

Immanuel Lutheran Swea City

January/February Newsletter



In case you missed it, I feel like we closed out 2025 with a bang! Yes, we had a fun Christmas program and a good gathering for Christmas Eve service. Time was spent with family and friends. But what I'm mainly talking about is the cereal drive. What started out as a random idea Janet Deim proposed at a council meeting turned into 612 boxes of cereal for the families of the North Union elementary schools.

On the last day of school for the year, a group of volunteers set up giant "W" formations of cereal boxes at both Fenton and Swea City and we were given the chance to not only talk about how kindness inspires kindness, but to show love and kindness to our community in sending cereal home with each elementary student. For some families, the extra help meant the difference between having 3 meals a day or not.

It has left me wondering, how can we keep tangibly showing our neighbors love and kindness? How can we continue being the hands and feet of Christ in a practical way as we venture into 2025?

As I was listening to a favorite podcast on my way over to Swea City today, the hosts were talking about an article highlighting the growing awareness of how lonely most of us really are despite being more connected to the world than ever through social media and smart phones. What study after study has shown in the last 5 years is how increasingly isolated we are becoming. As one of the hosts said, "We are more likely to have a meaningful conversation with someone we have never met in person on the other side of the world than we are to know the name of our next door neighbor." That hit me hard because it is all too true in my life.

As we settle into 2025, I want to ask you to consider taking on the challenge I have felt the Holy Spirit put on my heart: Spend more time in person with your neighbors. Drop off a treat baked on a snow day. Call them up and check on them or invite them over. The next time you are running up to Fairmont or to some other larger city, see if they would like you pick up anything.

In the next 30 days, if you live in town, make a point to connect with everyone who lives on your block. And for those who live in the country, make a point to connect with everyone who lives at a site you drive by in an average day or week. Let's not let the kindness we show our neighbors be a one time thing, but something which continues throughout the year.

~Pastor Sara

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Wednesday, March 5

Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday, March 9

Daylight Saving Time Begins

Sunday, April 13

Palm Sunday Service & Brunch

Thursday, April 17

Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, April 18

Good Friday Service

Sunday, April 20

Easter Sunday

Camp Events

www.okoboji.org

See page 8!



Council Meeting Highlights

Want to see the full approved minutes of the council meetings? You can now check them out on our NEW website! www.immanuelswecity.com They will be posted once approved on the communications page. Minutes will remain on the website for a minimum of one year.

December Highlights

- Cereal Drive is nearing an end with a distribution date set for the last day of school before the break. T-shirts for the kids have been ordered to celebrate their focus on kindness this fall.
- We are gathering bids for several new exterior doors which are in need of being replaced due to several wear and tear issues.
- Save the date notices for the 150th Anniversary were discussed with some plans made to gather contact information of key individuals.
- Interest from the sale of the parsonage was rounded up to \$6000. It was approved to donate \$1500 to each of the following organizations: Little Al Foundation, Hurricane Helen Victims, Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement, and Shayla Bee.
- A scholarship was approved for Libby Stevens.
- It was approved to allow Our Savior's Lutheran in town to use our building for an upcoming funeral which will likely not fit into their building. We will ask them to donate towards covering the cost for extra cleaning and set up.

January Highlights

- A donation of \$4000 to be put towards new exterior doors was received. We are the process of getting bids on the doors most in need of replacement.
- The cereal drive and distribution was a big success. It was written up in the most recent issue of the LCMC Iowa District Newsletter.
- We have a church website! It can be accessed at www.immanuelswecity.com
- Sunday school students will kick off 2025 talking about some more details surround the Christmas story and then move into learning about the 10 Commandments.
- A financial review of the 2024 books will be done by Chad Preston and Bill Hampton.
- Summer camp scholarships were decided upon. Details will be announced soon.
- Holy Week and Easter services were decided upon. Additional details later in newsletter.

2025 Church Council Members



Top (Left to Right): Janet Deim, DeMaris Fritzler, Rob Thompson (Treasurer), Sandi Holm (Secretary)

Bottom (Left to Right): Paul Preston (President), Joel Klocke, Lynette Preston, Becky Larson, Bill Hampton (Vice President)

Mission Of The Month

December

Faith Lutheran Church—
Spencer

flcspencer.org

Faith Lutheran Church, another fellow LCMC church in Spencer, is continuing with flood relief as they work to complete insulation, drywall, and painting work ahead of both winter weather and late fall events.

Money raised will go towards continued repairs of the building. Photos of damage and ongoing repairs can be found at their website.

Money Raised: \$478

January

Ronald McDonald House—
Rochester, MN

www.rmhcmidwestmwi.org

Ronald McDonald Houses exist to offer families a place to stay close to major medical facilities while a child is receiving medical care. Families stay at the houses free of charge and each home seeks to provide everything a family needs from food to transportation. Donations will go specifically to the house located in Rochester, MN.

Money Raised: TBD

February

Beacon of Hope —
Fort Dodge, IA
beaconofhopeshelter.com

Beacon of Hope is a shelter for homeless men in Fort Dodge. They focus on reaching out to men who are homeless, hungry, and/or in need of hope by demonstrating the Grace of Christ through food, shelter, clothing, and the Word of God. We are excited to welcome Brian Bidleman to share about Beacon of Hope on Sunday, February 9th.

