

Immanuel Messenger

July 2026



Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church Mission:

We gather as people of Christ, serving with love, hope and faith.



Please join us **July 12–16** at **Bethel Reformed Church in Sterling** for Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God! This will be an unforgettable week of adventure, worship, and faith-building fun for kids **4 yrs. old through 5th grade**. A **free dinner** is served nightly at **5:30 p.m.** and VBS runs from **6:00–8:00 p.m. each night**.

MANY (6th grade through adult) VOLUNTEERS are needed to help lead games, crafts, music, Bible stories, and more. Whether you love being on stage or serving behind the scenes, there's a place for you!

You can scan the QR code to register kids or sign up to volunteer. Let's help kids discover Jesus!

*CommUNITY VBS is sponsored and led by Immanuel, First Presbyterian, St. Paul, St. John's, Grace Episcopal, First Christian of Sterling, Bethel Reformed Church and Open Door Community Church. Bethel is the host site for this year. IMPACT hours for service are available. **Thank you for supporting this vital ministry!***

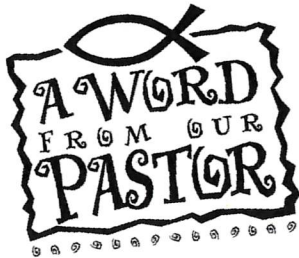


Join us for CommUNITY Worship on Sunday, July 19, at 9:30 a.m. at Grandon Civic Center (304 Brinks Ct., Sterling! We will be worshipping God with our CommUNITY VBS partners!

If there is inclement weather, worship service will be at Bethel Reformed Church 230 E. 23rd St., Sterling.

Y'all are most welcome!

Grace and peace of Christ to you beloved people of Immanuel!



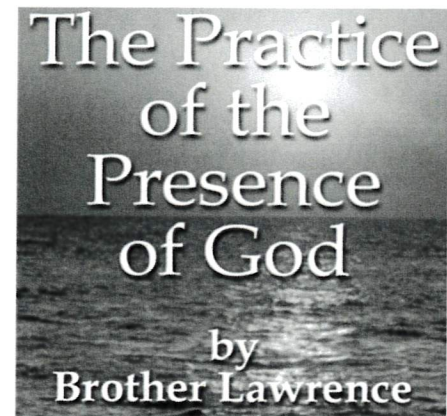
God is with you in reality. On this day, and always,
you are not alone, no matter how things feel.

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid,
for I am your God." (Isaiah 41:10a)

Jesus said, "Remember, I am with you always,
to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20b).

No matter what each day holds, God is with you!

Throughout July you have the opportunity to
join me in diving into Brother Lawrence's "The
Practice of the Presence of God." **This little
book is packed full of opportunities to grow
in our understanding of God's withness in
reality.** Brother Lawrence's conversations
and letters share keen insights that have the
capacity to shape our perceptions and
experience of God.



I will prepare some reflection questions to accompany the reading. We
have obtained a free Public Domain version of this work. **Regular and
large print copies of this will be available to you at no cost beginning
July 1.** If you attempt to pick up a copy and there are not any left PLEASE
CONTACT the church office and we will get you a copy! On July 26,
following worship, I will lead a discussion of this little book at 10:05 a.m.
You are most welcome to join in this journey of continued discovery of
God's withness in reality!

It continues to be an immense gift to serve alongside you! God is with you!

Gratefully-

—Pastor Bree Truax, pastorimmanuelrf@gmail.com, 360-989-4906

**Council Meeting Highlights from Mtg.
on June 18, 2026**



1. President Nick Dirks reported that we have received one bid for the front concrete work. Nick will contact the contractor to setup a meeting where we can ask questions we have about the project.
2. Deb Keaschall led council through a further review of the officers, council and committees sections of the by-laws. The next step is to finalize the document for congregational approval.
3. On behalf of Immanuel's Stewardship Team, Council unanimously voted to welcome Steve & Amy Grevengoed as members. Welcome Amy & Steve!
4. Council approved Andrew Roth's application on behalf of the Stewardship Team and awarded Andrew a \$200 Scholarship Grant. (You can learn more about Immanuel's Scholarships on p. 7 of the Messenger.)
5. Treasurer Bill Wescott, shared financial updates on CD rollovers and a property tax increase on the parsonage which Immanuel rents out.
5. Council voted to have their next meeting on August 20, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. In the meantime, any needed church business will be done over email.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronda Borgmann, Council Secretary



*On Friday, July 3rd, the office will be closed
in observance of Independence Day and
reopen Monday, July 6th at 8:00 a.m.
Have a safe and happy holiday weekend!*

Immanuel offers worship each **Sunday morning at 9 a.m.** & **Wednesdays at 4 p.m.** In addition, you are most welcome to worship with us over the phone. **You can participate in phone-in worship 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 1-888-975-5536.** If you would like a phone-in worship bulletin mailed to your home, please contact the church office at 815-625-3575. We are church together!

