



The Immanuel Herald

Publication of Immanuel United Church of Christ

October 2026

Pastor's Corner

A Message from Pr. MaryBeth

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God will guard your hearts. ~ *Philippians 4:6-7*

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ~ *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Grief and Thanksgiving: Odd Companions

Most of us have experienced hardships, challenges, the loss of a loved one, and the last thing we may think of is gratitude. As the letter to the Thessalonians says, we are to give thanks in all circumstances! That sounds absurd if not unrealistic. Yet, there it is: gratitude. Grace, favor, good will, thankfulness. Strange as it may seem to some, when I am feeling sad and missing my late husband, I try to remember music we enjoyed, a happy event we shared, or something funny that reminds me of him. All of a sudden, a smile moves across my face and a thought of thanksgiving warms my heart. I am thankful for the years and joys we had. Grief and thanksgiving are odd companions, but companions still.



In spite of, or rather because of, a comforting picture of thanksgiving in the midst of grief, grief still lingers. The communities of faith at Philippi and in Thessalonica experienced persecution and hardship. The book of the Acts of the Apostles tells us each gathering of faithful suffered both personal and communal sorrow and even violence. And yet, as St. Paul writes his letters to them from a Roman jail cell, he tells them not to be anxious, to bring every request, every request, to God.

Just as those early Christians did, we can find the peace of God that will guard our hearts with faith, hope and joy ~ even along with the odd companions of grief and thanksgiving. Know that each one of you is a beloved child of God, loved in the midst of any struggle or challenge and for that we are thankful.

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

President's Message

If only you believe like I believe (If only you believe like I believe), we'd get by. Most already know, but, for those who may not, August was not very kind to me. Thankfully, I am on the mend. Of course, modern medicine played its hand. This goes beyond medicine to prayers.

After a lifetime of good health, my system decided to say "lets catch up for lost time." I bite into a tuna sub and instantly I feel one of my teeth crumble and become part of the sandwich. I got a dental appointment for the same day and then had to wait a week for the removal. Shortly after that, the nasty flu-like symptoms came and kick me in the gut. Still recovering from that, my annual Dr appointment to which at the end, the Dr said, we need to biopsy that bump on your head and a week later heard the "c" word...

Knowing very little of skin cancer and not wanting to visit Dr Google, I followed my Doctor's advice and went to the dermatologist who removed it and gave me a clean bill of health.

During that time my mind was racing with more what ifs and worries and frets than anyone should have. My number one main concern was for my cat, Loki. Loki came from a fur-ever home whose owner passed. After months in the shelter, did he come here just to be put in that position again? I prayed. Yes, I prayed for my health, and strength to give Loki a home. I prayed and then one day...



I went out to my car, I glanced up at my dying tree and on branches that have been bare for years were tiny leaves popping out. I stood and just gazed at them in awe. But wait, there's more... For years I have had planters I put out in spring and inside for the winter. One year a weed moved in with the geranium. I said fine and kept it. This spring, both the geranium and weed stayed dormant. Being lazy, I left the pot inside and just occasionally water it. Now in my hour of need, both after a long dormant summer, the geranium and the weed are alive and blooming!

Some will say, "so?" Others will say, "Ho Hum." But I accept these as signs that God has answered my (our) prayers. God has given me the sign, that Yes, all will be fine, trust in me. What better place can one give thanks and trust in God, than that. Immanuel. If only you believe in miracles, so do I. I BELIEVE!

BobO

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid?
Do you still have no faith?"

Mark 4:40

Worship & Friendship at Immanuel

OCTOBER 2026

Sun. Oct. 4, 10am: Worship, Communion
Adult Class, 11-11:45am

Sun. Oct. 11, 10am: Worship, *Joyful Noise*
Adult Class, 11-11:45am

Mon. Oct. 12, 7pm: Council, Zoom

Sun. Oct. 18, 10am: Worship, Communion
Annual Budget Meeting

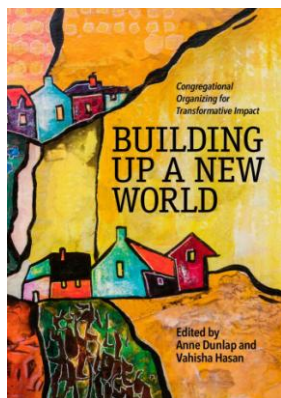
Sun. Oct. 25, 10am: Worship
Adult Class, 11-11:45am

