

May 2015



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH - STRUM, WISCONSIN

# The Church Messenger

## Stewardship of God's Earth

By Jim Tocko

This month is so exciting! The birds are returning and busily securing their territory and looking for nesting material. The nine varieties of woodpeckers with their long beaks, strong necks and thick skulls are busy drilling holes in trees. The woodpeckers usually visit dead or dying trees looking for insects. Plants are emerging from the once frozen earth. Why do the weeds green before the grass? Try to avoid broadcasting herbicides but choose to use selective/limited spraying. Herbicides don't kill bees, but scientists believe herbicides confuse the bees' GPS in such a way that they are unable to return to the hive.. We all know the vital roll bees and other insects play in pollination. Without their help we would have 60% fewer fruits and vegetables.

If you are thinking of planting something different this year, give milkweed consideration. Milkweed is absolutely essential for the procreation of the Monarch butterfly. Because of the wide use of herbicides and other practices, the butterfly habitat is being greatly reduced. Milkweed is noxious to other insects. The caterpillar can only eat milkweed.

Each garden in individualized. Some are neat and tidy and others are wild and rambling. Whatever you plant is for your pleasure. Remember, gardening is not a love of work, but a work of love.

### Baptisms



AIDEN SANBERG, son of Josh Sandberg and Skylar Rivard, baptized March 1, 2015

CALVIN SEMINGSON, son of Taylor and Kesha Semingson, baptized March 15, 2015.

AUBREY LASHER, daughter of Todd and Laurie Lasher, baptized April 18, 2015

COLTAN BROWN, son of Judson and Trish Brown, baptized April 26, 2015.

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#### Worship Schedule

##### Sunday

9 AM : Worship  
10:15 AM: Sunday School  
11:15 AM: Acoustic Service

##### Wednesday

6:30 PM: Confirmation

\*If you would like to host or sponsor a coffee hour, please call Michelle in the office at: (715) 695-3511.



To make an online donation, scan this QR code with your smartphone to be taken to our secure donation page.

## A Message from Pastor Ken

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Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 'the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross'. Hebrews 12:2

How interesting is that? Jesus, considered enduring the cross, a joy?

It is so easy when things are going well, and busy, for us to overlook the blessings we have received from God. What is even easier to forget is that Jesus has paved the way, not only having defeated death and the cross for our stead, but also in giving us the example of the journey of the cross.

What is the cross? What is the cross for you? What is the cross for me?  
What is the cross for Immanuel Lutheran in 2015?

We all are called to bear one another's burdens, and that is different for each one of us. But the question I pose for us a church is this: What is God calling us to? What sacrifice are we called to offer for the sake of others? Is it a new ministry? Does it involve supporting a missionary? Does it involve partnering with a third world congregation?

As your pastor, I invite you all to pray to God for our new mission to be clear. I invite you to seek out ways that we can be more than a people who gather for worship, but as a people who are called to be the church in this world.

I truly believe that when we do rally around a new mission, that we will be blessed with the joy of participating in God's mission to the world. The question is just this: What will it be?

May God's peace surround you as we experience the beauties of spring in Wisconsin, and may God speak to your heart about a new mission for our church.

Pastor Ken

### Dirty Car? Clean it up!

Help our youth work their way to camp! Bring your car to the rear parking lot at Immanuel on Saturday, May 2 from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. and let us do the dirty work for you.

All proceeds will be used to help pay the Luther Park Bible Camp registration fees for Immanuel's youth.



### Community Dinner (Village Café)

As our Community Dinners continue to grow, I would like to thank the members of the congregation, the Daughters of the King, and all the volunteers who make this outreach program possible. A special thanks to Mandi Taylor and Jim Tocko for washing all the dishes, and to Jim and Sara Heck for assisting with prep and set-up. I would also like to extend my appreciation to everyone who attends the dinners; without you, they wouldn't exist.

Please join us on May 24<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall for Scalloped Potatoes and Ham. All proceeds are applied to provide the next month's meal. Carry-outs are available upon request.

