

Immanuel Lutheran Church
512 5th St. NE
Independence, IA 50644



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Immanuel Lutheran Church

October 2026



PASTOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the season of Halloween decorations, football games, and pumpkin spice in everything. There's excitement in the air as we get in all the activities we can before the holidays and winter weather arrive.

However, out in the world you will hear little to no mention of the Reformation. It was October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. This act would change the world forever, and you and I are the theological heirs to Luther's revolutionary words and actions.

Like Luther, we live in a time when many people are desperate for relief from the anxieties and fears that keep them awake at night. And in a similar fashion, we also live in a time when many holding religious authority take advantage and use those fears and anxieties for their own personal gain.



Sometimes, the world around us feels overwhelming. So many voices competing for our attention. So many persuasive arguments made, and criticisms hurled at the opposition. There's certainly a temptation to join the crowd in denying all responsibility, assigning blame, and judging others as morally and spiritually beneath us. To find something that we can do to make ourselves more worthy of God's love than others in this chaotic life.

With so many similarities between his time and ours, have you ever wondered what Martin Luther might say to us if he were here today? Certainly, if Luther were with us today his words would unsettle the establishment, just as they did more than 500 years ago.

(continued on next page)

Church Office

319-334-2511

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday

9-11AM & 1-3PM

Pastor

Rev. Brian Moeller

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Council Officers

President: Ray Dostal

Vice-President: Bill Isham

Secretary: Cara Johnson

Treasurer: Bob Haak

Council Members

Gene Budzine

Steve Elliott

Tami Fenner

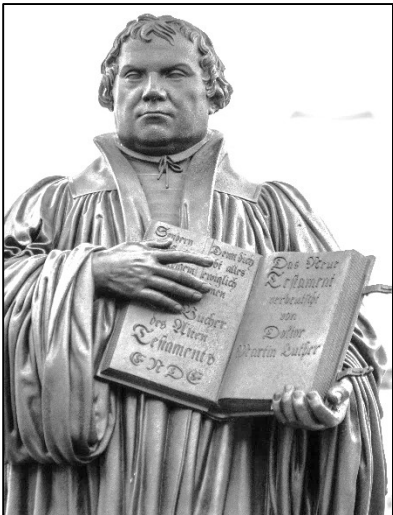
Andy Isley

Jane Martin

Brandy Schultz



I think he would first encourage us to practice humility. Reminding us we aren’t better than “other” people that share different opinions than us. That we have no right to assume that we have a higher status in God’s eyes than those who live on the streets, are in prison, or battling a drug addiction or mental illness. All of us are sinners, guilty of sedition in the eyes of God, and all of us face the same condemnation on a cosmic scale.



Luther might then recall how Jesus healed the sick and the blind, walked on water and even raised the dead. And even more importantly, how Christ said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by me.”

He certainly would speak to us about Golgotha, where Jesus was mocked, beaten, crucified and laid down his innocent, holy life for the sins of the whole world. Of course, Luther would mention the tomb where they laid Jesus dead body. And how on Sunday morning, witnesses would find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. How God’s holy angels did speak to mortals, saying “Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen.”

He would then share with us how Christ gathered his disciples before his ascension, telling them to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

And finally, I can imagine Martin Luther sharing this confession of faith, written in his Small Catechism, which has been read by generations of people coming to faith in Christ:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

For us, like the people of Luther’s time, all other things lose significance when we believe these words in our hearts. In these days of fall events and celebrations, don’t forget whose you are, and what you are called to do in this world. Come, Holy Spirit and guide us!

Wishing you the Lord’s peace,
✝️ *Pastor Brian Moeller*

Immanuel Lutheran Church - October 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 9:00 Bible Study w/Pastor Brian 7:00 pm Calico Cut-ups	2	3
4 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Worship 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 BLAST	5 2026 Fall Theological	6 7am-2026 Fall	7 7:00 & 9:00 Coffee & Conversation at Em's 1:00 IWELCA 3:30 SWAG 5:15 Meal 6:30 Worship 7:00 FORCE 7:00 Confirmation	8 9:00 Bible Study w/Pastor Brian 6:00 ATM	9	10
11 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Worship 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 BLAST 12-4:00 Fellowship Hall in use	12 11:30 Shalom Circle 6:00 Property	13 1:00 Faith Circle 5:30 Parish Ed 6:30 Youth Board	14 7:00 & 9:00 Coffee & Conversation at Em's 3:30 SWAG 5:15 Meal 6:30 Worship 7:00 FORCE 7:00 Confirmation	15 9:00 Bible Study w/Pastor Brian	16	17
18 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Worship 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 BLAST 2-4:00 Women's Tea Party	19	20 6:30 Worship & Music	21 7:00 & 9:00 Coffee & Conversation at Em's 3:30 SWAG 5:15 Meal 6:30 Worship 7:00 FORCE 7:00 Confirmation	22 9:00 Bible Study w/Pastor Brian	23	24
25 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Worship 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 BLAST	26	27 6:30 Council	28 7:00 & 9:00 Coffee & Conversation at Em's 3:30 SWAG 5:15 Meal 6:30 Worship 7:00 FORCE 7:00 Confirmation	29 9:00 Bible Study w/Pastor Brian	30	31 6:00-10:00 Haunted Hunters Breakfast

