



IMMANUEL NEWS

Immanuel United Church of Christ
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February 2026 Newsletter



Immanuel UCC Staff:

Rev. Deon A. McKenzie, Pastor - pastordeon@immanuelucc.org

Sarah Ewald, Youth Coordinator - youth@immanuelucc.org

Jennifer Jansen, Financial Manager - jjansen@immanuelucc.org

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Linda Stoecklin, Parish Nurse - lindapn23@me.com

Derick Winterberg, Social Media Coord. - dwinterberg@immanuelucc.org

Church Office hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00am - 1:00pm

PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In-Person Worship

Sundays at 9:30am
126 Church St.
Ferguson, MO 63135

Live-Streaming

Sundays at 9:30am
on Facebook

Our Facebook page is:



Immanuel United Church of
Christ, Ferguson MO

Immanuel United
Church of Christ,
Ferguson MO

Past Worship Services

Available on Facebook
and
www.immanuelucc.org
(click on "Past Sermons")

Tele-Ministry (Audio only)

Listen to the latest church service by calling
314-255-1873

Electronic Giving



From our Pastor

Love That Goes the Extra Mile

Dear Church Family,

As we move into February 2026, most of our minds are already filled with reds and pinks, hearts and chocolates, reminders that Valentine's Day is just around the corner. For some, this month becomes a whirlwind of dinner reservations, greeting cards, and social media posts celebrating love and romance. Yet as we look more closely at our calendars and note that Ash Wednesday falls on February 18 this year. We are invited to look deeper than the romanticized version of love we engage in.

Did you know, before Saint Valentine became a name printed on candy boxes and cards, he was a third-century Christian priest who defied an emperor's decree to protect the sanctity of marriage. During that era when Roman soldiers were forbidden to marry, Valentine would risk his life to unite couples in a Christian ceremony. Sadly, for his faithfulness, he was imprisoned and eventually executed. History records that before his martyrdom, he signed a final letter, "Your Valentine." Valentine exemplified a love that literally went the extra mile not for romance or recognition, but for the sake of the Gospel and the Christian family.

Today, love is often defined by how it makes us feel. If the feeling fades, we assume the love is gone. But God's word speaks of a deeper kind of love; *agape*. This is the selfless, sacrificial commitment we encounter in 1 Corinthians 13 and in Jesus' own words in John 15:1, when He says, "*Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.*"

Agape love is not rooted in emotion alone. It is a decision, an act to seek the highest good of another regardless of the cost. It is the "extra mile" love that forgives when it is hard, serves when it is inconvenient, and remains faithful when the feeling of romance fades. It is the love Christ showed on the cross, and it is the love He

From our Pastor

calls us to reflect in our homes, our friendships, and our faith communities.

In this digital age, our relationships face unique pressures. We are constantly tempted to compare our private lives to the filtered versions of marriage and happiness we see on social media. As we move through 2026, I want to encourage us to practice three “Extra Mile” habits that nurture Christ-centered love in every season of life:

1. **Protect the Heart** - In a time when mental health challenges and anxiety are major concerns for families, let your home be a sanctuary of peace. Choose listening over reacting. Choose grace over criticism. Speak words that heal rather than hurt.
2. **Disconnect to Reconnect** - Make a conscious effort to put away electronic devices and engage in a real face-to-face conversation. Whether you are married, single, widowed, divorced, or navigating a new season of life, your value is found in Christ, not in your relationship status. Presence is one of the greatest gifts we can offer one another.
3. **Fervent Prayer** - Strong marriages and healthy relationships are not built on luck or chemistry, they are built through daily prayer and dependence on God’s wisdom. Invite God into your conversations, your decisions, your conflicts, and yes, into your dreams.

So, this February, as we celebrate romance, let us celebrate the love that truly changed the world, the love of Jesus Christ. May our God-honoring marriages, friendships, and relationships become a living witness to a world that is hungry for something deeper than a card, a gift, or an emotional feeling.

Walking the “extra mile” with you,

Pastor Deon



Lenten Happenings

Daily - Lenten Devotional booklet

February 18 - Ash Wednesday Service
with Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes
1:30pm and 7:00pm

Wednesdays in Lent (Feb 25 - March 25)
Lenten Mid-week Services at 11:30am in the Chapel
and at 7:00pm on Zoom.

March 29 - Palm Sunday Service at 9:30am.
Sacrament of Holy Communion

April 2—Seder Meal 6:00 pm
(arrive at 5:15pm for dinner and fellowship before the
religious Seder meal)

April 3 - Good Friday Services at
1:30pm and 7:00pm.

April 5 - Easter Sunday Service at 9:30am.
Sacrament of Holy Communion.
Easter Egg Hunt immediately
following the service for all ages.

