

Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church
501 8th Avenue
Rock Falls IL 61071

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ROCK FALLS, IL
PERMIT NUMBER 65

MINISTERS: MEMBERS OF IMMANUEL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Immanuel Office Phone: 815-625-3575 Fax: 815-625-3702
Office Administrator - Jill Leesman office@immanuelrockfalls.org
Custodian - Jerry Adams
Organists & Music Directors - Virginia Schumaker & Lori Attig
Sunday School Superintendent - Jennifer Morgan
Pastor Bree Truax Cell: 360-989-4906 pastorimmanuelrf@gmail.com

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Website: immanuelrockfalls.org
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In-Person Worship - Sundays at 9 a.m. & Wednesdays at 4 p.m.
Sunday School at 10:15 - 11:00 a.m. - December 3 & 10
Facebook: Immanuel Ev. Lutheran, www.facebook.com/ImmanuelRockFalls/
Phone-in worship—available anytime—**1-888-975-5536**

Immanuel Messenger

December 2023



Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church Mission:
We gather as people of Christ, serving with love, hope and faith.
- - - - -

*Youth Led
Worship
Dec. 17th* Young people of all ages will be leading worship and sharing the message on Sunday, Dec. 17th at 9 a.m. There will be special music provided by young people prior to worship. Please join us for this special celebration and sharing of the Birth of Christ! MANY thanks to Jennifer Morgan, all volunteers and all youth who are leading this service!

Worship with us this Christmas!
Come and celebrate the birth of Emmanuel,
God with us on December 24th!

**Join us for Carols, Candles
& Communion on
Christmas Eve Worship**
at 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. & 11:00 p.m.

at Immanuel. Plans for each service are the very same.
Worship with us at the best time for your household.
ALL ARE WELCOME!



A blessed Advent and Christmas to you!!!

You are most welcome to worship with us in person or over the phone each week! Our **toll free CALL-IN WORSHIP NUMBER is 1-888-975-5536.** Worship is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!



Let us celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas!



How does a weary world rejoice?

An Advent series in Luke's Gospel

This Advent and Christmas season we are dwelling in the Gospel of Luke as we explore "How does a weary world rejoice?" We are utilizing resources developed through Sanctified Art to broaden our Advent practices including art, advent calendars, special liturgies, music and more. When describing the theme of the season Sanctified Art Staff note, "Joy is often a companion to many other emotions. We can feel joy in addition to feeling many other things at once: grief, anticipation, anxiety, excitement, disappointment, exhaustion. Perhaps many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve—or that it is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. This Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy."

I am looking forward to this Advent journey with you all as we continue to dig deep into God's Word together. May God grant us desire to read God's Word, breath deep, listen well, root ourselves in God's abounding love, serve as we are able, and so much more!

Truly, in Christ, we have Emmanuel, God with us!
Praise God for each of you! 'Tis a gift to serve with y'all!
—Pastor Bree Truax, pastorimmanuelrf@gmail.com, cell: 360-989-4906

Pastor Bree is off & on vacation Dec. 25-30. Please contact the church office at 815-625-3575 in case of pastoral emergencies December 25-30.

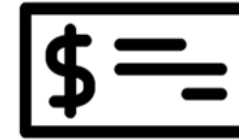
THANKS for supporting the mission & ministry of Immanuel! Your partnership in the Gospel makes an immense difference! We have **THREE** secure ways for you to give.



ONLINE
Immanuelrockfalls.org



MOBILE
Tithe.ly app



IN PERSON
Cash or check

All donations will be included on your yearly giving statement.
Thank you for your prayers, service & giving!

the price increases to \$25 per arrangement.) Please let Jill know what special dedication you would like included in the bulletin.

A HUGE THANK YOU
to the local businesses below who are supporting the Messenger!
Thanks be to God for your generosity! If you own a local business and would like to be a part of the team of businesses that help make the Messenger possible, please contact the church office.



