



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Glorifying God. Impacting the Community.

Immanuel Informer

January 2024

Volume 19, Issue 7

New Year, Same Mission, Always Thankful

God Bless you and Happy New Year! We begin each year thanking God for seeing us through yet another year whether that year was good or bad, however you define that. Oftentimes it's a mix of both and as we look back, we can see the ups and downs of life with its bright spots and dark days. But ultimately, I believe we can agree that giving thanks to God are in order, no matter the outcome of the previous year. We thank God for all His goodness toward us this past year here at Immanuel.

Entering a new year carries the idea of closing a door on the past and opening a door on the life that God continues to provide. Of course, in opening this door we understand it is filled with unknowns. Jesus cautioned us to not worry about tomorrow. Instead, He encourages us to seek God's salvation, and then entrust our daily lives to His loving care (Matthew 6:25-34).

So, as we begin the year 2024, I encourage you to look to the One who holds all things, yes, our very existence, in His hand. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13). It is far too easy to be overcome by the world and its constant cries of fear and despair. God has not called us to such hopelessness. Instead, we are to look to the One who gives us hope in His Word as we enter yet another year that will bring both good and bad experiences.

Redeemed of the Lord, look to the One who provides you with a Church in which to worship with other believers in Christ. Evaluate your devotion to God. Is there room for improvement? Of course there is. Come to Him regularly to partake of the good gifts He provides for you in Word and Sacrament. Nothing in our daily lives can compare to what God offers us on Sunday mornings. You need this medicine for your soul and God provides it. Without it you run the risk of being disconnected from the True Vine, Jesus Christ, who is the Living Word. Remain in Christ and live.

Let us look to the One who calls us to build relationships with each other, serving one another, praying for each other, and forgiving one another. These are the marks of the Church. These are the things that speak volumes to the world. These things especially carry over to the overall mission of Immanuel as we *Glorify God by Impacting the Community*. Let us continue to glorify the Lord as we share the love of Jesus with the students and families of Immanuel Christian Academy—they just celebrated 170 years of Christian education in Hillside! Let us impact our community with God's love shown to those who are near and in great need of food for their families. Let us continue to grow food in our garden which helps the community and other local food pantries. These are things that *Glorify God and Impacts our Community* and you are a worker in God's vineyard. Whether you are physically active or pray for our ministries, you present yourself as a living sacrifice which is holy and acceptable to God (Rom 12:1). This is we do out of love—because He first loved us (1 John 4:10).

God is giving us another year to continue doing what we do best here at Immanuel. Let us do it with joy, which is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). From our human perspective the work of God may appear to yield a small harvest, but we do not see things as God sees them. God merely calls us to be faithful in this place called Immanuel Lutheran Church. And in being faithful the Lord will bless us as we give of our time, talents, and resources. We are bearing fruit for Jesus. This is God's desire for His Church. Let us give thanks to God for this new year, seeking ways to share His love, and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in all we say and do. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Pastor Steve Deombeleg

Share God's Love

Charlie Brown's young friend Linus made the mistake of confessing to his big sister Lucy that he wanted to be a doctor when he grew up. Lucy was astounded at her brother's declaration. "You, a doctor!" That's a laugh! You could never be a doctor! You know why? Because you don't love humankind!" Young Linus immediately responded, "I do love humankind! It's people I can't stand!"

Linus' comment may give us a chuckle. We find humor in it because we identify with Linus. Apart from the power of God's Spirit working in us, our love for others is weak and shallow at best. But God calls us to love all people and enables us to do so. Whether we are doctors, carpenters, policemen, teachers, secretaries, or plumbers, we are to love those with whom we work with as well as all people. God places us in different vocations where we can share God's love. We are His instruments through which He works. In his letter to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him" (1 Corinthians 7:17).

God has a purpose, a plan, in mind for each of us. Like Linus, one might consider being a doctor, but God may have a much different vocation in mind. No vocation is to be viewed higher or lower than another, and we are called, regardless of where we are placed by God, to let His love within us overflow to others.

