

God's Hands—January 2024

Some Food for Thought from the Pastor

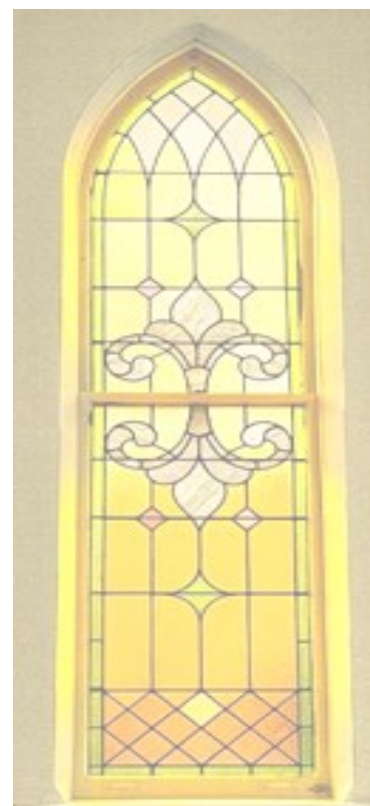
One of the statistics that we calculate for our annual report each January is our CCC's, which stands for Communing, Contributing, & Confirmed members. Yet, I think CCC could stand for something else here at Immanuel. It could be a defining characteristic of who we are as a Contemplative Christian Community.

A Contemplative Christian Community (CCC) is a group of people who assist one another in doing the inner work that prepares them for reaching out in love to the larger world. A CCC follows the psalmist edict: Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10). A CCC becomes centered in God's ways of love by opening their hearts and souls to God's gifts of love and forgiveness. A CCC welcomes all into God's circle of love. A CCC creates safe space to assist one another in deepening faith journeys. A CCC is grounded in trust. A CCC initiates folks into a counter cultural way of being and doing.

In *The Hidden Wholeness*, Parker Palmer, uses the metaphor of a group of people sitting quietly together in the forest, watching quietly for the wild animal of the soul to show itself. This metaphor fits what we do in our Spiritual Direction Groups. It's a place in which participants experience contemplative community. One of the things that keeps the soul hidden is when we try to fix, save, advise, or correct one another. But, when it comes to soul work, it isn't helpful to be helpful. Instead, participants are led to ask open ended questions or offer observations that will assist another in exploring their experiences, accessing their inner teacher, and discerning God's presence and guidance. This is the third year that Kit McCarthy and I have been facilitating direction groups of 3 or 4 participants, growing an additional group each year. It continues to be one of the most sacred activities in which I'm privileged to participate in. It's one of the ways that we're becoming a CCC.

For many years I posted the following Thomas Merton quote on my refrigerator, as a prompt and guide to practice contemplation within the demands of a world that usually goes crashing through the forest instead of sitting quietly under a tree: ***"There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful."***

Being and becoming a CCC is a counter cultural endeavor, and yet so needed on the path to finding shalom. Peace, justice, serenity, and flourishing of life for all, begins within our hearts and souls. Imagine a world in which most people are in tune with their inner wisdom that makes work fruitful. Or maybe it's easier to just imagine your own life more in touch with your inner teacher, and not so harried by the world's demands.



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- January Music
- January Feeding Our Faith
- Book Review
- Walk for Warmth

Immanuel Calendar



Jan. 1		Happy New Year 2024!
Jan. 3	10:00 am	Group Spiritual Direction
Jan. 4, 18	9:00 am	Daytime Quilters
Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25	7:30 pm	Wilmette Band Rehearsals
Jan. 6, 20	8:00 am	Indoor Farmers' Market
Jan. 7	12:30 pm	Confirmation Class (at Grace Lutheran; no class on Jan. 14)
Jan. 9, 16 23, 30	Noon	Midweek Spiritual Discussion on Zoom
Jan. 9	7:00 pm	Group Spiritual Direction
Jan. 10, 27	10:00 am	Trombone Choir Rehearsal
Jan. 14	12:30 pm	Council Meeting
Jan. 15	11:00 am	MLK Day—Interfaith Action Walk for Warmth
Jan. 18	7:00 pm	Group Spiritual Direction
Jan. 21	Noon	Budget Meeting
Jan. 28	11:30 am	Annual Meeting

Be sure to check the Church Calendar online at www.immanuelevanston.org/Calendar for the latest info on church events and building usage.