CHERYL A. STUTZKE
Event Coordinator
castutzke@sbcglobal.net

BLUE GOOSE RUN

14609 Blue Goose Road
Sterling, Illinois. 61081-9164
815-772-7200

Moeller, Myers
& ASSOCIATES PC
Counseling & Consulting

3917 E. Lincolnway, Suite C
Sterling, IL 61081

mmaccil.com 815.626.8760



Specializing in Irrigating Seed Corn & Vegetable Production

Terry Schutz
2303 Hickory Hills Rd.
Rock Falls, IL 61071
Home: (815) 625-8905
Cell: (815) 716-0300

Marc Schutz (815) 716-0310
Shane Schutz (815) 716-0320
Chad Wetzell (815) 716-3837

You are an important part of the body of Christ!

Each of you matter to God, to our congregation and community! Pastor Bree and the Church Council are here to serve alongside you. You are welcome to contact Pastor Bree and Church Council members as needed.

Council Contact Information				
Pastor	Pastor Bree Truax 360-989-4906 pastorimmanuelrf@gmail.com			
Executive Board	President Ronda Borgmann 815-622-9306 Rondaborgmann@gmail.com	Vice President Kevin Arnold 309-434-8638 Karnold@growmark.com	Secretary Stacey Hackbarth 815-303-3386 shackbarth1@icloud.com	Treasurer Bill Wescott 815-590-6270 paramedic61071@yahoo.com
Congregational Life Ministry	Terry Andersen 815-303-6580 vcterry@yahoo.com	Luke Sandrock 815-499-0293 lsandrock@2cornerstone.com		
Faith Formation Ministry	Stacey Hackbarth 815-303-3386 shackbarth1@icloud.com	Molly Hackbarth 815-213-2309 Mehackbarth9124@gmail.com		
Service Ministry	Pam Shoffner 815-716-0190 mccrash2007@hotmail.com	Kevin Arnold 309-434-8638 Karnold@growmark.com		
Support Ministry	Nolan Scanlan 815-441-7489 nscanlan6@gmail.com	Scott Attig 815-303-9642 attig80@yahoo.com		
Hospitality Ministry	Sheryl Wagner 815-252-7923 dashwagner@gmail.com	<i>Please keep our Council Members and Pastor Bree in your prayers.</i>		
Worship Ministry	Bonnie Cassens 815-535-8323 BJCassens@yahoo.com	Ronda Borgmann 815-622-9306 Rondaborgmann@gmail.com		

Council Meeting Highlights - November 20, 2023

1. Bill Wescott reviewed the Current Balance Sheet with the Congregational Council. Our financial snapshot continues to be in good shape. Thanks to all who are supporting the mission and ministry of Immanuel. Capital Fund & CD - \$ 43,945.16 Roof Fund & CD - \$55,868.50 Checking - \$35,248.56. Energy costs and other expenses will be increasing this coming year, and in fact, we are starting to see that happen now. We must remain diligent and faithful in our giving.
2. General discussion about upcoming openings in the council that will be coming up. Please prayerfully consider becoming a member of the council.

Next meeting December 18, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Stacey Hackbarth, Council Secretary

*People of Immanuel—What a GIFT to serve with you!
Thank you for your on-going partnership in the Gospel;
in the mission and ministry of Immanuel!
Each of you make a difference in our community of faith
and the communities that you live in!
THANK YOU and THANKS BE TO GOD FOR YOU!*

*Jill Leesman, Virginia Schumaker, Lori Attig,
Jerry Adams & Pastor Bree Truax*

*May you know
more of God's
abounding love
through Christ
this Christmas
and always!
Merry Christmas!*



When being admitted to the hospital or nursing home, you are welcome to let the admitting clerk know that you are a member of Immanuel Lutheran, Rock Falls. **If you would like a visit or to be included in congregational prayers, please call the church office (815-625-3575).**

Prayer requests of any nature are also welcome. Please contact the church office with requests for the congregational prayer list.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Nancy Maxwell 12/02
Ed Johnson 12/14
Emma Bailey (90) 12/29

We thank God for all of you, and for all who have birthdays in December! We specifically honor members who are 80 years or older.

Frank Bollman 12/14
JoAnn Linton 12/21

Happy Anniversary!