Birthdays & Wedding Anniversaries - October 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 <i>Gary & Marieta Gissel (32)</i>	2 Matthew Burns Jonathan Coffman JoAnn Dillon	3
4 Brennan Bachman Troy Hulseberg Dellen Leisinger	5 Kipton Knutson Eldon Leisinger	6 Lisa Moore Sherry Stevens <i>Steven & Stephanie Brewer (19)</i> <i>Roger & Diane Wilson (25)</i>	7 Betty Kress	8 Carson Frye Cathy Lehs Kathleen Olsen <i>Aaron & Cyndi Losey (21)</i> <i>Joshua & Tiffany Meike (21)</i> <i>Allan & Janice Seemann (49)</i>	9 Colin Bland Brian Meyer Thomas Simons <i>Kevin & Nikki Sidles (27)</i>	10 Brent Shannon <i>Nicole & Mike Schroeder (28)</i>
11 <i>John & Chris Moran (29)</i>	12 Drew Beatty	13 Cenlin Bell Claira Thein	14 Benton Enright Tyler Main Brian Stevens <i>Jerry & Carol Jensen (65)</i>	15 Claire Cahalan Karen Kranz Adalynn Thein <i>Todd & Dawn Ristvedt (21)</i>	16 Bryce Bachman Brian Eddy Terra Gissel Eliana Jensen Sophie Wolf <i>Derwin & Julene Mauer (44)</i> <i>Allan & Marilyn Oline (50)</i>	17
18 Gerald Bitterman Henrick Mikel <i>Mike & Carrie Hamilton (23)</i>	19 Abel Anderson Megann Bohlken Steve Elliott Barbara Roberts Linda Walthart	20 <i>Jamie & Carrie Koch (25)</i>	21 <i>Mark &Michelle Crawford (43)</i>	22 Keira Schares Sarah TerHark	23 Gabriella Bearden	24 James Beyer Emmi Frasher
25 Judy Latwesen	26 <i>Andy & Cassidy Thein (2)</i>	27 Sandra Erdelt Mike Hamilton Sam Hamilton Jane Martin Tanner Stevens <i>David & Terra Gissel (19)</i> <i>James & Janet Hansen (42)</i> <i>Daryl & Barbara Roberts (42)</i>	28 Jessica Hack	29 Hensley O'Loughlin <i>Jeff & Mary Frahm (49)</i> <i>Brian & Erin Kelchen (21)</i>	30 Melva Gramenz	31 Paula Fleming Blake Johnson <i>Thomas & Judy Harland (62)</i>

Church News and Announcements

One Year to Live Retreat – there’s still time to register!

Come journey with other men of faith (including Pastor Moeller) at Lutheran Men in Mission’s One Year to Live retreat. It will be held at Camp EWALU October 23-25. We gather for a meal around 6:00 pm on Friday and head home mid-afternoon on Sunday. For many men, this is a life-changing event! For more information, go to lutheranmeninmission.org/one-year-to-live/.

Bible Study – Thursdays at 9 am!

Join Pastor Moeller for “Dwelling in the Word,” as we use the lectionary readings for the week to consider what God is doing in our lives and those around us. We meet in the Fireside Room, bring your favorite morning beverage and join us for prayer and conversation!

It’s time for our annual Soup Drive!

It’s the time of year that have our thoughts turning to soup and crackers! It’s the season to help stock the shelves at the Independence Area Food Pantry.. Currently, the food pantry has NO soup on the shelves. We will have a cart ready for donations. At the end of October the youth count it all, box it up and deliver it. It’s an easy way to warm up others with soup and warm your heart with kindness and generosity.

