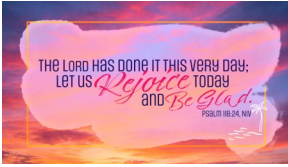


THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER



MAY 2026
Volume 40, Issue 8



From Your Pastor

On Thursday, May 14 the Christian Church will observe the Ascension of our Lord Jesus into heaven. Jesus completed the saving work of God by His perfect life, death, and resurrection. Then after appearing at various times and to many different followers for 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus physically, bodily, ascended into heaven in the presence of His disciples as is recorded for us in Luke 24:48-52 and Acts 1:1-11.

Jesus gave His followers—and that means He also gave to us—some very precious promises and purpose before He ascended. Jesus said “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20), and “You will be clothed with power from on high” (the promised sending of the Holy Spirit) “and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This means that through us Jesus is continuing His work of bringing His saving Good News to a lost and dying world!

As we read through the book of Acts we see how God used the early believers in some amazing ways as they were faithful to Jesus’ purpose and kept trusting His promises. We can stand at the end of the Book of Acts, look back to the beginning, and say, “He really did guide and bless those first Christians.”

The most encouraging thing about this guidance and blessing is that Jesus Christ does it in the real world. The Book of Acts is no fairy tale in which Christians went out into the world, and God fixed it so everybody listened to them politely, believers always got along, their lives were always happy, and there were gobs of money, easy family relationships, and so on. That would be a fairy tale.

In this real life of yours, Christ can use your frustrations to teach you what faith really is. Sail right through everything without a hitch, and pretty soon you get smug. “I’ll just do this and this and this,” you say, as if success were a matter of your deciding. The prophet Amos had a more

realistic view of how life can be. It is “as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him” (Amos 5:19). In other words, hit the roadblocks, fall on your face, head off into the unknown, and you find out how true it is that you are completely dependent on the grace and blessing of God.

In the annoying, exhausting frustrations, you can learn how to pray and cling to the Lord in a way you never did before. The prayers may not be long and polished. They will be full of punch; they will be real, like the prayer of that Canaanite woman who simply pleaded with Jesus, “Lord, help me” (Matt. 15:25), because years of frustration taught her she couldn’t fix the trouble in her family on her own.

Christ is Lord over your life. He opens up opportunities, fruitful ones, for you to be His witness right where you are. God isn’t running your life by accident. He has a reason for you living when you do and in the circumstances you are. In that position—in other words, in your real life—He knows how to bless the words you say for Christ, the influence you bring, and many times even the example you show in handling your frustration.

A great Ascension season exercise would be to open your Bible to John’s Gospel and read chapters 14–16. There Jesus told His people what it would be like after He ascended and all the things He would keep doing for them. Well, He is doing all those things for you in your real life. At the end of those chapters, He speaks this promise. It has your name all over it: “I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). God give you the faith to trust that indeed it is so—for you!

Your fellow-servant for Christ,

Pastor Mahuken



- May 1.....**Barb Ernst**
Ryan Morgan
- May 3.....**Brittany Rogers**
- May 4.....**Jason Voss**
- May 5.....**Karsen Bruhn**
Nathan Teut
- May 7.....**Destry Beeck**
Jolene Streck
- May 9.....**Josie Bekkerus**
- May 10.....**Vern Wood**
- May 11.....**Ashley O'Brien**
Keith Petersen
Christina Riessen
Delores Schultz (92)
- May 12.....**Theodore Cruz**
Caleb Schroeder
- May 14.....**Cathy Bubke**
- May 15.....**Tanner Schultz**
- May 16.....**Kayla Miller**
- May 17.....**Eli Rohlf**
- May 18.....**Damon Schultz**
- May 19.....**Tim Bubke**
Brad Detlefsen
Jennifer Doxsey
- May 20.....**Hadley Nahnsen**
Mitch Schwarz
- May 21.....**James Hill**
Jamie Jepsen
Brandon Meseck
- May 22.....**Kay Wilken**
- May 24.....**Austin Aldag**
- May 25.....**Mark Beeck**
Mike Beeck
Brandon Wigg
- May 26.....**Austin Korner**
Ian Weber
- May 27.....**Melanie Hargens**
- May 28.....**Kara Ferguson**
Kelsi Jepsen
Nakia Zavitz
- May 29.....**Jaden Petersen**
- May 30.....**Jac Friedrichsen**
Gene Haberberger
- May 31.....**Stacy Jepsen**

