

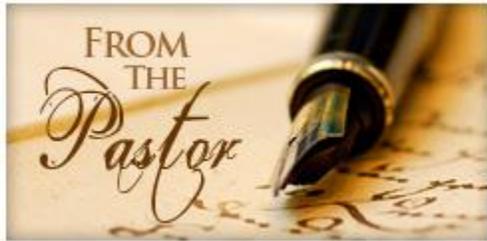
Immanuel United Church of Christ

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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
May 2021 Newsletter
Interim Pastor Brad Brookins
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April 26, 2021

An article on how churches can best plan for their future came across my desk last week. The author made the point that given the current pace of change in our culture and the level of uncertainty

we experience about the future, churches need to stay nimble and be prepared to improvise and sometimes alter their plans. We can prepare to improvise, he said, “first by taking care of one another and ourselves. We improvise most nimbly when we’re healthy and relaxed.”¹

It occurred to me that a healthy and relaxed congregation would be one that was centered on the good news of Jesus and able to relax into the abundant grace of God. Because the truth is, as Scripture tells us, nothing that worries us stands a chance before the God’s gospel of grace.

Then it occurred to me, because this is the way my mind works, that perhaps I should pay attention myself to this suggestion. The truth is, you see, I am very seldom either centered or relaxed. My hyper-active monkey brain chases after bad news with much more vigor than good news. And like most people these days, I carry around a load of anxiety that I seldom put down. It’s hard, impossible maybe, to be anxious and relaxed at the same time.

And then I remembered one of my very favorite poems—*The Avowel*, by Denise Levertov.

The Avowel
As swimmers dare
to lie face to the sky
and water bears them,
as hawks rest upon air
and air sustains them,
so would I learn to attain
freefall, and float
into Creator Spirit’s deep embrace,
knowing no effort earns
that all-surrounding grace.

And then, because we have been talking about Vision and Mission Statements in church for the last few weeks, I thought it would be useful for me to exercise a little nimbleness of my own and craft a new mission statement for myself—one to express my own aspirations for how I’d like to live into the uncertainty ahead. So I did that. And it looks like this:

To live centered in the story of Jesus, relaxing into the grace of God

¹ <https://www.congregationalconsulting.org/two-kinds-of-planning/>

What does your personal mission statement look like?

Peace Always,

Brad



CHURCH COUNCIL

The April Church Council meeting was held on April 21, 2021. Members Present: JoAnn Geissbuhler, Roy Hardt, Fritz Hirsbrunner, Brandi Ruf-Wepking, Sheila Siegler, Jean Stauffacher, Dave Sutherland,

Matt Ubersox, Randy Ubersox, and Pastor Brad Brookins.

Absent: Roy Berrey due to connectivity issues.

The March minutes were approved as presented. The Financial Report was approved as presented.

Reports:

Pastor – No report, Pastor gave opportunity for group to ask questions or make comments, there were none.

Christian Education – Since there are only a few sessions left for school year we will continue with electronic format.

Joan Blaser will take care of signs for graduates to be displayed outside of church to recognize our High School Seniors.

Building and Grounds – Water turned off in the Parsonage will save on recurring charges for service to home. Matt needs to find out more information on landscaping bid and will report to council at next meeting.

Mission Team – Cinnamon Roll/Brat sale this Friday, April 23. Mission Trip dates July 31-Aug. 7, Biloxi, MS. Nine signed up to go with three spots still open. Apple pie sale is planned in October. Pie making will be at the Baptist church again this year due to the space and ease of facility.

EF&G – Sermons being delivered to 10 people currently.

Women's Guild – Questionnaire will go out to women of the guild this week.

Strategic Planning – Fritz reported a good discussion on Sunday with parishioners. Members are more focused on the church being opened which made it hard to discuss the strategic plan. Fritz will be in church again on Sunday to continue the discussion with parishioners and get their feedback on key items of the plan.

ChurchTrac – Tip sheets will be in the April Newsletter with instruction for online giving.

Evaluations – Completed performance reviews with Cindy, Nancy and Joanne. These went well.

Old Business:

Computers – Betsy has reached out to local IT folks with estimate of \$2,400.00 but is unable to get us serviced in the time constraint we have, has estimate of \$2,000.00 from Best Buy. Lead On another IT person who is willing to help us with assessing connectivity issues and getting Humpty Dumpty connected as well. The council was in favor of Betsy making purchase of computers from Best Buy.

Humpty Dumpty – Fritz had a discussion with them and advised the rent will not be raised this year. Their membership is down this year so this will really help them. They would like to put a sign outside their door so folks could locate them. We need more information on the size and location of the sign in order to make an approval. They also would like to put a banner on the railing of the church parking lot advertising openings at the school. Council approved the banner.

Church Reopening – A lengthy discussion including all aspects of reopening the church and the risks associated was had by the Council tonight. The Council approved opening the church for Church services, weddings, funerals and baptisms with safety guidelines to be determined by the Worship Committee prior to reopening. Goal date is May 16th or 23rd. The committee will determine the in-person size limit, mask wearing, food service, and safe practice for Pastor in-person guidelines. IT will need to be set up for those wishing to stay home yet view church live online. Worship Committee will consist of Brandi, Pastor, Roy B., Matt U., Cindy P., Sheila and Betsy. Pastor will coordinate group meeting to set guidelines.

