

Annual Church Bazaar

Friday, November 1

7:00 pm : Country Store, Dessert Walk, & White Elephant Thrift "room"

7:30 pm : Auction fun begins!

**If you have anything you would like to donate please notify the ladies.*

Sunday School News

Nov 3 – 9:15 Sunday School, Noisy Offering during church

Nov 10 – Practice singing @ 10:10, Bible Camp during the service (no Sunday School)

Nov 17 – Christmas program practice during Sunday School (9:15)

Nov 24 – No Sunday School

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 pantries.

**Council
Meeting is
Tuesday,
November 5
at 7 p.m.**

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

Instead of participating in the county "Giving Tree" this year for Christmas, the Ladies have decided to contribute to "Pajama Grandma".

Pajama Grandma distributes pajamas to children in the surrounding area. Bring NEW pajamas, any size, by December 1. There is more need for older children sizes.



Giving Thanks When Life Is Hard

All summer long it was easy to give thanks for my favorite baseball team, the Minnesota Twins. Week after week, crucial game after crucial game they stayed out in front of the other teams of their division. They homered, pitched and played their way to 101 wins and won their division. Then came the Yankees...Aaarrrrrgh! For the umpteenth time in their history, the Yankees made the twins look like the worst team in major league baseball. The Twins even set a record for the number of times that a team lost in the playoffs to the same team. How do you give thanks for that?

It's easy to give thanks when life is going reasonably well, but how do we give thanks when life is not going well? How do we give thanks when we lose a job, or fail a class needed for graduation, or don't get a promotion at work, or the car breaks down unexpectedly on a busy city street, or it doesn't stop raining so farmers can't harvest, or a loved one dies from cancer way to young?

The Apostle Paul, in the letter to the Ephesians describes life full of the Spirit and says, ***"But be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*** (Eph. 5:20). Giving thanks at all times for everything challenges us to understand that God is greater than any circumstance we find ourselves in.

Moreover, Paul didn't just tell others that they should give thanks during hard times, he actually did it himself. He and Silas prayed and sang songs of praise to God during the night after they had been beaten and imprisoned in Philippi. ***"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."*** (Acts 16:25). For myself during the last two years of grieving the death of our sons, singing hymns and songs to God has been a great comfort and strength for me. Singing helped me through Thanksgiving 2018 and will this year as well.

Yet, when it comes to answer the question of how to give thanks when life is hard, I point to Jesus as the one who shows us how to give thanks in hard times. ***"On the night when he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."*** Yes, before Jesus is betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, arrested, put on trial and condemned to death on a cross, Jesus gives thanks even when life is hard. Give thanks to God always, even when life is hard.

Pastor Ahles

A Community Thanksgiving Service will be held at Immanuel in Strum on Wednesday, November 27th at 7 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend this joint service.



Thanksgiving
Worship Service

NOT APPROVED MEETING MINUTES OF THE JOINT PARISH BOARD of

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH & ELK CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

Meeting Date: September 17, 2019

Time: 6:30 p.m. (The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Tom)

In Attendance: Pastor Ahles, Jim Odness, Becky Rongstad, Vicki Hanson, Camille , Marie , Tom Wagoner, Pam Johnson

Opening Devotions: Pastor shared devotions, starting with Psalm 145 as a responsive reading. He talked about the act of praising God and shared a humorous devotion he had come across recently.

Last Quarter's Minutes: The June meeting minutes were approved, with the correction that Michelle didn't make a motion (as she is not on the parish board). Notes to be amended with Camille making the motion.

Pastoral report

Pastor Ahles is tentatively thinking of taking remaining vacation days the week after Thanksgiving and the week after Christmas.