Dennis & Judy Lehman 12-19-1965
Gerald & Mary Foscitt 12-23-1971



If you don't see your name on this list or there is a correction to be made, please contact the church office at 815-625-3575.



WELCA Bible Study will be held on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 9:00 a.m. at Immanuel. Please bring your Bible and "Gather" magazine. All women of Immanuel are members of WELCA and welcome to join WELCA for a time of fellowship and Bible Study!

Special thanks to all who donated to the Women of the ELCA Thank Offering received on Sunday, November 19th. The Thank Offering provides crucial support for ministry resources for women's health; human trafficking; outreach through social media & partnerships with other Christian women's organizations. Praise God for your generosity!

Men's Group will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sterling **on Monday, Dec. 4th, at 6:00 p.m.** This opportunity is open to all men. A hearty welcome and invitation is extended! Please contact Gerald Foscitt at 815-499-6566 with questions.



People of Immanuel,
Peace to you! Thank you for your generosity! We appreciate your donation of \$334.49.

Blessings and peace from LOMC Staff & Board,
—Rob Gieraltowski Executive Director, LOMC



Church Council meets monthly, serving the church through leadership. People of God, as you may have heard Pastor Bree communicate, you have two options...

Option 1: Prayerfully consider serving on Church Council in **Church Council** 2023. **Option 2:** Pray that God will raise up leaders in our congregation willing to serve on Church Council. NOW is the time to be choosing and enacting option 1 or option 2. **Thank you for your diligence in this!**

Team Ministry annual reports are due in the church office by January 8th. The annual congregational budget forum will be on Sunday, January 14 following worship. The annual congregational meeting will be on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Please mark your calendars and watch the January Messenger for additional details.

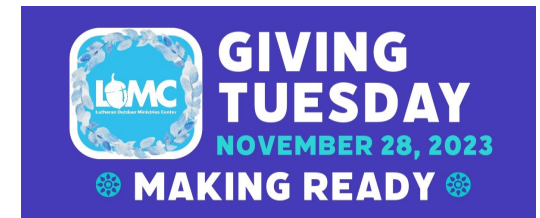


The Noisy Offering for December is the **Loaves & Fishes Breakfast Program** at First United Methodist Church, Sterling. They are in need of donations and volunteers. Checks can be made out to Loaves & Fishes

and mailed to First United Methodist Church, 501 Broadway Ave., Sterling, IL 61081. Sign up to serve meals by calling Lois Heerd at (815) 626-4773 or Paul Gould at (815) 499-2041.

Help Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) in Oregon, IL raise funds to help everyone experience sanctuary, community, creation and faith at LOMC! Help us in making ready LOMC for season after season

of experiences. **Tuesday, November 28.** Matching Gifts! Amazing donors (staff, LOMC board and special donors) are offering a matching gift to help encourage support. Help us raise funds and the board/staff/donors will match those donations dollar for dollar. Goal is \$25,000. We have the opportunity to raise needed funds for the ministry of LOMC!!!



Fiscal Commitment Cards - Included with the October stewardship mailing was a fiscal commitment card. Additional copies are available outside the church office. Thank you to all who returned their completed cards! If you have not had a chance to turn your card in, please do so. We build our 2024 budget on our projected giving. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to God and sharing the gospel.

**Thank you
for giving
to the Lord!
You make a
difference!**



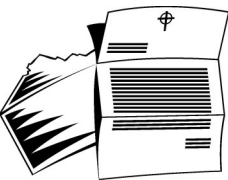
**New
Offering
Envelopes**

Offering envelopes for 2024 can be picked up on Sunday, December 17th in the narthex. Please dispose of 2023 envelopes at the end of the year because your number for 2024 may be different. If you cannot find your envelopes or you would like some, please contact the church office. If you are willing to help distribute offering envelopes to relatives, friends or homebound members, please contact the church office. Your assistance in delivering envelopes is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

The offering envelope packets have a red border December 25 envelope. The red border envelope is for Christmas and is designated to the Northern Illinois Synod. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel!