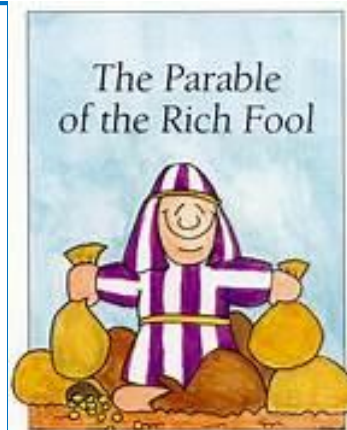
**USE THE TALENTS
GOD HAS GIVEN YOU
IN SERVICE TO OTHERS
FOR HIS GLORY.**

*"Whatever you do,
work heartily, as for the
Lord and not for men"
(Colossians 3:23).*

Stewardship is a relationship, not just activities and responsibilities. It recognizes God as the owner of all things - including our very lives. That means all choices concerning our money, possessions, time, family, relationships, and tasks are spiritual decisions lived in response to our relationship to God. The more we get to know God, Who owns all things, the better we can manage life according to His will. That knowledge of Him and that relationship with Him develop by reading and studying His Word and receiving His Sacraments. Working through that Word and God's Holy Sacraments, the Holy Spirit does His work of sanctification, changing us into the likeness of our Savior (2 Cor 3:18).

THE RICH FOOL WAS TOO SELF-SUFFICIENT TO SEEK GOD AND JESUS CALLED HIM A FOOL. ARE YOU TRUSTING IN YOURSELF OR GOD?

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding"
(Proverbs 3:5).*



Stewardship Corner - *Because we know that we have a God Who loves us, has adopted us as His children, and wants the best for us, we are energized to be about His work. Out of gratitude for who God is and what He has done and continues to do for us, we respond by using our lives and blessings in ways that give honor and praise to our Lord. Acknowledging God as our creator and sustainer of all things, we understand our role as God's stewards. As God's stewards, we seek to manage our time, talents, and money faithfully and according to His will, which we discover in His Word. We become God's instruments through which He works to further His kingdom and help those in need.*

2024

Happy New Year

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
2 Corinthians 5:17

Resolutions for Christian Living

- **Read the Bible Everyday.** Use page six of your monthly newsletter or visit Biblestudytools.com, Biblica.com, Bibleproject.com, or Bible.com to begin a daily reading plan.
- **Set aside time every day to pray.** Feel like you don't have time? Wake up 10 minutes early and pray, pray during your daily commute, pray in bed before falling asleep.
- **Join a Bible Study.** Immanuel has bible study on Sundays at 11:15 a.m. or speak to your church family for ideas about other local bible study groups.
- **Volunteer.** Join a church ministry or look at local charities for inspiration until you find the service God has called you to do.
- **Forgive.** Forgiveness is not optional. Colossians 3:13, Eph. 4:32, Matt. 18:21-35
- **Invite a friend to church.** Somone your know might be looking for comfort, hope, family, clarity or purpose. They may say "no" but what if they don't?



A prayer for the new year

Father,

Thank You for Your love and grace to help Your people have the power to bear fruit, in season and out of season, in good and hard times. Lead us by Your Spirit in 2024, teaching us Your ways to speak Your Word and Truth to the world. Help us to be intentional, committed, and consistent to gather with other believers, stay flexible and open to what You have planned, to rest in You, speak Life and Hope to a world in chaos, and to show Your love to our neighbor. Help us to have your compassion for others in difficult days. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Put Your Hands Together

A ministry of Immanuel Lutheran Church

December 2023 Report

Private & Online Donations: \$ \$2,018.66 (general support and expansion project)

Pending Grant Applications: (0)

Grant Awards: None, Chick Fil-A, Jewel-Osco, NID-LCMS, CRFSF, grants were all denied.

Food Distributions & Activity: In-Kind Food Donations/Food Rescue Received: 56,461 Lbs.

Pop Up-Pantry Families Served: Saturday Dec 10th Dec 22nd Dec 29th 250+ families total

Volunteer Stipends Paid Out: Gift Cards: \$150 (gas)

Food Relief Agencies & Ministries Served: Westchester Food Pantry, St. Paul-Oak Lawn, Downers Grove Soup Kitchen, St. Matthews Soup Kitchen, BEDS+, Village of Hillside, Interim Housing Center - Downers Grove, Our Lady of Angels-Chicago, North Berwyn Food Pantry, Chicago Heights FP, Fight2Feed, Elmhurst Food Pantry, Immanuel-Des Plaines, Breakfast with Baby.

