



JUNE 2025



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

631 Grand Street, Allegan Michigan



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Tammy Reed – June 3
Michael Acosta - June 7
Dottie Steffey - June 7
Lori Querback - June 7
Marie Kutz - June 23





JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Daniel jr. and Jessica Doornhaag - June 7

Russell and Joyce Davis - June 11

Ivan and Shelley Busfield - June 12

Neal and Joy Winger - June 15

Pr. Dan and Susan Ward - June 16



WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR JUNE

June 1

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

June 8

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

June 15

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

June 22

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

June 29

Reader - Donna Preisler
Assistant - Rick Bierlein
Counters - Joyce Davis & Ken Kingsbury
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, June 2025: Prayer

[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.

- Luke 11:1

The Apostle Paul tells us to pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and Jesus tells us what to say (or at least gives us an outline) in Matthew 6 & Luke 11, but I can't think of a place in Scripture that defines the word "prayer." Luther and his followers clearly understood prayer as the "human response to God's word in command and promise."¹ We have amazing examples of prayers in the Psalms and people of faith who pray thorough Scripture. Within those boundaries, then, allow me to offer this understanding:

Prayer is what happens when we come before God, when we understand that he wants us to and promises to hear what we have to say.

Notice that there is no promise to give us an answer that we would like; in fact, Jesus tells us to pray for the Father's will and then demonstrates that when he prays "take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" and then he went to the cross.

I believe that God deals with us as individuals, which is our baptized names, not our surnames (family names) that matter most to God. So, when I pray for our outgoing synod bishop, I will pray for "Craig Alan," because I know that is his baptized him, the name by which I believe God knows him.

Sometimes, we can be so lost and confused that we don't even know what or how to pray, and God hears our prayers because "the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with sigh too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). Sometimes, all we can bring ourselves to say is "How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?" (Psalm 13:1) God is big enough to handle our questions, our frustration, our anger (and, I believe, would rather we yell at him rather than stop talking altogether).

At this point, I need to clear up a common misconception about prayer: we do not have to be specific in our prayers. It can be helpful for us when we are. Sometimes, we can't be. But it isn't *necessary*.

¹ Haemig, Mary Jane. Notes on ["A Sermon on Prayer and Procession during Rogation Days."](#) In *Pastoral Writings*, 4:150. The Annotated Luther.

Why the emphasis on prayer this month? Because in every congregation that Rachel and I have served, a conversation about the Prayers of Intercession has always arisen. “They’re too long” and “I don’t know who we’re praying for” and “we’ve been praying for the same people forever” are among the most common observations. Let me take them one by one.

“They’re too long.” Tough. That’s why we’re here. Literally. Christians are a praying people. When someone asks us to pray, or when we know there’s a reason to pray for someone or we know someone needs prayer. It’s what we do. If there are a lot of people who need our prayer, get comfortable. (In fairness, I have not heard this one at Immanuel directly, so I’m addressing it just in case 😊). This is, however, part of the reason we have only been using first names.

“I don’t know who we’re praying for.” Neither, quite frankly, do I. I added some of these names to the prayer list so long ago that I’ve forgotten both who they are who added them. We were keeping track but we gave up. However, I *could* go back through the e-mails that Joyce has sent out and figure it out, if I wanted to know. Additionally, there is a possibility that someone has been added to our prayer list in confidence (another reason only to use first names). In that case, you were never intended to know. (This actually happened to me when Mom asked her congregation in Texas to pray for me and the secretary called her to ask why I was on the prayer list.) Either way, what matters is that *God* knows, and, as I said above, we trust that God will hear our prayers.

“We’ve been praying for the same people forever.” In my first call, we were praying for two people who were deployed overseas with the military. It should come as no surprise that I’m in favor of this, and I hope that you are, too. 😊 At some point, however, we asked the question: are they still overseas? We had been praying for them mindlessly for so long that they had returned home months ago and no one noticed (or said anything). So, for about another month, we prayed that their transition back to civilian life went smoothly, and then removed them from our prayer list.

There are practical ways to address these concerns.

