

Immanuel United Church of Christ

339 E. Louisa St.

P.O. Box 87

Darlington, WI 53530

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MARCH 2026 Newsletter

Rev. Dana Caldwell

608-776-4110 Office

E-Mail – immanuelucc@centurytel.net



FROM OUR PASTOR

Lenten Devotional Reflection

Please take a deep breath and exhale to center and focus yourself as you begin this devotional time.

Prayer of Illumination: Dear Lord, open our minds and our hearts to experiencing you fully in this time of reflection today. Amen

Scripture: please read Matthew 26:14-30

Judas Iscariot knew Jesus. He spent 3 years of his life following him. He knew Jesus' face to face. He REALLY knew Jesus. Judas shared his life with Jesus. They shared conversations, meals, and places to rest along their journey. Judas knew Jesus's sense of humor. He had witnessed Jesus' rail against the Pharisees and Sadducees. He knew how close Jesus was to John the Baptist and Lazarus and how he felt their loss- and he was likely there to witness Lazarus come out of the tomb. He experienced Jesus' compassion for the crowds. Judas saw Jesus heal people. While Judas was not alone in his confusion about what Jesus was trying to teach them. He had experienced Jesus's frustration with everyone- including himself as a disciple. Even after three years Judas put his own expectations on Jesus thinking Jesus would become a military leader who would be the Jews Messiah against the Romans oppression. As we read the scriptures Jesus showed no violence outside of overturning some tables.

Think about this for a minute.

In the gospel of Luke 22:15 He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." He earnestly desired to share the "last supper" with Judas. In the gospel of John, before the Passover meal, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, yes, even Judas's feet. Really sit with all these things and allow them to sink in.* Jesus loved Judas to the very end.

And yet, after all of this Judas betrayed Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior, for a few coins....

Reflect on the following questions: (you may want to journal your responses)

How well do I know Jesus? Do I have a personal relationship with Him?
Have I chosen to betray Jesus over a few coins to have desired worldly items and comforts, or do I live and give sacrificially? In what ways can I live and give more sacrificially going forward?
Do I share my witness of the work I see Jesus doing in my life with people who may not know him? How can I be a better witness to what Jesus means to me, and what He has done for me?
Do I follow my plan and pray Jesus will bless it, or do I pray and follow the plan Jesus lays out before me?
Do I have expectations of Jesus and his role in my life, and in the world, that do not represent who He is in scripture? Do I know Jesus as portrayed in scripture well enough to know the difference?

Dear Lord, we are so thankful that we can think about these things from the "Easter" side of the cross, knowing that you came to save us. We are also thankful for the work Your Holy Spirit has, done, is doing and will continue to do in us to transform us into the likeness of Christ. Help us we

pray to grow closer to you day by day. Amen.

Peace be with you!

Rev. Dana Caldwell



CHURCH COUNCIL

The meeting was called to order by Connie Ubersox, Vice-President, due to the absence of President Nancy Slama, at 6:14 PM. Council members present at roll call were: Connie Ubersox, Jordan Hinderman, Pam Hardt, Steve Siegler, LeeAnne Ruef and Phil Risseeuw. Absent were: Nancy Slama, Kerry Black and Dave Sutherland. Also present were: Pastor Dana Caldwell and Betsy Wiegel, Church Treasurer. Pastor Caldwell then opened the meeting in prayer.

The meeting agenda was then presented for review and approval. Connie Ubersox asked to add an agenda item 8 (d) Pastor Health Update. After review and consideration, motion by Hardt second by Hinderman to approve the meeting agenda as amended. Motion carried. Discussion was then held concerning the minutes of the January 14, 2026 Church Council meeting. A copy of the meeting minutes was included in the meeting notice email. After review and consideration, motion by Risseeuw second by Siegler to approve the January 14, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Under reports of committees, the following information was provided:

Financial Reports – A copy of the January, 2026 financial statements were included in the meeting notice email. Several questions were asked regarding this information, and Betsy Wiegel answered those questions. After review and consideration, motion by Risseeuw second by Hinderman to approve the January, 2026 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report – Pastor Caldwell reported on the Leadership Meeting held February 7, 2026. She stated she felt the meeting went well, and she received good feedback. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2026 after church. A Prayer Workshop is scheduled for March 14, 2026. Pastor Caldwell explained a few details that will be covered at the Prayer Workshop. Confirmation Sunday is tentatively scheduled for June 28, 2026. Final plans are being worked out for the Ash Wednesday Service scheduled for February 18, 2026 and the Lenten Services beginning February 25, 2026. All services will be at 6:00 PM with a light meal served at 5:00 PM. Pastor Han Lee of the Darlington United Methodist Church will be assisting with some of the services, and the piano players at the Methodist Church will also assist with three of the Lenten Services. Members of Grace Lutheran Church are also willing to assist with the Lenten Services. Pastor Caldwell's Installation Service on February 22, 2026 beginning at 1:00 PM. And initial planning is progressing on the upcoming Easter Services.

President's Report – Connie Ubersox passed around a thank you note from Joan Blaser. Discussion was held concerning a donation request from the Canoe Fest Committee. It was the consensus of those present, not to make a donation for 2026. Connie then read a letter from the Church's insurance company regarding policy declarations that will be included in the April, 2026 renewal policies. A copy of the letter will be sent to Kerry Black.

Christian Education Committee – Jordan Hinderman reported Janice Ruf has agreed to be the Church's Sunday School Teacher for another year.

Building and Grounds Committee – Dave Sutherland sent an email stating there is nothing for consideration for this meeting.

Mission Team – Connie Ubersox read an email from Jared Reuter stating the Mission Team

donated \$1,000.00 to the steeple fund. And starting on April 1, 2026, the Mission Team Treasurer's will be providing the requested quarterly financial reports.

Stewardship Committee – Nothing new at this time.

EF&G Committee – Connie Ubersox reported this committee has scheduled Women's Sunday for March 15, 2026, and is putting together the service details.

Endowment Committee – It was reported that a correction needs to be made to the interest amount earned on the investments; and therefore, the anticipated disbursement calculations included in the annual report. The corrections will be made, and presented at a future Church Council meeting.

Finance Committee – Phil Risseeuw stated there is nothing new to report at this time.

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee – Nothing new at this time.

Thrift Store Committee – Pam Hardt stated some of the committee members went to the Benton Thrift Store and helped them out with clothes sorting and other tasks. They learned more about store operations, and came home with some clothes racks and hangers. They are still waiting to get the final floor cleaning done in the basement.

Women's Guild – Connie Ubersox stated the next meeting will be held March 11, 2026.

Worship Committee - Pastor Caldwell stated this committee is working on Lenten Services activities.

Under old business, discussion was held concerning the following agenda items:

Evaluations – Performance evaluations are normally held in March for the Church Secretary and Church Organist. Volunteers are needed to perform the evaluations. Connie Ubersox, Pam Hardt and Pastor Caldwell stated they are willing to complete the performance reviews.

Sound System – Betsy Wiegel reported the cost estimate for replacement of the sound system in the sanctuary that was presented by Marjean Sutherland at the January 14, 2026 Church Council meeting, was submitted and paid for by the Church's insurance company. After the new equipment is installed, the system will be evaluated regarding the need to add a congregational microphone.

AED Placement – The AED has been purchased and delivered to the Church. Training on the AED was completed on January 31, 2026. The AED now needs to be placed on a wall, somewhere in the church, hallway or fellowship hall. Several location options were suggested. After discussion and consideration, it was the consensus of those present to allow Randy Loken to find an appropriate location for the AED, and install same.

Under new business, discussion was held concerning the following agenda items:

Move March Council Meeting – Connie Ubersox stated the next scheduled Church Council meeting would be March 11, 2026, which is a Lenten Service date. After discussion and consideration, it was the consensus of those present to move the March Council meeting date to March 10, 2026 at 6:15 PM.

Donation to Lafayette County EMS – Connie Ubersox asked if a money donation should be sent to Lafayette County EMS for the AED training they completed at our church. Several options were discussed. After discussion and consideration, it was the consensus of those present to write a Thank-you note to Lafayette County EMS, and deliver it to the EMS garage with some bars and cookies.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Committee Chairs – A copy of Immanuel Church's Committees was included with the meeting agenda email. At this meeting, the list was reviewed, and Committee Chairman recommended for each committee. After discussion and consideration, motion by Siegler second by Hardt to approve the following list of Committee's and Committee Chairman:

EF&G Committee – Janice Ruf, Chairman, Kathleen Black, Cindy Pluemer, Janette Steger and Betty Williams, members.

