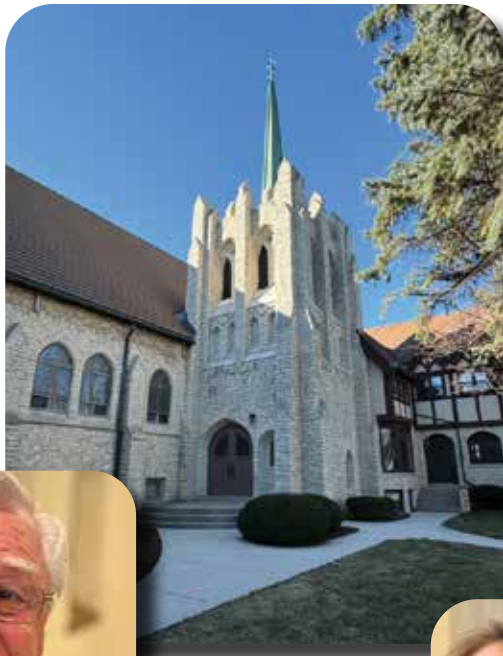




# Preparing for God's Blessings



# ***Let my life be my thanks-giving!***

Spring 2024

Hi friends!

We are incredibly blessed to call ourselves “family” by faith in Jesus. Whether you are a 3rd-generation member of Immanuel or have only just begun to meet your new family in the past few months, our Savior calls you his “*chosen people... God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out darkness into his wonderful light*” (1 Peter 2:9). That means it’s only by God’s gracious choosing that we are forgiven every sin every single day. And it’s only by God’s gracious choosing that we have been set free to declare his wonderful love with every moment of our lives. And it’s been only by God’s gracious choosing that for 97 years, Immanuel has sought to do this one thing well—connect more souls to Jesus!

We pray you’ll seriously consider this initiative. Please take your time with this information. Digest it. Ask questions. And pray. The Lord has placed another opportunity before us—by his own gracious choosing—one more chance to continue connecting even more souls to Jesus!

Chosen by Him to serve with you,

Your Pastors,  
Paul Bowe and Matthew Zimpelmann



***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8,9***

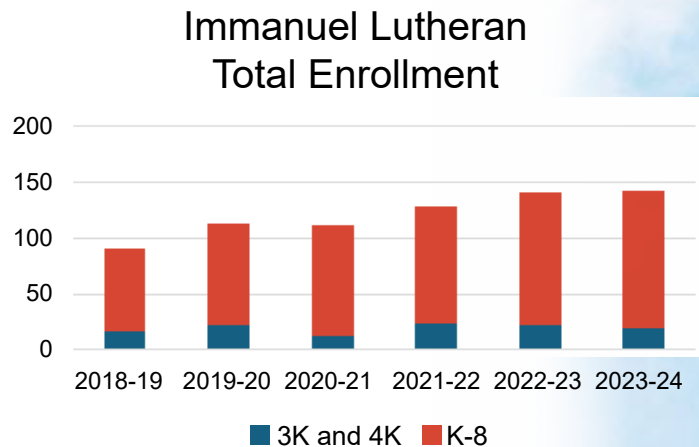
# God Continues To Bless Immanuel Lutheran

Immanuel Lutheran Church and School looks, acts, and feels like a close family. Our church and school work side by side as one unified ministry, assisting families in teaching God's Word to their children. The school is also one of the main ways we reach out with the gospel of Jesus' love to our community. Immanuel School not only supports Christian families but also is the primary means that has brought new members into our Immanuel family.

## School building expansion opportunity

Addressing the following needs will help us to improve our educational offerings:

- Immanuel Lutheran School and Preschool are experiencing phenomenal growth in student enrollments, increasing 32% over the past 5 years. Currently, total enrollment is at 143 children. If space needs are not addressed in the next 3 years, we will be forced to limit enrollment, which is not a viable option.
- The gymnasium does not have a gathering area for fellowship. Attendees need to have a safe space to congregate before and after large group school activities. The church family will also benefit when the need arises for larger church gatherings that the current Fellowship Hall cannot accommodate.
- Immanuel Lutheran School is our church's primary evangelism effort for our church. Since 2018, our church family has grown with 171 new members. Of these members, 98 (57%) had a connection with our school. We wish to continue growing God's Kingdom through these school connections.



