ILHS

THE TROJAN TIMES

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*Banquet 2026 was a joyful celebration. We were able to give thanks to God and honor our Senior Class!*

A student publication of Mankato's Lutheran High School.

# NEWS & EVENTS



## Banquet 2026

This year's Banquet was a bit different compared to what most of us are used to. The big difference this year was that it was moved to the school basement instead of the gymnasium. Being such a small class, this was ultimately the Juniors' decision this year, the idea of decorating a whole gym and spending months doing so, did not sound too appealing to us. And we honestly just returned banquet to its original state, because before it was in the gym, they had it in the basement. Except, I may be able to argue that it looked a bit nicer than those days, due to our recent basement renovation project, which has included painting all the walls a nice neutral color and getting uniformly colored curtains that we were able to put beautiful curtain lights on! The theme for this year's banquet was "Our Calling as Christians". Our skit was called “Paper or Plastic” and it showed a young girl, Sarah, starting her first job and having many troubles, even to the point of wanting to give up. But she was reminded that she may be called to do hard things at times. This can be applied to all of us throughout our lives, as we remember that our calling as Christians may not always be easy, and that we will have hardships, but that we have God to lean on during these times, and we know that He always has a plan for us!

Overall, this year's Banquet was a big success, and I have heard so much positive feedback. I look forward to seeing how next year's Juniors decide to plan it all out!

*By: Heidi Dick*













## Senior Class Trip

The Senior Class of 2026 went on their Class Trip on April 18th through the 20th. They rented a van and left Immanuel and headed to Rapid City, SD. They spent the evening visiting a waterpark and exploring the area around their hotel. The next morning, they visited the sister congregation of Immanuel, Good Shepherd Lutheran, and worshiped with our brothers and sisters in Christ there.

Then they made a quick pit stop at Walmart and kept driving, arriving late at their VRBO in Teton Village, Wyoming. Some Seniors saw Mt. Rushmore for the first time on this drive.

The day after their arrival, they had breakfast and decided to hike to Phelps Lake. Their hike took them five and a half hours, traveling roughly a distance of 8.75 miles. They saw birds, moose, and other animals. Then they played pool and foosball, among other activities at the VRBO.

The rest of the week was spent exploring Jackson Hole. The Seniors stopped at a natural hot springs, saw sheep, and explored a Fish Hatchery, The Grand Teton Vistor’s Center, and the town of Jackson. In Jackson, they frequented a grocery store called Albertson’s, took Old Western Photographs, browsed a knife store, and tried huckleberry ice cream, the best dessert in Wyoming according to Food Network, at Moo’s Gourmet Ice cream.

The highlights of many of the Senior’s trip were “the hot tub,” “monopoly,” “the hiking,” “the hotspring,” and “ice cream.” Praise God for keeping the Seniors' safe on their class trip and blessing them with many final memories of high school!

*By: Rebecca Heinze*

# YOUTH GROUP

Immanuel Lutheran Church's Youth Group is a rebranding of the previous group called Ambassadors. Youth Group is a Bible study group that our church secretary, Mrs.  Hilary Lien has revamped for the high schoolers of Immanuel (and others!) to attend. We get together once a month for Bible studies with a variety of topics, and occasionally character studies. It also includes fun fellowship activities. Some of our recent activities have included a sunrise viewing, movie nights, kickball games, going out for coffee, prayer sessions, getting ice cream and visiting a pumpkin patch etc.  The Youth Group is also trying to do more acts of service for our church and school community, our first event that Youth Group hosted was “Muffins with Mom”, on Mother's Day where we  set up, served, and cleaned up afterwards.

Summer is coming up quickly, and during the summer Youth group will be  held every two weeks! This is an amazing opportunity to stay steadfast in God’s word over the few months when you will not have daily chapels and religion classes. Overall, it is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen yourself spiritually and is also great for fellowship with your fellow Christian peers.  I strongly encourage EVERY highschooler, and upcoming highschoolers, to attend as many Youth Group events as possible over this summer! Check out the church calendar for dates and keep an eye on the church bulletin boards for fliers with details for these events and studies.

