

Immanuel's congregation has from the beginning of its existence provided for the spiritual training of children and adults. Within weeks of purchasing the original property, a school was formed. Today, members of all ages have many opportunities to study God's word.

In October 1874, Pastor Edward Wiegner started a **Christian Day School** on the first floor of the church/parsonage. Classes met five days a week for studies in religion, reading, writing and arithmetic. In the fall of 1884, a school was built for \$330 at the site of the current parsonage. The school was moved to south of the wooden church in 1890. The school was discontinued in 1906. The building was sold in 1924 and was moved to the east end of St. Ansgar and became a grocery store.

Saturday School was conducted by the pastor for the religious instruction of all children. There were a few attempts to start a Sunday School in 1892 and 1896.

**Sunday School** began in 1921 after discontinuing *Christenlehre* conducted during the regular Sunday morning worship. Pastor Paul Brammer was the superintendent and 50 children were enrolled. In 1946 there were 10 teachers and 80 students. In 1974 there were 12 teachers and 106 children enrolled. There were also two junior Bible classes and an adult Bible class that met during the Sunday school hour.

In 1946, a layman was chosen to serve as the Sunday School superintendent. Wilmer Rosel was the first to hold this office.

For many years Sunday School met in the church basement, where students gathered for opening and closing devotions led by the Sunday School superintendent. This included hymn singing. Classes were separated by curtains that hung on chains from the ceiling. Older students met in the kitchen, under the front steps, and in the mother's room (located where the stairs to the sanctuary are now).

In 1971, the 14-room education unit was built. It was dedicated on February 13, 1972.

All Sunday School children are included in a traditional Christmas Eve service with recitations and music.

Today, Sunday School gathers in the front of the church following the Sunday service for a short opening and song time before going to their classrooms for the lesson. The current enrollment is 51 students and 4 teachers. During the summer, All-Generations Sunday School meets with lessons taught by a different volunteer each week to the gathered group of students.

The high school Bible class met in the church balcony until the 1960's, when they gathered instead at the Art Janzow home. Following Confirmation, the confirmands' Bible class met at the August Janzow home with Adele Dieterich. The high schoolers currently meet in the youth room.

Adults met in the church following the Sunday service for Bible study until the 1960's, when Pastor Norman Betke started an Adult Bible class that gathered at the parsonage during the Sunday School hour. In 1972, the class moved to the meeting room (now the church library). Led by Pastor Squire, adults take a closer look at the scripture lesson used for the day's sermon.

**Confirmation** instruction began with the organization of the Immanuel congregation. The first Confirmation class was in 1876 following two years of instruction. 10 students were in the first class. After the parochial school closed, religious instruction was held all day Monday and Tuesday for the confirmands. Eventually, this changed to all day Friday and half day on Saturday. By the 1950s and 1960s, Confirmation was instead held after school on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. In 1966, instruction

switched to only Wednesday after school. From 1876–2024, Immanuel has confirmed 1,324 individuals, which includes both junior confirmands (ages 12–14) and adults. Class sizes have ranged from 1 to 25 individuals. Those wishing to be confirmed study the Holy Bible as well as Luther's Small Catechism. The 2024 class, confirmed by Pastor Mark Squire on Palm Sunday (March 24), had 10 members.

In 1928, Summer School began running for 4–6 weeks. Vacation Bible School was held for 2 weeks, mornings only, following the public school year. It changed to one week all day for a few years, and gradually dropped to one week of morning classes. VBS switched to one week during the evenings.

In the 1960s, classes were held in the basement of the church and at a few of classrooms at the school (now South Square). At the close of VBS, a special service was held, followed by a picnic. The picnic was replaced by 'Sundae Sunday.'

In the late 1920s, a men's social and study group began. A fellowship club in affiliation with Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) was active from 1951–1957. A new 'Men's Club' was formed in 1966. They continue meet the first Thursday of each month for Bible study and fellowship.

The Ladies Bible Study began in the early 1960s as a group of rural women who met to study a Bible lesson. Another group started in town until eventually the two groups combined. The group continues to meet on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 AM in the church library with pastor leading the discussion. Recent topics have included the Psalms, spiritual beings, Christian funerals and the honorable care of Christian bodies during and after death, and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

A Wednesday evening Bible study began meeting in 2019 and continues to meet each week at 7:00 PM. The class is studying Luther's Large Catechism.

Pastor William Janzow helped organize Immanuel's youth starting with a Young Ladies Society. Later this became the Young Peoples Society (Y.P.S.). In 1945, the name changed to Walther League. The high schoolers met monthly, conducted business meetings, studied, sang songs, and had other activities. They played shuffleboard, volleyball, went sledding and camping. Twice a year they met with other youth from the circuit for a rally and a retreat often held at the Methodist campground in Clear Lake. Our youth now belong to LYF (Lutheran Youth Fellowship.) They host the Easter Breakfast and join the Sunday School for the Christmas Eve service. Several have attended the national LCMS National Youth Gatherings, which are held every three years in rotating locations around the country.

Young and old alike have ample opportunities to study God's Word together and are also provided resources for individual and family devotions. Education in God's Word has and will always be a cornerstone of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church!





