



MARCH 2025



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

631 Grand Street, Allegan Michigan



**Ken Kingsbury - March 1**  
**Sharon Aksamit - March 1**  
**Harper Hopkins - March 1**  
**Laney Cole - March 2**  
**DJ Betzner - March 13**  
**Erin Davis - March 16**  
**Soren Doornhaag - March 20**  
**Joyce Davis - March 27**  
**Brad Van Melle - March 27**



## **WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH**

### **March 2**

Reader - Linda Havens  
Assistant - Mike Fusillo  
Counters - Linda Scott & Ken Kingsbury  
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

### **March 9**

Reader - Linda Scott  
Assistant - Donna Preisler  
Counters - Joyce Davis & Mike Aksamit  
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

### **March 16**

Reader - Michele Radke  
Assistant - Jim Horwath  
Counters - Laura Compton & Linda Scott  
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

### **March 23**

Reader - Sharon Aksamit  
Assistant - Mike Aksamit  
Counters - Joyce Davis & Jim Combs  
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

### **March 30**

Reader - Sharon Aksamit  
Assistant - Mike Aksamit  
Counters - Joyce Davis & Jim Combs  
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

**WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS:** We really appreciate everyone that serves during our worship service and *would love to have more people involved*. If you would like to serve as a reader, worship assistant, counter, or greeter, please talk to Pastor Chris or Ken Kingsbury. We can be reached in the office Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 1pm.



Pastor's Page, March 2025: Grace

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast.*

- Ephesians 2:8-9

First, let's state the obvious: "Grace" can be a person's name, like Grace Kelly, the actress from the 1950s who became Princess of Monaco. "Grace" can also be short for "table grace," the prayer before (or even after) a meal. A person can be gracious in his manner or graceful in her movements... Obviously, this is not what Lutherans mean when we use the word, but it is sometimes how people outside the Church understand and use the word.

Even in "church circles" or "among Christians," we can think we know what we mean when we use this word. Except that Christians who are not Lutheran or Reformed use it slightly differently than we do. And sometimes, even Lutherans *know* what it means but don't *act* like it's true.

The above quotation from Ephesians has been called the Lutheran "theme verse." I sum it up this way:

We don't save ourselves; God saves us.

We don't choose God; God chooses us.

Grace is God's unearned love and favor.

Luther summed it up for children this way:

*I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one*

*common, true faith. Daily in this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins—mine and those of all believers.*

- *Small Catechism, explanation of the Third Article of the Creed*

God's love and favor are unearned. God doesn't forgive you because you made up for whatever you did wrong. God loves you and chooses you because that's what God does and who God is.

You don't earn grace. What you earn is your due. If you earn it, it's not grace.

As the Nazi Party came to power in Germany, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (a Lutheran pastor who resisted the Nazi regime) coined the term "cheap grace," which is when you act like, because God has forgiven you, you can do whatever you want. Paul puts it a little differently:

*What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?*

- *Romans 6:-12*

I would call this presumptuousness, and we counter it with humility – the acknowledgement that God doesn't *have* to love, choose, or save us.

Nonetheless, God does choose, love, favor, and save us. Not because we're great, but because of who God is. That's Grace.

SDG,

Pr. Chris

Notes:

A request from council: Please don't forget to clean up your cup and used items after fellowship hour on Sundays and Bible study on Wednesdays by putting your items in the dishwasher rack after you have rinsed them.

We're looking for volunteers at Grand Ravine's next brunch on Tuesday, 4 March. Pr. Chris will cook the food provided by Grand Ravine's resident council, and we will start eating at 11am. Games will probably start around 11:45am (or so), and that's when we'll need the volunteers. See Pr. Chris or Sharon if you're interested.

Our next youth fundraiser breakfast will be on Saturday, 8 March, at 9am.

Our offering for the special services during Lent (Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Midweek services, and Good Friday) will be split between our Backpack Ministry and the Blessing Box.

Pastor Christ will be attending the ***Religious Support Enhancement Symposium*** in Fort Knox, Kentucky Monday March 17<sup>th</sup> through Friday March 21<sup>st</sup>. In case of a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Julia Humenik at Allegan United Methodist Church.

Mike Melms's funeral made several of you think about what you would like for your own funeral, so we include Immanuel's funeral planning worksheet as a helpful guide.

Personal Products Collection: throughout the season of Lent, (Ash Wednesday through Palm Sunday), we are collecting personal care items for the residents of Grand Ravine. Shampoo, conditioner, bodywash, deodorant, hand lotion, dental items, toilet paper, tissues, etc. can be donated. When you are out shopping, pick up an item or two to toss in the baskets near our church entrance! Thank you for your support in showing our neighbors a little bit of love!



