

Immanuel United Church of Christ

339 E. Louisa St.
P.O. Box 87
Darlington, WI 53530

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FEBRUARY 2021 Newsletter

Interim Pastor Brad Brookins

608-776-4110 Office

E-Mail – immanuelucc@centurytel.net



From the Interim Pastor
February, 2021

Dear Friends,

One of the reasons I agreed to come to Darlington and serve as your interim pastor, was that I was intrigued by the problem of being the church, and being the pastor of a church, in the midst of a deadly, world-wide pandemic. I wanted to see if I could help a little with working that out. It turns out I was right about one thing—it is indeed a problem.

The things most of us love about church—a Sunday morning in the sanctuary, sunshine streaming through stained glass windows that tell the gospel story in pictures, and remind us of the faithful ancestors who installed those windows; drinking in the liturgy, the music, the bread and wine; sitting close to friends, complaining about noisy children, singing hymns of faith, shaking hands, giving hugs—all these things we love that have been our way of experiencing and expressing our faith have, for now, been taken from us.

Only, that's not exactly right, is it?

Nothing we love has been taken from us. The deeper truth, rather, is these things we love have been temporarily laid aside by us so that the people we love can be kept safe. We've made these hard decisions because we know in our hearts that what we most love about the church is not the church itself but the people we "do church" with. Not one of us, I'm quite sure, would ever choose the pleasure of a Sunday morning service over the health and well-being of anyone worshipping with us.

So seen in this light, foregoing one pleasure—Sunday mornings in our sanctuary, to preserve a greater pleasure—the company of those we love, really wasn't a difficult decision, or even a close call.

However, it is still a problem. Especially now as we are learning that it may be several months yet before enough of us are vaccinated and the Covid virus is knocked down far enough for us to safely gather again in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. As the winter wears on we will be tempted to rush back inside. If neighboring churches decide to open their doors before we do, some will wonder why they can and we can't. There will be times when our resolve to love our neighbors more than we love our sanctuary will be tested. We need to be prepared for this test.

You should know your Church Council is paying close attention to pandemic developments. They are gathering the best information available from trustworthy

sources to guide their decisions on when and how to re-open for in-person worship, and they will be communicating their thinking to you on a regular basis. Expect to hear more very soon.

In the meantime, as we live through the coming months don't hesitate to call me or any of the Council members if you have questions or concerns. Our goal is to be as careful as is necessary and as transparent as possible with the sometimes very difficult decisions that lie ahead. We will continue to act out and act on Jesus's call to each of us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Remember, we are all in this together and we will get through this together.

In continuing hope,

Brad Brookins
Interim Pastor



CHURCH COUNCIL

The January Church Council meeting was held on January 20, 2021. Present at the meeting were: Roy Berrey, JoAnn Geissbuhler, Roy Hardt, Fritz Hirsbrunner, Tana Risseuw, Janice Ruf, Sheila Siegler, Jean Stauffacher, Randy Ubersox, Pastor Brad Brookins: Absent Matt Ubersox

The December minutes were approved as printed. The Financial Report was approved as printed.

REPORTS:

1. **Pastor Report:** Pastor Brad will be offering a Bible Study at 6pm on Tuesday evenings. Wednesday Prayer time will continue on Weds nights at 6:30pm (or 5:30 on council evenings). Confirmation class will be Wednesday at 7:30pm. Brad attended a webinar with the Wisconsin Council of Churches which focused on the obstacles of worshipping in person. Too many safety issues to safely open at this time. He has also been in contact with the other fellow Pastor's in Darlington to discuss this issue.
2. **President's report:** Thank you notes received for the Christmas gifts and from Pastor Barbara for her quilt and gift card. Wisconsin Badger Camp also sent a thank you for the \$100 donation. Thank you to the Sutherland, Hardt and Siegler families for taking the Christmas decorations down.
3. **Christian Education Committee:** JoAnn Geissbuhler stated that the survey results from Sunday School age parents was to continue the Google Slides as the lessons. Committee will be meeting to prepare for the next semester of materials.

