

WJH

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

This is the time of the year when we begin to wonder: Will this Christmas be refreshing, or will it be exhausting? Some people say: It's refreshing for the kids, exhausting for the adults. Considering that I'm now one of the adults, I don't like that answer. What to do?

Simplify Christmas Shopping

Doesn't this become a big ordeal? I've often employed the "nothing's quite right" approach to Christmas shopping. Every gift idea is met with a reason that it doesn't work. So we'd wander the mall, picking stuff up, and setting it back down. Many times I've left the mall with not one gift, but a backache that said I'd been walking in circles for too long.

Last year, Renée would say, "What about this?" And I'd respond, "Yep, that works." We weren't trying to be thoughtless. We were acknowledging that there's no such thing as the perfect gift. We finished our shopping in record time, thus removing probably the worst part of the whole season.

Lots of Christmas Music

Christmas has the best music, so let's hear it. The record albums of my childhood have now been re-released as CD's. I've downloaded the best of them into my iPod, and the Christmas Playlist starts up sometime in mid-November. Before Thanksgiving—because I like it. My prescription is: Christmas music. And more Christmas music.

Get Ahead on Bulletins

Last year I took out a sheet of paper, wrote down all the good Christmas hymns in the hymnal, and planned out the whole season. My goal was to make sure that we'd sing them all. Quite accidentally, I'd gotten a little ahead, which made the office less stressful.

You probably aren't working on bulletins this time of year. But whatever stuff bunches up on you, tackle it a little early. This makes some of the hurriedness go away.

A Little AM Radio

This November I decided that our days are too full of noise. So I turned the car radio off. I drove in silence to a meeting, and was strangely clear-headed.

When I decided to turn the radio on again, I wondered what's on AM these days? When I was a kid our cars only had AM radios. I remember the poor sound quality, the hissing when you drive near a power line, and a lot of oldies music. (I also remember that whenever I heard the familiar voice of Doctor Demento, I'd insist that we had to listen. Retrospectively, I suspect that my parents were in prayer that we wouldn't come across the good doctor.)

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WJH continued

So I began my search on the AM dial. The first thing I discovered is that it's become almost entirely talk radio. Not that that's wrong, but I wasn't really looking for bleak political news, or guys yelling about New York sports.

Eventually I found AM 850 which, happily, plays oldies. It still has the poor sound quality, and it still hisses near the power lines. To me, that adds to the experience.

I was disturbed to hear them identifying the station as "B107." I thought: those numbers sound like an FM station. Sure enough, 850 is the AM version of FM 107.3. which leaves me in a dilemma: Do I listen to my oldies in FM or AM? FM sounds better. AM has the "desired effect." If I'm in the car by myself I've found that I like the nostalgia of the AM channel a little better.

Daily Devotion:

This is just not negotiable. I read the Bible chapter suggested in Immanuel's weekly bulletin insert. I also read from a daily devotional book. I've used many different books. All of them are good in their own way. It doesn't matter which one you use, so pick one for the year and stick with it.

Long ago I heard a speaker say, "Most people feel too rushed to spend time in Word and Prayer. The truth is you're too rushed not to be in Word and Prayer." I think that he had it just right, and his words encourage me to stay with it.

Anyway, that's how I enter the Thanksgiving—Advent—Christmas time of year. No one needs to employ my method. But I pray that you do find a way of not just "surviving" the holidays, but thriving and growing in Christ. Merry Christmas!

Pastor Matt Meyer



Season's greetings and blessed holiday wishes to all from your Immanuel Lutheran staff and an open invitation to join us at any and all of the worship services and events offered here this month. As we enter Advent our busy, multi-purpose facility will again be bustling with something-for-everyone activities in anticipation of Christmas therefore please check the enclosed calendar for details and come on down.



Kudos this issue to ALL our dedicated volunteers whose efforts throughout the year make it possible for our Church & School and Cemetery to function and move forward. Without your generous sharing of time, talent, and resources progress here would be dramatically slowed. Please watch the bulletin and website for upcoming 2012 volunteer opportunities.

On a business note, year end contributions must be postmarked by 12/31 to be counted for 2011. Also, please watch your mailboxes for your 2012 contribution envelopes and be careful not to misplace them with your unwanted holiday mail. 2012 should be an exciting yet challenging year with trying to sell our downtown properties and increasing our school enrollment topping our things to do list. Stay tuned. We thank you for your continued support. Merry Christmas!

In His Service ,
Bill Hunt, Business & Facilities Manager

Does life ever frustrate you? What do you do when life doesn't go your way? A lot of us experienced frustration during the last snow storm, myself included! Life as normal was no longer, well, normal! Does the Bible have any insight for handling frustration?

1. The first thing we should ask ourselves is what hand we might have played in our own frustration? Maybe we didn't cause the great snow storm of 2011, but some times we have to admit that other frustrating situations have been caused by ourselves. I almost ran out of gas one evening during the summer, but it was my fault that I didn't stop to gas up. The Bible first asks us to examine ourselves. *"A man reaps what he sows." Galatians 6:7*
2. Ask yourself what you can learn from your situation? God may be guiding us through a difficult time to help us grow closer to Him or to develop our godly character. God often places us in interesting situations that force us to become more loving, generous, patient, or outgoing. If God wants to teach you peace, then you can bet that your life will be thrust into the midst of chaos. We have the promise thought that "all things work together for good." Romans 8:28
3. Have you thanked God for all the blessings that you do have? When we go through frustrating situations, we often learn to appreciate what we have even more. God is developing an attitude of gratitude in us that we might not have had before. When God sent the apostle Paul to Rome, Paul thought it was to build up the church in the greatest city of his day. But God brought Paul to Rome not for fame, but to be imprisoned. Yet it was during those moments in prison that Paul wrote much of the New Testament. *"In everything give thanks." Thessalonians 5:18*
4. Ask God to fill you with His divine love. What!? Love is self-giving and sacrificial, not self-serving. Many times we get frustrated because we believe that the world revolves around us, instead of realizing that God created us for the purpose of loving others. When we are preoccupied with ourselves, we forget that others are our priority. During the snow storm, I had an opportunity to spend time at other people's houses and with families that I don't normally get to be around. The snow storm literally brought us together. It was a blessed frustration! *"Love is not easily angered." 1 Corinthians 13:5*