Old Business

No plans in either church for mid-week advent worship services

Sunday School program will be held on Sunday, December 15 at both churches

Elk Creek's Christmas Sing-a-Long & Supper will be held on Thursday, December 18 at 6 pm

Immanuel Christmas Dinner and Concert will be held on December 18th (Dinner 5:30 / Concert 7:00)

On Wednesday, December 4th, Immanuel will host a senior dinner @ 11:00 with program

Thanksgiving Eve will be held Wednesday, November 28 at Immanuel, with Eleva at 7 pm

Thanksgiving Day dinner will be held from 12:00 to 2:00 at Immanuel; all are welcome

Christmas Eve worship will be held at 5:00 @ Immanuel, and at 7:00 @ Elk Creek

Christmas Day worship will be held at 8:30 Immanuel; Jim announced that Elk Creek will not hold Christmas Day service as attendance was very low last year

Confirmation Updates

Strum has 26 students currently in confirmation, and 4 will be confirm their faith on October 27. There are ten 7th graders and twelve 8th graders meeting at 3:45 on Wednesdays. Pastor was pleased to have the support of Kevin Skoug and Craig Semingson, as they work with the 7th graders on "Echo, the Story" class material.

Pastor will be working with the 8th graders using "Luther's Small Catechism." Immanuel holds a dinner in honor of their confirmands, hosted by the younger students, and will be held Wednesday October 23 this year. Elk Creek has 3 freshman students who will confirm their faith on October 27. They are currently working on their statement of faith. There is one student in his second year of confirmation, and 2 or 3 first year students.

Supply Pastor Procedure: A short discussion was held to clarify our supply Pastor procedure, as who gets pastor. First service congregation will make arrangements for the supply pastor for both congregations.

Parsonage Fuel: Parsonage LP fuel contract is signed and we have remained with Chippewa Valley. Jim explained that our contract was originally with both Elk Creek church and parsonage. Going forward, Elk Creek will take care of parsonage fuel contracts as it is their property to care for. A discussion ensued suggesting that if there are concerns that arise on parish council business conducted via email, that it would be good practice to hold an impromptu face-to-face meeting. Also, "reply to all" in emails in order to keep all members informed of the discussion.

Review of Shared Expense Percentages: We currently cover shared expenses with Immanuel paying 65% and Elk Creek paying 35%. This is based on our current agreement (using the numbers from 2 years ago) which outlines average attendance as governing how expenses will be shared. The contract was drawn up in April of 2017, and will be reviewed and revised if warranted annually. There was no change in 2018, as it was decided to keep intact until a review in fall of 2019, with any changes to begin in January 2020.

Tom provided the following numbers that each church provides to the synod:

Baptized Members: 62% Immanuel/38% Elk Creek

Confirmed Members: 58% Immanuel/42% Elk Creek

Attendance Average: 60% Immanuel/40% Elk Creek

During discussion, the stair lift in the parsonage was proposed by Tom to be included in shared expenses. Along with that proposal, it was also proposed that the recommendation be made to the individual church councils, to change percentage of shared expenses to 60% Immanuel and /40% Elk Creek, as outlined in the parish agreement. Motion made by Marie, seconded by Pam. Motion carried.

Pastoral Salary Review: Salary guidelines were handed out and reviewed and discussed. Pam proposed that we recommend to our councils a salary increase of \$3,565 for 2020, which covers a cost of living adjustment, along with bringing us closer to recommended minimum salary guidelines (which would be reached over an 8-year period if we continue to follow). The motion was seconded by Marie. Motion carried.

Budget: The shared budget was reviewed and will be amended with new percentages that will be proposed to each congregational council.

New Business:

Tom, Becky and Jim's terms will be up early next year.

Tom shared with us that "Military Makeover," a television series, is coming to Strum to fix Steve Wojcik's home and there is need for volunteers to house the team coming in. Call Debbie Ebert if you are willing to be a host.

Strum Apple Pie Project will be taking place on October 8 & 9. \$8 per pie. Excellent pies, and helpers are appreciated! Call the Strum office to order, or sign up for pick up.

Immanuel's Nordic Fest is November 9

Elk Creek's Fall Bazaar is November 1. Dessert raffle & Country Store (bake sale) begins at 7:00 p.m., and auction starts at 7:30 p.m.

