



Immanuel-Trinity Lutheran Church

The Beacon September 2024

Dear Partners in the Gospel,
I want to share a pertinent article for Immanuel Trinity. We need to take this one to heart.

*Reflection by Pastor Jenn Pockat, Associate to the Bishop
August 26, 2024*

What does your church say about itself? Does your church like itself? What vitality markers are you using as a church to define who you are?

“We can’t find any volunteers and we’re all burned out. No one is volunteering to do anything.”

“The church in [name of town] is floundering.”

“The community church across town is taking all of our young families. No one wants to be here anymore.”

“There are no more young people. We used to have a church full of kids.”

“The ELCA is too liberal and people are leaving. At this rate we won’t even be around in ten years.”

The pastor in me hears pain in these statements. These are hard things to express and to experience. But it also seems like some of our communities are suffering from low self-esteem. The difficult realities that some of us are facing can quickly turn into a self-defining narrative that may seem true, but also leaves out some of the good parts.

If the above sentiments feel familiar, I want to assure you that you are not alone. I also want to invite you to listen more deeply and think about how you can encourage your congregation or ministry.

Self-esteem, simply defined, is the feeling we have about ourselves. When I hear the word I instantly think of being a teenager. If I heard a teenager in my life talking poorly about themselves I would say something. I would want them to know how I see them. I would encourage and help them.

If you have a teenager in your life you know they have a really important job. In addition to tending to their relationships and the work they have to complete at school, they also have the job of working to identify who they are, their values, their direction, and their purpose.

It’s the job of a teenager to become who they are. This is hard work for any person. It can also be hard for the church or a ministry organization. God is calling us to be who we are. But that can be difficult when we make assumptions about who we are, don’t feel like we know who we are, or don’t like who we are.

In 2022 Psychology Today published an article on the root causes of low self

esteem in adolescents: chronic abuse and criticism, adverse childhood experiences (such as trauma, neglect, or witnessing violence), societal pressures and expectations, and attacks on identity.

The effects of low self-esteem are many: less confidence, avoidance of healthy risk-taking, struggling to make decisions, difficulty saying no, failure to advocate for self, and later life impacts including anxiety, depression, loneliness, or addiction later in life.

In the church these days, we could name some of the following as causes for low self-esteem: the trauma of covid, the secularization of society, polarization in politics and its impact on faith communities, successful ministry from siblings in Christ, lower giving trends, members leaving our churches.

The effects of low self-esteem in our churches contributes to volunteer burnout, lack of fulfillment in worship, bullying behavior that impacts pastors and leaders, less resources for engaging in ministry, and low morale.

Simply put, the story we tell ourselves about who we are has some significant power in shaping the ministry we share with our communities. While I don't have a magic fix to offer about this particular reality, what I do know is that researchers have guidance for parents of teenagers and some of these seem to overlap with how we might gently proceed with ourselves.

The best gift we can offer each other in our churches is the belief that we have inherent value and are worthy of love and belonging - whether we are growing wide in numbers or growing deeper in our relationship with God and ourselves.

If you are individually or corporately experiencing chronic low self esteem, here are some things to practice:

Show unconditional love, encouragement, and praise. Notice when something goes well or feels good. Say something.

Take sabbath. What would it look like to push pause on the livestream? Take the summer off as a council? Re-tool on faith formation. Invite people who are burned out to step back. Trauma can cause flight, flight, freeze, fawn, and fatigue in individuals and communities. Part of trauma recovery includes rest.

Set Boundaries. Bullying happens when we don't feel good about ourselves or a situation. While we want to be "kind" to one another, sometimes creating a boundary with a bully can be the kindest thing to do. It's possible people aren't participating because of unhealthy behavior from individuals. Work together to care for each other and reach out for help if you need it.

Focus on the other. The gospel invites us to serve our neighbors. We feel better when we serve others: feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, providing a need. A seminary professor once suggested that if I was having a particularly bad day, that was a good day to go visit someone.

Seek to learn something together. "Confidence and competence go hand in hand." What kind of individual or group learning might help stimulate something new? The Fall is a great time to read a book together, create time for a parish staff in-service, or devote a council meeting to learning from an expert.

