



The Immanuel Echo

The Newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church
Manitowoc, WI
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

December 2023

WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER?

Steve's company was hosting its annual Christmas party, but Steve and Caroline weren't having a great time. Even though it seemed like everyone ELSE was having a great time, this couple was pretty much ignored. In the middle of the holiday cheer, they didn't really have any.

Here's why. Steve recently joined the company and didn't know many people at work. He knew some names but didn't really know the people themselves very well. And when you're pretty quiet as it is, it's hard to jump into lively party conversations.

If only someone noticed them and introduced them and brought them into the group so they could get to know everyone better!

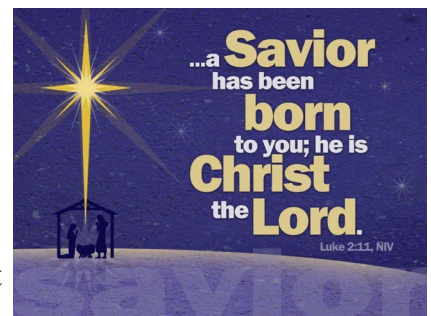
Ever feel distant from your Creator? You believe in God, but sometimes you just don't feel very close to him? It's a lonely, helpless, terrible feeling ... that God just won't allow.

The Bible tells us, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18). The "One and Only" is Jesus, who came to help us know God better. The birth of Jesus is such a big deal at Immanuel because it is what God did for us to get closer to him. On the night of his birth an angel told shepherds, "Today a Savior has been born to you" (Luke 2:11).

So, whatever we've done or said to create distance between us and our Creator – God knew and sent Jesus to bridge the gap! He came to us and took the punishment for distancing ourselves from God with our priorities, our negligence, and our "ho hum" attitudes about him. He came so we could see and understand God's love. His birth was the start; his death was the finish.

Do you know the feeling Steve and Caroline had? You won't EVER have that with God because of Christmas. Jesus came so we would know God better.

Join us this Christmas so we can be closer to Him and each other—through Jesus, whose birth we celebrate.



~ Pastor Matt Zimpelmann

COME TO ADVENT WORSHIP

Our special midweek Advent services are on **Wednesday, December 6th, 13th, and 20th.** This year's theme is *Advent Images from Isaiah.*

- † **December 6th**—*Isaiah 64:1-9*
- † **December 13th**—*Isaiah 40:1-11*
- † **December 20th**—*Isaiah 61:1-3,10-11*

The times of the worship services are **4:00 PM and 6:30 PM.**
Come and be a part of these special opportunities to focus on our coming Savior!



Between worship services, join us for some good food and friendship:

- * **December 6th**—Ladies of Immanuel hosting
- * **December 13th**—Immanuel Choir hosting
- * **December 20th**—PIE hosting—desserts will be served in school at the Open House



CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

Christmas is around the corner, and preparations are being made to celebrate the birth of our Savior. *What a Story!* is a children's Christmas service that explores the details of the story of salvation and reminds us that it is more than just a story – it is historic fact, the details of which are the basis of our sure and certain hope through faith in Christ. Pre-service music of children playing piano, bells and chimes will begin 30 minutes before each of the children's services.

- ◆ **CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE:**
- **Friday, December 22nd at 9:00 AM**—PreK thru 8th grade

- ◆ **CHRISTMAS EVE: Sunday, December 24th**
- **8:00 AM**—Children's Christmas Eve worship service in church—PreK thru 8th grade
- **10:30 AM**—Children's Christmas Eve worship service in church—PreK thru 8th grade
- **6:00 PM**—Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Please join us for both the Children's service and the Candlelight service to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

- ◆ **CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE:**
- **Monday, December 25th at 9:00 AM**—Join us as we celebrate our Lord's birth



OPEN FORUM & VOTERS' MEETING

On **Sunday, December 10th**, following the late worship service, there will be an **Open Forum** followed by the **Voters' Meeting**. The members of the Church Council and other committees will be reporting on their respective areas of ministry. Reports will be made available prior to the Open Forum. Check the Information Center in the coming weeks.



Opportunities for Men

Here are several opportunities for all the men to grow in God's Word!

† **Men's Prayer Group** meets on **Tuesdays, December 5th and 19th; and January 2nd and 16th at 7:30 AM** in the Gathering Room.

† **Men's Bible Study**— **Saturdays, December 2nd and January 6th—8:00 AM** at Grace Lutheran and on **Saturdays, December 9th and 23rd; and**

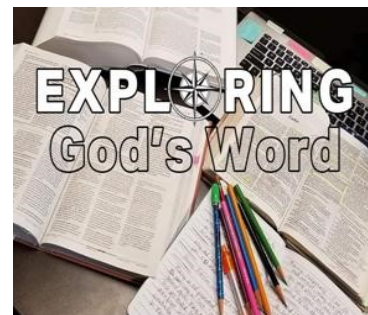
January 13th and 17th—8:00 AM at 1st German Lutheran

"For where two or three gather in My name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20



Sunday Family Bible Study

Join us for Family Bible Study on Sunday mornings between worship services to dig deeper into God's truths for us in our lives. During challenging times and joyful times, we learn to fix our eyes on Jesus, His truths, how vital He is in our lives, and our eternal future. Each week we explore a different topic so join us anytime. God has so much to tell us, to help us, at all times! **Please note:** there is no Bible Study on Sundays, December 24th and 31st.



Our study is taught in a relaxed, family atmosphere. All ages are welcome! There are activity pages for the children that correlate with the lesson being studied, and they participate in the beginning of Bible study with their parents. At 9:50am, children are welcome to go with a teacher to the room across the hall. There they learn and explore the same portion of God's Word through felt board, video, crafts, etc. and sing praises to Jesus. At 10:10am the children are brought back to their parents in Bible study. Parents have the option of their children staying with them for all of Bible study; in this case parents with little ones may wish to bring along a snack or coloring book for them.

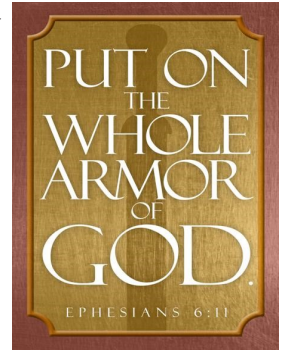
Our Bible study is held in the Fellowship Hall (church basement) from 9:20 AM to 10:15 AM.

Women's Bible Study—Ephesians

Women of all ages are invited to join us for Women's Bible Study on **Saturdays, December 16th; January 13th and 27th at 9:00 AM.** We meet in the Conference Room in the church office.

We are currently enjoying a study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul wrote his letter to them while he was a prisoner and in it he reminded the Ephesians of what God's great power and grace has done for believers. That means you too!

Bring your Bible, if you don't have one, please let me know and we will supply you with one. There is a study guide and we will also be using The People's Bible Galatians / Ephesians book for reference as well. We have copies of both available. If you are planning to join us or have any questions, please contact Judy Fuerbringer at 920-973-3355 or judynglenn@ameritech.net.



Join us to be refreshed & strengthened by the words of our Savior!!

We Invite You To Advent by Candlelight Saturday, December 9th

Women of all ages are invited to set aside the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and take a quiet evening to prepare our hearts for the busy and hectic run-up to the holidays, a time to gather amid the soft glow of candles and the sound of music and God's Word—a time to raise our voices in word and song. Join us on **Saturday, December 9th at 5:30 PM** to view the tables illuminated with candlelight. You will then enjoy desserts and social time, followed by a special program and music. Please, invite your female family members, friends, and neighbors of all ages and join us for this special evening of fellowship, music, God's word and delicious desserts! All ladies, whether invited by a specific hostess or not are encouraged to sign-up to attend. The sign-up sheets are in the binder located in the back of the Gathering Room. It is an evening you won't want to miss!



If you need a ride, please indicate that on the sign-up sheets.

Hostess Opportunities: Please consider volunteering to be a hostess for the evening! Hostesses provide table settings, holiday decorations, candles, and a favorite dessert for between 6-10 guests. Many ladies decide to co-host with a partner. It is lots of fun and requires only a few hours of your time for planning, baking or buying, and decorating and serving your guests! If you are interested and would like more information please contact Kathy Groth at 920-682-5276.

Order Your Poinsettia(s)

Help to beautify Immanuel for the celebration of the birth of our Savior! **The deadline for signing up for poinsettias is Sunday, December 3rd.** All poinsettias can be taken home following the Christmas Day worship service. Envelopes for signing up are in the back of the Gathering Room on the podium, then place your envelope with the payment in the podium. Checks payable to Ladies of Immanuel. Call or text Judy at 920-973-3355.



