

## December 2020 Newsletter

### A Word from Interim Pastor Kim

#### *At the Manger*

In the end, I just couldn't feature spending \$30 for a child's gift that he'd outgrow in a year or two anyway. So I picked something else.

But I've never seen it again anywhere, and always regretted not picking up that nativity set for my godson Joey. It was a soft-stuffed Mary and Joseph, and the babe, lying in a puffy manger that came in a cozy drawstring bag that also served as the stable. It was a take-along-anywhere nativity that encouraged holding this story of Jesus' birth in your hands, and making something of it.



I probably never would have thought about it if I hadn't seen my niece Hannah play with the nativity set at my in-law's house. This set wasn't, after all, the kind of thing you play with, with its breakable figurines. But how do you say no to a child who wants to get closer to Jesus? So, under watchful eyes, with adults holding their breath, Hannah held each piece and told these figures their stories while she reverently placed them in the stable. When she came to baby Jesus, she cradled him, kissed him softly, and set him in the hay.

I always thought nativity sets were just part of the tradition, the family heirloom hauled out of the basement each year, with each figure unwrapped from its tattered old pieces of tissue each year to be set on the mantle. But Hannah and Joey have taught me that the nativity, the story that comes alive for us in our gospel on this holy night, is meant to be held in our hands. It's meant to be re-enacted and lived through and wondered over in our imaginations, pondered over in our hearts, and made something out of even after we leave this candlelit scene of mystery and wonder and re-enter the 365 days of our ordinary, daily life. This story of Jesus' birth, is meant to be a take-along-everywhere nativity. It is meant to be handled, used, told, touched.

What is our story, the one that needs to be told to us, remembered to us this year that has been so changed by covid, so full of losses, so marked by racial injustices and economic inequities, so that we may take our place in the nativity for this miracle of God that once again takes human form in a real world and real lives crying out for love? And for the justice that is, as Cornell West said, what love looks like in public?

May God bless you with this love that comes to us in our hands this Christmas and every Sunday as the very bread of life makes its home in our hearts.

*Interim Pastor Kim Beckmann*  
[pastor@immanuelevanston.org](mailto:pastor@immanuelevanston.org)

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### December Sunday Scripture Readings

**December 6, Advent 2**  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
2 Peter 3:8-15a

**December 24,  
Christmas Eve**  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalm 96

Mark 1:1-8

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2: 1-14 [15-20]

**December 13, Advent 3**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalms 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

**December 25,  
Christmas Day**

Isaiah 62:6-12

Psalms 97

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:[1-7], 8-20



**December 20, Advent 4**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1: 26038

**December 27, Christmas 1**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalms 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

Daily lectionary readings can be found at [www.dailylectio.net](http://www.dailylectio.net)

## Worship Matters

### Sundays in December, 10:30 am on Zoom

**The Second Sunday of Advent - December 6th**

John the Baptizer announces good news out of the wilderness: the power to turn us, to turn the world around, is coming. Stir up our hearts, O Lord, and come!

**The Third Sunday of Advent - December 13th**

In John the Baptizer, act two, we go out with him to the wilderness to see what it takes to prepare that highway, that road, for God's salvation to come to us. Stir up our wills, O Lord, and come!

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 20th**

God shows up in unexpected places. We don't blame Mary for being surprised to find life in her virgin womb. But God specializes in life where we don't expect life to be possible. Stir up your power, O Lord, and come!

**The 1st Sunday after Christmas - December 27th**

We're still unwrapping! The three days immediately after Christmas commemorate three "Companions of the Christ child" – St. Stephen (remember Good King Wenceslaus?), St. John, and the Innocents of Bethlehem. We continue to take in the meaning of God's love for us in the gift of Christmas.

## Christmas Festival Worship at Immanuel on Zoom



**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24th**  
**Christmas Eve Worship on Zoom**  
**at 8 pm**

The first Christmas was humble,

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25th**  
**Christmas Day Worship on Zoom**  
**at 10 am**

We are excited to join Christ Lutheran in

surprising, around a manger in Bethlehem. This pandemic year we are stripped down to the essentials in our gathering, and prepare to be surprised by joy nonetheless. Remembering that *Silent Night* was first premiered in a congregation whose organ and traditional songs had been stilled by organ failure... this year we'll find a new way to sing *Silent Night* as a congregation. See Jimmy's invitation to join in our congregational singing of *Silent Night* this year by submitting an audio and/or video as detailed in email and elsewhere in this newsletter.