Reflect accurately on your strengths and weaknesses. Do some asset mapping and ask the community where they desire to grow and what continues to provide spiritual nurture and life.

Practice confession and forgiveness. Consider areas where the church has misstepped to hurt or isolate people. Sometimes a well meaning church can really cause pain to individuals or groups. Go to God in prayer and confess the hurt. Seek healing where you can. God is merciful and ready to listen.

Identify and challenge negative self-talk and patterns. Call it out when you

hear it. We don't have to be so hard on ourselves. What are the "false narratives" or assumptions that are shaping your identity? What is real? What is not real? One of the myths causing some pain right now has to do with identifying our church in a partisan way. In reality, one of the very best things about the ELCA is that people who identify across the political spectrum are all welcome to Christ's table. In the East Central Synod of Wisconsin we are not just "one" thing. We are diverse - let's be honest about it!

Take pride in your unique congregational identity and differences. Sure, you may not have a vibrant youth program - but do you do senior ministry really well? You may not have a fancy worship team - but what about your theology might be life saving for your community? You don't have to be good at it all but let your light shine bright where things are going well.

Model positive behavior. Demonstrate self-compassion in your leadership. Cover for one another so you can take a break when you need it. Incorporate play or fellowship into the work that you do to meet one another as children of God. Not using your vacation because you're "too busy" will make things worse, not better. Let a position sit vacant to assess if something is truly needed. Operate from a place of care.

Your church, our Church, has a unique calling from God. While we are going through a time of change, it does not mean that we are not the body of Jesus Christ in the world. While I travel around I also see how amazing your ministry is. You are feeding the hungry, you are wrapping up college kids in quilts, you are making incredible music and fostering places of peace.

If I could, I would hold up a mirror for each of you and say to you what I say to my teenage niece, "Don't be so hard on yourself. Look. How beautiful!"

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them."
— Ephesians 2:8-10, NRSVUE

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Tom

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CORNER



Spark: Grades 4K-4



Connect: Grades 5-6
Confirmation: Grades 7-9



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Register Now!
It's not too late!
Classes begin soon!
Wednesday Sept 11th 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Spark (Grades 2-4) Connect (Grades 5 & 6) Confirmation (Grades 7-9)

Sunday September 15 after worship
Littles' Spark (grades PK-K-1)

Important things to know for this year:

- No food or drink is allowed in class during the instructional period. Water bottles are allowed unless they become a distraction.
- Unless otherwise instructed, cell phones should be turned off during

class.

- The gym will be closed during class time.
- Children should be encouraged to use the restroom prior to class so as to avoid class interruptions.
- Please arrive on time for class. For safety and planning purposes please let us know if you have a conflict and will be absent or late.
- In addition to these safety measures, students are expected to occasionally complete short assignments at home. Some of these might include coloring or other worksheets, family participation activity, and memorization. You are your child's most important first teacher and partner in learning. We appreciate your support.

RSVP ASAP: By going to www.immanueltrinity.org or click the button below.

We are looking forward to a great year of sharing God's word!

Christian Education Registration Form

Join us for RALLY DAY 2024

Help us ring in the new year of Christian Education!
Saturday, September 7 & Sunday, September 8, following
services.

CHRISTIAN ED PARENTS MEETING

All parents of children attending Christian Education classes this year are asked to attend a mandatory parent information meeting with Pastor Tom & Barbara Hurtgen.

When: Wednesday Sept 11 and Sunday Sept 15 following classes.
Please attend the meeting after your child's class.

Where: Confirmation Room

What: We will be discussing our need for volunteers to maintain our program as well as program expectations for the coming year.

Why: The success of our Christian Education Program depends on our volunteers. We need your input.

Helpers are needed in the following ways:

- Chaperone Kids and Assist Teachers
- Musical Offering: Teach prior to service and/or accompany children for a musical offering at a weekend service of your choice
- Join The Christian Education Committee (meets monthly or as needed to plan events, musical offerings, etc.)

Bring your calendars/schedules! You will be asked to sign up for dates that you are able to help out.