# Council Minutes

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March 10, 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

Opening prayer: Pastor Ken

Members present: Kate Back, Pastor Ken, Jim Tocko, Camille Skoug, Dan Bjerke, and Howard Hanson

Members absent: Michelle Peaslee

Approval of February 10, 2015 council minutes: Approved

Approval of Treasure's Report for February: Approved

Window project will soon be underway.

No old business

No new business

## **Pastor's Report:**

- Round Robin has been interesting and enjoyable
- WELCA service Wednesday March 11, 2015, Palm/Passion Sunday; Maundy Thursday; Good Friday (two services, one at Nursing Home); Easter Sunday.
- Confirmation Sunday is scheduled for May 17, 2015
- March 15, 2015; we will welcome the installation of the Jr. Daughters of the Kings, as well as a baptism, and welcoming the choir from Elk Creek, who will be sharing a song dedicated to Melvin, Jeanette Tobiason's late brother.
- Pastor has been doing a deep read and study of Paul's letter of the Galatians. After Easter the 11:15 service will be studying Galatians together verse by verse, as incorporated into the communion liturgy.
- Taking a closer look at a study reviewing congregational size.

Closing prayer: Pastor Ken

Adjournment: 8:00pm

Warmest Regards,

Kate Back

# Financials

## Mar 1 - Mar 8

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| General Fund Contributions ..... | \$6,245.00        |
| Expenses.....                    | (\$4,627.65)      |
| <b>Net Income (Loss) .....</b>   | <b>\$1,617.35</b> |

## Mar 8 - Mar 14

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| General Fund Contributions ..... | \$2,856.00        |
| Expenses.....                    | (\$749.86)        |
| <b>Net Income (Loss) .....</b>   | <b>\$2,106.14</b> |

## Mar 15 - Mar 21

|                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund Contributions ..... | \$3,898.00          |
| Expenses.....                    | (\$6,029.66)        |
| <b>Net Income (Loss) .....</b>   | <b>(\$2,131.66)</b> |

## Mar 22 - Mar 28

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| General Fund Contributions ..... | \$1,912.01        |
| Expenses.....                    | (\$646.14)        |
| <b>Net Income (Loss) .....</b>   | <b>\$1,265.87</b> |

## Mar 29 - Mar 31

|                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund Contributions ..... | \$1,825.35          |
| Expenses.....                    | (\$5,285.10)        |
| <b>Net Income (Loss) .....</b>   | <b>(\$3,459.75)</b> |

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Total Contributions .....      | \$16,736.36       |
| Total Expenses.....            | (\$17,338.41)     |
| <b>Net Income (Loss) .....</b> | <b>(\$602.05)</b> |

## Liabilities

|                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Loan Balance Due .....</b> | <b>\$9,679.00</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|

## Percent of Monthly Budget Allowance

|                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| General Fund Contributions .....   | 85.5%  |
| Other Contributions .....          | 57.2%  |
| Benevolences.....                  | 50.0%  |
| General Expense.....               | 90.8%  |
| Ministry Expenses .....            | 54.8%  |
| Office Expenses <sup>1</sup> ..... | 135.1% |
| Pastor Expenses .....              | 100.2% |
| Payroll Expenses.....              | 99.9%  |
| Property Expenses .....            | 37.6%  |
| Utilities Expense .....            | 70.2%  |

<sup>1</sup>Toner and Masters \$281.32 (bulk to save on S&H)

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Actual Mar Expenses .....</b> | <b>\$17,338.39</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                   |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Budgeted Mar Expenses.....</b> | <b>\$19,232.87</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Percent of Budget Used.....</b> | <b>90.1%</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|

## Restricted Fund Accounts

### Building Fund

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$878.12 |
| Receipts                   | \$115.00 |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00) |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$953.12 |

### Chapel Fund

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$111.12 |
| Receipts                   | \$111.95 |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00) |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$223.07 |

### Daughters of the King

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$60.96  |
| Receipts                   | \$97.00  |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00) |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$157.96 |

