



Messenger

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2010

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1

Immanuel Lutheran
Church and School
154 Meadow Street
Bristol, CT 06010
860-583-5649
il.church@snet.net
www.immanuel.lutheranbristol.org



OUR MISSION

The people of Immanuel Lutheran Church are living proof of the grace of God through salvation in Jesus Christ. Empowered by Christ, our mission is to reach out in love to those who have not yet responded to the Gospel that all may be united in Christ.

Rev. Jeffrey Potter
Vacancy Pastor

Mr. Raymond Ryskowski
School Principal

Mrs. Mary Aszklar
Vice Principal

Mr. Vernon C. Koch
Lay Minister



MESSENGER GOES BI-MONTHLY

Beginning with this issue of Messenger, the newsletter will be published bi-monthly. This is the January / February issue covering the first two months of this year. Under the dark cloud of a budget deficit, it was thought that this move would help by cutting down on some of the printing and mailing costs involved with publishing a monthly newsletter. The calendar will no longer appear in the newsletter as it would be far too difficult to gather information and accurately report scheduled events two months ahead.

To be sure, this move will do very little to solve the financial challenges faced by this congregation, but every small contribution helps.

When the time comes that we do have a better financial outlook, the newsletter may again become a monthly printing. We pray that that day will be soon.

Important Letters

Recently, the Church Council and the Board of Stewardship held a joint meeting to discuss two major problems confronting the church; declining worship attendance and finances.

While there is no solution found to quickly remedy these difficult and challenging problems, all boards and leaders are looking to find ways to begin a spiritual renewal of the congregation, which in turn would probably solve the other problem of finances.

It was asked of a few attending the meeting to draft letters to the congregation to outline the

difficulties we face as we move forward through the call process and beyond. Since the church is people and not just a building, the problems can only be overcome by the members working together to get things done. The members, therefore, need to know what we are facing.

Two of those letters appear in this issue of Messenger (p. 3 and 4). Please take time to read them and take them to heart.

A New Year's Resolution

Economically speaking, 2009 was a dreadful year for many families around the world. Some lost homes, cars and jobs. Many are unable to fund college educations for their children, and bank accounts have dwindled. What will 2010 bring: movement toward less of everything or toward a more hopeful future?

Here's a good resolution to make: "Our family will pay close attention to our income, our savings and our necessary purchases. We will keep a record of every dollar spent and every dollar saved."

Money accumulated, invested and given wisely will bring peace of mind and the ability

to contribute more to the church and people in need. Families must develop a healthy attitude toward money. Scripture doesn't condemn money; it simply warns against loving it or making it an idol (1 Timothy 6:10).

With God as our mentor, nearly every family can avoid having crushing debt. Wise stewardship brings relief and unbridled joy to those who practice it. As economist George Humphrey said, "I don't think you can spend yourself rich."

Women of Immanuel

By Gail Smuda

The Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner meeting was held on Thursday, December 10 with 17 in attendance, including Vernon Koch and a guest, Claudia Riegler. After enjoying our dinner, Gail Smuda led the devotion "Christmas in Our Lives", with several women participating. Christmas cards were sent to the homebound. Gail delivered items that were donated for the prison ministry. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 11, 2010.

A bylaw amendment had been proposed at the June 2009 meeting. Notification of the amendment and rationale was included in the November and December newsletter. The change was necessary because the number of meetings has changed. The amendment changed the election of officers from November to December; installation will take place in December. New officers begin their terms in January. The amendment passed.

Christmas donations were selected: \$150 was donated to ILC Local, \$100 each to Zion Meals for the Needy and CMS World Relief; \$50 each to Bethesda Lutheran Home, Southbury Lutheran Home, and the Seminary Food Bank, for a total of \$500.

Health Kits

Lois Koch reported that the following items are needed to complete Health Kits: individually packaged toothbrushes, bath-size bars of soap (4-5 oz.), combs (wide tooth preferred) and Band-Aids ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch). Donations may be placed in the box near the coat rack.

