



\* MERRY \*  
Christmas  
\*

Christmas is full of so many cultural traditions and myths. It is easy to be led to tangential and even irrelevant things as we try to focus on Christ at Christmas. What is important is to remember Christmas is what is written in Scripture and confessed in the creeds. Namely that Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem, is coeternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. He is eternally begotten before the creation of all worlds, not made, and Jesus Christ, our Lord, is both conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Yet as the world looks at Christmas they seek other things. They seek the date of Christmas, the origin of Christmas traditions, and how it affects our celebrations today.

There is indeed a debate on the date of Christmas. In the west, the date was set as December 25 in the fourth century, while the Eastern Church continues to celebrate Christmas on January sixth, which we know as Epiphany, since long before Christmas' date was set in the west. We open our Bibles reading Matthew, Luke, and John and find nothing about the date of Jesus' birth. Yes, sheep were in the field at night, and yes, it was during the first Census while Quintus was governor of Syria, but the date us never given to us in Scripture. There is no scriptural day given for the birth of the Christ child.

Likewise, most Christmas traditions are not spoken of in the Bible. Our American Santa Clause seems to be a blending of several characters, St. Nicholas, whose saint day is Dec. 6, Father Christmas, a British Christmas gift giver resembling our American Santa Claus, and Chris Cringle, a more Nordic gift giver who always appeared to be bright and jolly with rosy cheeks. No doubt you have heard that our American Santa Claus comes to us from Atlanta and Coca Cola from their ads by Haddon Sundblom in the 1930s. You do see how none of this has anything to do with Scripture right? Sometimes, we do hear about how some of our Christian traditions were taken from pagan religions, but here again these are not things in scripture itself. And even if these myths seem similar to scriptural accounts, we know that there is the natural knowledge of God, which may account for a non-salvific shadows of the Gospel that might be seen in these pre-Christian celebrations.

As we go through the season of Advent and as we enter into Christmas, we will hear many worldly ideas and constructs about Christmas. This is nothing new. The remedy is still the same. There is no need to battle culture and attempt to force the world into belief, but rather, as St. Paul says, to be in the world but not of it. We can exchange gifts and decorate trees. We can even dawn out sanctuary in lights and decorations, for to us, the church, they are reminders of what we are celebrating this Christmas season and a reminder that the baby in the manger whom we await is none other than our savior who is Christ our Lord.

***Rev. James Yonkers***



## SPECIAL DATES IN DECEMBER:

- Christmas Decorating, **Dec. 2**
- LWML Mite Collection Sunday, **Dec. 3**
- First Sunday in Advent, **Dec. 3**
- Second Sunday in Advent, **Dec. 10**
- ILS Christmas Program, **Dec. 12**
- Third Sunday in Advent, **Dec. 17**
- Sunday School Christmas Program, **Dec. 17**
- Blue Christmas Service, **Dec. 21**
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, **Dec. 24**
- Christmas Day, **Dec. 25**
- New Year's Eve, **Dec. 31**
- Fifth Sunday Zora Draws Door Offering, **Dec. 31**

## SPECIAL DATES IN JANUARY:

- New Year's Day, **Jan. 1**
- Epiphany, **Jan. 6** (observed Jan. 7)
- Baptism of our Lord, **Jan. 7** (observed Jan. 14)
- Parish Education Monical's Day, **Jan. 9**
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, **Jan. 15**
- National Lutheran Schools' Week, **Jan. 21 – 28**
- ILS Children sing during the service, **Jan. 28**
- Zora Draws Door Offering, **Jan. 28**

**HELP US CARE FOR YOU:** *Your well-being is important to us and we want to pray for you!* Unfortunately, we are no longer notified by the hospital; please call the church office during regular business hours (Monday through Friday from 7 am - 3:30 pm) when you have any medical procedure or in any time of spiritual need at 217-442-5675. In case of emergencies after hours, please feel free to contact Pastor Yonkers on his cell at 260-413-8375. **Prayer requests:** we are certainly pleased to pray for your (non-member) family and friends alongside our Immanuel members. Please keep us informed of their needs.

**LUTHERAN LEGACY:** The church has two endowment funds (one for the general fund and one for building and grounds). To donate directly to Lutheran Legacy, go online to [lutheranlegacyfoundation.org](http://lutheranlegacyfoundation.org) and click on the "funds" link on the top of the page, then on "churches" for Immanuel or "parochial schools" for ILS. The funds are listed in alphabetical order, scroll down until you find Immanuel in Danville and click on the "donate" button to the right. You can choose to donate by credit card or check. If you do not have a computer, simply pick up a donation form from information table in the hall and mail a check.

**Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus.**

## PONDERINGS AT THE END OF THE DAY

— **OR YEAR:** Dutch Catholic priest and theologian Henri Nouwen found it useful to reflect on several questions at the end of the day: "Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing?" Pondering such questions may prove valuable at the end of a year as well: "How did I contribute to peace in the world this past year? Did I bring smiles to others' faces? Did I offer words of healing?" Nouwen continued, and we can too: "Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?" Many of us set New Year's resolutions for self-improvement, asking, "What are my goals? How can I better myself, my weight, my work-life balance, my habits?" But Nouwen said of his self-inquiry: "These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and [in] the life to come." His resolution was to share God's love with others. With God's help, it can be ours as well, for each new day and each new year.



