

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



Matthew 1:23

The Manger

December 2011

The monthly newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church ELCA



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES, DECEMBER 24

4:00 pm FAMILY SERVICE OF COMMUNION

Who will place the Christ Child into the manger this year?

7:30 pm SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS with Candlelight

The prophecies and the accounts of Scripture carry the birth of Jesus to us.

11:00 pm HOLY COMMUNION with Candlelight

Reflective in candlelight and meditation around the Lord's Table.

ONE CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE, DECEMBER 25

- One Service Only -

9:30 a.m. Holy Communion

EPIPHANY (TRANSFERRED), SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

- One Service Only -

9:30 a.m. Holy Communion

NOTICE: All individuals or groups wishing to sing or play on Christmas Eve, please contact Pastor Rick (627-6310 or rmckenzie@immanuel-gl.org) quickly.

THE 4TH: A FUN DAY

You have received the letters, the announcements, the RSVP invitations, the Pledge Form – all about "Building the Cradle Stewardship Drive." This is what we want you to do:

- Complete your Pledge Forms
- Attend worship on Dec. 4 and bring your pledge forms with you.
Pastor Dawn will be preaching on "Building the Cradle in Peace"
- Attend the Potluck with your good food
- Stay following the potluck, if you can, for Hanging the Greens or Caroling.

We are planning on a fun-filled, success-filled, tummy-filled celebration.

The Stewardship Drive Team



**SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
DECEMBER 11 DURING 10:30 SERVICE**

PASTOR DAWN'S PAGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In my first December at my last call, a family appeared on our doorstep seeking shelter. Their names were Mary, David and Joseph; a mother, father and nearly adult son. After making many phone calls, I was unable to find shelter for them in the area. Yes, there were places that would take the men separate from the women, but there was no room for the entire family unit.

As we reflect and pause and await the Holy Family in our midst, let us remember those who do not have a place to lay their heads, or enough food to eat, or warm clothes to wear or monies sufficient to provide proper medical care. In this season of hope, joy, love and peace, may we be reminded that **WE** are the bearers of Christ's promise to care for "the least of these."

To that end, David Houseman is heading up our ELCA Good Gifts ministry that helps to supply sources of income and sustainable food to those in this country and around the world. Please consider purchasing an alternative gift for your loved ones that embraces the spirit of this season. Our Advent offering will also go to "the least of these" in two ways: GLEAP (Grand Ledge Emergency Assistance Program) and the ELCA Malaria Initiative (www.elca.org for more information). And finally, to help our 10 ELCA Youth Gathering participants, coffee mugs and coffee may be purchased individually and as sets (available in the Narthex or by contacting the church office). The coffee mugs achieve two goals in being a welcoming spiritual community by providing reusable mugs that "advertise" Immanuel Lutheran to our neighbors and by supplying a safer lidded drinking vessel for hot beverages. (And as an aside, we also reduce our use of recyclables/trash!)

Watch for some enhancements coming to our church coffee hour in January. In order to provide an opportunity for our 8 and 10:30 worshipers to build deeper relationships, beverages will be available in the entryway between services. Please take the time to gather for conversation, clue each other in about how long the 8am sermon is, share the good news about your new pastor . . . you get the drift. Also coming in January: **new** Bible study and fellowship group offerings. Watch January's *Manger* for times, dates and places.

Join us for the Christmas parade on Friday, December 2 as the Immanuel float spreads the good news that Jesus is soon to be born among us. Not only will we share such joyous news, but we'll hand out candy with a card attached announcing our Christmas Eve worship services. The Advent/Christmas season is a wonderful time to invite those who do not know Jesus to come and meet our Immanuel at Immanuel.

Frank and I are ever grateful for your hospitality and prayerful support. As we acclimate to all things Michigan (how about that Secretary of State office?!), we are excited to finally be dwelling among you. As someone commented to me, "There's no place like home." I couldn't have said it any better!

With you in Christ's service,
Pr. Dawn

PASTOR RICK'S PAGE

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...who for the joy set before him endured the cross...

Hebrews 12:1, 2

Can you visualize this? It is the original Olympic Stadium in Greece. The athletes are on the field. In the stands, the fans are cheering-on their favorites. There are pretty much only two sets of people: athletes and fans.

The unidentified author of Hebrews wrote from the perspective of an athlete on the field: "we are surrounded;" "let us run," I write as one who is transitioning up to fan status. My next move is to join the Fans of Immanuel:

- "D-Fence;" "
- "We are (clap, clap) I L (clap, clap)"
- "You can do it;"
- "OK, work together out there now"
- "Hey, listen to your coach."