Prayer Shawls

We have gone from an ample supply of prayer shawls to an empty cupboard. The good news is that people have been comforted by the shawls, now we need to replenish our stock. The Prayer Shawl Ministry won't meet again until the spring, but you can knit or crochet shawls at home. Instructions will be left in the Prayer Shawl mail slot in the office. Finished shawls may be left in the church office; please attach a note indicating that it's a prayer shawl.

Lutheran Women in Mission

Mark your calendars: the LWML – New England District Convention will be held April 30-May 1, 2010 in Plymouth, Mass. Make it a priority to attend! Allow God to work in your life through the spiritual and personal enrichment that is



offered. You will have a life changing adventure! The convention will focus on the theme, *Listen, Learn and Live!* What a wonderful opportunity for God to minister to us; to hear God's Word and fellowship with sisters in Christ.

More information about the district convention, registration forms, and other LWML news may be found at www.lwml-ned.org. You can check on the progress of the Mission Grants, sign up for a free e-mail subscription to the *Beacon* newsletter and *Pass It On*, a monthly update on the activities of Lutheran Women in Mission in New England. Spend some time exploring the web site, you'll find a lot of interesting information.



BAPTISM

ALEXANDER SHANE ROMANIELLO
Son of Todd and Glorie Romaniello
December 13, 2009

CALLED HOME TO HEAVEN

HOWARD KAUFFMAN
April 2, 1924—December 9, 2009





Messenger is published monthly by Immanuel Lutheran Church and School for its members and friends.

Immanuel is a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

Michael Krampitz
Newsletter Editor
Karen Smith
Church Secretary

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 A.M.
10:45 A.M.

BIBLE STUDY

9:30 A.M.

KIDS4CHRIST

9:30 A.M.



WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Worship Services are broadcast each Sunday on

WXCT RADIO

990 AM
1:00 P.M.

Every Member Sunday

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we begin yet another New Year, we would hope and pray that the difficulties of this past year are behind us and we can look forward to new and better things. However, even in this New Year, we are forced to face some serious challenges.

The budget deficit continues to plague the operating ministry of this church. Despite the best efforts of the faithful to increase their giving, the reality is that we continue to bring in less money than is needed to support the ministry of Immanuel Lutheran Church and School. The Board of Finance reports that, on a regular basis, they need to deplete reserves to pay salaries, benefits and other operating expenses. Unless we can overcome this budget challenge we may have to consider extreme measures to cut spending and preserve vital ministries.

Of much greater concern is the continued decline in worship attendance. Only 360 people attended the two Christmas Eve Services this past year and the New Years Eve service saw fewer than 50. It was reported that in 2009, some 100 Immanuel families declined to worship and contributed nothing of time, talent or treasure to the Lord for the work of His church.

The leaders of Immanuel wrestle with this problem, trying to formulate a plan to stem this tide of spiritual neglect. Certainly, a new pastor would help to bring the congregation together and help heal the deep wounds we have experienced over the loss of Pastor Bridges and the pastoral vacancy that has challenged us for more than a year. But we must not stand idly by and wait for a new pastor before beginning to restore the ties between our absent members and their loving God. The church can weather financial difficulties, but spiritual apathy can be devastating. There is great danger for those who stray away from God’s grace and loving protection.

There will be some who will say, “Why don’t the leaders do something? They should go after those families and bring them back to worship.” Part of that argument is true. The leaders do need to seek ways to reverse this trend of spiritual decline and they are addressing that. But, each and every one of us also shares a God-directed responsibility to look out for the spiritual needs of fellow

believers. Almost everyone in this church knows of someone who has fallen away and needs to be reminded of their baptismal vows and of the love and forgiveness their heavenly Father offers to those who love Him. Spouses, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbors and friends – all fall into this list of members who need to come home to God’s house.

Despite the challenges, Immanuel still has many blessings to celebrate. We can celebrate the new Sunday school program, Kids4Christ, the Mum Parade float and School Open House, successful auction and the amazing Destiny Africa Children’s Choir concert, just to name a few. Our chief blessings are the very people who make up our church. Last year we added eleven new members through baptism and four members and families by adult confirmation and seven young adults confirmed their baptismal vows. Quite a feat for a church with a pastoral vacancy! With the Lord’s help, we can do so much more.