Contributions for 2023 must be turned into the church office **by December 31st to be counted for 2023.** The Sunday, December 24 and Wednesday, December 27 offering will be deposited by the morning of December 29, 2023. If you are mailing in your offering envelopes to Immanuel, they must have **December 31st postmark** on them to be counted for 2023. Thank you!



**Annual
Giving
Statements**

2023 contribution statements will be mailed in mid-January.
If you need yours sooner than mid-January, please contact Jill in the church office. Thank you!

Please remember our Homebound Members with a prayer, visit or card:

Gerry Trieloff
Morningside of Sterling
2705 Ave. E
Apt. 233
Sterling, IL 61081

Emma Bailey
Citadel
105 E. 23rd Street
Sterling, IL 61081

Vera Stutzke
1801 Avenue G
Apt. 145
Sterling, IL 61081

Mary Lou Wolber
203 E. 9th St.
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Delores Kuhlemier
1011 6th Avenue
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Patricia Mintun
Allure
612 W. St. Mary's Road
Rm #104
Sterling, IL 61081

Nancy Maxwell
710 W. LeFevre
Apt. 204
Sterling, IL 61081

Virgil Rhodes
Heritage Health
308 S. 2nd Street
Walnut, IL 61376

Shirley Boyer
1102 E. 13th Street
Sterling, IL 61081

Deb Gonzalez
812 W. 5th Street
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Swede Knapp
Morningside of Sterling
2705 Ave. E
Apt. 106
Sterling, IL 61081

Betty Harms
1801 Avenue G
Apt. 305
Sterling, IL 61081

Bob Dietz
Citadel
105 E. 23rd St., Rm# 127
Sterling, IL 61081

Lois Deetz
28286 Woodside Drive
Rock Falls, IL 61071



**WORSHIP
at Parkway Ctr
& Morningside**

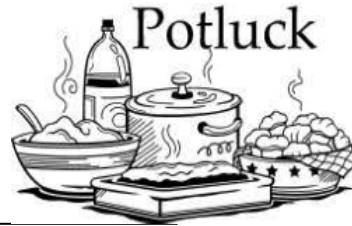
Immanuel is offering worship at two area care Facilities monthly. We are leading worship on **December 10th at 3 p.m. at Parkway Center**, (1801 Ave. G in Sterling) and on **Tuesday, December 12 at 9:30 a.m. at Morningside of Sterling** (2705 Avenue E). Thank you for supporting this vital ministry! Thanks to Nancy Strock and Virginia Schumaker for their service making it possible!

Special thanks to all Thrivent Members who designate Immanuel to receive their Choice Dollars! Immanuel has been given \$1,718.00 for 2023. Thank you for supporting the mission and ministry of Immanuel!



Breaking Bread Together BBT

Please join us for **BBT in December!** Breaking Bread Together or BBT is a time of sharing life, God's love and a meal together! This is a no host lunch. **Join us for BBT on Wednesday, December 6th at 11:45 a.m. at Benny's** (2511 Locust Street, Sterling). **ALL ARE WELCOME!** Come and share life with God and each other at BBT!



All are welcome to join in a **Christmas Potluck following 4 pm worship on December 20th.** Bring a dish to pass or **just come;** there will plenty of food for all!



On behalf of Immanuel Lutheran Church, we presented Pre-school Bibles, Adventure Bibles and Study Bibles on October 15. **May God bless all who listen, read, study, pray and ask questions about God's Word!**

PRE-SCHOOL BIBLES: Matteo Blackburn, Ellie DeVries, Emily DeVries and Annie Dirks

ADVENTURE BIBLES for Third & Fourth Graders: Lyric Shuman, Kaila Hernandez, Maiya Hernandez, Gracie Pettinger

CONFIRMATION STUDY BIBLES: Tenley Schumaker, Kate Morgan, Jack Sandrock and Elin Shuman



POSTPONED The First Communion preparation class mentioned in the November newsletter has been postponed to **Sunday, January 21 from 11 a.m.–2p.m.** This highly interactive class allows us time to explore what it means to receive communion. We will be working through a workbook about communion, baking communion bread and so much more! Young people of all ages are welcome. If young people have taken the class previously and would like to do so again as a refresher they are welcome! Young people are requested to attend with a trusted adult. **Please sign up to participate outside the church office by January 7 so that course materials can be purchased.**



Many thanks to all who organized, served and dined at the spaghetti supper! Thanks also for the silent auction items, sponsors and those that participated in the auction. Special thanks to Thrivent, Johnson Oil, Folsom's Bakery, Angelo's, and Benny's Red Apple for their donations! We raised \$3,148.06 after expenses for the boiler fund. Thank you and thanks be to God!