Money Raised: TBD

**WE'RE
ONLINE!**

Immanuel Lutheran now has an official online home! Check out our new website at www.immanuelswecity.com! Basic information about who we are, when we meet, how to connect with us, and recent all church communications can be found here. It isn't the fanciest of websites which fits us well because we aren't all about being the fanciest of people! Please help spread the word and pray that when people are searching for a church in this area, this new website will make it easier for Immanuel to be found!

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday March 5th

Please make plans to join us for Ash Wednesday Services at 6:30pm. More information on celebrating Lent, Holy Week, and Easter will be coming out on Facebook, email, and the next newsletter.



Welcome Vaeda Maria Amundson



We officially welcomed Vaeda Maria into the family of God through the waters of Baptism on Sunday, January 26th. It was a big week for her as she had just turned one the previous Wednesday!

Vaeda is the daughter of Ray and Erika (Priester) Amundson who are finding it hard to believe that she is already one year old!

Please be praying for her parents and her sponsors (Talan Priester and Stephanie Priester) as they continue to celebrate Vaeda and help to grow up knowing God's great love in her life.



Thanks for sharing!

The month of December gave some extra opportunities for our children's ministry to be part of sharing the Good News! Great job in helping with the Advent Wreath each week and presenting the Christmas Program "Manger Tales!" You all are greatly appreciated!

CHILDREN'S Sunday School

Cereal Collection Drive

Goal: 300 boxes

Collected: 612 boxes!

Great Job Everyone! Check out some highlights from distribution day!

SWEA CEREAL DRIVE

A box for each student
grades K-8 over
Christmas break!



Each student PK-5th Grade was able to go home with TWO boxes of cereal PLUS we were able to leave extra for the school staff to distribute to the families with the greatest need.



When the parsonage was sold, we committed to using any interest we got from the CD purchased with that money to bless other ministries. The total was rounded up to \$6000 and \$1500 was given to each of the following organizations.



The Little AI Foundation was inspired by Alan Andrew Dean Miller who was born with a congenital heart defect and passed away at just

7 months of age. In his short time, his parents met many other families who often had to be apart from each other because one parent had to return home to go back to work. The Little AI Foundation was founded to help families stay together as much as possible when a child needs medical care away from home. They serve dozens of families throughout Iowa each year providing them with practical support such as gas cards, hotel vouchers, grocery vouchers, and more.



Shayla Bee is a foundation familiar to many in our congregation for their support of Mr. Sunshine's family. They strive to reduce the financial burden felt by working class families with a child in a medical crisis. Their hope and

goal is to allow families to stress less about the financial burden and focus more energy on loving and caring for their child. Based in Spencer, they serve families of Northwest Iowa. We are honored to receive a special thank you featuring events and families of 2024 recently from Shayla Bee and encourage you to take a moment to browse through it.



Just when it felt like our region was starting to grasp the full extent of flood damage from the rains in late June, Hurrigan Helene hit the

east coast with wide spread flooding of its own. Through the Courtney Dailey Disaster Relief Fund, we are reaching out to help with ongoing clean up and rebuilding efforts our brothers and sisters in Christ are experiencing in North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee. Courtney is a Christian author who lives in the region and has been giving a voice to victims of the Hurrigan Helene while also leading the way in being involved in hands on efforts to rebuild her local community.



Welcome Home Refugee Resettlement Program

Those seeking to migrate the United States are often feeling war, violence, persecution, upheaval and/or devastating

natural disasters in their home countries. One of the many programs of Catholic Charities works to help those seeking to immigrate through our refugee and asylum programs get a new start while also calling for bipartisan, effective, and humane reforms to our country's broken immigration system. We are specifically supporting the work done through the SW Minnesota office as refugees work to resettle in the Rochester, MN region.



Mighty Warriors Kids and Youth

When: Wednesdays - After school for kids (grades 1-5) 6-8pm for youth (grades 6-12)

Both Mighty Warriors Kids and Mighty Warriors Youth continue to meet on Wednesdays! Programs are open any youth in our local area who wishes to participate regardless of the school they attend.

Mighty Warriors is a program put on by the North Kossuth Ministerial Association and is a cooperative effort primarily between the churches of Ledyard and Swea City.



A few Christmas Party Highlights!

Sunday School classes during our 9am Worship Service are off an running again with the new year! Starting in February, they will studying the 10 Commandments and learning about how they help us grow in our relationship with Jesus still today!

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School



Confirmation

Confirmation classes for any teen grades 6 and above who are interested are kicking off again in February. Meeting time will be set based on what works for the kids who are attending the class. Topics to be covered yet this year are: 10 Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Sacraments.

INGHAM OKOBOJI LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMPS

SUMMER CAMP '25

FAMILY CAMP & YOUTH
CAMP PROGRAMS

REGISTER TODAY!
WWW.OKOBOJI.ORG



Summer Camp Registration Now Open!

Registration for all youth and family summer programs at IOLBC is now open! The church will pay up to \$50 per student to attend camp through IOLBC with additional funds available if needed.

Don't forget about great ADULT programs as well!

Feb. 14-16: Marriage Retreat

May 2-4: Spring Crafting Retreat

June 2-3: Elderversity

Sept. 23-Oct 1: Travel Camp: Boston

For more information, talk to Pastor Sara!

Immanuel Lutheran Church
104 1st Street North
Swea City, IA 50590

January/February 2025

The Immanuel Lutheran
Church Newsletter

TO:

