

First Sunday in Lent
February 22, 2026



Immanuel Lutheran Church

a Reconciling in Christ congregation

346 Shrewsbury Street

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*our purpose is to gather people, nurture faith,
grow in God's love, and serve God's world*

Welcome to Immanuel!

We're thankful you're with us this morning! Throughout worship we'll use the red hymnal located on the back of the pew in front of you. Page numbers can be found towards the front of the hymnal at the bottom of the page, with hymns towards the back, beginning with the Psalms. Hearing assist devices are also available – just ask an usher for help.

We believe that the Gospel – the Good News that we are loved, forgiven, and free in Christ – is a gift offered to every person, and that God's grace has no limits or conditions. Through Christ, we are made a community that shares God's mission to proclaim grace and peace to all the world.

Prelude

Gathering

The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection.

Welcome

stand

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For failing to recognize your coming reign,

and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For disregarding voices from the margin,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:
Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

Bless Now, O God, the Journey

Hymn 326

Children's Chat

Pastor Josh Ferris

(young worshipers through grade 5 are invited to Children's Word)

stand

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Kyrie

Hymn 157

In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

For the reign of God, and for peace throughout the world,
for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

For your people here who have come to give you praise,
for the strength to live your word, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, and defend us, O God.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

sit

Word

God speaks to us in scriptures read, sung and preached.

First Reading

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Romans 5:12-19

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over

those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

stand

Gospel Acclamation

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**Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4:1-11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" "

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to

him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Josh Ferris

stand

Hymn of the Day

Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

Hymn 808

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

sit

Offertory Music

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

H. Hopson

Lori Rabeler, soloist

Offering Prayer

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

p. 152

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus*Holy, Holy, Holy*

Hymn 190

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,

holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,

heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

sit

All are invited to receive communion by coming to the front of the sanctuary. First, you'll receive bread, which is the body of Christ given for you. Then move to the next station, where you will find cups full of grape juice (lighter-colored) and wine (purple-colored), which is the blood of Christ shed for you. At the end, return your empty cup to the tray. Gluten-free wafers are also available; if you'd like one, simply raise your pointer finger when it's your turn to receive.

Agnus Dei

Jesus, Lamb of God

Hymn 199

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

**Jesus, redeemer, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

Communion Hymns

Restore in Us, O God

Hymn 328

Jesus, the Very Thought of You

Hymn 754

Prayer after Communion

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, though Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Announcements

stand

Benediction

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ✠ bless you now and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

Hymn 618

Dismissal

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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Immanuel Lutheran Church

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Nursery School Directors – Amy Drzik, Kristine Whittemore

Sexton – Don Roberts

Online Ministry Coordinator – Jennifer Greene

We're thankful for these servants in worship today:

Livestream – Elin Eisenlord & Jen Greene

Assisting Minister – Mary Donev

Ushers – Craig Landquist, Jim Anderson

Acolyte – Carter Gowdy

Greeter – Ellen Friend

Nursery Care – Annie Ferris, Sam Bardon

Children's Word – Sue & Jeff Swanberg

Coffee Hour – Linn & Bob Watt

Altar Guild – Mary Jane & Bill Rasku, Heidi & Bill Lahey

Counting Team – Josh Greene, Barry Dellecese

Worship, Service, and Fellowship in the week ahead:

Today	8:00 am	Simple Church (indoor Chapel/Choir Room)
	9:00 am	Indoor & Livestream worship (in sanctuary)
	10:15 am	Coffee Hour (in gym)
	10:30 am	Learning Hour + Adult Confirmation
Monday	9:00 am	Lectio Divina (on Zoom)
Tuesday	7:00 pm	ILNS Board Meeting (Room 6)
Wednesday	7:00 pm	Lent Evening Prayer around Cross (in sanctuary)
	7:30 pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
Thursday	10:30 am	Bible Study (on Zoom)
Sunday	8:00 am	Simple Church (indoor Chapel/Choir Room)
	9:00 am	Indoor & Livestream worship (in sanctuary)
	10:15 am	Coffee Hour (in gym)
	10:30 am	Young Families Gathering & Adult Forum

Daily Bible Readings for the Coming Week:

Monday: Psalm 32, 1 Kings 19:1-8, Hebrews 2:10-18

Tuesday: Psalm 32, Genesis 4:14-5:10, Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Wednesday: Psalm 32, Exodus 34:1-9, 27-28, Matthew 18:10-14

Thursday: Psalm 121, Isaiah 51:1-3, 2 Timothy 1:3-7

Friday: Psalm 121, Micah 7:18-20, Romans 3:21-31

Saturday: Psalm 121, Micah 7:18-20, Romans 3:21-31

Sunday: Gen. 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, John 3:1-17

Welcome to Immanuel

Thanks for joining us in worship today! Wherever you are, we're glad to have you with us. Remember you can reach out to the church office anytime if you need help, prayer, or someone to talk to.