*Worship
with us
from*
HOME



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

Birthdays:

7/23 Judy Lehman

7/23 Clark Smith

7/30 Vera Stutzke (104)

Anniversary of 50 years or more:

Rod & Janice Attig 7/28/1963

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.



Breaking Bread Together BBT

Breaking Bread Together or BBT is a time of sharing life, God's love and a meal together! These are no host gatherings for all interested parties. **Please join us for BBT in July!** People of St. Paul, St. John's and friends are welcome!

July BBT Opportunities:

Tuesday, July 14 at 11:30 a.m. at Harvest Bakery & More
(916 Albany St., Erie). We will car pool from Immanuel at 11 a.m. and shop at **Sandlin** (810 Main St., Erie) following lunch. All are welcome!

Tuesday, July 28 at 11:30 a.m. at Asian Buffet
(3106 E. Lincolnway, Sterling).

Come and share life with God and each other at BBT!

Updates for Directory: We'd love to stay in touch **with you!** If there has been a change in your phone number, email or address OR if you have canceled a land line number, or moved, please let us know. Sharing your updated information assists in good communication. Thanks for your help! Please email Jill at office@immanuelrockfalls.org or call 815-625-3575 with any contact information updates. Thank you!

CONTACT information



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

Gerry Trieloff

Morningside of Sterling
2705 Avenue E, Apt. 233
Sterling, IL 61081

Ruth Ann Metzen

Morningside of Sterling
2705 Avenue E, Apt. 107
Sterling, IL 61081

Shirley Downey

Resthave Care
408 Maple Ave., Rm. 134
Morrison, IL 61270

Vera Stutzke

Citadel
105 E. 23rd Street
Sterling, IL 61081

Virgil Rhodes

Allure of Walnut
308 S. 2nd Street
Walnut, IL 61376

Mike & Chris Wilen

1410 E. 15th Street
Sterling, IL 61081

Delores Kuhlemier

1011 6th Avenue
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Joyce Greenwalt

P.O. Box 144
Polo, IL 61064

Kathryn Rowzee

2002 Riverdale Road
Rock Falls, IL 61071

**Special THANKS to all who continue to remember
our home bound through prayers, cards and visits!
We are church together!**



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). If you have a prayer request for the congregational prayer list, please contact the Immanuel Church Office at 815-625-3575. **Prayer requests will remain on the list for a month and can be renewed as many times as needed. Thank you!**

**WORSHIP
at Parkway Ctr
& Morningside**

Immanuel is offering worship at two area care facilities. We lead worship on **Sunday, July 12 at 3 p.m. at Parkway Center**, (1801 Avenue G in Sterling) and **Tuesday, July 14 at 9:30 a.m. at Morningside of Sterling** (2705 Avenue E). Many thanks to Nancy Strock and Virginia Schumaker who help make this possible. If you would like to assist with either of these services, please contact Pastor Bree at 815-625-3575. Thank you for support of these worship opportunities! Your prayers and fiscal support makes these opportunities possible!

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



THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for the card and for compact Bible. It will be put to wonderful use. Thank you. *Ellie McCarty*

Thanks to the church and the council! I love Subway so that gift card from the church won't go to waste in my hands. The Bible is also greatly appreciated, I enjoy that translation and the new format helps with travel. *Eli Attig*

Pastor Bree (PB) has some continuing education in July! Here is the scoop: PB will be in Indianapolis at the Rostered Ministers Gathering July 6th-9th and off the 10th & 11th. **Pastor Kathy Burkheimer will be providing emergency pastoral care coverage July 6-11.**

**Where
is PB?**

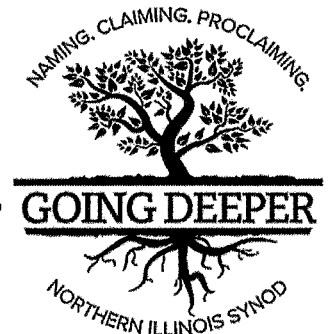
You can learn more about what Pastor Bree will be doing at:

<https://www.elca.org/event/070626-rostered-ministers-gathering>.

