
IMMANUELITE

January 2, 2012

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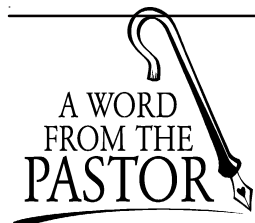
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FROM THE PASTOR

But test everything; hold fast what is good.
Abstain from every form of evil.
1Thessalonians 5:21-22

It is a testament to the power of Christmas that when it comes along in December many channels on television feel the need to broadcast religious programming. Some of it is very good. Some of it is not so good.

There seem to be no end of documentaries on various channels that are out to tell us how the original Christmas actually took place. I have never understood why a documentary needs to tell me that. The gospels of Matthew and Luke do an adequate job of telling me what actually took place.

There are also documentaries that explain the life of Jesus. They claim to tell us how it really happened. The problem is that by claiming to tell us what really happened, they are implying that what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us is not what really happened. They point us away from the Gospels and to the documentary for the revelation of truth.

I suppose I should be thankful that Jesus still gets so much press and air time. Even channels that do not typically carry this type of programming have specials on Jesus or Christmas. The problem for an average Christian is how do you tell the good from the bad.

In order to answer that question I am not

going to go into a case by case analysis of the documentaries on television. I do not have the patience to listen to some of them. Some of them are boring to me and others make me mad! But I will tell you the basic assumptions with which most documentaries operate.

The first set of assumptions are modernist. Modernism assumes that the general experience of humanity is the only experience possible. That means that the common experiences of our life are normative for modernism. Modernism has discovered physical and chemical explanations for most of the phenomenon of the universe. Modernism assumes that there are such explanations even for the phenomena that they have not explained yet.

What these means is that modern people assume that miracles do not occur. A miracle is a unique unrepeated experience. Elijah calls down fire from heaven (1Kings 18). That experience happened only once. Even Elijah did not do it again. Moderns assume that since it is a unique experience it cannot have happened. Fire coming down from heaven is not something that happens with any frequency, therefore it did not happen when Elijah called it down.

Modern people must then offer an explanation for the story in the Bible. These explanations range from the claim that the incident in 1Kings 18 is fiction, made up by some pious ancient person for political, economic or religious reasons to a more common phenomenon like lightning which the ancients interpreted as fire falling from heaven. When common phenomena are offered as explanations there is typically a theory that the story has been embellished through the years with other details to the

form that we have in the Bible today.

In this way all miracles are dismissed from the Bible, especially the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. When it comes to Christmas some pretty elaborate theories float around as to how Jesus could have been born from a virgin all of which dismiss the virgin birth itself as impossible.

The second set of assumptions with which television documentaries operate is the need to sell commercials. In order for a channel to stay in business they need to sell commercials. In order to sell commercials channels must convince potential advertisers that there are a lot of people who watch their channel which would mean that if the advertiser purchased air time to promote their good or service that there would be a lot of people watching it.

In order to do this some documentaries will titillate rather than educate. This is what happens when documentaries that claim that Ezekiel saw a UFO (Ezekiel 1) or that the book of Revelation predicted nuclear weapons.

I have not heard too many outrageous claims regarding the nativity, but you never can tell when one will crop up.

When you test a documentary in order to hold on to what is good and abstain from every form of evil watch out for these two sets of assumptions. If it seems like they are saying outrageous things just to get you to watch it, it is probably not true. If they dismiss the miraculous it is not true. When documentaries site the Scriptures (they usually put the reference on the screen), look up the passage in the Bible and find out what the original context was and make sure that what they are telling you matches up with what the Bible actually says.

In this way you should be able in a basic way to tell the good from the bad when it comes to Christmas documentaries. Anyone should be able to get plenty of practice at Christmas. And just wait: the second round of religious programming comes at Good Friday and Easter! A blessed Christmas to all of you. Because of Jesus,
Pastor



FIRST MONDAY SEWING

After a break for the holidays we are ready to start the New Year out right. We will be meeting for the first time in 2012 on Tuesday January 3.

We are working on several projects and can use some extra help. If your new year's resolution finds you wanting to do something different come join us.

Note that we will be meeting on Tuesday in January instead of Monday. We as usual have lunch and break about 3:00.

COME JOIN US TUESDAY JANUARY 3.



The donut sign up sheet for January- April is on the bulletin board. Thanks to all who volunteered. Please pick a Sunday that you are able to pick them up. The donuts are available at the Homer Country Market. Thanks for helping with this and join us for Fellowship!



We have a collection box to help the schools by collecting Betty Crocker Boxtops. We will take our collection at the end of the school year and divide them among the schools that our students attend. This helps the schools purchase items that help the students. The collection box is at the guest registration podium in the entrance hallway.





Remember to save those printer cartridges. Turn them in at the office. We will recycle them and use the money to offset office expenses. The recycle company is now accepting old cell phones also. If you want to discard them, you may drop them at the office also. Thanks and happy recycling. Go Green!



