

## God's Hands—January 2025

### Some Food for Thought from the Pastor

"In her book, *The Power of Meaning: Finding Fulfillment in a World Obsessed With Happiness*, Emily Esfahani Smith identified four pillars of meaning:

- **Belonging** - Feeling valued and understood by others, and valuing others in return.
- **Purpose** - Having long-term goals that reflect your values and contribute to the greater good.
- **Storytelling** - Making sense of the world and yourself by weaving your experiences into a narrative. This helps you understand your place in the world and your impact on others.
- **Transcendence** - Feeling awe or wonder, and connected to something larger than yourself. This can be experienced in nature, through meditation, music, or dancing.

It struck me that the 4 pillars of Immanuel Lutheran congregation align well with her 4 pillars of meaning, and by living out our 4 pillars we're engaged in living very meaningful God-centered lives. Here is my alignment:

Pillar #1: **We worship God** – this is where we experience **transcendence**. It happens on Sunday mornings, but also in our spiritual practices throughout the week.

Pillar #2: **We work for justice** – our working for justice gives us **purpose** as we practice God's ways of love and care for all creation.

Pillar #3: **We build community** – We often do this through our **storytelling** and listening to others tell their life stories.

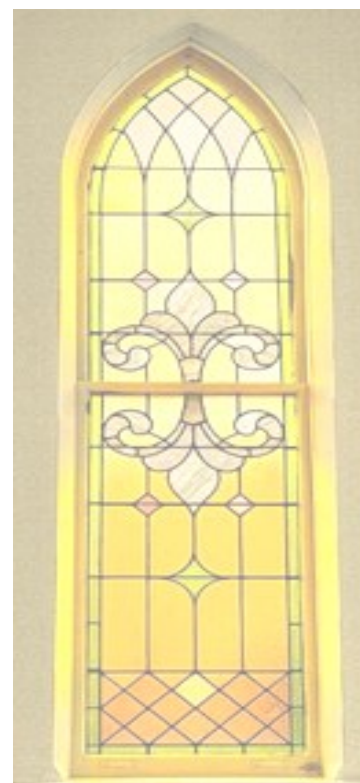
Pillar #4: **We welcome all** – No one is excluded for their age, size, color and culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or even for their beliefs of lack thereof. All people are valued and can find a sense of **belonging** at Immanuel.

Our life together provides us with deep meaning. I invite you to consider how to share your story in ways that reflect how meaningful your life is because we live out these 4 pillars of Immanuel together. Remember that by telling our story we build community.

As we enter into a new calendar year many people make new year resolutions. This year I resolve to find more ways to just simply to tell my meaning-filled stories.

Deep and Abiding Blessings,

*Pastor Mark*



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## Immanuel Calendar

Jan. 4, 18	8:00 am	Indoor Farmers Market
Jan. 2, 16	9:00 am	Daytime Quilters
Jan. 7, 14, 21 28	2:00 pm	Midweek Adult Spiritual Growth In-person or Zoom
Jan. 8	10:00 am	Group Spiritual Direction
Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29	7:30 pm	Choir Practice
Jan. 9, 16, 23 30	7:30 pm	Wilmette Band Rehearsal
Jan. 12	2:00 pm	Council Meeting
Jan. 16	5:00 pm	Group Spiritual Direction
Jan. 19	11:30 am	Budget Meeting
Jan. 20	11:00 am	MLK Day Walk for Warmth
Jan. 26	11:30 am	ANNUAL MEETING



Be sure to check the Church Calendar online at [www.immanuelevanston.org/Calendar](http://www.immanuelevanston.org/Calendar) for the latest info on church events and building usage.