Church Council

Minutes of the Church Council Meeting January 13, 2026

Present: John Bogdajewicz, Timothy Guethler, Kim Haynes, Karl Klasing, Don Morice, Nancy Remmert, Melinda Schuster, Judy Sherman, Martha Snead, Pastor Deon McKenzie*. *Absent

Meeting was called to order by President Judy Sherman with prayer at 7:00 p.m. Don Morice offered a devotion.

Minutes of the December 9, 2025 were reviewed with the following corrections noted: The misspelling of "sock", Tim Guethler should have been listed as Financial Secretary, and Martha Snead represents the Council at the Board of Christian Education (BCE). It was moved and seconded (Melinda Schuster/Martha Snead) that the corrected minutes be accepted. Motion carried.

Financial Reports were presented by Karl Klasing who reported that giving increased by \$15,000 during 2025. The clearing account was presented and it was agreed that this information should be included in the Financial Report monthly.

There was no Pastor's report because of his absence. He will present a full report at the February meeting and the Council Retreat on February 21.

PARISH NURSE REPORT: Linda Stoecklin

Linda reported making 22 phone calls, sending 10 texts and 3 emails, spending 24 hours during December on our behalf.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Property and Grounds: John Bogdajewicz

John will be holding a ZOOM meeting on Thursday, January 15 regarding the clogged drain from the roof. Judy Sherman re-

Church Council Cont'd

ported that the light at the top of the stairs from the Sanctuary to the Reception Room is out and makes a hazard situation for Choir members coming to rehearsal.

Board of Christian Education (BCE): Martha Snead

The Youth had two events in December. Their attendance was 7. They are practicing a skit for Easter entitled "Sunday Changed Everything". They are planning a bowling event in February and they plan to help in the Food Pantry one Sunday a month. Because the Puppet ministry and the Prayer and Share group do not meet any longer, it was decided to move their budgeted funds to the General Operating Fund. The BCE Treasurer has added a budget line item for VBS.

Worship Committee: Martha Snead

There was no meeting of this committee. A request was submitted for the committee to provide new name tags for the ushers.

Christians in Action (CIA): Nancy Remmert

The committee has not met. North County Churches Uniting (NCCU) held the Annual Essay Contest for students in elementary, middle and high school. The student winners will be honored at Florissant Valley Community College on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 where they will present their winning essays and receive a \$100 prize. This event is open to the public.

Mission Outreach: Melinda Schuster

Melinda reported that \$155 was received in the Christmas Card Board. These funds will be designated to the Immanuel Harvest of Hope. Melinda was thinking ahead and purchased totes for next Christmas 2026 when they were on Sale. Thursday, January 29, Room at the Inn will enjoy the Immanuel Wurstmarkt dinner at their new shelter. The committee will have a meeting during

Church Council Cont'd

February. Tim Guethler reported that the Habitat for Humanity build was successful. Four volunteers from Immanuel were workers. Judy Sherman reported that she has met with the Lutheran Cooperative and churches from that group will be working with the Bridging Ministries. She is going to encourage members of Bridging Ministries and the Lutheran Cooperative to support the Immanuel Food Pantry in some way. Judy also reported that Immanuel's Harvest of Hope has received a shipment of food and the preparations for the Ribbon Cutting ceremony are in place.

Technology: Don Morice

Don is doing some research on music that could be supplied before worship begins on Sundays.

The following committees had no report at this time: Stewardship, Nominating, Budget and Finance, Safety and Security, Investment and Insurance.

OLD BUSINESS

By-laws review will continue on Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

The Council will hold a retreat on Saturday, February 21, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Melinda Schuster will arrange food for this event.

No other business appearing, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Remmert, Secretary



Love one another.

Board of Christian Education

BCE Meeting Minutes

January 6, 2026

Present: Peggy Nofles, Sarah Ewald, Martha Snead, Sarah Klasing, Mary Conley, Nancy Messer, Pastor Deon and Paula Hildebrand.

Absent: Jennifer Jansen

Devotion: Peggy began the meeting with a devotion entitled "Power Belongeth Unto God" by Arthur W. Pink.

Reports:

Secretary Report: The minutes from the December meeting were read and reviewed. Minutes were approved as read. (Paula 1st/Mary 2nd)

Treasurer's Report: Paula reviewed the expenses for December. The checking account balance is \$7,988.50. Motion to approve (Sarah K. 1st/Mary 2nd). Motion passed.

Staff Report: Pastor thanked the new members for serving and welcomed them. Installation of the Church Council and the BCE will be on January 11. The Immanuel food pantry grand opening ceremony will be Monday, January 19. Days of operation will be Sundays and Thursdays after coordinating with other food pantries in the area. First Sundays of each month will be donation Sundays for Immanuel.