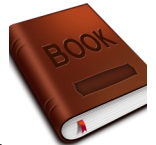


- Jerod & Kim Petersen..... May 9, 1992**
- Dave & Jac Friedrichsen..... May 13, 1972**
- Doug & Christi Fredericks..... May 16, 1996**
- Rev. Steve & Susan Schulz..... May 16, 1987**
- Trevis & Laura Beeck..... May 26, 1990**
- DeWayne & Denice Schultz..... May 29, 1972**

Please notify the office of any omissions or corrections.



From the Church Record Book



Baptized: *“Let the little children come unto Me...”*

Corbin Jason Bekkerus, son of Peter and Josie Bekkerus, baptized on April 12, 2026.

Accession: *“Welcome in the name of the Lord...”*

Timothy Wilson, transferred from Our Savior Lutheran Church, LCMS, Denison Iowa, on March 30, 2026.

Deaths: *“I am the Resurrection...”*

Lillie E. Petersen, age 106, died April 10, 2026, and was buried April 17, 2026, in the Morgan Township Cemetery, Schleswig, Iowa.

Youth Confirmation: *“You are Mine...”*

April 26, 2026

- Brenna Kae Bubke**
- Zoie Arlene Ferguson**
- Ty James Jacobson**
- Morgan Belle Jepsen**
- Reed Edgar Meseck**
- Gavin Lee Schneider**



Vacation Bible School is Coming!

Sessions for children that just completed
Preschool-6th Grade

Monday, July 6—Thursday, July 9

Grab your backpack and get ready to embark on a Tropical Trek where we will learn how Jesus came to seek and save the lost based on Luke 19:10!

As we travel to fun and exciting places, like a dormant volcano and island caves, we'll discover how God finds us and helps us in every challenge we face in life.

Immanuel's 2026 Confirmation Class



Front row (l-r): Reed Meseck, Gavin Schneider, Brenna Bubke, Morgan Jepsen.

Back row (l-r): Ty Jacobson, Jaxson Green (Faith-Deloit), Zoie Ferguson, Pastor Mahnken.

SPECIAL ASCENSION SERVICE



At Mission Central on
May 14, 2026.

5:00 p.m. Meal

6:30 p.m. Worship

What a JOY and BLESSING to have the privilege of having Pastor Rich Snow, Nebraska District President as our guest speaker for the Ascension Worship Service at Mission Central on May 14th, 2026!

A wonderful meal will be provided at 5:00 p.m., and then Rev. Snow will have a very special message for everyone, sharing the joy of our Lord's Ascension and highlighting some of the exciting mission work that our Lord Jesus is doing in the mission fields right here in the Midwest.

Please mark your calendar NOW for this special event at the world-famous Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa!



CONGRATULATIONS!

Immanuel's 2026 High School graduates will be honored at a reception on Sunday, May 3 following 9 a.m. worship.

Everyone is invited to enjoy donuts and juice and greet our graduates: Linkin Beeck, McKinzie Hargens, Lylian Morgan, Blaze Palmer, Brock Schneider and Tyson Stoppel.



THANK YOU to everyone who joined us for our annual Sr. LYF Easter breakfast.

We served 105 this year and enjoyed the fellowship that the morning provided as we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord.

*Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

As You Spring Clean ...



Please consider donating any unwanted items to our church garage sale held in conjunction with Schleswig City-wide Garage Sales May 28, 29 and 30. The proceeds help support our Mission projects.

Items can be brought to the church garage between May 18 and May 27. We are grateful for your support! ~ The Mission Board

THANK YOU!

We have completed the project to display all of our Immanuel Confirmation pictures. Jerry & Grace Langholdt have generously donated a handmade oak cabinet for that area in the Fellowship Hall. It has room on top for the New Album which will contain the Confirmation pictures taken since 2016 and in the future. Amanda Bruhn has prepared the pages for the album, including pictures, year of Confirmation and the names of Confirmands.

We thank all of these individuals for their work and time to make this possible. Please stop by and check it out! Also, say "Thanks" to Jerry, Grace and all involved with this project.