English Language Learners

Beginning January 31, 2012 Immanuel will be offering an English class for the large community of Portuguese and Spanish speakers that God has placed on our doorstep. We would like to welcome our neighbors who would like to learn English into our church and help them better themselves. The course will help those who want to learn English for the completion of a GED and for citizenship. If you are interested in helping with this project, enjoy working with diverse cultures, are looking for community service hours, or just want to help change the direction of someone's life, please contact Pastor Joel. The course will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-9 pm. Even if you can only help for a couple weeks or as a substitute, we would greatly appreciate it.

Marriage Encounter

Whether you are newly married, remarried, or married for a number of years you will find Marriage Encounter's retreat worth while. This is a weekend with your spouse that will improve your communication skills, renew your love and commitment, and rekindle romance in your marriage. The retreat is a freewill donation and will be held May 4-6. Please contact the church office to reserve a spot on this retreat.

Young Adults

Looking for fellow Christian friends, fun, food, and fellowship? Please check out our Facebook page under "Immanuel Lutheran Church and School groups" or send your email to the church office to be added to the monthly email newsletter for these and other upcoming events.

White Elephant Party at Pastor Joel's December 18 at 5 pm
Movie Night at Church January 21 at 6:30 pm
Cosmic Bowling at Brookfield Lanes February 18 at 6:30 pm



Dear Members of Immanuel and Friends in Christ:

As we prepare personally and with our families for the celebration of the birth of our Saviour, our congregation too has a schedule full of events for you to participate in. They include among others Christmas caroling for our shut ins; Wednesday evening Advent services; decorating the Church on Dec.10th after the 5pm service; the children's Sunday School Christmas pageant on Dec.18th; servant events for the youth with the Jericho Partnership; and of course worship services on Christmas DAY and Eve.

From a Council perspective, one of our activities will be of particular interest to you and that is the audit being conducted of our finances and business operations. Council has been privy to a first draft for discussion purposes, with a final report hopefully to be received in December. Council will be meeting in January to formulate Immanuel's action plan in response to any issues that arise. In all likelihood, we will call a special Voters meeting for February to present the final report and our responses. Below is the highlights page I provided yesterday at the November Voters meeting. Should anyone have any questions, please come and speak to me or call me.

On behalf of 'Kat and the Kittens' (my four daughters), we would like to wish you all a Christ filled Christmas celebration!

In Christ,

Phil Wiegand



AUDIT UPDATE

Accounting firm Reynolds and Rowella have been engaged since mid -September. Our size and the fact that we have not had an audit conducted in recent memory (10+ years) required the outsourcing to, and the objectivity of, an outside firm. The final report is to be received in December

Council will be reviewing the final report and providing "management" responses to the report in January, which the Voters can review at a specially called Voters meeting anticipated for February

Some high level observations already known include the following:

- *We have too many memorials (therefore bank accounts) to be effectively managed
- *We need to improve the timeliness of deposits
- *We need to update policies and procedures including those for counting the offerings, requiring more members to share in the responsibility
- *We need to segregate some duties to ensure the proper checks and balances are in place
- *We need to review systems to ensure timely and accurate reporting

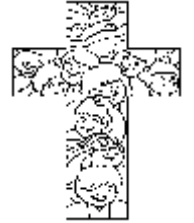
From the Sunday School Superintendent:

Immanuel's Sunday School program resumed for the 2011-12 school year on September 18th. The program includes seven regular classes for youth from age 4 through High School, as well as two Adult Bible studies. Staff for this ministry includes Pastor Harper, Pastor Cundiff and twenty-eight lay volunteers providing teaching, music, and group event support.

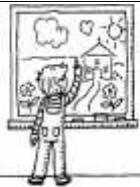
Attendance from September 18 through November 13 has averaged 64.3 per week, of whom 5.6 have been visitors. In the past twelve months, the Sunday School has averaged 53.8 attendees per week, which is an 11% increase over the average weekly attendance for the twelve-month period ended November 2010.

In supplement to the *Growing in Christ* curriculum, twice monthly all of the age 4 through grade 6 classes begin in the Sanctuary for a group Invocation, lesson review and music. These group "openings," intended to promote fellowship and shared learning, have proven engaging for the kids. Looking ahead, the Advent season will feature regular rehearsals for the December 18th Christmas pageant as well as a group lesson on November 27th.

On behalf of the Sunday School staff, we ask for the continued prayers of the congregation that our efforts to share the stories of our Heavenly Father's grace and mercy would bear fruit with the children He has placed in our care.



In Christ ~ Scott Scholten



Immanuel Lutheran School News ...

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the recent car show a great success. On short notice, church and school families came together to put on a great event attended by many people. Thank you to Lew Lombardo for his expertise and support in this event. The BCDS plans to host this event again in the spring (late May). I would also like to thank everyone for attending the middle school Oktoberfest. Our seating was sold out and with financial support from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, our students raised over \$3000 to offset costs for their trip to Boston. Due to the great demand, we plan to move our event outside next year to accommodate more people. (Did you know you can find the recipe for those great potato pancakes in the ILC&S Cookbook? You can purchase one from the church or school office for only \$10!)

As we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, I would like to take some time to share with you some upcoming ILS events.

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| PK/K Advent Service | 12/7 -- 7pm |
| 1 st -8 th grade Advent Service | 12/14 -- 7pm |
| Pizzeria Uno Family Night Out | 12/15 -- all day |
| Registration for 2012-13 | starts 1/3/12 |
| Open House | 1/28 -- 10am-1pm |

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS: FREE MONEY FOR ILC&S!

If you are a member of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans you can earn money for Immanuel simply with a few clicks of your computer mouse. Thrivent members can direct Thrivent Choice dollars to Immanuel. Dollar value is based on total products you have with Thrivent.

Go to www.thrivent.com and click on "Thrivent Choice".

Click the red box "Get Started" and simply follow the directions to log or create a user name.

In the search section, list Immanuel, Danbury, CT and select "search". Immanuel Lutheran School will come up as the selection. Click on "Set up Recurring" and follow directions.

Monies will now automatically be sent to the business office and you won't have to do anything else.

Advent greetings to you and your family!

In Christ's Service ~ Nate Palkewick, Principal



Why the Students at ILS Don't Need to Study the Pilgrims This Year

The recent October snowstorm and subsequent power outage came with many emotions for the teachers at Immanuel Lutheran School. With speaking to my fellow colleagues, I could sense a bit of disbelief, frustration, anger, denial, confusion, and yes, even a bit of elation and joy. Unexpected time off is great for last minute plans and unusual midday activities like lunch with friends and for some who were lucky to have power, watching shows like "The View" in the late morning. While there was time to rest and relax, there were unsettling thoughts going through some teachers' minds. While we waited for phone calls regarding closures or delays, we were also thinking of what was planned in our classroom for the week.

When in the world we were going to teach our students about Veterans Day, Election Day and even Thanksgiving while missing a whole week of the already short November? Not to mention the half days for conferences and the Thanksgiving break. And of course, yes, let's be serious, when were we going to re-schedule "Reformation Day Duck Pin Bowling"?!?! There were so many questions!

When I realized we would be missing a whole week of instruction, I jokingly was saying to friends and family that I wasn't going to teach the students about the Pilgrims this year. We were, after all living like Pilgrims without electricity. It was a joke meant to make light of my own frustration with time lost from the classroom, but upon further reflection, it's true! Here are some reasons why the students at ILS might identify more quickly with the Pilgrims this year than in past years of learning our early American history.

1620: When the Pilgrims arrived in 1620, they found a vast forest thick with trees and wilderness. It was a great land of the unknown.

2011: On October 29th, 2011, trees all over the state snapped and fell over roadways and power lines creating a "wilderness" and land unknown to motorists.

1620: The Pilgrims lived without electricity and depended on the sunlight to do many activities.

2011: No need to explain this one.

1620: The Pilgrims didn't have much food when they first arrived and lived off of stale food items brought over from England.

2011: Refrigerators weren't running and food started to smell and go bad. Grocery stores were limited because of above tree problem.

1620: The Pilgrims worked together to make a Common House that they would all live in and commune in until the Spring when more houses could be built.

2011: Neighbors gathered at houses of those who had electricity restored or congregated at "emergency shelters" in their communities.

1620: The Pilgrims had heard stories of Native Americans and were on the lookout for them around camp. They weren't sure how an encounter would be with them, either friendly or hostile.

2011: We heard that CL and P workers were in the neighborhood. We didn't know how close or how soon they would be around, but we were on the lookout for them. Again it was unclear if interactions with them would be friendly or hostile.

1620: The Pilgrims were unprepared for the cold and snowy New England weather. They had to huddle together and warm by a fire and many were sick and died.

2011: "Snowtober" was unexpected and certainly 15" in parts of the state was unheard of for this time of year. We know better now...

Joanna Vill
Teacher, ILS Kindergarten



On Thursday, November 10, ILS celebrated Veteran's Day with an assembly filled with patriotic songs, readings and poems. This celebration was to honor the veterans in our lives and community. Third grade did a little bit of research to find out more about this special day. Here is what they found.....



Luke- On 11th day of the 11th month in the 11th hour WWI ended.

David- WWI ended on November 11, 1918

Jolene- Veteran's Day became a federal holiday in 1938.

Dionie- Shortly after WWI ended, WWII broke out.

Alex- Veteran's Day was first known as Armistice Day.

Kathleen- WWI was known as the "War to end all Wars."

Jack- Schools are closed on Veteran's Day.

Kandasamy- Ceremonies, flag raisings, parades and special services are held to honor those who served.

Max- Veteran's Day is a day to honor/celebrate those who served in the military.

Sindhuja- In 1954, Congress changed the name from Armistice Day to Veteran's Day.

Joseph- In WWII, many lives were lost.

Sasha- It is a day to celebrate peace.

Andy- It was called Armistice Day to celebrate the peace that was made on this day.