1. We will continue to use only first names in the prayers of intercession.
2. *Starting next month* (July 2025) we will publish the names of the folks for whom we are praying and who asked us to pray for them in the newsletter if confidentiality allows. Just know that this list will probably be out-of-date within days of publishing the newsletter because we’re always adding people.
3. Each month, I will wipe the list clean. *But fear not!* You can always ask to have your loved one, friend, neighbor, our loved one’s friend’s neighbor put back on our prayer list. I will add Pr. Julia as she cares for her mother, Cheryl, who has terminal cancer. I will add those from our congregation who are ill and their spouses who care for them. But I will clear everyone each month so that we’re not praying to end someone’s cancer 2 years after they’ve been declared cancer free (or whatever the term is).

We are a praying people, because God has commanded us to be, and because we trust that God hears our prayers.

SDG,

Pr. Chris

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.



Zumba meets in the Fellowship Hall every Wednesday at 6pm and every Saturday at 10am, unless there is a conflict with a church function.



BIBLE AND BREW will meet Monday June 9th 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 time!*

THE CHURCH COUNCIL will meet Monday evening June 16th at 6:00pm. If you are interested in the activities of the congregation or have an issue you would like to have the council consider, you are welcome to attend this meeting.



BOOK GROUP will meet twice this month. Our first meeting will be on Monday June 2nd at 1pm. At this meeting we will discuss the book for May which is *All the Colors of the Dark* by Chris Whitaker. Then we will have our regular June meeting on Monday June 23rd and the book for this meeting will be chosen at the June 2nd meeting. Members of the group suggest and decide on which book they will read for the following month at each meeting. Watch the Sunday Bulletin for the announcement of the monthly selection.

Dinner Nite Out will take place Saturday June 21st at 5:30pm. The sponsors for this month are Jim and Sandie Horwath. The details will be posted later in the sign-up sheet is on the Round Table. If you would like to host and choose the restaurant, we have dates available from August through December.

GOD'S GARDEN will continue this month on Tuesday June 3rd and Tuesday June 17th at 9am. Bring your gloves, rakes, leaf blowers, etc. Please join us for **one hour** of work to beautify our church grounds followed by a relaxing period of coffee and dessert together. Many hands make the work light. The sign-up sheet for refreshments is on the Round Table



FATHER'S DAY: Sonora Smart Dodd was born in 1882. Her mother died in 1898. So, Sonora and her siblings were raised by her Civil War Veteran father. Upon hearing a rousing Mother's Day sermon one Sunday morning, Sonora decided to begin promoting a day to honor fathers. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge began to urge state governments to recognize Father's Day. Finally in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a proclamation establishing Father's Day as a national holiday. Therefore, on Sunday June 15th we honor those who serve as *Fathers* in our communities.





RUMMAGE SALE: We want to give a big *Thank You* to everyone that helped out with our sale on May 16th. We had some excellent donations and several of you signed up to help with the setup, the sale itself, and the take down the day after. With many hands it makes the task so much more enjoyable. Even though we were only open one day this year, we still managed to receive \$590.00 for our Backpack Ministry.

JUNETEENTH is a holiday that commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in Texas, specifically in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865. It's the longest running African American holiday and is celebrated to honor the freedom and perseverance of Black Americans. Juneteenth became a recognized national holiday in 2021.



GRADUATION FOR DJ BETZNER: His actual graduation day will be on Friday June 6th at the Allegan Performing Arts Center behind the Allegan High School (1560 M-40, Allegan, Michigan). Bill and Jessie Cronkhite are asking that we be there in support of this fine young man. They will also be having a Graduation Party for DJ here in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday June 29th a 2:00pm and everyone is invited to attend.

WHITE CAPS BASEBALL: The snow is finally gone, and we think spring has arrived! So now it is time for Baseball. The signup sheet for the August 23rd game is on the Round Table. Be sure to get your name down for the limited number of reserved tickets. Please see Bill Cronkhite if you have any questions.





BACKPACK MINISTRY: We have already received \$590 from the Rummage Sale which is a good start toward our goal of \$2,000 to provide backpacks for the students of L.E. White Middle School this fall. We will have a thermometer in the Fellowship Hall to track our progress.

If you would like to help, we plan to place tags on a tree in the Fellowship Hall with specific items you can donate. Or you can write a check designated to the *Backpack Ministry*.

TAG TREE FOR BACKPACK MINISTRY: We are looking for a small *Charlie Brown Tree* to use in the hanging of the tags for the Backpack Ministry. If you have one that we could borrow for this purpose, please contact Sharon Aksamit. Thank you!