## What You Want Immanuel Lutheran Church to Know about Your Funeral

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptismal Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage Date (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Member Contact: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Interment : \_\_\_\_\_ Graveside service? Yes No

Flowers? Yes No If not, in lieu of flowers: \_\_\_\_\_

Service: At Immanuel At Funeral Home (Name: \_\_\_\_\_) Other Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Eulogies: Yes No

Holy Communion: Yes No

### Scripture Readings and Lectors

Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms: \_\_\_\_\_

Epistle: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Prayers and leader: \_\_\_\_\_

### Music:

Hymns: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Prelude/Postlude: \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran: Yes No

Memorial Designation, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Projected? Y / N (If yes, please designate person to run the projector)

## Funeral Scripture Suggestions

### Old Testament

Job 19:23-25a	<i>I know that my redeemer lives</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>God will swallow up death forever</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31	<i>Comfort, O comfort my people</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25	<i>I am about to do a new thing</i>
Isaiah 49:13b-16a	<i>God will not forget you</i>
Isaiah 54:10	<i>The Lord has compassion on you</i>
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	<i>Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters</i>
Isaiah 61:1-3	<i>The spirit of the Lord God is upon me</i>
Jeremiah 31:8-13	<i>I will turn their mourning into joy</i>
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases</i>

### Psalms

Psalms 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>
Psalms 42:1-7	<i>As a deer longs for flowing streams</i>
Psalms 46:1-7	<i>God is our refuge and strength</i>
Psalms 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalms 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord</i>
Psalms 143	<i>Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications</i>

### New Testament

Romans 5:1-11	<i>Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ</i>
Romans 6:3-9	<i>Baptized into Christ Jesus</i>
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	<i>Who will separate us from the love of Christ?</i>
1 Corinthians 15:12-26	<i>Christ, the firstfruits, has been raised from the dead</i>
2 Corinthians 4:7-18	<i>We have this treasure in clay jars</i>
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 18	<i>We do not want you to be uninformed about those who have died</i>
Hebrews 12:1-2	<i>We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses</i>
1 Peter 1:3-9	<i>A living hope through the resurrection of Christ from the dead</i>
Revelation 7:9-17	<i>God will wipe away every tear</i>
Revelation 21:2-7	<i>I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem</i>
Revelation 22:1-5	<i>The Lord God will be their light</i>

### Gospel

Matthew 5:1-10	<i>Blessed are those who mourn</i>
Matthew 11:25-30	<i>Come to me, all you who are weary</i>
Mark 16:1-7	<i>The resurrection of Christ</i>
Luke 24:1-9, 36-43	<i>The resurrection of Christ</i>
John 1:1-5, 9-14	<i>The light shines in the darkness</i>
John 6:37-40	<i>I will raise them up on the last day</i>
John 10:11-16	<i>I am the good shepherd</i>
John 11:21-27	<i>My sheep hear my voice</i>
John 14:1-6	<i>In my Father's house there are many rooms</i>
John 14:25-27	<i>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you</i>





## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Quilting Group** meets every Tuesday in the Quilting Room at 9am.

**Bible Study Group** meets every Wednesday at 10am in the Study Room. We discuss the Bible Readings for the upcoming Sunday Worship Service.

**Praise Team** Practice meets every Wednesday at 4pm. Watch the Bulletin and the church web page for changes during the holidays.

**Coffee for Vets** meets on the second Tuesday of every month in the Fellowship Hall for coffee and fellowship. If you know of a Vet who might like to participate, please invite them.

**BIBLE AND BREW** will meet Monday March 10th at the Trestle Stop in Hamilton. We meet at **5:30pm** for a meal, fellowship, and a lively discussion on random questions on a wide variety of subjects. It is a lot of fun and we hope to see you there. Please note the new time!

**THE HEARTS AND HANDS GROUP** will meet at the church on Monday March 10<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. If you can crochet or knit, then this group is for you. Items that we create are given out to the community and include baby blankets, slippers, hats, gloves, scarves, and other items. If you have an interest or questions, please see Maryann Fusillo.

**THE CHURCH COUNCIL** will meet Monday evening on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**BOOK GROUP** will meet Monday March 24th at 1pm to discuss the book chosen for this month. Members of the group suggest and decide on which book they will read for the following month. Watch the Sunday Bulletin for the announcement of the monthly selection.

**Zumba** meets in the Fellowship Hall every Wednesday at 6pm and every Saturday at 10am.

**Dinner Nite Out** will take place Saturday March 15th at 5:30pm. The place and hosts are TBD. Please see the sign-up sheet on the Round Table if you would like to host and choose the restaurant.