Nursery Care – Nursery care is available during our 9:00am worship services (8:30-10:30am). Simply go down the stairs at the back of the sanctuary. The toddler room is on the left, where you can sign in.

Children's Word – After the Children's Chat, our young friends are invited to go with our volunteers to the gym to worship in their own way. Kids will return in time for communion.

Altar flowers – During the season of Lent, we will not have flowers on the altar each week. If you would like to sign up for Sunday altar flowers (after Lent), please see the flower chart in Lawson Hall. Cost is \$50 and the 2026 chart is now up.

Rose on the Altar – There is a rose on the altar today to celebrate the birth of Eliza Marie Day, born on February 12 to Whitney and Jon Day. Proud grandparents are Sue and Jeff Swanberg!

Thank you – We thank Lori Rabeler for her gift of music this morning.

Coffee Hour – Join us in the gym after worship for coffee, fellowship, and treats. Thank you to Linn & Bob Watt for hosting!

Godly Play – Our youngest learners will not meet this week, due to Pastor Sarah being on vacation.

Faith Quest – Our readers are invited to classroom 5 as we consider God's invitation to us in scripture.

Adult Confirmation – We will meet again today! Join us in room 6 at 10:30am. For materials, visit <https://tinyurl.com/3hmjv4jc>.

Young Families Gathering – Families with young children are invited to stay after worship on Sunday, March 1. Kids can play while their grownups have time to catch up with one another.

2026 Lent Devotion Booklet Now Available – Our annual Lenten devotional booklet, full of readings and reflections written by members of Immanuel, is now available! Grab some copies from the back of the sanctuary or Lawson Hall. You can also find a copy online on our website, and each reflection will be posted daily on Facebook.

Prayer Around the Cross: Love Outpoured – Starting February 25, we'll gather each Wednesday evening in Lent for *Prayer Around the Cross*. These simple services will begin at 7:00pm and last about a half an hour. They include short songs that are easily learned, a reflection from a pastor, and an invitation to sit by the cross to pray and light a candle.

Pastor Sarah Out of Office – This week, Pastor Sarah is enjoying a well-deserved rest with friends and family. While she's gone, she won't be checking emails or returning phone calls. She will return from vacation in time for worship on March 1.

Parish Administrator Vacancy – Earlier this week, we sent a letter/email to all households in our church sharing that Jen Langhill, Immanuel's parish administrator, recently resigned effective immediately. We ask that you please pray for Jen and Tim as they face difficult family struggles in Florida. In the coming weeks, our church will begin a search for our next parish administrator. If you know someone who might be interested in this work, please encourage them to contact the church office. Until then, we are working on plans to ensure the role is filled on an interim basis and will share more information in the coming days and weeks.

Adult Forum – In the Holy Scriptures, God assigns a sacred responsibility to human beings: we are to care for and keep God's creation for future generations. Join us on Sunday, March 1 as Jed Lindholm leads us in a conversation about Climate Change using an abbreviated version of the En-ROADS Climate Workshop, which helps build support for strategies to address climate change via interactive testing of the cutting-edge simulation model. Using this model, participants propose climate solutions such as energy efficiency, carbon pricing, fossil fuel taxes, reducing deforestation, and carbon dioxide removal. These approaches

are tested using En-ROADS so that participants can see the impact on global temperature and other factors. Join us to experience what it's like to create your own climate future using grounded conversations; the resulting experience is hopeful, scientifically-grounded, action-oriented, and eye-opening.

Lectio Divina – Join us on Monday mornings from 9:00–9:30am on Zoom. Lectio Divina is the practice of reading scripture as a form of prayer. (Meeting ID: 814 8663 8380, Passcode: scripture)

Monday Night Bible Study – The Monday Night Bible Study group will gather again on March 2. The group voted to no longer have pizza, but there will be extra Jesus. And as usual, all are welcome!

Thursday Morning Bible Study – Join us on Thursdays at 10:30am on Zoom! We're discussing the book of Daniel and would love to have you with us! Here's the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84825798597>.