Ladies of Immanuel Christmas Party

The Ladies of Immanuel are having their Christmas Party on **Thursday, December 14th at 1:30 PM.** **ALL** ladies are invited! Join us as we celebrate Jesus' birth, and enjoy food and fellowship with your sisters in Christ. Entertainment will be provided by Immanuel's 1st and 2nd grade students.

Please bring a food dish to share. If you would like, you can also join in the "bring a present, get a present" gift exchange (\$2-\$5). We are also holding a Voluntary Service Project benefiting ***New Beginnings-A Home for Mothers.*** If you would like to help, you may choose to give a monetary donation; donate clothing in child sizes 6 and up or boys size 2T; or pull-ups in any size.

Bring a friend and join in the fun!

Acts 20:35 - "It Is More Blessed To Give Than To Receive"

During the Christmas season, there is a beautiful opportunity for joyful giving back to God. It is a time when we reflect on the birth of Jesus, who was the ultimate gift from God to humanity. As we celebrate this miraculous event, we are reminded of the importance of gratitude and generosity. Giving back to God can take many forms, whether it is through acts of service, sharing our blessings with others, or offering our time, talents, and resources to those in need. It is a season of selflessness and love, where we find joy in bringing happiness and comfort to others. This joyful giving back to God not only strengthens our connection with Him but also fills our hearts with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. It is a reminder that the true spirit of Christmas lies in giving, and when we give back to God, we experience the true essence of the season.



Blessings on your month,
~ Tom Wurm, Financial Secretary

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION—PIE

Partners in Education (PIE) is a parent organization that plans social events and fundraising for Immanuel School. This year, our fundraiser is for LED lighting in the classrooms and new fans for the gym. The cost is \$18,000. At our Trivia Night event we raised \$2,000 of our goal. Please consider making a donation to help us reach our goal. You can stop by the church office or online giving to make a donation.

UPCOMING EVENTS—2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR—Mark your calendars!

DECEMBER

- ◆ 20th—Wednesday—PIE hosts Advent Supper—Desserts served at the School Open House

JANUARY

- ◆ 15th-19th—Penny Wars during Spirit Week

Thank you for your support!

Please contact Jaimie Carlson at 920-242-4286 to see how you can assist with our events. We are looking for parent volunteers for the many events we have planned. Our events help give back to the school, create social events for students and parents and support the staff.

We are looking forward to a great year!!!

MORNINGS WITH MOMMY

Join *Mornings with Mommy* on Thursday, December 14th from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM for our annual *Happy Birthday, Jesus Party* as we celebrate Jesus birthday! This FREE interactive holiday event is for moms and caregivers and kids to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas through crafts, stories, songs, community, and our traditional cupcake celebration! For ages birth to 5 years old and their caregivers.



We will meet in the Fellowship Hall, located in the lower level of Immanuel church. Please contact Andrea at 715-220-1439 or aldolan@gmail.com with any questions and to secure your spot and allow us to plan in advance. Feel free to invite a friend too! This event does tend to fill to capacity so RSVP very soon!

Like and follow us on our **Facebook page—Mornings with Mommy-Manitowoc**, to stay up to date with future events.

CHRISTMAS IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY

The Library has a number of Christmas books both fiction and non-fiction as well as Christmas CDs and DVDs. Please stop and see what we have available.

The various Christmas books are by authors such as Thomas Kinkade and Debbie Malcomber. We also have a series of Christmas books by Donna Van Liere, some of which have been made into Hallmark movies. These include *The Christmas Shoes*, *The Christmas Note*, *The Christmas Blessing* and *The Christmas Promise*. There are also many wonderful children's easy books to help little one's understand the "reason for the season". These will be on display by the children's books in the church library.

We have quite a few Christmas DVDs ranging from Veggie Tales' "*Saint Nicholas*" to the non-fiction "*The Star of Bethlehem*" which unlocks the mystery of the world's most famous star. Look for these, as well as others, on display in December.



~ Laura Rozoff

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS CONCERTS!