~ THE LWML INVITES
ALL LADIES ~



Thank you to all who attended our Lenten meal. The proceeds went to help Jonathan Schulz, a current student at Fort Wayne seminary and son of Immanuel members, Pastor Steven and Sue Schulz.

Jerry and Grace Langholdt have generously donated a new handmade oak cabinet for the Confirmation display in the Fellowship Hall. It also has room to store Bibles and hymnals. Stop by and check it out. Also, say “Thanks” to Jerry and Grace for this gift.

The Quilt Auction at Camp Okoboji is June 29th.

The District Convention at Camp Okoboji is June 11 thru 13. Cheryl and Loretta are our delegates, and Coleen and Peggy are alternates. They will be voting on the Mission Grants for the next 2 years.

We purchased a new Bunn coffee pot for the church kitchen.

Several members attended the Spring Rally held at Zion on April 16th. An informative presentation was given by Lutheran Family Service regarding their programs.

Visits were made and Portals of Prayer devotional books were delivered to our Immanuel members in care facilities.

~Donna Harm, Secretary



Camp Okoboji Urgent Request

I cannot stress enough how much we need 2026 Summer Staff!!

We still only have a handful of staff signed up. Please encourage youth (at least 16 years of age) and college students to consider serving with us. Those interested in serving at Camp Okoboji should complete a NLOMA profile. This is the first step in the application process for summer positions.

Fill out a profile online at <https://nloma.org/employment/summer/serviceprofile/>

From Your library . . .
“Have we got a book for you!”



Covenant Child
by Terri Blackstock

Three-year-old twins Lizzie and Kara Holbrooke live a happy and simple life with their widowed father Jack. When Jack meets Amanda at a church gathering they soon fall in love and marry. Amanda quickly takes on her new role as mother to the twins and wife to Jack. A role she cherishes.

Jack and his parents are on their way to a cousin’s wedding and are killed in a plane crash. Jack is from a wealthy family and Amanda reluctantly inherits the vast fortune but loses the twins to their mother’s parents who want them only for the money they will inherit. The girls are thrown into a squalid life that will challenge their character.

Amanda will spend the following years watching over the girls from a distance, never giving up on her covenant with them and Jack.

—Submitted by Elaine Teut



Crossroads
of Crawford County

At Crossroads, we are so grateful for your joining our mission in so many ways! Having your hearts through multiple gifting avenues as well as your participation in our work is an incredible gift!

We are honored to celebrate Crossroads’ 10th year, at the very same time as God has granted us plans to begin our ultrasound program (May 1st). So the 10-year celebration, along with the ribbon cutting, reflects the full story of Crossroads, not only the new ultrasound services. The event will highlight both of our programs while also introducing ultrasound as the next step in our growth.

The theme “Growing in Grace” was an easy decision after a beautiful new quilt donning that theme was recently donated to Crossroads. The intent was to let the quilt go to work for Crossroads and we will soon be sharing details of that plan.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church
Voter's Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2026**

I. Opening Devotion and Prayer

Led by Pastor Mahnken.

II. Reading/Approval of Minutes and Agenda

The minutes were presented by Craig Bogatzke. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved by the Council to accept the January 5 minutes.

III. Reports of Officers and Boards

A. Elders (Curtis Korner)

The Elders met with Pastor Trunkhill about initial steps of calling a new Pastor.

B. Trustees (Ryan Ernst)

A quote from Prengers Flooring America in Carroll was sought for carpeting the upstairs level of the church.

New computer monitors were purchased and installed for Pastor and the secretaries.

Security cameras are being considered for various points around the church building and education unit.

Assistive Audio devices are being investigated to get better auditory options for members who need hearing assistance.

A new filter was installed in the drinking fountain in the education unit.

The narthex furnace is in need of attention. It must be controlled in the breaker panel.

Potentially a thermostat issue.

Dialogue with the city continues between their street and our parking area.

Carroll Glass has been consulted to resolve some door issues.

C. Treasurer/Stewardship/Finance (Larry Abbe)

Currently Immanuel is ahead \$7,268 after the first quarter of 2026.

Back in January, a gift of \$4,000 was approved and presented to Unity Ridge. The funds were taken from Home Missions. That money will be replenished when interest proceeds are taken from a mature CD.

Also, approximately \$5,000 will be available from interest proceeds from the Immanuel Endowment Fund.

