



# MESSENGER

Immanuel

Lutheran Church

A community growing in Christ, living in grace and serving in love.

April 2021

Volume 24, No. 4

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## SUNDAY MORNINGS

### Worship

Join us for live, virtual worship Sunday mornings at 10 am. Go to Immanuel's website, [ilcsp.org](http://ilcsp.org), and click on "Worship with us online." You'll also find recordings from the past few Sundays.

### Holy Communion

We'll share Holy Communion during our service on the 2nd Sunday, April 11.

### Sunday Coffee Hour

Gather online after Sunday worship (10:30ish). Find the link in News & Notes or at the end of worship.

## FROM THE PASTOR

### Waiting for Resurrection

As a member of a church staff, I tend to live in the future. We are always asking things like, "What will we sing for Christmas?" "What themes will we focus on in Lent?" "How will we celebrate Easter online ... again?" So, as usual I am planning ahead for holy week—with both crucifixion and resurrection rolling around in my head.

But though I'm planning for Easter and beyond, this year my heart is in Holy Saturday—the day between Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The day after the tragic event when everyone asks, "How can this be?" "Who should we blame?" and "Where was God?" It was the day after the funeral. When people were exhausted, and grieving, and barely able to get out of bed. It was the Sabbath. The day to stop ... and give everything into God's hands.

This year my heart is in Holy Saturday. I hear about yet another tragedy of anger (Colorado) and of racism (Atlanta). I hear about 2,725,607 deaths from COVID (as of 3/23) and try to remember that each one is a person with a story. I feel the grief of what has happened and the weight of questions about what is to come. And I long for God's presence in the midst of it. I'm aching for newness and resurrection and joy.

My heart is in Holy Saturday. But here's the thing. Nobody expected Easter. There were no aisles of Easter candy in the grocery store a month in advance. Nobody bought lilies or easter baskets or planned to have the family over for dinner. Easter was a surprise. A glorious, hopeful, completely unexpected surprise. Into the midst of grief and tragedy, God came and changed everything.

My heart is in Holy Saturday – but I'm trusting that Easter is coming. I'm trusting that God is, even now working miracles in this world – shaping minds and hearts, teaching us what unselfish love can do, creating new possibilities and making a way for resurrection to come into this world. I trust that nothing..... absolutely nothing in all of heaven or earth can stop the loving will of God.

Easter resurrection is coming. We don't know when, we don't know how, but as sure as the women saw the empty tomb on that first Easter morning, we will see a new world. God will bring life and resurrection to our time.

My heart is in Holy Saturday ... but Easter is coming!

— Pastor Cindy

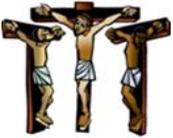
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## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



### **Maundy Thursday** – April 1

Check your worship bag for an at-home worship option for Maundy Thursday. Use it alone or with others. (If you would like to be part of an online group for worship, contact Pastor Cindy or Emily.) If you weren't able to pick up a worship bag, you can find the service [HERE](#).



### **Good Friday** – April 2, 7 pm [HERE](#)

Five candles (from the worship bag or your home) will guide you through Tenebrae, the service of shadows. Hymns, readings and artwork will tell the story.



### **Easter Vigil** – April 3, 6 pm [HERE](#)

Light a candle as we wait for resurrection. We'll hear Old Testament stories told creatively by members of Immanuel, remember our baptism, then ring bells or make other joyful noise with the first "Alleluias" of Easter.



### **Easter Sunday** – April 4, 10 am [HERE](#)

Christ is risen, indeed! Familiar hymns, a virtual choir anthem, and the great story of Jesus rising from the dead. Join in the Easter joy!

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### **15th annual Immanuel Art Show**

#### ***Let There Be Art.***

While we continue to wait for the building to safely reopen, we're going to have another online show!

The artists have submitted photos of their works, and there is now an online gallery of them that you can access by going to:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/vjRp89Sxm52of3dy5>

The gallery will remain up online from Sunday, April 11, through May 23.

Visit it and enjoy the art, even if we can't do it together.

Questions?