### Library Fund

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$264.00 |
| Receipts                   | \$20.00  |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00) |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$284.00 |

### Music Fund

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$476.62 |
| Receipts                   | \$40.00  |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00) |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$516.62 |

### Social Concerns

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$1,314.73 |
| Receipts                   | \$75.85    |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00)   |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$1,390.58 |

### Sunday School

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$1,206.65 |
| Receipts                   | \$12.00    |
| Disbursements              | (\$100.00) |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$1,118.65 |

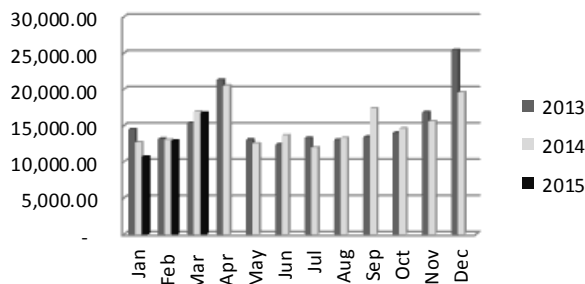
### Window Fund

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$11,906.53 |
| Receipts                   | \$150.00    |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00)    |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$12,056.53 |

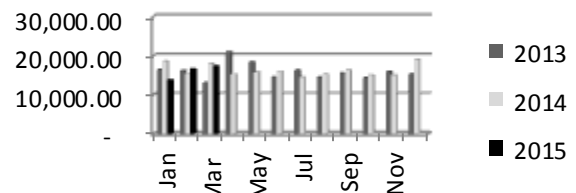
### Youth Fund

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Beginning Balance, March 1 | \$4,500.33 |
| Receipts                   | \$40.00    |
| Disbursements              | (\$0.00)   |
| Ending Balance, March 31   | \$4,540.33 |

### YTD Contribution Comparison



### YTD Expense Comparison



# Memorials

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## **IN MEMORY OF INA OLSON**