D. Education/Youth (Angela Korner)

The Confirmation Prayer Team had a meal on April 8.

On April 22 there will be confirmation questioning.

On May 3, there will be a high school graduate recognition event.

The Weifenbach-Russel Scholarship will again be awarded and will be rewarded until the family decides they can no longer fund it.

E. Preschool (no report)

F. Mission/Fellowship (Chris Mahnken)

After a generous gift, soup dinner receipts, and Lenten suppers, the Mission Board will be able to fund the following missionaries:

The Trumps serving in Kenya, Africa

The Ferrys serving in Eurasia/Romania

The Preus' serving in Eurasia/Romania

The Fedders serving in the Czech Republic

The Sharps serving in Puerto Rico

The garage sale and plant sales are approaching.

G. Memorial Committee (nothing to report)

H. Pastor's Report (Pastor Mahnken)

Pastor Mahnken shared various congregational statistics about Immanuel.

Pastor thanked the congregation for providing cake and recognizing his and Chris' 40th wedding anniversary.

Pastor also thanked the congregation and individuals for their expressions of sympathy at the passing of his mother.

IV. Old Business

A. New Constitution for Immanuel

This is not ready to present to the congregation yet.

V. New Business

A. Request Voters for Subsidy from Home Mission Fund (\$175) to assist in covering the cost of the meal at the Ascension Day Service at Mission Central. All the congregations of the Denison and Mapleton Circuits are asked to contribute.

Sandy Bubke moved, Deb Green seconded, and the voters unanimously approved this expenditure.

B. Synodical Convention Offering

Larry Abbe made a motion, seconded by Leroy Hight, and the voters approved a \$500 gift to Synodical Convention.

C. Memorial Committee

Lodean and Sandra Voss will be moving off the committee while Lila Bubke and Val Teut will take their places. Thanks to Lodean and Sandra for their years of service.

VI. Adjourn With Prayer

Led by Pastor Mahnken.

~Submitted by Craig Bogatzke, Secretary

"Everyone should be eager to advance the teaching and study of the Word for his own salvation and the glory of God."

Martin Luther



Pastor Mahnken's Report Voters' Meeting—April 13, 2025

We began 2025 with 620 Baptized members and 512 Communicant members on the books.

In 2026 four of our members have died—Shannon Henningsen, Janet Beeck, Jay Fink, and Lillie Petersen. One member has been added by Holy Baptism—today. One communicant member—Tim Wilson—has transferred from another LCMS congregation. One communicant member was released because of no reply to available contact information. So, as of today, Immanuel has 617 baptized members and 508 communicant members on our roll.

Our average worship attendance so far has been 142.6; for 2025 was 140.5/week. Our average Saturday evening worship in 2026 has been 33.8; for 2025 was 32.9; the year before it was 33.8.

Our average midweek Lent worship attendance was 80, up from an average of 73 for both '24 & '25. Our Maundy Thursday attendance was 92, up 11 from '25 but down five from '24. Our Good Friday attendance was 102, up 12 from '25, but down two from '24.

My record of Easter attendances only goes back to 2003, but our total Easter attendance was the lowest it has been in at least 23 years, and that by 30 less. My assumption is that our 2026 Easter attendance was the lowest it has ever been.

Chris and I thank you for the gift and the cake reception to celebrate our 40th Wedding Anniversary on Sunday, March 22.

Immanuel sent flowers for my Mother's funeral. I have printed a picture of them, and I'll pass that around. Thank you also for the memorial given in her memory to her life-long congregation of Salem in Farrar. Thank you also to many of you who gave individual memorials and thank you for your prayers and words of sympathy. I am still in the process of writing thank-yous, so, please be patient.

I want to call your attention to our Confirmation teachers of this year. Sue Schulz has been teaching our 5th Grade and K'Lynn Harm has been teaching our 6th Grade. My wife, Chris, has been serving as a substitute and has also helped with checking Memory Work throughout the year. Nancy Bielenberg has been a sub for me, most recently when I was gone for my Mom's funeral. All are wonderful, dedicated teachers. Their giving of time and their recognition of the importance of teaching the faith to our children is honorable. Please remember both our children and their teachers in your prayers.

