



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Glorifying God. Impacting the Community.

Immanuel Informer

January 2025

Volume 20, Issue 7

Seek the Lord

2025! Thanks be to God! He has safely brought us into another new year! In our Christmas celebrations we often hear the name “Immanuel,” which of course means “God with us.” As we enter this new year, the name “Immanuel” allows us to reflect on the previous year to see how God was working in our lives. It’s always a time of remembrance. So, are you better off today than you were 365 days ago? Some of you certainly feel good about this past year. Some of you are uneasy. And some are on the verge of despair.

As we leave 2024 and enter 2025, we may want to evaluate our lives based on net worth, health condition, position at work, or some other earthly standard. But God’s Word offers us another way to evaluate our life. The prophet Isaiah challenges us to consider what we put our faith and trust in. He writes: “Listen to me, you who *pursue righteousness* and who *seek the Lord*” (51:1)

Isaiah describes what needs to be foundational in our Christian life—the pursuit of righteousness and seeking after the Lord. Seeking God is not something that we do willingly. No, Isaiah says that we pursue righteousness and seek the Lord because of what *God* has done in us and for us in the person of Jesus Christ. Isaiah chapter 51 reminds us of God’s extraordinary work, calling to our attention the many ways God’s grace and mercy impact our lives. It’s filled with words of restoration and comfort. God promises to comfort and restore us by strengthening our faith. We have the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life through faith in His Son. The Apostle Paul explains: “*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*” (Rom 8:31-31).

Our well-being begins with God’s love for us in Jesus Christ, as the prophet writes, “*My salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail*” (v 6). This Good News gives us assurance and strength to endure what comes our way each day, month, and year. Nothing can separate us from God’s love (Rom 8:38-39). “*Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations*” (Is 51:4). This assures us of God’s desire to save all people from their sins. I encourage you to read Isaiah 51 to be comforted and have the assurance of God’s love for you.

By God’s grace, we have passed through another year because God has made it possible. Despite our financial, physical, or employment status, we are blessed people because God always provides, he always meets our every spiritual need through the power of the Gospel. Are we better off today

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God's Abundance

We have before us a whole new year. Think of the abundance of possibilities and opportunities God lays before us for service to His kingdom in the minutes and hours that make up the days of the year 2025!

Abundance is a characteristic of God. He gave His only Son Who declared to us, *"I came that [you] may have life, and have it abundantly"* (John 10:10). Through Him and because of the abundance of His love for us, we *"believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of [our] faith, the salvation of [our] souls"* (1 Peter 1:8-9). While He is slow to anger, the Lord is *"abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression"* (Numbers 14:18).

He gives the gifts of His creation to us in abundance as well, for who can count the stars in the sky, the birds in the air, or the fish in the sea? He also pours out on His people gifts in abundance. According to God's grace, He has given us different gifts (Romans 12:6).

God has equipped and enabled us with His abundant gifts to seek out the lost, to lead and serve on committees and boards that do the work of ministry, to provide financial support for our church workers at home and in missions, and to teach and preach His Word for the salvation of souls and the edification of believers.

Perhaps you do not know where you fit into this picture. You even think you are not part of the picture. Not so! The Apostle Peter wrote, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"* (1 Peter 4:10). By this we know that each of us has at least one gift and that God holds each of us responsible for using that gift. Ask God to show you where He wants to use you.

**AS GOD'S PEOPLE, WE ARE STENGTH-
ENED FOR STEWARDSHIP THROUGH
WORD AND SACRAMENT.**

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you."

John 15:16



**LORD, IN THIS NEW YEAR,
HELP US TO BE FAITHFUL
STEWARDS OF ALL THAT
YOU ENTRUST TO US.**

"Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful"
(1 Corinthians 4:2).

Stewardship Corner

A new year offers a fresh start for many of us. Like Paul, we *"[forget] what lies behind and [strain] forward to what lies ahead"* (Philippians 3:13). Through Christ, Who has paid the penalty for our sins, the slate is clean; we can forget about the past. We are new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), ready to go forward in His strength to serve Him with the gifts He has given us. What new changes in 2025 are you willing to make for the Lord? Is there a committee or board in your church that needs help and could use your talents? How about witnessing to a neighbor who does not know Jesus? May God show us all opportunities for greater service in this new year.

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than we were 365 days ago? Yes and No! We are still the same sinful people living in a fallen world. Yet, we are the redeemed children of God, thankful to have received God's grace and mercy every day this past year. And it is by God's grace that we can say we are *equally* well-off today as we were last year or 10 years ago because God's salvation will last forever; his righteousness will never fail. Later in chapter 55 Isaiah speaks words that we should put to memory for this new year: "*Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near*" (Is. 55:6).

May God pour out his never-ending love upon you this new year,

Pastor Steve Deombeleg

New Year

New Resolution

Read the entire Bible in one year.

Here are a few links to Bible reading plans

- <https://www.biblica.com/resources/reading-plans/>
- <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/60-the-one-year-bible>
- <https://bibleproject.com/downloads/reading-plan/#load-reading-plan-288>
- <https://bibleplan.org/>
- <https://communication.cph.org/free-bible-reading-plans>

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17



HAPPY
New Year

You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip with abundance.

PSALM 65:11

Put Your Hands Together

A ministry of Immanuel Lutheran Church

December 2024 Report

PYHT Food Distributions & Activity

Expansion Project Update: Postponed until further notice.

Grants: No new grants will be written

In-Kind Food Donations/Food Rescue Received: 24,217 Lbs.

Food Ministry Service Events: 9

Direct Families Served: 424 Families, 14 Ministries

PYHT Food Relief Agencies & Ministries Served:

Westchester FP, Berwyn FP, St. Paul Oak Lawn, St. Lukes, Downers Grove Comm Kitchen, NEW Inglewood Food Pantry, Youth Crossroads, Village of Hillside.

Upcoming Dates

Monday, January 6th Food Bank Unloading - Help Needed at 4:30pm

Saturday, January 11th Pantry Day - Help Needed

Thank You to all volunteers, the congregation & friends of the pantry for your time and support of our holiday food distributions. What a great way to end the year with thanks to God for our most successful season in five years. We couldn't have done it without such a great team effort. What a wonderful Community Impact!

Submitted by Jayne Siou, Director of Pantry Operations



Expressing Your Love

The three words “I love you” are powerful. Love is expressed not only in words but also in action. In fact, it has been said, “Talk is cheap.” To tell someone that you love him is good to do, but love expressed by what we do and how we act is even better! As God’s people, we convey love through our giving and serving.

In God’s Word, He tells us how much He loves each of us and then proves it by giving His Son to die for us. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). Jesus gave His life for us, and He keeps on giving. We respond to His love for us through our giving. When we give faithfully of our time, talents, and treasures, we show our love for Jesus.

God takes love seriously. He loves us, and

He expects us to love one another. Jesus said, *“...love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”* (John 13:34). We love others by serving them. Serving communicates love. *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45).

The love that Jesus places in our hearts can be our fuel to make a difference not only in our lives, but in the lives of those around us. It is important to express our love as we thank God for His abundant grace, mercy, and blessing, but our words must be supported through the greater expression of our love as seen through our giving and serving, as God gives us grace to do.

Raise Right

Scrip fundraising is a no-selling program that enables families to raise money for their church or school. Scrip is just another way to pay for everyday purchases using gift cards in place of cash, checks, and credit cards. You purchase gift cards from your organization at face value, and your coordinator orders those cards from Raise Right Scrip Center at a reduced price. The difference is an instant rebate for Immanuel. It’s that simple! Order Forms are located in the church hallway or can enroll online to order: <https://www.raiseright.com/shop>



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

Getting the Most Out of Your Daily Bible Reading

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

January - Unity in Christ

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Ephesians 1:1–14 | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Luke 6:6–16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Ephesians 1:15–23 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Ephesians 2:1–10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Luke 6:17–26 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Ephesians 2:11–22 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Luke 6:27–49 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Luke 7:1–17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Ephesians 3:1–21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Luke 7:18–35 |
| Epiphany | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Luke 7:36–50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Ephesians 4:1–16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 John 17:1–26 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Ephesians 4:17–32 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Colossians 1:1–14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Ephesians 5:1–20 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Ephesians 6:10–24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Colossians 1:15–23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Luke 3:1–20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Colossians 1:24–29 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Luke 3:21–38 | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Colossians 2:1–19 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Colossians 2:20 -3:4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Luke 4:1–15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Colossians 3:5–17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Luke 4:16–30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Colossians 4:2–18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Luke 4:31–44 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Luke 5:1–11 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Luke 5:12–32 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Luke 5:33 - 6:5 | |

Set aside time to read the bible on a daily basis.

Find a quiet place to read and reflect on each day’s reading.

Begin with prayer, asking God for guidance and blessing.

For the Record

Death

Robert Brown II, December 28



A Month of Prayer

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

1. Marilyn Weeks
2. Randy & Michelle Weeks
3. Welch Family
4. Dorothy Westphal
5. Philbert Wilcox Sr.
6. Philbert Wilcox Jr.
7. Brett Willis
8. *The Woodruff Family*
9. *The Wright Family*
10. *The Aguirre Family*
11. Tina Alicea
12. *The Anderson Family*
13. Ron & Barb Arndt
14. Susan Arnold
15. Bell Family
16. *The Bertacchi Family*
17. Jennifer Bettin
18. Jeffrey Bettin
19. Karen Bimler
20. The Blair Family
21. Christine Bost
22. Bozzi Family
23. *The Brantley-Cruz Family*
24. Ruth Anne Brendemuhl
25. Barbara Brown
26. Doretha Brown & Rashaad Smith
27. *The Burks Family*
28. *The Caldwell Family*
29. Joe & Lisa Chioda
30. *Coe / Brown Family*
31. *The Davis Family*

January Birthdays

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 03 - Ronald Steele, 3rd Grade | 15 - Marisa Perez | 22 - Michelle Weeks |
| 06 - Lynda Nickl | 15 - Peyton McKenzie, 6th Grade | 25 - Jennifer Bettin |
| 08 - Luke Woodruff, 8th Grade | 20 - Dorothy Westphal | 28 - Randy Weeks |
| 10 - Brett Willis | 21 - Zach Garcia, 5th Grade | 31 - Mercedes Lepe |



January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 - <i>Epiphany Observed</i> 9:30am Worship HC 10:30am Fellowship 11:15am Bible Study	6 - <i>Epiphany</i> School Resumes 3pm B-Ball Practice	7 4pm Basketball Game @ Burr Ridge	8 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	9 3pm B-Ball Practice	10 4pm Basketball Game HOME vs. LaGrange 7pm Adult Volleyball	11 11am Food Pantry Distribution
12 - <i>Baptism of our Lord</i> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 11:15am Bible Study Scrip Orders Due	13 3pm B-Ball Practice	14 - 10:45a.m. Walther Preview Concert 5pm PTL Meeting 7pm Walther Concert	15 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	16 3pm B-Ball Practice	17	18
19 9:30am Worship HC 10:30am Fellowship 11:15am Bible Study	20 No School MLK Jr. Day	21	22 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	23 3pm B-Ball Practice	24 4pm Basketball Game HOME vs. Bensenville 7pm Adult Volleyball	25
26 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 11:15am Bible Study	27 MAP Testing 3pm B-Ball Practice	28 4pm Basketball Game AWAY @ Elmhurst	29 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	30	31	

2317 - 2329 South Wolf Road
Hillside, IL 60162

Church phone - 708-562-5590

School phone - 708-562-5580

E-Mail: general@immanuel-hillside.org

www.immanuel-hillside.org

RETURN REQUESTED

POSTMASTER: DATED MATERIAL

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

Joanna Czubernat, Communications
jczubernat@immanuel-hillside.org
708-562-5590 ext. 102

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

Dr. Patricia Jackson, Principal
principal@immanuel-hillside.org
708-562-5580 ext. 201
www.icahillside.org



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