Allentown for a service of Lessons and Carols this bright Christmas morn. We give thanks for our connections there through Sara Krentz and her father Deacon Michael Krentz who serves as music director/organist. Pastor Kim will preach. Pastor Woody Maxon will preside at communion. You are invited to "bring the sparkle", however you may do so! One idea is to having sparkling wine or grape juice for communion, if available, to "pop the cork" on God's unstoppable life in the gift of Jesus. We will gather in the joy that has come to the world.

## Advent Midweek Devotions with Holden Evening Prayer

JOIN US ON ZOOM ON WEDNESDAYS AT 7:00 PM

### Love Comes Down!

Each week, we will have some meditation and reflection time on a pair of "winter saints" whose days are remembered in December. They help us to consider various ways that love comes to us in these longer nights of winter.



Dec 2, Love Seen and Felt – John of Damascus & St. Nicholas

Dec 9, Love Heard and Confessed – Ambrose & Juan Diego and the Virgin of Guadalupe

Dec 16, Love Desired and Fulfilled – John of the Cross & Katharina Von Bora

Dec 23, Love Foretold and Poured Out – Isaiah and Micah and the Anointer of Bethany

Fellowship time follows our evening prayer. Look for the weekly eblast or go to [www.immanuelevanston.org/calendar](http://www.immanuelevanston.org/calendar) for the zoom links and details.

## The Advent Season at Home

Many of our forebears were baptized at home. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism to be taught and discussed in a home setting. In Covid times, our homes have once again become a center of sacred space. As we lean into "quarantide" this advent, and embrace both its richness and its simplicity, we see Jesus present in the holiness of our living space.



### Advent wreath

Battery candles, leftover Easter egg candles, a quartet of tea lights, a bit of shrubbery,

or a coloring page... we "make do" in Covid times to bring a circle of light and anticipation to our hearts and homes.

### **Advent Prayer**

The most ancient prayer of the church has a name: "Maranatha!" It means "Come, Lord Jesus!" A simple advent devotion to pray down a savior would be to light a candle at a meal, and pray: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to all be blessed. Feed us with your living bread, that all the world be clothed and fed. Amen.

For a longer devotion, [click here for the "Krentz family liturgy"](#) which has spanned generations!

### **Advent Daily Lectionary and Online Meditation**

A website and mobile app offers daily scripture over morning coffee, at close of day, or even when you're on the go. Take a 5-minute sabbath at <https://www.dailylectio.net>. St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square has prepared an "Advent spiral" spiritual growth experience. Click on this link <https://advent-spiral.stlukesls.org/?fbclid=IwAR2cFQtYewc7mDlviwCfoZM3kHKCtNKy069XmuTbMgi15sho3KvCcOcm3GI>

### **Christmas Creche**

On Christmas Eve, we lay the baby Jesus down in the manger. A tradition in many cultures invites us to begin our journey to Bethlehem and assemble our manger scene throughout advent. On Christmas Eve, the baby finally makes it to the manger! Perhaps you have some figures and some animals that could be assembled. Here are a few sites that offer paper templates and ideas. Click on these links <http://madebyjoel.com/2013/12/paper-city-nativity-scene-joyfully-expanded.html> and <http://smartgirlsdid.com/2013/12/21-free-nativity-printables/>

If you have a baby that isn't permanently attached to Mary's arms, you may join us in waiting til our Christmas Eve worship when we lay down the baby Jesus.

## **December Music at Immanuel**

Happy New Year from your virtual choir loft!

After kicking off the church new year with an original Advent anthem "Awake from Slumber, Wake from Sleep" by J. William Greene, we begin December with a beloved setting of "O come, O come Emmanuel" in Latin by Zoltan Kodaly.



We rejoice on Advent 3 with a setting of the tune *Oreientis Partibus* by Alfred V. Fedak and finish our advent season with Nancy M. Raabe's setting of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (Savior of the Nations, Come).

Christmas Eve has two lovely contributions by soprano soloist, Ashlee Hardgrave from the Messiah and Adolphe Adam's O Holy Night. The choir lifts up the newborn Savior with Evelyn R. Larter's setting of "What Child Is This?" and J. S. Bach's setting of the angel carol "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." A special assembly-wide Silent Night will top of the evening.

Many thanks to closing out the calendar year with all the extra dedication and commitment from Tom Couch to edit, and the choir members to record and video and submit. Many many thanks! Merry Christmas!

*Jimmy Morehead*

## **Assembly Silent Night Video for Christmas Eve**

Dear Faithful Members of ILC,

We are going to put together an Assembly-wide video for Christmas Eve of SILENT NIGHT. You can submit an audio track (of just your voice) AND/OR video file (sing and move while making the video - submit the full file with audio).



Music: Silent Night verse 1 in German, Verse 2 and verse 3 in English. (If you only want to sing the second and third verse, that is ok!)

Sing harmony or sing melody/soprano! You can find practice files and sheet music by clicking this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dF4fbjkOCSKNQIUrS6OMA9nQc-PA7Nun?usp=sharing>

You can submit your files by uploading them to the Dropbox:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/cNUlj33gY1LXeg8a1uu>

**Please submit your files by midnight on DECEMBER 17th!**

(We need extra time to edit the video as well as the audio).

[Click for Silent Night Sheet Music](#)

[Click for Silent Night Practice Music Files](#)

[Click for Full Instructions on How to Record & Submit](#)



## Stewardship 2020

### **WE ARE ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT AND ACTIVE IN MISSION!**

#### **THANKS TO YOU!**

THANKS to those who have returned and dedicated 2021 plans for giving and sharing of our resources celebrating the Reign of Christ we experience near (and here!) in Jesus' presence as Immanuel.

THANKS to those who inspired us by recalling Immanuel's core mission and its impact on our lives:

Michael and Elora Kloster - We Worship God  
Ayla Pizzo – We Welcome Everyone  
Terri Hummel – We Build Community  
Diane Keely - We Work for Social Justice

THANKS to those of you still considering! If you haven't had a chance to submit your estimate of giving for this year, there is still time to do so. If you haven't pledged before, we'd like to invite you to consider doing so this year. Any estimate for your sharing you can make, will help Immanuel plan for our mission together in an uncertain time. You can send in a form to the church by mail, or email it to Mary Ann Kearns at [giving@immanuelevanston.org](mailto:giving@immanuelevanston.org).



# Council Discernment

*Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7)*

As part of our discernment process for deciding which persons God is calling forward from the Assembly to serve as leaders on our Congregation Council, the Nominating Committee is asking all baptized and confirmed members of the congregation to prayerfully name one person they believe the Holy Spirit is lifting up as a leader. These leaders must be baptized, confirmed members of the congregation. This year the Nominating Committee is also offering space to hear what gifts these leaders would bring to their Council service. There are two ways to submit your responses this year:

You may fill out an online form, found at the link below. All responses are anonymous. [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSefP2dfNm4oLlvx3Qq08pvt\\_flpqBcWn7duysCKahtNy\\_8iw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSefP2dfNm4oLlvx3Qq08pvt_flpqBcWn7duysCKahtNy_8iw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

You may send a paper version to the church by clicking the button below and filling out the form.

**The Nominating Committee requests your responses by Tuesday, December 8, 2020.**

The following persons are continuing their service on Council and should **not** be listed:

<b>Dana Barron</b>	<b>Bert Mount</b>
<b>Tom Couch</b>	<b>Scott Romans</b>
<b>Linda Edlund</b>	<b>Susan Ross</b>
<b>Melisa Larson</b>	<b>Jim Skelton</b>

The following person has completed one term on Council and may be listed for a new term:

**Grace Yarnoff**

In addition, the following persons have completed two full terms and are not eligible for immediate reelection:

**Greg Hummel, Sara Krentz, and Erik Shearer**

[Click for the Council Discernment Form](#)

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## Call Committee

The Call Committee (Tom Couch, Chris Djuric, Anne Heider, Tyler Heyl, Michael Kloster, Lisa Larson) received three candidate names for consideration. One candidate withdrew before interviewing.