New Business:

Contract verbiage keeping in contract is as follows:

Immanuel understands that in-person services and meetings may not be prudent during the Covid 19 pandemic, therefore, Immanuel gives Pastor Brad Brookins discretion to his in-person participation in such services or meetings. The Council approved to accept the contract as written.

Search Committee: They have met 3 times and will continue to meet and progress in the search process. The strategic plan discussions with the congregation will continue to be passed along to the committee for use in the search process.

The next Council meeting will be Sunday, May 16th at 6:15pm.



I would like to thank the following people for helping deliver Meals on Wheels the month of March:

Randy Loken
Nancy Quinn
Connie and Randy Ubersox
Marjean and Dave Sutherland
Chloe and Gracie Hinderman
Colleen and Jeremy Williams.

The next month we are scheduled to deliver meals will be in August. Please contact Diane Ritchie at 608-482-0048 or ritchied@dalrington.k12.wi.us if you would be willing to help. We are always very short of people willing to help.

*Thank you,
Diane Ritchie*



OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family of Mary Lindell who passed away on April 12, 2021. Our deepest sympathies also go out to the family of John "Dave" Ubersox who passed away on April 12, 2021. Our hearts go out to all of you,

and we will always remember the happy memories we have in knowing Mary and Dave. May those memories bring you joy.



Graduating High School Seniors

A special service for Graduating Seniors is set during Sunday morning services on May 23. Plans for Baccalaureate are also being planned by the Community of Churches on the evening of May 23. Senior families will be contacted once plans are finalized.



Church Re-opening Update

The council unanimously voted to re-open church with the pastor in person for services, weddings, funerals and baptisms. A goal date is May 16th or May 23rd. Safety guidelines will be included with the help of the worship committee. We also need to make sure we have the proper hardware and software to ensure members that wish to stay

at home for services continue to have a good church experience and that work has been started.



Janitor Help

Immanuel is looking for a Janitor to clean the church starting June 1, 2021. Contact JoAnn Geissbuhler immediately if interested at 608.482.0465.

Job Description:

The janitor provides a clean environment for all church

activities. The Janitor is accountable to the Women's Guild and the Church Council. May also take direction from the Pastor when special activities require a change in the cleaning schedule. The Janitor also provides cleaning support to any of the church's organizations for their scheduled events.

Education, Training & Experience: Experience in the safe and effective use of a wide variety of cleaning products and equipment.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: Proficient in the timely cleaning of a large facility.

Effective interpersonal skills with the ability to relate to a variety of people, and personalities, including the Pastor and lay people. Share cleaning knowledge and advise work of volunteers to perform seasonal heavy cleaning that is not included in the list of janitor's duties. Individual must be self-directed.



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.



IUCC Online Giving

Immanuel United Church of Christ is now able to offer the option of online giving. This is done through our Churchtrac program. There are three options to give: Credit/Debit card, ACH/Checking, and SMS/Text giving. There is a small cost to IUCC to be able to do this but it is minimal. The most cost effective way to give online is to do the ACH/Checking option. The cost for IUCC is only \$.25 a transaction. Credit/Debit card has a cost of 2.2% plus 30 cents for each transaction. SMS/Text giving utilizes a credit/debit card so the cost would be the same. You will be credited for your full donation and IUCC will pay the fee to the company.

If you are logged into Churchtrac (<https://iucc.churchtrac.com/>), the donation will go directly into your account. You are able to select different categories you would like your donation to go to. For example, \$200 donation - \$180 to General Operations and \$20 to OCWM. The money gets directly deposited into the Church bank account. The company Churchtrac uses for this is Stripe and our account is all set up with them. They receive the fee for their service through the transactions that are completed. The transaction will show up on your account as **Immanuel UCC**. There is a step by step process help guide that can be accessed by clicking the link at the top of the e-mail that was previously sent to you, or the link on our website.

If you already have or would prefer to have your bank send your donation to the Church via check, that option has not changed.

If you need any help getting this set up, please feel free to reach out to Marjean Sutherland at 608-482-0091 or e-mail marjeans@hotmail.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 9** – Mother’s Day
 - May 16** – Church Council meeting at 6:15pm.
 - May 23** – Honoring our Graduates during worship
 - May 24** – Deadline for June newsletter articles
 - May 31** – Memorial Day
-



Cinnamon Roll & Brat Stand Pictures



Search Committee Update

The following members have been approved by the congregation to be on the Search Committee: Roy Berrey (608-432-2416), Joan Blaser (608-778-1504), JoAnn Geissbuhler (608-482-0465), Pam Hardt (608-726-1657), Karl (Fritz) Hirsbrunner (608-604-2057), Jared Reuter (608-642-2811), Brandi Ruf-Wepking (608-726-1476), Marjean Sutherland (608-482-0091) and Betsy Wiegel (608-370-3502). Marjean was elected as Chairman, Brandi as Secretary and Jared as Chaplain.