Contact Dave Alstead at [dave@davidalstead.com](mailto:dave@davidalstead.com)



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## WORSHIP & MUSIC

### Farewell and Godspeed for our organist, Julie Lindorff

Our friend and sister in Christ, Julie Lindorff, is moving to Vermont to be near her son and his family. While we rejoice for Julie, we are saddened for our church community. Julie has blessed us with her gentle spirit and amazing musical talent since 2012. During the virtual service on **Sunday, April 25**, we will have a Farewell and Godspeed for Julie. If you would like to send a card to the church, we will make sure Julie gets it. We thank God for the gift of Julie!



### Exciting Electives for 2021!

*Calligraphy, Handbells, Photography, Gamelan, Japanese Weaving and Clay Creativity*

**9a-3:15p | August 9-13, 2021**

"Love is..." is the theme for our 6<sup>th</sup> music and arts camp! This camp is for children and youth who have completed K-8<sup>th</sup> grades. Local pandemic conditions will continue to be evaluated and the camp may have to be changed or canceled due to the COVID-19 recommendations closer to the starting date. We are hopeful the vaccine distribution will be successful and that infection rate numbers will decrease to the point where we can hold camp as usual! Full refunds will be given if camp is cancelled.

Please invite your friends and neighbors. We have full and partial scholarship money available. All requests will be confidential. Please contact Chris Cherwien or go to [ilcsp.org/imac](http://ilcsp.org/imac) for details and signup.

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## BUILDING REOPEN TEAM UPDATE

### A phased plan

Last year, on the third Sunday of Lent, Immanuel swiftly closed our building to help the whole community slow the spread of COVID-19. It has been a long weary year of being apart from each other. We are grateful for the many people who have worked so hard through difficult circumstances to keep both our city and our church intact.

Today we are entering a new and hopeful time. We celebrate a miracle each time someone says, "I got my vaccine!" We also know that it will take time for vaccines to be available to everyone. It will take time for the rates of infection to reach levels that will allow us to gather again first in small, distanced groups, then later as a full congregation.

Our Building Reopen team has worked hard throughout the pandemic to find ways to allow ministry to continue while remaining diligent in safety. As we consider next steps, they have created metrics to guide a phased reopening. ([See it HERE](#)) The plan was approved by the council at their last meeting. We are currently in Phase II.

As we move into the spring and summer, we ask for your patience and your prayers. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Cindy or any member of the Building Reopen team: Deb Ahlquist, Dale Fierke, Harvey Jaeger, Carl Johnson and Maria Reed.

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## CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY

### Family story time starting soon

The St. Paul Public Library's Read Brave theme, "Owning Our Stories," has inspired the CYF team to start a family story time. Book picks will highlight voices from marginalized communities. We will offer two time/day options per book, and as the weather warms, we'll make one an outdoor group and keep the other on Zoom. Each gathering will include a story time, some wondering questions, and a fun activity. Look for more details in News & Notes as we finalize our kickoff in April.

### Family faith gathering will be Maundy Thursday meal

Join Miss Emily on Zoom for a mealtime worship service on **Maundy Thursday, April 1**. This will serve as our virtual gathering for April. Please [contact Emily](#) if you plan to attend so she can schedule a gathering time that works for all.

### God-Centered Day Camp (aka VBS) registration is open ... sort of July 12–15, 9 am–noon, for kids who've completed K-5. \$40.

We opened registration, but our camp registration system is pausing services. There will be a few days while we are switching over our systems to something new when registration will not be available. So, please watch News & Notes for information. If you have already registered and paid, you are all set.

Our theme this year takes us into those days after Jesus's death and resurrection, when his disciples' world was turned upside down. What now? And what does the future hold? Sound familiar?

We'll hold a special pre-K & parent VBS session that week (exact day TBD) with play and pray time for all, and time for parents to reconnect with one another. Watch for more in the next couple months.

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## Support the youth: Donate, bid!

**Virtual auction kickoff: Friday, April 16,  
7 pm on Facebook Live**

Join us for a live kickoff event, featuring some of our amazing youth, on Friday and then start your bidding. The online auction site will stay open through the weekend. Links will be publicized in News & Notes and on Facebook.

Your support is so important. We are planning some COVID-safe excursions this summer to help our kids reconnect and get away from screens and looking ahead to the ELCA National Youth Gathering next summer.