**GIFT (SCRIP) CARDS ORDERS:** The next scrip order is due to the church office by 9 am, **Dec. 4** (a week earlier than usual), and **Jan. 8**. Updated order blanks are on the table in the chapel hallway; please use these for your orders and throw away old order blanks. The December order date is earlier than our usual order date so that they can be used for Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers. Orders are not limited to the vendors listed on the order blank; look for additional vendors at [raiseright.com/resources/organization](http://raiseright.com/resources/organization) or see the list posted in the hallway bulletin board. If your vendor is available write the name of the vendor, denomination of the gift card, number of cards wanted, and total amount on a blank line of the order form. *The following have been added to the vendor list: McDonald's with a 2% profit to the church, Casey's Gas with a 3% profit to the church, Saltgrass Steakhouse with a 9% profit to the church, Jimmie John's Subs with an 8% profit to the church, and Sonic (when it opens) with an 8% profit to the church.* These orders will be available for pickup on **Sunday, December 10, and January 14**, in the church office after that, or make special arrangements with Jo Van Hoveln. If you have questions, please see Jo Van Hoveln or Kim Davis.

**SCRIP CARD EXPLANATION:** The cards come in various amounts and can be used just like a credit/debit card at the designated vendor. For example, you order and get a \$100 Meijer card. The church gets \$3 (3%) of income from this card, and you buy \$100 worth of groceries, prescriptions, gas, etc. with it. There are varying rates on these cards from 1.5% to 13% so the amount the church receives depends on the rate on the individual vendor card. There is a printed list of the vendors and the percentages they give on the bulletin board and on their website at [www.raiseright.com/resources/organization](http://www.raiseright.com/resources/organization). These cards are good anywhere in the USA and make great birthday, Christmas, new baby, or wedding gifts.



# Stewardship SPOT

**The Measure of Our Generosity:** If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8-11) Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it." The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel." The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?

**YEAR END GIFTS:** As we come to the end of another year we reflect on the blessings that God has given us. Even as the world seems to be lost and trying to redefine what is good and right, God's faithfulness to us still shine through. During this time, we give thanks for our bounty and prepare our hearts for the celebration of the gift of the Christ child. Many of us give extra gifts at this time of the year and it is also the time in which we have the largest giving month. For those of you who are considering making an extra gift, there is an opportunity for those of you over 70 ½ years old. The Secure Act has a provision that allows gifts to charities from an IRA and the gift is not counted as income. This provision is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Some of you may have already utilized this provision but for those of you that have never heard of this here are some of the rules: 1) you must be at least 70 ½. 2) you can give up to \$100,000 per year from an IRA or Qualified Plan. 3) while the income is reported it doesn't add to your taxable income and is not subject to the Individual Deduction or Itemized Deductions, in other words you do not need to exceed the Standard Deduction to claim the gift. If you need more information on how you can utilize the QCD for your gifting, contact your investment advisor or tax advisor. Thanks for all you do for our congregation and the mission of Christ here at Immanuel.

**2024 ENVELOPES** are coming soon! Please do not use your new envelopes until 2024 as your envelope number may have changed; likewise, do not use leftover 2023 envelopes after Jan. 1. This will help us accurately acknowledge your contributions. If you currently do not have envelopes, but would like to begin using them, please call Kim in the church office. Thanks!





## WORSHIP WITH US THIS CHRISTMAS

### Deck the Halls!

We will *deck the halls* of the church and sanctuary for Christmas on **Dec. 2**, at 9 am. *Many hands make light and joyful work* as we prepare for our Lord's birth this Advent and Christmas season. *Please join us!*

### Advent Midweek Services

Advent Services are at 6:30 pm on the 3 Wednesdays in Advent before Christmas: **Dec. 6, 13 & 20**. Advent sermons will focus on the work each person of the Trinity did for us at Christmas. We will look at the Father, begetting the son and giving Jesus unto us. The Son, Jesus, became flesh to dwell among us, and the Holy Spirit who, as we confess in the creed, conceived Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Join us prior to Service for an Advent supper, then come to worship our coming King to prepare for Christmas.

### Sunday School Christmas Program

The Sunday School children will share the Christmas story as part of the 9:30 am morning service on Sunday, **Dec. 17**. Practice is during Sunday School Nov. 26, Dec. 3, 10, & 17. We hope your children can participate! Please talk to Diana Pratt with any questions.

### Christmas Eve

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service with Holy Communion is at 9:00 pm **Dec. 24**. Please come 15 minutes early to enjoy extra Christmas music prior to the service.

### Blue Christmas

For many people, the approaching Christmas holiday does not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on television or in greeting cards. They may be facing a holiday after the death of a loved one or after a divorce. Perhaps they have been unable to have a child, or have suffered through an emotional trauma. Or perhaps they feel pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations. In recognition that not everyone faces Christmas the same way, Immanuel will be hosting a Blue Christmas Service this year. It's not based on the Elvis Presley song, but rather is a quiet, contemplative service that usually happens on one of the longest evenings of December symbolic of our darker nights when we find ourselves grieving, lonely, or longing for something better. The Blue Christmas service is all about making space during a season that is noisy with celebration to acknowledge the "both/and" of our emotions. It's an avenue to offering care and compassion for those who are struggling. Our Blue Christmas will be held on Thursday, **Dec. 21**, at 6:30 pm in our Chapel. If you're struggling in celebrating Christmas this year, please join us.