NEWS: <https://youtu.be/mrStuzwAB-0>

Pantry Meeting: Sunday, January 28th after/during Coffee Hour

Volunteers and church members are encouraged to participate and share input on the future of our Food Ministry and Expansion Project.

PYHT: URGENT Request for Official Board Members: See Jayne Siou

No new or large grants can be written without official Food Pantry Board Members.

Midwest Food Bank:

A large variety of food was/is available to us, the truck ride is 250 miles round trip, but I felt it was worth the sacrifice of my/our time if it means supplying our pantry with the food we need. **Volunteers are needed to help make the monthly pickups on the first Monday of every month, beginning in February. Pickup of U-Haul truck required.**

Volunteers: We are always grateful for the wonderful volunteer turnout on Saturday Pantry Day, Holidays, and the response to the pantry needs during the week. Thank you for being the light of Christ all throughout the year!

Expansion Project Update: Unfortunately, no new grant awards came through this year, we will continue fundraising and seeking options for funding. Details will be explained in the upcoming meeting 1/28. **Expansion Project Fundraiser 2023: \$7,928.66 collected towards our \$60,000 goal.**

Please pray for continued guidance and support of our pantry expansion project!

IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Plans or Resolutions

Valerie Winston

Typically, as a new year dawns, people start making resolutions for that new year. Those resolutions can range from losing weight to quitting smoking to trying to eat healthily. Resolutions are usually about trying to improve one's life. But as the new year begins, those resolutions can many times fade out or be broken before the month of January ends. It's easy to resolve to do or be better, but if there is no plan on how to achieve that, then it's not going to happen. It's also not going to happen because those resolutions are missing something.

Several years ago, I realized that instead of making resolutions, I needed to make plans. Making plans required more focus and more attention. I was able to focus on how to achieve those plans because I also focused on my favorite Bible verse. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." There have been times in my life when I have tried to do my own thing and ignore what God has planned for me. I learned my lesson.

No matter what I may plan, I will always follow God's lead. He knows what is best for my future. He has given and will continue to give me hope. So, as this new year begins, our plans should truly focus on the plans that God has for us. We should always resolve to let Him lead the way. Blessings as your new year begins.



Winter is a bit of a slower time of the year for the garden, but it's certainly not boring. We're busy fundraising, continuing to develop the indoor gardening and planning out 2024.

We just had our annual Seed-Money fundraiser and it was quite successful. Even though we fell short of our goal, we still managed to raise just over \$1000 for the

2024 growing season and while last year most of the donations we received through this fundraiser were from outside sources, this year's donations came mostly from Immanuel's congregation. For that, we are grateful.

Our indoor growing efforts suffered some setbacks while we were busy working outside. We basically had to start over, but the hard lessons learned will hopefully contribute to a sustained effort. Many people seem to prefer lettuce grown indoors because the leaves never have soil on their surface. Add to that year round growing capability and we think that it's well worth the effort.

The 2024 growing season should yield a great harvest. We're focusing on particularly well performing varieties and will be securing seeds by middle of January. We're looking to add perennial varieties, such as raspberries and blackberries to intercrop with our orchard trees and it looks like the lumber on which the greenhouse sits will need replacing.

Never a dull moment, but maybe this will be an excuse to add solar heating . . . stay tuned.



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.

January - Discipleship

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Colossians 1:1–14 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Mark 8:1–26 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Colossians 1:15–23 | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Mark 8:27—9:1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Colossians 1:24—2:5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Mark 9:2–29 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Colossians 2:6–19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Mark 9:30–50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Colossians 2:20—3:4 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Psalm 72 <i>Epiphany</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Mark 10:13–34 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Mark 10:35–52 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Colossians 3:5–17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Acts 8:4–25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Colossians 4:2–18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Acts 8:26–40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Mark 1:1–20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Acts 9:1–25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Mark 1:21–45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Acts 9:26–43 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Mark 2:1–17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Acts 10:1–33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Mark 2:18–28 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Mark 3:1–19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Acts 10:34–48 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Acts 11:1–18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Mark 3:20–35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Acts 11:19–30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Mark 5:1–20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Acts 12:1–19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Mark 5:21–43 | |