The Committee completed first interviews, candidate research, and discernment discussions for two candidates. Information about the candidates was gathered from video recordings of preaching and/or presiding in worship, provided work samples, and the candidates' social media presence. The committee chose to end the discernment process with one candidate. The committee and remaining candidate met for a 2<sup>nd</sup> interview and the committee has





## December Birthdays

David Johnson 12/1  
Laurie Stivers 12/4  
Mildred Carlson 12/6  
Steve Warner 12/7  
Alfhild Wikstrom 12/7  
Nicholas Senn 12/11  
Ernie LeVon 12/17  
Alex Ross 12/17  
Zachariah Yarnoff 12/24  
Kerstin Litwin 12/29

## Pandemic Prose

### Don't even think about it

Let's put this out there right from the start: This will NOT be The Merriest Christmas Ever. (Ever look at the magazines in the line at grocery checkout? Every year this is their promise--'merriest ever', and I wonder how they can top the merriest from all the years before). With a vaccine to start rolling out soon, we have a reasonable hope that this will be our only quarantine Christmas, so we just need to get through it unscathed. Don't even think about the pressure of making it the merriest one!

Maybe no one will be in our homes this year to see decorations or a twinkling Christmas tree. Put it all up anyway! We certainly need all the spirit-lifting we can make for ourselves. The hours of daylight are so short right now that we've got to make the most of them--crack open the blinds, pull back curtains, let the light in, and when darkness falls, turn on twinkly lights, light some candles, think about the light of God shining through the darkness! We will need all the light we can get through this dark December.

Join Immanuel's Advent worship on Wednesday evenings for a dose of connection, reflection, prayer and music.

There are so many Advent and Christmas programs and concerts available to us this year, on radio, TV, and streaming services. While I'm not a fan of the Hallmark Christmas movies, many are--and if you are, watch them all! For years, I've tuned in for the 'Festival of Lessons and Carols' from King's College in Cambridge, England. It's live on NPR Christmas Eve morning (early because of the time difference), and it's been the musical accompaniment to rolling Swedish meatballs or making lefse. If you don't know what this last item is, that's OK.

We are waiting in these days. Waiting for the birth of the Babe, waiting for the safety of vaccines, waiting for the days to grow longer. We have a great blessing in being able to connect virtually, to celebrate our shared purpose and fellowship. Hang in there--good things are coming to us, thank God!

*Linda Edlund*

### How was Thanksgiving?

Unless everyone was putting up a brave face when we had our coffee hour breakout rooms on Sunday, it sounds as if we made it through

COVID Thanksgiving pretty well. We had small gatherings. We sat outside, some of us around little firepits that warmed our hearts much more than our fingers and toes. We ate, and we were thankful. If we were alone, it wasn't because we had no invitations or that invitations extended had been declined, it was because we were keeping ourselves and others safe. Love kept us home, or with a tiny group.



At our house, we got Thanksgiving To Go from *Terra and Vine*, and gifted a second bag to my daughter and her partner. We had a lovely floral arrangement from Paperwhite Florals, Immanuel member Andrea Knohl's business. I love being cooked for and having flowers delivered, and supporting local businesses. We can do the crowd next year!

Linda Edlund

## Churchwide Events

**You're Invited!**

Stars and Promises Christmas Concert feat.  
Peter Mayer, lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffett

Dec. 9, 2020 | 7 p.m. Central time  
Benefiting ELCA World Hunger

Facebook Premiere  
(Accessible without a Facebook account)

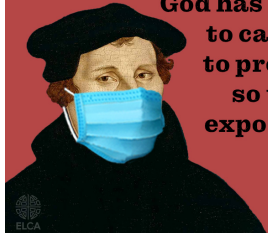


 ELCA World Hunger  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

### Creating a Healthy Society

Protect yourself and your neighbors – wear a mask, practice physical distancing and wash your hands. We all share the responsibility for creating a healthy society, as Martin Luther reminds us in his 1527 essay “Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague.”

**All of us have the responsibility of warding off this poison to the best of our ability because God has commanded us to care for the body, to protect & nurse it so that we are not exposed needlessly.**



- Martin Luther, 1527  
*Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*

**Merry Christmas!  
Happy New Year!**



## 2020–21 ILC Leadership

Scott Romans, *Congregation President*  
Melisa Larson, *Congregation Vice President*  
Sara Krentz, *Congregation Secretary*  
Tom Couch, Linda Edlund, Greg Hummel,  
Melisa Larson, Dana Barron, Bert Mount,  
Erik Shearer, Jim Skelton, Grace Yarnoff  
*Congregation Council Members*

Susan Ross, *Treasurer*  
Mary Ann Kearns, *Financial Secretary*  
Elizabeth Stegner, *Assistant Financial Secretary*



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Give