## January Scripture Readings

### January 5, Epiphany (observed)

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26  
Psalm 148  
Colossians 3:12-17  
Luke 2:41-52

### January 12, Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7  
Psalm 29  
Acts 8:14-17  
Luke 3:15-18, 21-22

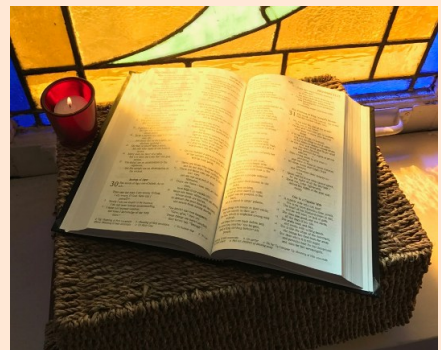
### January 19, Epiphany 2

Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 36:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

### January 26, Epiphany 3

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a  
Luke 4:14-21

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



## Music at Immanuel

### Music in January

As the new calendar year begins, we find ourselves led into the Epiphany season with lots of references to light -- the star the Wise Ones follow, the light shown upon Jesus at His baptism, and the light of Freedom. The choir offers an Epiphany anthem by Gustav Holst on January 5th: *Three Kings from Persian Land*. This is followed by the American folk tune *Down to the River* for the Sunday of Jesus' Baptism. We then contribute *Stars in the Sky* based upon Psalm 19 by Rudolph de Lassus. We conclude the month with a South African choral setting of *Freedom*.

## Feeding Our Faith

Sundays 9 AM—10 AM

**Gatherings include viewing short videos and lively discussions.**

You can participate either in-person (meet in Fellowship Hall) or via Zoom. All participants will have an enhanced experience by being able to see and hear each other, via an Owl Lab 36-degree view video camera/speaker/microphone! Zoom link is on the church website, [www.immanuelevanston.org](http://www.immanuelevanston.org)

### 2025 Schedule of Topics

**January 5, 2025: Cole Arthur Riley: "The Silence of God"**—In this talk, Cole explores how individuals can maintain their faith in a seemingly silent God, particularly in times of suffering and distress. Cole delves into the complex relationship between trauma and spirituality. Cole suggests that, rather than losing belief, individuals can engage in practices that foster a deeper presence to both themselves and the world around them, even in the absence of clear signs of God's presence.

**January 12, 2025: Dr. Moshe Szyf: "Inheriting Trauma"**—Dr. Szyf delves into the fascinating science of epigenetics and its profound implications for understanding intergenerational trauma. Epigenetics refers to how environmental factors—such as stress, trauma, and life experiences—can influence gene expression without changing the DNA sequence itself. This talk explains how trauma experienced by one generation can leave biological marks on the genes, which may then be passed down to subsequent generations.

**January 19, 2025: Scott Mitchell: "Fringe Dwellings"**—Scott reflects on the journey of being accepted as a gay individual in a world that often marginalizes LGBTQ+ voices. He highlights the importance of finding loving and supportive communities, especially those that are typically overlooked or excluded by mainstream society. Scott shares personal experiences of finding belonging in unusual places and shows us all how we can better love those that are "othered" in society.

**January 26, 2025: Sister Theresa Sullivan: "Help, Help, Help: Am I a Savior or a Servant?"**—Sister Theresa Sullivan discusses the profound impact of serving others, emphasizing that it's not just an obligation but a gift. She explains that seeing service as a privilege, rather than a burden, can transform the way we approach helping others. The talk highlights the deep responsibility that comes with caring for those around us, acknowledging that it requires effort, empathy, and sometimes sacrifice.



## Christmas Trombones

The Chicago Trombones returned to Immanuel on Sat. Dec. 7, 2024 for another delightful holiday concert in the sanctuary. The performance was held at the same time of the Indoor Farmers' Market, so patrons of the market got an extra Christmas musical treat that morning. Immanuel's Sara Mauk is a member of the ensemble and serves as liaison.