4. **Building and Grounds:** Matt Ubersox let JoAnn know that Joey Ruf has been contacted to replace the exit lights per safety regulations.
5. **EF&G:** Janice Ruf is continuing to deliver the bulletin to 14 people. Also took them the Annual Report booklet and will ask them prior to annual meeting if any concerns that need to be addressed at the annual meeting on their behalf. Let her know if anyone needs a call or bulletin.
6. **Women's Guild:** Deb Loken has told JoAnn that the donations to replace the Bazaar were appreciated and was pleased with the response.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Worship Committee:** Pastor Brad had asked to get a group together to help gather ideas for worship service. He would like to get some of the younger members involved. Members now include Roy Berrey, Tana Risseuw, Cindy Pluemer, and JoAnn or Sheila will be contacting others to join the committee.
2. **Churchtrac:** Marjean Sutherland is exploring more options this program allows. Looking at the possibility to donate through the program. Also will be doing a "test" email to see how system works in regard to signing up to donate or work at a Church function.
3. **Annual Meeting:** Sunday, January 31, 2021 following the Zoom Worship. Unable to have the meeting on Facebook. Immediately after the meeting the Council will meet to elect officers.
4. **Strategic Planning:** Fritz Hirsbrunner will discuss this committee at the Annual Meeting. He has 4 volunteers to date but strongly encourages more participation. A Member of each of the Church committees will be represented to keep the continuity and information shared with all aspects of the planning.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Ash Wednesday Feb 17th.** Pastor Brad will prepare a recorded service and have some other updates in regard to what will be available that evening.
2. **Church Keys:** Anyone who has a church key please contact Sheila Siegler to update the list and have keys returned that aren't needed.
3. **In Person Church Services:** The Council decided to continue with Zoom and Facebook per recommendation of the WI Council of Churches. There will be ongoing discussions and communication with church members.

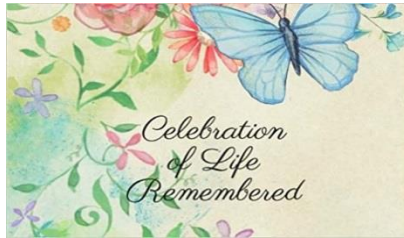
The next Council meeting will be February 10, 2021 at 6:15 p.m. Date change due to Ash Wednesday



THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for the cards, calls, thoughts and prayers when I recently had surgery. It was greatly appreciated. I hope to be back at the piano soon!

*Thanks again,
Cindy Pluemer*



THE LIFE OF JANICE SCHADEWALT

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family of Janice Schadewalt who passed away January 22, 2021. Our hearts go out to you, and we will always remember the happy memories we have in knowing Janice. Janice will be affectionately remembered and sadly missed by all who knew her. Sympathy cards can be sent to John

Schadewalt, N 7750 Valley View Road, New Glarus, WI 53575



WOMEN'S GUILD

A big THANK YOU to all of our wonderful church members who made monetary donations to the Women's Guild in lieu of our Christmas Cookie Bazaar. As of

December 23rd, we have received approximately \$3,000.00. We are so grateful and hope to put the money to good use in 2021. The Guild officers will be evaluating later in the year about our face-to-face monthly meetings. Hopefully they can resume once we are going back to church. As of now, there will be no 2021 guild booklet, but once we decide on a start date for monthly meetings a booklet will be distributed to everyone.

We hope everyone's Christmas was a good one!!!

Debbie Loken
Women's Guild President



WORSHIP UPDATES

Facebook: Did you know that you can go back and watch any service on Facebook. Search the Immanuel United Church of Christ home page and all services can be viewed at anytime.

Zoom: Joining services on zoom offers fellowship time 30 minutes prior to the service. This is a great way to interact with other members of our church. A few laughs and giggles are usually included.