*By: Heidi Dick*

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## Graduation Open House

**Mark Mayhew**
Saturday, May 16
11:00am-1:30pm
215 James Avenue
Mankato, MN

**Cade Libby**
Saturday, May 16
12:30-4:00pm
136 Waynesborough Way
Mankato, MN

**William Lien**
Saturday, May 16
1:00-4:00pm
1969 Valley View Dr.
North Mankato, MN

**Austin Hart**
Sunday, May 17
5:00-7:00pm
106 Red Oak Dr
Mankato, MN

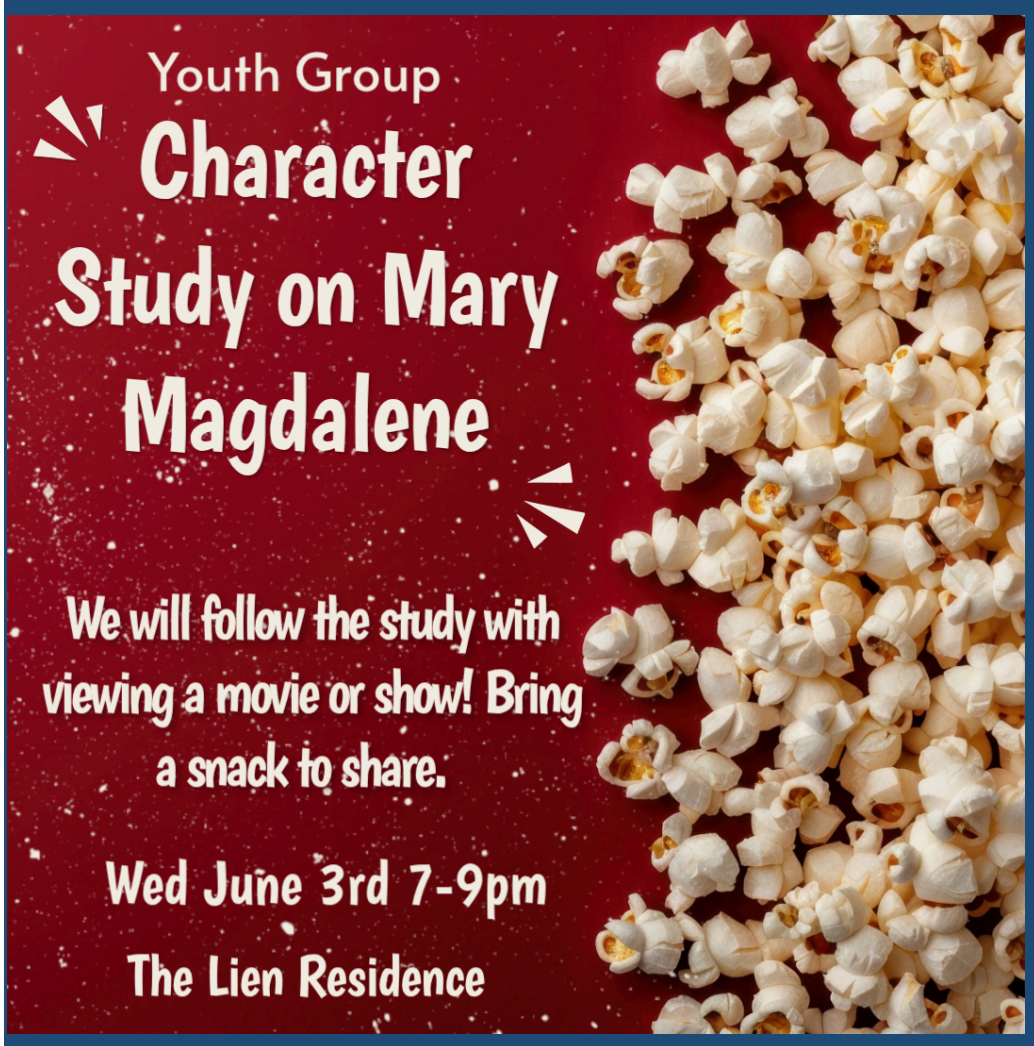
**Leah Dick**
Sunday, May 17
12:00-3:00pm
24062 577th Lane
Mankato, MN

**William Lien**
Saturday, May 23
9:00am-12:00pm
720 S. Ridgely Street
Kasota, MN

**Rebecca Heinze**
Saturday, May 23
5:00-8:00pm; campfire to follow
60352 230th St.
Madison Lake, MN

**Gaius Hensely**
Saturday, June 27th
4:00m-9:00pm
201 N Riverfront Dr
Mankato MN, 56001

# Student Spotlight










Want your flyer or ad in the Trojan Times? Ask the ILHS Newspaper Club for more information!

