

# Immanuel

## Highlights

Volume XXVII, Issue 3 March 2026

*A monthly Publication  
for the Members and Friends of*

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
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Akron, Iowa 51001



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*God's Enduring Grace*  
1910-2026

"As members of the family of God, we proclaim  
God's grace through our worship, education,  
witness, service, and stewardship."



### Special March Dates:

#### Congregational Meeting

The meeting will be held after worship on March 1 to give approval for the purchase of new windows for the church parsonage.

#### Baked Potato Lunch

A Baked Potato Lunch will be held on Sunday, March 15, following worship. A sign-up sheet for items to bring will be available in the fellowship hall starting on March 1.

#### Church Council Meeting

The next council meeting will be held Sunday, March 22, following worship.

### FINANCIAL STATISTICS

January, 2026

First Week	\$ 696.00
Second Week	\$1,676.00
Third Week	\$1,007.00
Fourth Week	\$2,627.00
Fifth Week	NA
Total	\$6,006.00
Needed Each Week	\$3,127.00
Currently	\$1,501.50
Difference	<b>\$ -1,625.50</b>



**Spring Begins March 20, 2026**



**Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026**



**April 5, 2026, Easter Sunday**

### Daily Devotionals

The April, May, and June issue of *Christ in Our Home* is available at each entrance. Stop into church and take one with you if you are interested in this daily devotional.



2	Tayvn Wilken	17	Kendra Olson
3	Marcie Finzen	21	Beth Ross
3	Natalie Olson	28	Ainsley Naslund
4	Brody Knapp	31	Kathy Johnson
7	Sue Higman	31	Marlys Johnson
		31	Matthew Knapp



**Happy St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2026**



### First Communion Date Set

First Communion for our 5th Grade students will be Sunday, May 3. More details will be forthcoming.

The students are Oakley DeVos, Ronald Finzen, Marcus Finzen, Case Harris, and Logan Jacobs.



A signup sheet has been put in the fellowship hall for the Baked Potato Bar Luncheon to be held Sunday, March 15, 2026, following worship. If you would like to share something, you can sign up for a small pot of chili, salad, bars (without peanuts) or lemonade.

If you want Sharon to sign you up for something for you, just call her.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Church Council  
February 15, 2026 9:34 a.m.**

Present: Jon Harris, Matthew Knapp, Josh Martinsen, Tim Philips, Tom Schroeder, Kim Swancutt, Arica Schuknecht

Absent: Heather Noll, Heather Morehead

Minutes of the January Meeting: Motion made by Tom to approve the January minutes; seconded by Tim. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Tom to approve the January treasurer report; seconded by Matthew. Motion approved.

***Unfinished Business***

**Parsonage Update/New Windows:** Quotes have been received to replace windows at the parsonage. The lowest bid was Akron Lumber Company. A special vote by the congregation to approve this purchase will be held following church on March 1. A list is also being compiled of various projects that need to be done at the parsonage and will be available on March 1.

**Call Committee Process:** The call committee met with Rev. Cara Knutson, a member of the Western Iowa Synod staff who will help us with our call process. We now await possible candidates.

**Interim Pastor:** Work continues to find an Interim Pastor. In the meantime, services will be led by Jon Harris, Josh Martinsen, and Logan Yoder, Youth Pastor at Akron FBC. Saturday night services continue and are being led by Marcy Finzen and Sharon Frerichs. Thank you to all who are helping during this transition time!

**Lent Discussion:** Pastor Trish Underberg will lead our Ash Wednesday service on Wed, February 18, 7 p.m. Josh Martinsen will lead the regular Lenten services on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Jon is working on finding someone to lead our Maundy Thursday and Easter services.

***New Business***

**Election of Council Members:** The following council members were elected to the following positions:

**President:** Jon Harris, nominated by Josh Martinsen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Schroeder

**Vice President:** Josh Martinsen, nominated by Matthew Knapp, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tim Philips

**Secretary:** Arica Schuknecht, nominated by Matthew Knapp, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Josh Martinsen

**Baked Potato Lunch:** This will be held on Sunday, March 15, following worship. A sign-up sheet for items to bring will be available in the fellowship hall starting on March 1.

***Items that may be brought before the Council***  
None

The next **Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, March 22, following worship.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arica Schuknecht, Council Secretary



The "Souper Bowl of Caring" was a great time to enjoy fellowship with friends and family. Pictured above: Charles and Diane Von Hagel, Christina Compton, Dawn, Nick, and Justyn Hale.

## Noisy Offering

The noisy offering collected in January 2026 amounted to \$182.64. This brings our total donations for "Sleep in Heavenly Peace" to \$1,844.59. This organization is dedicated to building and delivering beds and bedding to children in need throughout Plymouth County and the Siouxland area.

Looking ahead, the noisy offering for February will be directed to Mid-Sioux Opportunity. This contribution is timed to coordinate with our observance of the Souper Bowl of Caring, which focuses on providing relief for local hunger.