Barbara Hoke
Teacher, ILS 3rd Grade



I wanted to sum up our outstanding year for **Operation Christmas Child** and give a special thanks to all who did so much to make it such a success this year. Here is a quick summary:

*Number of Boxes - 382 (compared to 267 last year)

*Packing Party - Over 20 volunteers that packed 60 + Boxes

*Lori Woodruff - Involved her students at school and brought in 50 boxes

*Deana Haitsh coordinated boxes at work and brought in about 15 boxes

*Ashlyn, Abbey, Erin and Anna sold all their cupcakes and raised \$480 toward the shipping costs

*The 8 Volunteers transported the boxes over to Brookfield on Friday:(*Kurt Habeck, David Lutz, Randy Salazar, Bill Haitsh, Bill Hunt, Dean Hollrah, Jackie Scholten*)

It is a wonderful blessing to be reaching 382 children with the gift of the gospel along with a shoe-box filled with goodies. And it was a great way for our Church community - both young and old - to group together with enthusiasm around this project. Thanks be to God.

Jennifer Marr, Coordinator
Operation Christmas Child Gift Boxes





The Board of Lay Ministry continues to work with the pastors to support the spiritual well being of the congregation.

One of our primary tasks is to visit those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot get to church. Board members bring a brief service or devotion and the sacrament to shut-ins (usually on the first Sunday of each month). **If you or someone you know would like to be on our visitation list, please call the church office.**

Another significant part of our ministry is to encourage participation in Bible studies. These are an important part of growing in God's grace. There are several Bible Classes on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM. In addition, several times a year, you have the opportunity to study the Word in sessions on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 PM and Thursday afternoons at 2:00 PM. The next sessions begin on January 18th and 19th 2012. We urge everyone to become regular attendees of at least one weekly class. We guarantee that your faith and understanding will be strengthened.

Members of this board also do what they can to mark special events that impact spiritual maturity. For instance, on September 9th we sponsored a Confirmation Kick-off that was both a social event and business meeting for youth and their families. Before the pastors met to discuss expectations and the schedule for the year, we enjoyed some food and fellowship. We look forward to more events in the year ahead.

There are several things to note that relate to the upcoming seasons of Advent and Christmas. The Board of Lay ministry is preparing a devotional booklet that includes a list of activities that families and individuals can do for others throughout Advent.

The hope is that, by honoring God's great gift to us through service to others, each of us can walk closer to Him during this joyful and often hectic time of year.

The devotional will be distributed in several forms on November 27 (including email and print). If you would like to receive your copy through email, please make sure that Rachel Williams has your correct address.



Mission Quilting Group

The quilting group has been busy at work despite the weather and 17 inches of snow at my house. We have finished 12 quilts including two baby quilts for the Christmas Festival for Ann's Place. We have several

requests for our Congregation and School families....we need some volunteers to sew some tops for us. It is simple straight stitch, 1/2 inch seams. The fabric is already cut. I would estimate that one top could be completed in 1-2 hours. Currently I have eight tops waiting for assembly and several more in process.

Our second request is to keep this ministry in your prayers. Please pray for the unknown people who will be receiving these quilts. Their living circumstances and need in most cases is something that we can't imagine. A quilt, a simple blanket can bring so much comfort.

Thank you to all who have donated fabric, sheets, thread and your time

Jeri Surovy

"Do not ride in automobiles; they cause 20 percent of all fatal accidents.

Do not stay at home; 17 percent of all accidents occur in the home.

Do not walk on the street or sidewalk; 14 percent of all accidents occur to pedestrians.

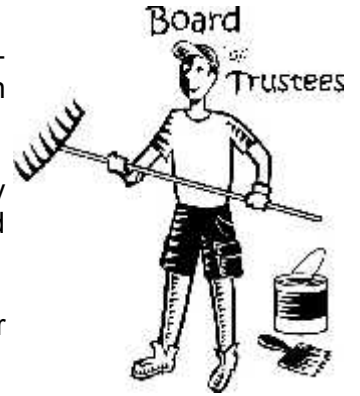
Do not travel by air, rail or water; 16 percent of all accidents happen on these.

"However, only .001% of all deaths reported occur in worship services. Hence, the safest place for you to be is in church. Sunday School is also relatively safe."

--Executive Speechwriter Newsletter, 8, No.1, (1993)



Thanks so much to all who help with this year's Clean-up Days! The 25+ volunteers at our Fall Clean-up made a huge difference in helping keep up our church and school home. Winter Cleanup Day is scheduled for Saturday, February 19th.



This past October's storm damage was relatively minor. Fallen limbs at cemetery were cleared from several gravesites and the road. We will have limbs and brush chipped to finish storm cleanup.

Cemetery leaf cleanup is being coordinated by Randy Salazar with the "regular crew". Contact Randy (203-744-7381) if you'd like to help out.

If you do have a couple of hours to help out around our facility, there is always something to be done. Keep an eye on the church calendar for clean-up days that are typically held each fall, winter and spring. Please call me (203-792-7558) either now or through out the year to find out how you can help. I look forward to having fun with you doing His work here at Immanuel!

While there is little to report on action for the sale of the downtown Step of Faith properties on West and Foster streets, the lease with our tenant, Aids Project of Greater Danbury (APOGD) will be up shortly. As you may know, we've exhausted options to replace the parking leased from Light House Ministries at 32 West St that expires at the end of this lease's term. While this does impact APOGD's use of parcel, they have expressed their desire to remain and we are in process of negotiating a new lease with them.

The four-unit rental house on Foster St is in good shape with no major items to report on it. Many thanks to Dick Walter for keeping tenants in the building and over seeing Immanuel's interest as each day we are that much closer to using these properties to fund our Family Life Center.

