



**IMMANUEL**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# The Image

February 2024



## 2023 Pastor's Annual Report

### You are the light of the world!

*"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." -Jesus (Matthew 5:14-16)*

This past year has been a year of light. Our worship and learning began the year focused on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. We used this pivotal teaching as a way to frame our faith lives and the church year. Jesus proclaims in the sermon: Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, and the peacemakers. Jesus also proclaims: You are the light of the world! You are God's light shining in this very world. Don't you dare to hide that beautiful light! In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gives us instructions to forgive others and to love our enemies. This powerful message inspires our faith lives and challenges us to be peacemakers in the world through love of God and neighbor.

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORTS

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## 2023 Pastor's Annual Report cont.

In the midst of this learning, we did the work of church and we practiced living out our faith in our daily lives. I will share some pastoral highlights of the past year.

We began the year by raising \$3000 in cholera relief for Malawi which was added to the Synod's campaign. In Lent 2023, we shared in ministry with other ELCA churches in Eau Claire through the round robin preaching and Holden Evening Prayer. Our theme, "In Community" brought us together as a wider church community. Our youth focused on spiritual practices during Lent and our senior Bible study participated in the ELCA World Hunger Lenten study. Our JOF learned about the Sacrament of communion through classes I taught and celebrated the milestone at Holy Week Dinner Church.

In April we confirmed 8 ninth grade students! It was a wonderful celebration of baptism. We also celebrated the XZY milestone with our 85 and older adults. We are so blessed at Immanuel to be able to walk alongside people in all ages and stages of their faith journeys.

Our praise team led by Tammie Delveaux, once again, led Praise in the Park in collaboration with other Eau Claire ELCA churches. I preached in the park about the parables of Jesus and the kingdom of God. Throughout the summer we raised over \$5000 for community partners at our Praise in the Park services. This is an incredible way we were able to be a public witness and light to our community.

Over the summer we saw a transition in our **office staff** as we bid farewell to Grace Olson and welcomed Dee Schlieve as our new office administrator. Grace Olson is doing well at Wartburg Seminary and we continue to support her as her home congregation. Dee has done an excellent job taking over the position and coordinating such ministry as: membership records, worship and service volunteers, creating worship slides, and managing other office, secretarial, and church duties. You can say hi to Dee during our current Immanuel office hours, which are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Sandy LaValley served as communication administrator maintaining the website, Eblast, and our monthly newsletter, The Image. Make sure you are signed up to receive our weekly emails!

The summer also brought excitement as we hosted VBS for elementary students, and Summer Stretch for Middle School students at Immanuel. Alyssa took the high school group on a trip as well. As we kicked off our fall ministry we were excited to welcome over 30 middle school students to the confirmation program and 17 teens joined the Youth Gathering Team for July of 2024. Our WoW worship and learning experienced new energy and participation with worship averaging around 70 people every week! We are currently planning for the upcoming High School Youth Gathering in New Orleans with the high school youth group. Our theme is **Created to Be** and features the daily themes of: Brave, Authentic, Disruptive, Free, and Disciples. We look forward to diving into these themes for 2024 as a congregation as well. Our upcoming Lenten round robin will follow the Gathering theme and our teens are also studying them in their trip meetings.

## 2023 Pastor's Annual Report cont.

We celebrated Malawi Sunday in October as we heard from our Immanuel participants Gabe, Linda, and Deacon Laura, who traveled with the synod visiting both our partners in Zomba and other ministries and churches in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi. Our ZIP team is continuing to raise funds to hopefully bring a team of visitors from Malawi to Eau Claire in 2024. We will soon be participating in the synod's drive to raise money for wells in Malawi. In November, we celebrated Indigenous People's Sunday, led by Pastor Sara Bishop, our Synod Minister. We continue to be open to discerning where God is leading us in racial justice and reconciliation work with our neighbors.

Our council and leadership rejoiced as our giving and stewardship increased in 2023. We continue to be incredibly grateful to the people of Immanuel for supporting this ministry with your financial and spiritual gifts. We are blessed! We are looking for new council members to serve for the new term. We are also looking for three delegates to attend the Synod Assembly this year which will be held on June 7th & 8th at the UWEC Davies Center. There will be a bishop's election, which should make for an interesting assembly. Please let me know if you feel called to serve!

Thank you for being the light of the world this year in so many ways! I can't even list all of the mission and ministry that takes place at Immanuel within our building and in the community. I suppose that is a wonderful thing! Thank you for your partnership in ministry.

God's blessings on this new year together!

Pastor Jamie Brieske



*A Church Without Walls*

## *Immanuel Lutheran Church*

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715.832.7832

Pastor  
Jamie Brieske  
[immanuelpastor1@gmail.com](mailto:immanuelpastor1@gmail.com)

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**SUNDAYS 9 AM**  
followed by JoF and Fellowship

**WEDNESDAYS 6 PM**  
Worship on Wednesday occurs most Wednesdays. Check the monthly calendar for special events.

# 2023 Faith Formation Ministry Annual Report

Faith Formation Ministry at Immanuel strives to walk together in faith and fellowship with people of all ages as we navigate our life-long faith journeys. All of the ministries and events that I facilitate as the Faith Formation Minister are done with the goals of growing in faith and relationship together as priority.

Here's a look back at some of the fun we had in several areas of Faith Formation Ministry in 2023:

## **Journey of Faith**

In the early months of 2023 we were finishing up a year of learning that was focused on God's Amazing Creation! We heard Bible stories that connected to water, land, plants, and animals, then connected these stories to the ways we still connect to and care for creation today. Journey of Faith ended for the learning year in May with our annual Youth Led Worship service. In the fall of 2023 we started a new learning year, with classes meeting on both Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings following worship. On Sundays, the classes are using the Spark! curriculum series from Augsburg Fortress and following the lectionary. On Wednesday nights the class is working their way through the whole Bible using the Action Storybook Bible. During Advent, all of the kids learned about the birth of Jesus, and we had almost 40 kids participate in our Christmas Program, "A Storybook Christmas."