Later in July, Pastor Bree will be at the WELCA Triennial Convention in Des Moines, **July 16-19** <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page> It is so rare that we would have the Triennial Convention so close to us! She has volunteered to serve in a few ways during the convention and looks forward to experiencing the event with a few of our WELCA Tri Church members; including Ronda Borgmann. From Des Moines, PB will head to the Conference on Theology Arts and Worship **July 19-22**. Her participation in this conference is funded through the Lilly Foundation and our congregation's participation in the Wonders of Worship Program. You can learn more about this conference at: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/cwta/>. PB will be off & out of state July 23-25 as CommUNITY VBS precedes the WELCA Convention leading to a 10 day work stretch with no days off. **Emergency pastoral Care for July 16-25 is provided by Pastor Kathy Burkheimer (815-590-0974).** Please keep Pastor Bree's travels and learning in your prayers. Thank you for supporting her on-going growth and well being!

2026 Synod Assembly Highlights

Many thanks to Immanuel's Synod Assembly delegates; Sue Dirks, Ronda Borgmann and Pastor Bree, and to Bill Wescott who attended as a Synod Council member and Pastor Tammy Anderson who attended as a retired Rostered Minister. The 2026 Northern Illinois Synod (NIS) Assembly, June 13-14 was excellent. **R-1: Walking with Creation as a Neighbor through Worship and Action was approved...**



This resolution commends congregations to “choose ‘Season of Creation’ as part of its regular liturgical practice” and “to undertake at least one Creation care focused project or program annually.” Resources will be forth coming on the NIS website. The Assembly voted to approve an **Updated Northern Illinois Synod Constitution** that includes updates from the ELCA Churchwide Constitution. If you would like a copy of the approved Synod Constitution it is available on the NIS website: www.nisynod.org. Throughout the weekend we were **Commended to walk with God, to love God, our neighbor and ourselves... to take following Jesus seriously...** We continue to ask, “What is it to follow Jesus in 2026 as the people of Immanuel?” In addition, **Bill Wescott was elected as Synod Vice President**—this is the highest elected lay officer in each of the 65 Synods within the ELCA. **You are welcome to pick up a full page of Synod highlights on the brown counter in the Narthex** (gathering space outside the worship space). **We are church together!**



Immanuel Scholarship Applications are now available! The Immanuel Scholarship Fund offers two kinds of scholarships. **One application** is for a scholarship grant of \$200 per semester. Applicants need to be active confirmed members of Immanuel who are attending a college or university affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor body or a full communion partner. The **second application** is for those who are preparing for full time ministry. These special grants are based upon financial need, availability of funds, and the approval of a special grant by the Immanuel Congregation Council. Please contact the Church Office to obtain scholarship applications.

STUDENT MUSICIANS: This summer, MANY churches are again hosting student musicians from the Sterling/Rock Falls area. This includes any student completing 7th grade – a just graduated college student. **We ask that students share a piece with Immanuel and then arrange to play that piece at another congregation, where you will be paid \$30 per service as a guest; musician.** The following churches in Sterling welcome you to share your gifts: First Christian, First Presbyterian, Grace Episcopal, St. John's, St. Paul. The church office has a list of who you will need to contact at each church to schedule your date to serve as a guest musician. This is a chance to keep your music skills tip top over the summer, share an IMEA or audition piece you may be working on, or another special piece. Please contact the church office to receive all the details and request a date to play at Immanuel and the music coordinator will get back to you. Thanks!



*Celebrate
with us!*

Tri Church News: We join the people of St. John's in giving thanks for Shawn Wolfe, who has completed the Diakonia program! We will celebrate this accomplishment with a special presentation from Diakonia leader, Doug Wood, during Wednesday evening worship on July 29 at 6 p.m. at St. John's

(703 3rd Ave., Sterling). There will be a gluten-free reception following.

