

June 5th, 2024



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at ILM,

Saint Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 4: 17-18 that we will have trouble in this world, but that we should stay focused on what is unseen and eternal.

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

What a joy and a gift of God to know that what we share together as a people of God—Word, Sacrament, life, and salvation—are eternal. Presently, Immanuel Lutheran Ministries is dealing with issues related to things that are transient as a result storm damage. This letter is intended to bring you up to speed on the current situation and what is being done to resume normal church worship and programming at both campuses.

Many of you suffered damaged property as a result of the onslaught of storms during the month of May. Pastor Grayson has been intentional about asking members to let him and the church staff know if there are needs for which we can be of assistance. That still stands. If you need help, call us at 254-773-3898.

The severe storms on May 12 and May 22 caused extensive damage at both campuses. On May 12, both campuses sustained hail damage—as many of you did on your vehicles as the storm occurred during worship hours. The roof at the Temple campus will need to be replaced, but leaks appear to be manageable and will not disrupt normal use of the building. In Belton, the roof above the sanctuary was damaged more severely, and even with efforts to tarp the roof to prevent further damage, significant amounts of water continue to enter the building, causing water literally to drip from the ceiling, windows, and light fixtures and pool on the floor. On Wednesday, May 29, after yet another rain event, much more water was discovered. We called out roofers and water damage experts who advised us against using the air conditioning to avoid the possible spreading of mold. It was then that church leadership made the difficult decision not to hold worship services in Belton on June 2.

On Monday, June 3 and Tuesday June 4th, more assessments of the Belton campus roof and subsequent water damage was done by our roofing contractor, a commercial restoration individual, a license mold inspector, and a crisis management company. This situation is challenging. The solution is not simply to quickly install a new roof. We must first address water damage that has occurred and then work with our contractors to address both internal water damage as well as the roof itself. Moisture is still present in the ceiling and walls, creating an environment for mold development. **Therefore, we do not believe it is prudent to have services at the Belton campus again on June 9.** Once we have a plan and a timeline for repairs, we will be able to address how we handle worship services in Belton going forward.

To our Belton worshipers, we do not take this decision lightly. We commit to resolving this situation quickly, but we ask also for your patience as the Board of Directors and church staff navigate a complex repair process. Please join your fellow ILM members at the Temple Campus for worship and Bible study on June 9. (Bible study @ 9:15, service times at 8:00a.m. and 10:30a.m.)

Even while we face the challenges presented by the recent storms, we do not plan to delay the special called Voters Assembly meeting coming up on Monday, June 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Temple campus. At that meeting you as a congregation will have the chance to vote on a recommendation from the Board of Directors regarding the future of pastoral ministry at ILM. If you have not yet reviewed the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) informational and FAQ document, you may access it on our website, on our phone app, or you may pick up a packet during worship this weekend.

Pastor Grayson's sermon this past week highlighted the fact that we believe in a Theology of the Cross. That means we understand that trials and tribulations are part of our sojourn in this life, knowing that God uses suffering to draw us closer to him. As Paul teaches us, we know transient problems will beset us in this life, but our focus remains on the eternal. Let us draw closer to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ while we navigate these waters together. I am optimistic, even excited about the future that God has planned for us here in Bell County!

With you in Christ,

Darrell Becker
President
Immanuel Lutheran Ministries