The Committee met with Rev. Lorraine Ceniceris Wisconsin Associate Conference Minister via Zoom on Monday, April 12. She explained the process and especially the Five Commitments for Search Committees which are:

A Faith Commitment: The task of the Search Committee is very simple and very complex. Initially the task is spiritual. Search Committee members make a faith commitment to develop as faith-centered, prayer-directed people of God willing to listen to God in the process of seeking a new pastor. Search Committee members engage in a 4-Way Covenant-a Covenant with their prospective pastor, the congregation, the Conference and Association, and the Holy Spirit.

A Time Commitment: Search Committee members make a time commitment. By the time the search process is completed (from first organizational meeting to the calling of a new pastor) **the committee may have been working together for as little as 9 months or as long as 18-24 months.** Initially most committees meet weekly. Once committees begin considering pastoral profiles and scheduling interviews, the frequency of meetings increases. At times the Search Committee must travel to hear prospective pastors preach. All in all, it is a significant time commitment.

A Commitment to Confidentiality: Search Committee members make a commitment to confidentiality. Members must not talk about the content of their work. That is to say, the sharing of names of individuals under consideration is a serious breach of process. Even to speak in generalities about location or experience or gender can risk people guessing who the committee is considering. The congregation must be kept informed at every step of the process. Sharing where the committee is in the process is critical. **However, until a final candidate is presented, all conversation about any candidates is closely guarded.**

A Commitment to Openness: Search Committees make a commitment to genuine consideration of all candidates. The commitment involves understanding that the gifts, skills, and experience of candidates are primary in determining their ability to serve the congregation.

A Commitment to Consensus: Finally, Search Committee members make a commitment to consensus. Members need to be of one mind in recommending their prospective pastor to the congregation. Any unreadiness on the part of any member of the Search Committee can and often does spell disaster down the road. Everyone must be able, with a clear and positive conscience, to support and endorse the individual presented before the congregation.

The Committee is meeting weekly and starting the process of completing our Church Profile. **To do this, it is vital we get input from the Congregation. Each member should complete the survey** located on the back (please make copies if needed or they are also available in Church) and **return by MAY 9.** They may be mailed to PO Box 87, Darlington WI, dropped in the suggestion box at Church located in the Narthax or scan and e-mail to immanuelucc@centurytel.net. This survey is also available online at: <https://surveyhero.com/c/21e842e2>. If you would prefer to do the survey by phone, please feel free to contact any Search Committee Member listed above. **The survey is completely confidential** unless you choose to add your name and phone number to be contacted.

We ask that you pray for us regularly. We are blessed with a wonderful church community, so with hard work and God's guidance, we will be blessed with a wonderful pastor to guide us as we minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

1. **The first question on our Church profile is “Who is God calling IUCC to become as a congregation”? How would you answer this question?**

2. **What are your expectations of our next pastor?**

3. **How supportive would you be of a pastor who combines new ideas with our existing traditions?**

_____ Very Supportive _____ Supportive _____ Somewhat Supportive
_____ Not Supportive

4. **Would you have pastoral concerns with any of the following:** (circle) **Yes** **No**
(If yes, please mark with an X all that apply)

_____ Ethnicity _____ Race _____ Sexual Orientation _____ Gender
_____ Marital Status Other _____

5. **Please rank the following skills of a pastor in the order of importance to you.**
(With 1 as most important to 10 as least important)

_____ Able to compose and deliver moving, inspirational and memorable sermons
_____ Accepting of people with divergent views
_____ A person of faith
_____ Deals effectively with conflict and is a problem solver
_____ Effective in planning delivering worship services, weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.
_____ Effective in working with our children and youth
_____ Effective leadership skills
_____ Good Listener who is approachable and a helpful counselor.
_____ Has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of our church
_____ Team Player (working collectively toward a common goal)

6. **Do you have any further comments?** _____

7. **If you would prefer to discuss or complete this survey with a search committee member, please include your name, phone number, and best time to call.**



**MAY
BIRTHDAYS**

- 1st Debbie Loken
- 5th Betsy Wiegel
- 7th Spider Fromader
- 9th Pastor Brad Brookins
- 15th Paul Badertscher
- 18th Nathalie Ruf
- 19th Abigail Reuter
- 27th Lauren Gleason
- 28th Ed Wiegel
- 29th Jeanie Schadewalt
- 31st Scott Glendenning



Deadline for the June newsletter articles is **May 24, 2021.**



**MAY
LITURGISTS**

- 2nd Jared Reuter
- 9th Abby Reuter
- 16^h Joanne Merriam
- 23rd Marjean Sutherland
- 30th Judy Huntington

**MAY
ANNIVERSARIES**

- 2nd Keith & Marilyn Siegenthaler
- 24th Dean & LuAnn Monson
- 25th Kevin & Wendy Leahy
- Deana & Stu Soper
- 26th Fritz & Jane Hirsbrunner