It's up to you to share your God given gifts and support your child's faith formation.

Parent Helper Sign up

★ THANK YOU ★

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND TO ALL WHO JOINED US EITHER BY
MAKING A PURCHASE OR DONATING MONEY TO OUR
BRAT FRY!!

IT WAS A HUGE SUCCESS WITH A PROFIT OF **\$976.84**

WE MADE **\$198.00** IN TIPS ALONE!!

THANKS TO DEB AND LENNY MALLAS IN SECURING **\$250.00**
FROM THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR OUR CAUSE AS WELL !!



WE APPRECIATE YOU!
FAITH IN ACTION TEAM

festival
foods



Faith in Action Summer Update

Thank you to all that have donated to the Salvation Army 2024 Brown Bag Lunch Program. With the help of Immanuel Trinity Lutheran Congregation, we collected **1150 pounds** of donated items which were used to feed multiple children, lunch ever Tuesday and Thursday throughout the summer months.

The Salvation Army expressed multiple thanks to us and also said if we had not helped out they would possibly have had to shorten their summer schedule. So be proud of our assistance, I am!

We continue a year round collection for food items which support the Fondy Food Pantry. Thanks to Ruth Auchtung who delivers these items on a regular basis. The summer total was **196 pounds**.

Faith in Action **Loaves and Fishes** Team has a date coming up this September 9th. The number of clients has risen to over 200 as of late. Please continue to support this cause and join us in serving. We are there for only two and a half hours; but it makes a big impact and it is a great time for fellowship.



You made a big difference!

Thank you all for your donations to the FDL Back to School Drive! A car full of supplies was delivered to the Boys & Girls Club on August 9. Supplies were distributed on August 17.

According to the organizers, a new record was set with 2,396 children registered to receive supplies! That was 335 more than last year! Thank you for helping to meet the needs of our children.

Barbara Hurtgen, B2S Coordinator

On Monday, September 9 our church will be providing the meal and serving. Pans, with the recipe and sign-up, are available in the church Narthex. The casseroles do need to be baked before you bring them to church. If you want to bring them the weekend before, you can place the casseroles in the refrigerator. They will be taken downtown. You can also drop off the casseroles off directly at Church of Peace, 158 S. Military by 4pm. If you have any questions, please



Looking for Home Bound Member Information

Hello All,
My name is Tess Schwartz, I have been a member of Immanuel Trinity Lutheran Church for 34 years. I am currently on the Faith in Action, Ministry Fund, and the Communion Team. I had been involved in Sunday School in the past when my children were little, Youth and Family Group, and assisted as an Usher for many years.

I am on a mission to reach out to our church community regarding a need for visitation and/ or would like Communion brought to you. I strongly feel that there must be folks who are interested in this care or visit. Whether it is you or a family member who wishes to direct you to us, please know we are here and available to visit you. But, first and foremost we need your permission. The Hospitals and most Care Facilities have a HIPAA Policy, that is a hurdle for us to see you without your permission. So if you are in one of these facilities and want visitation please let them know you grant us permission so we can come see you.

Again, I have a passion for our members who are not able to get out and attend services or are in need of a visit. We would like to know who you are and how we can assist and support you with this need. Please call our Church Office 920-921-4545 (Julie) Monday-thu-Thursday, 9am - Noon. You can leave a message as well. Or if you wish to reach out to me, Tess Schwartz at 920-517-2958.

Sincerely,
Tess Schwartz



Lectors, Communion Assistants, and AV Support are needed for Saturday and Sunday worship services. We invite new helpers to sign up on the Church website or contact Julie in the office, 920.921.4545.

Outdoor Spruce Up

On Monday mornings throughout the summer, Bruce Hall and Nan Gray have been cutting old branches from bushes, tree trimming or pulling weeds. We also appreciate the lawn mowing that Len Mallas does for the church. Thank you for beautifying the church grounds!