Sunday, January 31st is to be designated as **Every Member Sunday**. On that Sunday, we will have one combined worship service at 9:00 a.m. with a fellowship coffee hour to follow when we will celebrate all the new members we have added to our rolls in 2009. Each member is being asked to phone the members whose names are listed above and below his name in the church phone directory. Directories will be placed out in a common area of the church so members can write down the names and numbers of those to call. Also, if you know of a particular member who has been absent from worship, call to invite them to this special service of common faith.

Finally and importantly, pray every day for this church and ministry. Pray that the Lord would send a new pastor very soon. Pray that the church leaders will be led to find ways to increase worship attendance. Pray that we may work together to solve the financial difficulties that take our focus away from the all-important task of bringing the Good News of salvation to a world that denies the need for a Savior. Pray that God will increase our faith and set aside our fears and make us bold to give gifts of love and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Michael Krampitz, Elder
Board of Parish Ministries

Back to a Spiritual Community

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I'd like to take a moment to talk about the world in which we live, the place I believe our church has in it, and what we as a congregation need to do to get there. In speaking with a number of you, I know that mine is a perspective shared by many.

A good number of you have ties to our church going back generations. You have memories of it being a focal point for communicating and socializing with friends and family - it may in fact have been the only opportunity for you to spend time with some people on a regular basis. Our church served an important function - a foundation upon which many a family's lives were built. As time and technology has marched on, however, the church has largely lost that function. Spending time together was replaced with phone conversations, which were replaced with voice mails, then e-mails, texts, and instant messaging. Never have we been so "connected" to each other. And, I would submit, never have we been so alone.

The fact that so much of technology is devoted to allowing people to communicate speaks to the importance we place on human interaction. But, by placing ourselves at a remove, we've taken away the very thing which we crave. Our need for a meaningful relationship with our God, our family and with one another is clear. It is also clear that our church is once again the best venue to make these connections. This will not happen on its own, however, nor can the officers and current volunteers at our church make it so. Each and every one of us - faithful attendees, those who have for whatever reasons fallen away, and everyone in between - is needed to revitalize our congregation.

We have done a great job at our church in teaching the Word of Christ in our services and in our school. I would personally like to thank all the staff and volunteers that make this so, but I greatly fear that any list I made would be woefully incomplete. But our church has to be more than that; we desperately need to build our sense of community. We have a number of groups and activities already - we all know a few that immediately spring to mind. But we can and should do so much more.

We need to create more opportunities for fellowship across the board. And we all need to do so without waiting for someone else to start it for us. Like cooking? Why not start a cooking club, or recipe exchange group? Enjoy working on cars? How about getting a group together that will repair cars for the needy or for mechanically challenged members? Is there already a club that does what interests you, but their meeting times are inconvenient? Start a second one. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination (and the Ten Commandments ...).

Now, some of us will say that we're too busy to "get involved" at our church. Some of us will say that we did our part last week, or last month, or 20 years ago. Still others of us will say that we're already doing this, that, or the other right now. Folks, this is our spiritual home, and the place where our kids, grandkids, friends and neighbors should be coming to learn their values - not from MTV. Isn't that worth investing ourselves in? The Work of the Lord is never done, and regardless of what we've done or are doing, we need to do more. I suppose that Our Savior could have stopped after raising Lazarus, and said "I just raised the dead; what more could you ask of me?" But aren't we glad he didn't?

So please, take a moment and ask yourself what you can do to help our church. Maybe it's giving of your time or your talent for the betterment of our congregation or our community. Maybe it's giving of your treasure to make other's works possible, or perhaps it's some combination of the three. Whichever it may be, know that if we do so with a joyous heart and above all make it fun we will already have succeeded, for our acts will be testimony to His Good News. I will be asking at the Every Member Sunday on January 31st for a show of hands of those who are willing to volunteer; if you are so moved, your first assignment is to find someone just like you. And, as volunteering should never be a life sentence, I hope to keep any commitments finite, manageable, and fun. Thank you and God Bless.