January Scripture Readings

January 7, Baptism of Our Lord

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Act 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 14, Epiphany 2

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

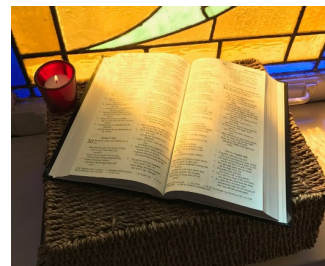
January 21, Epiphany 3

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

January 28, Epiphany 4

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

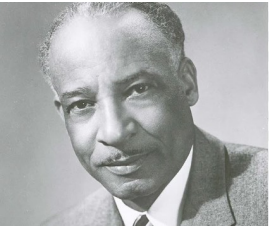
Revised Common Lectionary daily readings can be found at <https://www.dailylectio.net/calendar>



Music at Immanuel

January Music

We kick off the New Year with a wonderful setting of the poem by Howard Thurman with music by Mark Schweizer called "Christmas Joy." We follow that with a beloved favorite of "Locus Iste" by Anton Bruckner.



In the middle of the month, we celebrate with William Dawson's rousing spiritual setting of "Aint-a that Good News." We close out the month of January with a flourish of Bach. Organ and piano and choir will join forces for Ertöt uns durch dein Güte with only a few weeks before Lent prepares us for the Easter season.

—Jimmy Morehead

Feeding Our Faith

Sundays 9 AM—10 AM

January Topics

Gatherings include viewing short videos and lively discussions.

You can participate either in-person or via Zoom. All participants will have an enhanced experience by being able to see and hear each other, via an Owl Labs 360-degree view video camera/speaker/microphone! Zoom link is on the church website, www.immanuelevanston.org.

January 7 – Money, Wealth, and the Bible: Former financial analyst and professor of Hebrew Bible, Dr. Roger S. Nam, walks his listeners through the ways the Bible conceptualizes wealth, from God's covenant with Abraham to the teachings of Jesus, and challenges us to acknowledge the differences between ancient economies and our own.

January 14 – Four Words that Change Everything, Lisa Sharon Harper: In memory of her great-grandmother Leah Ballard who lived in slavery, Lisa Sharon Harper preaches the good news of God's liberation.

January 21 – Creating God in Our Image, Lydia Muñoz: Executive Director of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry of the UMC, Rev. Dr. Muñoz argues that worship spaces and the way we behave in them have been largely shaped by whiteness and calls for more authentic liturgy in worship.

January 28 – An Ethics of Dust, Luke A. Powery: Rev. Dr. Luke Powery dives into the issues of race through a theology of dust, challenging listeners to think beyond our racial identities and acknowledge our need for one another.

Continued from page 1...

One of the strengths of Immanuel congregation in being and becoming a CCC is music. Music can be a great aid for contemplation and becoming more in touch with the state of one's soul. Music communicates beyond words. It can be an entry point for many into a more contemplative way of living.

I invite you to join me in the never-ending process of Immanuel being and becoming a contemplative community. As Immanuel, we know and trust that God is with us. This will help us to focus on the 4 pillars of our life together, Worshipping God, Welcoming All, Doing Justice, and Building Community. It will help us to discern how best to expend our time, gifts, resources, and energy in God's work of reconciling the world. As we enter a new year, let's more fully embrace the reality that we truly are God's beloved. And may that reality shape our being and becoming a CCC.

Deep Blessings,

Pastor Mark

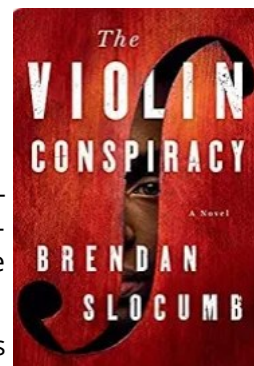
The Violin Conspiracy

By Brendan Slocumb , 2022.

A book review by Maren Baylaender

Ray McWilliams has a gift and a dream – he’s determined to become a world- class, professional violinist and nothing will stand in his way. Not his mother, who wants him to stop making such racket, not the fact that he can’t afford a violin suitable to his talents, not even the racism and prejudice inherent in the often-rarified world of classical music.

When Ray discovers that the beat-up family fiddle is actually a priceless Stradivarius, all his dreams suddenly seem within reach. Together, Ray and his violin take the world by storm. But on the eve of the renowned and cutthroat Tchaikovsky Competition – the Olympics of classical music – the violin is stolen, a ransom note for \$5 million left in its place. Ray feels like he’s lost a piece of himself. As the competition approaches, Ray must not only reclaim his precious violin but prove to himself – and the world – the no matter the outcome, there has always been a truly great musician within him.