*Photos by Joe Simchak*

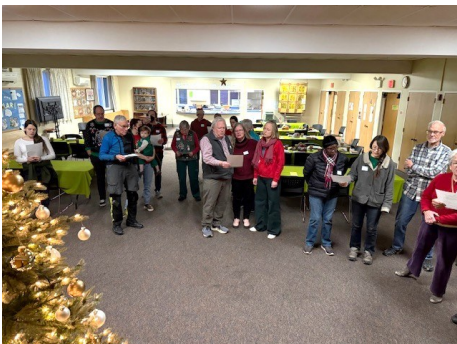
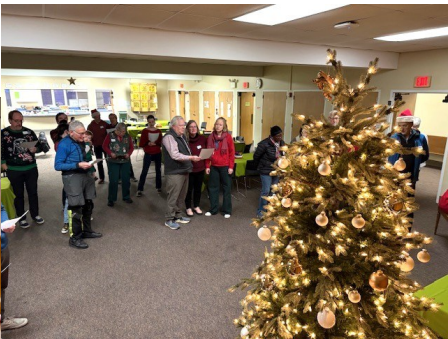
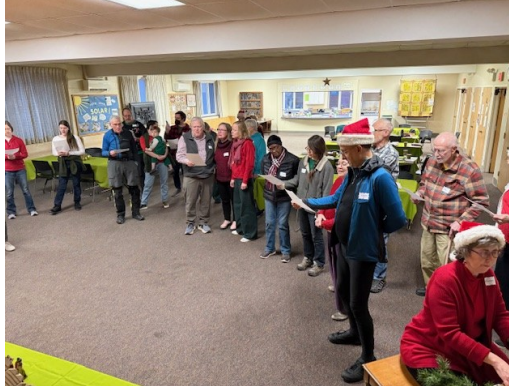


## Caroling & Cocoa

On an overcast Saturday afternoon on Dec. 14, 2024, several dozen people gathered in Fellowship Hall for a festive time of Carols and Cocoa. Accompanied by Anne Heider and then Laura McDaniel on the piano, the indoor carolers of all ages were led in beloved Christmas carols both traditional and contemporary. The finale was gathering around the Christmas tree for a rendition of *O Christmas Tree!* Carolers also enjoyed steaming cups of cocoa. We are very grateful for the many people who planned, shopped, organized, coordinated music and did set-up/clean-up for this event — a joyous way to celebrate the Christmas season.

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Nicolai Schousboe 1/3  
George Otto 1/6  
Sara Krentz 1/11  
Jim McCarthy 1/12  
Eliza McDaniel 1/13  
Gabriel Brown-Peck 1/19  
Ryan Knohl 1/29



Photos by Michael Kloster & Pr. Mark



## Immanuel's Support for Adopt-a-Child Christmas Gifts for Henry Booth House Head Start

With grateful hearts, we reflect on another year of generous support for the Adopt-a-Child Christmas Gift drive benefiting Henry Booth House's Early Head Start and Head Start programs. For the fifth consecutive year, Immanuel has helped bring joy and hope to children and families in Chicago's Hegewisch and Near South neighborhoods, making their Christmas a little brighter.

This year's response has been nothing short of inspiring. We are deeply appreciative of everyone who participated in the annual gift drive—whether through prayers, shopping, or financial contributions. Thanks to your kindness, we were able to meet the growing need, providing gifts for ten families and eight individual children — an increase from thirty-one to fifty-eight individuals compared to the past two years.

The need was greater this year, but Immanuel rose to the challenge, showing once again that when we come together as a community, we can make a significant impact. Your dedication and support make all the difference in the lives of the children and families served by Henry Booth House.

As we reflect on this annual mission activity, we are reminded of the power of generosity and the importance of coming together to care for one another. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who participated in this year's Adopt-a-Child Christmas Gift drive. Your compassion and thoughtfulness are a true blessing to those in need.