## **VBS:**

Immanuel hosted about 45 kids for VBS this past summer, at the end of June. Again this summer we were able to have awesome volunteers from Immanuel to lead the preschool class, as well as hired several high school youth from the congregation (Kylie Engedal, Alexis Drier, Rylie Hansen, Kaelyn Hansen, & Kaatya Modl) to be our elementary leaders. Our theme was "Operation Restoration" and we spent each day focusing on ways we can care for God's creation - including nature, our selves, and those around us. This was a great way to wrap up our whole year of focus on creation care!

## **Summer Stretch:**

We had 9 middle school and 3 high students participate in Summer Stretch in 2023. Some of the things we did include a day working at Immanuel, a morning helping to prepare for the Day Lily Dig, and a morning at the Chippewa Valley Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Our afternoons were full of fun, including swimming and seeing a movie. We ended the week with a fantastic day at Valley Fair!

## **High School Ministry:**

SHYN (Senior High Youth Night) meets weekly in the youth room on Wednesday nights during the school year to share in a variety of activities, including devotions & Bible study, caring conversation, and game nights. This group also has the opportunity to participate in a summer trip each year. In 2023 we headed to Tennessee, staying in a group lodge at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. While we were there we had the opportunity to volunteer at a large food bank, as well as at the state park we were staying at. We also had a lot of fun, and ended our week with a day at an adventure park!

### Milestones Ministry:

Another ongoing ministry at Immanuel is our Milestones Ministry program. This is a unique way of intentionally marking various milestones from birth through end of life, and connecting them with others in our church community. Some of the life milestones we celebrate are: baptism, starting Journey of Faith classes, getting a Bible, starting confirmation, affirmation of baptism, graduation, and a special blessing for those who are 85 years and older!

### Day Camp Ministry:

Camp Create is Immanuel's two-year-old day camp and takes place in the Journey of Faith classrooms and church nursery. We started this ministry in 2016, and have been continually amazed at how this program has grown and evolved since then. We currently offer two class sections, with up to 10 kids welcome in each section. This year we are also offering "Lunch Bunch," which is a once per week day camp ministry for kids at Create-A-World preschool. Lunch Bunch meets after preschool and we eat, play, and read stories together. Both of these day camp ministries are thriving and we are so thankful for all the fun and energy that fills the building each day these little ones are here!

Faith Formation Ministry is an evolving, changing, and moving ministry at Immanuel, and we are always dreaming big and watching for where the Holy Spirit is nudging us.

God's Peace,  
Alyssa Engedal



## Ash Wednesday Schedule:

### Ash Wednesday February 14:

12 pm Soup Lunch

1 pm Worship

6 pm Soup Supper

7 pm Worship

(No Learning)

8 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Wednesdays during Lent:

February 21, 28

March 6, 13, 20

5 pm Soup Supper

6 pm Holden Evening

Prayer

6:30 pm Learning

7 pm Choir Rehearsal

## 2023 Council President Report

Dear Immanuel Family,

It has been a good year with a return to more fellowship with each other and doing God's work. In thinking about the highlights of 2023, here are a few that I would like to share:

- Increased in-person attendance to both worship services
- A record number of students participating in confirmation
- Addition of the outdoor recreational equipment - basketball hoop and Gaga pit
- The "Three Big Questions that Change Every Teenager" book study by the church council and the confirmation students
- Fellowship opportunities before and after the worship service
- A successful stewardship drive
- Many improvements to our building
- The Green Team working to make our church more eco-friendly
- Music ministry - thanks to Tammie, the WoW band, LeRoy, the choir and handbells
- A continued commitment to the Lutheran Church Cemetery
- Our food pantry and blessings box continue to support our community

These are just a few of the highlights showing that we have much to be thankful for. In a very challenging time, with costs on the rise, and people with very busy schedules, our church is still going strong thanks to all of you and your generous donations of your time and financial giving.

As we discussed our hopes for 2024, most revolved around continued fellowship opportunities and building community. We will continue our support for our many missions. I encourage you to get involved or try something new. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the church leaders and council members. Thanks again for all you do!

Respectfully,

Jennifer Dean  
Council President

*Looking ahead...*



## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

March 24  
Palm Sunday  
9 am

March 28  
Maundy Thursday  
7 pm

March 29  
Good Friday  
1 and 7 pm

March 31  
Easter Sunday  
9 am

## **2023 Create-A-World Preschool Annual Report**

Create-A-World is having a great year!

We are learning about the ocean A-Z. Our clothing drive and calendar fundraisers were a huge success raising over \$1000. With the funds we have been able to meet the needs of four families through scholarships and we donated \$100 to the Ronald McDonald House!

We are looking forward to next year with our preschool registration coming up on Thursday, February 8th. Katy LoRusso will be back for her 17th year, Jennifer Larson will return for her 7th year and Melissa Corlett will return for her 4th year with us.

We are currently raising funds for a pour in place solid surface and new play set for the play ground. If you would like to contribute, please contact Dee in the office or Katy LoRusso. Lots of fun, exciting things happening and we thank you all for your prayers and support.

Katy LoRusso  
Create-A-World Preschool Director



## **2023 Food Ministry Annual Report**

The Immanuel Food Pantry had another busy year with many new families visiting Immanuel's Food Pantry. During the summer, our hours remained the same being open every Monday from 4 – 5:30 pm. The Summer Stretch kids helped me reorganize the food pantry. Thank you to Elaine Schultz and Jo Stolp who earlier in 2023, took me shopping at Festival for items not always available from Feed My People

Our annual Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to 7 families and were so appreciative. Thank you to all who donated the staple supplies for this meal and also Hy-Vee for their donation of turkeys and pies!