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



A Month of Prayer

The fellowship of prayer consists of caring people who pray daily for members in the church. Members and their families will be listed in alphabetical order each month. Please pray for both their known and unknown needs. *School Families in italics.*

1. Sandra Houle
2. The Iacovetti Family
3. Dorothy Ivers
4. The Karpierz Family
5. Clyde & Omie Lane
6. Becky Lelingis
7. The Lepe Family
8. The Mannella Family
9. Len & Susan Mazanek
10. Scott Mazanek
11. *The McKenzie Family*
12. *The Moore Family*
13. Ed & Karen Mulvihill
14. Heidi Murphy
15. *The Muskew Family*
16. *The Nash Family*
17. Kathy Nelson
18. Lynda Nickl
19. Mike & Carol Northcutt
20. Mindy Ondrovic
21. Phyllis Ondrovic
22. Pena Family
23. Perez Family
24. *The Perry Family*
25. Lynn Rand
26. Susan Redis
27. Gloria Rubietta
28. Joan Rundgren
29. *The Ruff Family*
30. *The Ruffin Family*
31. The Santos Brantley - Cruz Family

January Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 06 - Lynda Nickl | 22 - Michelle Weeks |
| 10 - Brett Willis | 25 - Jennifer Bettin |
| 13 - Steve Hardy | 28 - Randy Weeks |
| 15 - Marisa Perez | 31 - Mercedes Lepe |
| 20 - Dorothy Westphal | |

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>9:30am Worship HC</p> <p>10:30am Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:15am Bible Study</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Happy New Year</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Classes Resume</p> <p>1:45pm Chapel</p> <p>3pm Faculty Meeting</p> <p>7:30pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7am Morning Parking</p> <p>Lot Prayer Meeting</p> <p>3:00 pm Varsity Basketball Practice</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7am Morning Parking</p> <p>Lot Prayer Meeting</p> <p>3:00 pm Varsity Basketball Practice</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7pm Adult Volleyball</p>	<p>6</p> <p>11am Food Pantry</p>
<p>7</p> <p>9:30am Worship HC</p> <p>10:30am Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:15am Bible Study</p>	<p>8</p> <p>15 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</p> <p>No School</p>	<p>9</p> <p>3:00 pm Varsity Basketball Practice</p>	<p>10</p> <p>1:45pm Chapel</p> <p>7:30pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7am Morning Parking</p> <p>Lot Prayer Meeting</p> <p>3:00pm Varsity Basketball Practice</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7pm Adult Volleyball</p>	<p>13</p> <p>11am Food Pantry</p>
<p>14 - Scrip Orders Due</p> <p>9:30am Worship</p> <p>10:30am Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:15am Bible Study</p>	<p>15 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</p> <p>No School</p>	<p>16</p> <p>4:30pm Varsity Basketball Game HOME</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:45pm Chapel</p> <p>7:30pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7am Morning Parking</p> <p>Lot Prayer Meeting</p> <p>3pm Varsity Basketball Practice</p>	<p>19</p> <p>4:30pm Varsity Basketball Game AWAY @ Itasca</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p> <p>9:30am Worship HC</p> <p>10:30am Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:15am Bible Study</p>	<p>22 - This Week</p> <p>Progress Reports & MAP Testing</p>	<p>23</p> <p>4:00pm Varsity Basketball Game HOME</p>	<p>24</p> <p>1:45pm Chapel</p> <p>7:30pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7am Morning Parking</p> <p>Lot Prayer Meeting</p> <p>3:00 pm Varsity Basketball Practice</p>	<p>26</p> <p>4:30pm Varsity Basketball Game HOME</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7pm Adult Volleyball</p>
<p>28 - 9:30am Worship</p> <p><i>Day School Choir Sings</i></p> <p>10:30am Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:15am Bible Study</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>4:30pm Varsity Basketball Game HOME</p>	<p>31</p> <p>1:45pm Chapel</p> <p>7:30pm Adult Choir</p>			

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RETURN REQUESTED

POSTMASTER: DATED MATERIAL

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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*