In His Service,
Chris Schab

Important Dates

January 10, 2010 final date for submission of potential candidates names
 January 11, 2010 Special Voters meeting scheduled to present list of candidates for approval by Voters
 January 18 Call Committee to meet with NE District President
 January 25 Regular Voters Meeting
 January 31 Every Member Worship Sunday, 9:00 AM

News and Events

Warm-A-Child



I would like to thank our congregation for contributing so generously to the annual Warm -A- Child mitten tree and mite box campaign. Your donations to the Helping Ministry assist area children who are in need of winter clothing, hats, mittens, jackets, and special requests. Eighty- eight (88) children were given very nice gifts- thanks to you. The Crisis Pregnancy Center received 6 large

boxes of tiny clothing and appropriate “baby” items. Even in these trying times, we all were stewards of God’s grace.

Sincere thanks, MaryAnn Kalwat

Dine Out With the Scouts

On Wednesday, January 13th, the Scouts will be holding a fundraiser at Applebee’s Restaurant in Plainville. Please join us for food, fun, and fellowship from 4:00 PM until closing. Bring your ILS voucher which will be handed out to all students and church members the week of the event, or ILS will not be credited. Thank You.....Pack 21

Sanctuary Vases Near the Goal

The Altar Guild has received the funding for one of the two Sanctuary vases! These high polish brass vases will be used on either side of our altar. The remaining funds needed to purchase the second vase is \$1250.00.

We continue to invite our congregation to participate towards the purchase of these vases. You can contribute as a Memorial, to honor someone special, to commemorate a special date, or to the Glory of our God. Please include your contribution number on any envelope used, and all contributions need to be specifically marked for the purchase of Altar vases.

If you need additional information please contact Marilyn Miller at 860-621-4619.

Wrong Coat Taken Last Winter

A man’s top coat was mistakenly taken last winter from our main coat rack by one of our members. He is looking to return this one, and hopefully get his back in exchange—this is a double-breasted, black, size “tall”, with the label Andrew Fezzes of New York.

There is a silver button on the lapel, with the letters *AF*. If you know who may have owned this coat, and may have one to exchange with one of our members, contact Karen in the office.

No Desperation

Nearly every year, California is plagued with massive wildfires. In October 2007, an unrelenting fire raged through and around Malibu. Many homes and other dwellings quickly became heaps of ashes. The Malibu Presbyterian Church fell prey to the raging flames and unceasing wind.

Those who loved the church stood helpless before the inferno. They remembered the blessing of worshiping God, attending Bible classes, sharing in prayer and experiencing warm Christian fellowship.

A Los Angeles Times reporter found faithful church member Annie Kauffman watching the fire. Although pain was written on her face, Kauffman said, “Losing the building is stunning. To stand and look at all this is a kick in the gut. But because the heart of the church is the people, I don’t feel a sense of desperation.”

A Special Ministry

Last summer, Emma Daniel Gray died in Washington, D.C., at age 95. At the memorial service, Bishop Royce Woods told the congregation about the special ministry Gray practiced every night for 24 years, as she cleaned the Oval Office. She paused behind the president’s chair and offered a prayer for blessings, wisdom and safety.

“You couldn’t be around her and not know what she believed,” Woods said. “She always believed there was a higher power to grab on to that would lift you above any circumstance, and she was always able to do that. She preached her own eulogy by the life that she lived.”

Goodbye, Old Year



Old Year! upon the Stage of Time
You stand to bow your last adieu;
A moment, and the prompter’s chime
Will ring the curtain down on you.
—Robert W. Service

Salute to Immanuel Members

November 30, 2009

Dear Pastor:

During this time of Thanksgiving, we'd like to encourage you to recognize the Thrivent Financial congregational coordinators who volunteer in your church. With the Care in Congregations© program ending on December 31st, it's a good time to thank these dedicated volunteers. You could deliver a personal thank-you and/or recognize them in your church bulletin or during service announcements. The coordinators in your congregation are:

Linda T Beaudoin
Vernon Charles Koch
Bruce B Kane

We, too, are thankful for these members and plan to acknowledge their service. In the upcoming weeks they will receive a letter of appreciation and a small gift from Thrivent Financial. We appreciate these members and their accomplishments through the Care in Congregations program.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to update you on some other changes we mentioned in our previous letter:

- **Thrivent Choice:** Development continues on this new giving program that will launch in the spring of 2010. It's designed to give Thrivent Financial members choice - and for eligible members, one of the choices will be directing charitable funds to your congregation.
- **New role for Thrivent Financial congregational coordinators:** Work is progressing on defining a new role for the congregational coordinators who volunteer in your church. Volunteers who serve in the new role, which will be significantly different from the current role, will help to increase the positive impact Thrivent Financial and its members have on your congregation through a variety of programs and offerings. The new role will be introduced in early 2010.