Our Board of Education is to be commended for their service in support of our Confirmation teachers and students through our Confirmation Prayer Team night this past Wednesday. They prepared and served a meal for the adult Pray-ers and students and teachers. Activities were also a part of our evening. One of our Pray-ers was once a student and had her own Pray-er when she was in confirmation. She texted this to me following that evening: "Thank you and our Board of Education, I had an absolute blast last night at our gathering. It truly made me smile for the rest of the evening and filled my cup. It still makes me smile today! My only regret is we didn't do something like this when I was their age! Thank you again for a wonderful evening together."

There was a sad and tragic event that was unfolding that night in our community. A search was on for a man who was missing. It affected our gathering briefly as our sheriff's deputy asked us to clear the building so he could do a search. We were very soon back inside, but the evening ended tragically as that man ended his own life. So there was a stark contrast between what we do here and what was unfolding outside and it showed how what we do is so precious in teaching our children—and being reinforced ourselves—that our lives are precious in God's sight. He gave His Son to die for us to make us His own and to pour out His love into our lives. We continually need Him for the strength and hope we need for life's challenges, or we too are in danger of falling into despair. The sheriff and his deputy were in our church office already that morning as the search was going on here in town. They asked if we had cameras on our parking lot. Earlier in the year we had a preschool parent asking if we were looking into locking our doors for the security of the children. Serious consideration should be given to this possibility, at least during the hours preschool is in session; although locking our doors would certainly present some logistical challenges and frustrate many of you who come and go during the day.

I know this is not a Voters' decision—but I also know the way Immanuel works—if someone makes a decision without asking a larger group—but can we remove, as in put on the Garage Sale, these four chairs which are kept along the wall here. I assume they were purchased because some did not want to sit on the hard, metal, folding chairs we used to have here. Now we have these cushioned chairs—and no one sits in those four chairs. They just need to be moved back and forth whenever we have funerals or larger functions here in the Fellowship Hall.

There was a recent issue of the Lutheran Witness which addressed the topic of pastoral vacancy. I ordered 20 extra copies and a number of them are here. PLEASE, take a copy today and read the articles. You can return it and someone else can read it.

I am not going to be gardening in the space south of the church this year. I simply do not have time in view of all I need to attend in preparation for our departure. If someone wants a piece of what has to be one of the most awesome garden spots in terms of organic matter added over the last 25 years+, this is it! Otherwise; it will just be seeded and mowed. But the raspberry canes are mine for this year!

I want to acknowledge also the many members of Immanuel who helped out with our Preschool's fundraiser carnival this past Friday evening. I especially invite you to thank Larry & Anne Abbe who, along with Jerry & Barb Ernst and Cindi Paulsen served the meal from here in our kitchen. I was away that evening upon the death of Lillie Petersen. When I returned at 9 p.m., maybe later, Larry and Anne were just leaving after cleaning up.

Recently the Lord impressed upon me a Bible verse which is always good for us all—Psalm 56:3-4 "When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid."

Chris and I thank you for your prayers on our behalf. We continue to pray for us all.



Can you believe it? We are under a month left of preschool for the year. It has gone by so fast! The children are loving the spring weather and are eager for all outdoor related activities. It is a gift to watch their growth and development. We will miss our afternoon class. They are a spiritually hungry group, and I pray they will continue to grow in their walk with Jesus.

The other day, during music, I decided we would sing one of my personal favorites. I love the song *The Blessing* by Kari Jobe. The song touches on the gift you give those in your family by offering them a heritage of faith. I know if you heard it, you would quickly recognize the words as they are often spoken in church. What struck me when we began singing was the authenticity and transparency of the children while they worshipped. I didn't say a word and was left speechless as one of the little boys dropped to his knees and began to worship the Lord face down. It wasn't long before the entire class was on their face worshipping our Heavenly Father. It was a "happy tears" moment for certain. Can you even imagine? I would have snapped a picture but we were using the phone for our music source.

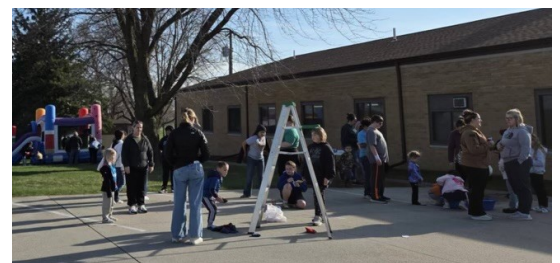
You know I love to reflect upon these Jesus moments and this was no different. I can't help but pose the question, "Why does this change?" When does it seem to become "not okay" to lay on our faces before the Lord and weep over His goodness. The children don't care who sees them. They just surrender it all. What an incredible testimony to us adults. It brings to mind the Scripture in John that tells us "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." It is my prayer for each one of us that we too can enter into worship putting it all at the feet of Jesus. He is ever so deserving.

