

THE VISION



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From the Pastor...

I recently had the opportunity to experience the musical *Les Misérables* at the Fox Theater in St. Louis for the second time. I have also seen the movie version and have read the book by Victor Hugo that inspired the musical. It is a story that is compelling because of the humanity of its' characters and how their decisions impact many lives. It is also a story that reminds us of redemption, forgiveness, second chances and finding peace in the midst of difficulty. It is a story about mercy and justice and is reflective of our faith and the story of God's work found in the Bible.

Lent begins on February 22nd and ends with Easter. It is a season of the church year where we reflect on the decisions of our lives and seek forgiveness and restoration for our failings and seek the peace that is promised by God, the "peace that passes all understanding." This Lenten season we are going to be looking at God's grace in our lives through the story and characters of *Les Miserable*. I will be doing a six week sermon series that focuses on the themes found in *Les Misérables* - grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love and hope.

In addition to the sermon series, there will also be a six week Lenten study on Monday evenings at 6:30 at Rainbow House. We will be using the materials developed by United Methodist Pastor Matt Rawle entitled *The Grace of Les Miserable*. Whether you are familiar with the story or not, I believe this study will ask a lot of questions about the difficulties we find in life and help find peace in the midst of these difficulties. Please contact the church office to sign up for the class.

—David

This Issue:

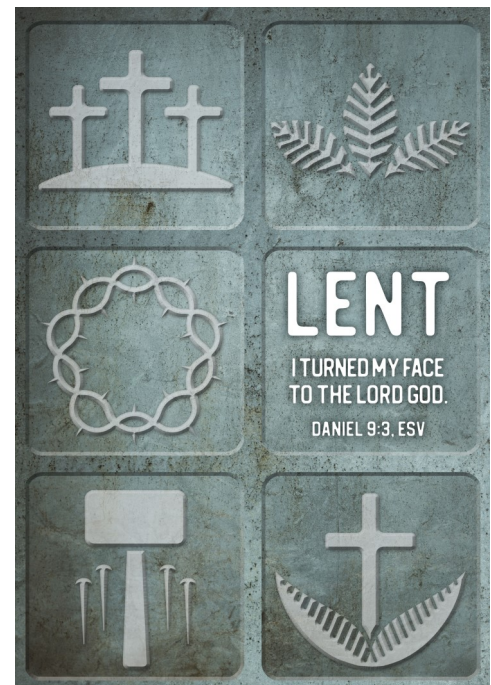
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Rainbow House Team Forming

It has been 3 years since Immanuel UMC became a Reconciling Ministries congregation. As a result, we have had the opportunity to open our doors to many people and to take the message of God's inclusive love to our community. One of the ways we do that is through Rainbow House. Each month Rainbow House hosts groups for LGBTQ+ adults and youth as well as for parents, friends and allies (PFLAG). It also partners with other community organizations to promote justice and inclusion.

While we have many people from our community that volunteer at Rainbow House, I think it is vital that Immanuel continues to oversee its mission. The church council has given approval to setting up a Rainbow House Team to help with this oversight. What that looks like and how the team functions will be determined by those who are a part of it. If you are interested in working together with others to develop and implement a plan to create safe space for the LGBTQ community and to help change the narrative that people have to choose between their faith and identity, then this is the place for you. Please contact Pastor David and let him know of your interest.

Next Step Luncheon

If you have started attending Immanuel UMC over the past year, you are invited to our Next Steps Luncheon after church on Sunday, February 5 in the Journey's Inn Room. Pastor David Roderick will be your host and will share some of the history of the church as well as some of what the future holds. You will also have a chance to ask questions about the church, the denomination, and anything else that is on your mind. To register, please call the church office,



Ash Wednesday-February 22

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the season of Lent, a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. Although Ash Wednesday has ancient roots, it does not appear in the rituals of The United Methodist Church or our predecessor denominations until the 20th century. Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. The service focuses on both themes, helping us realize that both have been triumphed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the service of ashes on the first day of Lent, we come before God recognizing our humanity, repenting of our sin, and remembering who we are and who we can be. We pray you will join us for worship on Wednesday, February 22 beginning at 6:30 pm.

