



APRIL 2026



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
631 Grand Street, Allegan Michigan

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR APRIL

April 5

- Reader - Jennifer Vance
- Assistant - Jim Horwath
- Counters - Laura Compton & Nancy Brauer
- Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

APRIL 12

- Reader - Bernie Lenau
- Assistant - Jim Horwath
- Counters - Joyce Davis & Mike Aksamit
- Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

April 19

- Reader - Michele Radke
- Assistant - Mike Fusillo
- Counters - Laura Compton & Sharon Aksamit
- Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

April 26

- 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: April 2026

"Everything Happens for a Reason"

Ok, keep reading.

My problem with this one is that it makes God sound like a puppet master, and I just can't bring myself to blame God for the terrible things that people do to one another.

However, in Romans 8:28, the Apostle Paul writes "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."

Mind you, this is the same guy who, just a little earlier in that same letter (Romans 5:3-5) wrote the lines that we just heard in worship:

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

And, to be fair to the Apostle Paul, he practiced what he preached, as he boasted in his suffering to the congregation he planted in Corinth (2 Cor 11:23-30); I took the actual words out of my final draft, as they took up a lot of room. 😊 I don't know a lot of Christians who *boast* in their *suffering*... and I worry about the few I do (they tend either to have martyr complexes or weaponize their experiences).

Jesus himself does not promise that "Everything Happens for a Reason." He promises to love and save us, to be with us and that he will give us the Holy Spirit (John 13-15).

Now, I can say that God is sovereign and that he does not abandon us. I can say that there might be reasons for things that I can't see or understand. God *might* cause some things to happen that I don't like or find pleasant. But "everything happens for a reason" tends to pin everything on God, and I am hesitant to pin *everything* on God, because I am not an Old Testament prophet and I have received no special revelations from Jesus. Also, I've seen the dark side of where this can lead: "God is punishing me / us / America!" (In my experience, we suffer enough for our own

stupidity; God need not make us suffer when we, sadly, are all too capable of bringing suffering upon ourselves.)

Finally, this is not necessarily a helpful thing to say to someone in the muck of life, because sometimes, suffering people can't see past their suffering (read Job 3:1 – 31:40 for more on what not to do with someone who is suffering).

What I can say with great confidence is that God can turn all things to good and does turn many things to good. I've seen the good that God has brought from tragedy; I'm guessing that you have, too! But "all things work together for good for those who love God" means that all things will work out for the whole Church eventually (even if not in the foreseeable future, or even this life).

SDG,

Pr. Chris

Notes:

Our next confirmation fundraiser will be a lunch that they host after worship on Sunday, 12 April; yes, that's immediately following First Communion for Lily, Shephard, and Lincoln.

Nursery Attendant

Makayla Slater has been under the weather recently and will not be able to be our nursery attendant; still, we welcome Kristin and Makayla to return to worship with us whenever they are ready.

Care Committee!

A new, small committee has formed: the Care Committee. If we notice that you have been absent from worship for about three weeks (and we haven't heard from you / we don't know why), we'll reach out, just to make sure you're OK. You might receive a note by mail, a phone call, or a text from Pastor, Donna Preisler, Denny Gorr, or Maryann Fusillo.

Prayer List:

Maryann added Jeff, Sandy Foster (Pr. Jim Foster's wife) fell and broke her ankle and elbow, Dennis is Dawn Doornhaag's brother (he has prostate cancer), Lynda is Lori's sister, Chris Brown is Sally Stiver's son-in-law, Pat Sweeris attends our Bible study, Dinner Night Out, and Bible & Brew and is having leg issues, Sarah is the wife of a Soldier (whose cancer has returned), Louis Gasper is the husband of Ken Kingbury's cousin who has bladder cancer, Nicole Pearson is a friend of mine from college who is both pregnant and has cancer, Kathy was added by Maryann Fusillo, Nicole Radke is Michele Radke's daughter-in-law, Pam Forsythe is Ken Kingsbury's friend, Mike is Laura Compton's neighbor with Alzheimer's (and Lisa is his wife), and the rest are members.

A BIG THANK YOU:

First, I need to acknowledge that I am not good at saying “thank you” and that there are a lot of things that happen around Immanuel only because faithful folk show up because they care enough to make them happen. In March, the confirmation youth who are going to Minneapolis in 2027 for the ELCA’s Triennial National Youth Gathering had a “St. Patrick Day Goodie Exchange.” When I set up the table, there wasn’t much out there. When I reappeared after confirmation class, the table was full, and when the money was counted, there was more than \$250. Thank you for making that possible. On Tuesday, 24 March, we hosted a brunch at Grand Ravine, and I had an Army casualty notification the night before, so I was late getting there. But the ladies (and Ken) who showed up that morning made it a success. These are just two examples, I wanted to make sure I said THANK YOU for making our ministries happen.

From Laura Feffer, Principal at LE White Middle School, in response to our Lenten donations:

“Thank you doesn’t seem like enough. This round of donations again so generous and so impactful. Thank you a million times over! Laura Feffer, Principal, LE White Middle School”



UPCOMING EVENTS

Quilting Group meets every Tuesday in the Quilting Room at 9am. Immanuel has been known over the years for our support and participation in the quilting ministry. These quilts are sent all over the world through Lutheran World Relief, including some for the homeless here in the United States. If you are willing, please join us for three hours on Tuesday mornings.



Bible Study Group meets every Wednesday at 10am in the Study Room. We discuss the Bible Readings for the upcoming Sunday Worship Service. If you would like to be placed on the email list to receive an advance copy of the readings, please contact the church office. We always have a lively and interesting discussion and we encourage you to join us if you are able.

