

***Eighteenth Sunday
after Pentecost
September 27, 2026***



Immanuel Lutheran Church

a Reconciling in Christ congregation

346 Shrewsbury Street

Holden, Massachusetts 01520

(508) 829-4416

www.immanuelholden.org

facebook.com/immanuelholden

instagram.com/ilcholden

*our purpose is to gather people, nurture faith,
grow in God's love, and serve God's world*

Welcome to Immanuel!

We're thankful you're with us this morning! Throughout worship we'll use the red hymnal located on the back of the pew in front of you. Page numbers can be found towards the front of the hymnal at the bottom of the page, with hymns towards the back, beginning with the Psalms. Hearing assist devices are also available – just ask an usher for help.

We believe that the Gospel – the Good News that we are loved, forgiven, and free in Christ – is a gift offered to every person, and that God's grace has no limits or conditions. Through Christ, we are made a community that shares God's mission to proclaim grace and peace to all the world.

Prelude

Gathering

*The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week,
the day of Christ's resurrection.*

stand

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

sit

Children's Chat

Marie Vogel

(young worshipers through grade 5 are invited to Children's Word)

Celebration Song

For Everyone Born

B.Mann

(during this song, children will help bring donated food to the front)

Refrain: and God will delight when we are creators of justice
and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy! (*see last page for music*)

Greeting and Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

sit

Word

God speaks to us in scriptures read, sung and preached.

First Reading

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. ²⁵Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Philippians 2:1-13

¹If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

stand

Gospel Acclamation

p. 142

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 21:23-32

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?'" ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

sit

Sermon

Pastor John Nieman

stand

Hymn of the Day *Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways* Hymn 772

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

Hear us, O God,

Your mercy is great.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

sit

Offertory Music *The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing* G. Kendrick

stand

Offertory Canticle *We Plow the Fields and Scatter* Hymn 681

We thank you, our creator, for all things bright and good,

The seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food.

No gifts have we to offer for all your love imparts,

but what you most would treasure—our humble, thankful hearts.

All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above.

We thank you, Lord, we thank you, Lord, for all your love.

Offering Prayer

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.

All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use

our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ, who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus

p. 144

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of pow'r and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our

Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

sit

All people are invited to receive communion today by coming forward to the front of the sanctuary. First, you'll receive bread, which is the body of Christ given for you. Then move to the next station, where you will find glass cups full of grape juice (lighter-colored) and wine (purple-colored), which is the blood of Christ shed for you. At the last station, return your empty cup to the tray. Gluten-free wafers are also available; to indicate you'd like to receive one, please simply raise your pointer finger when it's your turn to receive.

Lamb of God

p. 146

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Communion Hymns

O Master, Let Me Walk with You

Hymn 818

Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am

Hymn 814

Prayer after Communion

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Announcements

stand

Blessing

The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

Hymn 712

Dismissal

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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Immanuel Lutheran Church

Ministers – the people of Immanuel

Pastors – Pastor Sarah Barnes

203-518-0327 | pastor.sarah@immanuelholden.org

Pastor Josh Ferris

360-244-9207 | pastor.josh@immanuelholden.org

Parish Admin & Online Ministry Coordinator – Jen Greene (M-Th)

508-829-4416 | office@immanuelholden.org

Music Director – Claire W. Paquette | music@immanuelholden.org

Nursery School Directors – Amy Drzik, Kristine Whittemore

Gym Coordinator – Walter Shanahan | gym@immanuelholden.org

Sexton – Don Roberts

We're thankful for these servants in worship today:

Livestream – Josh Greene, Molly McArthur

Assisting Minister – Sheri Parretti

Ushers – Craig Landquist, Jim Anderson

Greeter – Emilia Greene

Acolyte – James Dellecese

Children's Word – Jen Greene & Kaylie Harrington

Coffee Hour Host – Mary Jane & Bill Rasku

Altar Service – Mary Jane Rasku, Heidi Lahey

Counting Team – Josh Greene, Barry Dellecese

Worship, Service, and Fellowship in the week ahead:

Today	8:00 am	Simple Church (Outdoor Chapel/Choir Room)
	9:00 am	Indoor & Livestream worship (Sanctuary)
	10:15 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	3:00 pm	Synod Ordination Service (Sanctuary)
Monday	9:00 am	Lectio Divina (Zoom)
Wednesday	7:00 pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
Thursday	10:30 am	Thursday Morning Bible Study (on Zoom)
Sunday	8:00 am	Simple Church (Outdoor Chapel/Choir Room)
	9:00 am	Indoor & Livestream worship (Sanctuary)
	10:15 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	5:00 pm	Confirmation Dinner (Gym)

Daily Bible Readings for the Coming Week:

Monday:	Psalm 133, Genesis 48:8-22, Hebrews 11:23-29
Tuesday:	Psalm 133, Genesis 49:29-50:14, Romans 14:13-15:2
Wednesday:	Psalm 133, Genesis 50:22-26, Mark 11:20-25
Thursday:	Psalm 145:1-8, Nahum 1:1-2:2, 2 Corinthians 13:1-4
Friday:	Psalm 145:1-8, Nahum 2:3-13, 2 Corinthians 13:5-10
Saturday:	Psalm 145:1-8, Zephaniah 2:13-15, Matthew 19:23-30
Sunday:	Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:7-15, Philippians 3:4b-14, Matthew 21:33-46

Welcome to Immanuel

Thanks for joining us in worship today! Wherever you are, we're glad to have you with us. Remember you can reach out to the church office anytime if you need help, prayer, or someone to talk to.