The pantry has received many monetary donations from friends and family of Keith Martin, allowing the pantry to remain stocked with healthy food options, gas cards and Kwik Trip coupons for eggs, milk and produce. Thank you, Immanuel, for your monetary and food donations, and thank you to those who volunteer and welcome guests every Monday!

With the help of Megan Hofeldt and our WoW students, our Blessing Box continues to serve those who need personal care items AND Immanuel's Knit Together group has donated many beautiful warm hats and scarves, thank you! A BIG thank you to Steve Johnson, for volunteering to pick up and deliver the Weekend Kids Meals to Meadowview Elementary students each week. This partnership is essential in providing nutritious weekend meals for students in need. Thank you, Immanuel, for your continued support of this important ministry.

Sandy LaValley  
Food Pantry Ministry Coordinator

## 2023 ZIP (Zomba Immanuel Partnership) Annual Report

In 2023, the Zomba - Immanuel Partnership had another rewarding year of relationship building and fundraising. We started our year working with the Synod to assist our friends in Malawi with cholera relief, a problem that was later exacerbated by Hurricane Freddy and an absence of safe drinking water for many.

In August, a small group from Immanuel joined Deacon Laura on a trip to Malawi, witnessing the destruction and loss from Hurricane Freddy and listening to the stories of those affected. They spent time with our friends in Zomba and helped bridge the gap felt from Covid pandemic disruptions. The travelers came back with amazing stories and a renewed vigor to strengthen our accompaniment mission.

During the summer, ZIP hosted two Day Lily Digs on separate weekends to allow new buds to bloom and shorten the digging hours. The addition of a Malawi info table with hand carved wooden items and crafts from Malawi helped the crowd to more fully understand our mission. The Dig, along with our Chili Cook Off and Thrift Sale, made for another great fundraising year!

Near the close of 2023, the Synod introduced a campaign to drill two new solar powered deep-drilled borehole wells in Malawi and is looking to raise \$40,000. These wells will provide clean water for thousands of people in their area and help prevent disease all while being run by the sun. Please consider donating to this project via the Synod website.

Finally, ZIP plans to invite a group from Malawi to visit Wisconsin in 2025 to continue our mission of friendship and walking together in Christ. We are excited to host our friends once again and will be reaching out for assistance in housing and transportation as the trip gets closer.

Zikomo friends!

Holli Jacobson and The ZIP Team

## “Created to Be” 2024 Lent Round Robin

Our 2024 Lent Round Robin (pastors will rotate) prepares congregations for the upcoming ELCA youth gathering by utilizing their theme “Created to Be.”

We are created to be **brave**, to show up with an open mind and heart, willing to be challenged.

We are created to be **authentic**, to bring our whole selves and know that we are loved by our Creator.

We are created to be **free**, to be transformed by the gospel.

We are created to be **disruptive**, to work for justice for all our siblings.

We are created to be **disciples**, to be sent out into the world to love our neighbor just as we are loved by God.



## 2023 Caring Ministry Report

Dear Friends of Immanuel,

Immanuel welcomes its members who prefer to participate in worship and study groups via Zoom and Facebook. I understand that for many of us, due to medication schedules and changes in our bodies, we, including me, find that we are not confidently able to be anywhere, including church, by 9 am on any morning. As the congregation's Caring Ministry Coordinator, I support your choice.

These past three years of Covid and RSV, shrouded in politics of division, have led to many feeling isolated, lonely, and depressed, even to the point of suicide. This has challenged our society as a whole, our congregation, and us individuals. I am aware that our Church Council has been discussing how to best gather data to more fully understand the depth to which the Council's work as I see it as essential in the support of our Eucharistic Ministers in their relationship with those to whom they become the light of God's love as they visit sharing scripture, prayer and Holy Communion. Those EM's are: Emilie Anderson, Marcia Bowman, Deb Kavanagh, Bob Lodahl, Sue Luthy, Sue Waits and Becky Wilcox.

As I remember, one of Robert Bellah's most profound conclusions in *Habits of the Heart*, a 1985 sociological study of American life, was that congregations are America's best hope for building a healthier society. That applies to today's life in the USA more than ever.

Many people have asked me, "Why did you move to Eau Claire?" I served as Intentional Interim at First Lutheran 2012-2013. During that assignment I learned that Eau Claire was a "City with a Heart." You care for people in a welcoming way with support from corporations, social and religious organizations, and many individuals. We joined Immanuel because of your commitment as a congregation to be inclusive, not only in membership, but in helping those in need and welcoming the stranger.

Epiphany is the season of light, God's Light in Jesus the Christ. May we together embrace Christ's invitation to carry the Light of God's love into our relationships of family, friends, neighbors, and broader community.

Submitted by,

Dr. Michael C. Rehak, Caring Ministry Coordinator

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Home: 715-514-2372



## 2023-24 Annual Review - Immanuel Music Ministry

This year we continue to have a lot of fun with the music ministry at Immanuel.

We added some amazing sidekicks, and permanent members to our WoW worship team on Wednesdays. Kallen Engedal started coming to play on keys, and sits next to his dad Andy Engedal. Greg Kaufmann's (who plays electric bass) granddaughter Lauren started coming to play her upright bass. And Alizah Felling started coming to play auxiliary percussion with her dad, Levi Felling, in addition to singing backing up vocals. Levi and Gabe Ramlow, son of Laura and Nik Ramlow, also started switching off every Wednesday playing drums for our team as well. It truly has become a family affair, making me ask the question, where is my sidekick? We are very appreciative of Larry Lundeen, who played ukulele and sang with our team up until about December, before he left to go to his Florida home with his wife Barb. Alyssa rocks it on sound, as well as Don Schlieve on guitar. And Pastor Jamie sings and preaches in her graceful way. And as I always say, I wave my arms and move my fingers ;).

Our Adult Church Choir continues to remain such a guiding light in the church community. We are so blessed to have such a large number of tenor, baritone, and bass singers. As you may have noticed our back row extends out beyond the chairs sometimes. The sopranos and altos are smaller in number, but mighty. We are always looking for new choir members, and are seeking new singers, especially in the soprano and alto sections.

