



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Glorifying God. Impacting the Community.

Immanuel Informer

December 2020

Volume 16, Issue 6

Celebrate the Newborn King!

Greetings in the Name of the newborn King,

“Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer” (Psalm 66:16-19).

“Come and hear, all you who fear God!” Now, there’s an announcement that all people on earth should take notice of.

To say that this past year has been challenging would be an understatement. Many people are saying things like, “I can’t wait for this year to be over,” as if everything will change for the better come January 1, 2021. But we all know that the difficulties of life will continue. Some fear that we will never return to normal. Others see the glass half-full and sing the tune, “Always look on the bright side of life” by Monty Python. There is a bit of truth to the opening verses of that silly song:

“Some things in life are bad
They can really make you mad
Other things just make you swear and curse
When you're chewing on life's gristle
Don't grumble, give a whistle
And this'll help things turn out for the best, And
Always look on the bright side of life”

We can agree that yes, some things in life are bad, and that we have had plenty of moments where we have been mad. An insidious virus that won’t go away and that has killed masses of people, a society that’s become unhinged over injustices and inequality, a political process that makes you want to swear and curse—just chewing on life’s gristle. Wouldn’t it be so easy if all we had to do was whistle and believe things will just turn out for the best?

POINSETTIA PLANTS will be part of the chancel decorations for Christmas at Immanuel. If you would like to make a plant purchase, special order forms are available. Orders and payments must be made before December 13th. The foil covered plants are \$14 each. Checks should be made payable to **Immanuel Altar Guild**. The plants can be picked up immediately after the Christmas Day service. If you have any questions, contact Barb Arndt at 630-655-0797.



Voices from the Edge: Advent Encounters Preparing the Way

Advent has long been a time of preparation, preparation for the celebration of Christmas. Yet the road to Christmas is anything but easy. It twists, it turns, and we meet many strange figures along the way. Prophets cry out in visions. John the Baptizer preaches in the desert. Angels appear whether you are asleep or awake. The voices are varied, the places are strange, but one thing is certain: in each encounter, God is preparing us for the celebration of the greatest encounter of all, the birth of Jesus, his Son, our Savior, the Redeemer of the world.

Midweek Advent Services

Wednesdays - December 2, 9, 16 and 23
7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary

Service of Lessons and Carols - December 20, 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Service - December 24, 9:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Service - December 25, 10:00 a.m.

Fellow Workers on God's Team

In his first letter to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote, "For we are God's fellow workers..." (1 Corinthians 3:9). Through Paul, God was telling the people in Corinth that they had the honor and privilege to work with Him and to be important participants in His mission. In the same way, God makes us His fellow workers on His team. Even though we are undeserving and have nothing to offer, God, in His sovereignty, chooses us to be His vessels through which He will accomplish His purposes. As God's fellow workers, we become His hands, feet, and mouth to the world.

God does not schedule tryouts for those He selects to be on His team. He isn't seeking the most talented, the most powerful, or the most attractive. He invites and encourages everyone to be part of His team. The people who become part of God's team vary in appearance, in gifts, in stations in life, and other ways. Although God's team is made up people who are different in some ways, the one common factor is that they are all new creations with transformed hearts for Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they have become people of faith who see God as their greatest treasure. Faithfulness is a top priority as a fellow worker with God. Through faith, we commit and are energized to serve God by serving others. What we do with our time, talents, and money gives evidence to which team we belong.

In God's Word, we find examples of people who were not eager always to be fellow workers on God's team. Moses gave numerous excuses that God shouldn't use him to lead the Israelites out of the Egyptian captivity. Saul hid! David felt unqualified to be king. God caused Jonah to be swallowed by a fish in order to get him on His team. God didn't give up on these people. He chose and equipped each of them to be fellow workers on His team.

God blesses each of us with the privilege to be a fellow worker on His team. Whether we willingly join or are at first resistant, we are now participants in God's mission to help others "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). God uses ordinary people like us to do extraordinary things. Are you ready to go to work?

WE ALL ENJOY OPENING THE GIFTS PLACED BENEATH THE CHRISTMAS TREE, BUT NONE CAN COMPARE TO THE GIFT GOD GAVE US IN CHRIST.

"Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15)



The four Sundays prior to Christmas are the four Sundays of Advent, which begin the Church year. The purpose of Advent is not only to prepare us to celebrate the birth of Jesus which occurred over two thousand years ago but also to prepare us for His second coming. Jesus, who came to us in a stable, will come again when the trumpet sounds in glory on the Last Day. The New Testament stresses that Christians must be ready at all times for the second coming. We are to live with joyful expectation. Whether by Jesus' return or our own deaths, we should always be prepared to meet Him. Peter wrote, "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers" (1 Peter 4:7).

REMEMBER TO PRAY

If you have a prayer request, please call the pastor in the church office (708-562-5590). We are praying for you! Please notify the office when circumstances of your request change or when the Lord answers your prayers. We want to rejoice with you and thank the Lord.

DURING ADVENT, WE PREPARE TO CELEBRATE OUR SAVIOR'S BIRTH AND HIS COMING AGAIN.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega' says the Lord God, 'Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty' " (Revelation 1:8).



Immanuel Christian Academy

Joy to the World, Laughter Has Come

By Valerie Winston

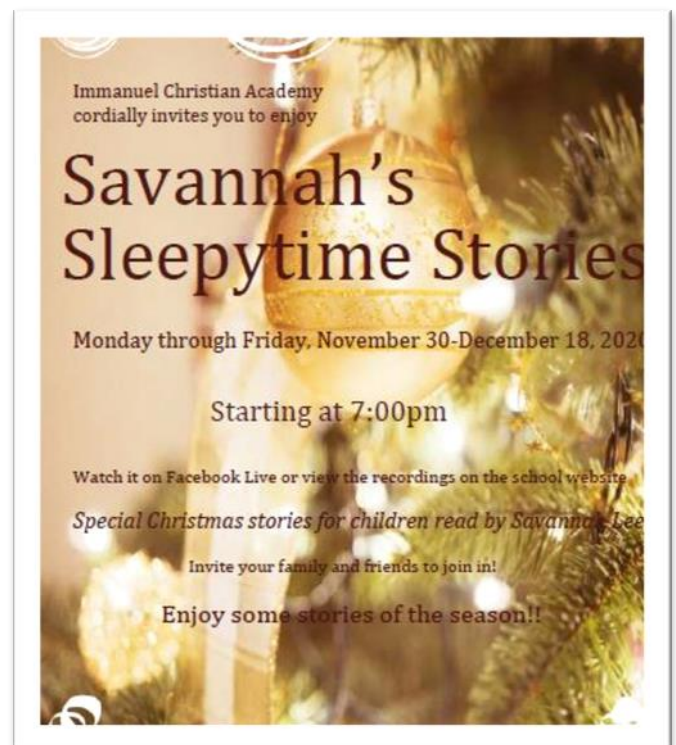
In my 35 years of the teaching ministry, there has been nothing that can compare to the last eight months or so. I will not once again go into all of the adjectives that have been used to describe this pandemic. It has been devastating to family and friends, it has taxed our medical personnel, and it has wreaked havoc on basically our everyday lives.

But in the midst of all this seeming desolation and loss, there is some actual joy to be found. I see it in the blessing of Immanuel Christian Academy. I can see it in the hard work and never-ending dedication of the teachers. I see it in the continued support and willingness to go above and beyond their duty in the office staff. I most especially see it in the wonder that is our students.

The students have kept our spirits buoyed by their ability to be joyful and happy when they come to school each day, whether in person or remotely. They have been filled with joy when throwing leaves in the air at recess, or dyeing their hair for a spirit day, or even when giving completely wrong answers in class. They have even been joyful when totally failing at knock-knock jokes. There are times I find myself laughing when I remember how one student spelled their name, but actually didn't.

Proverbs 17:22 says, "A merry heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." Experts have said that laughter aids in digestion, lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, boosts the immune system and can produce a general sense of well-being. There is a saying that laughter is the best medicine.

Yes, there has been so much that could have broken our spirits. But as we focus on the joy of the coming of our Savior and the happiness that this season brings, let us fill our hearts with laughter and peace. Let us be reminded of the joy that each day can bring. Blessings to you and yours this Christmas and may your heart and life be filled with much joy and laughter!