You can:

**Donate items for the auction.** We aren't asking businesses to donate, so we're looking to our church



community. Want to make your donation extra impactful? Donate a gift card from a favorite restaurant or shop. You can bring items to the church Monday-Friday, 9 am–4pm, and leave them in the parking lot entryway.

**Donate on our Thrivent Action Teams page.**

Thrivent covers all processing fees so your whole donation goes to the kids.

**Bid on auction items.** We'll be using an online auction site to make bidding and payment easy.

Contact [Michelle Stillwell](#) with questions.

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## MOMENT IN HISTORY—150th ANNIVERSARY

### Immanuel's support for refugees

ILC supported many refugee families in the years following the end of World War II and the end of the war in Southeast Asia. These people were fleeing war and persecution, often coming here from refugee camps arriving in the United States with very little. ILC members met refugees upon their arrival to Minnesota helping them settle in a new and very different country from the one they left. Some of the services Immanuel provided included help finding jobs, clothes, and apartments, completing paperwork, providing groceries, furnishing apartments, obtaining driver's licenses, navigating the bus system to get to work and to travel around the area. Immanuel served as a sponsor and our goal was *to ensure success in a new country*. For the most part we have lost contact with the families we sponsored which is a wonderful indication that we met our goal of *ensuring their success in a new country*. We were able to assist these families to the point where they didn't need us anymore! The following is a small history of some of the families Immanuel's members supported.

- ◆ In 1956, the Highland congregation sponsored the settlement of the Karl Schoene family from Bavaria, Germany. The family later opened the Gasthaus Bavarian Hunter near Stillwater.
- ◆ The Ralph Horvath family was settled into their apartment home at 1124 Randolph with help from Immanuel. Mr. Horvath had been in a concentration camp in Hungary for 2 years and in a displaced Persons Camp in Vienna, Austria for 4 years.
- ◆ In 1973, Immanuel sponsored the Munshe family from Uganda who were exiled by the Idi Amin regime. They were originally from India. They owned their own school in Uganda and fled because Idi Amin was executing leaders in many fields, including education.
- ◆ 1990 – 1991, ILC sponsored families from Vietnam: The Truoc Cao family, wife Phan Vy-Thuy, daughters: Yen-Ly, Vinh-Truong, and the Tieu-Ny's family, sons: Quang-Thang and Quant-Thinh. Mr. Cao served with American forces in South Vietnam. He spent several years in a prison camp. Support for these families included household goods and tutoring. Immanuel members were invited to many wonderful meals and celebrations at their homes.
- ◆ June 16, 1975. This is the story of the Lam family told through the voice of their 2<sup>nd</sup> son, Ba Lam. Ba was born in Vietnam and was three years old when his family immigrated to the United States. Father, Phu Lam, was a first lieutenant in the South Vietnamese army and a high school principal. Mother, Thom Vo, was a secretary for the US Embassy in South Vietnam. Sons Tung Lam and Ba Lam were born in Vietnam; daughter Que Lam was born in 1976 in the US. The family spent time in Thailand and Guam refugee camps before coming to America. They were in Arkansas for two and half months. While there, Ba's mother worked with the Red Cross doing paperwork to help families find churches to support them. During this time, she found 3 Minnesota churches to sponsor her family. The whole family from Ba's mother's side was able to immigrate to the US - grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins - 5 families. The Red Cross helped all 5 families move to the same state (Minnesota) which was so important to their well-being. Three St. Paul area churches sponsored the families and ILC helped the most with finding jobs, apartments, paperwork, clothes, groceries, driver's license, bus to work. The Lam family bought a house in the Como Park area and attended ILC Christmas Eve services for many years. They loved Pastor Bentley! Elvina Loftness invited Ba's family for an annual Christmas Eve dinner. After they were established and working they held a party hosting approximately 50 members of Immanuel Lutheran Church.



Pictured (from left): Que Lam, Cao Vinh-Truong, and Pham Vy-Thuy

Dru and George Koerner lived on Lake Johanna and mentioned to Elvina Loftness, an eager supporter of our refugees, that a young Vietnamese dentist named Ba Lam was moving in next door. When Elvina said she knew him and his family, a whole new story began! In this article, Ba was willing and excited to share his family's jour-

*Continued on Page 6*

## MOMENT IN HISTORY—150th ANNIVERSARY (continued)

ney and Immanuel’s participation in helping his family.