The second annual Fall Arts Celebration was a hit. This year it was hosted at Trinity Lutheran. The Immanuel Church choir sang a lively anthem called, "Fly Away Medley," which provided an exciting and jubilant contrast to the concert program. Many concert goers and people from other congregations had such positive reactions to the choir's performance.

This spring, we ordered quite a bit of new music, and are pleased that Jon Seamon is accompanying us on trumpet, as well as with the occasional appearance of Levi Felling on percussion. We also have welcomed Alizah Felling into our choir, and we are excited to incorporate young perspectives and ideas added to the group. Welcome Alizah!

The choir recently traveled to Dove Health South to visit one of our choir members, Jerry Hanson. He was beyond appreciative of the support and musical healing. We sang selections from the hymnal and many people in the hallways stopped to listen to the beautiful music.

The Immanuel choir members started sharing their personal experiences about choir with the congregation last Sunday (Jan 14th) in a recruitment attempt to help encourage people to feel more comfortable stepping out of their comfort zone to join us. We are a flexible bunch.

The bell choir continues to meet when they can, and Peggy Blomenberg has done such a wonderful job leading this group and keeping it going. Helissa Bell continues to work with the children on Sunday mornings at Sunday school, and will hopefully be doing some children's choir pieces coming up this spring.

Thank you so much for all your love and support, we are truly honored to be serving the congregation of Immanuel with our music ministry. If you ever have any questions or suggestions, please contact [tammiedelveaux@gmail.com](mailto:tammiedelveaux@gmail.com).

Musically yours, Tammie Delveaux Rubenzer

## 2023 Immanuel Lutheran Church Trust Annual Report

The stated mission of the Trust Fund is “to serve in partnership with Immanuel Lutheran Church to be a living witness to God’s love and concern for the world. This will be evident in the socially responsible investment and distribution of the Trust's assets and income for such purposes.”

The bylaws of the Trust stipulate that up to 5% of the fund assets, as determined by the previous year total market value as of September 30, may be distributed (so in 2024 the Trust can distribute up to 5% of the market value of the Trust on September 30, 2023). In 2023 there was \$46,701 available to distribute!

Here are highlights of the grant disbursements made in 2023:

- To Hope Gospel Mission for “StepUp beds” in their Short Stay Expansion Project at the Hope Renewal Center for Men.
- To Bethlehem Lutheran Church in New Orleans for updating their kitchen equipment. Bethlehem Lutheran provides to-go meals for those in need, averaging 600 meals/week.
- To encourage and support the young people of Immanuel to attend church camp at Luther Park by offering 50% scholarships.
- To JONAH in support of the Multicultural Festival held in Eau Claire.
- To Immanuel for outdoor recreational equipment..
- To support Grace Olson with her seminary expenses.
- To Home4Healing, a non-profit that provides free housing for up to three months for blood cancer and stem cell patients undergoing treatment at Mayo Clinic in Rochester.
- To support YogaChurch, a new program offered by Jesus Fit.
- To the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi to address needs due to the cholera epidemic.
- To the Lay School of Ministry for two “Meeting Owls,” technology that provides high quality audio and video for hybrid meetings; Immanuel is able to use an Owl, and the groups who have taken advantage of this feel it has improved and enhanced the meeting experience for those who are participating virtually and those who are “in person.”

If you have any questions on how the Trust operates, how you can request a grant from the Trust or how you can give to the Trust or leave it in your will, please feel free to contact a member of the Board.

Market value at September 30, 2023: \$979,384.76

Market value at September 30, 2022: \$934,027.27

Current Board of Trustees: Pastor Brieske, Zan Degan, Lauren Likkel, Mark Helland, Ryan Stilp and Bob Wilcox

Submitted by,

Dee Schlieve  
Trust Administrator

# Immanuel Lutheran Church Annual Meeting

## 2023 Property Committee Report

Committee Membership: Al Ludwig, Kim and Suzi Sturz, Don Schlieve, Bill Schwengel, Kelly Kavanagh, Marv Franson, Michael Rehak, Mary and Brian Bischel, David Schaffer, and Marcia Bowman.

The property committee had a busy year keeping the building and grounds in good condition. Five new members were recruited during the Ministry Fair. Committee members were joined by a number of other members on work days to accomplish necessary tasks. We thank the congregation for their support in this ministry and we encourage volunteers to join the committee and participate. We especially thank Kim and Suzi Sturz for their day to day work as our church custodians.

June 3 Work Day:

- Replacement of refuse container fence. New panels and posts were purchased.
- Landscaping and brickwork around the church sign.
- Invasive brush and tree removal along nature trail and near buildings

July 10 Summer Stretch Youth Service Day: Middle school students helped the property committee as they edged sidewalks, pruned bushes, watered the memorial trees, and raked pea gravel in the playground.

November 5 Work Day:

- Removal of leaves and debris from the flower beds, roof, playground, and lawns with leaf blowers and lawn mower bagging. Over 50 bags of this organic material were hauled out by Greg Kaufmann to his farm for mulching lilies.
- Trees and brush that have grown too close to the back of the church building and garage were pruned or removed.
- Solar lights were installed above the basketball hoop and on the bell tower next to the gaga pit.

Eagle Scout Project: Keiran Tarpenning completed the gaga pit and two benches on the north side of the church. The gaga pit is Keiran's Eagle Scout project and is a fine addition to the church grounds. Thank you to Keiran and his scouting crew for contributing their time and resources to make our church more welcoming and helping to create an environment that encourages youth to serve and worship God.

Coordination with Green Team: The property committee coordinated various energy conservation and environmental topics with the Green Team throughout the year, including Focus on Energy rebates, solar energy for electricity, No Mow May, and composting of solid waste.

Custodian Fill-in: Property committee members covered for Kim and Suzi during their vacations in July, September, and December.

