

The **Annual Church Bazaar**

was held Friday, November 1 and it was a laughing good time! \$7,543 was raised between the country store, white elephant thrift sale, lunch, cake walk, raffle, and live auction.

Thank you to everyone that made/donated items, bid, baked, & helped the night go smoothly.

Start planning for next year!



This year at the "Craft for a Cure" event, \$2007 was raised and sent on to *Alzheimer's Research*. The six years we have been doing this, we have easily raised over \$10,000!! WOW!

Thank you to Lynn and Lindsey Nelson for all the work they do to organize a fun day.

Sunday School News

Dec 1 – Christmas program practice during Sunday School (9:15)

Dec 8 – Christmas program practice during Sunday School (9:15)

Saturday, Dec 14 – Practice! 9am-noon, snacks provided

Dec 15 – kids arrive at normal Sunday school time, **Christmas program performance**

Dec 22 – Sunday School Christmas party, optional attendance, but lots of fun!

Dec 29 - No Sunday School

This year our congregation collected pajamas for the local "Pajama Grandma" program.

We collected more than 50 pairs of pajamas in all sizes.

Pajama Grandma distributes pajamas to children in the surrounding area.

Emmanuel – God With Us



December

Every year as cold December descends upon us with cold and snow, we begin the story of Jesus all over. Every year the mainline Christian churches, like Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, United Church of Christ, and other denominations begins again, the cycle of **“Emmanuel – God With Us.”** Every year with the beginning of Advent, the story of Jesus is told starting with the foretelling of his birth. Then Jesus is born and we celebrate his birth at Christmas. Following his birth, the wise ones from the East

come to pay homage at Epiphany, which means “to make known.” Quickly the story of Jesus moves forward to Jesus being baptized by John in the Jordan, the beginning of Jesus purpose in the world to call people to repentance for the kingdom of God is at hand. As Jesus chooses the apostles to travel with him, we find out more of who Jesus is as the Son God through teachings and miracles as he travels from town to town and always toward Jerusalem. When the story of Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, the stage is set for the final days of Jesus’ life, as he has supper one last time with his apostles, is arrested, put on trial, condemned to death, nailed to a cross at the crossroads outside of Jerusalem for all the world to see. One would think that the story of Jesus would end right there. But God burst open the tomb, conquering death and the grave not only for Jesus, but all of us as well. The women and eventually the Apostles, experience the resurrected Lord and travel to the mountain of Galilee as Jesus directed them. There, the resurrected Jesus gives them final instructions just before he ascends into heaven and promises them **“Emmanuel – God With Us”** to the end of the age.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I AM WITH YOU always, to the end of the age.”

Then, the story of Jesus continues when the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Jesus), comes with tongues of fire and the church begins the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins--the beginning of making disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey just as Jesus commanded. AND, the story of Jesus doesn’t end there as down through the centuries of time, the baptizing, the teaching continues to make disciples of all nations. So the story of Jesus comes to each one of us, the Church of Christ in the world today.

Therefore, as we once again begin to listen and hear the great story of Jesus, God’s beloved Son, let our hearts turn and open to the holy child of Bethlehem--**“Emmanuel – God With Us.”** *Oh Come, All Ye Faithful...Let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Pr. Ahles

Lines from LaVerne... We are all just walking each other home, our journey to heaven. Hopefully, we can discover our purpose in this life, "God's chosen instrument". Are you feeling weary at some times in your life? If so, only one man claimed to have the answer for it. He stands before the world with the promise, "Come to me, all you who are weary and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Then there was Peter. Peter was sharp, as he kept his distance from Jesus, just close enough, but not too close. Don't get too close Peter, you might get hurt. Don't stir the water, keep religion in its place. Pay your dues and come once a

week...well...you could get carried away. But Peter learned a lesson that day – a very hard lesson. It is better to never have followed Jesus, than to have followed him and denied him. Then we have some who treat Bible class and the worship service like a harsh movie critic. Entertain me and it better be good. Our world has very little room for failures. Our world is ideal for the successful, but devastating for the loser. However, Jesus had a place for misfits, the last became first, and even the loser had value.