Council Report: Martha reported the election of officers to the Church Council. They are: President – Judy Sherman, Vice President – John Bogdajewicz, Secretary – Nancy Remmert, Treasurer – Karl Klasing, Financial Secretary—Tim Guethler and Martha Snead will continue as Council Representative to the Board of Christian Education.

Board of Christian Education Cont'd

Youth Coordinator Report: Youth attendance was reported as follows: November 2 – 7 youth, November 16 – 7 youth, December 7 – 7 youth, December 13 – 7 youth, December 21 – 9 youth (Christmas party), January 4 – 4 youth. A bowling party is being planned for February. An Easter skit, Sunday Everything Changed, has been chosen. Sarah is also in discussion with Judy Sherman about how the youth can help with the food pantry.

Old Business: Paula explained the checking account funds and suggested a few changes. She asked permission to remove the Prayer and Share and Puppets designations from the line items since these have not been used in recent years, and will not be for the foreseeable future. The amounts budgeted for these two funds will be included in the Operating Income line item. Motion to approve (Sarah K. 1st/ Mary2nd). Motion passed.

Paula also explained there are two line items for camping. One is Camp Donations while the other is the Kifer Fund, also set up for camping expenses. Paula explained that moving forward, expenses will be paid from the Kifer Fund until it is zeroed out. The Camping Donations Fund will continue to support camping related expenses. No motion was necessary.

Committee Awareness:

Policy and Personnel: no report

Finance and Audit: no report

Bridging Ministries: no meeting in December. The next meeting is on January 26, 10:00, at the Church of the Master. Tabled review of the December choir event.

Worship: no meeting

Mission Outreach and CIA: Since we have no representatives that come to the BCE meetings from these groups, it was suggested that we ask about the possibility of receiving copies of their minutes.

Board of Christian Education Cont'd

New Business: Paula presented the 2026 budget. She explained the line item comparisons from those gathered for the 2025 budget and the reasoning for the line item figures in the 2026 proposed budget. Traditionally, VBS has not been given a line item amount in the BCE budget because it has been part of a partnership with other churches. A motion was made to accept the proposed 2026 budget including a \$500 line item for VBS. Total for the proposed budget is \$3,850. Motion to approve (Sarah K. 1st/ Mary2nd). Motion passed.

Martha expressed her appreciation for the work that Sarah Ewald does with our youth. She wanted to make sure that Sarah felt supported and has what is needed. The Board members concurred.

Adjournment: Sarah K. 1st/Paula2nd at 7:08

Close: The Lord's Prayer

Devotional next meeting: Sarah Klasing

Next meeting: February 3, 2026, 6 PM

BCE meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month in the library. All church members are welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Messer



**LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS WILL BE ARRIVING
IN EARLY FEBRUARY. WE INVITE YOU TO READ THE
DAILY MESSAGES AS WE PREPARE FOR EASTER.**

LENT STARTS ON FEB 18 WITH ASH WEDNESDAY



IMMANUEL FELLOWSHIP

Fun and Games - Because of the unpredictable weather in February, Immanuel Fellowship's meeting will be simple. We're going to bring a "sack lunch" and play games. Everyone is welcome.

Thursday, February 5
11 AM
The Reception Room

ROOM AT THE INN - 2026 SCHEDULE

We will provide meals for Room at the Inn on the following dates in 2026:

Thursday, April 30
Thursday, July 23*
Thursday, October 29
Thursday, December 31

* Normally we provide the meal on the 5th Thursday; however, in July we are doing the 4th Thursday because of a scheduling conflict.

LYDIA HOUSE MEALS -2026 SCHEDULE

We will provide meals for Lydia's House on the following dates in 2026:

Wednesday, March 18
Wednesday, May 6
Wednesday, July 22
Wednesday, October 21
Wednesday, December 16



WINTER SEASON IS UPON US....

If inclement weather causes us to cancel a Sunday worship service, please check the local TV stations (Fox, CBS, NBC) for any updates. Our organization should be displayed as “Immanuel UCC - Ferguson”. We will also try to send an email out to communicate any changes to our schedule.

COOKIES FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Spring is just around the corner which means we will again be packing and sending our goody boxes to all our college/graduate students of the congregation.

We will gather in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, March 21st at 9:00am so come join in the fun. There are always lots of laughs and packing usually only takes about an hour.

If you wish to donate any goodies (homemade or store bought), you can drop them off at the church office by Thursday, March 19th or contact either Krescene (618-205-3188) or Brenda (314-600-7854) to make other arrangements. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact the church office or either one of us.

PARENTS or STUDENTS: PLEASE reach out to us to make sure we have the updated addresses of where to send the goodie boxes so that they do not miss out on a few treats to bring a smile of happiness.

Thank you so very much for your continued support of this valued tradition in Immanuel’s history for 32 years and counting!