Lenten Hope

Lent is an occasion for us to journey with Christ ... into tomorrow. For you never walk with Christ long but what the dawn breaks, the sun shines and hope breaks through.

—C. Neil Straight



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We
Love
Kids!

Sunday School

Children’s Sunday School has returned to Immanuel! There are two age divisions:

- 3 years old—Kindergarten
- 1st—5th Grade

Sunday School begins at 9:00 am each Sunday in the Journey’s Inn Room. It’s time to hear again those stories about how much Jesus loves us, learn new songs, get re-acquainted with old friends and make new friends. Please join us at Sunday School each Sunday!



Confirmation

Pastor Sarah Dierker will be leading a confirmation class at Immanuel on Sunday mornings beginning at 9:00 am. This class is open to all middle and high school students who are interested. Please let the church office know if your student plans to attend.

Kid’s Night Out

All kids age 4 through those in 5th grade are invited to participate in Kid’s Night Out at Immanuel. Once a month the children gather together for a meal, and then do a variety of fun activities. The evening ends with the children eating a snack and watching a movie. In February, Kid’s Night Out will be held on Saturday, February 25 from 5:00—8:00 pm. We ask that you make a reservation for your kids so that we have a sufficient amount of food, supplies and staff. Make a reservation by calling or e-mailing the church office.





The **United Women in Faith** are pleased to announce the unqualified success of our January lunch. It was appreciated by all who attended - delicious food and good fellowship. Many thanks to all who so generously supported our community outreach. We will be hosting Presidents Day lunch on February 20th. Two or three kinds of soup and grilled cheese sandwiches. Please invite your friends and anyone in the community that might appreciate a home cooked meal and some good company. It is a pleasure to be cooking again and to have a small crowd gathered together. Please pray for our mission to continue.

In March we will be celebrating our fifth annual PI(e) day - mark your calendars and be on the lookout for ordering opportunities. March 14th will be the day to pick up pies - orders will be taken after church February 26th and March 5th or by calling Penny May 618-655-0706. We have not completed the Pie List yet, but several delicious varieties will be available.

Dear **Sistah's** — Let's celebrate Galentine's Day on February 16 with a potluck at 6:00 pm. I don't have a service project in mind. At 7:00 pm, those interested can finish discussing Richard Rohr's *Falling Upward*. This will be the last Sistah's meeting that I plan. It's been a wonderful time! If anyone else is interested in going forward with Sistahs, please feel free to do so.

—Lisa Allen

New Year, New Projects

As the year 2023 begins, the Board of Trustees are looking forward to another year of keeping our Historical church as beautiful and inviting as we can. Over the past few years we restricted activities in our building, but now we are welcoming groups such as Sunday School and Kid's Night Out. Community groups have begun using our spaces again—Bridge Club, SIUE Yoga, Madison County Historical Society and Head Start.

Our project for this month was having our Fellowship hall floor cleaned, stripped and re-waxed by a professional company this past week. This cost will be approximately \$1,250. The floors were scratched and deeply dirty and needed a "new look." Please consider supporting this project with prayers, good wishes and monetary gifts.

Also this year we are looking for a scout group that might need to do a project to gain a badge. We are needing a landscape clean-up and new rocks around the church. Sometimes scout groups will do this type of work—if you know of anyone please let Sharon Koenig know.

Another big project is our parking lot which is in need of resurfacing and repainting of handicap parking this year. Please help to support us in this project with your prayers, good thoughts and monetary gifts. Any gifts can be given in your offering by marking the amount on the special projects line or marking your check with project name.

As the year continues the BOT will keep updating everyone on our progress on these needs at Immanuel.