You Lay Minister,
LaVerne

November 5, 2019 Congregational Council Meeting (Unapproved)

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by President Jim Odness. Members present were Jim Odness, Keith Nelson, Bruce Thompson, Pastor Ahles, Stephanie Rumstick, Brandi Berg, Tom Johnson, Linda Odness, Becky Rongstad and Cedric Anderson

Kellee Petik – From Luther Park provided a brief presentation and informational session about the building project at Luther Park. She shared that there are matching funds available through two different donors and left information regarding how interested parties could support this cause.

Pastor led us in prayer and devotion with a reading from Luke Chapter 19. In this reading Zachariah was called a son of Abraham God, likewise Jesus calls us through baptism to be sons & daughters of God. In being God's children we are all members of the family and are blessed. Pastor reminds to work together in faith to grow God's family.

Secretary's report for the October's Congregational Council Meeting was read by Linda; motion to approve minutes as read by Brandi, Bruce seconded; motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Brandi with motion to approve as presented by Linda, seconded by Tim, motion carried.

October

- Checking Account - \$6,660.37
- 2050 General Fund - \$38,478.15
- 13 mo. CD - \$10,145.30
- Building Fund Checking - \$9,264.20
- Memorial Fund - \$2,872.05

Pastor's Report

- Pastor conducted 5 worship services, attended 5 text studies, made 5 home visits, 5 visits to shut-ins, and 1 hospital visits.
- He provided instruction on 4 dates for the confirmation students and attended choir practice 3 nights and attended the annual bazaar.
- Pastor attended the following meetings: Dairyland Conference Pastors', meeting in Pigeon Falls; Mutli-Conference Gathering @ Luther Park, Chetek; and special meeting with both church Councils, the Joint Parish Council and Synod staff support.
- Pastor provided ministry and prayer with the Barry McKune family and attended his funeral.
- Pastor will use his remaining vacation on the following dates: November 26th - December 2nd
December 27th - December 31st.

**Council
Meeting is
Tuesday,
December 3
at 7 p.m.**

- The bazaar was a great success this year, raising \$7,543.00 which is the best ever.

Parish Secretary Update

- Crystal was wondering if we are going to continue to use communion cards. Lengthy discussion was held with no action taken.

Janitor

- Brandi, Tim and Jim met with Julie on November 8th as a three month follow-up. It appears that everything is going well. She would like to be paid \$20.00 an hour which is an increase from \$15.00.

Sunday School

- Just a reminder that beginning in November, Sunday School time will be spent preparing for the Christmas Program which is on December 17th.

Parish Council

- Next meeting will be held on November 19, at Immanuel Lutheran, beginning at 6:30

Old Business

1. Offering envelopes for 2020 will be ordered by Brandi and will be available in the narthex, hopefully by the middle of December.
2. Church survey is available electronically through Facebook and paper copies in the church narthex. Please complete them by November 30th.
3. On behalf of the council Jim extended a big thank you to all those who attended, supported and participated in the annual bazaar. The evening was fun and a great success.
4. Jim also recognized Lynn Nelson and her family for the Alzheimer's Fundraiser that was held on Saturday, November 2.

New Business

1. A tentative budget for 2020 was presented by Brandi with some numbers adjusted with budget to be finalized at December meeting.
2. Jim is encouraging those continuing on council next year to set some goals for benevolence as well as growing our church. He also feels it is important to set some projects as a focus.
3. Pastor Ahles was excused from the meeting and a lengthy discussion was held regarding the proposed salary increase presented by Pastor Ahles which was also shared at the Joint Parish Board meeting in September. Tom made a motion to maintain Pastor Ahles salary for 2020 as it is with no increases, seconded by Bruce; motion carried.
4. Pastor Ahles returned to the meeting and salary decision was shared with him after which additional discussion ensued, with no further action taken.