**FAT TUESDAY/MARDI GRAS** We will have our annual Pancake Dinner at the church beginning at 5pm. on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. This event ushers in the first day of the Lenten season which starts the following day with our Ash Wednesday services.



**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP** opportunities. We can either celebrate this special beginning of the Lenten Season on Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup> by attending the worship service at Noon at Hope Lutheran Church in Plainwell, or by attending here at Immanuel at 7pm. The Lenten season is a time for us to reflect on the sacrifice Christ was willing to make for us leading up to Good Friday and finally Easter Sunday.

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME** seems to be occurring a bit early this year. So, at 2am on Sunday we get to move all our clocks one hour ahead (Spring Forward) thereby having the *wonderful* pleasure of losing an hour of sleep!



**LENTEN SOUP SUPPER AND WORSHIP** will begin Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup> and continue every Thursday evening through April 11<sup>th</sup>. We will begin with a light meal in the fellowship hall at 6pm. There will be signup sheets on the Round Table for this event. The Lenten worship service will follow at 6:45pm. This is a special season where we prayerfully reflect on the sacrifice Christ made for us. Make a point to attend if you are able.

**FIRST DAY OF SPRING** occurs on Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup>.





**SAINT PATRICK'S DAY** is held on Monday March 17<sup>th</sup>. This is an official Christian feast day established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to commemorate Saint Patrick who died on this date in 461. He is the foremost patron saint of Ireland. Celebrations today often involve public parades and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks. Many major cities turn their local rivers green.

Historically, the Lenten restrictions on eating and drinking alcohol were lifted for the day.



**GRAND RAVINE BRUNCH:** Brunch will begin at 11am on Tuesday March 4<sup>th</sup>. This time Grand Ravine is supplying the food and the games for this special event will begin about 11:45am. This is a great opportunity for us to get to know our neighbors a bit better. We will meet in the GR

Conference Center named the Luther Livingston Conference Center in honor of our Pastor Livingston who was the motivating force behind our creation of Grand Ravine. We are looking for a few volunteers to assist with the games. Please see Pastor Chris or Sharon Aksamit if you are willing to assist.

**YOUTH FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST** will be Saturday March 8<sup>th</sup>. Sorry we had to cancel the one in February, but the weather didn't cooperate.

Once again we will be serving eggs, pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee, and orange juice. We will be serving from 9am to 11am and all donations will go toward our youth ministry. We plan to have our Confirmands attend a Confirmation Camp at Stoney Lake in July and possibly also send youth to the National ELCA Youth Conference.



## A THANK YOU LETTER:

*Hello,*

*Please extend the heartfelt gratitude from myself and our staff. It's a tough time in education and moments like Wednesday (We provided their lunch during Teacher Conferences) remind us we have our community's support.*

*The donation towards the facility dog was just so above and beyond. We so look forward to our continued partnership.*

Your Partner,  
Laura Feffer  
LE White Middle School

## ANOTHER THANK YOU NOTE:

*Dear Members of Immanuel Lutheran,*

*Thank you to everyone that helped with the wonderful funeral dinner for Mike Melms. From setting up to cleaning up or providing food, servicing food or doing dishes. With all of your help everything ran smoothly. We are truly blessed to have such a caring church family.*

Sharon Aksamit  
Mission and Outreach Committee

**WHITE CAPS BASEBALL:** By August the snow will be gone and time for Baseball. The signup sheet for the August 23<sup>rd</sup> game is on the Round Table. Be sure to get your name down for the limited number of reserved tickets.



**JOY CLOSET** is a mission of the Hamilton Christian Reformed Church serving all of Allegan County. They offer FREE clothing, toys, bedding, diapers, toiletries, school supplies, coats, shoes, books, and games to those in need. See their card on the Round Table.

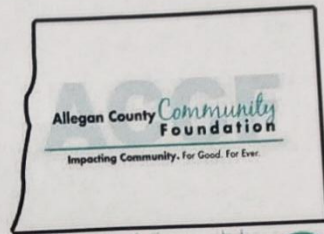




# VOLUNTEER FAIR

Allegan County Gives is designed to connect community members with the impactful initiatives happening in Allegan County and ways you can give your time, talent and treasure.

**Please join us** to meet and greet local organizations to learn of the different ways you can give your time and talent to support their missions.



Wednesday, March 19th from 12-2PM  
The Silo, Allegan

Light refreshments will be served

Rides available through Allegan County Transportation! Call 269-673-4229 to reserve your ride. ACCF is covering the cost of rides on 3/19/25 only.



