

"...they will call him
Immanuel"
— which means,
"God with us."



Matthew 1:23

The Manger

December 2009

The monthly newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church ELCA

From Pr. Rick's Computer: Advent/Christmas

Our Christian faith believes that human history is God-filled. Over the eons, God began to make promises that he would send a *Messiah*. It is a hope embedded deep within human hearts. Moses prophesied (ca. 1300 B. C.) that God would send one who was greater than he. Nathan prophesied to David, "God will build you a house (or dynasty) and kingdom forever. (2 Samuel 7). We live knowing the promise and nurturing the hope for our world as people of faith.

Advent/Christmas draws us into a time of prophecy fulfilled and prophecy yet-to-be fulfilled. We believe the birth of Jesus fulfills the Messianic prophecies. Jesus is God's Messiah and Savior. He brings the "New Covenant" promised by Jeremiah (ca. 590 B. C.). To celebrate Christmas means to live with God who keeps his Word. Christ has come. Prophecies have come to pass.

At the same time, we long for fulfillment. The prophecies promise a world united under the rule of the Messiah. We call this the *kingdom of God*. This year the weariness and tolls of the wars reveal the depth of our longing for a world of peace (*shalom*). Advent prepares us for this. This year our concern for employment feeds our yearning for a society where all are included in meaningful life. This, also, is Biblical shalom.

In the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22, we read "Behold, I am coming soon!" The Church responds with prayer, simply and powerfully, "Come."

"**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**" is the Advent prayer. We pray it each day in our homes before meals, upon rising and at bedtime. We pray it in worship. We pray it in faith because the Christ has come at Christmas.

Jesus will come! Will you? Will you come? I mean this. I am especially asking you members who do not come to the Communion table regularly. Will you come?

The world needs your prayers. The mission at Immanuel needs you. You need spiritual renewal and growth, whether you are conscious of it or not. I would bet that a brief reflection would reveal a hunger for a more passionate walk with God (spirituality, transcendence). Jesus is coming. The Church is supposed to pray for this prophecy to be fulfilled. We do.

Let's join, home and church, in prayer this Advent/Christmas season.

Pastor Rick

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Staff:

Rick McKenzie, Pastor
Denise Lund,
Office Administrator
Sue Schnarr,
Director of Education
Lyn Danes,
Director of Kid's Hope
Ellen McKenzie, Choir Director
Jim Espie, Organist
Carmen Karkau, Organist
Jim & Kristin Crooks,
Maintenance
Carol Espie, Maintenance

Team Leaders:

Bill DeWitt, Gathering
Sue Schnarr, Preparing
Den Graeber, Serving
John Van Hoesen, Support

Immanuel Lutheran Church
501 S. Clinton Street
Grand Ledge MI 48837
Phone: (517)627-6310
Website: immanuel-gl.org
E-mail: dlund@immanuel-gl.org
Sunday Worship Services:
8:00 am & 10:30 am
Sunday School:
9:30 am

HOLIDAY EVENTS

Celebration Dinner & Hanging of the Greens
Sunday, December 6

following the 10:30 service

Our celebration dinner will feature:
roasted pig, turkey and stuffing.

Guest are asked to bring side dishes and
desserts to share

Bring your own table service!

After dinner we will be decorating the Christmas
trees and going caroling.

LIVE NATIVITY RETURNS!

For the 4th year, Immanuel Lutheran will bring
back the Live Nativity on December 19 and 20
from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. The drama team will begin
sign ups after each service beginning in December.

This year we are making this a community-wide
event by inviting the churches of Grand Ledge to
participate. We will need cookies, parking lot
attendants, greeters to serve the hot chocolate
and cookies, people to sing in the choir and actors
to be shepherds! Please consider making this one
of your family's Christmas traditions and sign up to
be a part of the "Live Nativity."



**Luther League II
Annual Christmas /White Elephant
Gift Exchange/ Luncheon
Monday, December 14, 2009**

11:30 am Bennigan's Restaurant

Come and bring your white elephant gift wrapped
and enjoy a time of fellowship and fun.

Call Tom & Elaine Mattson (627-9670) or George
& Annette Ryan (627-9511)

if you have questions or need to car pool.

All seniors welcomed!