Krescene & Brenda
YOUR COOKIE CRUSADERS



FEBRUARY

	MON	TUE	WED
<p>1</p> <p>Blood Pressure Check Coffee 9-930 and 10:30am Worship 9:30am * Communion Adult Faith Exploration 10:30 Food Pantry 11am -1pm</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Groundhog Day</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>BCE Meeting 6:00 pm, Library</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Quilters</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Coffee 9-930 and 10:30am Worship 9:30am Youth Event Donuts with Deon 10:30am Food Pantry 11am -1pm</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Church Council Meeting 7:00 p.m. Room 102</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Quilters</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Coffee 9-930 and 10:30am Worship 9:30am Adult Faith Exploration 10:30 Food Pantry 11am -1pm Interfaith Dialogue 2-4pm</p>	<p>16</p> <p>President's Day</p>  <p>Newsletter Deadline</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Quilters Ash Wed</p> <p>W</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Coffee 9-930 and 10:30am Worship 9:30am Youth Event Donuts with Deon 10:30am Food Pantry 11am -1pm</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Bridging Ministries 10:00am Church of the Master</p> <p>Newsletter Assembly 9:30am, Library</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Quilters</p>

2026

	THU	FRI	SAT
9 am	5 Immanuel Fellowship 11 a.m. Reception Room Food Pantry 11am -1pm	6	7
9 am	12 Food Pantry 11am -1pm	13	14 Valentine's Day 
9 am Wednesday  ASH WEDNESDAY	19 Immanuel Fellowship Exec. Meeting 10:00am Library Food Pantry 11am -1pm	20	21 Council Retreat 9:00am—2:00pm
9 am	26 Food Pantry 11am -1pm	27	28



IMMANUEL HARVEST OF HOPE



FOOD PANTRY RIBBON CUTTING



Harvest of Hope Food Pantry Hours

Sundays: 11:00am—1:00pm

Thursdays: 11:00am—1:00pm



THE CHRISTMAS FUND

Immanuel collected \$710 for the Christmas Fund special offering which helps support retired/active UCC clergy and church workers. This offering is one of the UCC's 5 for 5 special mission offerings.

CHRISTMAS CARD BOARD DONATIONS

The Christmas Card Board donations totaled \$155. The money is going to support Immanuel's Harvest of Hope Food Pantry. Thanks to everyone who used the board to send a Christmas greeting.



Memorials and Honorariums

In Honor of Marilyn Crawshaw

To: The Music Enhancement Fund

From: Brenda and John Bogdajewicz



IMMANUEL YOUTH ACTIVITES



IMMANUEL UCC YOUTH GROUP

FEBRUARY EVENTS

FEBRUARY 8 PEOPLE OF
THE BIBLE CONTINUED
WITH A TWIST

FEBRUARY 22 SERVICE
PROJECT FOOD PANTRY



Prayer Request



Gloria Bahr	Kay Jones	Sammi Stoehr Servais
Krescene Beck	Darla Kempf	Cindy Sexton
Bob Blackman	Anna Klasing	Christine Struble
John Bogdajewicz	Bradley Kohler	Kolene Thies
Beverly Bowman	Denora Lum	David Trudo
Travis Brown	Linda Meyer	Jan Viehmann
George Thomas Burke	Sharon Ming	Russell Viehmann
Dennis Callahan	Jim Morice	Jane Vogt
Susan Casey	Bart Moy	Shari Vogt
Dan Engelman	Ann Niemczyk	Mary Wallis
Joni Everett	Lauren Payer	Mark Wand
Marilyn Geiger	Louise Pennell	Dick Watt
Brackson Haid	Carol Pohl	Paul Westcott
Bonnie Heenan	Jeff Raines	Karen White
Rich Henderson	Richard Redel	Roy White
Brooklyn Higgins	Nancy Reidy	Will Williams
Melba Holtgrewe	Chrystal Sailor	Family of Ann Klasing
Annette Jollenbeck	Ben Samel	Family of Alice Becker

"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5:14



February Birthdays

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>
Nancy Valenti	2/3
John Viehmann	2/3
Sharon Ming	2/4
Paula Hildebrand	2/9
Dorothy Kohler	2/13
Pastor Deon McKenzie	2/15
Rich Henderson	2/19
Lynn Winterberg	2/19
Dennis Bahr	2/21
Michele Boatright	2/27
Paul Buschmeyer	2/28
Nancy Vortmeier	2/28





Flowers for February



- February 1 -
- February 8 -
- February 15 -
- February 22-

*If you are interested in Sunday flowers,
please call the Church Office.*

Lay Readers for February

- February 1 - Shirley Joellenbeck
- February 8 - Teddy Branom
- February 15 - Tim Guethler
- February 22 - Karl Klasing

*If you would like to read scripture, please call the
Church Office or Charlie Miller.*

Don't Miss the

DEADLINE!

The deadline for the next newsletter
Monday, February 16