Craft for a Cure to End Alzheimer's Disease is Saturday, Nov. 2 at Elk Creek. \$20 reserves a space to work on a craft. Lunch, snacks, beverages and dessert are provided. Buy a chance at door prizes. Contact Lynn Nelson to sign up.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 with the Lord's prayer.

Next meeting to be held November 19, 6:30 at Immanuel

Respectfully submitted by Pam Johnson



Lines from LaVerne... BECOME CLOSER TO GOD. God's number one desire for everyone of His followers is that we experience an intimate relationship with Him. Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine and you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing." John 15:5-6 Today, the notion of "fearing God" is the most ignored teaching of the Bible. Yet, both David and Solomon told us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A healthy fear of God is a great gift. This fear, or reverence, places God on the throne of our hearts and positions us at a place of humbleness and worship before God. Be very careful how you live, as we have a limited amount of time here on earth. Our lives are like a vapor, that appears for a while and then vanishes. If we don't seek the things of God first, we will lose the time and opportunity to seek them at all. We cannot serve two masters. God wants our hearts to bond with Him and with things of eternal purpose. This includes fruits of the spirit, and the fruits of extraordinary forgiveness, mercy and generosity and of obedience to Christ's Word. There are no shortcuts. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. His words are the only source of nutrition that provide the spirit and life we need to help us to bear fruit.

You Lay Minister, LaVerne

PS I was so proud of those who helped the veteran in Strum with his new home. Hooray for you! Thanks a lot!

October 3, 2019 Congregational Council Meeting (Unapproved)

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 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

Pastor led us in prayer and devotion with a reading from the first book of Kings, Chapter 19. In this text Elijah is zealous for the Lord of Host's and is looking for God!! Likewise as Christians our Faith brings us before God, and we need to listen to what God is saying and doing. Pastor shares that Faith gives us the power to open to what God is doing in us and the world. Our task is to be faithful with him – be a light for him.

Secretary's report for the September's Congregational Council Meeting was read by Linda; motion to approve minutes as read by Stephanie, Keith seconded; motion carried.

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

September

- Checking Account - \$11,877.48 Building Fund Checking - \$8,755.20
- 2050 General Fund - \$33,478.15 Memorial Fund - \$2,872.05
- 13 mo. CD - \$10,100.79

Linda made a motion to transfer \$5,000.00 to the 2050, General Fund Account,

Pastor's Report

- Pastor conducted 4 worship services, attended 3 text studies, made 3 home visits, 3 visits to shut-ins, and 3 hospital visits.
- He provided musical accompaniment for Rally Day.
- Pastor attended the following meetings: Dairyland Conference Pastors', Fall Ministry Retreat in Trego, WI and second training session offered by the Northwest Synod on "Boundary Training"
- The following students will be confirmed on October 27th, Taylor Hammer, Vince Filla and Aiden Frase.
- Pastor also shared that there are currently 5 students enrolled in confirmation, in various stages of the program, meeting Sunday's after service.
- Pastor asked to use the fellowship hall on November 9th to host a birthday party for their granddaughter, Elizabeth.

WELCA

- Quilt for the bazaar is nearly completed and raffle tickets are available for sale.
- Mission kits and quilts will be blessed during service on Sunday, October 6, 2019. Following the service kits will be boxed up for shipping. The items will be taken to Eau Claire on Saturday, October 14, 2019.

Parish Secretary Update

- No report

Janitor

- Brandi, Tim and Lind will be meeting with Julie in the next few weeks to discuss how things are going and plans for moving forward.
- Brandi shared that she has had frequent contact with Julie. Jim has also had some contact with her and things appear to be going well.

Sunday School

- Just a reminder that on some Sunday's when the children sing, they will not have Sunday School before service, instead after they sing all will go down stairs during service for a group Bible Camp.

Parish Council

- Next meeting will be held on November 19, at Immanuel Lutheran, beginning at 6:30
- Jim shared information regarding the meeting in September.