### ***Building Fund***

Omar & Ruth Engen

### ***Endowment Fund***

Nancy Johnson

Sara Heck

Marie Murrell

### ***General Fund***

Margaret Severson

Frances Eide

Dennis & Maxine Ulberg

Phyllis Semingson

Paul & Ruth Eide

Dale & Mary Pederson

Peter & June Grant

Jean Runkel

Mark & Cynthia Nymo

Rex & Barb Howard

Charlene Anderson

Dale & Charlene Olsen

Robert & Marilyn Ingman

Don & Judy Haukeness

Jon & Susan Nymo

Ron & Patty Runkel

Sam & Virginia Yanakopoulos

John & Jeri Lee

Sim & Claudia Lee

Richard B Lee

James Boulter & Christine Emerson

DeLaine Nyseth

Robert & Penelope Vonhaden

Clark & Yvonne Williams

Tim Engen

Java & Jane Bergerson

Ruby Spangberg

Jean Amundson

Ron & Jennifer Gullicksrud

Thomas Kenyon

Roger & Denise Ring

Dave & Colleen Berge

Mary Salava

### ***Music Fund***

Jim & Judy Foss

Ron & Marlene Onstad

### ***West Beef Cemetery***

Sue Larson

Albert & Ann Becker

Lyle & Ellen Heck

Clarice Bergerson

Joyce Schmidt

Julie Kensmoe

Joanne Brion

Ron & Julie Westphal

Mary Salava

### ***Window Fund***

Ronnie & Julia Bjorgo

Laverne & Ruth Gullicksrud

Jeanette Berg

## ***100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration as designated by the family of Ina Olson***

Michelle Moltzau

Randy & Kay Sands

Mark & Andrea Nyseth

Gary & Debra Ottestad

Carmen Dunham

Matt & Ronnette Nelson

Peter Koxlien

Shirley Bunde

John & Sue Bergly

Clark & Kathleen Wilson

Vera B Benzel

Larry & Karla Engen

Chad Nyseth

Teresa Emerson

Kandi Weltzien

Ed & Judy Olson

Janice Klebig

Pat & Jim Wiess

Dave & Kay Schorbahn

Jane Olson

Dennis & Deb Mathson

Tom & Debbie Bilski

Jeff & Jill Koxlien

Curt Matuska

Bill Kinney

Dave & Judy Kunes

Rob & Val Herman

Terry & Pam Koxlien

Jewel & Norma Berge

Florine Koxlien

Dennis & Sue Knudtson

## **IN MEMORY OF NORMA RAYNES**

### ***General Fund***

Mary Salava

## **IN MEMORY OF LOUISE "TOOTS"**

### **HAGENESS & STANLEY**

### **HAGENESS**

### ***General Fund***

Bjorn & Diane Rusten

Jim Tocko

Dave & Marlys Bjorklund

## **IN MEMORY OF DON PRESTON**

### ***General Fund***

Phyllis Semingson



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## **MEMORIAL FUNDS**

Immanuel Lutheran Church funds:

- ◆ Building
- ◆ Chapel
- ◆ Community Dinners (Village Café)
- ◆ Creative Beginnings
- ◆ Daughters of the King/Jr. Daughters
- ◆ Endowment
- ◆ Strum Area Food Pantry
- ◆ General
- ◆ Library
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Sunday School
- ◆ Window
- ◆ Youth
- ◆ WELCA

Cemetery Funds:

- ◆ Hamlin Cemetery
- ◆ St. Paul's Cemetery (Strum)
- ◆ West Beef River Cemetery

***When writing a check, please make the check payable to the individual memorial fund.***

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## Birthdays

|                           |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Richard Ashwell..... 2    | Ethan Pope ..... 16       | Megan Salava ..... 25     |
| Isaac Hulberg ..... 2     | Maria Berge ..... 17      | Jordan Schadrie ..... 25  |
| Julie Kensmoe..... 2      | Allen Hardy ..... 17      | David Schorbahn..... 25   |
| Trevor Torpen..... 2      | Tracy Rogness..... 17     | Jack Torpen..... 25       |
| Kay Kruger..... 3         | Charles Thompson ..... 17 | Dennis Ulberg..... 28     |
| Donna Hanson ..... 4      | Lenore Heinemann ..... 19 | Emmalee Guenther ..... 29 |
| Brian Schadrie..... 4     | Janet Cole..... 20        | Nolan Semingson ..... 29  |
| Collin Higley..... 5      | Tammy Koxlien ..... 20    | David Kunes ..... 30      |
| Laurie Lasher ..... 6     | Claire Maki..... 20       | Jacob Olson..... 30       |
| Linda Simpson..... 6      | Sharon Olson ..... 20     | Bethany Knudtson..... 31  |
| Julie Zingsheim ..... 6   | Gerard Hanson ..... 21    | Eileen Myren ..... 31     |
| Evan Johnson..... 7       | Thea Hazelton..... 21     |                           |
| Ethan Johnson ..... 7     | Marian Thronson..... 21   |                           |
| David Back ..... 8        | Lyle Heck ..... 22        |                           |
| Lucinda Olson ..... 8     | Dominic Dregney ..... 23  |                           |
| Jenna Zingsheim ..... 9   | Debra Ottestad..... 23    |                           |
| Joshua Stendahl..... 11   | Easton Koxlien..... 24    |                           |
| Howard Hanson..... 13     | Dennis Mathson ..... 24   |                           |
| Craig Semingson..... 13   | DeLaine Nyseth ..... 24   |                           |
| Jeanette Tobiason..... 13 | George Ross..... 24       |                           |
| Sonja Gilbertson..... 16  | Joseph Rindal ..... 25    |                           |



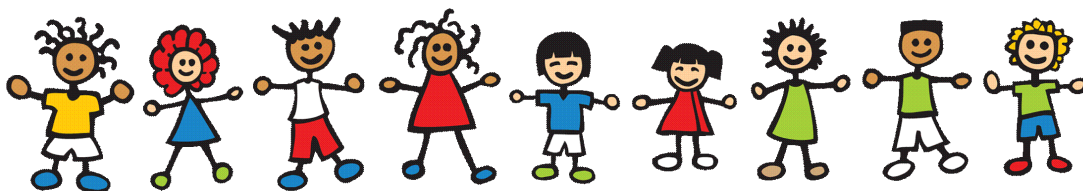
“May you have all the joy your heart can hold, all the smiles a day can bring, all the blessings a life can unfold. May you have God's best in everything.”