~ Looking Ahead ~

Sun. Nov. 1, 10am: Worship, Communion
All Saints Sunday, Totenfest

Adult Bible Study ~ 6 sessions

October 4-25, November 8-15



Building Up
a New World

edited by Anne Dunlap
& Vahisha Hasan

After worship in the
Parlor, 11-11:45am.
Bring refreshments!

- White Supremacy and the Structure of Oppression; Isaiah 58
- Organizing Congregations for Impact; Luke 10:1-9
- Building a Just Economy; I John 3:17; Leviticus 25; Deut. 15; James 1:14-17
- Community Safety: An Incarnational Practice of Vulnerability; Matthew 5:21-26; I Corinthians 6:1-8
- Living Into New Solidarities: Mutual Aid as Gospel Practice; Matthew 14:15-21, 15:32-39; Mark 6:30-44, 8:1-9; Luke 9:11-17; John 6:1-13
- Resisting White Nationalism: Antifascism in the Way of Jesus; James 2:8-9, 14

MISSION, CARE & MEMBERSHIP

September & October



New toys, coloring & puzzle books, crayons & markers, playdoh, dolls, fidget toys, cars or trucks, Uno cards, \$15 or less gift cards, donations.

All Ages: Toddler to Teen

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November & December



School Children
of Evergreen Park

Warm Clothing: Hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, sweatshirts/pants, warm socks, donations.

Sizes: Kindergarten ~ 5th Grade

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MCM Delivered Much Appreciated
School Supplies and over \$500 to
Southeast Elementary School



Front row: Three Fifth Graders
2nd row, left to right: Sue Ptak, Jane Feurer,
Principal Kasprowicz, Pr. MaryBeth, Audrey Brown

Thank You All for Donating and Caring!

Please Keep These Families in your Prayers:

Rosemary Davidson	Pam Gross	Christine Hickerson
Jim O'Toole	Karen Wyka	Lois Murphy, family
Jackie Moline	Jorrie Pitts	Gary Hickerson
Samantha Hickerson	Shirley Mikolaitis, family	
Bruce Venhuizen	Allen Eriksen, Diane Eriksen, Linda Barrios	
Sue Ptak	Betty and Ken Engemann, family	



Hot Shots Basketball is Back for its 32nd year!

The 2026 season begins **Saturday, October 17**, and we'd love your help with concessions.

Please consider signing up for a Saturday morning shift, between 8am-12noon, from Oct 17 through Dec 12.

Your help is appreciated and helps to make Fall Ball a success for all of our young players families and our Church!



Thank you for volunteering and supporting Hot Shots!

Sue and Gary Hickerson
Sue and John Ptak



TOTENFEST

All Saints Sunday, Nov. 1st

Immanuel remembers loved ones who have died in the year since Nov. 1, 2025. All are invited to submit the names, dates and relationships of loved ones they wish to honor.

Within the worship service, we read the names of those who passed away in the previous year, toll memorial bells, and light a candle to remember their light in our lives.

Similar to the Mexican observance of El Día de los Muertos, Day of the Dead, Totenfest or Totensonntag is the German for "Festival for the Dead."

It is a Protestant Christian religious holiday dedicated to remembering our loved ones.

Look Who Came to Live in My Garden!

Up-front and Personal: Photo by Debbie Venhuizen

Symbolic Meanings of Butterflies

Transformation: Butterflies are seen as a representations of change, encouraging individuals to embrace their own metamorphosis.

Hope and Resilience: Butterflies symbolize hope during difficult times, reminding us that beauty can emerge from struggle.

Spiritual Journey: In many cultures, butterflies are associated with the spirit's journey after death, symbolizing rebirth and the continuation of life.

Freedom: Their ability to fly freely represents personal freedom and the pursuit of one's true self.





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