Building and Grounds Committee – Randy Loken, Chairman, Roy Hardt, Marjean Sutherland and Randy Ubersox, members.

Christian Education Committee – Jordan Hinderman, Chairman, Janice Ruf, member.

Endowment Fund Committee – Fritz Hirsbrunner, Chairman, Pam Hardt, Marjean Sutherland, Connie Ubersox and Betsy Wiegel, members.

Nominating Committee – Kerry Black, Chairman, Betsy Ellefson and Nancy McCarten, members.

Pastor Parish Committee – Fritz Hirsbrunner, Chairman, Kerry Black, Betsy Wiegel and Nancy Slama, members.

Stewardship Committee – Joan Blaser, Chairman, Janice Ruf, Sheila Siegler and Marjean Sutherland, members.

Worship Committee – Pastor Caldwell, Chairman, Roy Berrey, Judy Huntington, Cindy Pluemer and Steve Siegler, members.

Finance Committee – Phil Risseeuw, Chairman, Fritz Hirsbrunner and Betsy Wiegel, members.

Thrift Store Committee – Marjean Sutherland, Chairman, Pam Hardt, Sheila Siegler, Connie Ubersox and Pastor Caldwell, members.

Motion carried.

Pastor Caldwell Health Update – Pastor Caldwell then updated those present on her current health concerns. She stated on December 30, 2025, an MRI revealed not only a bulging disc that requires surgery, but also cancerous lesions in her pelvis, spine and spleen. A subsequent scan found nodules in her lungs and swollen lymph nodes. She stated she has been diagnosed with stage IV cancer. Additional tests are scheduled; however, Pastor Dana feels she now has enough information to inform the church congregation. A copy of a proposed email was distributed to those present for review. It was suggested the email be sent out tomorrow, and a question-and-answer session be held after the church service this Sunday, February 15, 2026. After review and consideration, it was the consensus of those present that the proposed email distribution and follow up question and answer session was a good plan for this situation.

The next Council meeting will be March 10, 2026 at 6:15 p.m.

WOMEN'S GUILD

The Guild's next meeting is March 11th at noon with lunch. We will be having a program. It will be the Forensics kids which is always so enjoyable. A meeting will follow.



PASTORAL CARE

If you know of any church member that would appreciate a pastoral visit, please let Pastor Dana Caldwell know and she will follow up with the contact. You can contact Pastor Caldwell at the church by calling 608-776-4110. The quickest way to contact Pastor Caldwell is by calling her cell phone at 919-523-8187, or by emailing her at dana.l.caldwell@gmail.com.

BINGO

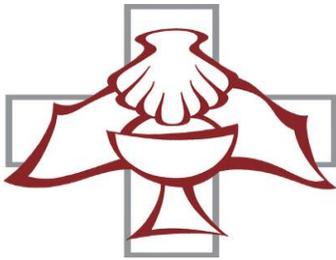
IUCC hosted Bingo at the Manor on February 18th. Thank you to Betsy Ellefson, Randy and Connie Ubersox, and Carol Glendenning for helping out.

Thank you,
Kate Black



Monthly Financial Information

	January 2026	Budget
Contributions/Other Revenue	\$ 7,330	\$ 7,553
Expenses	<u>\$ 19,290</u>	<u>\$10,797</u>
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$(11,960)	\$ (3,244)



PASTOR DANA CALDWELL INSTALLED

On February 22, 2026, Pastor Dana Caldwell was installed as Immanuel's pastor. The Installation service was wonderful and moving with a gathering after the Installation service to celebrate. God has blessed us by calling Pastor Dana to be our leader and teacher. Welcome Pastor Dana! Immanuel is very happy to have you.

LEADERSHIP MEETING FOLLOW-UP

On March 8, 2026, after the worship service, a follow-up to the Leadership meeting on February 7th will be held.



EF&G

The E F and G Committee is busy organizing the Women's Service to be held March 15th. The message will be on "Kindness" this year.

Also, we are planning the 80+ Birthday Party, more information to follow.