## Creative Beginnings Early Learning Center

It's that time of year again! CBELC Hotdog Stand and Bake Sale is May 2nd! This yummy event will start at 8:00 am rain or shine. Baked good donations are always welcome to help make this event successful. All profits go to improve the quality of learning for the children of CBELC.

CBELC is excited to announce that the art room for Immanuel Lutheran Churches' children is now open for everyone to use! We have added a sand table, paints, crayons, markers, paper, coloring books, and much more. This is such a great opportunity to let the children learn through the expression of art!

We would also like to show our gratitude to Pastor Ken for taking time every Monday and Wednesday to have Chapel with the students of CBELC. To show our gratitude we have donated \$500.00 to the Chapel fund. Once again thank you Pastor Ken for all you do to make CBELC a wonderful place.



| Sun   | Mon             | Tue  | Wed  | Thu  | Fri                    | Sat  |
|---|-----------------|--|--|--|------------------------|--|
| 31<br>9 AM Worship<br>10 AM Coffee Hour<br>11:15 AM Acoustic Service/<br>Holy Communion<br>Synod Assembly   |                 | <b>May 2015</b>  |  |  | 1                      | 2<br>8 AM<br>CBLEC<br>Pop & Hot Dog Sale<br>Youth Group Car<br>Wash Fundraiser<br>2 PM Jr DOK Senior<br>Tea  |
| 3<br>9 AM Worship/Holy<br>Communion/Sunday School<br>Kids Sing<br>10 AM End-of-Year<br>Celebration for Sunday<br>School                                   | 4<br>6 PM CBLEC | 5<br>6 PM Exercise Class with<br>Patty Fassino (Fireside<br>Room)  | 6<br>10 AM WELCA "Ladies<br>Day Out" Buckknuckles<br>1:45 PM Nursing Home<br>Service   | 7<br>9 AM - Noon Quilting<br>3:30 PM - 5 PM<br>Feed My People Food<br>Distribution (Strum<br>Village Hall)                         | 8<br>Pastor's Sabbath  | 9<br>SPARC Clean-up<br>Day<br>11 AM Kaiser<br>Funeral  |
| 10<br>9 AM Worship<br>10 AM Coffee Hour<br>11:15 AM Acoustic Service/<br>Holy Communion<br><b>Mother's Day</b>  | 11              | 12<br>7 PM Council   | 13<br>9 AM Martha Circle<br>Potluck @ Church (Sara<br>Heck)<br>1:30 PM Hope Circle<br>@ Lyn Schlink<br>3:40 PM Jr Daughters<br>6:30 PM Confirmation<br>Banquet | 14   | 15<br>Pastor's Sabbath | 16   |
| 17<br>9 AM Worship/Holy<br>Communion<br>10 AM Youth Group<br>Pancake Breakfast/Fair<br>Trade Coffee Sales<br>11:15 AM Acoustic Service/<br>Holy Communion | 18              | 19<br>9 AM - 11 AM<br>Food Pantry<br>(Fireside Room)<br>6 PM Exercise Class with<br>Patty Fassino (Fireside<br>Room) | 20<br>3:40 PM Jr Daughters<br>7 PM Baccalaureate<br>Hosted by Eleva Lutheran<br>Church   | 21   | 22<br>Pastor's Sabbath | 23<br>Graduation Day!<br> |
| 24<br>9 AM Worship<br>10 AM Coffee Hour<br>11:15 AM Acoustic Service/<br>Holy Communion<br>4:30 PM - 6:30 PM<br>Community Dinner<br><b>Pentecost</b>      | 25              | 26<br>6 PM Exercise Class with<br>Patty Fassino (Fireside<br>Room)   | 27<br>10 AM "Kaffee with<br>Katie"<br>3:40 PM Jr Daughters   | 28<br>6 PM CBELC<br>Preschool<br>Graduation<br> | 29<br>Pastor's Sabbath | 30<br>Synod Assembly   |