Thank You -

—Immanuel 's Board of Trustees



Prayer/Praise Ministry (+ indicates weeks—call office to continue another 4 weeks)

- + Johnny Usher, 19-year old nephew of Jerry & Sharon Prott, cancer
- ++ John Ruemmler, cousin of Emily Spitze, beginning cancer treatment
- +++ Alan Grammer, recovering from surgery
District Superintendent Allyn Walker upon the death of her husband
The Terry Allen family on the passing of their mother/grandmother
Terry Allen for current healing and upcoming heart surgery.
David Stoeckel (Christal and Carrie's Dad) dealing with an infection again
- ++++ Rev. Dr. John "Doc" Shear—continuing cancer treatment

2022 Contribution Statements

Your contribution statement for 2022 is available to you if you contact the church office. It can be sent electronically, via the US Postal Service, or set out to be picked up on Sunday morning. We began doing this for the 2021 statements, as in the past a large number of them weren't picked up and ended up having to be shredded. We are doing what we can to conserve paper! Be sure to contact us and we will be happy to provide you with your statement. As always, we APPRECIATE your support!!

Contributions/Expenses

We were able to include December contributions and expenses in the January newsletter because it was sent out late. Since we still have one Sunday in January, those numbers will be shared in next month's newsletter. We are happy to report, however, that as of today we have not had to "borrow" money from another account to pay our monthly bills. Thank you for your continued support!

Black History Month

Each February 1 marks the beginning of a celebration of Black academics, poets, politicians, and activists' contributions to American history. Evolving from Carter G. Woodson's "Negro History Week," Black History Month was officially recognized in 1976 to uplift the "too-often neglected accomplishment of Black Americans."

Each Sunday in February we will include a blurb about less well-known Black people in our bulletin each week: Langston Hughes, Ella Baker, Shirley Chisholm and the Black Panther Party.





Birthdays in February

01	Elmer Hediger
02	Judy Moody
03	Jordan Grammer
04	Phyllis Tucker
05	Linda Potter
07	Caleb Newman
09	Kieren Sharp
10	Drew McCullough
15	Trace Spitze
20	Pat Schott
21	Petie Hunter
22	Trevor Page
23	Sheila Acuncius
24	Marge May
26	Tad Roniger
28	Dale Fellhauer

Celebrating Anniversaries

10	Ashlei & Tony Anderson
14	Armand Jr. & Pat Boudreau
14	Kurtis & Dawn Emshousen

Worship Assistants for February

February 5

Worship Leader: Lisa Allen
Greeters: Emily Spitze, Christal Akers-Helle
Soundboard: Jim Van Nest
Worship Screens: Carrie Van Nest

February 12

Worship Leader: Betty Gengler
Greeters: Noah Lewis, Jill Winte
Soundboard: Matt Lewis
Worship Screens: Kiffon Lewis

February 19

Worship Leader: Sarah Dierker
Greeters: Tom & Penny May
Soundboard: Brandy Page
Worship Screens: Sheila Page

February 26

Worship Leader: Eloise Allen
Greeters: Gary & Sharon Koenig
Soundboard: Christal Akers-Helle
Worship Screens: Tami & Leah Masinelli

Love Aces the Test

Love
never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:8

Author Adele Calhoun describes life as "our 'open-book' test on love." How can we ace it? In *Invitations From God*, she points out that daily decisions are the make-or-break factors: "Day in and day out as we plan, work, produce, commute and relate, we make life-altering choices to either love or neglect others."

For another study guide, reflect on St. Augustine's timeless words: "What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of [people]. That is what love looks like."



Immanuel's Inclusion Statement:

As we recognize the value in each other, we recognize God. We embrace God's good gift of diversity and believe all persons are of sacred worth. Therefore, we welcome people of every age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, social-economic background, family structure, and physical or mental ability into the full participation of this congregation. We are called by God to raise the level of hope for those who have been marginalized and singled out for exclusion, including our LGBTQIA+ siblings. Our passion for a wide welcome of all God's children moves us to participate in reconciling and justice ministries so that we might truly be open minds, open hearts, and open doors.

Contact Us!

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Liz Ahrens
Praise Team Leader

We
love
because
He first
loved us.

1 John 4:19

Worship Schedule

Sunday School
9:00 am each Sunday

**In-Person & Livestream
Worship**
10:00 am each
Sunday

[https://www.facebook.com/
immanuelonmain.org/](https://www.facebook.com/immanuelonmain.org/)

Thank You for your
continued support
of our ministries.

Up-to-Date Online Calendar: <https://73818207.view-events.com>

Immanuel United Methodist Church
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