Old Business

1. Keith provided and estimate from Kulps to repair the louvers on the steeple. No action taken at this time plan to share information with members at the annual meeting in January of 2020.
2. On behalf of the council we would like to thank all members who participated in the "God's Work Our Hands" project at the church, everything looks great.
3. Jim wanted to thank and recognize Steve Ebert for his work with organizing and remodeling the Veteran's Home in Strum.

4. Jim also extended a big thank you to Allen Rongstad for painting the exterior windows of our Church.
5. Thank you to Dennis Smith Landscaping for replacing the scrub that died.
6. Nate Rongstad has agreed to plow the parking lot and parsonage for this winter.
7. Snow shoveling around the doors of the church building will be completed by Allen Rongstad, on a volunteer basis.

New Business

1. Linda made a motion to transfer \$5,000.00 dollars from the General Checking Account to the 2050 account, Stephanie seconded the motion, , motion approved.
2. Lengthy discussion regarding the Joint Parish Agreement and proposal for determining each congregation's financial responsibility, no decisions made.
3. Keith made a recommendation that Pastor Ahles ask members of Immanuel Lutheran Church's Council and Parish Board to meet with Elk Creek Lutheran's Council and Parish Board Members to discuss our Joint Parish Agreement, with a Synod Member in attendance to mediate, Cedric seconded the motion, motion approved.
4. Pastor will bring this proposal to Immanuel Lutheran's Council at their meeting later this month.
5. Council will be working on our budget for 2020 at the next meeting.
6. Council will be publishing and making available through various media a copy of the Annual Church Survey for all to complete and submit by end of November.
7. Pastor informed the Council that the joint Thanksgiving Service for 2019, will be held at Immanuel Lutheran, Strum, on November 27, at 7:00 p.m.

Motion to adjourn made by Linda, 2nd by Bruce, motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 and we closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Odness, Recording Secretary

Godstock Service Project

(hosted by the Dairyland Conference Synod Youth Board)

When: November 8-10

Where: Action City, Metropolis Resort, Chaos Waterpark

What is it? Godstock is an event where youth in the synod can worship with others and learn more about their faith through workshops, activities and service projects. Music and guest speakers include Joe David, Agape, and Breaking Chains.

For more information contact Laura Ramlow at lramlow@nswi.org or 715.559.3474

9/15/19

Elk Creek women met for their monthly meeting. Meeting called to order by Pres. Jan at 9:15. Theme verse and creed were recited. Secretary's report was given, motion by Brandi, 2nd by Stephanie to approve and place on file. Treasurer report given: Expenses \$453.61, income \$6.50, ending checking balance \$1539.22. No change in savings. Seminary fund \$10,240.80. Cash from the lunch at church in the barn divided between area schools for weekend meal programs.

Old Business: Day of Enrichment in Osseo 9/21, Speaker on Human Trafficking. Email from Lynn to nominate/vote for Elk Creek Lutheran as best Lutefisk dinner in Trempealeau County can also do this by logging onto the Trempealeau Co. website.

New Business: God's Work, Our Hands Sunday Sept 8th. Will do things needed around the church. Barb Howard has Thrivent Grant for Lunch and supplies. Group 1 to serve Lions Club Oct. 7th (buns in Freezer if

needed). Salad Lunch at our Saviors in Whitehall September 19th. Bazaar November 1st. Country Store groups 1 & 2, Lunch group 3&4.

Discussion on Lunch money from Church in the Barn, should have gone to ladies, and loose offering to weekend meals. Motion by Brandi, 2nd by Becky for in future money from lunch to go to ladies.

Discussion if the money given to the church (\$75.00/quarter) is still needed due to the number of newsletters being sent by email instead of postage. Will continue for now and will look at this again the end of the year. Had been giving janitor a gift of \$25 a month will be discontinued since duties for new janitor is less, and receives an hourly salary.

A thank you will be sent to Lori Nelson and Barb Nelson for the donation of bags for kits.