Plumbing: Repairs were made to the dishwasher in the kitchen after it was found to have leaked water overnight onto the kitchen floor, underneath the wall, and into the main hallway adjoining the kitchen. The water was immediately removed by Kim and fans were set up in addition to professional drying work done by ServiceMaster to bring the moisture level to acceptable levels.

Electrical: The five sidewalk entrance lights were converted to LED lamps in October, replacing the halogen lights and ballasts after one of the lights malfunctioned. The interior lighting for the church sign was also converted to LED at this time after it was determined that one of the two fluorescent ballasts in the sign was defective. The LED lamps do not require ballasts and will use less energy. Total cost on the conversions was \$1732 with \$180 returned in Focus on Energy and Xcel Energy rebates.

## 2023 Property Committee Report cont.

**Heating and Air Conditioning:** This past month one of the furnaces was found to be out of order due to a malfunctioning blower motor. An aftermarket replacement motor was installed for \$453.

**Church Grounds:** We continued this year with no irrigation of the church lawn. Relying on natural precipitation and not having irrigation has kept costs and mowing time down. As the summer drought set in, however, the lawn and entrance garden became very dry. Some emergency watering was done to these plants and the newly planted trees. "No Mow May" was implemented on the lawn surrounding the parking lot.

**Interior Painting:** Kim painted the men's restroom, kitchen, hallway by the library and sacristy during the summer.

**Meeting OWL Setup:** Meeting Owl, which is a camera, microphone and speaker system that shows the whole room of attendees (and zooms in on a speaker when someone is talking) is now in place and working well in the community room.

**Roof Leak:** A water puddle on the floor in the choir section discovered in September led to the discovery of a roof leak along the flashing on the window dormers above the altar area. The water was found to have entered in the flashing where screws were improperly placed. The problem was corrected without the need of calling a contractor. Damage to the ceiling is minimal (about a 6 inch radius) and is obscured from main view by a beam.

**Preschool Radon Test:** A state required radon test in the pre-school was conducted in September. The levels were well below the maximum allowed exposure level.

**Preschool Playgroud Renovation:** The pea gravel playground surface was brought up to state required standards this year but the renovation of the playground (surface and equipment) remains a viable project with funds available in a Trust Fund grant and money raised by the preschool group to help fund this project.

The pea gravel base is not ADA compliant because wheel chairs and similar devices cannot operate on it. This may also be an opportunity to upgrade the playground structures, since permanent structures are incorporated into the base for safety. The goal of the preschool committee is to work with the church in renovating the playground, possibly with a durable surface such as rubber or artificial grass, along with improved playground equipment.

**Upcoming Projects:** Several projects are on the list for 2024 as committee time resources and funds permit.

- Sidewalk Repair – Replacement of broken sidewalk squares, especially the two adjoining the parking lot in front of the church.
- Landscaping new plants around the entrance. Irrigation may have to be resumed around the buildings if needed.
- Repair or replacement to the side entry door. The bases of the door frame and adjoining window frame have rusted away and are loosening. A quote by Market and Johnson for replacement was estimated at over \$12,000. Quotes for repair without replacement will need to be done to determine if repair is feasible.
- Painting of the restrooms by the classrooms

## 2023 Property Committee Report cont.

Long Range Property Plan: At the May property committee meeting, the group discussed some points that should be included in the long range plan for the church property.

- Addition of memorial trees next to the Hanson and Garnett memorial trees – also plant two trees to replace memorial ash trees removed due to emerald ash borer.
- Preventative maintenance and replacements to the HVAC system
- Solar energy should be considered in the long range plan for the property committee, in light of installation costs, economic return, and feasibility of installing the panels on the roof.
- Prairie and woodlot management
- Trees along boulevard to be replaced by city forestry department

Capital Improvement Fund: The Capital Improvement Fund is separate from the maintenance budget and has been used for the sanctuary repair in 2020 and the parking lot sealing in 2022. This fund is important not only for preventative maintenance but also for emergency repairs and replacement of such items as furnaces and air conditioning units. Giving can be specifically directed to this fund.

Departing Committee Members: Mary and Brian Bischel moved to the Tomah area this past fall where they are building a new home. They have become good friends during their time at Immanuel and devoted countless hours to maintaining and improving the church property in service to God and to our congregation. We will miss them and wish them the best as they begin a new chapter in their lives.

Submitted by Bill Schwengel  
Property Committee Chair



## Immanuel Statistics for 2023:

Members as of  
1/1/2023 - 506

Baptized - 1

Deaths - 5

Weddings - 2

Confirmed - 8  
(included in  
1/1/23 number)

Transfer out - 4

Transfer in - 18

Adjustments - 27

Members as of  
12/31/2023 - 489

# **2023 Lutheran Cemetery Association Board Annual Report**

The 13.5 acre cemetery dates back to 1878 when it was chartered as the Eau Claire Lutheran Cemetery Association. The board consists of two persons from each of the three member congregations (Grace, Spirit, and Immanuel). Immanuel's representatives to the Board are Bill Schwengel and Steve Mikelson.

## **Burials**

There were 11 burials during the past year, of which 9 were interment of cremains and 2 were traditional burials. None of these burials were deceased members of Immanuel.

## **Cemetery Grounds Work**

Volunteers from the member churches participated in picking up trash and overwinter debris on April 29. About 15 helpers picked up 10 bags of trash. A similar event on "Gods Work, Our Hands" Sunday was held on September 17 where headstones were cleaned and grave plots edged. Drought conditions this past summer necessitated reseeding one new grave and watering during the dry spell.

## **Omaha Street Improvements and Assessments Payment**

The City of Eau Claire renovated Omaha Street in 2022, installing new pavement, curb, gutter, and driveway approaches. Each of the five cemetery associations along Omaha Street were assessed the improvement costs according to the amount of street frontage. The Lutheran Cemetery Association's share of this cost was \$26,194.70. Ten percent of this assessment was paid out of cemetery funds in January 2023 and the remainder was paid in April of 2023. Each of the three churches in the association pays an equal amount of the cemetery expenses for snow removal and lawn care. This expense is \$2500 per year, which is a line item in the church budget.