*“Thank you so much for taking the time to put this wonderful article together... I’m sure many people will appreciate hearing the history of how Immanuel Lutheran Church has helped so many immigrant families achieve happiness and success in the US! ~ Ba Lam*

— Contributors: Ba Lam, Ann Derr, Peggy Johnson, Jane Tripple, Judie Prayfrock

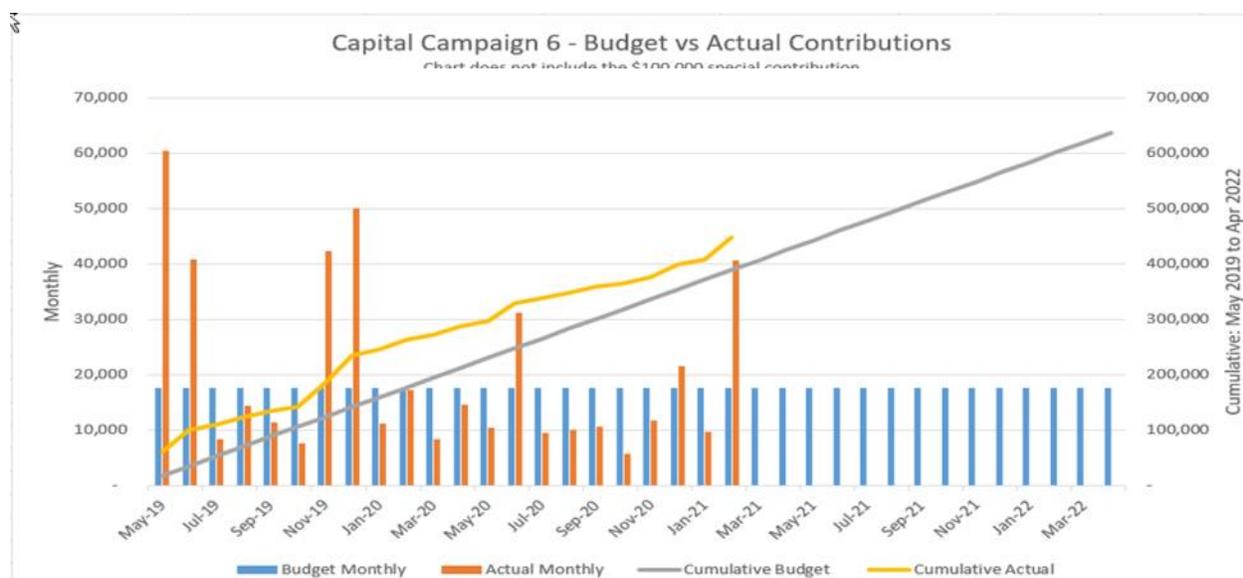
### It’s a history quiz!

How much do you know about Immanuel’s pastors, buildings, music, and funny stories? Would you like to win a prize for your best guesses? Join us for a 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Zoom quiz show on **Saturday, April 10**, at **7 pm**. Ray Peterson will be the MC. All you need is a pencil and blank piece of paper. Join the Zoom meeting [HERE](#).



Image by katemangostar, Freepik.com

## QUARTERLY FINANCE UPDATE



The Finance Ministry team, in an effort to keep the congregation in-the-know on church finances, will provide quarterly reports in the Messenger. This quarter, we are focusing on Capital Campaign 6, which is paying down Immanuel’s mortgage. The orange bars of the chart above show the monthly contributions. The yellow line represents cumulative giving, which is trending above pledges indicated by the gray line. The mortgage balance through March 31 is \$393,529.29. As we come ever closer to paying down our building mortgage, we welcome your vision for capital campaigns to come.

As the spring of 2021 dawns and we reflect on the extraordinary past year, we would like to pause to give thanks for the steadfast faithfulness of the people of Immanuel in support of our mission in Christ. The Finance team is tasked with managing the budget of Immanuel. We have been blessed by the faithful giving of the treasure, time and talents of our congregation during this tumultuous time. Thank you again for your faithfulness.

