



The Image

January 2020



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God and Gender

“Is God a girl or a boy?” a little child asked during Sunday school class. This question often comes up in our journey of faith as we grow in our relationship with God. What gender is God? Oftentimes, I respond with a general answer. “God is neither a boy or a girl. God is spirit!” That answer leaves a lot to desire when it comes to our deep longing to know and understand God. To gain a deeper understanding of God’s being, we must dig a little deeper. We can gain many insights into the character of God, including God’s gender identity, through the scriptures, prayer, and the witness of the saints around us.

In our first creation story from Genesis, we hear God say, “Let us make humankind in our image. So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.”¹ This wisdom from our creation story implies that both male and female are included in God’s image. God’s wonderfully big nature includes both masculine and feminine. We know that we are all created in God’s image and we are beloved children. All genders are a part of God’s good creation.

In the prophetic works of the Hebrew Bible we see images of God portrayed as a mother. In the words of Isaiah, God says, “As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.”² Here we see God’s love not only as a father but also through the lens of a nurturing mother.

There are many metaphors and images for God throughout the Bible. Sometimes God is referred to as rock, light, fire, a still small voice, a father, a mother, a savior, a prince, a shepherd, or a gate. All of these metaphors have a yes and a no within them. They all attempt to describe God, and yet at the same time fall short of truly describing our indescribable creator, redeemer, and sustainer. In our prayer lives we can connect to God through many different images. These images help us to draw closer to God through the truths expressed through these metaphors. We can know the loving comfort of God our mother. We can feel the warmth and grace of God our light. We can hear the still, small voice within us speaking God’s truth. All of these experiences make up God, and they are all accessible to us through prayer and meditation and study of the scriptures.

Many saints of the past and present have helped us to see the reality that God is expressed through varied gender identities. St. Julian of Norwich shared these beautiful thoughts of God that she obtained through a spiritual vision:

“It is a characteristic of God to overcome evil with good. Jesus Christ therefore, who himself overcame evil with good, is our true Mother. We received our ‘Being’ from Him - and this is where His Maternity starts - And with it comes the gentle Protection and Guard of Love which will never cease to surround us. Just as God is our Father, so God is also our Mother.”

Saints of today show us that God loves all people, including people of every gender identity and sexual orientation. Part of our journey as a Reconciling in Christ congregation is to continue to learn and grow in our awareness of God’s beloved children and their unique experiences.

Writer and Pastor Emmy Kegler explains it like this, “But God, in big and little ways, has picked up a woman’s broom and swept every corner of creation. God, in big and little ways, has tucked up her skirts and flattened herself on the floor, dug through dust bunnies and checked every dress pocket. God has found us, dustier and rustier and without any luster, and held us up to the light to say: No matter how you rolled away or what corner you were dropped in, you are mine.” Her ministry along with ministry of Reconciling Works and other LGBTQIA+ Christians shows us that we are all made in God’s image, because God’s gender is

diverse and expansive. God wants all people to feel included in her family, the church. Learning more about gender identities and expressions can help us to live into this diverse and beautiful dream of God's family.

God's beloved: You have all been set free from gender stereotypes and norms to live into your freest and truest selves. God has set you free, therefore go and set others free!

In God's expansive love,
Pastor Jamie

¹Genesis 1:27 NRSV

²Isaiah 66:13 NRSV



RIC Sunday 2020 January 26th 9:30 a.m.

Prayer for RIC Sunday

Gracious and liberating God, whom in Jesus knows what it's like to be an oppressed person, knows what it's like to live in a world as a rejected soul, cut off from the community, and to experience state sanctioned violence just for being yourself, guide us to be fierce advocates for our LGBTQIA+ siblings in Christ. Amen.



*Annual Meeting of
the Congregation*

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 2, following worship. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

NOTICE: Proposed updates to Immanuel's constitution reflecting ELCA adopted amendments will be discussed during Immanuel's annual meeting on February 2, 2020. A congregational vote is needed to approve the resolution to amend Immanuel's constitution. Copies of the proposed changes to the constitution will be available in the church office.