You are the athletes contending for Christ and the gospel. Over the last couple of months I have been slowing down my pace and passing off the baton of leadership to Pastor Dawn. She has been accelerating her pace. Pr. Dawn brings so many gifts and skills. She is an experienced and visionary leader for you. I believe in her. I believe in God's leading her to you in this chapter of Immanuel's 140-year+ worship and service to God's glory.

Our overlapping time concludes this month of Advent and Christmas. You have made it possible for your two pastors; indeed for the sake our shared ministry. It has been such a holy gift to us all. Next I will be entering the stands to cheer you on to higher heights for the Lord. (NOTE: I will not be available to do funerals, weddings, baptisms, etc.)

Now, these Bible verses are making reference to the saints who have "fought the good fight" and "finished the course" of their lifetimes. They surround us and cheer us on. But right now also think of George Perles; Ron Mason; Lloyd Carr (you knew I had to get that one in!). We are the biggest fans and most loyal supporters. We are so very proud, so very grateful, and still cheering from the stands.

So, my sisters and brothers in Immanuel's race, you have, from the Lord, a wonderful pastoral leader. Now

- Shape up;
- Look ahead;
- Give Christ your best effort.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary. (v. 3)



KIDS HOPE USA CORNER

Here's a recent Kids Hope USA story to warm your heart.

A note written by Gabrielle a 2nd grade KIDS HOPE USA student to Lisa, her mentor... "In my *in tire* life I love you the most! First comes friends, then comes BFF! That's us...I love you and you are my BFF!"

My Christmas HOPE is that all the children who are on our waiting lists at our two schools will have someone step into their lives to become their BFF. Right now we have two boys and one girl at Beagle who need a caring adult to make a difference in their lives. Please consider becoming a mentor. It will change your life too, and that's no small change.

Contact me at Idanes@immanuel-gl.org or 627-6310 *Lyn Danes*

**LUTHER LEAGUE II
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS /WHITE ELEPHANT
GIFT EXCHANGE/ LUNCHEON**

**Monday, December 12, 2011
1:00 pm Finley's Restaurant**

Bring your white elephant gift
for a gift exchange.

Call Call Sharon Catey (627-2538), Annette
Ryan (627-9511), Joy Powis (627-7067) or Vera
Ford (627-5213) by December 8 to reserve
your spot.

All seniors welcomed!

ANNUAL LUGNUT OUTING

Mark your calendars for Friday, August 10, 2012 for Immanuel's next Lansing Lugnuts outing. It's a LAFCU fireworks night. Tickets are \$9 each for reserved seats or \$10 for box seats and can be reserved by calling Orv Erickson at 517-645-2865, emailing him at norsky148@sbcglobal.net or just see him after church some Sunday. Tickets must be ordered and paid for by Sunday, June 24, 2012. We have 20 reserved seats and 20 box seats all in the same area but we can get more of each. Come join us this year for a great night out with the family. GO NUTS!!!!

UPKEEPERS

Some of the major projects we completed this year at Spring Clean- up: mulched around shrubs, installed new rails around flower beds on Edwards Street, re-shingled storage shed, trimmed branches and cleaned flower beds. We have also installed energy efficient light in the Sanctuary, painted the Sanctuary walls, painted Altar area walls, installed decorative trim where new sanctuary meets old over expansion joint, painted nursery walls & installed color-full, cushioned floor, painted pastors study, painted sacristy, installed new cabinet around safe converted altar into a communion table, stained Memorial Garden fence & gazebo, painted cement benches in Memorial Garden, painted outside of 501 building, painted pastors office & assembled new desk, relocated bookshelves in 501 building, relocated storage shed, created parking /loading area in back of church off alley, the veterans plaques in the memorial garden and replaced hand washing sink in kitchen. During the Fall clean up moved leaves to alley for pickup. We will be installing a door to the balcony in the library (to conserve heat in that area). We will install glass panel in rear doors of sanctuary for safety at elevator area.

Thanks to all who have spent time on these projects, as well to those who do routine maintenance to keep our church functioning.

THANK YOU NOTES

Thanks to Greg Hickok & McKenzie Construction for donating Materials

We would like to thank all of those who had a kind word to say, a hug to share, or a note to pass on during this difficult time for our family. We would especially like to thank those who prepared and served the meal for all of us. Thank you also for all of your thoughts and prayers during Jack's illness.