Your brother in Christ,
Dennis Ruopp
Chairperson, Board of Trustees



Merry Christmas from your Men's Club and thanks to all whose participation in such events as the bocce & brats nights, the Baltimore baseball trip, the bloodmobiles, the Bible studies, staffing the Jericho shelter, and the Oktoberfest/car show, helped to make 2011 both memorable and successful. If you have any ideas for 2012 events or projects please let us know.

In Immanuel Fantasy Football League action, Nate Palkewick's "Big Blue" and the Hunt's " Brookfield Giants" sit atop the pack at 5-3 while defending champ Mitch Morton's, "No Names" and Pastor Joel's "Gosh!" squad are even at 4-4 and Trip T's "Thunderhorses" and "Walter's Warrior's" are still in the playoff chase at 3-5. Stay tuned and watch for March Madness.



Bill Hunt



Next
VOICE DEADLINE
FEBRUARY 15th

ASSEMBLY
THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 23 - 10 am



Things we've done.....

- * LYF News / Events Communication methods continually improving
- * FaceBook for LYF Created
- * ILC Website updating
- * ILC Service Bulletin weekly updates
- * Emailing parents and Youth
- * LYF Bulletin Board



Board of Youth

LYF Friday Night on October 7th Mini-Golf & Meal at RW's Barbecue & Mini-Golf
21 Youth and 9 Adults attended.

Friday, October 14th – “FREE” Christian Rock Concert at Faith Academy in New Milford.
3 Adults & Youth attended

Sunday October 16th Joint Youth Group event with St. Joseph Church/School Danbury.
Bus trip to Lake Compounce in Southington, Ct., Haunted Graveyard
9 ILC Youth and 3 Adults attended

Joint Youth Group event with St. Joseph Church/School Danbury Sunday night, Nov. 13th
The LYF Board covered the Pizza expense & SJC Youth Board provided the beverages so this was a “Free” for all participants. “Sideline Basketball & Pizza”

Future Events / Business

Butter-Braid sales extended for Christmas time delivery due to much lower than expected sales thus far. We believe the snowstorm/power outage etc... put a damper on enthusiasm and ability to sell. Joan Sherwood is the contact for this endeavor.

Saturday, December 10th, 2011 (6-9 pm) “Girls and Moms and/or Dad’s night out at Danbury Mall” Carolyn Barrett is also the contact for this event. Great fellowship, Christmas shopping, a snack at food court.

Saturday, December 17th, 2011 Event/ date / times / location for a mission outreach / community service event for LYF members to volunteer / partner with Jericho Partnership. (Carolyn Barrett is the contact person.)

Maryland Mission trip, July 14 to 21, 2012, 2012 Better Homes for Appalachia Servant Event Group size will be limited to 8 participants per church including counselors. Youth participants should have completed the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh or Twelfth grade to be eligible to attend.

The total cost for the event is \$275 per participant. The required deposit is \$125 per participant at the time of registration. The balance will be due by June 1st, 2012

Registration is on a first come first served basis. Applications are available in the church office.



In service to Christ,
Art Stock
ILC Board of Youth Chair

**WOMEN'S
SERVICE
ORGANIZATION**



Tuesday, December 13 -- Christmas Party at Nancy Schulze's home at 6:30. Please bring a side dish or dessert. All ladies are invited. Everyone coming is asked to bring a grab bag gift (\$10 limit). We will share Christmas stories, sing some carols and open gifts. **Please RSV: Nancy at 744-3046.**

There will be a meeting in January. We will be discussing the book "Heaven is for Real" by Lynn Vincent. If you haven't read it yet, take it out of the library, borrow one, or purchase one. You don't have to read it to come to the meeting.

Thank you for your prayers and the beautiful cards you sent me.. God bless all of you!

Love, Evie Caprio

Blood DRIVE

The American Red Cross and Immanuel Lutheran Church invite you to give that special gift of life at the most special time of year. Once again we will be hosting a blood drive on Christmas Eve Day, December 24, 8:00 AM to 12:15 PM.

Blood donation is perhaps the best way any of us can truly make of difference in the lives of others. Consider also that when you donate you also receive a mini-physical with screening of temperature, blood pressure, anemia, and tests for various infections. Men, we lower our risk for heart disease dramatically as well. Blood donation rids us of excess iron which can lead to heart disease.

Please save the date and time for a truly unique and special donation. You may call Joel Wardenburg at 203-740-8960 for more information.



GIVING TREE

Please take the small scrolls off the tree at your convenience. Each scroll will tell you of one item very much needed. The **white yarn** indicates a gift to purchase and a **blue yarn** a gift certificate.

If you are giving a piece of wearing apparel, please leave the tags on or note inside as to where the item was purchased in case it does not fit properly. If possible, enclose a gift receipt.

On the weekend of December 10-11, bring your wrapped gift labeled with the tag provided in the scroll. You may bring an ornament of your choice and place it on the Giving Tree. These will be given to the families.

If you cannot shop, but would like to participate with a cash donation, please contact the church office (Rachel) for information.

ATTENTION! IMPORTANT!

If you have a scroll with a name instead of a number, please be sure the gift is brought in by December 11. They are receiving only one gift; therefore it is vital that it is in on time.

If you have any questions, call Sylvia 845-279-3467.

THANK YOU!! Since this is also the January Voice, we would like to thank you in advance for your added support in making the Giving Tree a success. The recipients are very appreciative of your generous and very needed gifts.