Thank you's read from Whitehall Schools, RSV (Birthday Box) and Shelley Navis, for support of her trip to Russia.

Next meeting will need to elect officers. Will also need to set a date for Bridal Show, Brandi offered to do Hair and Makeup for the event.

From the council meeting: Playground equipment need attention, looking more long term. Addition of a Resin or concrete bench. Discussion at Joint Parish council on Percentage each church pays.

Motion by Stephanie, 2nd by Beck to Adjourn. Meeting closed with Lord's Prayer. Offering taken.



**WELCA Meeting of Elk Creek Lutheran Church
October 13, 2019**

The meeting was opened by Presidents Danenberg & Berg at 9:10 am with Creed and Theme verse. No Secretary's report for

September as the women did not meet. Treasurer's report was given; October income \$299.04, expenses \$500.23, proceeds from Rally day potluck of \$180.00 was given to the building fund. Current balance in the savings account is \$1454.24 and Seminary fund \$10,241.59. Report placed on file.

Old Business:

It has been decided that the monthly give of \$25.00 given to Brad, for all the extra work he did, will no longer be offered to the janitor.

New Business:

Bazaar is on Friday, November 1st, Country Store and Dessert Walk beginning at 7:00 pm, with live auction beginning at 7:30. Lynn received a Thrivent grant and she is using it to purchase items for the bazaar. Just a reminder of the Alzheimer Research Fundraiser on Saturday November 2nd starting at 9:00 am in the fellowship hall.

The Wedding Pageant Fundraiser for the Roof has been set for June 27, 2020 at 1:00 pm. The plan is to serve a bridal luncheon after the pageant. There will more details to come, please attend meetings to help with organizing and participation.

The Lutefisk dinner for 2020 will be held on the third Saturday in February.

A Large Donation was made to the "Birthday Boxes" program at Western Dairyland. In addition 9 blankets were donated to Western Dairyland.

Mission Kits collected and sent this year are as follows: 36 School Care Kits, 26 Baby Care Kits, 15 Fabric Kits, 30 Personal Care Kits, and 18 quilts.

The Whitehall School district requested support for the RIF program this year. Linda made a motion to donate \$100.00 to the program, Tammy seconded, motion carried.

Following is the current ballot for 2020 WELCA.

Co-President: Jan Berg – (unknown at this time- two ladies were suggested and they will be asked)

Treasurer: Becky Rongstad

Secretary: Barb Fischer

Church Council Representative: Becky Rongstad and Lynn Nelson

Alter Committee: Nicole Nelson & Crystal Johnson (Continuing) Tammy Danenberg & Linda Odness (new)

Audit Committee: Brandi Berg and Barb Howard

Nominating Committee: Debbie Ebert and Amber Radatz

Mission Action: All Church Ladies

Quilting: All Church Ladies

Becky made a motion to vote on the ballot presented, Tammy seconded, motion carried.

Just a reminder if you are in the church and if any doors are open, such as the Sunday school rooms or the accordion door to the fellowship room, close them to conserve on heat.

Becky made a motion to give Jan \$100.00 to purchase gifts for New Horizons, Lynn seconded, motion carried.

Tammy made a motion to give to the Pajama Grandma program this year instead of the giving tree, Lynn seconded, motion carried. The deadline for getting pajamas to the church is December 1st.

Discussion regarding a possible change to the price of quilt tickets. Currently the tickets are \$1.00 each or packet of 6 for \$5.00. Consideration is to make the tickets \$5.00 each to reduce the number of tickets that are printed. No action taken.

Mail: A thank you from Heath Johnson for helping pay for bible camp. He had a great time.

Tammy made a motion to recess, Linda 2nd, Motion carried. Offering was taken, and meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Linda Odness acting Secretary.



We would like to remind you as Thrivent members that you have the option to direct your Choice Dollars to Elk Creek Lutheran Church.

Recent deposits made to Elk Creek Lutheran Church.

September/October deposits: \$69.00.