 2026

Sun. May 3, 10am: Worship, Communion

Thurs. May 7: National Day of Prayer

Sun. May 10, 10am: Worship  
Joyful Noise; Mothers' Day

Mon. May 11, 7pm: Council, Zoom

Sun. May 17, 10am: Worship, Communion

Sun. May 24, 10am: Worship  
Pentecost! Wear Red to Church  
'Strengthen the Church' offering

Sun. May 31, 10am: Worship  
Trinity Sunday

## Kind Hearts are the Gardens

Kind hearts are the gardens,

Kind thoughts are the roots,

Kind words are the flowers,

Kind deeds are the fruits.

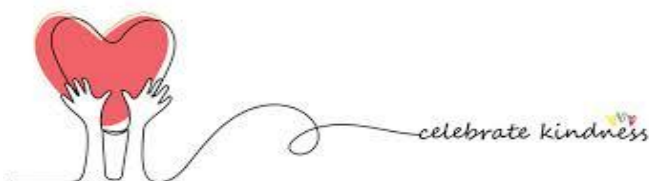
Take care of your garden,

And keep out the weeds,

Fill it with sunshine;

Kind words and kind deeds.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



# Kindland

JUST BE ♥ KIND®

There are 250 days until December 31.

The Kindness Project is co-sponsored  
by the United Church of Christ.

250 Days of Kindness.

July 4, we commemorate the 250th  
birthday of the United States!

When asked what the greatest  
commandment is, Jesus said,  
the first is to love God and the second  
is to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Kindness is love in action.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Because of a tornado, our neighbors in  
**Kankakee** suffered great loss to their  
homes, and to a local church,  
St. John's UCC. Immanuel can help  
through the 250 Days of Kindness!  
Making a donation to help St. John's  
is one way to help.

The hope is to fill America with the  
message of kindness that is always  
our shared strength.

There are many ways to show kindness:  
ideas are available on the bulletin board  
and the many fliers in the Narthex.

**HOW CAN WE SHARE OUR ACTIONS AND  
OFFER NEW IDEAS?**

**Try a Few of These Suggestions**

- \*Write a Thank You Note
- \*Sit with someone sitting alone
- \*Say something kind to someone you've  
never spoken to
- \*Make a card or  
cupcake for someone sick or recovering
- \*Start a Gratitude jar
- \*Walk with a  
friend
- \*Shop a local-owned store & say  
"Thank You"

## The Garden

On April 8, Sue Hickerson spent numerous hours weeding our garden in preparation of the four yards of mulch that was arriving the next day.



Pictured from top to bottom is Ernie Kopp, John Ptak, Sue Ptak, Pedro Barrios, Brad Stone and Deb Venhuizen awaiting the mulch delivery on April 9.



*Working together can  
lighten the load, strengthen  
the faith, and reflect God's  
love*



*A special  
Thanks to  
Jim Harris  
for being our  
barista*



**Please Keep These Families in your Prayers:**

Rosemary Davidson      Pam Gross      Christine Hickerson  
Jim O'Toole      Karen Wyka      Lois Murphy  
Jackie Moline      Jorrie Pitts      Gary Hickerson  
Samantha Hickerson      Shirly Mikolaitis and family  
Allen Eriksen, Diane Eriksen, Linda Barrios



**HONOR FLIGHT**

Wishing our own **James Harris** safe journey as he takes to the skies on **May 20** for the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C.

Jim served in the United States Marine Corps from 1958 to 1964.

One of Jim's biggest memories is of having been based in Hawaii at the time it became the 50th state. (Wow!)

Everyone, please congratulate Jim on his service and upcoming journey. **Well done, Jim!**

**CROSS KEYS SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE**

One of the students of our Shared Space Partner, Cross Keys, won a world-wide award and recognition at the Annual International competition in Schaumburg.

Sara won 22nd in all the world!



**All of us Have a Voice as Citizens and Advocates of Love and Kindness.**

Some of us join a rally, some can volunteer for a cause. All of us can be informed and use our voices to call our National Representative and/or Senator. The **United States** Capitol switchboard can be reached at **(202) 224-3121**.