You are welcome to prepare a card, prayer or favorite Bible verse to pass along as a blessing to Shawn. All are welcome!

Shawn is an active member of St. John's and such a gift. Shawn has responded to God's call and the needs of the church and is serving as the Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) at Trinity in Milledgeville and First Lutheran in Jordan. We thank God for raising Shawn up within St. John's and working through him in service to others! **We hope you will join in worship and celebration on the 29th!** We are church together! If you would like to assist with the reception, please contact Denise Norman at denisen49@yahoo.com or 815-631-9506.



WELCA Tri Church

Evening Gather Bible Study

Coordinator Karen Wolfe

Meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at St. John's - 6 pm

Next meeting is Tuesday, July 7

No preparation needed – join us for learning and conversation!

Morning Gather Bible Study

Coordinator Ronda Borgmann

Meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Immanuel - 9 am

Next meeting is Tuesday, July 21

No preparation needed – join us for learning and conversation!

Quilting for Lutheran World Relief

Co-Coordination Deb O'Brien and Dawn Waite

Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at St. Paul 9 am-12 pm

Next meeting is Wednesday, July 15

No experience necessary – join us for fun while we do this important work!

Family Group

Coordinator Gabby Law

Typically meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at St. Paul 5:30-7 pm

Next meeting is Wednesday, July 8 due to VBS

Adult bible study time w/ frozen pizzas for supper & a guided children's activity - join as you are able!

Church Ladies Eating Out (CLEO)

Coordinator Judy Bartel

Meets the last Monday of each month at different restaurants at 5:30 pm

Next meeting is Monday, July 27 – place to be determined

Please RSVP to Judy each month at 815-751-6768 if you can join!

Thanks to all who attended the June 16th WELCA Tri Church craft and fellowship event at St. Paul! There are pictures on the WELCA Tri Church Facebook page. Be watching for a fall activity.

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 Nick Dirks 815-441-4599 nickwdirks@gmail.com	Vice President Deb Keaschall 815-718-5237 debkeaschall@gmail.com	Secretary Ronda Borgmann 815-622-9306 Rondaborgmann@gmail.com	Treasurer Bill Wescott 815-590-6270 paramedic61071@yahoo.com
Congregational Life Ministry	Deb Keaschall 815-718-5237 debkeaschall@gmail.com	Deb Cervantes 815-535-8242 debdawnhend@comcast.net		
Faith Formation Ministry	Scott Attig 815-303-9642 attig80@yahoo.com	Alex Attig 815-303-3382 alexattig@gmail.com		
Service Ministry	Pam Shoffner 815-716-0190 mccrash2007@hotmail.com	<i>Please keep our Council Members and Pastor Bree in your prayers.</i>		
Support Ministry	Marty Schaefer 815-441-5129 mscha466@gmail.com	Scott Attig 815-303-9642 attig80@yahoo.com		
Hospitality Ministry	Sheryl Wagner 815-252-7923 dashwagner@gmail.com	Shannon Schutz 815-590-6150 sschutz2000@gmail.com		
Worship Ministry	Ronda Borgmann 815-622-9306 Rondaborgmann@gmail.com	Kelly Schaefer 815-441-7614 kellyschafer66@gmail.com		

Thanks
for your participation

Thank you everybody else for all the aluminum cans you brought to us. Thanks to Gerald Foskitt for taking them to be recycled! *You are most welcome to save and bring your bagged aluminum beverage cans by Immanuel and place them in the entryway. Money raised from these donations support Immanuel Lutheran Youth ministries.*

ALSO—The People of Loaves and Fishes Breakfast Program are so grateful for all the bags you have brought and are bringing! **Thank you!**

THANK YOU for supporting the mission and ministry of Immanuel through your prayers, service and giving!
You make a difference!

Stewardship is how we...
Live, Give and Serve!

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. Thanks!



CHERYL A. STUTZKE
Event Coordinator
castutzke@gmail.com

BLUE GOOSE RUN

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

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501 8th Avenue
Rock Falls IL 61071**

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PLEASE DO NOT HOLD.**

MINISTERS: MEMBERS OF IMMANUEL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Immanuel Office Phone: 815-625-3575

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.

Facebook: Immanuel Ev. Lutheran, www.facebook.com/ImmanuelRockFalls/

Phone-in worship - available toll free anytime at 1-888-975-5536