Extending Hospitality to People of All Gender Identities and Gender Expressions in the Congregation

Beyond the Binary: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression from Reconciling Works

Since most everyone has been steeped in the gender binary system, some of these concepts can seem very foreign. This can be a lot of information to take in. So, let's pause and remember why it is important to learn these new understandings. In the RIC Welcoming Journey, the goal is to deepen and expand a faith community's ability to welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. However, to this day the dominant story LGBTQIA+ people hear from communities of faith is God does not love them just as they are. The hope for a faith community is to be able to respond with hospitality and true welcome to people who hold a diversity of identities, particularly differences in gender identity and/or gender expression. It is important to remember, people learn new things about themselves and their bodies as they go through life; do not freeze people in time.

Here are some helpful definitions:

Sex: Is assigned at birth based on external genitalia, reproductive organs, chromosomes, and hormones. Some people with ambiguous or other biological complexities (such as chromosomal pattern or hormonal shift), may identify as intersex. Such as: Male, Intersex, Female

Gender Identity: Refers to a person's innate, deeply felt physiological identification as a woman, man, or another gender which may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender Identity is different from the term "gender," which is typically used in reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. Such as: Woman, Genderqueer, Man

Gender Expression: Refers to the external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as dress, grooming, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions. The norms vary culturally. Such as: Feminine, Androgynous, Masculine

Sexual Orientation: Is the term used to describe which gender(s) someone is physically and or emotionally attracted to. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, and straight are all examples of sexual orientations. A person's sexual orientation is distinct from a person's sex, gender identity, and gender expression. Attracted to Men, Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer, Attracted to Women

People over definitions and personal pronouns:

Personal pronouns are the set of pronouns a person wants others to use when talking to or about them. Ask a person what pronouns they prefer. Remember if someone is feminine presenting, it does not automatically mean they use she/her/hers pronouns. You cannot assume someone's pronouns based on the person's gender expression.

The term "gender identity" is more inclusive than "sex" or "gender," because not everyone who was assigned a certain sex at birth identifies as that gender later in life. Including "gender non-conforming" and/or a "custom" options extends additional hospitality.

It is important to ask for pronouns when making event name-tags, because one cannot assume a person's pronouns based on their name or gender expression.

Not all queer people use he/him/his or she/her/hers pronouns. For some "they, them, theirs," "xe, xem, xyrs," or "ze, hir, hirs" are gender inclusive pronouns which most accurately reflect that person's identity.

Additional ways to extend hospitality include:

•ADDING PERSONAL PRONOUNS TO NAME-TAGS:

Purchase premade name-tags with pronouns, provide markers for attendees to fill in the blank, or print your own mini pronoun stickers for attendees to select and wear.

•GENDER INCLUSIVE RESTROOMS:

Ensure your gathering spaces have clearly labeled gender inclusive restrooms available for attendees. This can also extend hospitality to families with small children or people with physical disabilities.

•INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:

Work to make sure materials for your gatherings have updated language that is inclusive of gender non-conforming individuals. Try swapping out binary phrases like "women and men" and "brothers and sisters" with more inclusive phrases like "siblings in Christ" or "God's beloved."

Used with permission from: Building an Inclusive Church from Reconciling Works



Migrant Journey from Central America

On Sunday, January 19 during learning time, participate in a cross-generational activity and take the "migrant journey." What is the migrant journey? It is an interactive experience to learn about the factors driving people to flee their homes in the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) and seek refuge in countries. As people go through the journey, they learn why children and families are fleeing from their homes and the obstacles they face finding protection in other countries, including the United States.



Greetings!

Immanuel Lutheran has a team of caring people that are trained to provide communion to those who are not able to be at church on a regular basis or not at all. The team is called the Eucharistic Ministry Team. Each person is partnered with one or two people that will have a visit at least one time per month. During the visit and along with the gift of communion, a devotion or scripture reading can be shared, a review of the bulletin, the *Image* or just conversation of what is going on at Immanuel can happen. All Eucharistic Ministers are provided with training, a communion kit and the service for communion. The first visit can be solo or partnered with Janet or Pastor Jamie. The team also meets 3-4 times per year for follow-up, support and fellowship.

Being a Eucharistic Minister is meaningful for those who are receiving communion as well as for those who are sharing in this special meal of communion.