♪ MLHS Junior Lancer Band:

- ◆ **Sunday December 10th—3:00 PM** at MLHS gymnasium. Featuring the Jr. Lancer Band, Concert Winds, Beginner Band, Jr. Lancer Youth Choir, and MLHS Jazz Band

♪ Christmas at the Seminary:

- ◆ **Sunday December 10th—3:00 PM and 7:00 PM** at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the campus auditorium-11831 North Seminary Drive, Mequon. The 3:00 PM concert is streamed live at



livestream.com/WLSLive.

♪ MLHS Christmas Concert :

- ◆ **Thursday, December 21st—4:30 PM & 7:30 PM** at the Capitol Civic Center—913 South 8th Street—free and open to the community—invite your friends!!!

Come and join these dedicated singers and musicians as we prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth and raise our voices in praise to our newborn Savior Jesus.





During the past few months, the Board of Elders has been reviewing if we should and could expand the number of times Communion is offered using the common cup. Accordingly, we hope and pray that our decision to expand will come as good news to the members asking for more opportunities to take Communion in this way. As you may remember, we had originally planned on offering it only on the fifth Sundays and the corresponding Thursday evening services along with Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday. Instead, we will now expand the Common Cup offerings to the first Sunday and the corresponding Thursday evening services of every month plus the Maundy Thursday services. This will all start in January of 2024.

Your continued feedback is greatly appreciated.

~David Ramseur

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN ENDOWMENT FUND

Immanuel Lutheran Endowment Fund (ILEF) founded in 2003

**“His mercy extends to those who fear Him,
from generation to generation.” Matthew 6:33**



Plant your seeds now, and trust in the Lord that these seeds will bear fruit even when you are gone.

Advent is the season of gift-giving as at Christmas we reflect on the greatest Gift of all – God’s Son – our Savior. Through our regular and special envelope offerings, we use the opportunity to give gifts to support the congregation’s efforts to support the Lord’s work.

We also give gifts reflecting our love to family members and friends. At times we struggle finding an appropriate gift for someone who seems to already have all their needs and wants fulfilled. A gift to the *Immanuel Lutheran Endowment Fund (ILEF)* in their name would provide a long-term goal of continuing to share the Word of God into the future.

If you have questions about the Immanuel Lutheran Endowment Fund (ILEF), please contact someone from the Endowment Committee or email us at endowment@ilutheran.org. Endowment Fund brochures, contribution envelopes, and bookmarks are available at the Welcome/Information Center in the Gathering Room at church.

Groups within the congregation who have a project that would enhance the ministry/mission of Immanuel are invited to submit a proposal for consideration in 2024. Contact one of the ILEF committee members for a Grant Request Form which should be submitted by February 2024.

Committee Members:

Greg Schmill, Chairperson

Tony Dick, Secretary

Dave Nickels, ECHO articles

Scott Stuckmann, Treasurer

Judy Gueldner, Grant Request Coordinator



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
James 5:16

- † That all may cherish the gift of Jesus this Christmas and in the new year
- † For all who travel—that the Lord keep them safe
- † That we may all be thankful during the upcoming Christmas season and throughout the New Year

Pastoral Acts

Home In Heaven

Kenneth Wayne Stuebs 11/5

Baptisms

Marshall Lueptow 11/19
Benjamin Nickels 11/19

Gifts and Memorials

In Memory of - Kenneth Stuebs

- ♥ Many thanks for the gifts of love for our Savior Jesus Christ for Immanuel



HATS, MITTENS, & SCARVES

Beginning December 1st and through the winter months, the Immanuel Evangelism Team will again be collecting new homemade or store bought hats, mittens, scarves and gloves to be shared with those caught in the cold. The items will be bagged along with little tags attached, letting those in need know that they have warm friends here at Immanuel.

The items will be tied to our parking lot fence, and also distributed throughout the community.



GriefShare

is a support ministry to help people who are grieving the loss of a loved one whether recent or in the past. Each session is about 2 hours long. There is a short video on various topics presented by mental health experts who have also gone through the grieving process. This is followed by group discussion time. Between each weekly session there is a workbook that has daily exercises that point you to God's Word and help you work through your grief.