# Worship Assistant Schedule

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## Greeters

May 3 Matthew & Ronnette Nelson  
May 10 Rick & Tracie McSorley  
May 17 Jeff & Jill Koxlien  
May 24 Ron & Char Myhers  
May 31 Jon & Amy Olson



## Readers

May 3 Matthew Nelson  
May 10 Tera Gullicksrud  
May 17 Sara Heck  
May 24 Char Myhers  
May 31 Joyce Russell



## Communion Assistants

May 3 Jim Tocko  
May 17 Craig & Jodie Semingson



## Ushers

\*Kevin Skoug, Josh Skoug, Lucas Weidrich, Ethan Maug, Hensel Vold



## Acolytes

May 3 Kyle McSorley  
May 10 Jordan Schadrie  
May 17 Mark Tonn  
May 24 Olivia Windjue  
May 31 Josie Zingsheim



## Altar Guild

May 3 Susan Larson  
May 17 Lois Hulberg  
Flowers Julia Bjorgo  
Betty Vold  
Robes Ruth Eide

# WELCA News

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At the April General Meeting, our Program was "Christian Anti-Stress Kit", led by Karen Franson. All present were treated to special lace gift bags that Karen made from lace scraps left her by Clara Skovbrotten, and tied with ribbons leftover from Jeanette Eide. We then filled our bags with small items designed to remind us how to keep our stress levels down. Each item also had a corresponding Bible verse and an explanation card. It really was quite useful! We ended with prayer.

On April 22, several of us went to the WELCA Dairyland Conference Morning of Renewal at Lyster Lutheran Church. The Program featured Deb Gilbertson, meeting other members from nearby WELCA sister churches, and a lunch.

On May 6, we met at the church at 10am, to travel to Buckknuckles in Prague, Wisconsin, for a tour and lunch, for "Ladies Day Out".

There are no more General Meetings until Wednesday, August 5, when we re-convene at 1:30pm in the Parish Hall with the program: "The Inviting Colors of Fall". I hope you'll join us. (PS. The September 9 Chanhassen Play is going to be: "Mary Poppins"! Start planning!)

Finally, We remember this month, two remarkable women from WELCA who are now with Our Lord. Ina Olson passed away February 20, 2015 and Louise "Toots" Hageness passed away April 16, 2015. Both women were our beloved WELCA sisters and worked many years with us. We thank the Lord for their lives, and that we were privileged to have them among us.

Yours in Christ,  
Sara Heck  
WELCA co-president



# Coming to Terms with the Times

By Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

## CREATING PROGRAMS, CHASING YOUTH TRAIL, TELLING THE LOVE OF GOD



When I'm out and about in the church, I'm often asked what I plan to do to save small congregations, reverse the decline in membership, bring young adults back to church, increase mission support, make the ELCA truly multicultural, boost our relevance in the culture and fix Congress (well, not that last one). I have no plan to do any of

that by myself, but I wonder if there is a deeper concern in those questions that requires a deeper answer from all of us.

The world has changed and is changing. Residents of my mother's retirement community who waited weeks to receive letters from loved ones serving overseas during World War II are now on Facebook and regularly use Skype or FaceTime to visit with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Air travel that was once glamorous and rare for most of us is now, both in frequency and ambiance, a lot like taking the bus. It's not unusual, even in small-town America, to have Jewish, Muslim and Hindu neighbors or those with no religious affiliation at all. We are in a strange new world and don't really know how all this will shake out.