## Senior Spotlight- Gaius Hensley

As the School year is coming to an end and the Class of 2026 prepares for the next chapter in their lives, we should look to recognise all of the seniors. This month we are honoring our senior, Gaius Hensley. I asked him what his plans are for after high school, and he said that, *"After graduation, I plan to either go to college or start working toward a career that gives me stability and growth. I want to build a future where I'm independent and able to support myself."* When asked who he admires most, Gaius pointed to his mother, describing her as the hardest-working person he knows. Her influence has made a great impact on his own life. He explains, *"She's taught me that discipline matters more than motivation, and that you don't quit just because things get hard."*



Gaius told me he is proud as he reflects over his time here at Immanuel because, *"There were times it would've been easy to fall behind, but I kept going and improved over time."* One lesson Gaius believes he learned in his time spent here is perseverance. Admitting that his experience at Immanuel has been unique because he's had to *"figure a lot out on his own,"* he believes this forced independence has been his biggest area of growth. He told me that he has grown into a more independent person who has gotten better at handling stress and speaking up rather than staying quiet. Gaius's consistent effort applies to his academic life, when talking about his major strengths he notes his ability to focus. However, he acknowledges that he battles procrastination and overthinking. Yet, when his classes included project-based learning, he thrived. *"I liked being able to connect ideas and come up with my own conclusions,"* he says *"It made school feel more real and less like just doing assignments for a grade."* For underclassmen, he leaves us with a piece of advice that he had gathered through the years spent here. He advises us *"Don't waste time thinking you'll 'start later.' Later comes faster than you think."* This is great advice not only for your academic life but throughout your entire life.

God be with you as you walk into this new chapter in your life!

*By: Lucy Stratton*

# Senior Spotlight



## Austin Hart

One of the Seniors for the month of May is Austin Hart. Austin has attended Immanuel Lutheran for six years. I asked Austin what his future plan is, what he wants to pursue, and if he has any long-term goals.

He said, *"I want to major in mathematics with a minor in either software engineering, data science, or business finance. "*

Austin told me, *"Something that made my high school experience unique was the fun class dynamic."* He also explained that some of his hobbies outside of school include skiing, fishing, and hide- and -seek. I then asked what was one thing he learned about himself. He said, *"I refined some of my interests."*

*By: Norah Wakefield*




## Kaden Kruse

One of our senior spotlights for the month of May is Kaden Kruse. Kaden has been attending Immanuel since kindergarten and has participated in basketball, baseball, football, and soccer all in the duration of his time enrolled at Immanuel.

Baseball & football were possible because of our co-op relationships with Loyola & MVL. Sports have meant a lot to Kaden. He has discovered in himself that he has a lot of grit and the ability to play through injuries and the like.

Some of the most influential people he interacted with during high school were his coaches, Mr. Sherman Carstensen, Mr. Jay Hanel, Mr. Mark Matzke, Mr. Sam Carlson, and Mr. Tim O'Mally.

Outside of school & his wide gerth of extra curriculars he enjoys hunting, target shooting, working with cars, and fishing.

Kaden plans to attend Minnesota State University, Mankato in the fall to pursue automotive engineering. A long term goal of his is to be able to work with his classmate Daniel Priebe once Daniel achieves his own goal of racing. Kaden expressed his excitement for being able to build and test cars for Daniel.

Looking back over the course of the last four years it feels only natural to learn and grow in maturity and understanding. When I asked him what advice Kaden would give to his freshman self, he would tell him to *"Work on injury prevention in sports, and to try football sooner."*

His outgoing message he leaves with us remaining at ILHS is to *"Work hard, but have fun and take breaks every now and then."*

You will be very missed, Kaden, and we are excited to see what God has planned for your future!
*By: Colleen Olmanson*

# Senior Class Photos