We are excited about the options Thrivent Financial members in your congregation will have for giving and helping your congregation in the future, through the Thrivent Choice program and other opportunities. We hope that you share in our enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

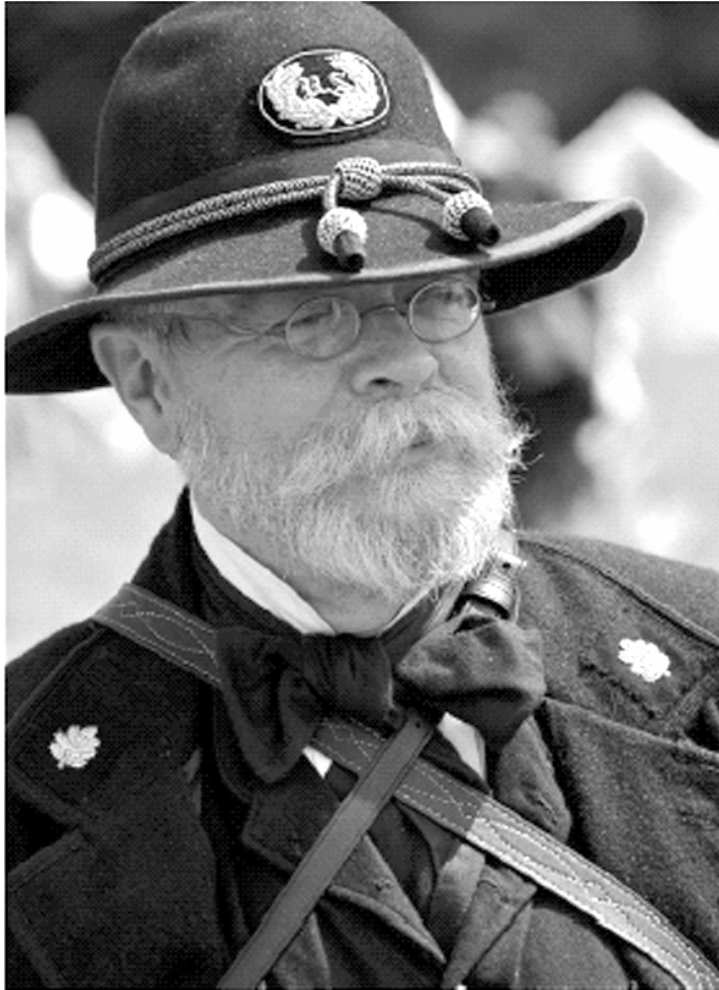
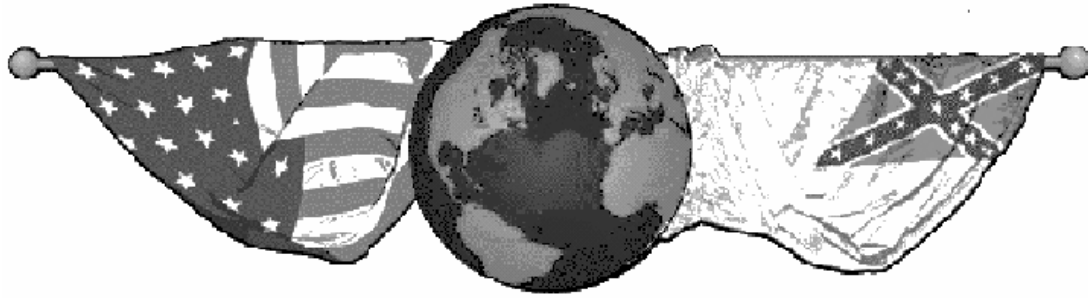
Bruce Nicholson
Chairman, President and CEO

Now is the Time

We live in troubling times, with wars, poverty, hunger, economic woes, health scares and more. So what now?