**CAPITAL FUND DRIVE:** The current bank balance is \$38,565. Our current projects are the resealing of the north part of the parking lot for \$17,435, and new gutters and downspouts on the sanctuary for \$4,900. This leaves us with a little over \$16,000 for other projects. The congregation established the Capital Fund Drive in 2012, and thanks to our generous congregation, we have accomplished many needed upgrades/renovations. Prior generations worked and sacrificed to build the school/church building, and it is up to us to preserve and improve our church home just as we would our own household's.

**PROJECTS COMPLETED:** Thanks be to God the Father for His wonderful gift to us of His Son, Jesus. The following accomplishments are entirely done through the generous giving of our congregation!

- New organ \$18,565
- Replaced the HVAC in the sanctuary and office wing \$125,083
- New lights in the sanctuary \$17,374
- New flat roof over the sanctuary 3,405
- AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for the sanctuary \$1,199—funded entirely through grant from Vermilion Healthcare Foundation
- Parsonage:
  - New HVAC \$6,650
  - New roof \$7,755
  - Attic insulation \$1,745
  - Electrical work \$1,321
  - Crawlspace insulation and vapor barrier
  - Asphalt driveway \$7,525
  - Kitchen cabinets, master bath shower, sliding glass door \$9,920
  - New flooring in part of the parsonage \$5,011
- Partial payment towards new playground equipment (from Hog Roast proceeds) \$4,149
- Paid down and provided monthly payments for the church mortgage \$104,735
- New cafeteria stoves/ovens \$9,562
- Drainage tile around building and parsonage \$21,235
- South portion of parking lot resealed and restriped \$8,960
- School windows \$113,329 (\$10,000 was received from Cadle grant and \$8,100 from bequests account)
- Guttering on school wing \$13,835
- Resurfacing gym floor \$2,500
- New lighting for driveway \$22,168
- New guttering over the chapel door \$195

There is a Capital Fund Drive bulletin board in the hallway between the coat room and the parish mailboxes. There are special envelopes for ongoing donations throughout the year. "...because of my devotion to the house of my God I give my treasure for the house of my God. 1 Chronicles 29:3b. All donations from large to small are equally appreciated. Questions? Please contact Jo Van Hoveln. The Men's Club and Capital Fund Committee will co-host the German dinner in February 2024. Watch for more details in future newsletters and Immanuel Lights.

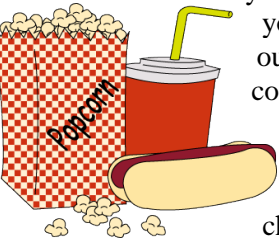
## CAPITAL FUND CHRISTMAS TREE:



There will be a Christmas tree in the narthex for special year end gifts to the Capital Fund Drive; it has all blue and silver ornaments.

Place your check or cash inside the envelope (next to the tree) and place the completed envelope in the offering plate. If you would like an ornament from the tree to commemorate your donation, please feel free to take one. All donations will be used to build up our bank account to pay for future projects. Donations must be received in the church office by Dec. 31 to be counted on your 2023 contribution statement. The tree will be left up until Epiphany so you can get a jump start on your 2024 giving if you would like.

## HUSTLE HOOPS CONCESSIONS:



We need your help! Please consider signing up to work a shift at the Hustle Hoops concession stand, hosted by the ILC youth. It is a great way to support the youth and get to know people from our community. The dates that need coverage are Dec. 16, and Jan 6, 13, 20, and 27. Pick the hours you can work and sign up at the bulletin board by the flower chart. Thank you!



*May you know the comfort and  
joy of God's presence this  
Christmas season and always!  
Merry Christmas!*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS SUMMARY:

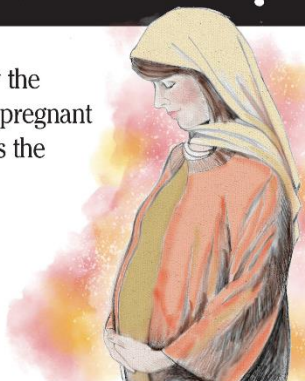
- **New Business:** A request to use the gym facilities for a birthday party was approved.
- **Old Business:** Working to get property insurance quotes. The board will sponsor the first Advent supper with the proceeds to benefit the Zora Drew Scholarship Fund.
- **Christian Education:** Enrollment is currently at 95, with 7 in aftercare only for a total of 102. We did not pass our fire marshal inspection. A few very minor corrections will be completed before a revisit. PreK will attend a fieldtrip to the Reindeer Ranch with Trinity's Kindergarten class. The Christmas Program is coming up on Dec. 12. Provide cookies and juice.
- **Finance:** Financial reports were reviewed. CDs maturity date coming up in December. It was decided to reinvest in short term CDs. All of the organ fund balance will be invested with the interest earned from the current CD. The church savings and bequest funds will be reinvested, but the interest earned will be deposited to the general fund.
- **Properties:** The school boiler is up and running. New stainless steel tops were installed over the kitchen butcher block table, and the wood edges on the serving lines. Capital Fund will replace the guttering on the sanctuary. Two dead trees were removed and it was paid for by the Men's Club. The minor repairs requested by the fire marshal have been completed. Scott will get bids for gym painting and new blinds for gym windows.
- **Evangelism:** Julie is working on Christmas gift bags for ILS students. We will not participate in the Night of Lights Parade this year.
- **Worship:** The schedule for Advent and Christmas services was discussed. Butch has heard many positive comments regarding the use of the screens. Looking out into the congregation during services, many are looking up at them. Live stream receives approximately 10 viewers per week that are not counted in attendance.
- **Parish Education:** The Children's Christmas Service will be on Dec. 17. Diana will hand out treat bags for those who participate.
- **Youth:** College Care Packages are completed. We are planning a youth bowling Christmas event.
- **Missions:** Reviewed Reports. We did very well for our Thanksgiving food offering and we are grateful for the congregation's generosity.
- **Elders:** No report.
- **Deaconess Intern:** We had a great Fall Fest turnout and impressed by church support. Can we make our facilities friendlier for young families? Revamp nursery?
- **Vice President:** Butch is looking into Ameren lighting grants.
- **President:** Cemetery Committee would like to hold door offerings for the cemetery at Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The new youth usher team will begin in December. Josh will get with them for a brief training.
- **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, January 16 at 6:00 pm