~ Lee Bjerke and Mark Thompson, Finance Ministry team

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## THE LIBRARY

### New books

305.5

Wil Wilkerson, Isabel

**Caste: the origins of our discontents.** C. 2020

Wilkerson combines impressive research... with great narrative and literary power.” She includes moving stories about real people caught in a powerful system of rigid human rankings. The author includes startling parallels to caste systems in India and Nazi Germany as she “shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day” by all people in America. I urge you to read this book. It has much to add to our understanding and current discussions about systemic racism.

-quotes from book cover



Fic

Erd Erdrich, Louise

**The Night Watchman.** C. 2020

This novel is based on the life of Louise Erdrich’s grandfather, Patrick Gouneaus and his amazing efforts to carry his fight against Native dispossession all the way to Washington, D.C. This family history forms the skeleton of the story which is fleshed out with a wonderful cast of fictional characters, and explores themes of perseverance, love and death with both sly humor and great depth of feeling. It’s an engaging ‘page turner’, and readers will be eager to find out more about each of the beautifully drawn characters.

818.6

Hol Holbrook, Carolyn

**Tell me your names and I will testify.** C. 2020

In this memoir Minnesota author, Carolyn Holbrook, “poignantly traces the path from her troubled childhood to her leadership in the Twin Cities literary community, showing how creative writing can be a powerful tool for challenging racism and the healing ways of the storyteller’s art.”

quote is from book cover

261.7

Wal Wallis, Jim

**Christ in crisis: why we need to reclaim Jesus.** C. 2019

In this book “Christian activist Jim Wallis argues that our cultural and political crisis largely stems from how the American church has become disconnected from the teachings of Jesus Christ.” He points to eight radical questions central to Jesus’s teachings, and challenges each of us to ask ourselves these questions to measure whether we are thinking and acting ‘in Jesus’s name’. “He reveals how following the teachings of Jesus emboldens and empower us to ‘be not afraid’, but to act in courage and hope.”

Quotations from book jacket

223.2

Mer Merrill, Nan C.

**Psalms for praying: an invitation to wholeness:** C. 2007

As the author meditates on the beloved Psalms of the Old Testament, she re-revisions them with different words, rhythms and contemporary language that may speak to us and our prayerful understanding in this much later age, but equally needful and seeking souls.

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## SOCIAL ACTION

### Jesus Blesses Little Children

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Matthew 19:14, NRSV*

### Childcare Awareness & Advocacy in MN

Immanuel loves children and invests in its children. Immanuel also cares for the children in the community - through Vacation Bible School, Music and Arts Camp, abundant support for Wilder Preschool, and SPPS snow day or strike day childcare. We had previous childcare partnerships by hosting a German Immersion school, At the Summit preschool, and Art with Ellen preschool art classes in our building.

We recognize the high cost of childcare to families (MN ranks 4th costliest), high expenses for centers, low wages for caregivers (20% live in poverty) and a shortage of quality child care slots. Birth to age 5 is a critical time for brain development, maximizing a child's potential for learning through nurturing and stimulating care. As Christians, we are called to be involved in the community. God intends government to protect all people and to enable humans to flourish (Romans 13:1-7), so Christians must work for good government.

### Let's be a part of the solution!

1. Join Immanuel's Childcare Awareness & Advocacy email list. <https://forms.gle/6MjvQ9rcTLmg4PJg9>
2. Attend a Zoom meeting on **Sunday, April 11, at 7 pm** to learn more about how to make your voice heard on this issue at the state/city level and complete a Call to Action item.
3. Read and learn more below to be informed so you can talk with neighbors, friends, family about this issue.
4. Watch the News & Notes for more details on the child-care crisis in Minnesota and how you can use your voice to advocate for the youngest Minnesotans.
5. Questions? Contact Anna Kirkness at [akstark@gmail.com](mailto:akstark@gmail.com)

### Why can't this wait?

This spring, the MN Legislature is considering some bills that will address some childcare issues. JRLC (Joint Religious Legislative Coalition), one of Immanuel's advocacy partners, has [child care assistance](#) as part of 2021 Agenda: The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps low- and moderate-income families with child care costs so they can work or go to school, and it is the state's largest program serving infants and toddlers. Minnesota needs to fund the program adequately to eliminate the current waiting list of families.