Meal Packaging Event - Save the Date! Immanuel will once again host a meal packaging event on May 2, 2026. We are also once again using M&M candy to raise funds for the event. Take a tube of Mini M&M candy and return the tube full of quarters to help us feel our neighbors near and far. You can also go to www.immanuelholden.org, click the "Give" link and select "Meal Packaging Event" from the drop-down menu. (Yes, you can still take some candy if you donate electronically). Full candy tubes and other non-electronic donations can be placed in the collection plate during worship. If you want to learn other ways you can help make this meal packaging event a success, speak to Molly McArthur or Jill Zitzewitz.

Spirituality for the Home Stretch – We'll meet next on Tuesday, March 3 at 1:00pm in the Choir Room. Please read the first two chapters of *Looking for God* by Nancy Ortberg in preparation for our time together. We have more books on the way! Let Pastor Sarah (or Pastor Josh) know if you need a book!

Book Club – We'll meet next on Thursday, March 19 at 6:00pm in Room 6. Join us as we discuss, *Nature and the Mind* by Marc Berman.

Homeless Kits – You can grab a homeless kit – and small bags of period products – from Lawson Hall for you to hand out to someone in need.

Communion Kits – Personal kits are available in the locker outside Lawson Hall. Each kit contains a pre-packaged wafer and grape juice.

Stephen Ministry – Stephen Ministers are trained to provide one-to-one, confidential care to those experiencing a difficult time. Please let one of the pastors know if you'd like to connect with one.

Melting for Good -

When will the snow melt? Maybe never! But this winter's heavy snow is an opportunity both have some fun *and* do some good together.

Melting for Good has officially begun! The display of calendars is up in Lawson Hall. Your job is simple: guess the date when the last of the pile of snow in the bottom end of our parking lot melts for good.

All you need to pick a date is a one-time donation of \$10. This money will be pooled together and the winner will get to decide which non-profit the money is donated to!

As we prepare, here are two rules to keep in mind:

1. Dates cannot be shared. First come, first served!
2. Don Roberts will be our official judge for the contest, and he alone will be responsible for determining when the last of the snow is melted for good. Let it be known and declared that Don is resistant to bribes of all forms (even Dunkin' cards)!

Good luck!

We are currently collecting:

Period Products – Unscented pads and tampons, individually wrapped, of all sizes and brands, handed out at Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. Monetary donations are accepted as well.

Greeting Cards – New greeting cards of all kinds, which are given to Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.

Bras – Bras in good condition of any size, color, or style, which will be given to veterans in need. Contact Mary Donev, (661) 599-2870 or mary@donev.com. (Other gently used clothing items can be dropped off at 69 Grove Street in Worcester.)

Wachusett Food Pantry – Non-perishable, unexpired food items for the Wachusett Food Pantry (serving all Wachusett Towns).

LWR Personal Care Kits

During Lent, we will once again collect supplies to assemble Personal Care Kits through Lutheran World Relief. Each week, we will collect a different item (check this week's bulletin insert for more information!)

Item requirements:

- **Soap:** 3–4 oz. bars
- **Bath towels:** 20" × 40" or 52" × 27" (dark colors preferred)
- **Toothbrushes:** Adult-sized and individually wrapped
- **Combs:** Large-toothed with a handle.

In Your Prayers this Week

This week, please lift up to God those who have requested our prayers:

Adrienne Altobelli, David Alward, Bruce & Janet Axelson, Isaac Barron, Mary Beams, Jane Bedard, Bob, Heidi Besse, Grace Bialecki, Tina Bodnar, Lucy & Tom Brennan, Ken Cameron, Kaylee Caramanica, Joy Cohen, Bonnie Colon, Colleen Davison, Alvina Debois, Lauren Demerjian, Lina Dickey, Kim, Stef Donev, Kevin Duguay, Jaeger Dziama, Jim Eisenlord, Gabriella Falk, Alan Farmer, Tim Fournier, Leah Frances-Woods, Ann Marie Grambo, Dave, Dolores Hadady, Bill Higgins, Erika, Rich Hopkins, Robin Johns, Dick Johnson, Carol Jorgensen, Mackenzie Keogh, Carole Laino, Jean Lane, Ayuen Leet, Jim Legere, Meghan MacDonald, Joe Martire, James Mellor, Joanne Neal, Karen Papachristou, Francis Parretti, Don Phaneuf, Shirley, Kay Porter, Jeff, Wylla Rabeler, Rich Reynolds, Ray Rossetti, Shirley Rotti, Donald Shefer, Anita Slater, Wendy, Shirley Smith, Maria Taylor, Elaine Vetter, Becki Welch, Liz Wilson, Jim Zelesky, Nancy Zelesky, and Jill Zitzewitz.