Believe this: We Christians will survive the test! Faith, prayer and discipline will bring us victory. Our love for God and the need for worship, Christian education and joyous fellowship will ultimately prevail.

A pastor who worked in a city's poverty-stricken area was asked how his work was going. He answered: "It is a hand-to-mouth existence: God's hand providing for our mouths." So it may be for many churches and people today. But God promises to see us through.



Interested in the past?

Want to learn more about our world? Join us on the 22 January 2010 for the first in a series of “History: A Part of Your Life” Lecture / Field trip opportunities. Our first session will feature Willi Runk, Civil war Re-enactor, presenting an overview of 1865 and its impact on the nation and the world. Families are invited and there will be some refreshments—including Dr. Graham’s Crackers! We will meet in the Old School Basement at 7:00 PM—see you there!

History: A Part of Your Life

22 January 2010

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Old School Basement

154 Meadow Street, Bristol, CT

7:00 PM

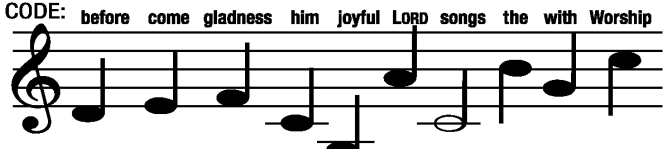
Just for KIDS

Make a joyful noise

People often gather with noisemakers to celebrate the promise of a new year. Be thankful and joyful for the many blessings in your life.

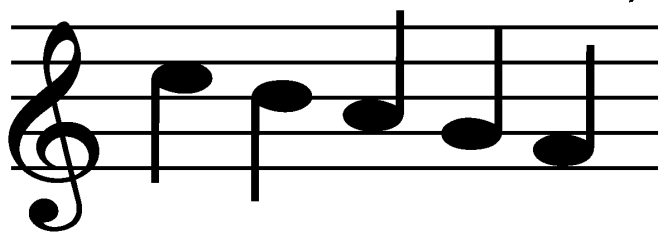
Using the musical note code, write the words of Psalm 100:2 (NIV) in the correct order below.

CODE: before come gladness him joyful LORD songs the with Worship

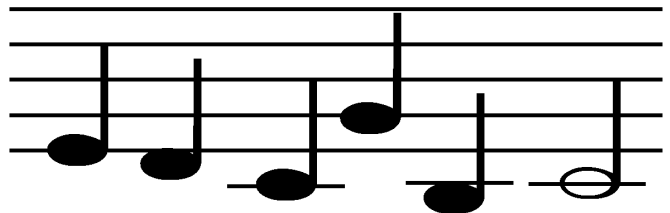


* * * * *

_____ the _____ ;



_____ .




Answer: Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

JINGLE BELL TAMBOURINE

To ring in 2010, make a joyful noise with this musical instrument.

What you need:

- 2 plastic plates
 - Hole punch
 - Pen
 - Beads or beans (or other small items that will make noise when shaken)
 - Tacky craft glue
 - 6 pieces of ribbon (each about 5" long and 1/4" wide)
 - 6 jingle bells
 - Stickers
 - Markers
- 

What you do:

1. On the bottom of each plate, write, "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth" (Psalm 100:1, NIV).
2. Punch six evenly spaced holes around the rim of one plate. Mark the holes with a pen and then punch six matching holes in the second plate.
3. Pour the beads or beans into one plate and then squeeze glue around the rim of that plate.
4. Place the other plate on top, aligning the holes. (Make sure the Bible verses are on the outside.) Let it dry.
5. Thread one ribbon through one hole and through one bell, and then tie the ribbon. Repeat five more times, once for each hole.
6. Decorate the instrument with stickers or markers.
7. Play your tambourine when you sing your favorite songs.

God's Answers to Prayers

Messenger
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
154 MEADOW STREET
BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT 06010



NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BRISTOL, CT 06010
PERMIT NO. 382