Thank you all for your continued support!

### Immanuel Sunday School Service Project

Immanuel Sunday School is collecting travel size deodorants for the Akron-Westfield School Nurse office. We need a total of 75 deodorants (30 boys and 45 girls). There is a collection box at both entrances to church. We will finish collecting March 15th. Thank you!

## No Sunday School Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026.



### Sunday, March 8, 2026

Move your clocks one hour ahead before you retire Saturday evening.

## "Souper Bowl of Caring 2026"

February 8, 2026

What a Soup-er morning at Immanuel! Thanks to our junior high and high school youth for leading the church service, and the Sunday school kids for singing! Thanks also to our youth and parents for hosting the soup cook-off and to Lisa Harris for heading up the kitchen duties. We had 11 official soup entries in the cook-off plus 4 other soups for our lunch.

Congratulations to our soup contest winners:

1. Dan DeVos 2. Charles VonHagel 3. Venice Stowers

People's Choice Award: Matthew Swancutt

Our souper bowl of caring total from free will offering and soup entry fees was \$758.21 which will be donated to Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.

Here are the voting results!

Seattle Seahawks - \$474.79

New England Patriots - \$00.00

Don't care - \$223.42

Soup entry fees - \$60.00

Total \$758.21

Thank you to our judges Ellie Martinsen, Brody Knapp, Jeff Morehead and Dave Compton and to our emcee, Jon Harris with his trivia questions. Finally, thanks to our congregation for their generous support and to everyone who made soup, bars, or helped in any way.

In addition, we applied as a Thrivent Action Team for this project and were granted \$250.00 to use to purchase non-perishable food items. We purchased the items at Maynard's Grocery and will deliver to our Akron Mid-Sioux Office.

Congratulations to our soup contest winners, and thank you to all who brought soup and bars to share. The winning soup came down to a coin flip! What a great day at Immanuel filled with fellowship.



Youth who led our worship service: Sydney Edwards, Emma Harris, Morgan Knapp, Faith Martinsen, Emelia DeVoss, Nora Mathistad, Reese Harris, Paige Nicholson.



Soup Judges for the contest: Dave Compton, Jeff Morehead, Brody Knapp, and Eliabeth Martinsen.



First Place: Daniel DeVos



Second Place: Charles Von Hagel



Third Place: Venice Stowers



People's Choice Award: Matthew Swancutt

Below you will find the recipes for each of the above winning soup entries.

### **Burger/Shrimp Soup**

Dan DeVos

- 1# burger grilled
- 2 bags raw shrimp grilled
- 1 can of mushroom soup
- 2 potatoes
- 4 celery stalks - cut
- 3 med carrots - cut
- 1 small onion - cut
- 1 pint Half and Half
- 1 8 oz brick cream cheese
- 3 cup water
- 3 chicken bouillon cubes
- Old bay seasoning to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste

### **Beef/Chili Soup**

Charles Von Hagel

- 1 pound each of ground pork and ground beef browned and drained
- 1 quart canned tomatoes
- 1 pint mild salsa
- 2 cans each kidney beans / chili beans
- 1 package Williams chili seasoning package
- Minced onion
- Lowrys seasoning to taste
- Garlic Pepper to taste

Prepare and cook day before cool and refrigerate and cook next day when ready to eat.

### **Creamy Potato Soup**

Venice Stowers

- 1 lb. potatoes, peeled and diced about 1 inch
- 6 T. butter
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 2 T. minced garlic
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 2/3 c. flour
- 2 quarts of half and half
- 2 ½ tsp. salt (Kosher)
- 1 large pkg. real bacon ships

Boil potatoes, onion, celery, garlic with enough water to cover potatoes until done. Do not drain water off potatoes. Pour in half and half. Add butter. Whisk flour into a little water to make a paste. Add it to the soup. Stir in the bacon chips. Simmer. Garnish with cheese.

### **Red Pepper Gouda**

Matthew Swancutt

#### **Ingredients**

- 1/4 c. vegetable oil
- 3 onions- chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 stalks celery, diced
- 6 jars (12 oz. each) roasted red peppers, drained, rinsed and chopped
- 2 Tbsp. smoked paprika
- 1 Tbsp. basil
- 1 tsp. thyme
- 1 1/2 tsp each salt and pepper
- 8 cups chicken broth
- ½ cup cornstarch
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups shredded smoked gouda

#### **Preparation**

Heat oil in large saucepan set over medium high heat; cook onions, garlic and celery for 8 to 10 minutes or until softened. Add red peppers, paprika, basil, thyme, salt and pepper; cook for 5 minutes. Puree mixture.

Place chicken broth, corn starch, sugar and pureed mixture into crock pot. Heat until warm. About ½ hour prior to serving, slowly mix in gouda and whipping cream.