Plans for 2024 include two volunteer work days, one in the spring and one in the fall, the installation of two signs, and exploring the use of an electronic database for indexing and mapping of the graves. There is no water faucet in the cemetery and the water lines in the cemetery have not been used for at least 20 years. A water hydrant has been discussed and associated costs explored, but is not planned at this time.

Submitted by,

Bill Schwengel  
Vice-President, Eau Claire Lutheran Cemetery Association

# 2023 Green Team Annual Report



The primary objectives of the Green Team are:

1. Raise awareness about environmental issues and what we can do as a congregation and as individuals to care for creation.
2. Assist the congregation and staff at implementing environmental projects at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

## Composting

At no additional cost, Immanuel changed their trash hauler to EarthBound Environmental as they offer curbside composting pickup in addition to trash and recyclables. New trash cans were purchased to streamline the separating of recyclables and compostables. A Thrivent Grant was used to fund the new trash cans and purchase compostable bags.

## Review Feasibility of Solar

Sue Waits, Kelly Kavanaugh, Levi Felling and Bill Schwengel met with representatives from two different solar companies to review the feasibility of solar. Although there are many solar grants and incentives the group felt other property upgrades had a higher priority at this time. The feasibility of solar should be reviewed at least every 5 years as technology, cost and incentives continue to change.

## Transition to Farmer to Farmer Coffee

The Folgers coffee used in the church kitchen was replaced with Lutheran World Relief Sustainably Grown Farmer to Farmer coffee. A donation was received to cover the initial purchase. The Farmer to Farmer coffee is sourced directly from farmers participating in Lutheran World Relief projects. Funds received from the sale of this coffee directly help the communities and farmer families.

## Collection of Batteries, Holiday Lights and Cords

The Green Team continued to collect batteries, holiday lights and cords. An average of 10 pounds of batteries per month were collected and taken to First Choice for recycling. Throughout 2023, a total of 120 pounds of batteries were diverted from the landfill.

Different tips and articles were included in the newsletter and announcements to remind the congregation of what they can do at home to divert waste from the landfill.

Some ideas for 2024 include:

- Scrap metal collection to divert more trash from the landfill and raise money for Immanuel youth ministry.
- Raise awareness about the role of native plantings and facilitate a spring book discussion of Tallamy's book, "Nature's Best Hope" which is the One Book, One Community selection for the LE Phillips Eau Claire Public Library. We hope to coordinate with Alyssa and Pastor Jamie and use the youth version of this book with WOW families.
- Work with Property and Management to review plantings around the church grounds for reducing invasives and planting more natives.

Many thanks to Immanuel Green Team: Greg Kaufmann, Cindy Bullock, Jon Seamon, Peggy Blomenberg, Pira Mueller, Michael Rehak, Mark Helland, Lois Helland, Levi Felling, Sarah Aiken-Felling, Lang Jacobson, Sue Waits, Linda Aaseng, Nate Aaseng

Submitted by,  
Sue Waits



# 2023 JONAH Annual Report

Celebrating 16 Years in the Chippewa Valley

“Our calling is not only to pull people out of the river, but to go upstream to find out what or who is pushing them in.” Jim Wallis

Mission and Values: **JONAH** - Joining Our Neighbors Advancing Hope-exists to deepen relationships within and among faith communities and partner organizations to empower people in addressing the root causes of social injustice in the greater community.

We organize diverse people around these common values:

- Radical Inclusivity: Belief in the infinite dignity and worth of every human life, in the ethic of shared abundance, and the intentional inclusion of all persons-especially people who have traditionally lived at the margins of society.
- Love: Opposition to all forms of oppression and inequity, and trust in the triumphs of love and hope over cynicism, hate, and fear.
- Reconciliation: The idea of repairing past harms, and restoring people and communities to right relationship.
- Living for the Future: Having the well-being of our grandchildren’s grandchildren as the criterion for the decisions we make and the structures we support.
- Environmentalism: Belief that we are responsible for the stewardship of the natural world.

How We Work: Founded in 2007, JONAH uses grassroots organizing to bring people in the Chippewa Valley together around social injustices and empower them to build a more just and healthy community for all. We specifically bring people together when a bridge is needed.

JONAH believes in the principle that those closest to a problem or issue are best equipped to address the problem. This principle also informs our local action agenda-the issues we chose to address reflect what is important to our Chippewa Valley community.

How Can You Take Action? Join one of the following:

- Affordable Housing Task Force
- Environmental Task Force
- Child Poverty Coalition
- Mental Health Task Force
- Immigration Task Force
- Criminal Justice Task Force
- Transit Alliance Task Force



## 2023 JONAH Annual Report cont.

### JONAH Faith Community Members:

- Immanuel Lutheran Church
- Eau Claire Catholic Deanery (9 parishes)
- Eau Claire Friends
- First Congregational UCC
- First Presbyterian
- Grace Lutheran
- Hope United Methodist
- Spirit Lutheran
- St. John's Lutheran
- Temple Shalom
- The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
- Trinity Lutheran
- Unitarian Universalist Congregation
- Unity of Eau Claire
- The Unitarian Society of Menomonie
- The Menomonie Area Mission Coalition (14 congregations)

Learn More: Visit the JONAH website at [jonahjustice.org](http://jonahjustice.org); email Ray Koch at [rk9561@charter.net](mailto:rk9561@charter.net) or call/text 715-225-5907; visit the JONAH Facebook page; or contact Lynn Buske at [cvjonahorganizer@gmail.com](mailto:cvjonahorganizer@gmail.com).



## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT - AMMPARO AT IMMANUEL

“Dios es nuestro amparo y fortaleza,”  
 (“God is our refuge and strength,”) -Psalm 46:1

AMMPARO is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany children today and in the future.

The word “amparo” in Spanish means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. The ELCA’s strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) was envisioned after witnessing the plight of children who are forced to flee their communities in Central America and Mexico because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities.

*The Image*  
has a  
new look!

With the new format of  
The Image  
birthdays and  
anniversaries  
will no longer be  
included.  
If you would  
like a copy emailed or  
mailed to you, please  
contact the office  
715.832.7832.

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT - AMMPARO AT IMMANUEL cont.

Immanuel has become a partner with the ELCA's AMMPARO ministry and has begun to work on how we see this fitting into our ministry as a "Church Without Walls". AMMPARO in the Chippewa Valley has been active since 2019. Participating churches are Immanuel, Hope Lutheran, and University Lutheran.

We have hosted educational events, worked with Latinx families, collaborated with community organizations—all to build awareness and serve our neighbor.

During this past year we have continued to:

- Partner with JONAH Immigration Task Force.
- Partner with and promote the Synod's Vecino a Vecino: Juntos en Ministerio (Neighbor to Neighbor: Together in Ministry), a new ministry of the Northwest Synod.
- Participated in conversations with local and state legislators on the need for Driver's Cards for Undocumented Wisconsinites.
- Partnered with Chippewa Valley Bridge Builders, Welcoming New Neighbors, and World Relief Chippewa Valley on various Immigration and resettlement issues.
- Participated in a celebration of our area's diversity with the Chippewa Valley Multi Cultural Festival in August.
- Hosted the Mexican Consulate Mobile Visit in September.
- Raise funds to assist local Latinx community members that may need legal assistance, financial assistance, housing issues, and other immigration related legal needs.

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMMANUEL AMMPARO FUND  
PLEASE CONTACT RAY KOCH, SUE LUTHY, OR PASTOR JAMIE;  
or send check to Immanuel Lutheran Church: AMMPARO  
in the memo line.

To become involved or learn more about AMMPARO at Immanuel,  
please contact Ray Koch or Pastor Jamie.

2023 JONAH Annual Report  
and  
2023 ANNUAL REPORT - AMMPARO AT IMMANUEL

Submitted by

Ray Koch

**Are you looking for  
ways to serve at  
Immanuel?**

**Below are several  
ways to offer your  
time and talents at  
church. For more  
details or to sign up,  
contact the church  
office or highlight and  
click here:**

**<https://www.immanuelec.org/community/volunteer/>**

**Read lessons at  
Worship**

**Assisting Minister**

**Provide Special Music**

**Usher/Greeter**

**Serve at Community  
Table**

**Prepare food for  
Beacon House**

**Join Choir or Bell  
Choir**

**Deliver Weekend Kids  
Meals to Meadowview  
Elementary from  
Feed My People**

**Welcome and assist  
families at the  
Food Pantry  
on Mondays  
4 - 5:30 pm**



# Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

January 15, 2024

Dear Pastors, Deacons, SAMs and Lay Leaders of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

After much prayer, reflection and conversation with my family I have decided not to seek a second term as bishop. It has been an honor and privilege to serve this synod first for four years as the Director of Evangelical Mission and now for the last six years as Bishop. I am grateful for your partnership in ministry, your prayers, support and trust through these years. Serving through COVID was an unexpected challenge! Through it all I was proud of your creativity, hard work and determination to continue to proclaim the good news and care for your congregations and communities. I am confident that you will continue to serve faithfully walking in the way of Jesus in the future. Please know that I will pray for you and for the next bishop.

I invite you to take time in these next few weeks to pray about the bishop's election. Please plan to attend your conference assembly in February. This meeting will be the nominating ballot to begin the pre-identification process for the bishop's election. Your Deans will be sending information about the meeting. (I am grateful to the Deans for their leadership in the election process.) [Here is the link to the synod constitution which lists the expectations for the bishop.](#) [Here is the link to the synod assembly 2024 election information.](#) We will have some time to talk about the Bishop's Election process on January 30 at 2:30 p.m. at the end of the Winter Theological Gathering at Luther Park. (Spirit Focused Ecclesiology with Rev. Dr. Cheryl Peterson) If you haven't, please register [here](#).

You are receiving this letter on Martin Luther King Day, January 15. Martin Luther King Jr., the Baptist pastor and civil rights leader was born on this date in 1929 and was assassinated on April 4, 1968. This federal holiday is declared to be a National Day of Service. We are encouraged to volunteer and do something to improve our communities. Martin Luther's dream was to address the racism, violence, hatred and poverty and create the Beloved Community. I hope and pray that you and your members will take your faith to the streets and be servant leaders in your communities for Jesus' sake. In these last six years we have tried to create space for intentional conversations about racial, environmental and gender justice. It is my dream you will continue to do so. Please read the latest edition of the synod's justice newsletter, Just Love, Just Act for ideas on ways to continue the conversation. [December 2023 Newsletter](#)

I am so grateful for you the rostered and lay leaders of this synod and for the amazing synod ministers I've had the opportunity to work with over the course of these years as bishop. A heartfelt Thank You to Liz Bartsch, David Behling, Sara Bishop, Diane House, Greg Kaufmann, Lidix Montoya, Erin Nelson, Randy Olson, and Laura Ramlow. I am honored to have been a part of such great team of leaders. I have been inspired and learned so much from each one of you. Thank you all.

God's blessings, as we moving forward bravely in this new year taking the next most faithful step!

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson".