Board of Missions and Evangelism

Greetings Immanuel -

One of our goals is to keep the Congregation informed of the missions which Immanuel supports. Listed below is a list of the missions your tithes help support.



Hope for the Children of Haiti - This mission supports a home and school for the orphaned boys and girls of Haiti. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti makes this work even more important than it was in the past.

Real Hope for Haiti

Voice of the Martyrs - VOM serves Christians in countries where they face persecution. They provide medical assistance, Bibles and legal counsel.

Open Doors, USA - Open Doors provide support and help to persecuted Christians who have no where else to turn. This includes Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Maldives, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Vietnam and the Sudan.

Lutheran Bible Translators - All LBT must raise their own support. Without congregations such as Immanuel and interested individuals, the important work of translating the Bible into the heart language of people would not take place. John Strassen completed the Dhimba Translation for the people of Namibia. He worked in an isolated area that would have been very difficult for many missionaries. LBT's work of recruiting and training new Bible translators. Because it takes two years to prepare for being a translator, the start up costs of preparing a translator before they arrive on the field, LBT relies on contributions.

Papa New Guinea - Julie Lutz is continuing the work of the late Dr. Stephen Lutz in Papua New Guinea (see most recent note from Julie following this article). LCMS missionaries must raise their own support. For this reason it is critical that Immanuel continues to support individual missionaries.

Capstone Ministries, Kenya - Dan and Patty Schmelzer work with street boys in Kenya who for various reasons are not with their families. This unique ministry provides spiritual, emotional and educational support to the boys with the intentional goal that they return to their families.

Concordia College, Bronxville - Immanuel is a member of the East Coast Association of Churches that supports Concordia, the only LCMS institution of higher learning on the East coast.

Lutheran Social Services of New England - LSS of New England supports homes for the elderly, refugee resettlement and supports services for troubled youth. LCMS congregations can designate where they desire money to be used.

Jericho Partnership, Danbury This ministry is the cooperative effort of Christian Churches in Danbury working toward being a visible Christian life changing presence in Danbury.

HOPE Seeds - HOPE Seeds is a recognized service organization of the LCMS that provides seeds, small gardening equipment and agricultural know how to people through out the world who lack the means to grow their own food. They provide seed packets in 13 countries working with 28 Christian ministries. Each family seed packets contain 10 vegetable seeds appropriate for their particular climate and country.

Bethesda Hospital, India - Bethesda is the oldest and primary medical mission of our partner Church in India, The India Evangelical Church. Bethesda is in a poor community and serves people who have little or nothing to pay for medical care. The hospital provides acute care as well as many walk in clinics.

The New England District of the LCMS The NE District is the major recipient of contributions to Christian mission and ministry beyond Immanuel. The District depends on congregations to sustain the continued presence of the LCMS in New England. The District forwards a portion of this to the LCMS head quarters in St. Louis.

Children's Christian Concern Society - The mission of CCS is to "Share Jesus with children through Christian Education and Working to release children from poverty." Currently CCCS, a recognized service organization of the LCMS works in Bangladesh, Thailand, Cambodia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Guatemala, Panama, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guinea, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Haiti and Bethlehem in Palestine.

Immanuel Lutheran School Tuition Assistance

Article continued next page

Robert Walter, Leader Source Robert travels to India, China, and Brazil, sharing God's word with the local pastors and training them to do outreach.

TOTAL CURRENT YEAR from Immanuel to Missions: \$52,210.00

We are a blessed congregation which the Lord is using to help others. Please remain faithful to your commitment and pray for God's protection upon our congregation so we can continue to share our tithes with these individuals who are doing God's work.

May God bless you and your family!

Twyla Walter



HERE....

Team Haiti would like to send its most sincere appreciation to the congregation of Immanuel. Members of ILC gave \$3,000 in September, through pledges that we had collected and pledges that were mailed in to the church office!! You have also supported us through various other fund raisers that Team Haiti has held over the past two years. Teams are rarely, if ever, successful without the support of the organization from which they originate. Immanuel Lutheran Church has been very supportive of this mission trip, and for that we are grateful. The total cost of the trip is \$15,000. To date, we have been able to raise close to \$13,000. With one month to go, I believe we will reach this goal. Team Haiti will leave early (early!) morning on December 28th and will be returning the afternoon of January 5th. There are six members of ILC that are going, along with someone who belongs to a Haitian Baptist church in Stamford, CT. Members from Immanuel include Renate Roehl, Dean Hollrah, TJ Keller, Sara Williams, Dan Cook, and Stephanie Shultz.

With just over a month to go, we will be collecting items to bring down with us.

- Canned Tuna
- Peanut Butter
- Tooth brushes/paste
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Educational Books
- Band-aids, Antibacterial Ointments, Tylenol, Advil, etc.
- Odds and ends such as crayons, markers, educational games

If anyone would like to donate any of the items on this list, there will be space in the back of the church (left side cabinets) to leave them.

We could always use volunteers to help us with administrative tasks. If you have time and would like to get involved in this way, please call Sara Williams at (203) 470-4362.

Again, thank you for the continued support of Team Haiti. As we gear up for our trip, please keep us in your prayers, that we may do God's work and encourage the mission of Hope for the Children of Haiti by sharing hope in Christ for eternity.

In His Service,
Sara Williams

AND ABROAD ... Julie Lutz - LCMS World Mission in Papua New Guinea

Dear Family and Friends,

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me... "And for Abel Bondi and Rebecca, sadly add, "I grieved the loss of my year-old daughter and you comforted me."