## Bible Quiz

Elizabeth, an older relative of Mary the mother of Jesus, was miraculously pregnant at the same time as Mary. What was the name of Elizabeth's husband?

- A. Aaron
- B. Zechariah
- C. Joseph
- D. Simeon



Answer: B (See Luke 1:5, 39-41.)





## CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT

of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

### Stay Connected!

Central Illinois District Contact Information:

CID's website: <http://www.cidlcms.org/>

Subscribe to the E-GatePost (digital newsletter) and

monthly bulletin inserts: <http://www.cidlcms.org/>

Follow the CID on Facebook and Instagram

### Pray

Pray for our Central Illinois District missions supported by your church's Mission Dollars to the District. *"Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored."*

Please remember in your prayers all our CID campus ministries, especially Rev. William Jensen and Wittenberg Lutheran Center in Normal, serving students, faculty, and staff of Illinois State University and other institutions. And pray for the "Keeping Christ on Campus" campaign, building endowments to help CID support our campus ministries.

### CAMP CILCA

#### December 8 – 9: Joyful Hearts Christmas

Camp CILCA welcomes campers of all ages with developmental disabilities for a 24 hour Christmas Party! Campers are partnered up with a high school or college-aged volunteer who will help them have a fun and safe time doing Christmas activities like baking, decorating, singing, and more!

**SAVE THE DATE!** Looking ahead, Monical's Day for parish education is Tuesday, **Jan. 9**. Eat out that day and help raise money for parish education programs.

**UPSIDE DOWN?** Even amid increased secularization, God makes the core Christmas message known. Take, for example, the story of a "winter pageant" a mother attended at her son's grade school. Songs of reindeer, snow and Santa included one titled "Christmas Love," in which the youngest performers held up letters as the song progressed: "C," "H," etc. When a little girl unknowingly held her "M" upside down, the older kids snickered and the adult audience smiled. But as the song drew to a close and all the letters were revealed, surprised recognition struck the Christians in the room. "CHRISTWAS LOVE," read the string of student-borne letters. God's truth had penetrated the human clutter and confusion around Christmas — as it has power to do throughout our lives: *"Christ was love."* And of course, he still is!!

### COOKIES FOR THE HOMEBOUND:

Christmas is a time that we traditionally remember our homebound or suffering members and friends with cookies. We need bakers as well as delivery people. If you could do either of these, please sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway. Please bring your delicious cookies to the multipurpose room by 1 pm on Thursday, Dec. 14. Cookies may be picked up for delivery after 2 pm on Thursday or on Friday morning. Please contact Diana Pratt if you have any questions. Thank you!



### WOMEN'S GUILD CHRISTMAS PARTY:

Ladies of Immanuel, you are invited to the Women's Guild Christmas Party and Potluck on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 11:30 am. Please bring a dish to share; drinks, dessert, and tableware are provided. Fun! Food! Games! Fellowship! We welcome you to invite a friend!

**ALTAR FLOWERS:** Soon, we will post the new 2024 Altar Flowers signup poster. Altar flowers are a great way to celebrate special occasions and remember loved ones. The cost is just \$40.00 per Sunday. You can take the flowers home to enjoy following the service. *Do you know you can request certain flowers or colors?* For example, request your wedding colors when you celebrate an anniversary to make them special to you on your special day! If you would like to make such a request, please contact Mary Powell by the Tuesday before to allow the florist time to prepare them for you. As a reminder, please do not take the green vases as we reuse them each week. There are plastic bags available in the sacristy for you to get them home in, where you can put them in your vases. Checks should be made payable to the Women's Guild; envelopes for this purpose are available on the hall bulletin board next to the signup sheet.

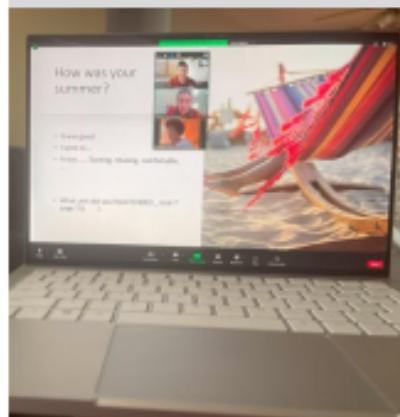
**FIRST, CONTACT:** In *Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality and Mortality*, Richard Beck writes powerfully about Jesus healing a leper in Matthew 8:1-3. "What is intriguing about this story is the sequence. Jesus touches the leper first. Then the command 'Be clean!' is offered. That is, Jesus' first move is into ritual defilement. By first touching the leper, Jesus ... [is] standing in solidarity with the unclean." Beck finds this "striking" because typically we expect purification before contact. But Jesus' actions reverse the pattern: "Contact occurs first." How fortunate for us, too, that God didn't wait to reach out to us until he had cleansed us of sin. God didn't save us from afar and only *then* come to live among us. Rather, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, ESV). And continuously, Jesus loves us, comes to us and touches our hearts, even when we are at our worst — straying from God, trapped in sin, unworthy, unclean, unrighteous. For it's not *our* righteousness or purity that heals and saves us, but Christ's.



## SHARING THE GOSPEL THROUGH ENGLISH

In September, Missionary Ruth Maita started a new semester of English classes. Each Thursday we have class at our mercy center in Mayaguez, as well as a class on Zoom that I have helped with.

We have about 5 students. We start this semester of classes by reading a Psalm. After talking about our theme "Asking for the time" we closed with prayer requests. An English student requested prayers for his girlfriend. This was big news because he has never been married or mentioned family. After class we shared the news with Pastor Gustavo Maita who offered premarital counselling. Though he met his girlfriend at his church, premarital counselling is non-existent, and he is interested in these conversations with Pastor Gustavo. We pray for this relationship and a Christ-centered marriage.



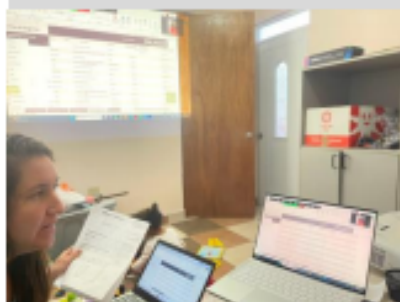
## A PUERTO RICAN BABY SHOWER

Church members from Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios (San Juan), Jose and Daniela are expecting their second child, a boy, due in October. They graciously invited us to the baby shower their parents were hosting at their house in Aguadilla, PR (about 30 minutes from Mayaguez). It was a wonderful day to get to celebrate our church member and to meet their family. What a blessing it is to be welcomed into the home of new friends.



## CHURCH TREASURER RESPONSIBILITIES

I live in Mayaguez, and with that I have a few more church related responsibilities at Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz (Mayaguez). I am the church treasurer; I help count the offering and create the budget for the congregation. The month of September was spent along with my teammates Pastor Maita and Ruth, gathering different documents needed for permits and taxes. This involved going to many different government offices and the bank several times.





### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- The Ladies of our three congregations in Puerto Rico.
- For the Baby Mateo (PR Church member), Baby Matheo (Belize), and Baby Ian (Peru) who will be born in October
- The students in our English outreach classes.
- For the Puerto Rico FORO meeting in October
- For a safe and good visit from Missionary Tirzah Krey (DR) to Puerto Rico in October.

### GIVE THANKS FOR:

- A wonderful visit by Missionary Danelle Putman (DR)
- A success mini chocolate workshop
- The start of our women's group activities.
- Another year of life.
- The many congregations and individuals who pray for, encourage and support me serving in Puerto Rico.



### CHOCOLATE WORKSHOP

At Iglesia Luterana Fuente de Vida (Ponce), we hosted a workshop on Chocolate making during our *compañerismo* (fellowship) time! We invited everyone who came to the "Noche de Pinturas" night in June and to our delight, we had quite a few people who repeated their visit. And two of the ladies who had come before brought a friend! Many stayed for dinner and the prayer service to end our time together.

The workshop and supplies were donated by a friend of the congregation who has a lot of talent in crafts and in many other areas. The CARD house is designed to be a place for people to gather and be together as a family. Being part of a family means you have a role and responsibilities. As we grow as a family we grow in responsibilities and roles given our time and talents. This event was a wonderful expression of how that is happening.



### WOMEN'S NIGHT AND MY BIRTHDAY PARTY

The women of Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz (Mayaguez) had their first monthly women's night, where we join once a month in a time of fellowship as sisters in Christ and have a bible study. In September, we learned how to make cupcakes from our Church member Cindy. Pastor Gustavo led a bible study on Elizabeth and Mary the mother of Jesus. It happened to be on my birthday, so it was also a birthday party for me as well.



You can support my work by giving online to [www.lcms.org/lehr](http://www.lcms.org/lehr) or

Adopt me as your missionary by visiting [missioncentral.us/Lehr/](http://missioncentral.us/Lehr/)



A check can be made payable to the **LCMS** with **Ashley Lehr** in the memo to: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod P.O. Box 66861 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861  
**Mission Central**

A check can be made out to **Mission Central** with "A10899-69467" in the memo and sent to: Mission Central 40718 HWY E16 Mapleton, IA 51034





## ***Making a Christ-like Difference!***

- ✓ 30-minute Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod worship service
- ✓ Produced by Lutherans for the homebound, hospitalized, ...
- ✓ Includes the Gospel, Epistle, and Sermon by LCMS Pastors
- ✓ Music by choirs, soloists, and small groups

### **WEEKLY BROADCAST SCHEDULE:**

**Sundays at 7:00 am – WTWO – TV2 (NBC)**

**Sundays at 7:30 am – WCIX Channel 3**

**Sundays at 10:30 am – TCT Network – Direct TV Channel 377**

**Nationwide Sundays: Direct TV Channel 377** (11:30 am Eastern / 10:30 am Central / 9:30 am Mountain / 8:30 am Pacific)

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**Lutheran Ministries Media, Inc.**  
5 Martin Luther Drive, Ft Wayne, IN 46825-4996  
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## **December 2023**

**December 3** (Matthew 5:1-12) **“What Are You Waiting For?”** *Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer*  
Be it the second coming or your own mortality, Jesus will return! Are you ready? If not, what are you waiting for?

**December 10** (Isaiah 40:1-11) **“Comfort, Comfort My People”** *Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III*  
We all need comfort for various reasons, which includes our feeling sorrow over our sins. So, be comforted! Even though we are sinners, God shows us abundant grace, and Jesus, our Good Shepherd, carries each of us in his arms. These truths are certain, because they come from God’s Word, which stands forever.

**December 17** (John 1:23) **“The Way of the Lord”** *Rev. Thomas Eggold*  
The message of Advent is not that we should get better or get busy. This is not a time to show God how qualified we are for the kingdom. Instead, Advent calls us to despair of our efforts and let go of our past performance and to die at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ where our burden was carried, our sin was punished, comfort is given, salvation is found, and we receive the righteousness of Christ. And this is the way of the Lord.

**December 24** (Luke 2:7) **“In a Manger”** *Rev. Shayne Jonker*  
The manger in Bethlehem is the first step toward a hilltop called Calvary and Christ’s death for the sins of the world. Rather than shy away from that truth, we remember and marvel: the Son of God wills to become a swaddled baby in a Bethlehem barn because He wills to go to the cross for you.

**December 31** (Luke 2:22-40) **“At Home with Jesus”** *Rev. Paul Shoemaker*  
Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple. Simeon and Anna greeted Him with joy. For many, being in church is a source of great joy. Worship Anew seeks to bring that joy to those who are unable to attend church.

## **January 2024**

**January 7** (Isaiah 60:1-6) **“Epiphany Light”** *Rev. William Mueller*  
The prophecy from the prophet is profound. Light in the darkness. Kings and nobility bear witness to the Light. Rare gifts given from love. This is Epiphany and so much more! Come and worship. Bow down with the Magi and discover, along with a boy named Gunther, Epiphany Light.

**January 14** (John 1:51) **“See Greater Things”** *Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer*  
We SEE GREATER THINGS in daily living and eternity with Jesus in our lives. When Jesus entered a skeptical disciple’s life, Nathanael’s vision of God greatly increased. He promises and does the same in our lives!

**January 21** (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) **“Proper Perspective”** *Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III*  
What a life we have! We experience God’s blessings and joys. We also have sorrows. The Apostle Paul reminds us to keep this present life in proper perspective. What exactly is that perspective?

**January 28** (Mark 1:22) **“Teaching with Authority”** *Rev. Thomas Eggold*  
The Word of Jesus in synagogue wasn’t a new teaching; it was a retelling of a timeless promise from God Himself. It is the teaching that man is not capable of keeping God’s Law. It is the teaching that Christianity is not about the work of the Christian, but the work of Christ. This teaching is astonishing!

# DECEMBER

## **Elders**

Dec. Don DeMoss, Dean Hull, Kurt Thornsborough

## **Communion Assistants**

Dec. 3 Josh Christensen, Dean Hull  
17 Don DeMoss, Allen Kurt Thornsborough  
(9 pm) 24 *Volunteers needed – please call the church office*  
31 Kurt Thornsborough, Dean Hull

## **Ushers**

### **Dec. Team “F”**

Capt. Josh Christensen, Hannah Christensen, Jamie Yonkers, Kendall and Carley Wright, Eli Mann.

## **Special Services:**

Advent Dec. 6 (6:30 pm) Team “B”  
Advent Dec. 13 (6:30 pm) Team “C”  
Advent Dec. 20 (6:30 pm) Team “D”  
Christmas Eve Dec. 24 (9:00 pm) Team “B”

## **Lay Readers**

Dec. 3 Butch & Julie B. Butch Buesing  
10 Gail & Barb Garner Gail Garner  
17 Nancy Purviance Josh Christensen  
24 *Volunteers needed – please call the church office*  
31 Kurt & Debbie T. Kurt Thornsborough

## **Gospel Reader**

## **Special Services (6:30 pm):**

	<u>Lay Reader</u>	<u>Gospel Reader</u>
Dec. 6	Sue Heidle	Josh Christensen
Dec. 13	Diana Pratt	Butch Buesing
Dec. 20	Janet Terry	Gail Garner
Dec. 21	<i>Volunteers needed – please call the church office</i>	
Dec. 24	(9 pm) <i>Volunteers needed – call the church office</i>	

## **Altar Guild**

Dec. Rosemary Hilton, Carrie Farrell, Debbie Ferris

## **Money Counters**

Dec. Team “C” Mary Powell, Holly Clem

## **Check Signers**

Dec. Butch and Julie Buesing, Jo Van Hovel

## **Acolytes**

Dec. 3 Carley Wright  
10 Jamie Yonkers  
17 Jamie Yonkers  
24 Kendall Wright  
31 Eli Mann

## **Special Services:**

Advent Dec. 6 (6:30 pm) Kendall  
Advent Dec. 13 (6:30 pm) Jamie  
Advent Dec. 20 (6:30 pm) Carley  
Christmas Eve Dec. 24 (9:00 pm) TBD

## **Videographer / Soundboard**

Dec. Dwain Dixon and Butch Buesing

## **Immanuel Cares**

Dec. Rosemary Hilton, Marcy Heeren

# JANUARY

## **Elders**

Jan. Don DeMoss, Dean Hull, Kurt Thornsborough

## **Communion Assistants**

Jan. 7 Allen Julian, Kurt Thornsborough  
21 Dean Hull, Josh Christensen

## **Ushers**

### **Jan. Team “A”**

Capt. Don DeMoss, Pete Rudolph, Randy Wilkinson, RJ Davis, Sue DeMoss, Kim Davis

## **Lay Readers**

Jan. 7 Sue DeMoss  
14 Carrie Farrell  
21 Gail & Barb Garner  
28 Sue Heidle

## **Gospel Reader**

Kurt Thornsborough  
Josh Christensen  
Gail Garner  
Allen Julian

## **Altar Guild**

Jan. TBD

## **Money Counters**

Jan. Team “A” Jerry & Charlotte Kennett

## **Check Signers**

Jan. Mary Powell and Mike Ferris

## **Acolytes**

Jan. 7 Kendall  
14 Jamie  
21 Eli  
28 Carley

## **Videographer / Soundboard**

Jan. Dwain Dixon and Butch Buesing

## **Immanuel Cares**

Jan. TBD

*Thank you for serving! From all of us in the church office, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for serving Immanuel! We are very thankful for you (too numerous to list!) who have volunteered your time and talents this past year, especially as we navigate the operations of our somewhat recent new streaming technology and very new sanctuary screens. May God continue to bless our ministry and worship together!*

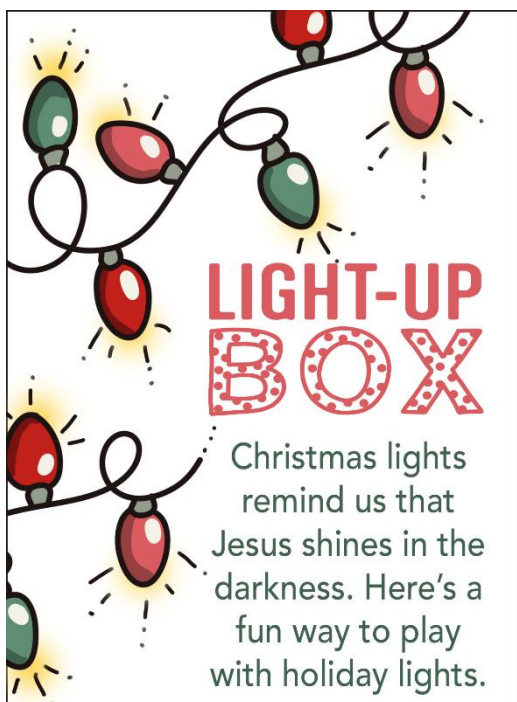
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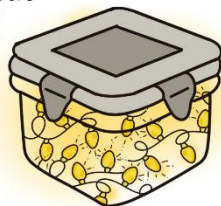
***Locally Owned ... Gary & Sarah Stuhr***





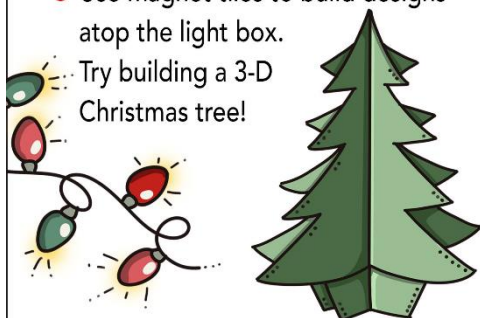
### What you need:

- A strand of Christmas lights
- A large clear plastic container and lid
- Green tissue paper
- Colorful beads

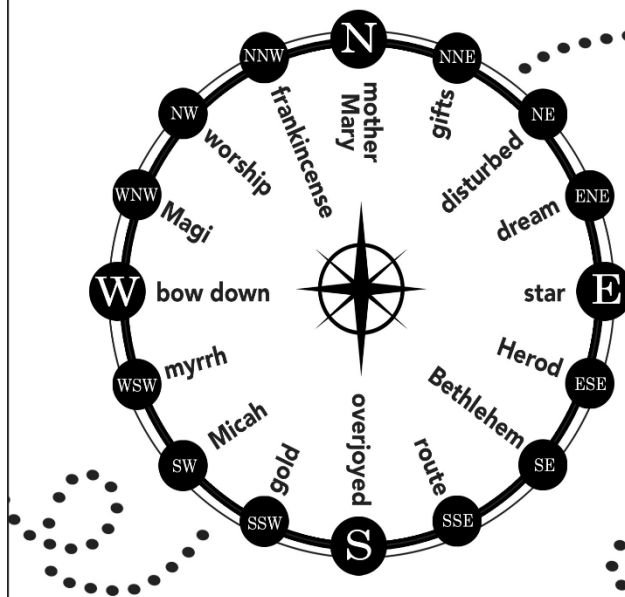


### What you do:

1. Plug in the lights and place them in the container.
  2. Put on the lid. (If the lid isn't transparent, flip the box over.)
  3. Play with your light box, using these ideas as starters:
    - Cut tissue paper into triangles and arrange them in a tree shape. Decorate the tree with colorful beads.
    - Use the light box for tracing. Place a picture on it, with a clean sheet of paper on top. Then trace the drawing.
    - Use magnet tiles to build designs atop the light box.
- Try building a 3-D Christmas tree!



# Puzzle!



Use the compass guide (and read Matthew 2) to answer questions about special visitors to young Jesus.

1. Who was king at the time of Jesus' birth? \_\_\_\_\_ (ESE)
2. Who came from the East to worship the one born king of the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_ (WNW)
3. How did King Herod feel about Jesus' birth? \_\_\_\_\_ (NE)
4. Which prophet did the chief priests and teachers of the law quote when King Herod asked where the Christ would be born? \_\_\_\_\_ (SW)
5. In what city would Christ be born? \_\_\_\_\_ (SE)
6. King Herod lied to the wise men, telling them to search and report back so he, too, could do what to Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ (NW)
7. What did the Magi see in the east and follow to find Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_ (E)
8. When the star stopped, how did the Magi feel? \_\_\_\_\_ (S)
9. Who else did the Magi see with Jesus? His \_\_\_\_\_ (N)
10. Before they worshiped the child, what did the Magi do? \_\_\_\_\_ (W)
11. Name the three treasures the Magi brought for Jesus.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (SSW) \_\_\_\_\_ (NNW) \_\_\_\_\_ (WSW)
12. These three treasures were all brought for Jesus as \_\_\_\_\_ (NNE)
13. What warned the Magi not to return to Herod? A \_\_\_\_\_ (ENE)
14. The Magi had to return to their country by another \_\_\_\_\_ (SSE)

Answers: 1. Herod; 2. Magi; 3. disturbed; 4. Micah; 5. Bethlehem; 6. worship; 7. star; 8. overjoyed; 9. mother Mary; 10. bow down; 11. gold; 12. gifts; 13. dream; 14. route



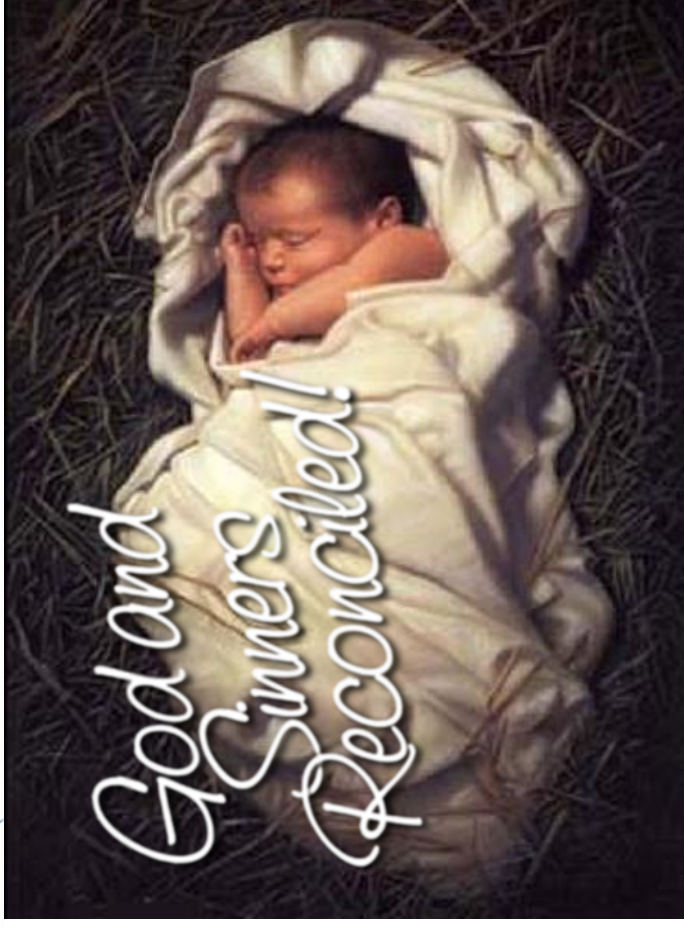
# Immanuel Lutheran Church MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY 2024

GOD WITH US

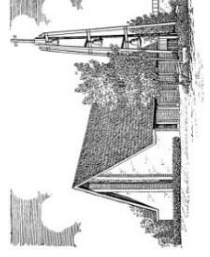
Our December 2023 / January 2024 newsletter prepared prayerfully for:  
*This newsletter also available on our website:  
[www.ilcdanville.com](http://www.ilcdanville.com)*

**Immanuel Lutheran Church and School**  
1930 N. Bowman Avenue  
Danville, IL 61832  
Church Office: (217) 442-5675  
Immanuel Lutheran Preschool: (217) 442-5036  
ilcd.churchsec@gmail.com  
ils.preschooloffice@gmail.com



**Immanuel Lutheran**  
1930 N. Bowman  
Danville, IL 61832  
[www.ilcdanville.com](http://www.ilcdanville.com)  
217-442-5675

Immanuel  
Lutheran School  
217-442-5036



## Worship Schedule

### Sundays

Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31  
Jan. 7, 14, 21 & 28  
at 9:30 am

Dec. 24 at 9:00 pm

### Wednesdays

Dec. 6, 13 & 20  
at 6:30 pm

Dec. 27

Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31  
at 5:00 pm

### Thursday

Dec. 21 at 6:30 pm

## Communion Schedule

### Sundays

Dec. 3, 17 & 31  
Jan. 7 & 21  
at 9:30 am

Dec. 24 at 9:00 pm

### Wednesdays

Dec. 27 and Jan. 31  
At 5:00 pm