We might be tempted to overdo our efforts, to work harder and harder developing innovative programming, reading every manual on church growth, jazzing up our websites, being present on every possible social media platform. Maybe we should discover our congregation's niche: young adults, theology on tap, justice and advocacy, care of creation, ethnic specific ministry, pet blessing liturgies, urban church, rural church, big church, small church, virtual church, home church. We have done some version of all of this somewhere across the ELCA. And good for us. We need to be brave and daring. God can use our best imagination and innovation.

Or we might be tempted to circle the wagons and hold ever more tightly to what we have left. There is much that is beautiful about our traditions and buildings and heritage. What will happen to all of that if our particular congregation ceases to exist? Who will bury our parents or us? Who will take care of the parish cemetery? This is when congregations begin eyeing visitors for their value as replacement parts.

My daughter and her significant other, who was running for county commissioner, attended a church pancake breakfast where they were swarmed by parishioners who didn't realize he was a candidate. All they saw were *young adults! Potential members!* It was an uncomfortable experience.

But why do we want people to join our church? What does church mean to us? When I have asked that question, people often spoke about church as community or family. People talked about the good and important work their congregations carried out to feed the hungry or shelter the homeless. Some said the best thing about their congregations wasn't programs but people.

It was rare that anyone mentioned God or spoke about an encounter with the transcendent. I don't believe our people lack faith or don't know Jesus, but I wonder if we have lost the language to speak about the love of God that has

been given to us in the crucified and risen Christ. Maybe we just assume Jesus. Maybe Jesus has become like wallpaper: we know it's there and everyone can see it, but we don't have to talk about it.

The best thing about the church, the thing that is uniquely the church, is not programs or people but Jesus. If we as a people, and as congregations, don't get that right it doesn't matter how many programs we come up with.

In Christ through the Spirit, God has invited us into a deeply intimate and loving relationship with God and with each other. Being church is abiding in that love. We are God's beloved people gathered around word and sacraments. That's what gives us life. That's what shapes us. That's what sends us out into the world to do justice and to love kindness (Micah 6:8). And this must be the kind of community to which we invite others – not because we want to grow or pay for the boiler or attract young people, but because we have received this incredible life-changing gift and want everyone to be touched and claimed and transformed by it too.

A monthly message from Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Her email address is [bishop@elca.org](mailto:bishop@elca.org).

This column originally appeared in the April 2015 issue of *The Lutheran*. Reprinted with permission.

**Maybe Jesus has become like wallpaper: we know it's there and everyone can see it, but we don't have to talk about it.**

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

Welcome to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Strum, Wisconsin! We are a church family of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who as disciples of Christ, are gathered together to *embrace, encourage, and extend faith, hope, and love in Christ*. Embrace, encourage, and extend: these three descriptive words sum up the mission of our congregation in following the command of Christ to love one another. Through worship, education, fellowship, and service, we share that love for each other and our community so that lives may be enriched and faith strengthened. Immanuel Lutheran Church is a congregation that is steeped in history while also engaging the context of the village of Strum, the community as a whole, and the world. Come and see! There is a place for you!

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

*Pastor*..... Rev. K D Taylor  
*Parish Administrator* ..... Michelle Peaslee  
*Custodian* .....Ronnette Nelson  
*Organist/Music Director* .....Jeanette Tobiason  
*Sunday School Directors*..... Tera Gullicksrud & Sherry Bjerke

**Creative Beginnings Early Learning Center**

*Director*..... Keri Whitwam  
*Lead Teacher—Forest Friends Room* ..... Samantha Tetzlaff  
*Lead Teacher—Lily Pad Room* .....Dusti Miland  
*Lead Teacher—Monkey Room*..... Teresa Owens

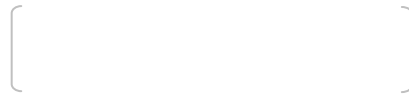
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*President* ..... Jim Tocko  
*Secretary*..... Kate Back  
*Treasurer*..... Michelle Peaslee  
*Member-at-large*..... Dan Bjerke  
*Member-at-large*..... Howard Hanson  
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*ILC Office* ..... (715) 695-3511  
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