Movie Night – “Xmas Without China”

Pastor Brian & Andrea are hosting a movie night at Immanuel on Sunday, Nov. 22 at 6:00 pm. Could you make it through Christmas without using anything made in China? Exploring the intersection of consumerism and immigration in American culture, the film is an intimate portrait of families wrestling with our drive to consume cheap products, but also with our desire for human connection and a sense of who we are in a fast-changing world. Join us for popcorn, warm apple cider, and fellowship!

A New Season of Giving, and a New Ministry Partner!

This year, Immanuel will focus on giving to **Feed My Starving Children!** As in the past, our youth will travel to a distribution center in Aurora, Illinois on November 24th. They will assemble meals for hungry children all over the world and return on the 25th. This opportunity is for youth in grades 8 and above. Cost will remain at \$90 per person to cover hotel and food costs. This takes the place of Operation Christmas Child and Samaritan’s Purse. For more information, please see Pastor Moeller, Shelly Hanson, or Ashlee Wilgenbusch. Thank you!

Christmas Eve Volunteers Needed!

The Worship and Music Committee is planning three services on Christmas Eve: 4 pm, 7pm, and 11 pm. More details are coming soon! Volunteers are needed for all three services. Please sign up on the office door! Thank you!

Youth Groups and Parish Education

Sunday School is in session! Class begins at 8:45 am. Kids in kindergarten through 4th grade can be dropped off downstairs in Luther Hall. We will join the worship service in time for the passing of the peace, the children’s message, and communion. Please let Shelly Hanson know if you have any questions regarding the new schedule.

Confirmation has begun

Confirmation began with our student/parent meeting being held on September 9th. We currently have 12 new students entering into confirmation and six 2nd year students. We will begin this year with Promise 3. (Proclaim the good news of God in Christ in word and deed.) Please join me in praying for these students as they begin this new journey of their faith.

Confirmation Partners

We are still looking for a few confirmation partners. You are not required to be at all of the classes (a new change). If you are interested in becoming a partner or learning more details, please contact Shelly Hanson as soon as possible.

Rally Sunday wrap-up details

Even with Mother Nature not cooperating with us, I think we all had a BLAST! Thank you to all who helped with donations, food, money, or time! It is all so appreciated, and we couldn’t have pulled it off without you!

Blast Scavenger Hunt

Our Blast Scavenger Hunt will be held with a pizza party this year on Sunday, October 25th, starting at 6 pm. We will need drivers, so if you are interested, please let Ashlee or Shelly know.

Immanuel has a new Office Assistant!

We have a new office assistant!

Kelly Williams was born and raised in Independence and recently moved back after almost 30 years of being in the Pacific Northwest to be near family. She also has a 21-year-old son who is a new barista at Gedney. They are both very excited to be here and be a part of this community.

Once she is caught up to speed on all things Immanuel, Kelly’s hours will be 7:30 to 3:30, Monday through Friday. Please welcome Kelly to Immanuel!



Finance and Stewardship

Immanuel Expenses Exceed Current Giving

At our May 31 annual meeting, the congregation voted to approve a budget of \$423,900. This is a \$97,000 increase from the past year. Since then, our income has not increased to meet these additional costs. Our reserves will be depleted over time unless giving increases to meet these additional expenditures.

Our staff are finishing up the books for the fiscal year that ended 6/30/26. Once those figures are complete, we will issue an annual report, resume regular reporting of current year financials, and continue sharing information about the cash shortfall we are facing.

IWELCA Thankoffering

IWELCA will be collecting their annual Thankoffering on Sunday, October 18th. There will be a special envelope distributed in the bulletin as well as in this newsletter. You can turn in your envelope on the 18th or in the church office. Thank you for your generosity!

NEW! Noisy Offering – First Sunday of every month

The children will begin collecting a noisy offering on the first Sunday of each month **starting October 4th**. So be sure to bring your change to church! All proceeds collected will go to help support our goal in donating \$1000.00 to Feed My Starving Children. We will also be passing out change jars to take home for you to collect your loose change. Be sure to bring your jar to church on the first Sunday of the month to add to the collection.

Stewardship Corner

Why do we give to charities? What motivates us to share our hard-earned dollars with others? The response I’ve heard most is that we give as a joyful response for all God has done for us.

Immanuel exists for the same purpose as all Lutheran churches – to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. From these two core activities, all our ministries and outreach flow. We baptize, trusting that the Holy Spirit will move in us as we hear the Gospel message. And filled with faith in the Crucified Christ, we cannot help but give of ourselves in a variety of ways to grow the Kingdom of God.

God has blessed each of us richly, saving us from sin, death and hell. We have also received countless other gifts of grace in our lives. What is your joyful response to all God has done for you? - *Pastor Moeller*