Website: The IUCC website is a great resource to find past worship materials including the sermon. <https://immanuelucc.wixsite.com/darlington>. Contact Janice Ruf if you want to be on the list to have a sermon delivered. Janice can be reached at 608.553.4182.

Evening Prayer: Join Pastor Brad on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm. Due to conflict with Council meeting on Feb 10th evening prayer will be at 5:30 pm.



CHURCH KEYS

We are in need to update the list of members who have church keys to either the church or parsonage. Please contact Sheila Siegler at 608.482.2332 if you have a key.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Adult Bible Study: Pastor Brad is starting Adult Bible Study on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Look for the e-mail invite to join via zoom.

Confirmation: Pastor Brad has resumed Confirmation classes on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm. Classes will be held via zoom.

Sunday School: Sunday School will virtually resume in Mid-February. Classes will be 2 times a month either via zoom or with lessons e-mailed to families. Watch for an e-mail with more information with dates and times.



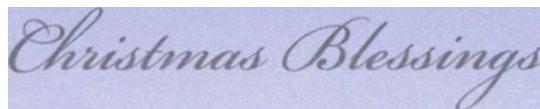
ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is February 17. More details to come about services once finalized.



FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING

Due to Ash Wednesday the February council meeting has been moved to February 10th at 6:15 pm.



Christmas 2020

Dear Family and Friends,

No one needs to be reminded that 2020 has been a difficult year. But it's also true that life has gone on and where there is life there is the potential for joy and meaning. Ruby and I have experienced the same kinds of challenges and losses that others have, but it has also been a year of blessing and even unexpected gifts!

Before it was clear how deeply COVID-19 would impact life, we flew to Arizona in February to see family and friends, take in a couple spring training baseball games, hike in the desert and enjoy the warmth. It was a fun time!

Upon our return things rapidly changed. In-person worship at Zwingli UCC (where I'm pastor) was cancelled starting March 15 and hasn't yet resumed. Learning to care for a congregation using virtual worship and other technologies has been challenging. During the summer I decided that it was time to be retired for good and I submitted notice of my intention to be finished at the end of the year. That impending date provokes some real grief and sadness, but I am also firmly convinced that the decision is a good one. Still, I have come to love the people of Zwingli UCC and will miss them.

There were other adjustments to life brought on by the pandemic. Outings as mundane as trips to the grocery store took on an element of "adventure," and visits to other public venues came to a complete halt. We've spent a lot of time at home!

Ruby was especially occupied from Mid-March through mid-July with the care of her mother. With the onset of the pandemic, she and her sisters decided her 103-year-old Mom (Anne Schmid) might be safer if she stayed with us (where there are fewer folk coming and going) than where she had been. Mom is physically frail, so her care takes some work, but she is mostly alert and mostly easy to care for. In July she returned to the farm, and we again became "empty-nesters" — except, of course, for the dog!

But there have been things to do! In January we decided to purchase the empty lot to the west of our home. It's slowly been transformed from an unkept wilderness of ragweed and burdock to something a bit more civilized. Early in the pandemic son Paul and his family decided to return to the US from their work in Myanmar. After spending some time in Arizona, they traveled cross-country to Wisconsin (in a rented RV) in July, thinking they'd return to Myanmar in August. In fact, they were not able to return until mid-November. They rented a house half an hour from here, and we loaned them one of our cars and were able to spend much more time with Paul, Dawn and 8-year-old Piper than we've ever been able to do (including being with Piper on her birthday for the first time ever!). We had picnics and hiked at places like Devil's Lake State Park and canoed the Wisconsin River and more. It's been a delightful and unexpected gift!

In October, the three boys and their families with Ruby and me rented cabins at a church camp in far southwest Michigan near the Warren Dunes State Park on Lake Michigan and we enjoyed a family reunion of sorts. That's the only occasion we've had this calendar year to see Bob, Melissa and 6-year old Richie in person, and we had a great time!

Pete, Jenny and 12-year-old Kailey are nearby in Verona and we do get to see them — though not as frequently as in pre-pandemic days.