God's Blessings, *Kristine Hernden, Melissa Goschka and family, Annette Bell and family*

Grand Ledge Crop Walk 2011 Final numbers. Immanuel raised \$3,123.00 (includes online giving). This is almost \$400.00 more than last year. We had a total of 32 walkers this year. Great Job Immanuel! Total giving for the walk was \$8,954.00 which is down from last year, but still very good as we had 3 churches who normally participate declined this year. Thanks for helping out all those in need in our community and worldwide.

Advent 2011 Alternative Giving Opportunity

For Advent 2010, the Serving Team initiated the Heifer International "Living Gift Market" as an alternative giving program. Members of the congregation donated \$2,150.

This year, Pastor Dawn has suggested we use the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog - part of the ELCA World Hunger program (see www.elca.org/goodgifts.) This will have several dimensions.

1) Children will receive a small carton in the shape of a barn titled "God's Global Barnyard" to take home. 2) Sundays during Advent after each worship service, members of the congregation can examine the literature in the Narthex, turn in their chosen donation(s), and receive a card they can give/send to the person they are honoring.

"God richly provides for our daily bread – the earth can produce enough to feed everyone. Yet millions still go hungry. One billion of our neighbors are living in poverty. They struggle on less than a dollar a day – without enough food to eat or clean water to drink. Even in the U.S., one in ten households experience hunger or risk of hunger – skipping meals, or going an entire day without food.

We hope the response from our congregation will equal or exceed the level of giving of Advent 2010. Your support is very much appreciated and will be used by the national ELCA office to help others. Thank you.

EARTHKEEPING

In 2012, we are specifically inviting others to join the Immanuel Earthkeeping group (under the umbrella of the Serving Team) to continue and build on the activities from this past year. These include 1) the placement of collection boxes in the church entryway to enable the recycling of plastic containers (#1 - #7), 2) the installation of more efficient electric bulbs and fixtures – which reduces our electricity consumption / carbon footprint and saves money, 3) the inclusion by Pastor Rick in the Sunday worship bulletins of prayer language which serves to remind / educate us of the bounty of God's wonderful (but fragile) creation and our role in supporting this, 5) articles in the *Manger*, 6) Pastor Rick's Sunday Bible study class initiated the Lenten season Energy Fast series, and 8) the adoption in May by Church Council of the *Covenant for the Care of Creation*.

In 2012, we want to build on this foundation. We hope to focus on plans for replacing some of our extensive lawn with one or two areas that will include native plants habitat - to support bees, butterflies and birds – and reduce the amount of grass which must be mowed (which would reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions). In addition, interest has been expressed in two other features - one which would be especially of interest to children. Sue Schnarr has recommended 'rainbow garden' and 'butterfly gardens' projects from a book titled *Inspiration from the Garden – SUNFLOWER HOUSES - a Book for Children and Their Grown-ups*,. A number of others would like us to consider having a meditative labyrinth. We have enough space for all these; extensive research on the options has been done and continues.

We have a number of good resources and ideas to examine and share with the congregation. Please consider joining us. (See Isaiah 58:6-7 and also www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org.) "The power of God is present at all places, even in the tiniest leaf God is currently and personally present in the wilderness, in the garden, and in the field." Martin Luther

DECEMBER 2011

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

- December 2 Steve Colby
- December 5 Peter Graeber, Lynn Colby, Emily Ketola
- December 8 Amber Lund, Lisa Baptista, John Boerger
- December 10 Joe Espie
- December 11 Michael Roesch
- December 12 Jack Wolf, Melissa Kingsley, Britten Riggs
- December 13 William Sanford
- December 14 Kelly White, Scherrie Bryant
- December 16 Grayson Sullenberger
- December 17 Carolyn Drown, Nikki Racine, Cheri Herriff
- December 18 Robert Buckley, Dale Stein, Adam Zipple, Martin Roesch
- December 19 Don Rinckey



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 21 Nicole Sullenberger
- December 23 Brenda Everts, Sue Schnarr,
Cameron Turner
- December 26 Michelle Dinsmore
- December 28 Sarah Gatewood, Jessica Roesch
- December 30 Jeanie Boerger-Dixon
- December 31 John Crambell, Carolyn Malkewitz
Jas Huson, Megan Dyke

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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



**ELCA GOOD GIFTS MALARIA CAMPAIGN
&
GRAND LEDGE FOOD BANK
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 ELCA Good Gifts Malaria Campaign and Grand Ledge Food Bank.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.

Lansing MI 48906

T 517-321-5066

F 517-321-2632

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

Seeking to be Faithful

I just completed a conference call with the rest of the Synod Council Executive Committee (Sandy Schlesinger, V.P.; Gena Hyde, treasurer; Chris Allen, secretary; and Iris Boettcher, at-large). We prayed at the beginning and at the end; in between we thought together how best to allocate your Mission Support gifts received between now and the end of next January, the end of our fiscal year. Our contingency planning, necessitated in recent years by shortfalls in income, is always a test of our priorities. I left this call with gratitude for these fine lay leaders you have elected to serve the Synod.