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Sorry Monty Python, that is not the way it works. We live in the real world, where often times there does not appear to be a “bright side of life,” especially this year.

But God gives the world hope. In the midst of the madness, the psalmist cries out, “Come and hear, all you who fear God...!” This opening proclamation for the season of Advent leads us forward to the day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, “*The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world*” (Jn 1:9). Jesus, ...*the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us*” (Jn 1:14), first as a little baby, then as a man who would suffer the wrath of God and be punished in our place, shedding his blood on the cross for our salvation.

The bright side of life? Yes, the true light of Christ is the only bright side this world has ever needed; it’s the only bright side that can save their souls from the darkness of sin. When people come to fear God (to be in awe of Him) through Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, turning from their sin, only then will they cry out with high praise. Only then will they know that God has heard their prayer. They will know God’s grace, the forgiveness of sins, through Jesus Christ the newborn King. They will know the promise of eternal life when all things come to an end. But where does it begin? It begins with you. “*Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.*” May God give us the words to speak, to tell a lost and dying world what he has done for our souls, so that they too can celebrate and have high praise on their tongues for Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Pastor Steve Deombeleg

Shop with Scrip - Scrip fundraising is a no-selling program that enables families to raise money for their church or school. Scrip is just another way to pay for everyday purchases using gift cards in place of cash,



checks, and credit cards. You purchase gift cards from your organization at face value, and your coordinator orders those cards from Great Lakes Scrip Center at a reduced price. The difference is an instant rebate for Immanuel. It’s that simple! Order Forms are in the church hallway or enroll online: www.shopwithscrip.com
Enrollment Code: 9D337C6F55761

Order Market Day Today!

Market Day is back and with home direct delivery! Register at www.marketdaylocal.com.

Choose Immanuel Christian Academy - Hillside as your organization.



Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures gives. Romans 15:4

Getting the Most Out of Your Daily Bible Reading

As you read the Bible each day, allow the Scriptures to speak to you. This daily “dialogue “ between you and the biblical text will reveal new understandings about God, and about yourself.

December

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Mark 13:24-37 | 17 Jeremiah 31:1-14 |
| 2 Obadiah | 18 Jeremiah 31:15-26 |
| 3 Malachi 3:1-18 | 19 Joel 2:18-27 |
| 4 Malachi 4:1-16 | Fourth Sunday in Advent |
| 5 Ruth 4:1-22 | 20 Micah 5:2-9 |
| Second Sunday in Advent | 21 Luke 1:1-25 |
| 6 Nehemiah 8:1-12 | 22 Luke 1:26-38 |
| 7 Esther 9:18-32 | 23 Luke 1:39-56 |
| 8 Isaiah 11:1-16 | Christmas Eve |
| 9 Isaiah 12:1-6 | 24 Luke 1:57-80 |
| 10 Zechariah 3:8-20 | Christmas Day |
| 11 Zechariah 9:9-17 | 25 Luke 2:1-20 |
| 12 Psalm 24 | 26 Luke 2:21-40 |
| Third Sunday in Advent | 27 Hebrews 1:1-14 |
| 13 Psalm 48 | 28 John 1:1-18 |
| 14 Isaiah 60:1-22 | 29 Isaiah 9:1-7 |
| 15 Isaiah 61:1-11 | 30 Isaiah 52:1-12 |
| 16 Isaiah 62:1-12 | 31 Isaiah 55:1-13 |

Set aside time to read the bible on a daily basis.
 Find a quiet place to read and reflect on each day’s reading.
 Begin with prayer, asking God for guidance and blessing.