Tell your zip code, get connected, say your concern in brief terms.

**Illinois** Capitol Switchboard: **(217) 782-2000** or **(312) 814-3500**



On March 25, 2025 our church lost a **matriarch, Dolores Eriksen**. Dolores had been the Sunday School Teacher to quite a few present day members of Immanuel. What an amazing woman and family. In 1979, when Americans left the USA they would travel to England, France, Italy ~ but not Allen and Dolores: they went to Egypt.

Only **0.09%** of the **American**

population traveled to Egypt in 1979. In 1985 they traveled to China which has always been a country I wanted to visit during my teaching years. Glasses were raised and a toast was given to Dolores and to Art Busse whose birthday was on April 1.



Instead of flowers the family asked that donations be made to Immanuel.



## Do you have a graduate to celebrate this spring?

Kindergarten, Grammar School, High School,  
Trade School, College, Grad School

Immanuel would like to honor your loved ones, too!

Share a photo and a brief note for the bulletin board. We will remember them at worship **June 7<sup>th</sup>**

June 7<sup>th</sup> is also **Confirmation** Sunday for **Finn Taylor**



## MISSION CARE AND MEMBERSHIP ~ May and June

**Feed My Starving Children** in Aurora on **June 20, 2026**.

Our time for a **group of 20** has been reserved at **11:30am**.

Meet at the church to carpool.



We always have more fun than one would think packing Manna Packs to be distributed to hungry children around the world.



At an event last year we helped fill 81 boxes of meals: 17,496 meals, enough to feed 48 kids for a year! We fill our hearts with gratitude that we have plenty and can help those who don't. **Sign up to go:** on the bulletin board and/or make donations to Immanuel UCC, designated to FMSC.

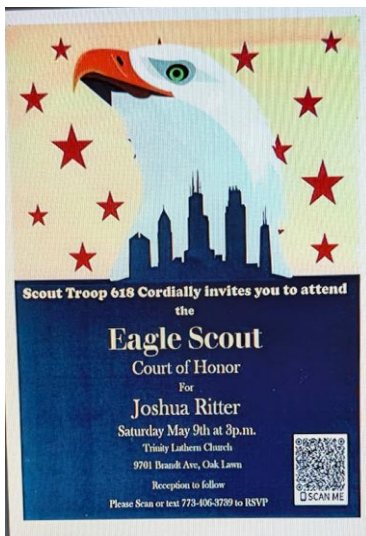
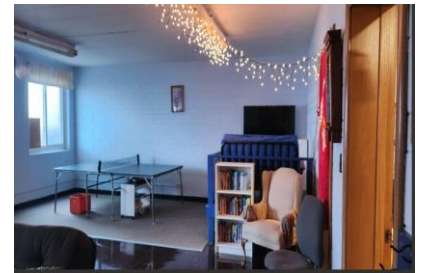
## Immanuel has a new Eagle Scout.

**JOSHUA RITTER** achieved the rank of Eagle Scout on December 22, 2025. For his Eagle project, he revitalized an unused classroom at Immanuel, transforming it into a welcoming youth room. His goal was to create a space where young people can gather, relax, and enjoy themselves.

### Before



**AFTER** - What a change, very warm and inviting now.



Joshua's Eagle  
**Court of Honor**  
will take place on  
**May 9<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 pm** at  
Trinity Lutheran  
Church.  
**9701 Brandt Ave,**  
**Oak Lawn.**



### ANOTHER EAGLE SCOUT IN THE RITTER FAMILY!

Maggie Ritter's Eagle Scout project was to redevelop the pre-school playground into a lovely **Community Garden** with veggies and flowers! She even built two garden benches for taking a shady rest after planting, weeding, watering and at the end of summer, for harvesting.

**This is a Community Garden!** Immanuel and neighbors are invited to participate and benefit: after all, Maggie is in college now!



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**May 2026**