

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Our Heritage and Our Hope
1898-1998: First Hundred Years

*from Immanuel Lutheran Church Centennial Cookbook
and Immanuel's Diamond Anniversary Recountance*

The first organized meeting of Immanuel took place on October 20, 1898 in the home of Mr. And Mrs. John Berglin. Rev. A.E. Gustafson from Helena presided at the meeting and led occasional services until January 1900. The infant Congregation met during the two years only monthly and in the homes of the members since there was no church available to them. The records show that several attempts were made to purchase church buildings from other denominational bodies, however, no purchase was made.

On January 22, 1900, pastor Gustafson announced his resignation. Sufficient progress had not been made to continue the work and nothing more was attempted in five years.

In February 1905, a student H.F. Johnson presided at the services and Rev. Herman Lind from Anaconda was called to reorganize the congregation. Members petitioned the Augustana Synod for membership and became a part of the church at large.

The first resident pastor was A.P. Anderson. Plans were made in August 1905 to construct a church on Alder Street that was completed in 1906. Pr. Anderson was called to a Foreign Mission and Rev A. V. Anderson was secured in a few months. He remained until 1910

Pr. C. J. Bengston served the congregation for 10 months; Rev. C. Waldo Ekeberg arrived in March 1912 and stayed through January 1914. A theological student, Mr. Hult, served for 3 months. Another student, E. Arthur Larson, arrived in October and stayed a year and a half.

Pr T.V. Anderson arrived and served two years and four months. Influenza took his life while he attended a Mission Meeting in Great Falls.

In August 1919, PR E.A. Palm came to Immanuel. It was in that year that the confirmation class was taught in the English language and many services were conducted in English.

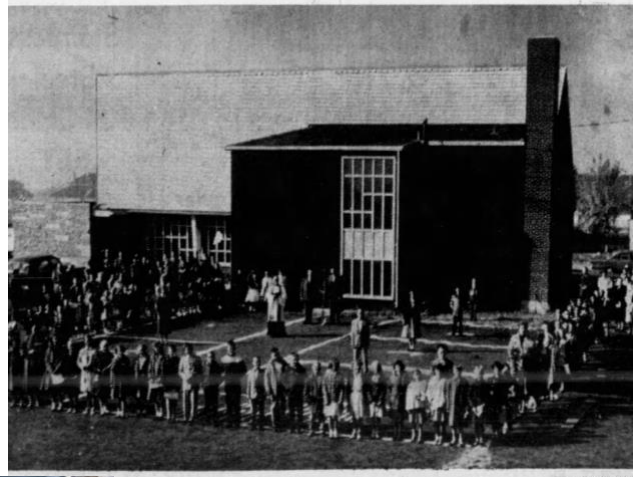
Theological student Emeroy Johnson served two summers. Upon his ordination in June he accepted a call to Immanuel in August 1928 and stayed 8 years. A new Reuter Pipe Organ was installed in 1933 and the Church Tower was added to the front of the building the next year.



Pr. Nels Bergstrom served from 1936-1940. A parish hall was added to the church and restrooms installed in the basement. After Pr Bergstrom left, theological student Stanton Peterson served until 1942 when Pr. Carl Muhr began as pastor for one and a half years. Pr Charles Johnson served from January 1944-1947 and Pr. Philip Warmanen from September 1948-1950.

Pr. Rod Johnson arrived August 1951 to begin 18 years of service. Groundbreaking for the South Avenue site began October 1954 and was dedicated in May 1955. An education wing was dedicated in May, 1959. On Reformation Sunday, October 1960, the Luther Wall was dedicated.

Education Building Ground Broken at Immanuel Lutheran Church



Dr. Maynard Kragthorpe served Immanuel from September 1969 to June 1972. Pr. Fred Ranlett was called and served from October 1973 until his death in June 1984. Building of the Hemgren Room began in 1984.



In 1952, Immanuel was able to lease property on the Clearwater River and build Camp Imlu. Over the years, a log lodge and a dorm were built. The site was used for retreats, outdoor ministries, vacation bible school, confirmation retreats and other outdoor ministry events. In 1993 the State of Montana increased the cost of the lease dramatically, eventually with the cost of the lease out of reach.

In 1999, Camp Imlu was sold with the proceeds going to start the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Fund.

Interim Pastor, Earl Anderson was at Immanuel six months. Pr. Paul Seastrand accepted a call to Immanuel and was here February 1985- July 1991. The stained glass windows in the Hemgren Room were installed in February 1985. Jan (Bendickson) Croisetiere, who was baptized and confirmed in Immanuel, created the stained glass windows in the Hemgren Room. Completion and installation of the etched windows displaying a variety of crosses dividing the sanctuary and Hemgren Room took place in December 1987.

In an effort to support Camp Imlu and Outdoor Ministry, the Lutefisk, Lefse, and Meatball Dinner was begun in 1988. Originally served family style, the dinner has evolved into a Scandinavian Smorgasbord that serves 350-400 people annually on a Saturday in February. Most every member of the congregation contributes to this annual event with time, talents, food, funds, and/or elbow grease.

Pastor Gregory B Karlsgodt was called in September 1991. An electronic Rogers organ replaced the pipe organ in 1993. In 1993, council established a Mission Endowment fund with the ELCA with funds from the estate of a benefactor. This Endowment Fund remained in effect until 1999 when a task force developed the Immanuel Evangelical

Lutheran Church Endowment Fund including the funds from the sale of Camp Imlu, gifts from a member as well as the funds from the previous Endowment fund.

In 1998, the Immanuel Preschool was established. The basement below the sanctuary was equipped to meet the needs of preschoolers from throughout the community.



In 1996, following a Stewardship drive, the Spirit Alive! Contemporary Service began and in October 1997 a Kurzweil digital piano was purchased. In 2001, the congregation approved funding to support an additional full-time staff member to serve in the areas of Worship and Music, Learning and Youth and Family.

Outreach Immanuel has a long history of making a difference in our community. In the early 1970's a \$3000 gift led to seed money to begin Council Groves project, Goodwill Industries and Boy's Foster Home (now Youth Homes). Several Immanuel members served on the boards of these organizations.

In the early 1960's Immanuel housed one of the first kindergarten classes in Missoula. Another outreach project was the sponsoring of five Vietnamese refugees in 1975. Immanuel, along with four other Lutheran churches sponsored a total of 38 Vietnamese and Laotian refugees.

Immanuel Lutheran Church celebrated its Centennial year starting in October 1997 and ending in October 1998. Various events were held beginning with a celebration honoring the founders of the church, a reunion of past confirmands, a Western Barbeque, a Centennial Style Show, and a Golf Tournament. The grand finale was attended by Bishop Mark Ramseth, past Pastor Maynard Kragthroe and many area Pastors.