

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wadena is excited to announce a groundbreaking model of ministry that we believe has HUGE potential to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and our relationships with one another.

We are excited to introduce Immanuel House Church (IHC) and invite you to participate in this biblically grounded model of discipleship. The concept of House Church isn't a new idea. It's as old as the church itself, when early followers of Christ would gather in one another's home for prayer, fellowship, and Holy Communion. Immanuel House Church envisions Immanuelites forming groups of 2-4 households, which will become our spiritual life hub for the next nine months.

We are hopeful that later this summer we can resume public gatherings of worship in our sanctuary. These gatherings will be very different than we're used to. They will need to be limited to approximately 50 people; we won't be able to sing together, shake hands or hug; and masks will be required. We also expect that we'll need to limit your frequency of in-person gathering to make sure we have room for everyone.

House Churches will make it possible for regular, safe, faith-filled gatherings of friends and neighbors, where God's Word and Holy Communion can be shared many, many times over the next months.

What does Immanuel House Church look like?

We know that every House Church will be as different as the people who form them. We are committed to helping you be the church no matter what your House Church looks like.

Typically, House Churches will gather once a month for prayer, confession and forgiveness, and to share communion together. You may also choose to listen to a recent sermon podcast or brainstorm a service project. We'll keep you supplied with lots of ideas and many resources to choose from.

Gatherings can take place in a variety of locations: one another's homes, patios, garages, or perhaps even at a local park. Some house churches will even gather online using Zoom.

Everyone who participates in IHC will have an opportunity to gather in the sanctuary every 4-6 weeks for worship. We're also exploring the possibility of occasional drive-up services. During these larger worship gatherings, we will pray a blessing on your House Church, and send you home with communion supplies and printed resources for your Worship time together.

We also hope that IHC participants who are able will volunteer approximately one time a month, with one of our five safety teams, to help ensure that those who gather in our sanctuary are able to do so safely.

I'm ready to be part of IHC! How do I get started?

Begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you in organizing your House Church.

Next, think about which households you would feel the most comfortable sharing this experience with for the next nine months. It's a short commitment - but one you will want to be comfortable with! Start by exploring families, neighbors or friends you and/or your children already spend time with at school, work, or play. You might also consider inviting a neighbor who doesn't have a church home to join you, too!

The size of your House Church is up to you. It could be as small as two people or as many as fifteen or twenty. House Churches with members at higher risk (Older than 65, younger than 5, underlying health conditions) should consider forming smaller groups.

What's the timeline for organizing our House Church?

Although we plan to form House Churches throughout the next nine months, we'd like to get started as soon as possible. We hope that by the end of July, we have enough House Churches launched to begin in-person worship! So, get started today!!

Once you've formed the start of your House Church, identify at least one person who is comfortable leading prayers, the creed, brief spiritual discussion, and distributing Holy Communion. It's possible you will have several in your group willing to do this. Alternating this role may be an option for your House Church.

When you've got the start of your group, contact Pastor Megan (mclapp@wadenaimmanuel.org 651-600-8357) with the details of your group. She will make sure you have all the information and resources you need to get started with Immanuel House Church!

What about the radio broadcast and YouTube?

We will continue to offer our weekly radio broadcast (9:30am on KWAD 920AM) and regular content on YouTube. So, if you're not quite ready to be part of a House Church, that's OK! Regardless of how you choose to participate in worship, we would like to find a way for you to receive communion every 4-6 weeks. Contact Pastor Nate (nloer@wadenaimmanuel.org 218-640-5913) to add your name to our home communion list.

I have questions, where can I find more information?

As always, contact Pastor Nate (nloer@wadenaimmanuel.org)

Pastor Megan (mclapp@wadenaimmuel.org)

or Jil (jfiemeyer@wadenaimmanuel.org) for more information.

Amidst all the fear, grief and sorrow the pandemic is creating, this moment may also give rise to exciting opportunities for faith growth and new leadership within our congregation. We believe Immanuel House Church will open new forms of Christian community as we live out our faith together as God's people.