We had our Open House which coincided with the preschool fundraiser. I haven't heard final totals regarding how much was raised financially, but I want to thank each of you who attended. It was fun to meet next year's students and see them get to celebrate registration with carnival games! While we are not yet full, we have good solid enrollment. If you know of anyone who has a three or four year old, we do have a couple of spots left. I know God will send us just the right mixture of children to create our preschool family.

May you experience the joy of worship and discovering God's Truth through His Word.

Mrs. Gustafson

Immanuel Lutheran Preschool is now accepting registrations for the 2026-27 school year. If you know of anyone interested in enrolling their child, please have them email Mrs. Gustafson at lesliegustafson@schleswig.k12.ia.us or call the Church Office 712-676-2235.



Do Eunuchs in the Bible Signal an Endorsement of Transgenderism?

It's surprising, but some Christians attempt to support the transgender movement using Scripture. They can't legitimately use the Bible to bolster their position, though. Instead, they try to force the text to fit their narrative. One common approach is to claim the biblical passages about eunuchs signal a trajectory towards transgender inclusion.

Jesus mentions three kinds of eunuchs in Matthew 19:12. The first kind includes eunuchs who were "born that way," a type of intersex individual with *congenital* atypical sexual anatomy. The second are eunuchs who were "made eunuchs by men," meaning they had been castrated, a procedure often done by royal officials to protect the harems. The third are eunuchs who "made themselves that way," referring to men who forsook sexual relations and renounced marriage to serve God with undivided attention (e.g., 1 Corinthians 7:32). So, how is it alleged that eunuchs provide support for the transgender movement?

First, transgender advocates believe the Bible's references to eunuchs signal a biblical trajectory towards inclusion of "sexual minorities." For example, while the Old Testament Mosaic Law prohibited eunuchs from entering the assembly of the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:1), the New Testament records an Ethiopian eunuch accepting the gospel and getting baptized (Acts 8:26–39). The Human Rights Campaign, a pro-LGBT civil rights organization, writes, "This story of a gender-expansive person of color welcomed as one of the first Christian converts is a powerful part of our spiritual history."

Second, eunuchs with atypical sexual anatomy are accepted into the kingdom in their altered physical state. Nowhere does Scripture suggest they need to change. Though Jesus healed people with physical ailments (e.g., the lame, blind, bleeding), He never healed a eunuch. Christian transgender advocate, Megan DeFranza, believes this indicates that surgical transition isn't as problematic as modern Christians make it out to be. She writes, "What is enlightening for our discussion is that the outrage many Christians today express over the surgical alteration of genitals, of castration, when done willingly by some transgender people was not shared by many of our Christian ancestors who saw service to God as a eunuch as having higher value than conformity to male gender."

These Christian transgender advocates believe the biblical data about eunuchs makes a case for people who identify as transgender today. Is that true? No, and here's why.

First, while it's true that the Ethiopian eunuch's intersex condition was not a barrier to getting saved, it's wrongheaded to draw conclusions from this about God's attitude towards surgical alteration of sexual anatomy. What matters to God is what Isaiah said was necessary for eunuchs: "Hold fast My covenant" (Isaiah 56:4). The covenant in force in Acts was the covenant of grace, received through faith. Anyone—whether intersex or not—can put their faith in Christ. But the fact that God accepts the faith of a eunuch does not imply His approval of castration.

Second, although the Ethiopian eunuch likely had atypical sexual anatomy, nothing indicates he identified as anything other than a man or was—as is said today—transgender. That the Bible mentions eunuchs or that Jesus extolled the virtue of eunuchs (Matthew 19:12) is not evidence for transgender ideology. Being a eunuch (or intersex) and identifying as transgender are two different things. The former is someone with a physical alteration, whereas the latter is someone who holds a self-perception that is incongruent with their biology. Scripture doesn't suggest the Ethiopian believed he was anything other than a man.