Motion to adjourn made by Linda, 2nd by Bruce, motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:21 and we closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Odness, Recording Secretary



Meeting Minutes of Special Meeting of Immanuel & Elk Creek Lutheran Churches (Approved)

October 14, 2019, 6:30 pm at Elk Creek Lutheran

Council Members and Joint Parish Council Members present: *Synod Representative Pastor Randy Olson, Pastor Vahlerian Ahles, Marie Murrell, Vickie Hanson, Tom Wagener, Camille Skoug, Bob Schlink, Scott Anderson, Peter Berge, Barb Fischer, Brandi Berg, Keith Nelson, Jim Odness, Cedric Anderson, Tim Radatz, Bruce Thompson, Becky Rongstad, Stephanie Rumstick, Pam Johnson, Steve Ebert, Linda Odness, Jan Berg, Tom Johnson*

Pastor led with devotions, and we began with prayer. Synod representative Pastor Randy Olson introduced himself and had us list the bright spots of our joining, in order to focus on **how this union has been a blessing**. The list we compiled included: joint services we've held together; we experimented with a joint service on 5th Sundays; our pastoral

leadership; a good call committee experience; both congregations were supportive to Pastor & Christine in their grief; both congregations' willingness to experiment; great to see events attended by other congregation's members.

It was expressed that there have been ongoing points of conflict for some time, causing our union to be less than what we had envisioned. One member summed it up as "the honeymoon is over." During the course of the evening, we broke into individual congregation meetings twice, rejoining for further discussion each time.

Tom handed out the shared ministry agreement and read the Mission Statement. Immanuel suggested that article IV (one bulletin . . .) be struck from the agreement. This was agreed to. Brandi suggested we add (c) "that the congregation with the earlier worship service will arrange for a supply pastor for both congregations when our pastor is unavailable" to this article also. It was agreed that the supply Pastor will be obtained by the congregation with the earlier worship service.

Immanuel proposed that **determining percentages for financial expenses** paid be based on an average of the 3 sets of numbers (baptized members, confirmed members, average weekly attendance.) Based on the latest numbers reported to the Synod, this split would be 60% Immanuel / 40% Elk Creek (which has been 65% / 35% up until now). It was agreed that joint expenses will be covered at 60% Immanuel & 40% Elk Creek.

It was agreed that the **final schedule for the year will be set by Joint Parish Council** in February meeting, and changes requested by Congregational Councils must be brought to Joint Parish Council for approval. Congregational Councils should discuss and communicate to Joint Parish Council members preferred schedule for worship services (lent, etc.) prior to the January parish council meeting.

Michelle has resigned as Joint Parish Financial Administrator, and Immanuel has proposed that the parsonage owner be assigned **responsibility for joint bills**. Suggestion to strike "and staff" under 9a regarding salaries, as there are no joint salaries, and this was agreed to. Suggestion had been made that the congregation housing the pastor in their parsonage should maintain the bookkeeping and pay expenses, billing the other congregation. Elk Creek would have to hire someone, as no one qualified expressed an interest on taking on this extra work. Strum had been taking care of this with no cost to Elk Creek. It was suggested that no matter which congregation takes care of it, if it is a cost, it should be shared. 2 years ago, a quote was given by Haukeness for \$600/year to take care of this. Elk Creek proposed that the cost be shared 50/50. Tabled for individual congregations to discuss twice. It was agreed that Immanuel would pay up to \$300/year if Elk Creek needs to hire the work out to a private contractor.

It was discussed that **housing the pastor** should be a shared expense by some degree by both congregations. The original agreement had no provision for the congregation housing the pastor in their parsonage to have any reimbursement by the other congregation, and Immanuel housed Pastor Bolstad with no reimbursement, and Elk Creek has been housing Pastor Ahles with no reimbursement. Elk Creek shared that Chimney Rock paid monthly when we provided the parsonage for our joint Pastors. Immanuel proposed that only expenses that were directly incurred due to housing pastor should be shared. The congregation housing the pastor takes in no income for the property, yet the congregation not housing the pastor is able to collect rent (income) that is used for maintenance. Immanuel stated that Elk Creek needs to have a dollar amount for them to discuss. Elk Creek proposed \$200/month to the congregation housing the parsonage from the other congregation, to offset maintenance costs. Tabled for individual congregations to discuss twice. It was agreed that Immanuel would pay \$200/month.

The meeting ended around 10:45 pm with hugs and handshakes, and a strong desire to move forward in shared ministry, focusing on doing God's work together.

Respectfully submitted by Pam Johnson

Tuesday, December 10th you are invited to join our church members as they sing carols at the Trempealeau County Healthcare Center at 1pm. If you'd like to bring treats to share with the residents, please contact Jan.