### Read & learn more [HERE](#)

"In Minnesota about 75% of employed Minnesotans rely on child care. As such, it serves as the foundation of our economy. Well before the coronavirus pandemic arrived, Minnesota faced a serious shortage of quality child-care slots and some of the nation's worst achievement gaps. The pandemic will worsen both crises."

### Common Hope Zoom Connection! Thursday, April 22, 7-8 pm



Immanuel Lutheran church is hosting a Zoom Connection with [Common Hope](#), an organization the church partners with to fight poverty with diplomas in Guatemala. Immanuel Lutheran Church members sponsor 19 students in Guatemala through Common Hope to help these students gain an education and their whole family break the cycle of poverty through education, health care, housing and family development! If you are a Common Hope sponsor, have a connection to Common Hope or Guatemala, or are interested in learning more about this partnership—this Common Hope Zoom Connection is for you! Come hear from Immanuel Lutheran sponsors about their sponsored

students, updates on what is happening in Guatemala and at Common Hope during their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and join for what is sure to be a hope-filled hour of connection!

Click [HERE](#) to sign up for the Immanuel Lutheran Common Hope Zoom Connection, and then a link will be sent to you. Questions? Contact Ann Derr, [annderr@gmail.com](mailto:annderr@gmail.com), or Teresa Bettmann, [teresab@us.commonhope.org](mailto:teresab@us.commonhope.org)

## COUNCIL UPDATES

### March 2021 Council Meeting Summary

In keeping with Minnesota's social distancing guidelines, the meeting took place online. The meeting opened with a reading from John 12:24-26 and a video presentation of what the time of Lent can do for us. Lent gives us a ritualized time to discover where we are being held back from being what God wants for us. This is a time for us to let go, to surrender our will to God's, and to embrace the Spirit and where it leads.

One direction we are being led is in giving; our congregation continues to support ILC generously and steadfastly. As we go into Easter, we are looking healthy and strong. Thank you to all for your continued support for ILC.

As we move further into the new year, the Building Reopen Task Force continues to work with our Ministry Teams, staff, and council to determine a path forward on our gradual return to the church building. We are currently in phase 2 of a four-phase reopening strategy, and as such, Immanuel will continue with online worship and meetings at least through the end of April. The approach is to develop a plan for both how and when we open and in what terms we can safely do so.

In preparation for the year ahead, the Council is revisiting the 2020 vision for Immanuel of connecting others to God's message of hope in new ways, looking to build on this vision for the year to come. 2020 presented unique challenges, but also new opportunities for outreach into our communities. 2021 offers even more new opportunities to listen to the Spirit at work around us. If you are interested in becoming more involved in ILC and its works, please reach out.

The meeting was adjourned and closed with a prayer.

The complete version of official minutes of each Council meeting can be obtained at the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Deb Ahlquist, Council President, or any Church Council member. The Council meets monthly, usually on the third Tuesday. Meetings are open to the public, and all are welcome. Currently the Church Council is meeting by video conferencing. If you would like to attend, contact any Church Council member.

Church Council/Team Chairs		
<b>Deb Ahlquist</b> , Council President	<b>Ross Robey</b> , Financial Secretary	<b>David Alstead</b> , Worship & Music
<b>Paul Mattessich</b> , Past President	<b>David Alstead</b> , Asst. Financial Secretary	<b>Gay Bartholic</b> , Stewardship
<b>Jeff Schmidt</b> , Vice President	<b>Nick Consoer</b> , Member at Large	<b>Mary Gwen Thompson</b> , Children, Youth & Family
<b>Martha Hansen</b> , Secretary	<b>Sue Klevan</b> , Member at Large	<b>Harvey Jaeger</b> , Property
<b>Mark Thompson</b> , Treasurer	<b>John Toso</b> , Member at Large	<b>David Hansen</b> , Membership
<b>Jackie Hippen</b> , Asst. Treasurer	<b>Lee Bjerke</b> , Finance	<b>Christine Danielson</b> , Social Action

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