

GRACEVINE

May 2016



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Pastor Ann Sundberg

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Where God is with us as we grow in faith!

Pastor's Message

As I write this, I am on my way back to Chadron from a visit to my old friends Bob and Elayne in New Jersey. For several years now they have invited me to their Passover celebration, and finally this year the dates of Passover and Easter did not coincide so I was able to visit.

Jewish people celebrate Passover every year to remember the Exodus from Egypt, their daring escape from slavery under the Pharaoh and their long walk to freedom in the Promised Land. The holiday centers around a special meal, the Seder, at which everyone around the table joins in telling the story of Moses, Pharaoh, the plagues and the flight across the Red Sea (found in Exodus 1-15.) Then for eight days, observant Jews do not eat anything made with yeast or leavening agents, in order to recall that their ancestors had to leave Egypt in such a hurry that there was not even time to let the bread rise.

Passover has also come to be a time of remembrance of the persecutions that Jewish people have suffered throughout history, particularly the Holocaust. And because of that suffering, Jews have taken up the cause of persecuted people in our time – those who are enslaved, those who face genocide, and those who are being forced to make their own long walk to freedom. I had not been aware of this ethical dimension of Passover.

Jesus' final meal with his disciples was actually a Passover meal, which we Christians commemorate each year as we share in Jesus' Last Supper on Maundy Thursday. The bread which Jesus blessed and broke was the unleavened bread of the Seder meal, and the cup which he passed around was the wine of blessing. When Jesus instructed his disciples to "do this to remember me," he promised that whenever they gathered around a table, he would be there with them.

There is also an ethical dimension to the meal that we Christians share. Just as we are fed by Jesus' own body and blood, we are sent forth from the table to serve our neighbors, whoever they may be. We, too, are called to oppose persecution, slavery and genocide. We, too, are called to confront evil in all its guises. We, too, are called to advocate for justice, to make sure that all people everywhere may live in safety and security.

The most wonderful part of being a guest at my friends' Passover Seder was the warmth with which I was welcomed. And I was reminded once again of the welcome that Jesus offers, arms outstretched, to everyone who seeks him.

Blessings to you in this season of Easter and Passover.



Pastor Dan

Council Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2016.

The Immanuel Lutheran Church Council met with the following members in attendance: Pastor Ann Sundberg, Robyn Baquet, Denise James, Sharon Thurlow, Chelsea Holt, Yvonne Moody, Laurie Schmidt, Karleen Gramberg, Barb Landen, and Karen Rupp . Those absent were True Thorn and Julie Duncan.

We opened with devotions and discussion from "Living Lutheran".

The Secretary's Report was approved as written. Motion to accept by Karen and seconded by Yvonne. The Treasure's Report was approved. Motion to accept by Yvonne and seconded by Karleen.

Pastor's Report: showed what she has been doing, such as church services and preparing for them; conducting services at Crestview and Prairie Pines; offering communion; and playing her cello for various events. She also shared when she will be away from the church for education, church activities and personal time away.

Building and Grounds: Trees have been trimmed up by Steve Duncan. Work is in progress on replacing the mail box. The committee will work on getting lawn mowing sign up in place.

Education: There is a steady number of children at Wednesday School. Working toward VBS, new curriculum and getting the date set for VBS.

Evangelism: Rhonda Schommer and Laurie Schmidt took communion to several members. A college dinner will be held on April 10.

Fellowship: Looking at developing a possible leaflet to let visitors know about our church and what we are about.

Social Ministry: Closer to Home is the 3rd Sunday in May.

Stewardship: Karen is looking at ways to increase being Stewards of God's Love.

Worship: We are looking for a choir director and accompanist.

New Business: New copier and lease to be installed. Dates to be determined for a Council Retreat this fall. Discussion about dates, curriculum, etc. for VBS.

A task force has been convened to come up with various ways we communicate within the congregation and ways to improve that communication.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

2016 Confirmands

Four Immanuel young people will affirm their baptisms on Sunday, May 15, after two years of focused instruction. As a congregation, we promised at their baptisms to "...provide for their instruction in the Christian faith, that living in the covenant of their Baptism and in communion with the Church, they may lead godly lives until the day of Jesus Christ." (Lutheran Book of Worship, page 121.) In the same service we closed with, "We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as fellow members of the body of Christ, children of the same heavenly Father, and workers with us in the kingdom of God." (LBW, page 125) When they affirm their baptism they will be fully fledged members of Immanuel. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

Trevor Berry



"Confirmation classes meant I could learn about God deeper. My favorite lessons were about baptism and communion. My 'come to Jesus moment' was knowing that my sins are forgiven!"

"I had never participated in washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday. Pastor kneeled and was willing to wash people's feet. It was unique. Good Friday kept getting darker. The candles were extinguished one at a time. I kept wondering what was happening, and then the door slammed!"

Trevor is an athlete. He plays golf, basketball, football, and baseball. His favorite subject is social studies. Trevor enjoys learning what people have done for this country, and the Egyptians are cool, too.

Other opportunities were at confirmation camp at Sullivan Hills.

"Solomon was my counselor and the ropes course was awesome!"

"I want to thank my parents, Pastor Ann, Bev, and the church people. I want to spend more time at church. Remember, keep God in your life; he'll guide you wherever you go."

Katelyn Briggs



"Confirmation means learning about God and the Ten Commandments. I wonder why He made them, but I believe they are relevant to today.