*In gratitude & peace – Lisa Larson*

*Photos: The Director of the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Office of Head Start, Khari Garvin, visited Henry Booth House's Hegewisch and Near South Head Start Centers and met with HBH leaders in July 2024.*



## Haitian Community Organization Holiday Party 2024

The Haitian Community Organization of Chicago hosted its annual Holiday Party in Immanuel's Fellowship Hall in the evening of Saturday, Dec. 21, 2024. Having outgrown the space at Grace Lutheran, HCO President Gerald Daye, who is a passionate pickleball player with Pastor Mark and Michael Kloster, approached Immanuel about hosting their party in a larger venue. Our Fellowship Hall was perfect for the event and Immanuel was glad to offer some support to the Haitian community, which endured a particularly trying year.

There was good food, games, music, a coat drive, a visit by Santa Claus and a multitude of toys for children. Thank you to all from Immanuel who donated or otherwise helped the party become a grand success!



**Immanuel's Indoor  
Farmers Market  
2024-2025**

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
presents Farmers Markets  
from November – April.

November 23  
December 7 & 21  
January 4 & 18  
February 1 & 15  
March 1 & 15  
April 5

**Time:  
8:00 – 12:30 p.m.**

 Evanston's Community  
Indoor Farmers Market

[www.immanuelevanston.org](http://www.immanuelevanston.org)  
616 Lake Street, Evanston



*Photos by Pr Mark &  
Susan Sloss*

## Walk for Warmth

January 20, 2025 @11:00AM — 1:00PM Central Time (US & Canada)

### Join the 6th Annual Interfaith Action Walk for Warmth!

Be part of the family-friendly Walk for Warmth on Monday, January 20, 2025 in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day of Service. Help Interfaith Action raise awareness of homelessness in our community and raise funds to support Interfaith Action programs including the overnight shelter.

We will gather at 11 AM for a brief program in the Sanctuary at First United Methodist Church at 516 Church St. The Walk starts after the program.



**New this year:** Supporters may opt for the traditional 2-mile walk past eight of the faith communities that host Interfaith Action's overnight shelter in rotation, or a short around-the-block walk. If you do not wish to walk, you are welcome to remain in the Sanctuary after the program and "walk in spirit".

The event concludes by 1 PM. We are grateful for the faith communities that host the overnight shelter and for the support of a caring community. Thanks.

To register (required) or donate, click the link:

<https://interfaithactionofevanston.networkforgood.com/events/78923-4275-walk-for-warmth-2025>

**“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”**

**-- Martin Luther King Jr.**

- You can respond to Dr. King's call to action by supporting the Walk for Warmth in the following ways: Walk with us! Join us to raise awareness of homelessness in Evanston. Bring the family. Invite your friends and neighbors to join you. There is no fee to register. Free parking is available at the public garage on Church St. just east of Chicago Ave. For everyone's safety, please leave your dog at home.
- Make a crucial monetary donation. All donations support Interfaith Action of Evanston programs including the overnight shelter that provides safe, warm and dry spaces for our unhoused neighbors to sleep from October through May. You can send a check to Interfaith Action of Evanston, PO Box 1414, Evanston, IL 60204. Write "Walk for Warmth" in the memo line on the check. Your donation of any amount is greatly appreciated. Thanks.

Let's carry on Dr. King's legacy and continue his fight for economic, social and racial justice, and make sure no one has to sleep outside!

*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.*





## Notes from the Parish Administrator....

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](mailto:parish-admin@immanuelevanston.org).

If you'd like to use a space, first please check the church calendar at [www.immanuelevanston.org](http://www.immanuelevanston.org) or contact the church office at 847-864-4464 or [parish-admin@immanuelevanston.org](mailto: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**.

### 2024-25 ILC Leadership

Michael Kloster, Congregation President

Terri Simchak, Congregation Vice President

Dana Barron, Congregation Secretary

Susan Ross, Treasurer

Greg Hummel, Diane Keely, Jerry Larson, Kit McCarthy,  
Steve Warner, Congregation Council Members

Laurie Stivers, Financial Secretary



PLEASE  
PLACE  
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HERE

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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.