All are blessed with finely disciplined and missional minds and hearts. In the face of ongoing financial challenges, all of them seek to be faithful, responsible stewards of your gifts. Together we decided to honor to the best of our ability the budgeted commitments to our campus ministries, Living Water Ministries, LSSM, Trinity Seminary, Capital and Wittenberg Universities. We will continue to send 50% of your Mission Support gifts for ELCA churchwide ministries. We will compensate our staff as justly as possible. Our Synod committees and teams, to their great credit, have almost all underspent their budgets, knowing that these are tough times. Still a multitude of old and new ministries have been strengthened already this year through their work. (See our website, www.mittensynod.org, and the December issue of the *Lutheran* magazine for examples of these ministries.)

In these last two months of our fiscal year, I do plead with you to give as generously as you are able to fund

the work of your Synod and of the broad ministries of the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Give through your congregation so that it can meet its 2011 intent or pledge to carry out its share of the burden for our ministries in Michigan and throughout the world. (If your congregational leaders have not yet crafted a “letter of intent” for 2012, urge them to do so over the next two months.) Additionally, specially earmarked gifts from you personally or from congregations receiving unexpected financial blessings can be given directly to the Synod and/or to the churchwide ELCA. These gifts make a huge difference in our ability to provide critical scholarships to seminarians, to respond to emergencies, to support the programs of the Center for Mission and Ministry, and to fund new initiatives like the ELCA Malaria Campaign.

I pray that in these next two months (December and January), you will in your tithes and offerings to the Synod give full sway to the law of love. In the phone call tonight I was reminded that you and I are truly blessed with solid, thoughtful leaders, seeking to be faithful, seeking to be good stewards of all that you give for the work of the whole church.



~ Bishop John

Winter Leadership Event: "I Am About To Do a New Thing."

Location: Trinity Lutheran Church (3701 Jefferson Avenue, Midland, MI, 48640)

Sunday, Jan 22, (5:00 p.m.) – Tuesday, Jan 24 (noon)

For all active and retired rostered leaders, synodically authorized ministers, lay ministers, and their spouses and partners.

Please visit <http://www.mittensynod.org/news/index.html> to download the registration form

Registration Deadline: Mon, Jan 9, 2012 / **Cut-off date for discounted room rates:** Dec 21, 2011

Registration Fee Per Individual: \$50

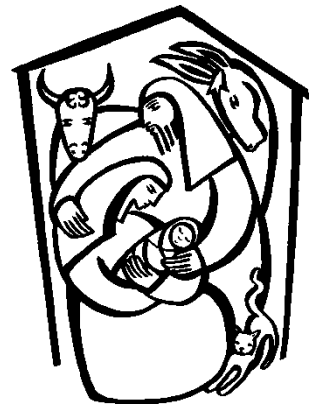
The Giving and Receiving of Gifts

Pastor Roger Hardy, Director for Evangelical Mission, Assistant to the Bishop

Whose birthday do we celebrate on December 25? We honor the birth of Jesus, the King who comes to serve, not be served. We sing carols that tell of God appearing in human flesh, reconciling God and sinners. We give gifts because the great gift of new life in Jesus has first been given to us.

Remember those who are in need and those who need your presence and presents. Remember that neither the size nor the number of gifts is important. What *is* important is the giving and the receiving that reflects God's unconditional love for the whole world. It is about giving what you can and what you are able to do.

I encourage you to give and to receive gifts this Holy Season in the Spirit of the One whose birthday we celebrate: Jesus.



Center for Mission and Ministry Spiritual Formation Program

Facilitating Contemplative Groups: **Training for Small Group Leadership:** January – May, 2012

- Would your church have one or two persons you would recommend and send for this formation program?
- Would you like to learn a contemplative approach to small group facilitation that is adaptable for use with any kind of group and will enhance and deepen a group's experience?

Location: St. Paul Lutheran Church (9844 SW Greenville Rd, Greenville, MI, 48838)

Date: 1/16; 2/6 and 2/27; 3/19; 4/23; 5/7; 5/21, 2012

Time: 1-4P / **Cost:** \$115 per person for eight 3 hour sessions or two participants from the same church: \$175 total (Participants can share the cost with the church.)

Leader: Nancy Brousseau, OP, Center for Mission and Ministry Facilitator

To register, please contact nancybrousseau@mittensynod.org