Epiphany 2, Martin Luther King Day



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# FEBRUARY 2024

<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
				1 12 - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting	2	3
4 9 AM Worship Annual Meeting 10 AM JoF & Fellowship  6 PM Neighbor to Neighbor Worship	5 1 - 3 PM Knit Together 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 6:30 PM - H3	6 9:30 AM - H3	7 10 AM Bible Study  5:15 PM Meal 6 PM WoW 6:30 PM Learning 7 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 NYG Mtg	8 12 - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting	9 Winter Retreat Luther Park	10 Winter Retreat Luther Park
11 9 AM Worship 10 AM JoF & Fellowship  Winter Retreat Luther Park	12 1 - 3 PM Knit Together 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 6:30 PM - H3	13 9:30 AM - H3	14 12 Soup Lunch 1 PM Ash Wednesday Service 6 PM Soup Supper 7 PM Ash Wednesday Service 8 PM Choir Rehearsal	15 12 - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting	16	17
18 9 AM Worship 10 AM JoF & Fellowship Green Team Mtg	19 1 - 3 PM Knit Together 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 6 PM Mindset Monday Somatic Practices 6:30 PM - H3	20 9:30 AM - H3  7 PM Council Mtg	21 10:AM Bible Study 5 PM Soup Supper 6 PM Holden Evening Prayer 6:30 PM Learning 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	22 12 - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting	23	24
25 9 AM Worship 10 AM JoF & Fellowship	26 1 - 3 PM Knit Together 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 6:30 PM - H3	27 9:30 AM - H3	28 10:AM Bible Study 5 PM Soup Supper 6 PM Holden Evening Prayer 6:30 PM Learning 7 PM Choir Rehearsal Immanuel serves @ Community Table	29 12 - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting		

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
**Financial Report - General Fund**  
**Actual for the 12 Months Ending 12/31/2023**  
**Budget for the 12 Months Ending 12/31/2024**

	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
<b><u>Giving</u></b>				
General Fund Giving	\$257,578	\$270,000	\$281,047	\$290,000
The 2024 budget amount is an increase of 3.19% of the 2023 actual amount. General Fund giving in 2023 increased by 9.11% from 2022 General Fund giving.				
<b>Total General Fund Giving</b>	<b>\$257,578</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>	<b>\$281,047</b>	<b>\$290,000</b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>				
Mission	\$29,250	\$28,650	\$28,650	\$28,150
Organizations we give to include the Synod, Lutheran Social Services, Luther Park Camp, Interfaith Hospitality, Cemetery Support, Community Table, Food Ministry, Neighbor to Neighbor and JONAH.				
Utilities	\$17,089	\$16,400	\$16,706	\$17,400
This category includes Electricity, Heat and Phone & Internet expenses.				
Maintenance	\$15,123	\$14,800	\$16,090	\$15,300
This category includes Snow Removal, Maintenance, and Office Equipment Maintenance.				
Program Support	\$11,591	\$11,900	\$13,086	\$12,400
This category includes Office Expense, Professional and Staff Development.				
Pastor's Salary	\$63,522	\$67,875	\$67,953	\$75,225
Pastor's Salary includes a Housing Allowance and is based on Synod Guidelines.				
Staff Salaries	\$94,932	\$97,025	\$91,975	\$103,055
Salary increase of 3% for 2024. Full-time ministry staff is based on Synod Guidelines.				
Pastor and Staff Benefits	\$24,045	\$22,000	\$22,468	\$23,800
This category is for Pastor's Pension, Student Loan and Staff Retirement benefits.				
FICA Taxes	\$8,535	\$8,650	\$8,617	\$9,200
This is FICA expense on the Salaries.				
Witness/Service	\$1,171	\$1,100	\$921	\$900
This includes Advertising, Devotional Books and Hospitality Supplies.				
Faith Formation Ministry	\$1,586	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
This is for activities for the Youth and Family Programs.				
Worship/Music	\$4,983	\$3,500	\$3,411	\$3,500
This includes Worship Supplies.				
Learning	\$2,006	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600
This includes Confirmation, Milestones Ministry, and VBS.				
Property	\$8,342	\$8,500	\$9,426	\$9,470
This category includes Insurance and Special Assessment by the City of Eau Claire.				
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$282,174</b>	<b>\$284,000</b>	<b>\$282,902</b>	<b>\$302,000</b>
The 2024 budget amount is an increase of 6.75% of the 2023 actual expenses.				
<b>Gain (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$24,596)</b>	<b>(\$14,000)</b>	<b>(\$1,855)</b>	<b>(\$12,000)</b>

Respectfully submitted,  
Casper K. Haas  
Chair, Finance Committee of the Immanuel Lutheran Congregational Council

01/23/2024

**Immanuel Lutheran - Eau Claire, WI**  
**Consolidated Fund Activity Report as of December 31, 2023**

Account Name	End Balance 12/31/2023	Purpose of Fund
Pipe Organ Fund Balance	\$235.00	For organ repair and maintenance
ALOA Fund	\$300.00	Dues for Association for Lutheran Older Adults
Camp Create	\$7,812.06	For Camp Create Program expenses
Lunch Brunch Balance	\$1,711.88	For Day Camp Ministry
A/V Equipment Balance	(\$131.36)	For purchases of A/V equipment
Advent Dinner Balance	\$136.00	To purchase food for the Advent Dinner
Choir	\$1,259.19	For choir music
Church Related Careers	\$130.98	For members pursuing church-related career
Discretionary	\$55.46	Pastor's discretionary fund
Faith Formation Balance	\$5,218.35	Sunday School, WoW, special projects, scholarships and y
Handbells Balance	\$1,836.71	To fund handbells supplies
iPad Loan Program Balance	\$0.00	To loan ipads for church services
Kitchen Balance	\$1,865.62	For kitchen supplies
Landscape	\$127.81	For landscaping supplies
Capital Improve Fund Balance	(\$769.28)	For improvements to the building
Caring Ministry Committee	\$2,192.99	For Care Ministry coordination
Pantry Fund	\$2,597.34	For the food pantry
Malawi Fund	\$11,400.49	For Malawi
Material Witness Quilters Balance	\$2,817.77	For quilting supplies
Memorials	\$3,061.12	Non-specific purpose
	<b><u>\$41,858.13</u></b>	