Coffee Hour – All are welcome to coffee hour in the gym following today's worship. We thank Mary Jane & Bill Rasku for hosting today!

Altar flowers – The flowers on the altar this morning are given to the glory of God. NOTE: *If you would like to sign up for Sunday flowers, see the flower chart in Lawson Hall.*

Children's Word – Children age 3 to grade 5 are invited to go with our trained volunteers after the Children's Chat to worship in kid-friendly ways, returning in time for communion.

September Food Drive – We're collecting non-perishable food items for food pantries located at First Baptist and First Congregational Church in Holden as part of worship this September. This is the last week we are collecting!

Adult Forum – On Sunday, October 4, Brooke Sulahain from Hope for Our Sisters will share the work that this organization is doing and ways you can get involved. Grab your coffee hour treats and join us in Room 6. If you would like to lead an Adult Forum conversation one week, reach out to Pastor Sarah. There is still some room on the Fall schedule.

Faith Quest – Starting Sunday, October 4, readers are invited to explore scripture in fun ways! With videos, skits, crafts, reading aloud and conversation, our bigger kids will dive into twelve stories from the Old Testament this fall! Go to room 5 when you hear the bell!

Godly Play – Also starting Sunday, October 4, our littlest learners (toddlers and pre-readers) are invited to join us in classroom 2 as we learn through story and play!

John Street – Thank you to all who donated and help package lunches! We are serving again in November.

Generosity Sunday – Join us in worship on October 11 for Generosity Sunday! We'll fill out new *Servant Connect* forms and talk about all the ways God feeds us and we work to feed others. 'Estimate of Giving' cards were sent out to all members of our church this week. Please return them in worship or to the office by October 11. You can also submit them online! Just scan the QR code here.



Monday Night Bible Study – The Monday Night Bible Study group will gather on October 5 at 6:30pm in Room 6. And as usual, all are welcome!

Spirituality for the Home Stretch – Join our senior spirituality group on Tuesday, October 6 in the choir room. We'll discuss chapters 9 and 10 of *Looking for God*. New members welcome!

Senior Luncheon – Join us on Thursday, October 8 at noon for a fall senior luncheon! Cost will be \$10 a person. The sign-up sheet is in Lawson Hall or you can call the church office. See Jen Greene with questions.

Lectio Divina – Join us on Monday mornings from 9:00–9:30am on Zoom. Lectio Divina is the practice of reading scripture as a form of prayer. (Meeting ID: 814 8663 8380 Passcode: scripture)

Thursday Morning Bible Study –We'll gather every week at 10:30am on Zoom to discuss the book of Romans. Whether you could teach a course on the book or have never heard of it before, you're invited to join us! <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84825798597>.

Prayer & Share – We'll gather again on Saturday, October 10 at 10:00a in the Choir Room. Please bring your bible. Join us!

Confirmation News – For new and returning students, confirmation classes return on Wed., Oct. 15! We will meet in room 6, 7:00-8:30pm.

Book Club – Join us on Thurs., October 22 at 6:00pm to discuss *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi.

CROP Hunger Walk - This year's walk will be on October 18th. Immanuel joins with several area churches to walk and together raise money to support Church World Services in their mission to STOP HUNGER. We also contribute 25% of the total for local food pantries in Holden and Worcester. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 total this year. ALL are welcome & encouraged to participate. Please consider joining us in any way possible.



Positivity Pouches – Have you shared some positivity with our Youth Group recently? Drop a note of encouragement or some kind words in their pouches in Lawson Hall! Cards and small gifts encouraged!

Homeless kits – You can grab a homeless kit – and small bags of period products – from Lawson Hall for you to hand out to someone in need.

Communion Kits – Personal kits are available in the locker outside Lawson Hall. Each kit contains a pre-packaged wafer and grape juice.

Stephen Ministry – Stephen Ministers are trained to provide one-to-one, confidential care to those experiencing a difficult time. Please let one of the pastors know if you'd like to connect with one.

We are currently collecting:

Period Products – Unscented pads and tampons, individually wrapped, of all sizes and brands, handed out at Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.

Greeting Cards – New greeting cards of all kinds (except Christmas), which are given to Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.