I thought of those words from Matthew 25 early last week, not knowing that would be the Gospel reading this Sunday. They just fit; this was being enacted around me. Our Enga brothers and sisters befriended, clothed, fed, and sat in the hospital ward with the strangers Anton had brought from the Penale (the area in which the airstrip is being constructed) for medical care Monday afternoon, a mere heart flicker ago. We didn't know one year-old Julie Abel was ill. It was her father Abel and sister who needed the medical attention. Julie's mother Rebecca came to care for Abel and three year-old Sandra, carrying Julie at her breast. Yet it was Julie who unexpectedly died Tuesday night. Our friends have been with Rebecca and Abel, mourning, staying the night, praying, digging a grave, shaping a cross for the so-small coffin, and praying again around her grave as we laid Julie's body to rest. I saw the face of Jesus this week, as clearly as it will be until I, like little Julie, see Christ face to face.... I saw it in Abel and Rebecca as the Least of These; I saw it in the faces of those who ministered to them.

+ May God comfort this grieving family and grant them peace as little Julie rests in soil not their own. May those who console Abel and Rebecca be strengthened in those efforts and may all be given a glimpse of God's love in theirs. We are able to help patients such as Abel and Sandra through the kindness of many of you. The LCMS project called "PNG Rural Transportation" provides funds for airfares of patients from "long-way" places, airfares which are greatly subsidized by Mission Aviation Fellowship. When at the hospital, our friends and neighbors assist in providing food, warmer clothing, and other needs of the patients until they are able to return to their distant homes.

This mode of funding mission activity through projects is long established in the LCMS. It provides the opportunity for those of us a long way from the physical need-on-the-ground to be able to serve the Least of These, wherever they are. Within LCMS, we have also had individuals and congregations who supported "their" missionaries for many years. There has been a shift in recent years, however, in that now virtually all of our support must come from this directed giving. I'm a bit wary of the new system, worried that competition will arise or that the array of opportunities would bewilder potential donors. But these I leave in God's hands, knowing His arms aren't short, nor His planning faulty. With God's Spirit leading those who desire to give financial gifts, we who have put the proverbial tin cups on the table can be thankful for every way in which God provides, whether it is through filling a cup with My name on it - or Another's name, through faithful prayers for needs which are now better understood, or in direct acts of kindness to those who are close. God blesses in all ways.

+ May God stir us each to be faithful conveyors of His gifts to others... and forgive us when we wrap our arms around "our" blessings, and then make out as though God's arm is short.

+ A very humble "Thank You" to those of you who have supported me financially and through your prayers. Your faithfulness makes it possible for me to serve in Papua New Guinea. Thank you.

November is a month for remembering - All Saints' Day remembering those who have gone before us (among many who died this year, we especially remember Luke Teale-Sinclair, 25, who worked with us on the Kaiam airstrip; four local victims of 3 separate car accidents in a 200 yard stretch of highway near us; and former missionaries, Chuck Rivers who helped build the hospital and Dr Neil Nickerson who preceded us at Immanuel Hospital.) ... Veterans / Remembrance Day for those who have sacrificed for us ... special family birthdays and anniversaries (Happy Days Julien, +Steve+, Alice, Dennis, Peter, Laura & Nathan, Jacquie & Dennis) ... and Thanksgiving Day for remembering blessings received.

Thank God with me : Donna Meyer will soon arrive as an LCMS GEO engaged in Religious Education (God-willing and PNG papers permitting); Timothy Lutheran Seminary is open and training pastors; The LCMS desires to continue in mission with the Gutnius Lutheran Church under the leadership of Bishop Nick Aiyene; Orphan Grain Train sent a container of books for GLC schools; LCMS Dennis Denow's visits stirred a GLC Education Workshop; The Kaiam Airstrip construction is nearing completion though the rains and tractor breakdowns, if they continue, may slow the progress more than we'd like; Paul Andrews' service at the airstrip and with computers has ended and he is now married, bringing in the harvest in Nebraska; PNG Mission Society has plans to bolster theological education within the GLC My mother Lola Behrens, daughter Laura Hall, son David Lutz, and grandsons Wyatt and Hadrian (Paul & Rebecca's sons) all came to PNG this year - each lovingly welcomed by every Enga and his cousin-brother, and each an absolute delight to have here for a spell.

(Continued)

AND ABROAD ... Julie Lutz - LCMS World Mission in Papua New Guinea (*continued*)

For your prayers and thoughtful consideration :

Mr. Wilbert Ruhnke is seriously ill, being held in God's ever-gracious arms. He and his wife Evelyn spearheaded mailing the surface copy of my prayer letter for many years but are no longer able to do so. If any group or individual would like to consider taking up this aspect of supporting me in mission, please contact me.

I have a new LCMS email address: Julie.Lutz@lcmsintl.org My primary address continues to be: lutz.travel@gmail.com Please make adjustments as needed.

Opportunities to support LCMS personnel and projects in PNG and elsewhere can be found at www.lcms.org, and looking about the site under "What we do" and then "Where we are" or "Missionaries." Gifts may also be given through Mission Central or sent to **LCMS Missionary Support, PO Box 790089, St Louis, MO 63179-0089.**

May God bless each of us as we serve the Least of These in our midst, knowing it is Christ, our Savior we serve, and by whose power we serve.