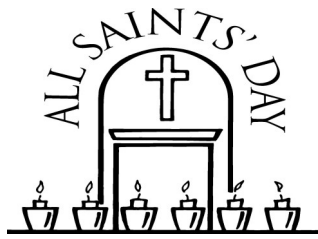
Have you misplaced a bowl or cake plate, etc.? A team of kitchen cleaners have moved the miscellaneous dishes that have collected since funeral lunches or potlucks from the kitchen. Please view the dishes collected in the conference room and pick up your dish to take home. After December 17th, they will be donated to the Caring Center or kept to sell in the future youth rummage sale.

National Youth Gathering participants will be holding a rummage sale in June of 2024. **You are welcome to donate gently used items for the sale by placing them in the room labeled "Rummage Sale Items" in the basement.** Please refrain from bringing adult clothing, children's apparel is welcome. **THANKS!**



6th-12th Grade Christmas Celebration **Following Coffee Fellowship (10:30ish) on December 17th our Christmas Celebration for 6th-12th**

households will commence! We are heading to Whoop Your Axe in Sterling for our Second Annual Axe throwing tournament and so much more! **Please bring \$5 to help with the costs.** Pizza and a fountain drink or water will be provided. **Please bring a snack to share.** If you are under 18, you must have a parent/guardian complete the Whoop Your Axe Waiver to participate at: <https://whoopyouraxe.com/waiver/>. Your parent/guardian can also sign the waiver at Whoop Your Axe (2317 E. Lincolnway, Suite C, Sterling). **All 6th-12th graders and their households are welcome!**



ROLL CALL OF DEPARTED SAINTS

November 2, 2022 - November 1, 2023

SAINT

Robert Peugh

Joan Tuft

Joanne Gerken

June Ufkin

Eugene Brinkman

Bessie Brown

Mary Jane Scanlan

DATE OF DEATH

December 7, 2022

December 29, 2022

February 5, 2023

March 15, 2023

March 25, 2023

May 30, 2023

October 10, 2023

DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL GIFTS

We dedicate the following items to the glory of God in loving memory of the following people:

Elevator Plaque -- All Saints of Immanuel

LED Lights and Stands for Recording Video -- Dorothy Hendryx

Worship Banners -- Bernice Von Holten and Mary Ann Dettman

Sanctuary Painting -- Dorothy Hendryx and All Saints of Immanuel

Vacuum Cleaner for Sanctuary -- Terry Schutz

Wax Christ Candles -- Mary Ann Dettman

Thank you for your generous gifts in honor and memory of loved ones.



Sunday School is offered weekly from 10:15 –11 a.m.

each Sunday! We have a Pre-School-1st grade class that meets downstairs led by Danyelle Robinson.

Lori Attig is leading music for this age group as well!

2nd-5th grade class is led by Jennifer Morgan with a variety of assistants. **IMMENSE THANKS to ALL who**

are assisting with faith formation at Immanuel! Young people of all ages are invited to come and grow in God with us this year! Enjoy a special coffee hour on the 17th after worship! There is no Sunday School December 17th, 24th or 30th. Merry Christmas!

Youth of all ages will lead the Sunday School Christmas program worship on Sunday, Dec. 17 at 9 a.m. We are practicing on Sunday mornings during Sunday School.

Please join us for Sunday School if you would like to be a part of special youth led Christmas worship on Dec. 17.

There are parts available for all interested! We have one Saturday practice on Dec.16 at 10 a.m.