Third, advocates of transgender ideology often use the term "gender" when describing biblical accounts of eunuchs. DeFranza refers to "conformity to male gender," the Human Rights Campaign talks of a "gender-expansive person," and Linda Tatro Herzer (another Christian pro-transgender author) says Jesus recognized "gender variance." This is, at best, confusing and, at worst, intentionally misleading. The Bible describes people as male and female and doesn't delve into a eunuch's self-perception (what is described as "gender identity" today). Using "gender-expansive person" or other similar expressions to describe a eunuch in biblical times is anachronistic and attempts to force a modern category on an ancient text. The biblical authors did not have these ideas in mind.

In fact, virtually no Jew or Christian since the first century believed the Bible taught that God created people who were *neither* male nor female. Why? Because such a notion is foreign to the text. This idea doesn't come from God or Scripture. Rather, it's a destructive anachronism that attempts to import an alien meaning into God's Word.

It's unfortunate that Christian scholars and authors try to harmonize modern gender identity theory with Scripture. It's evidence of culture's seductive draw. The church—in every generation—has been tempted to capitulate to culture. Unfortunately, in this instance, these authors are also trying to import new and faulty meaning into Scripture.



MAY 2026

Immanuel Lutheran Church,
Schleswig, Iowa



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																																											
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Preschool Mon., Tues., Thurs.: 8 a.m.—3 p.m. Wed.: 11:45 a.m.—3 p.m.</p> <p>Confirmation: Wednesday's 5th & 6th grade: 3:30 p.m.—5:15 p.m.</p> </div>				<p>June</p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					1	2
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28	29	30																																															
<p>3</p> <p>9 a.m. Worship w/HC 10:15 SS & BC</p> <p>10:15 Graduate Reception</p> <p>1 p.m. Schleswig Sharks 4-H</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Preschool</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Pastor @ Spring Pastors' Conference, Algona</p> </div>	<p>5</p> <p>Preschool</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:30 Bible Study p.m. Preschool 5th-6th Confirmation</p>	<p>7 National Day of Prayer</p> <p>9 a.m.—9 p.m. Church open Preschool 1:30 p.m. LWML</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</p>																																											
<p>10 Mother's Day</p> <p>9 a.m. Worship 10:15 SS & BC</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Preschool</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Preschool</p>	<p>13</p> <p>5th-6th Confirmation 6:00 p.m. Preschool Graduation</p>	<p>14 Ascension Day</p> <p>9 a.m. Quilting</p> <p>Special Ascension Service @ Mission Central 5 p.m. Meal 6:30 p.m. Worship</p>	<p>15 Peace Officers Memorial Day</p>	<p>16 Armed Forces Day</p> <p>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</p>																																											
<p>17</p> <p>9 a.m. Worship w/HC 10:15 SS & BC</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p><i>Messenger</i> Deadline for June/July issue</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Last Day of Public School</p>	<p>23</p> <p>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</p>																																											
<p>24 Pentecost</p> <p>9 a.m. Worship 10:15 SS & BC</p> <hr/> <p>31 Trinity Sunday</p> <p>9 a.m. Worship 10:15 SS & BC</p>	<p>25 Memorial Day</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:30 Bible Study</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9 a.m. Quilting</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</p>																																											
				<p>Schleswig City-wide Garage Sales May 28-30</p>																																													

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**Saturday Worship at 5 p.m. w/HC;
Sunday Worship at 9 a.m. HC on first & third Sundays
Sunday School and Bible Classes at 10:15 a.m.**

**E-mail: immansch@iowatelecom.net
or: markey@iowatelecom.net
Website: www.immanuel Schleswig.com
"Like" us on Facebook**

**Pastor: Merle F. Mahnken
Home Ph.: 712-676-2242 Cell Ph.: 712-269-6364
Assisting Pastor: Kurt Kaiser
Cell Ph.: 712-269-8452**

**Office: Amanda Bruhn and Jodi Lorenzen
Preschool: Leslie Gustafson
Organist: Nancy Bielenberg**

**Snow Removal and Lawn Care:
Ryan Jepsen 712-790-1603
Loren and Janice Jepsen**

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER



**OUR MISSION
STATEMENT:**
**"Together in Christ,
we grow through the
Word and
Sacraments, serving
our Lord and
sharing His saving
grace with all
people."**