Justice & Equity Ministry

Curated Events in 2023

Wilmette

The Justice & Equity Ministry held two main events in 2023. On March 2nd a group of members had lunch at Convito Café & Market, followed by a tour of The Baha’i House of Worship (The Baha’i Temple), led by Steve Sarowitz. Everyone assembled on the first floor of the Welcome Center, where Steve spoke of 9 major religions practiced in the world, and gave a brief historical overview of each, followed by a visit to the lower-level to learn more about the faith, and browsed the bookstore before visiting the temple. This is a beautiful place to visit all year round. The grounds are lovely to walk, pray or meditate. <https://www.bahai.us/bahai-temple/>

North Evanston

On Saturday, November 4th, The Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, opened its doors to ILC congregants and friends, for a tour of the exhibit titled: *No Rest: The Epidemic of Stolen Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2Spirits*. This exhibit seeks to bring awareness to the Native women and girls who go missing or are murdered every year. Unfortunately, these crimes generally do not receive news coverage. This outing was followed by lunch at Curt’s Café. **There is still time to see this** . Please check the link. Be sure to mention that you belong to ILC, they will be very happy that you are supporting them. <https://mitchellmuseum.org>

Please Join Us in the New Year!

In 2024, it is our hope to host 2-4 special events. While we welcome friends and community members, we have you in mind when we plan these experiences. Together we can create a more equitable community. We hope to see you there!

—Submitted by Audrey Moy

2023–24 ILC Leadership

Dana Barron, Congregation President

Michael Kloster, Congregation Vice President

Steve Warner, Congregation Secretary

Susan Ross, Treasurer

Diane Keely, Jerry Larson, Kit McCarthy, Terri Simchak,
Grace Yarnoff Congregation Council Members

Laurie Stivers, Financial Secretary

Hybrid Tuesday Midweek Adult Bible Study

Noon—1:00 pm

Our simple mid-week gathering on Tuesdays now at the Lunch Hour in Fellowship Hall. Brown bag lunchers are welcome. This gathering offers time for spiritual growth in Word and Fellowship. Check our website Calendar at www.immanuelevanston.org or the weekly email for Zoom info and the week’s themes.



INDOOR FARMERS MARKET

All are invited to serve on this ministry in many different ways—as Greeters, helping with set-up/clean-up, advocacy tables, and more, so tell your family and friends to join us. We'd love to hear your ideas of how IFM can serve our greater community even further.

—Michael Kloster, Grace Yarnoff, Kit McCarthy

The Indoor Farmers Market 2023-24 Season

Market is open 8 AM – 12:30 PM on the following Saturdays

January 6, January 20

February 3, February 17

March 2, March 16

Trombone Christmas Performs at Indoor Farmers Market

Here are more photos from the Trombone Christmas performance which was held in the sanctuary during the December 2nd Indoor Farmers' Market, and presented again, the notes from Sara Mauk, which originally appeared in *Newsfeeds*.

The Trombone Christmas is a separate event from the trombone band that rehearses at the church. One of the trombone band members, Spence Curran organized the Trombone Christmas event. This was Chicago area's inaugural Trombone Christmas and we hope to make it a tradition. The same trombone Christmas choir music is played by groups all around the country. We had trombone players from Libertyville and the University of Chicago as well as Chicago and closer suburbs...and Immanuel's Trombone band. We hope to have an even bigger event next year. All band tips were donated to Immanuel's Hunger initiatives. Pastor has the exact amount, but band tips were around \$75.00. Trombone Christmas is an annual event that happens all over the world and started in California. It is similar to "Tuba Christmas" that has been celebrated in Chicago closer to the Midwest Band Clinic downtown Chicago.

More information at <http://trombonechristmas.org/>

—Sara Mauk



WALK FOR WARMTH



JANUARY 15, 2024
11 AM

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
A Family Friendly Event

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On MLK Day of Service 2024, we invite you to join us at our [5th annual Walk for Warmth](#) in the fight against homelessness and hunger in our community. Let's carry on Dr. King's legacy and continue his fight for economic, social, and racial justice.

We'll start at the [First United Methodist Church, 516 Church St, Evanston](#), and walk along the route to see eight of the faith communities that host our winter overnight shelter.

To register, donate or sponsor a participant, use the camera on your smartphone to scan the QR code below.



www.Interfaithactionofevanston.org

Inspired by diverse faiths and shared values, Interfaith Action of Evanston brings people together to serve hungry and homeless people, pursue interfaith dialogue, and engage in advocacy that promotes social justice for those we serve.