Bras – Bras in good condition of any size, color, or style, which will be given to veterans in need. Contact Mary Donev (mary@donev.com).

Wachusett Food Pantry – Non-perishable, unexpired food items for the Wachusett Food Pantry (serving all Wachusett Towns).

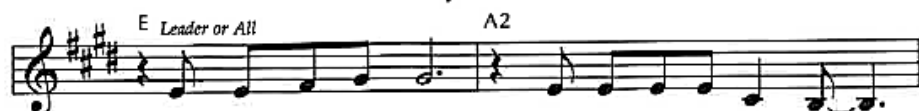
Little Library – book donations for any age welcome!

In Your Prayers this Week

Adrienne Altobelli, David Alward, Bruce & Janet Axelson, Isaac Barron, David Beams, Mary Beams, Bob, Heidi Besse, Tina Bodnar, Lucy & Tom Brennan, Bonnie Colon, Colleen Davison, Lauren Demerjian, Christina Deyo, Lina Dickey, Kim, Kevin Duguay, Tom Durant, Jim Eisenlord, Alan Farmer, Tim Fournier, Linda Friedman, Sonja Githmark, Ann Marie Grambo, Victoria Graves, Dolores Hadady, Bill Higgins, Erika, Rich Hopkins, Robin Johns, Dick Johnson, Jan Johnson, Carol Jorgensen, Ray Langevin, Jean Lane, Cristie Marsh, Family of Alwin Masselink, James Mellor, Darin Narum, Joanne Neal, , Don Phaneuf, Shirley, Kay Porter, Jeff, Wylla Rabeler, Rich Reynolds, Ray Rossetti, Shirley Rotti, Arthur Savage, Anita Slater, Marshall Smith, Tony, Elaine Vetter, George Vogel, Scott, Liz Wilson, Jim & Nancy Zelesky, and Jill Zitzewitz.

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For Everyone Born



1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,

3 For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble,

5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,



for ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread,

a voice to be heard, a part in the song,

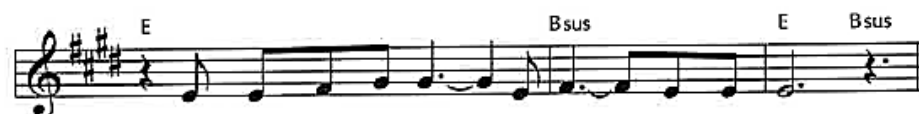
to live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be,



a shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing,

the hands of a child in hands that are wrin - kled,

to work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship,



for ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,

for young and for old, the right to be - long,

for ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,

JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

Refrain

and God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and

joy, com-pas - sion and peace: yes,

God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice,

jus-tice and joy!

Chord symbols: B, A//, E, E/G#, A2, Bsus, B, E, E/G#, A2, Bsus, B, C#m, C#m/B, A2, Bsus, B, (E), Fine, A2, E, Bsus, B.



During September, Immanuel's Council is highlighting the many feeding ministries of our church. We thank you for your continued support of, and participation in, these ministries. To learn more about them, or to get involved, contact the coordinators.

Garden of Feedin': garden behind the church growing vegetables, brought to the Wachusett Food Pantry/Worcester County Food Bank as they are harvested.

Molly McArthur mollyndamcarthur@gmail.com
Kristin Carnevale kristinsundberg7@yahoo.com

John Street Baptist Church Soup Kitchen: ILC provides 150 brown bag lunches to this soup kitchen Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sept, Nov.

Kaylie Harrington kayliesenecal14@gmail.com
Ron Rosenlund RonRosenlund@yahoo.com

Dismas Farm: halfway house in Oakham, MA where we provide & serve a meal months with a 5th Thursday (usually 5x / year).

Heidi Lahey heidilahey@gmail.com
Deb Sillo sgdsillo@gmail.com
Jed Lindholm jlindholm@hrp2.com

Kids Express: youth ministry of Concordia Lutheran Church in Worcester, where we provide a meal a few times a year and have the chance to eat with folks there.

Brian Welch brian.w.welch@gmail.com

Meal Packaging Event: annual event hosted at Immanuel where we package meals (10-15,000) to distribute locally and globally.

Molly McArthur mollyndamcarthur@gmail.com
Jill Zitzewitz jill.zitzewitz@gmail.com

CROP Walk: annual community walk in October to raise funds for CWS hunger relief globally and 25% of funds support local food pantries.

Kathy Mills gkmills@charter.net
Diana Provencher DijePro@charter.net

Wachusett Food Pantry:

Fran Philblade rjpfmp@philblade.com

Holden Food Pantries (Holden First Baptist & First Congregational)

Pastor Josh pastor.josh@immanuelholden.org

Meals / Food for Church Members: members volunteer to provide a meal or groceries to another member in need.

Jen Greene office@immanuelholden.org