Another loss was a planned AMTRAK trip from Chicago to San Francisco to Seattle and then back to Chicago. There would have been stops along the way to see family and friends. I still hope to reschedule this trip — maybe later in 2021, but probably more realistically in 2022.

Ruby and I both enjoy retirement and find ways to make life meaningful even while mostly staying close to home. We miss the concerts and theatre in Madison that were becoming a part of our lives. That loss is temporary. We look forward to getting our COVID vaccine shots when we're eligible and for the changes that will gradually occur once that happens.

In January we said goodbye to Quincy, our 13-year-old Cocker Spaniel. She was an oddly asocial creature, but we loved her and her death was a source of real grief. In the spring when we were confined to home, we decided to get new dog and we found a puppy who looks much like Quincy, but with a very different disposition. Maddie (short for Madison) is friendly and affectionate. She's pictured with granddaughter Piper in the far left of the enclosed photo (pictured during a hike at Picnic Point on the south shore of Lake Mendota for those of you who know the area). Kailey is pictured up in a tree at Tower Hill camp in Sawyer, Michigan during the family reunion I wrote of, and Richie is pictured on the shore of Lake Michigan during that same weekend. Like all grandparents we are profoundly proud of our grandchildren! .

We miss you and look forward to the day we might visit and catch up on our respective lives!

Merry Christmas! May God bless you with joy and peace!

Ruby & Rich Pleva .

Blessings to everyone!
Rich



Have you logged into Churchtrac yet???

Check out some of the benefits of our new Church software by logging into <https://iucc.churchtrac.com> . This will take you to our "Church Connect" page. Anyone can view this page but active members, with an e-mail address, can register and are able to view their personal demographic information such as mailing address, phone number, and their contributions. This is very beneficial as you can update your own information, and we are hoping this will keep our records more up to date. Members can also view a full church directory. It will list family members, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address. This feature is only available to members who are in the system and not to the general public.

Church Connect is easily accessed by any device. You can bookmark it or add an icon for easy access. The page has a link to the Website, Facebook page, Church Calendar plus much more.

If you have any questions or need any help logging in – please contact Marjean Sutherland at 608-482-0091 or marjeans@hotmail.com.



Looking for some Church information?

Our website at <https://immanuelucc.wixsite.com/darlington> is updated constantly with all the information you may need. The Home page gives you important announcements plus links to the Zoom events. Member Resources includes all the documents such as Committee List, By-laws, Annual Report, Building Request form, Maintenance Form, etc. Newsletter tab has the last 12 months available and Worship material has the Bulletin and Sermons for the last few months. Calendar shows all IUCC events happening along with their Zoom link.

You can easily reach the website through Facebook and Church Connect or you can bookmark it for easy access. If you think there is something we are missing, please contact Marjean Sutherland at 608-482-0091 or marjeans@hotmail.com



What you need to know about the COVID 19 Vaccination

I understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated now that COVID-19 vaccines are available. It is important for all of us to understand the facts about the vaccination. The following information is directly from the CDC and I encourage you to take the time to read the information provided so that you can make the correct choice for you and the safety of others.

My experience with the vaccination has been good. I am proud to be one of the first to become vaccinated for you and me.

Your Council President,
JoAnn Geissbuhler

Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19? No. None of the authorized and recommended vaccinations approved contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine **cannot** make you sick with COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. All of them teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (protection against the virus that causes COVID-19) after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, will I test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test? No. Neither the recently authorized and recommended vaccines nor the other COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States can cause you to test positive. If your body develops an immune response—the goal of vaccination—there is a

possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a **previous infection** and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine? Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, vaccine should be offered to you regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. We won't know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have more data on how well the vaccines work. Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

Will a COVID-19 vaccination protect me from getting sick with COVID-19? Yes. COVID-19 vaccination works by teaching your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19, and this protects you from getting sick with COVID-19.

Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA? No. COVID-19 mRNA vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. Messenger RNA vaccines—also called mRNA vaccines—are the first COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States. mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the mRNA cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease. At the end of the process, our bodies have learned how to protect against future infection. That immune response and making antibodies is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

Is it safe for me to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I would like to have a baby one day? Yes. People who want to get pregnant in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Based on current knowledge, experts believe that COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to a person trying to become pregnant in the short or long term. Scientists study every vaccine carefully for side effects immediately and for years afterward. The COVID-19 vaccines are being studied carefully now and will continue to be studied for many years, similar to other vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine, like other vaccines, works by training our bodies to develop antibodies to fight against the virus that causes COVID-19, to prevent future illness. There is currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination cause any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. In addition, there is no evidence suggesting that fertility problems are a side effect of ANY vaccine. People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them.

COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic.

- Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the disease in communities, CDC will continue to update the recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.

Links for Common COVID-19 Vaccination Questions/Concerns

1. Facts about the vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits/facts.html>
 2. Benefits of the vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>
 3. Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccines explained here: <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/emergency-use-authorization-vaccines-explained>
 4. Excellent video of the use of mRNA for the vaccine: <https://youtu.be/qJIP91xjvsQ>
 5. Moderna's Vaccine Website: <https://www.modernatx.com/modernas-work-potential-vaccine-against-covid-19>
 6. Moderna's Vaccine Program PDF: https://www.modernatx.com/sites/default/files/content_documents/mRNA-1273-Update-11-16-20-Final.pdf
 7. Pfizer's Vaccine Website: <https://www.pfizer.com/science/coronavirus>
 8. Rigorous safety and effectiveness standards for COVID-19 vaccines: <https://www.fda.gov/media/139638/download>
 9. Vaccines have rigorous ongoing safety monitoring: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>
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PASTORAL CARE

If you know of any church member that would appreciate a pastoral visit, please let Janice Ruf know and she will follow up with the contact, or contact Pastor Brad Brookins at 608-669-2926.



Dear Members & Friends of Immanuel UCC,

Thank you so very much for the lovely quilt and Amazon gift cards. The quilt will always hold a special place in my heart. Blessings on your pastoral search and hope for a joyous

Christmas season. May Advent be a productive time of discernment and waiting for the birth of our Savior. Miss you all.

*In Christ,
Pastor Barbara*



MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS ONLINE?

If you pay bills online through your bank, you can send contributions to the church that way, too.

The church's address is:

Immanuel United Church of Christ
339 East Louisa Street
P.O. Box 87
Darlington, WI 53530.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb. 2 – Adult Bible Study at 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 3 – Wednesday Prayer time at 6:30 p.m.
Confirmation at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 9 - Adult Bible Study at 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 10 – Wednesday Prayer time at 5:30 p.m.

Church Council Meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Confirmation at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 16 - Adult Bible Study at 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 17 – Ash Wednesday

Confirmation at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 22 – Deadline for March newsletter articles

Feb. 23 – Adult Bible Study at 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 24 - Wednesday Prayer time at 6:30 p.m.

Confirmation at 7:30 p.m.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

3rd Dick Ward
6th Nicole Lewin

8th Orvin Siegenthaler
10th Don Rolli
Stu Soper
13th Colton Buss
14th Heidi Rear
15th Dean Monson
16th Rinley Ruf
17th Taylor Reuter
20th Matt Ubersox
21st JoAnn Geissbuhler
Jerry Hancock
Michael Kendall
22nd Chuck Keister
Linda Connolly
24th Deana Soper
28th Travis Lewin

FEBRUARY LITURGISTS

7th Scott Glendenning
14th Joan Blaser
21st Joanne Merriam
28th Betsy Wiegel
March 7th – Janice Ruf



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

8th Cindy & Paul Pluemer
14th Christa & Dean Jenson
20th Orvin & Ruth Siegenthaler



Deadline for the
March newsletter
articles is
February 22, 2021.