With joy in the serving

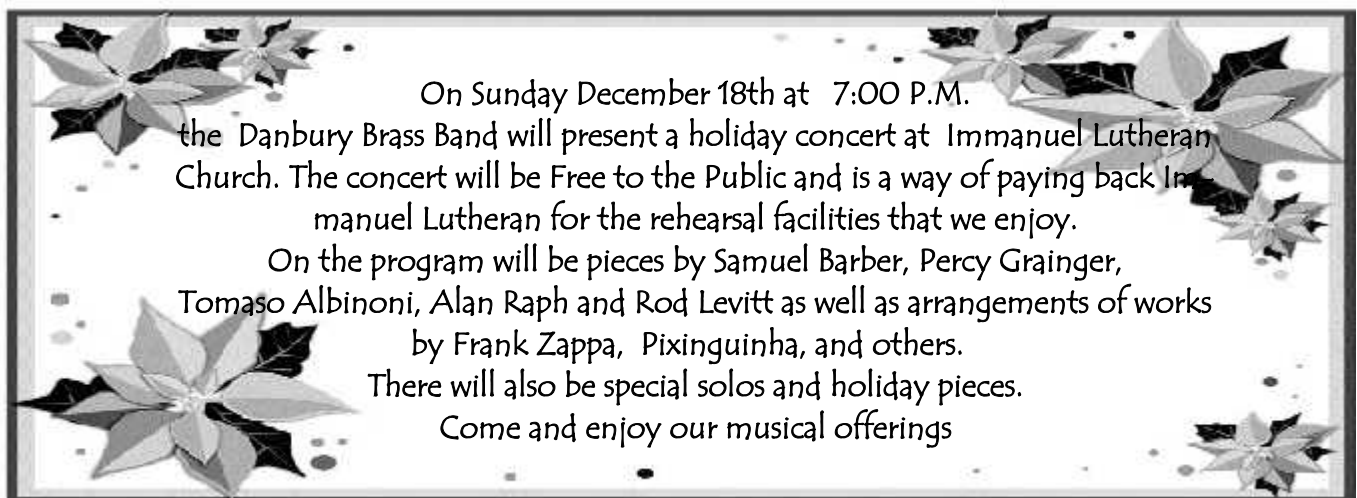
Julie Lutz
LCMS World Mission, Papua New Guinea

Sanctuary Update

While not as quickly as we'd like or as planned, improvements to the sanctuary have been ongoing since the May Voters meeting, when this beautifying project began. To date, the sanctuary has been painted, storage cabinets for the many and varying mission projects Immanuel participates in have been constructed and new usher stations have been built. As is usual during renovations, a few unexpected and additional issues came up and were included in the project. We have new wiring to support additional audio-visual needs and a screen for projecting our worship services. A new stained 'glass' window has been installed. An elevated platform has been constructed by David and Bill Haitsch, and a new pulpit/lectern is in process by this same team. These features allow more visual interaction between the congregation and the Pastors. Coming soon, new paraments, banners and two murals which will be painted in the area where we currently hang banners. The murals will depict liturgical symbols for the Father and the Holy Spirit and with the Son depicted in the stained window, will serve as a worshipful reminder during personal and corporate worship in the Sanctuary.

The changes made have been done so to give Immanuel's sanctuary more of a sense of worship space in our multi-use building. Let us "Praise God in His sanctuary" (*Ps. 150:1*) And as you leave God's house following worship, please take a look up and remember to "Make Disciples".

In Him who continually blesses us! ~ Rachel Williams





Michael Dogali
 Son of Michael & Kara (Krestofetz) Dogali
 Born 10/19/2011



Geoffrey & Margaret Lagas
 45 years on 12/17



In loving memory of **Joel Purdie**
 Kirsten Purdie

In loving memory of **Norman Davis**
 Evie Caprio
 Bob & Sue Wohlken
 Louise Green
 Bill & Elfriede Haitsch
 Linda Dawson
 Mike & Leslie Bardelli
 Marguerite Davis

In loving memory of **Marie Bladt**
 Lee Family Foundation



It's been a bit since I had any notes for my brothers and sisters in Christ. While I (*always*) have a lot to say, I will just give you the "Cliff Notes" version. I ask that you PLEASE look over the following and address the items as they pertain to you at Immanuel....

MISSIONS CLOSETS - The closets are labeled for the current mission collections. Please note the location (back of the sanctuary on your left as you enter) and place your donations in the designated areas. Ushers or church staff are available to help as needed.

EMAIL ADDRESSES - We are planning a new and updated direction of corresponding news from Immanuel. (For this issue, the Voice was mailed electronically to those who have provided current email addresses.) Please send your email information to churchoffice@immandanbury.org with "Church correspondence" in the subject line. This will help us be good stewards of God's earth and also help with more timely announcements. **NOTE: If you do not have email access, please MAIL a note along with your current address to the church office indicating this .**

HOSPITAL STAYS - The Danbury Hospital is undergoing a reorganization and we are currently unable to review the list of those from our church family who have been admitted. PLEASE contact the church office either by phone or email if you or a family member are admitted to a hospital or rehabilitation facility. The Pastors will not be notified unless you or a designated family member contacts the church office.

WORSHIP - A gentle reminder that weekends are for worship - for you , the Pastors and the church office staff. If you have business to discuss, things for one of us to do or just a reminder for the staff, please either write it down in the notebook outside of the church office door, send an email , phone or stop in during the work week. (*On weekends we are in worship mode and there is a very good chance that your request will not be remembered by Monday*) ☺

Thank you for your support of the work we do at Immanuel in service to Him . I wish you all peace and joy as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!!

Blessings -
Rachel