The choir has resumed practices on **Wednesdays at 7 pm** in the church basement. All are welcome to attend!

WELCA of Elk Creek met on November 10, 2019. Meeting was opened at 9:10 am by President Jan with Creed and Theme verse. Secretary's report for September and October was given. Correction to October minutes – Ladies did meet, but minutes were not available for October meeting, and \$100.00 in gifts was approved for Jan to purchase for Trempealeau CO. center, not New Horizons. Motion by Tammy 2nd by Becky to accept Secretary's report. Treasurer's report for October: Income; \$218.00, Expenses \$646.09, Checking Balance \$909.94, Savings and Seminary fund savings remains the same as previous month. From the Bazaar Nov 1st. Auction \$5665.00, Lunch \$162.50, Country Store; 123.50, Cake walk \$84.00, White elephant donations \$48.00.

Old Business: Jan bought \$100 in gifts at the Dollar Tree for Trempe Co. Care Center consisting of: socks, slippers, personal hygiene products, and calendars.

Donations for Pajama Grandma going very well. Discussed that a Thrivent grant could be used to purchase pajamas if someone had one to use.

Lynn urged all to vote for Elk Creek Lutheran as the Best Lutefisk and Meat ball dinner in the county. When voting, you also vote for a number of other categories to be named "Best of" for Trempealeau Co.

Wedding Show date set for June 27, 2020. Get information on Dresses, sizes and possible models to Tammy.

New Business: Final Ballot was brought forward by Deb Ebert from the nominating committee:

Co-President: Jan Berg and Stephanie Rumstick

Treasurer: Becky Rongstad

Secretary: Barb Fischer

Church Council Representatives: Becky Rongstad and Lori Nelson

Alter Committee Nicole Nelson, Crystal Johnson, Linda Odness and Jeneen Giacamino.

Auditors: Brandi Berg and Barb Howard

Nominating Committee: Debbie Ebert and Rosanne Thompson

Quilting and Mission Action: All Ladies

Memorial Committee: (3) Becky Rongstad, Tammy Danenberg, and Deb Ebert

Motion to approve as nominated by Tammy, 2nd by Lynn motion passed.

Tammy brought a request from OF School to sponsor a family in need. The family is requesting clothes, with wishes of crafts and books. Motion by Becky to give \$200.00 for Tammy to purchase items. Debbie Ebert 2nd. Motion passed.

Annual Gifts; \$500.00 to the 3 area Food Pantries, plus \$200.00 to Ruby's Pantry – this goes to the church to assist those who cannot pay.

Osseo Ministerial: \$300.00

Western Dairyland \$500.00

ELCA Goodgifts \$500.00 / Heifer International \$200.00

New Horizon \$500.00

Trempealeau Co. Health Center \$100 gifts, and \$100

Christmas From the Heart \$100.00 (Eleva Strum)

Osseo Elementary \$200.00

Discussion on these gifts; request by Barb to give Eleva Strum the same amount as Osseo. Motion by Lori to give the same to Osseo and E/S, discussion that we should give all 3 schools (Whitehall included) equally. Motion was then amended to match giving to all 3 schools and approve the other giving as listed by Lori, 2nd by Becky. Motion Passed.

Thank You's were read from Osseo Elementary, weekend food program, Trempealeau Co. Donation, Western Dairyland (Quilts), Birthday Box and RIF Program. Update from Stephanie on fundraiser for ERO (Quilt donated) \$3500 this year went to 3 families with health issues.

Lynn made the suggestion we think about doing some kind of a Welcome Basket for new people in the neighborhood.

Motion to adjourn by Tammy, 2nd by Barb, motion passed. Meeting closed with offering and Lord's Prayer. Barb Fischer, Sec.

Noisy Offering!

\$124.06 was collected to be used for Sunday School expenses like curriculum, supplies, Christmas program treats, etc.

THANK YOU!

FOOD PANTRY

The food pantry collection is the 2nd Sunday of the month. Please bring your non-perishable food items to be donated to area

December



*Christmas
Program*

Sunday,

December 15

10:30 am

**MIKE NELSON
WAS THE WINNER
OF THE QUILT
RAFFLE**

**Sing-A-Long
& Appreciation Dinner
Thursday, Dec 19
Meal at 6 pm
(sign up in Narthex)**