#### **Croutons**

Cube loaf of French bread. Toss bread cubes with olive oil, salt and garlic powder. Toast in oven until crunchy. Garnish bowl of soup with croutons and enjoy.



January 2026 Attendance				
	Saturday		Sunday	
January	3	2	3	57
	10	2	11	83
Cold	17	0	18	82
	24	3	25	92
	31	8		
<b>Total</b>		15		314
<b>Average</b>	4		79	



Pictured above doing a skit are Emma Harris and Faith Martensen. Below are Morgan Knapp, Nora Mathistad, Emma Harris, Sydney Edwards, Faith Martinson, and Reese Harris.



Students did an excellent job of leading our worship service. Group of students below sang the opening song at the beginning of the service. After those pictures are the tables served at the soup cook-off.



Front Row: Olivia Hale, Bonnie Schroeder, Allen Schroeder, Haylee Jacobs, Adelynn Edwards, Delaney Naslund, Xandyr Jacobs. Back Row: Ronald Finzen, Marcus Finzen, James Vogt, Oakley DeVos, Case Harris, Ty Naslund.

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*As usual Jon served as our host and asked trivia questions so order of food service was conducted.*

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There were 118 individuals in church and about that many who enjoyed their soup luncheon following the service.



Pictured above: Erin Mathistad, Linda Nielsen, Heather Morehead, Bob Nielsen.



Pictured above: Madison, Caelee and Mariah Husk, Joel, Hailey, and Bonnie Schroeder, Cam Schroeder, Steve Husk.



Pictures to the abovet: Lorna Easton, Allen Schroeder, Boni and Jim Lochner, Ken Waag, Ryan Schuknecht, Lainey Schuknecht.



Pictured above: Michael, Amelia, Katie, Susan Bob, Chad Brown, Tom Noll, Tommy Brown.



Serving soups: Alisha Knapp, Lisa Nielsen, Arika Schuknecht.



Pictured above: Kent Johnson, Bob and Sharon Frerichs, Venice and Gerry Stowers, Beth and Marcia Finzen.



Pictured above: Marge and Alan Lucken, Jeff and Beckie Wahlberg, Missy and Kelly Saathoff, Lance and Lisa Nielsen.



Pictured above: Kim Swancutt, Aaron Allard, Makayla Swancutt Allard, and Larae Allard, Todd Swancutt, Matthew Swancutt,

Pictured to the left: Jack and Margaret Correia, Marlys Johnson, Beth and Tom Ross.





## Shining a Light on Disability Support

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Brain Injury Awareness Month and Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month making it the perfect time to highlight LSI's services for individuals with disabilities.

LSI provide respite care for those caring for loved ones with mental and developmental disabilities along with 24 hour care, hourly options and host homes. In total LSI provided over 366,000 hours of services to those living with disabilities last year.

For families caring for a child or adult with disabilities, the demands of around-the-clock care can be overwhelming. That's where respite support makes a meaningful difference. Respite care offers caregivers a personalized break while ensuring their loved one continues to receive quality care. A trained respite provider can step in for a few hours or up to an entire weekend to support children and adults with disabilities. Services can be provided in the individual's home, the provider's home, or within the community.

As one parent put it, "Respite helped me step back and rethink things, breath and start over again with a better mind set! I truly believe that respite has changed my family and my life."

LSI's thorough matching process and ongoing oversight help ensure the success and quality of respite services. One of our respite providers, met her client and his family when they moved into a new neighborhood. This provider and client had an instant connection during this visit, and the provider knew that she wanted to provide respite services to him. The family worked with LSI, after being introduced to our respite program by the provider, to enroll the client in services. They started out with small amounts of time, and as the years went by, the amount of respite increased.

This provider has now been providing respite services to this client for over 10 years. Their relationship has continued to grow, and is stronger than ever, as the provider has supported both the client and his family.

This client has become a part of his provider's expended family, and sees her at least once a week. The client enjoys spending weekends once a month at his provider's home. This also allows the client's parents to have a scheduled break each month. One of this client's favorite activities during his weekends at his provider's home is to visit his provider's parents, and discuss the latest book that he has read with them.

*"I became a respite provider because it offered me an opportunity to earn some extra income around my family's busy schedule. What I was not expecting was the learning opportunities that occurred for both my children and the respite children on our home. It has been an amazing experience to see the children grow. I love when I run into them out in the community and they come over and tell me everything they are now doing. Through respite care you are able to make a difference!"*

-Respite Provider

**If you are interested in learning more about respite services or becoming a respite provider, contact Kay Baker at 319-883-9583.**

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
 251 Main Street, Box 79  
 Akron, IA 51001

**WORSHIP – WINTER/SPRING SCHEDULE**

- 5:30 p.m. Saturday Worship with Holy Communion
- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship Service
- 11:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship



2026



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**Our invitation to worship with us is always open to you!**

**“Gather and Grow with Us!”**