The Eucharistic team is meeting **January 6th at 5:30** at Immanuel. If you are interested in learning about being part of the team, please come! If you have questions call Janet Carlson at 715-456-0577 or email: faith4me.jan@gmail.com.

Merry Christmas!
Janet Carlson—Caring Ministry



A big thank you to the Immanuel community for your generosity!

- Because of your generosity, we were able to provide a Thanksgiving meal to 12 families in need of a little extra help.
- Thank you to all who worked in the kitchen, brought food and participated in our annual Advent Feast.
- On behalf of the church council, thank you for your generous financial support of Immanuel. Your gifts make it possible for us to share the Good News and live out the gospel within and outside our walls.

Why should we care for others?

Simple question right? But maybe not. In the book “Christian Caregiving, a Way of Life” by Kenneth C. Haugk, founder of Stephen Ministries, Dr. Haugk was asked by a patient why he was a psychologist. The patient not being satisfied with the answer of “I very much enjoy working with people” wanted a deeper answer. Dr. Haugk finally responded after contemplation that his real reason “lies in my faith in God and in what God has done for me in Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus cares for me so much that he was willing to give his life for me. Remembering his love, I can’t help but reach out and share that love and care with others.”

In my own life experiences I can attest that being cared for has been one of the biggest blessings and one of the biggest “aha” moments of growth of my faith. Being a very independent person one of the greatest gifts I have ever received was the ability to let go of that so called independence of taking care of things myself and letting others care and do for me. This happened when my son Tom was diagnosed with cancer. I was not able to keep up with daily living tasks such as grocery shopping, cleaning the house, yard care or even making meals due to Tom’s weekly or even daily trips to Rochester, MN, for treatments, the incredible amount of time that he spent in the hospital, and just being emotionally exhausted to do the next thing. Our Immanuel family and friends walked with my family during this time to provide care for us. I gave up my so called independence to do everything myself and accepted this beautiful gift of being cared for. Nothing was required of me as a way of paying back or owing anybody. We were simply loved and cared for.

Thanks for Caring



Our friends and family gave their time, possibly giving up something else to do so. Jesus gave up much more than just time - he gave his life for us because he loved and cared for us so much. Caring for others can be a big project like building a house for Habitat for Humanity or sitting on boards that do philanthropic work. But it can be as simple as greeting strangers as we pass by them or looking up at the cashier at Target instead of looking at our phones.

This past September I, along with Deb Kavanagh, Emilie Anderson and Karen Betzig-Lundberg, attended a mini training and informational session about Stephen Ministries, Inc. Stephen Ministries works with faith organizations to provide training and tools to equip people to care for others in their congregations. In the coming months we will be having discussions, researching and praying if Stephen Ministries would be a good fit for Immanuel as we continue to be a caring congregation. Check the Immanuel calendar for the next meeting date. If you are interested in being part of the conversation, contact Janet Carlson, 715-456-0577 or faith4me.jan@gmail.com. You can find more information about Stephen Ministries on their website, <https://www.stephenministries.org/>

Peace, Janet Carlson

Youth and Family Ministry



Christmas has passed, the presents are opened, and the cookies are eaten. Now – what to do with that bare tree? The 2020 Summer Service Team is happy to take it off your hands! On Sunday, January 5 & Sunday, January 12 our team will be offering Christmas tree pick up. Simply sign-up & take an envelope from the narthex, then place that envelope (be sure it's visible!) on your curbside tree by 9 AM on the day you signed up for – we'll be by to collect it! The cost is any free will donation to our trip. Thank you in advance – we appreciate your support!

Annual Family Retreat at Luther Park Bible Camp!

Looking for a fun family get-away this winter? Consider joining us on the Immanuel Winter Retreat at Luther Park. ***The retreat this year is happening from February 14-16.*** As always, you are welcome to stay the entire weekend, or come just for any portion of the weekend that works for your schedule. We will be housed at the Shalom center, which is a very comfortable building for sleeping and relaxing. We will have lots of activities for your family to participate in. Please consider coming to the retreat! Registration forms and additional information are available on the table in the narthex.

Family Fun Night at the Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center!

All are welcome for an active night at the YMCA Sports Center on Friday, January 10. The event is open from 5:00 - 9:00 PM - feel free to come and go as needed. Cost is \$5/person, and you can pay the Sports Center on arrival.

Pizza Ranch Fundraiser!

The 2020 Service Trip Team will be having a fundraiser at Pizza Ranch on Wednesday, January 28 from 4:00 - 8:00 PM. Come over and enjoy a delicious meal and support our team in the process! Our team will receive 10% of the nights' proceeds as well as all tips. Thank you!

The Immanuel Men's Group will meet on Saturday, January 11 and 25. We meet from 8:30 A.M. to 9:45 A.M. for Bible Study, devotion, discussion, conversation, and fellowship. New members to the group are always welcome! For more information see Ray Koch or Steve Mikelson.



Getting to Know Our 2020 Service Trip Team

Hello, my name is Karina Barquist. I am a 9th grader at North High. I am very excited to participate in the 2020 trip. I enjoy helping others very much so this experience should be very fulfilling and bring many more special memories.

Hello, my name is Marissa Schroeder, and I'm 14, in 9th grade, and I go to North High School. I would be very excited to go on this trip because I had so much fun on the last trip and made so many memories. I would be happy to go on a service trip to help with stuff. I feel like it would help make me a more responsible, respectful person.

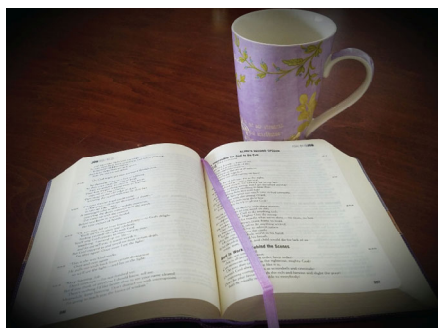
My name is Allisa Hansen, I am a junior at Memorial High School. I am excited to go on the trip because it's a great change to grow in my faith and bond with my peers.

Hi, my name is Molly LoRusso. I am excited for the 2020 mission trip to Tennessee because of the experience I had last year. I grew in my faith tremendously and grew stronger bonds with everyone there. I also want to help the younger kids like I was helped last year.

Hi, I'm Ava Weber and I'm a sophomore at Memorial. I want to go on this trip because I went last year and I enjoyed the experience so I would like to go again to expand my relationships. I would also like to go to deepen my connection with God and life.

My name is Kaelyn Hansen. I am 14 years old and I am in 8th grade at DeLong Middle School. I want to go on the mission trip this year because I want to expand my faith. I also want to go on this mission trip to help serve and grow a stronger connection with God and meet new friends and people. I am very excited to go on the trip this year!

My name is Maija Balts, I'm a junior at Memorial High School. I love mission work and am excited to meet more people. I'm excited for this trip because there are a lot of kids going, and I can't wait to bond with all of them. I think the hardest part for me will be the car ride because I tend to get motion sickness.



H3—Holy, Healthy and Happy

H3 meets on Mondays at 6:30 PM or Tuesdays at 9:30 AM. H3 is a group of people who meet to read Scripture, pray, and study and discuss a selected book, video or topic. H3 will resume on January 6, and we will be reading and discussing the book *Inspired*, by Rachel Held Evans. Come, join us!

JANUARY

Birthdays & Anniversaries

01 LaVerne Parenteau
 01 Rachel LaValley
 01 Megan Zimmerman
 02 Mercedez Isham
 03 Pam Johnson
 04 Deanna Larson
 05 Bob Lodahl
 06 Tom Buchholz
 07 Zachary Heck
 08 Todd Pickett
 10 Sheldon Satter
 10 Rayna Felling
 11 Marianna Gilbertson
 11 Kim Bowman
 11 Scott Calkins
 11 Felicity Manning
 12 Brenda Johnson
 12 Alexander Dragseth
 14 Doly Rakotomahenina

14 Weston Neidermire
 16 Al Ludwig
 17 Irv Peterson
 17 Jim Fey
 22 Ruth Halverson
 22 Lori Rosemore
 23 Fern Satter
 23 Lincoln Prissel
 24 Allison Leibham
 24 Kallen Engedal
 25 Larry Blanshan
 26 Janet Forster
 26 Andy Benware
 27 Seth Redetzke
 27 Rylind Rassbach
 28 Dan Malnory
 29 Neil Hanson
 29 Marguerite Gilbertson
 31 Marcia Bowman
 31 Schyler Manning
 31 Avery Wilson

16 Lang & Holli Jacobson
 20 Larry & Diane Blanshan
 25 Bob & Deanna Larson



New Church Pictorial Directory

It's time for a new church pictorial directory, and we want you in it! Pictures will be taken at the church January 22-25, 2020. You can schedule your appointment online

from our website, <https://www.immanuelec.org/who-we-are/church-directory-photo/>. You can also contact Sue Luthy or the church office. There is no charge to our members, and you receive a photograph free of charge.



	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26
Assisting Minister	Ray Koch	Janet Carlson	Dave Langhus	Dee Schlieve
Lector	Nathan Aaseng	Marc Likkel	Bob Wilcox	Lauren Likkel
Ushers	Please volunteer	Emilie & Loren Anderson	Bill & Peggy Schwengel	Curt Carlson & Gary Pospishil
Greeters	David & Andrea Schaffer	Jacobson Family	LaVerne Parenteau & Donna Armstrong	Jim & Cheryl Ulberg
Counters	Sue Luthy & Al Ludwig	Sue Luthy & Al Ludwig	Sue Luthy & Al Ludwig	Sue Luthy & Al Ludwig

January 2020

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<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/39-0990139>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Office Closed 	2 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	3 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	4
5 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Learning & Fellowship; undecorate the trees Christmas tree pickup	6 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry 5:30 PM - Eucharistic Ministry meeting 6:30 PM - H3	7 9:30 AM H3 6:30 PM Knitting	8 10:15 AM Sr Bible Study Noon—Material Witness Quilting 5:30 PM WoW Meal 6:00 PM WoW Worship, Learning & SHYN 7:30 PM Mentor mtg 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	10 9-11 AM Food Pantry open Family Fun Night @ YMCA Sports Center, 5:00-9:00 PM	11 8:30 Men's Group
12 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Learning, Fellowship, Book Group meets Christmas tree pickup	13 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open 6:30 PM - H3	14 9:30 AM H3	15 10:15 AM Sr Bible Study Noon—Material Witness Quilting 5:30 PM WoW Meal 6:00 PM WoW Worship, Learning & SHYN 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Service Trip	16 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	17 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	18
19 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Cross-Gen learning, Fellowship, Finance Committee Mtg 3:00 PM Inclusive Ministry (IM) Church @ Lake Street Methodist	20 No CAW or Camp Create 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry 6:30 PM - H3	21 9:30 AM H3 6:00 PM Trust Fund Board 7:00 PM Council Mtg	22 10:15 AM Sr Bible Study Noon—Material Witness Quilting 5:30 PM WoW Meal 6:00 PM WoW Worship, Learning & SHYN 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal Directory photos	23 9-11 AM Food Pantry open Directory photos	24 9-11 AM Food Pantry open Directory photos	25 Directory photos 8:30 Men's Group
26 9:30 AM Worship RIC Sunday 10:30 AM Learning & Fellowship	27 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open 6:30 PM - H3	28 9:30 AM H3	29 Immanuel serves @ Community Table Noon—Material Witness Quilting 4:00-8:00 PM Service Team fundraiser @ Pizza Ranch 5:30 PM WoW Meal 6:00 PM WoW Worship, Learning & SHYN 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	30 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	31 9-11 AM Food Pantry open	

Immanuel Lutheran Church

At Immanuel we recognize that every person has a valuable story that carries infinite worth. We are called by Jesus to love expansively and make this unwavering pledge to welcome all people, without exception. We affirm the image of God in people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, relationship status, physical or mental ability, health status, and



cultural or ethnic identity. In our church family we welcome all regardless of socioeconomic situation, addiction, imprisonment or anything else that too often divides us.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
3214 Golf Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701
Address service required

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Dated Material—useless if delayed



*A congregation of the
Northwest Synod of the ELCA of Wisconsin*