"I have had wonderful experiences at Sullivan Hills camp. I liked the wagon rides and making friendo bracelets. I've made good friends. One of them lives in Hemingford."

Katelyn has lots of people she'd like to thank- Mom, Dad, brothers, sister-in-law, and Madie. Katelyn was baptized at Immanuel and she wants to continue volunteering as a communion assistant and reader.

Katelyn enjoys dance, art, and reading. She just finished competing at the state history day.

Murphy Churchill



Murphy is a high school senior who will graduate the day before her confirmation. She too is an athlete, participating in cross country, basketball, and track.

Pastor Ann and Murphy have met Sunday afternoons for confirmation instruction. Murphy just completed a 40 day personal journey with Jesus during Lent.

“A life changing experience was the trip to Detroit. A large group of teenagers were assigned to a church in a poverty area. There was a basketball court with neighborhood kids playing ball. They wanted to know why all these kids came to their city. We got to witness to our faith. I want to thank Shannon. “

Murphy hopes to attend Black Hills State in the fall. She hopes to get involved with campus ministry in Spearfish. Her God question is, “How to bring people to the path of righteousness?”

True Thorne



Confirmation means being closer to God. I’ve become aware of the rules. True was baptized at Lake Preston Lutheran as an infant. She loves how welcoming Immanuel has been.

“I had fun on the rope course at Sullivan Hills, but I was shaking!” She wants to thank her fourth grade teacher, Mrs. H, Mom and Dan, and her multiple siblings.

Math is True’s favorite subject. She too is an athlete, participating in volleyball, basketball, and track.

At the end of the interview, True quipped, “I can’t wait to find out what God looks like!”

Social Ministry

We served our Closer to Home Meal on Monday, April 18. About 25 people were served. Thank you to all who provided food and helped serve this Meal.

In March our Shepherd’s Pantry served 27 adults and 12 children. Thank you very much to everyone who has donated food to support our Pantry. A list is donated on the kitchen door of items we are running low on. Your help is very much appreciated.



Stewardship

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It seems as though 2016 just started, but the first quarter has already passed, income taxes have been filed and we've enjoyed some beautiful glimpses of spring-like weather, interspersed with those reminders of winter not quite ready to let go. As we experience both the foretaste of spring and remnants of winter we have opportunity to marvel at the vast diversity of creation and the cosmos of which we are a part.

And we ponder our role as caretakers...what is it the Holy Spirit is leading us to do? As Stewards of God's Love, guided by our commitment to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all of our souls, and all of our minds, what are we to be doing to put these words into action – to incorporate them into our daily lives in what we do and what we say?

Last month's message focused on describing the cruciform structure of our relationships:

God makes the first vertical line DOWN, all blessings come from God – from above, God's love comes down to us in Jesus Christ!

We follow moving IN to the center (bottom of the cross). God has entrusted us with an abundance – time, talents and treasures. God gives in abundance that **we might share in abundance.**

Then **we move OUT to our neighbors on either side both near and far! We look out to see how God is calling us to love our neighbor** with all that God has entrusted into our care

Stewardship transforms God's commandment to "love our neighbors as ourselves" from a religious expression into a way of life. Stewardship is about loving God and my neighbor. Stewardship is about my whole self. Stewardship is about decision making and choices - How much of what is God's should I keep for myself?"

Some stewardship ideas as move forward this year include providing some opportunities to hear from others about their Holy Spirit experiences through mission moments/testimony (if you'd like to share your experience, please contact Karen Rupp or Jeanine Mohr); arranging for some speakers to share with us about end of life decisions and funeral planning; financial planning; caring for the earth/cosmos; caring for body/mind/soul; book study; asset mapping; building/strengthening relationships; using social media...and more. We have ambitious ideas and hope to accomplish them. We are open to more ideas too. Please share if you have some. And please consider volunteering to join the Stewardship Committee – just speak to Karen Rupp, Jeanine Mohr or Pastor Ann.

Once again, thank you all for all you do!

Peace and Blessings,

Karen Rupp, Stewardship Chair

Stewards of God's Love published by the ELCA is the source from which much of the above is taken.

Treasurer's Report April 2016

	Beginning balance March 28, 2016	\$	(3,513.61)
Income	Weekly Offering	\$	5,495.52
	Thrivent Funds	\$	92.00
	MIF interest	\$	91.90
	Interest	\$.04
	Total Income	\$	5,679.46
	Expenses	\$	10,474.71
	Ending balance as of April 25, 2016	\$	(8,308.86)

Worship Attendance

Date	Sunday Service
April 3	63
April 10	58
April 17	58
April 24	50

Immanuel Lutheran Church
747 Ann Street
Chadron, NE 6933

COUNCIL MEMBERS

President - Robyn Baquet
Vice-President - Denise James
Secretary - Sharon Thurlow
Treasurer – Chelsea Holt
Building & Grounds - Ericka Lans
Education - Yvonne Moody
Evangelism - Laurie Schmidt
Fellowship - Karleen Gramberg
Social Ministry - Barb Landen
Stewardship - Karen Rupp
Worship - Julie Duncan
Youth/Young Adult - True Thorne
Pastor - Ann Sundberg

Other Staff –

Financial Secretary – Lorrie Bauer
Custodian – Michelle Haynes
Church Secretary – Erin Daniel

Important contact information-

Nebraska Synod Website:

www.nebraskasynod.org, phone number
402-896-5311

ELCA Church wide Website, www.elca.org,
Phone number 800-638-3522