An Invitation for Your Congregation:

Join LSTC's Learning Communities 2024!

The LSTC Learning Communities offer no-cost spring and fall theological education programs via Zoom designed to enhance lay theological education, enrich parish learning programs, and foster a stronger relationship between the seminary and its constituent congregations. In the 2023-2024 year, we have three exciting programs on offer. We would love to have you and interested members of your congregation join us!

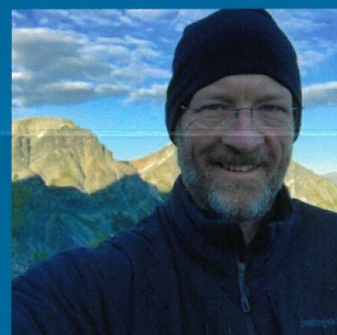
SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024 THEOLOGICAL INTERSECTIONALITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

Engage in a thought-provoking 4-part series on intersectionality with LSTC's Dr. Linda E. Thomas. Delve into the intersections of race, class, gender, and more, and explore anti-oppressionistic approaches to theology and parish life. Sunday sessions begin **January 7**, and Wednesday sessions begin **January 10**.



SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024 LITURGY AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Join LSTC faculty member Rev. Dr. Benjamin M. Stewart for an inspiring 4-part series on nature and liturgy. Reimagine communal liturgies and daily rituals as you explore the sacredness of the cosmos, sacraments, and our bodies. Sunday sessions begin **April 7**, and Wednesday sessions begin **April 10**.



Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago

CALLED INTO THE WORLD

Register at
www.lstc.edu/events
or scan the code



SOLIDARITYBRIDGE

November 27, 2023

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Attn: Pastor Mark Sloss
616 Lake Street
Evanston, IL 60201

Dear Pastor Mark,

Our patients often express gratitude and renewed hope when they receive support to restore their health. With your gift of \$500 received on 11/17/2023 you are partnering with a community of health workers committed to caring for the most precarious patients and bridging the gap in access to care for all.

Your generosity supports medical professionals in Bolivia and Paraguay who are saving lives and alleviating disability for hundreds of patients each year. Together we are making lifesaving care accessible to people who face immense barriers. Thank you.

Gratefully,



Catherine Werner
Director of Development

On behalf of our patients, thank you for your support! Advent blessings!

P.S. Just as you plan for the security and well-being of your family, please consider extending your support and continued solidarity to our global family through a planned gift or bequest. For more information on including Solidarity Bridge in your legacy, please contact Catherine Werner at catherine@solidaritybridge.org or (847) 328-7748.

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Isabel, a 59-year-old mother of six, lives on a small farm in southern Bolivia. She suffers from Chagas disease, a parasitic disease that is endemic in Bolivia and disproportionately affects people in rural areas. The disease weakened her heart and in 2012 she received a pacemaker through our Heart Surgery Program.



Patients in our program receive routine follow-up care all

throughout their lives. In 2022, when Isabel began to feel the familiar symptoms of heart failure again, she knew where to turn. After keeping her alive for nearly a decade, the battery of her pacemaker needed to be replaced. One of her sons accompanied her on their day-long journey to Cochabamba to seek our support again.

Thank you for helping to provide healing care for patients like Isabel.

Please retain this letter as your official receipt for tax purposes for the Internal Revenue Service. Solidarity Bridge is a tax exempt 501(c)3 organization EIN # 36-4481213. No goods or services have been received in exchange, your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Notes from the Parish Administrator....

Happy New Year!

Church officers, Committee and Ministry Chairs: Please check your mail slots. If you need access to the office, please contact me at parish-admin@immanuelevanston.org.

If you'd like to use a space, first please check the church calendar at www.immanuelevanston.org or contact the church office at 847-864-4464 or parish-admin@immanuelevanston.org for availability. When leaving the building, please practice good stewardship by **turning off all lights**, dumping trash properly, and **making sure doors are locked and secure**.



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

616 Lake St.
Evanston, IL 60202

Phone: 847-864-4464

E-mail: parish-admin@ilcevanston.org

Website: www.immanuelevanston.org

Immanuel Lutheran Church is a
Reconciling in Christ congregation.

We welcome people of every age and size,
color and culture, every sexual orientation
and gender identity, socio-economic
status and marital status, every ability and
challenge. We welcome believers and
questioners, and questioning believers.