Christmas Worship ART sharing about the birth of Jesus is needed for the December 17th bulletin.

Art done in ink or with markers shows up best. Please submit art to Pastor Bree by **December 10**. Thanks!



Confirmation is a time of intentional faith exploration for 6th - 8th grade students. **Confirmation classes are offered on Sunday mornings from 10:15-11:00 a.m.** All students are needed to help with the Youth Christmas Worship in December 17th at 9 a.m. There is no class on Dec. 17, 24

& 30th. **Tri Church Confirmation is on December 3 at St. Paul from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Lunch is provided. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Bree at pastorimmanuelrf@gmail.com.

Thanks
for your participation

Thank you for taking part in **Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF**, the original Kids Helping Kids campaign! Your gift of **\$178.74** to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, ensures that UNICEF can help save the lives of the world's most vulnerable children. Your Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF donation will help provide: life-saving vaccines and insecticide-treated bed nets, emergency relief following natural disasters, educational opportunities, and School-in-a-Box kits, and much more. We are so grateful that you, along with thousands of schools, clubs, volunteers and local communities have joined us in putting children first.

Caryl M. Stern, President & CEO

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

December Earth Church Potluck & Gathering

Saturday, December 2, 2023 Winter Meal at 12:00 Noon

Gathering at 1:00 p.m.

Come, share the joys of winter. Please bring a dish to share. Earth Church is located at 7578 W. Pines Road, Mt. Morris, IL. **RSVP:** Carol & Paul Soderholm at 815-973-8011 or carol.soderholm@gmail.com.

The service of the Longest Night will be held at First Presbyterian Church at 6:00 PM on December 21. Led by area clergy, this service is designed to help us lift up our hearts and entrust our lives to the God of grace. There will be prayers, music, readings, Scripture, and silence. We will light candles to remind us that the love of God illuminates even the darkest night. **Everyone is welcome to come.** First Presbyterian Church is at 410 Second Avenue, Sterling, IL. Handicap access ramp is just south of the main entrance on Second Ave. The door has an automatic opener and is adjacent to the elevator. The Sanctuary is on the main floor.



Sights & Sounds Concert for the Community at the Big Red Church on **Thursday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m.** Congregations from Rock Falls and Sterling will be sharing their musical gifts at this community event sponsored by the Sauk Valley Chamber of Commerce. All are welcome!

Winter Worship and the Weather

Generally speaking we will be having worship on Sundays. If it is unsafe for you to journey to worship, please stay home and be safe. In the event that worship needs to be cancelled, weather cancellations will be postings on our Facebook page, Immanuel Ev. Lutheran —www.facebook.com/ImmanuelRockFalls/.

Postings will be made no later than 6:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. If time permits an email blast will also be sent. Your safety is important!

We trust you to do what is best for the safety of your family and we promise to do our best to communicate any weather related schedule changes. Thank you!



Are you looking for a gift for someone who already has all they need? December 3, 10 & 17th Immanuel is offering an Alternative Gift Giving Fair!!!

You can make a donation to a specific ministry and pick up an ornament, token or card acknowledging the gift to give to someone this Christmas! Options include but are not limited to:

Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center—\$10, \$20, \$40, \$60, \$80, \$100

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois—\$10, \$20, \$40, \$60, \$80, \$100

Transit Punch Cards for LSSI Families In Need—\$20, \$40

Self-Help Enterprises—\$10, \$20, \$40 **YWCA of Sauk Valley**—\$10, \$20, \$40

Northern Illinois Synod—\$10, \$20, \$40 **The Caring Center**—\$10, \$20, \$40

ELCA Good Gifts—\$10 School Supplies for a Child, \$10 Fruit Tree Seedling, \$10 Mosquito net, \$10 Chicks, \$15 Rooster, \$20 Honey Bees, \$30 Water Filter and more! **ELCA Good Gifts** provides more than 50 charitable gifts to give in honor of friends or loved ones this Christmas that helps households around the world.

For example, a \$10 fruit tree seedling provides a tree that will grow and produce nourishment and income for a family.

Consider giving gifts differently this year through a charitable donation in their honor!