The Sunday School
Christmas Program

December 13 during
10:30 worship service.

Nursery through
high school students
will be participating.



ADDITIONAL FORUMS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMER 16

The Church Council has requested 2 more
public forums concerning the ELCA's Church-
wide Assembly vote so that more members will
have an opportunity to talk and pray. At these
meetings, we will attempt to 1) understand the
resolutions, 2) their implications for Immanuel
and 3) options open to us, plus 4) pray together
as church members.

Pastor will hold forums on Wednesday,
December 16: one at 3:00 p.m., the other at 7:00
p.m. Please meet in Pastor's classroom off the
Narthex. Materials will be given to attendees. All
confirmed members and guests are welcome.

IMMANUEL TRADITIONS

Traditions and rituals assist us in receiving the Advent of Christ. You have them in your home. We have them at our church home.

DECEMBER 6: COMMITMENT SUNDAY AND HANGING OF THE GREENS

8:00 am & 10:30 am Holy Communion

In church we offer our pledges for 2010 from Linked Up With Christ.

12:00 pm CELEBRATION POTLUCK

After church we celebrate with a pig roast potluck. We roast the pig, turkey and providing the stuffing. You bring the rest. Remember to bring your own table service so we don't have to purchase and recycle.

1:00 pm HANGING OF THE GREENS

Then we work together to decorate our home for Christmas. Christmas trees and Christmas tree, Nativity Scene and other decorations go up. Some may even go Christmas caroling to homebound members. Please come for one or two or all three.

Please bring a friend. It's a tradition.

DECEMBER 19 & 20: LIVE NATIVITY

7 – 8 p.m. Members of the church present the Christmas story outside with farm animals in attendance. Hot chocolate and cookies are served inside. We speak to our guests and invite them to church.

Please bring a friend. It's a tradition.

DECEMBER 24: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:00 pm FAMILY SERVICE OF COMMUNION

Children read the parts. The Nativity Scene is blessed. Children's Sermon only. A simple Eucharist is celebrated.

7:30 pm SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Our Immanuel version of this traditional service. This service is an outreach to the community.

Pre-service music. Choir sings. Other soloists, too. Candles are lit.

11:00 pm MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

A quieter celebration of Christmas with sermon and Eucharist. Candles are lit.



Please bring a friend. It's a tradition.

DECEMBER 31: NEW YEARS EVE

4:00 Holy Communion

A brief, spoken service of Confession & Absolution, Reflection and Communion. Please bring a friend. This is our 2nd year. Is it an Immanuel tradition yet?

NOTICE: All individuals or groups wishing to sing or play on Christmas Eve, please contact Pastor Rick (627-6310 or rmckenzie@immanuel-gl.org) by December 13. This can be for any service.

Living Immanuel Lutheran's Vision and Passionate Spirituality NCD Action Team Update

The NCD Action Team consists of Den Graeber, Orv and Lynne Erickson, Linn and Cindy Smith and Ellen Baribeau. This group has volunteered to take the Natural Church Development (NCD) process forward and offer church members opportunities to grow spiritually, both personally and within the church.

For the next few months, the NCD Action team will be focusing on ways to live Immanuel Lutheran's vision with passionate spirituality. Our vision "To be a welcoming SPIRITUAL community that NURTURES an intimate relationship in our daily walk with Jesus and INVITES PARTICIPATION through sharing our spiritual gifts TO THE GLORY OF GOD" already speaks volumes of passionate spirituality. Now, how do we put that into action? That is what our NCD Action Team will help us do.

Many people have asked, what is passionate spirituality? It is simply growing in your own personal relationship with God and relationship within the church and experiencing your faith daily and feeling God's presence growing in every part of your life. It is the Spirit of God alive in us in love and peace and joy.

To grow in a spiritual life, an individual may need to know what their spiritual gifts are. What is your spiritual gift? What is your special talent or ability that God blessed you with? Is it singing in the choir, or greeting visitors and members at church services, maybe it is praying for someone who is ill or in pain, or a gift of money to someone in need or maybe sharing your love of God with others?

To get to the heart of your gift, the NCD Action Team will be offering a survey that will help identify and create the opportunity to expand your spiritual gifts. The action team is also putting together a list of opportunities in the church and community where members can volunteer or be part of.

