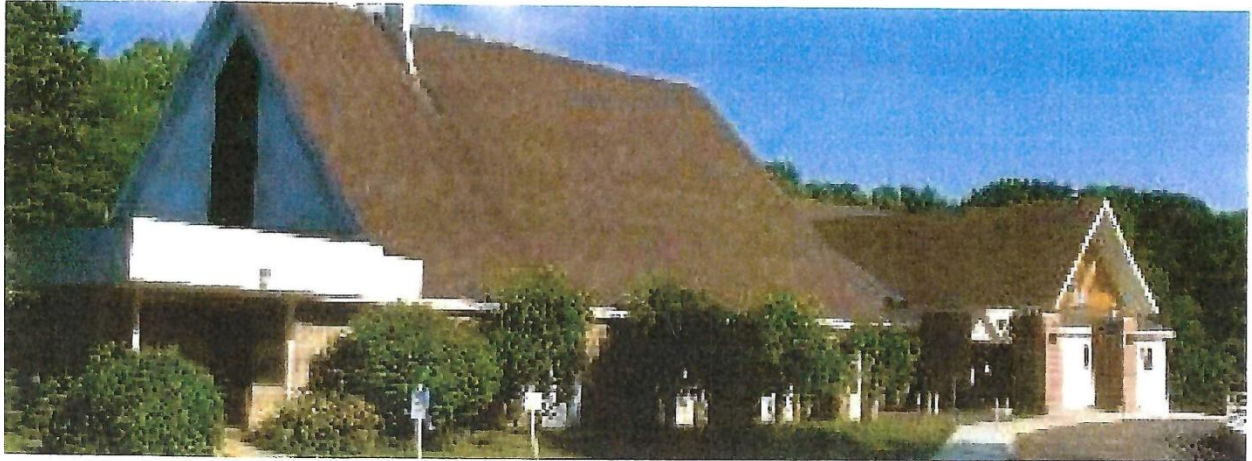




JULY 2025



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

631 Grand Street, Allegan Michigan



JULY BIRTHDAYS

Renee Steffey - July 3
Maribella Armourillo - July 9
Gerald Armourillo - July 11
Maryann Fusillo - July 14
Lennon Goodyke - July 17
Grady Armourillo - July 19
Shepard VanMelle - July 23
Meri Gorr - July 25
Jeremy Vance - July 29





JULY ANNIVERSARIES

Harold & Renee Steffey - July 3
Ken Kinsey & Dottie Steffey - July 10
Michael & Laura Wathen - July 15
Michael & Sharon Aksamit - July 26



WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR JULY

July 6

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

July 13

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

July 20

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

July 27

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, July 2025: Giving:

All tithes from the land, whether the seed from the ground or the fruit from the tree, are the Lord's; they are holy to the Lord.

- Leviticus 27:30

"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

- Jesus, The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:24

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7

Please note: If you read this looking for a loophole, you're going to miss the point. This isn't about "how can I rationalize what I'm doing now?" This is about our outlook on our Christian walk.

This month, I picked a scary word that no one likes to discuss and that comes across as self-serving because the pastor's salary depends upon your giving! But it's all over Scripture, so yup – let's talk about money! 😊

But if you read the above passages, you may have noticed that they're not necessarily just about money. If you keep reading, you'll see that wealth is discussed in a lot of ways. In fact, it's one of Jesus' favorite topics.

But again, this isn't just about money. Because the question is one of focus. While Luther claims, quoting Jesus, that the world's most common idol is money, God doesn't just want your money: He wants all of you.

And he doesn't just want *you*. God wants *all of us*, and **all of each of us**.

That's why we've switched back to an older form of the Offertory Prayer. Because Christians have always believed that God gives us all that we have and all that we are. And we say it together because it's not about me or you – it's about all of us.

"Merciful Father. We offer with joy and thanksgiving *what you have first given us*: our SELVES, our TIME, and our POSSESSIONS, **signs of your gracious love....**" (emphases mine)

Think about those words. There's a lot there; they're powerful words. AND THAT'S JUST THE FIRST HALF OF THE PRAYER! They say a lot about God and about us. And, while I'm not always the most

joyful or thankful, these words are aspirational – what we should aspire to believe, be, and do. That’s why we say them every week, so that they become a part of us. And we pray them together because it’s important for everyone to feel their impact as the words come out of our mouth. And they’re a prayer, so we’re saying them to God. As the prayer indicates, this is about so much more than money; it’s about a life lived for Jesus. And not just in and through a congregation – all the time.

SDG,

Pr. Chris

P.S. I believe everything I wrote above true. And I’ll switch the Offertory Prayer for September.

Notes from Pastor Chris:

The bishop-elect is coming! As Sharon mentioned in her article on our back pack drive, Bishop-elect Julie Schneider-Thomas, elected at our synod assembly in May, will join us to preach and pack backpacks on Sunday, 17 August. If at all possible, **please plan to attend worship that day**; she has said that she wants to get to know us, and this will be a great opportunity for us to get to know her as well.

We found a nursery attendant! Well, strictly speaking, she found us. Makayla Slater came to our Memorial Day luncheon, and when she expressed interest in seeing our nursery, I asked if she would like to be our nursery attendant once school starts. While we’re looking into her certifications and background, we hope to have her in place by the first Sunday in September. We have invited her to attend worship before then so that we can introduce her to the congregation.

As I said in a previous newsletter, I prefer not to make unilateral decisions; I prefer to have time to take decisions to council or the All Committee Meeting. This gives more people input into decisions and gets more buy-in from more people when decisions are made. I have also noticed, in general, that quick decisions are less well-examined and usually aren’t as good as decisions that have been examined by more than one set of eyes (and when someone walks through our doors looking for something from us, haste is sometimes a tactic that some folks use to prevent clear decision-making).