GriefShare is **starting in new session beginning Thursday, January 4th, and will continue meeting Thursdays thru March 24th.** We will be meeting at Immanuel from 2:30 to 4:30 PM in the church Conference Room. If you are interested in getting more information or know someone who we should personally invite, please contact Larry Verlinden at 920-323-2297 or verlinden@comcast.net. More information and registration is available online at the GriefShare website, griefshare.org. There is a charge of \$20 per person which is to cover the cost of workbooks. Please register by December 26th so we can ensure that we have a sufficient number of workbooks. Anyone is welcome to join the group at any time during the new session.

Serving Our Lord

2023 Church Council

God has richly blessed our family of faith with so many gifted people. One of the ways in which God's people have been gifted to serve is in the area of servant-leadership. So that your leaders are available for you to contact with ideas, encouragements, or concerns, we've listed the names of your Church Council here. Feel free to also use the following e-mail address to contact the entire Council: council@lutheran.org. (One e-mail sent to that address reaches all the Council members with e-mail.)

Tom Winter, President
Reed Kabelowsky, Secretary
Bob Seal, Treasurer
Dave Ramseur, Board of Elders
Tom Wurm, Financial Secretary
Nate Hochmuth, Family Ministry
Ron Nicklaus, Evangelism
Dan Smith, Property
Jason Sweney, Board of Education

THIS MONTH USHERS

DECEMBER

12/03/2023 Early—Team 2
12/03/2023 Late—Team 8

12/06/2023 ADVENT WORSHIP
 4:00 PM—Team 3
 6:30 PM—Team 10

12/10/2023 Early—Team 4
12/10/2023 Late—Team 9

12/13/2023 ADVENT WORSHIP
 4:00 PM—Team 5
 6:30 PM—Team 11

12/17/2023 Early—Team 1
12/17/2023 Late—Team 6

12/20/2023 ADVENT WORSHIP

4:00 PM—Team 2
 6:30 PM—Not Assigned

12/22/2023—Team 3—Children's Christmas Preview Service

CHRISTMAS EVE:
12/24/2023 Team 4—8:00 AM
12/24/2023 Team 7—10:30 AM
12/24/2023 Team 13—6:00 PM

CHRISTMAS DAY:
12/25/2023 Team 5—9:00 AM

12/31/2023 Early—Team 1
12/31/2023 Late—Team 8

JANUARY

01/04/24 6:30 PM—Team 10

01/07/24 Early—Team 2
01/07/24 Late—Team 9

01/11/24 6:30 PM—Team 11

01/14/24 Early—Team 3
01/14/24 Late—Team 6

01/18/24 6:30 PM—Team 13

01/21/24 Early—Team 4
01/21/24 Late—Team 7

01/25/24 6:30 PM—Team 10

01/28/24 Early—Team 5
01/28/24 Late—Team 8

DECEMBER GREETERS

12/03/2023

8:00 AM— Shirley Schmill & Virginia Temme
10:30 AM— Cody & Danielle Freemyer Family

12/10/2023

8:00 AM— Daryl & Lisa Kliment
10:30 AM— Matt & Jamie Carlson Family

12/17/2023

8:00 AM— Mark & Joanne Gaedtke
10:30 AM— Judy Fuerbringer

12/24/2023—CHRISTMAS EVE

8:00 AM—
10:30 AM—

12/31/2023

8:00 AM— Julie Denfeld
10:30 AM— Larry & Linda Verlinden

JANUARY GREETERS

01/07/2024

8:00 AM— Bob & Amanda Seal
10:30 AM— Ann & Karen Winter

01/14/2024

8:00 AM— Chuck & Linda Kauth
10:30 AM— Sandy Stadelman & Helen Demsien

01/21/2024

8:00 AM— Bob & Sue Kempfert
10:30 AM— Ron & Toni Nicklaus

01/28/2024

8:00 AM— Jason & Amy Muench
10:30 AM— Gary & Lynn Markowski





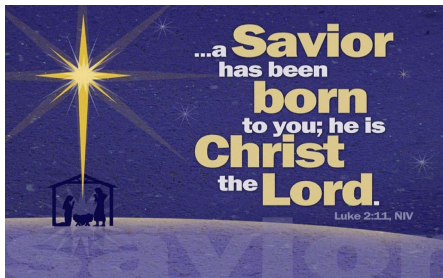
IMMANUEL

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DECEMBER 2023

The Newsletter Staff

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Worship & Contact Information

Worship Schedule

Thursdays: 6:30 PM—Resumes
January 4, 2024

Sundays: 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM



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Preschool to Grade 8

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