Please watch the January newsletter for information on the survey and all the opportunities available to you. Feel free to contact any of the NCD Action Team with any questions.

From The Healing Prayer Ministry

Thanksgiving is upon us and Christmas is not far behind. Many of us have been busy getting your homes and yards in order for the winter weather that we all know will be coming soon.

Both of these holidays lead us into thinking of those around us and planning for family get-togethers. Your Healing Prayer Ministers are like a family. We share in thanking our Lord for the service he has placed within our lives. We acknowledge the gift of prayer for healing that he wants us to do for you, our church family. Our prayers for you don't end after you have come to us. We continue to keep you and your prayer requests in our hearts and prayers.

We continue to grow as our Lord teaches us in his ways. We are reminded of his great compassion for the sick and the greatness of his healing. It is with thankfulness that we pray for you and know that it is our Lord doing the healing, using us as his healing ministers here at Immanuel. As Christmas approaches we are thankful to him for the gift of healing prayer and for all the many ways we've been blessed by the gift of you coming to us to share in the love and knowledge that Jesus is still with us in his unseen presence.

We wish you a blessed holiday season,

Joan Nolff, Healing Prayer Ministry



Daily Bible Readings

Do you read the Bible daily? Here are daily readings from the Gospels. Let's strive to read the Bible each day during Advent and Christmas. After each reading, ask, "What one thing will I take with me today (tonight)?"

Advent I:

Stir up your power, Lord Christ and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Nov. 30: 2 Peter 3:1-18

Dec. 1: Rev. 22:12-16

Dec. 2: Luke 11:29-32

Dec. 3: Phil. 1:12-18a

Dec. 4: Phil. 1:18b-26

Dec. 5: Luke 9:1-6

Advent II:

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Dec. 7: Romans 8:22-25

Dec. 8: 2 Peter 1:2-15

Dec. 9: Luke 7:18-30

Dec. 10: 2 Corinth. 8:1-15

Dec. 11: 2 Corinth. 9:1-15

Dec. 12: Luke 1:57-66

Advent III:

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Dec. 14: Hebrews 13:7-17

Dec. 15: Acts 28:23-31

Dec. 16: Luke 7:31-35

Dec. 17: Hebrews 10:10-18

Dec. 18: Hebrews 10:32-39

Dec. 19: Luke 13:31-35

Advent IV

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Dec. 21: Colossians 1:15-20

Dec. 22: Eph. 2:11-22

Dec. 23: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Christmas

Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Dec. 26: Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60

Dec. 27: John 21:19b-24

Dec. 28: Rev. 21:1-7

Dec. 29: 1 Corinth. 3:10-17

Dec. 30: Mark 13:32-37

Dec. 31: John 8:12-19



Volunteers Needed

At the congregation meeting on November 8 you voted to reduce office staff and custodian hours. Now we need volunteers to help in the church office on Fridays. Assisting the custodians can be anytime. Please call the office (627-6310) to volunteer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Attention all Sunday School Parents:

The Sunday School Christmas Program is December 13 during the 10:30 worship service. Nursery through high school students will be participating. Practice for the Christmas program will be December 6 and 13 during Sunday school. It is important that all students attend in preparation for this program. The students will be staying in their classrooms on December 13 until the Christmas program begins. After the program, they will be coming back to their classrooms. A special coffee hour after the worship service will celebrate Jesus' birth. Please join us!

There will be "All Sunday School" on December 20. I will be teaching nursery – high school. No Sunday School on December 27 or January 3. We will return to our regular schedule (every Sunday at 9:15am) on January 10.

Have a blessed holiday,
Sue Schnarr

KIDS HOPE USA CORNER



"Wow! He's smiling!" That was the spontaneous exclamation from my four year old granddaughter the first time she walked into our sanctuary and looked at our wood carving of Christ behind the altar. She was in awe. Since that day I have often thought about her surprise and delight. Every Sunday her words come back to me and I think about how Jesus might be watching our Kids Hope volunteers with that same loving smile, knowing how much they care for their students.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Luke 18: 16

Our mentors are doing their very best to bring God's love to our children at Greenwood. According to the Kids Hope USA plan it is all about the power of one – one child, one mentor, one prayer partner, one church, one school. Add to that the power of one Savior and we have an unbeatable team.