For the Record

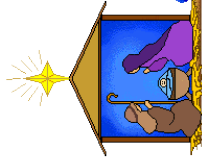
Nothing to Report



- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 3 - Maya Lepe | 9 - Zachary Blair |
| 3 - Lizette Pena | 10 - Karen Bimler |
| 7 - Sarah Blair | 10 - Katy Thomas |
| 8 - Susan Mazanek | 11 - Lance Turner |
| | 13 - Rita Stallings |
| | 16 - Jayne Siou |
| | 18 - Maxine Mannella |
| | 21 - Mia Railing |
| | 24 - Zachary Redis |
| | 26 - Corinne Hein |

A Month of Prayer for December

- 1 Pray for people who are lonely.
- 2 Pray for those who feel unloved.
- 3 Pray for those without a home.
- 4 Pray for prisoners who feel abandoned & unworthy.
- 5 Pray for people in the midst of divorce, for healthy marriages.
- 6 Pray for people with prodigal, wayward children.
- 7 Pray for those with chronic, incurable diseases and illnesses.
- 9 Pray for people who lack clean water.
- 10 Pray for the weary, exhausted, and worn out.
- 11 Pray for people taking care of elderly parents or family.
- 12 Pray for those whose dreams have died; who feel defeated, stuck, and unsure.
- 13 Pray for the sons and daughters trapped in sex-slavery. Pray for freedom.
- 14 Pray for people in financial trouble.
- 15 Pray for people addicted to drugs, alcohol, or other unhealthy, destructive habits and thought patterns.
- 16 Pray for people struggling from hurts of their past; abuse, neglect, shame.
- 17 Pray for people and children who are hungry.
- 18 Pray for people who want to work but can't find a job, for open doors and opportunities.
- 19 Pray for people who don't have a relationship with Jesus; who are doing life on their own and exhausted from it.
- 20 Pray for terrorists to be stopped; for them to repent and turn to Jesus.
- 21 Pray for people who are lying, stealing, and cheating other people.
- 22 Pray for God to break the spirit of greed and selfishness
- 23 Pray for people who don't think they need prayer or God.
- 24 Pray for people who feel entitled and have lost their sense of gratitude.
- 25 Pray for fresh waves of joy, generosity, grace and compassion to flood this nation and our world.
- 26 Pray for our governmental leaders, for God's will to be done; for wisdom and integrity.
- 27 Pray for students who are struggling to keep their faith.
- 28 Pray for those who are workaholics; for right priorities
- 29 Pray for pastors, who are faithful, but under fire or just discouraged.
- 30 Pray for the persecuted church, believers and new-believers
- 31 Pray for ministries and non-profits all over the world seeking to be the hands and feet of Jesus.



Christ Is Born

December



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November 29 First Sunday of Advent 9:30am Worship 11am - Bible study	November 30 Remote Learning	1 Remote Learning	2 Remote Learning 5:30 pm Men's Bible Study 7pm Advent Service	3 Remote Learning	4 Remote Learning	5 11am PYHT Food Pantry
6 - Scrip Orders Due 9:30am Worship with Holy Comm. 11am - Bible study	7 Remote Learning	8 Remote Learning	9 Remote Learning 5:30 pm Men's Bible Study 7pm Advent Service	10 Remote Learning	11 Remote Learning	12
13 9:30am Worship 11am - Bible study	14 In person / Hybrid Classes Resume	15	16 5:30 pm Men's Bible Study 7pm Advent Service	17	18	19 11am PYHT Food Pantry
20 9:30am Worship with Holy Comm. 11am - Bible study	21 No School Christmas Break Begins	22	23 5:30 pm Men's Bible Study 7pm Advent Service	24 9pm Christmas Eve Service	25 - Merry Christmas 10am - Christmas Day Service	26
27 9:30am Worship 11am - Bible study	28	29	30 5:30 pm Men's Bible Study	31 - New Years Eve	HAPPY NEW YEAR!	

2317 - 2329 South Wolf Road
Hillside, IL 60162

Church phone - 708-562-5590

School phone - 708-562-5580

E-Mail: general@immanuel-hillside.org

www.immanuel-hillside.org

RETURN REQUESTED

POSTMASTER: DATED MATERIAL

Rev. Steve Deombeleg, Pastor
ilcpastor@immanuel-hillside.org
708-562-5590 ext. 101 Cell: 847-714-6080

Deatrice Honey, Administration Assistant
general@immanuel-hillside.org
708-562-5580 ext. 200

Donn Hempel, B.A., Director of Music
dhempel@immanuel-hillside.org
Office: 708-562-5580 ext. 205
Home: 708-442-1505

Valerie Winston, Principal
vwinston@immanuel-hillside.org
708-562-5580 ext. 201
www.icahillside.org



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*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another,
as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10*