## Observed blessings of Immanuel Lutheran School

The reason our school is experiencing student growth can be summarized in these ways:

- The family connection strategies implemented by our pastors, principal and preschool director are bearing fruit. Non-member families and families who have chosen to join the congregation receive encouragement to continue in their faith by enrolling in our school.
- More community families are seeking Bible-based values for their children which, are not found in other schools. Immanuel's positive word of mouth marketing (friendship evangelism) is growing and impactful.

*God wants us to know the joy of giving generously.*



# Consider the Ministry Opportunities

Our vision is to share God's Word and the comfort it brings with those around us—both members and non-members—as often and in as many ways as possible. To carry out this vision, we view our buildings as tools to assist us in that all-important mission. But when buildings (tools) interfere with or become a barrier to God's people accomplishing his will, it is most prudent to assess the situation. Our leaders have assessed our current building layout and determined that a school expansion is needed to better serve families and carry out our Gospel ministry while also allowing for God's blessing of long-term church growth.

Our Building Committee has been working with Excel Engineering to develop a site attractive to guests and new school families as well as to address the above growth needs. The proposed expansion and upgrades are:

- **Erecting three full-size early childhood classrooms.** This will allow greater numbers in preschool and will free up additional classroom space in K – 8. The addition will enable us to double our current student enrollment in the future.
- **Building a commons area off the gymnasium for large-group activities for church and school.** The space will also contain ADA accessible restroom facilities and elevator access to the upper level.

The most compelling force driving the *Preparing for God's Blessings* plans remains the same: to connect more and more souls to Jesus. We are viewing this school addition as part of our mission of “*growing a family of believers who glorify God, grow in faith, and lead others to Christ.*”

The estimated total cost of the addition is \$2.7 million.

Our prayer is that this addition will serve our school and church ministry needs for several decades. As you view the following pages, we invite you to picture the many souls (both children and adults) learning about Jesus and growing in their faith in these spaces. What a wonderful image of the Word of God impacting souls!

## ***Our Preparing for God's Blessings Appeal Goal***

The *Preparing for God's Blessings* fund appeal is seeking gifts for expanding our school building. We pray that together, over the next three years, we present gifts totaling \$1,000,000 or more. All special gifts for *Preparing for God's Blessings* are over and above current giving and will be used to invest into our buildings—our tools for ministry. May God bless our desire to expand our school building and position our school to say “yes” to connecting more families to Jesus. Through this project, we seek to better connect both with each other and with visitors to our campus as we proclaim the Good News of Jesus in Manitowoc.

***Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven (people brought to faith through the Gospel). Matthew 6:20***

# Emerging Financial Plan for School Expansion

To fund the \$2,700,000 building expansion, several sources will be considered. Immanuel currently has no debt, which is a blessing as we consider a major building expansion. A financial plan, including cash and commitments, will be developed prior to moving forward with any building expansion. That will also be the time to determine the exact amount to borrow, the rate, and term. The following preliminary funding plan is our current, best estimate:

Immanuel's debt	\$0
3-Year funding appeal	\$800,000 to \$1,000,000
Grants and foundations	\$50,000 to \$100,000
Commercial loan	\$1,600,000 to \$1,800,000

**Estimated Total Cost of Expansion: \$2,700,000**

In addition to the above funding sources, a plan is being developed to address a future monthly mortgage payment to support a loan of \$1,600,000 or more. Ideas for additional funds will focus on school income sources and initiating planned mortgage payments prior to building. Much still needs to be accomplished for a sustainable plan before a final mortgage begins in two to three years.

## ***Blessings Update!***

*Several Immanuel families wish to help us get off to a good start with our funding effort. These fellow believers in Jesus have committed the first \$347,000 toward our fund appeal goal. May their bold action be both a model and encouragement for us!*



***In planning for our generous gifts, God trusts us to set our own salaries.***

# Questions and Answers



## **How will the entire capital improvement program be financed?**

The *Preparing for God's Blessings* fund appeal goal will provide substantial gifts and commitments now. Once it is clear how much we can expect to receive, our discussion will then focus on a reasonable amount to finance. We will involve the entire congregation when we discuss the level of debt to be incurred.

## **Why is this emphasis important to you?**

The *Preparing for God's Blessings* emphasis is an extraordinary opportunity for you to grow richer in faith and generosity. You will have many opportunities to consider God's abundant blessings on both personal and congregational levels. You will also have the opportunity to pray about your understanding of God's grace and goodness when you evaluate your current giving to the Lord. We pray that this giving is an expression of your thanksgiving and love for God and a response to the grace he has showered on you. In preparing to respond, consider asking yourself the following questions: What is truly important? What gives my life meaning? What do I want to provide for my children and grandchildren, for my neighbors and friends? What will I give to accomplish what is truly important?