I will be attending Confirmation Camp (they call it something else, but that’s what it is) with our Confirmands (Carter, Grady, and Izzy) from 6 – 11 July.

Because the weather is now “hot” by almost everyone’s definition, and because I HATE the heat, the air conditioning in my office will likely be set to a temperature I find conducive to working (a temperature which many of you would define as “cold”). In order to use as little energy as possible, I will probably be keeping my office door closed, even when I’m in the office. Please don’t hesitate to knock – I’m not trying to keep you out, I’m trying to keep the cool air in. 😊

Also because the weather is warmer, the glass front doors have expanded, which means that they don’t always close tightly. If you are the last person in the building, please make sure the doors are closed and latched when you leave.

Through July and August, I will probably arrive a little later on Sunday mornings than I do during the school year. No need to worry about me until at least 9:15am. 😊

A giant THANK YOU to everyone who makes this congregation work, from our extremely well-attended Memorial Day luncheon to God's Garden / Holy Grounds to baking communion bread to whoever it was that procured the cake for DJ.

By 01 July 2025, there will be cameras outside and inside our building.

The Prayer list as of 22 June 2025:

Linda was placed on the prayer list by Norma.

Joyce asked us to pray for Zonna and her daughter Annette, in an e-mail on 29 May 2025.

Jeff and Mike were placed on prayer list by Sharon Aksamit in an e-mail on 25 May 2025.

Theresa was placed on the prayer list by Laura Compton.

Pastor Julia Humenik is the pastor of Allegan United Methodist Church; she is helping to care for her mother, Cheryl, who has terminal cancer.

Nichole was placed on the prayer list by Michele Radke.

Sara, Rae, Judy, and Philip were all placed on the prayer list by Maryann Fusillo.



UPCOMING

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 July 14th 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 July 21st 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 on Monday July 28th at 1pm. The book for this month will be *Warrior Girl Unearthed* by Angeline Boulley. We would love to see you there to discuss this interesting book

Dinner Nite Out will take place Saturday July 19th at 5:30pm. The sponsor for this month Donna Preisler and we will be going to Hunan Gardens in Kalamazoo. There will be more details in the signup sheet 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 GROUP has been very busy and our property has been blessed with the fruits of their labor.



The cemetery cleanup was very successful and the new plants next to the church look great. The group will meet this month on Tuesday July 15th and Tuesday July 29th. 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



WHITE CAPS BASEBALL: For those that have signed up for the game, *please* get your check to Bill Cronkhite by the 13th as he needs to pay for our reserved seats. This is always a fun time for everyone. 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.



CONFIRMATION CAMP: Our young people will be heading off to Stoney Lake Camp for five days of fun, study, building new friendships, and youth-centered worship experiences. They will begin on Monday, July 7th and conclude on Friday July 11th. We hope and prayer that this will provide a memorable experience for our youth that will last a lifetime!



WEDDING OF BERNIE LENAU AND LAURA COMPTON will be celebrated here at Immanuel on Sunday July 20th shortly after the worship



service. Everyone is invited and encouraged to stay for this blessed event. There will be a luncheon immediately after the wedding and if you plan to attend we ask that you please sign the sheet on the Round Table under the wedding invitation. We need a count by July 1st to properly make plans. And if you are willing to help, there are signup sheets for that also on the Round Table.

PASTOR CHRIS WILL BE ON ARMY DUTY

beginning on Sunday July 27th through Saturday August 2nd. He will be at the Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois for a Battle Assembly meeting. We will be pleased to have Pastor Jim Foster celebrating worship with us that Sunday (July 27th).



INDEPENDENCE DAY: On July 4, 1776 our forefathers signed the Declaration of Independence which essentially created this great nation. It is always a big day of celebration, picnics, and of course fireworks. Let us remember and respect what a special day that was in our history. And as we set off our fireworks, let's remember to be safe. *Happy 4th of July!*



Backpack Ministry Update:



It's a big deal to supply 100 backpacks to the Middle Schooler's in our community so we wanted to give you an update on our progress so far!

- Our monetary goal is \$2,000 this year
- We have nearly \$1,400 so far (rummage sale, mid week Lenten services, etc.)
- Many personal care items (deodorant, combs, hand sanitizer) already collected so far
- Keep bringing in personal care items to keep the kids clean and safe (especially combs, hand sanitizer and deodorant)
- 150 water bottles purchased with a Thrivent grant card
- A second Thrivent grant card will help purchase 100 trapper keepers
- Watch for a giving tree with specific school supplies tags (mid-July)
- **Allegan United Methodist Church** is helping us and **Plainwell Hope Lutheran Church**

What do we need to pull this off you ask?

- 100 backpacks (we have them leftover from last year and purchased a few more!)
- 200 spiral notebooks (110 in our current inventory)
- 1,000 pencils (450 in our current inventory)
- 100 trapper keepers
- 100 packages of mechanical pencils
- 100 envelope pencil holders (we have 1)
- 100 packages of colored pencils (32 in our current inventory)
- 100 packages of cap erasers
- 500 folders
- 100 packages of highlighters
- 100 water bottles (Thanks to Thrivent we are all set)

What will we use the \$2,000 for?

- Purchase 100 trapper keepers ~ they are around \$15 each
- Purchase personal care items we don't get such as bandaids, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Purchase the school supplies we don't get from the list above

We already purchased 50 more backpacks

August 17, 2025 after worshipour new **Bishop-elect Julie Schneider-Thomas** will join us to fill the backpacks for delivery the next day! We hope you will join us as well.

Questions?? Ask Pastor Chris or Sharon Aksamit

DINNER NITE OUT
AT THE HOME OF JIM AND SANDI HORWATH