If you know of anyone that would like to come, a visit or a extra phone call, please let Janice Ruf know at 608 553-4182.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School has continued after the Holiday break with a poor attendance. We are still doing what we can to teach the children about the different Bible Stories, reviewing the Ten Commandments, and have started to talk about Lent and will be learning about the special days that follow until Easter. We are continuing to learn songs and will sing the 1st Sunday of the month if we have enough children. As the Sunday School year will be coming to an end, think about next year--- Are you interested in teaching, helping even if it is only a Sunday or two a month to help the teacher who is in charge. Think about how we could use you.



ENDOWMENT FUND SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

The Endowment Fund of IUCC has funds available again this year for scholarships and grants. Members of IUCC who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply: "attending their first year of college or seminary; for church related camping or leadership conferences; or such other training which enables members of this congregation to grow in Christian faith and service to God's people." If you are interested in applying, you can find an application in the Endowment Fund mailbox in Pastor Dana's office, or you can request one by emailing Fritz Hirsbrunner at fishin348@gmail.com. Completed applications are due by April 27.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.



Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities.

This offering will be collected on March 1st, 8th and 15th. There will be more information in the bulletins and envelopes in the pews. Thank you in advance for your gifts!



shutterstock.com · 2274092763

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar. 4 - Lenten Service at Immanuel with light meal at 5 p.m. & service at 6 p.m.

Mar. 8 – Daylight Savings Time starts. Turn your clocks ahead 1 hour.
Leadership Meeting following worship

Mar. 10 – Church Council Meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Mar. 11 – Women’s Guild Meeting at noon

Lenten Service at Immanuel with light meal at 5 p.m. & service at 6 p.m.

Mar. 14 – Prayer Workshop at Immanuel from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Mar. 15 – Women’s Sunday

Mar. 18 - Lenten Service at Immanuel with light meal at 5 p.m. & service at 6 p.m.

Mar. 23 – Deadline for April newsletter articles

Mar. 25 - Lenten Service at Immanuel with light meal at 5 p.m. & service at 6 p.m.

Mar. 29 – Palm Sunday

Apr. 2 – Maundy Thursday Service at 6 p.m. at Methodist Church.

Apr. 3 – Good Friday Service at 6 p.m. at Immanuel

Apr. 5 – Easter Sunday

NO WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY DURING LENT

There will not be Wednesday night Bible study from February 18th thru March 25th because of Lenten services. Wednesday night Bible study will resume on April 1st at 4:30 p.m.



**“I’m not sure what religion my family is.
It’s the one that forbids running with scissors.
And eating before dinner is the worst sin.”**



Immanuel Night Out

When: Sunday, April 19

Time: 4-5 pm Cocktail Hour

5-6 pm Supper

6-7 pm music and door prizes

Everything will be over by 7 pm

Supper: Broasted Chicken

Country Style Ribs

Mashed Potato/Gravy

Green Bean Casserole

Salad Bar

Dinner Rolls

COST: \$22.00 per person

Water included but all other drinks will be charged to the individual. Coffee, milk etc.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Ashley Buss
Colten Ruf
- 2nd Tara Glendenning
- 4th Phil Risseuw
- 5th Sheila Siegler
- 6th Larry Milestone
- 8th Hudson Hinderman
Carol Johnson
- 10th Roy Hardt
- 12th Jada Glendenning
Wendy Leahy
Al Ruf
- 17th Connie Ubersox
- 18th Lindsay Woodworth
- 20th Mason Duerst
- 21st Kevin Leahy
- 23rd Stacy Kammes
- 26th Christine Ubersox
- 28th Brandi Ruf Wepking
- 31st Kinsley Buss



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 15th Heidi & Gary Rear
- 23rd Stacy & Matt Kammes
- 29th Suzanne & Brian Marx



MARCH COFFEE HOUR

- 1st Betsy Ellefson
- 8th Sara Gleason
- 15th Nancy Slama
- 22nd Kate Black
- 29th Sheila Siegler



Deadline for the April newsletter articles is **March 23, 2026.**



MARCH USHERS/GREETERS

- 1st Gary & Nikki Martin Family
- 8th Scott & Tara Glendenning Family
- 15th Roy & Sheila Berrey
- 22nd Danielle & Tyler Duerst Family
- 29th Steve Fromader & Karl Hirsbrunner
- April 5th – Travis & Nicole Lewin Family

MARCH LITURGISTS

- 1st Reuter Family
- 8th Judy Huntington
- 15th Nancy Slama
- 22nd Joan Blaser
- 29th Fritz Hirsbrunner