## **How can we expect to generate \$1,000,000 in gifts?**

We believe we have the potential to generate enough funds to meet our goal. But this cannot happen without the Lord's blessing, and so all our endeavors call for firmly relying on and having faith in the Lord of the Church. Jesus put it simply: "Apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5b). But he also said, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). Your participation starts with praying and counting the blessings brought into your life through God's grace in Jesus. With that mindset as the starting point, every family, including children, will receive information on how they can participate in the *Preparing for God's Blessings* emphasis.



## **When will we begin construction?**

As always, the congregation will have final approval on construction and building plans. First, we need a prayerful and strong response to our stewardship emphasis. Our current ministry needs make this project urgent and important for us to proceed quickly but carefully. Assuming the stewardship emphasis is successful, we pray to break ground in 2025 while also taking the time required to make prudent decisions and to move forward wisely as a congregation.

***A great barrier to giving is the illusion that earth is our home. Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:20***



# What is my joyful, generous gift?

Please pray for God to open your heart as to how he would have you personally respond to *Preparing for God's Blessings*, to make a difference in the lives of others—now and for eternity.

We ask that you give as God blesses and moves you, remembering that your gifts to this special project are over and above regular offerings. As you make your personal gift-giving decisions, we trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, leading us to grow in our faith and generosity. May all our gift-giving decisions flow from hearts of faith!

The following giving scenarios are examples and may be helpful as you prayerfully consider how to best use the good gifts God has given you. Please also remember that a gift of any amount is a blessing to Jesus' church and is God-pleasing.

## Matching gift

Consider matching or doubling your current giving over the next three years. For example, if you are currently giving \$20 per week (\$1,040 per year) to Jesus' church at Immanuel, prayerfully consider giving an additional \$20 per week during the next three years.

## Growth in giving gift

Consider the percentage of your household income you are presently giving. For example, if your yearly household income is \$66,000 (median household income for Manitowoc County) and you are giving \$2,000 per year, your giving percentage is 3%. Prayerfully consider giving at least 6-7% (or more) of your household income during the next three years.

## Proportionally large gift

Consider 10% as a benchmark which you will reach and exceed. If you are giving 7% of yearly income, consider increasing your giving by 1, 2 or 3% for each of the next three years.

## Extraordinary opportunity gift

We invite members who have been blessed financially to pray and consider making gifts of \$25,000, \$50,000, \$100,000, or more over the three-year appeal. Please especially consider whether this is a good time to give an appreciated asset. See the "Creative Strategies in Giving" brochure for ideas about appreciated asset giving.



***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7***



## Preparing for God's Blessings

### *Giving is a reflection of God's many gifts to us.*

Our goal is a challenging one! But God has prepared opportunities for us to serve him, and he will bless our efforts! Please consider giving a thank offering for the *Preparing for God's Blessings* fund appeal.

*"Lord, you have blessed me in so many ways! Thank you! What are your plans for my role in providing Immanuel the ability to serve God's people?"*

When considering your gift, this plan may be used to assist you:

#### **Reflect on Your Blessings**

Talk to God in prayer. List for him all the blessings you have—actually list them! Think about how thankful you are for each and every one of these. Then ask him to lead you to thank and praise him through our *Preparing for God's Blessings* effort. Especially pray for an extra measure of his grace in your life as you invest in the work of the kingdom.

#### **Decide on the Amount**

The Lord Jesus is there to guide your decision about whether and how much to give for Immanuel Lutheran ministry. Focus on Jesus and his words in the Bible for your plans, trusting that he promised to hear us in everything—even in decisions relating to money. Whatever amount you decide to give in faith over the next three years is a gift that pleases God. It is a gift that will reach many through the gospel ministries carried out by Immanuel.

#### **Use the Promise Sheet**

Physically writing out plans gives all of us direction for the future. We encourage you to record your plan on the promise sheet. These promise sheets will be returned in church during our Celebration Sunday services on the weekend of May 9 and 12. If you want to make your promise gift prior to this date, please bring it to the church office or contact the Stewardship Emphasis Director, Larry Verlinden (920-323-2297).

*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*  
**Ephesians 2:10**

## **Immanuel Lutheran Church & School**

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