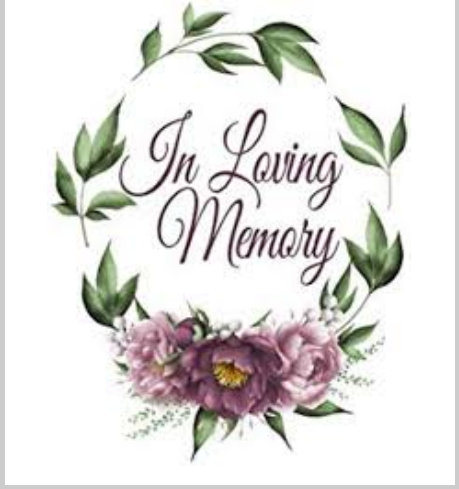
Special gift given in honor of Carly Thielman's Birthday on August 19 from Connie and Bruce Hall.

Memorial give in honor of John Hanisch by Ronald Mueller

Memorial given in honor of John Hanish by Norm and Caryl Thielman

Memorial given in honor of John Hanish by Marion Blakely

Memorial Given in honor of John Hanish by Bob and Audrey



Greenwood



The Church and the Office will be closed on **Monday, September 2** in observance of Labor Day. Have a safe and enjoyable weekend.

September Birthdays



September 1
Dale Dobrinski
Rich Popp

September 2
Kurt Lefeber
Sharon Jackowski

September 4
Steve Albert
Dixie Lee Mauthe

September 5
Jasmine Gonzalez

September 7
Ethan Fleischfresser

September 8
Jayne Hamburg

September 10
Darrick Sing
Janice Larson
Terri King

September 11
Tom Walker

September 12
Daniel Rosenthal
Joseph Hall

September 15
Aaron Hanna
Denise Sing
Scott Kopf

September 17
Karen Kraus

September 19
Debra Ellingen

September 20
Declan Solamita

September 21
Ron Kellar

September 22
Julie Dilling

September 23
Marilyn Donovan
Sherry Bartel
William Carlton Sr Mauthe
Franklin Wilhelms

September 24
James Will

September 26
Barbara Chapman
Cyle Lueck
Evelyn Nery
Jennifer Grafton
Karla Reehl
Norm Thielman
Tracy Nery

September 27
Kinsley Grafton

September 28
Andrea Naker

September 29
Patty Winkler

September 30
Dean Hanna
Frank Wermes
Judy Brown

~ September 2024 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
1 9:30a Worship w/Communion 10:30a Adult Ed	2 Labor Day Church and Office Closed	3 7p Champions of FdL 7p Scouting of America	4 6:30p Prayer Group	5 1pm Deborah Circle	6 9am Assemble Baby Care Kits	7 5:30p Worship
8 9:30a Worship 10:30a Adult Ed	9 9a Yoga on the Mat w/ Kristi 10:15a Chair Yoga w/Kristi	10 8:45a,10a, 11:15a Stay Strong 5:15p Faith in Action Mtg. & Planning for Thanksgiving Meal 6:45p Council Mtg. 7p Champions of FdL 7p Scouting of America	11 6:30p Spark, Connect, Confirmation, SHYG	12	13	14 5:30p Worship w/Communion
15 9:30a Worship w/Communion 10:30a Adult Ed 10:30a Littles Spark	16 9a Yoga on the Mat w/ Kristi 10:15a Chair Yoga w/Kristi 6:00p Brownie Troop #8300 Meeting	17 8:45a,10a, 11:15a Stay Strong 7p Champions of FdL 7p Scouting of America	18 8:30a Dorcas Quilting Circle 6:30p Spark, Connect, Confirmation, SHYG 6:30p Prayer Group	19	20	21 Wedding of Logan Will and Elizabeth Redlin 5:30p Worship
22 9:30a Worship 10:30a Adult Ed 10:30a Littles Spark	23 9a Yoga on the Mat w/ Kristi 10:15a Chair Yoga w/Kristi	24 8:45a,10a, 11:15a Stay Strong 7p Champions of FdL 7p Scouting of America	25 6:30p Spark, Connect, Confirmation, SHYG	26	27	28 5:30p Worship
29 9:30a Worship 10:30a Adult Ed 10:30a Littles Spark	30	Notes:				

Immanuel-Trinity Lutheran Church | 20 Wisconsin American Dr | Fond du Lac, WI 54937 US

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