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 at 9am for coffee, cinnamon rolls, and fellowship. If you know of a veteran, please invite them to join our group. This is a great way for them to have fellowship and discuss shared experiences.



GOD'S GARDEN: This group will meet on the First and Third Tuesday of every month. During the winter months the group will concentrate on the *inside garden* (i.e. the church building). As the weather changes we will work again on the church landscape and the church cemetery grounds. Check the Round Table for signup sheets and more instructions. Please join us if you are able as many hands make the work load light.



BIBLE AND BREW will meet on Monday April 13th at 5:30pm at the Trestle Stop in Hamilton. This is a great time to get to know one another better over a good meal and the individual discussion of interesting questions. Please come and join us. The signup sheet is on the Round Table.



THE CHURCH COUNCIL will meet at 6:30pm on Monday April 20th in the Adult Bible Study Room. If anyone has a report to be presented at the council meeting, please send it to the church office before Noon and we will print copies for you. Anyone is welcome to attend the council meeting, especially if you have something that they need to know about.

BOOK GROUP will meet on Monday April 27th at 1pm in the Fellowship Hall. This month we will read and discuss *The End of Life Book Club* by Will Schwalbe. We always choose the next month's reading at each gathering so join us and share your favorite book. You will also find all the selections, including those for last year, on our church web page under *Ministries*.



DINNER NITE OUT: For April we will meet at 5:30pm on Saturday the 18th at the Brewsters Smokehouse, 1420 East M89, Otsego. There is a signup sheet on the Round Table and we hope to see you there. There is also a signup sheet for anyone willing to sponsor the dinner for future months. All that is required is for you to choose the restaurant, make a reservation, and give a final count to the restaurant the week before the date. This is an excellent way for others to enjoy your favorite restaurant.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES: Begins with our special Palm Sunday Worship on March 29th. This is the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and the people laid their cloaks and palm branches in his path. Then on Thursday April 2nd we will have **MAUNDY THURSDAY** worship here at Immanuel at 6pm. This celebrates when Jesus had His Last Supper with the disciples. On Friday April 3rd we will have two different worship services for **GOOD FRIDAY** beginning at 1pm with a service focused on the seven last words of Christ on the cross. At 6pm we will have a Tenebrae worship service which ends with His burial in the tomb. On Sunday April 5th we celebrate **EASTER** and *the empty tomb*. *Hallelujah! He is Risen!*



WHITECAPS GAME: Spring has finally arrived and we look forward to what has become our annual gathering to see the game. Bill Cronkhite has reserved several great seats for the game on August 15th and there is a signup sheet on the Round Table. The cost is \$16 per person due by August 1st. This is always a fun event.



TENEBRAE WORSHIP SERVICE, which is part of our Good Friday worship schedule, is to commemorate Christ's passion, betrayal, suffering, and burial. The liturgy emphasizes the themes of abandonment, sorrow, and the journey to the tomb. During the last week of his life, Christ suffered a great deal for our benefit and this service gives us the opportunity to remember His great gift.



KNOW the SIGNS

EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of Alzheimer's or other dementia. Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are 10 warning signs and symptoms. If you notice any of them, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor.

• Memory loss that disrupts daily life

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's disease, especially in the early stages, is forgetting recently learned information. Others include:

Increasingly needing to rely on memory aids (e.g., reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own.

Asking the same questions over and over.

Forgetting important dates or events.

Typical age-related changes:
Sometimes forgetting names or appointments but remembering them later.

• Challenges in planning or solving problems

Some people living with changes in their memory due to Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers.

They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before.

They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills.

Typical age-related changes:
Making occasional errors when managing finances or household bills.

• Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure

People living with memory changes from Alzheimer's or other dementia often find it hard to complete daily tasks.

Sometimes they may have trouble driving to a familiar location, organizing a grocery list or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

Typical age-related changes:
Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or record a television show.

• Confusion with time or place

People living with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time.

They may have trouble understanding something if it's not happening immediately. Sometimes, they may forget where they are or how they got there.

Typical age-related changes:
Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.

• Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

Typical age-related changes:
Vision changes related to cataracts.



Some people living with Alzheimer's or other dementia could experience vision changes. This may lead to difficulty with balance or trouble reading. They may also have problems judging distance and determining color or contrast, causing issues with driving.

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

• New problems with words in speaking or writing

People living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue, or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have trouble naming a familiar object or use the wrong name (e.g., calling a "watch" a "hand-clock").

Typical age-related changes:
Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

• Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

A person living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may put things in unusual places.

They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. They may accuse others of stealing, especially as the disease progresses.

Typical age-related changes:
Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them.

• Decreased or poor judgment

Individuals living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience changes in judgment or decision-making.

For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money or pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

Typical age-related changes:
Making a bad decision or mistake once in a while, like neglecting to change the oil in the car.

• Withdrawal from work or social activities

People living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience changes in the ability to hold or follow a conversation. As a result, they may withdraw from hobbies, social activities or other engagements. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite team or activity.

Typical age-related changes:
Sometimes feeling uninterested in family or social obligations.

• Changes in mood and personality

Individuals living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience mood and personality changes. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, with friends or when out of their comfort zone.

Typical age-related changes:
Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

If you notice any of the warning signs of Alzheimer's in yourself or someone you know, it can be difficult to know what to do. These are significant health concerns that should be evaluated by a doctor. Don't ignore them. Please consult your physician or visit alz.org/10Signs for more information. Take action, and consult a physician.

Donate now at alz.org/Renew

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