Right now there is one first grade boy who could really use a special friend. He and his siblings are new to Greenwood, and he could use some social, emotional, and academic support. The only requirement for this job is an hour a week and a loving heart. Please pray and think about becoming a mentor for this little one. Who knows? If you do, you too may walk into church one Sunday and think, "Wow! He's smiling!"

Lyn Danes

ldanes@immanuel-gl.org, or 543-8661, or 243-4730

December 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:00 am Staff Meeting 11-3 Quilting	2 10:00 am Toddler Time 5:00 pm Yoga 6:30 pm God's Crusaders	3 7:15 pm Choir	4 8:00 pm AA	5 8:00 am AA 10:00 am Yoga
6 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am S. School 10:30 am Worship 12:00 Potluck Decorating the church	7 10:30 am Frozen Chosen 4-6 pm Community Soup Nite	8 12 noon Upkeepers 7:00 pm Council	9 10:00 am Toddler Time 5:00 pm Yoga 6:30 pm Handbell Choir	10 7:15 pm Choir	11 8:00 pm AA	12 8:00 am AA 10:00 am Yoga 12-4 pm Shilton Family Gathering
13 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am S. School 10:30 am Worship Christmas Program	14 4-6 pm Community Soup Nite	15 9:00 am Staff Meeting 11-3 Quilting 12:00 pm IV Team	16 10:00 am Toddler Time 5:00 pm Yoga 6:30 pm Handbell Choir	17 7:15 pm Choir	18 8:00 pm AA	19 8:00 am AA 10:00 am Yoga 7-8:00 pm Live Nativity
20 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am S. School 10:30 am Worship 6:15 pm SNL 7-8:00 pm Live Nativity	21 4-6 pm Community Soup Nite 7:00 pm Team Meetings	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> <i>Services</i> 4:00 pm Family 7:30 pm Candlelight 11:00 pm Midnight	25  8:00 pm AA	26 8:00 am AA
27 8:00 am Worship 10:30 am Worship	28 4-6 pm Community Soup Nite	29	30	31		

December 2 Steve Colby
 December 5 Peter Graeber
 Lynn Colby
 December 8 Amber Lund, Lisa Baptista,
 John Boerger
 December 9 Greg Stein
 December 10 Joe Espie
 December 12 Jack Wolf, Melissa Kingsley,
 Britten Riggs
 December 14 Kelly White, Scherrie Bryant
 December 15 Wendy Bower
 December 17 Carolyn Drown



December 18 Robert Buckley, Dale Stein, Adam Zipple
 December 19 Don Rinckey
 December 20 George Ayoub
 December 21 Jim Teahan, Nicole Sullenberger
 December 23 Brenda Everts, Sue Schnarr
 December 26 Yvette Rosier
 December 30 Jeanie Boerger-Dixon
 December 31 John Crambell, Carolyn Malkewitz

If your birthday or anniversary is NOT listed and it should be, it is because we do not have it on file.

If you would like to have your day recognized in the future, please let the office (627-6310 or dlund@immanuel-gl.org) know.

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Dale & Mary Jo Stein (12/18)
 Linn & Cindy Smith (12/18)
 Tom & Elaine Mattson (12/22)



I would like to express my extreme gratitude for all of the prayers, cards, phone call and meals over the past couple of months while I struggle through my health issues. It has been so healing to be enfolded in your embrace and feel the love of my Immanuel family. God bless, *Joan Wolff*

GLEAP AND SIREN FOR ADVENT

Each year our congregation supports charitable services that please God. We use the special envelopes in our offering packet labeled "Advent." This year all offerings in these envelopes will be split between GLEAP and SIREN. In case you don't know...

The Grand Ledge Emergency Assistance Program helps neighbors in the GL School District year round. It provides no cash - only vouchers that may be used at local merchants. Its core mission is food, medical care and transportation. If there is enough money, it will help with utilities and rent.

GLEAP partners with the GL Food and Clothing Bank and other agencies.

SIREN/Eaton Shelter Project is our county's program for family abuse and homelessness. It provides safe places and various education programs to help families get a fresh start in our area.

Families often need household items and things for children in order to make it.

When times are tough, God's people pull together. God's Work. Our hands. To his glory.