G.R.O.W., a Christian ecumenical men's group in the Newman/Broadlands area, will meet Sunday, January 8th here at Immanuel. All interested Christian men in the area are invited to attend the meeting, which begins with breakfast at 7:00am and includes a devotion and a spiritually uplifting topic or speaker each month. There is no charge for the meeting, although opportunity is given for a free-will offering, which is used in various ways to serve others in the community and beyond.



BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY

Those celebrating the anniversary of their Baptism into God's Holy Family during the month of January include:

- 6- Gregory Luth
- 7- Shirley Miller
- 8- Kristin Smith
Jared Smith
- 9- Bodie Dahlenburg
- 10- Erin Wienke
- 11- Thomas Negangard
- 12- Timothy Hendershot
- 13- Donna Laws
Riley Pierce
- 15- Brenda Luedke
Glenn Rothermel
- 16- Larry Luth
- 17- Kelley Bensley

- 19- Huntur Orwick
Skylur Orwick
- 20- Bryce Compton
- 22- Tyler Wakefield
- 23- Cassandra Russo
- 24- Jonathon Fellmann
- 25- Paul Mohr
Anna Orwick
Brian Freeman
Grace Orwick
- 26- Shirley Taylor
- 27- Jeffrey Messman
- 28- Kendel Robinson
Logan Siuts
- 29- Alice Messman
Charles Roberts
- 31- Glenda Danner



Here are the directory changes to date. Thank you! The new directory is in but as always we have changes already. Here are a few changes that may not be in the new directory.

Dustin Howell
318 N. 5th
Geneva, IL 60134-1314

Remove Boyd Cable from friends in back

I do not have correct address for the following. If you know how to reach them, please let the office know.

- Juanita Kresin- phone number
- Tammy Grafton
- Kathy Richter
- Mr. & Mrs. Dave Kelly
- Rebecca Rahe
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Laws
- Mr. & Mrs. Brian O'Donnell
- Ryan Rahe
- Brad Wakefield



We will meet again on January 16, 2012 at 7:00 pm. Join us if you have spare time and would enjoy the fellowship.

FROM OUR DCO INTERN-

KATIE MARTIN

Hello members and welcome to 2012! I wonder, did you set any resolutions this year? Generally, when the New Year arrives this need to examine how we lived in the previous year arises as well. The questions are posed in our minds: Did we do all of the things we wanted to do? Did we fill the year up with enough memories that will live on? And the big one, did we lose the weight we wanted to, or just gain a whole bunch? Unfortunately, with New Year arriving right after the season of eating the latter question is true for most of us.

Many times when we make these resolutions we forget two very important things. First, we are loved by God, made perfect by God, and he treasures us just the way we are. Don't believe me? Read Psalm 139: this chapter underlines how very much God cares for you and how fearfully and wonderfully made you are. As a person that naturally has pretty low self-worth I cling to this Psalm, especially at the New Year. When the world tells me I am not enough, God tells me I am more than enough.

Second, are we examining the right things? Have you ever come to a New Year, avoided those material questions, and just asked: Have I faithfully served my Lord this year? Paul writes this to the Corinthian church before his third visit:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

This New Year, what if we did not tear ourselves down with resolutions that are supposed to make us better but ultimately make us disappointed when we fail? What if we set resolutions to build ourselves up? Ask yourself: How can I be devout and faithful in my position in life? How will I grow? How can I set goals that will feed my faith (James 2:14-17)? Who can I put in my life as an accountability partner that will help me keep my resolutions this year? Take action, do not just say you will and then forget about it.

This process is what Directions will be for our church. At the close of 2011 Immanuel will enter 2012 examining herself. It will not be to tear down tradition or members, but to build up this congregation to help her grow. Directions is not set up to make drastic changes but to, as the name suggests, examine our direction. We will ask questions similar to the ones I am asking you to make personally but on a larger scale. After all, our congregation in an organism, a living body; are we taking care of it? In 2012 should we do just enough keep this living body running, or should we set goals to build up our body and take steps to reach them? Just as it is up to you personally to examine your faith, it is up to each of you as a member of our living body to examine these same things. Directions will take place every Saturday in January as an extended lunch time from 12:00-1:30. I encourage you to come and take part in this important event, even if you can only attend one!

"Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."-2 Corinthians 13:11 Let me know if you are planning on participating. Thank you. -Katie Martin



Epiphany



Immanuelite articles will be due in the office on, Monday, January 23rd. If you would like something in the newsletter, drop off or email your articles. It would be much appreciated if the boards would update the office on calendar events and meeting dates for each month. Thanks!!



For those doing the two year bible reading, the website for the schedule is www.nelsonbibles.com/admin/uploads/pdfs/ChronologicalReadingPlan.pdf. If you have any questions, contact Linda Pierce.



CHURCH COUNCIL

The church council met on December 1. Plans for the Christmas Eve Service were discussed. A new teacher is needed for the 5th and 6th grade class.

A discussion on the sanctuary lights revealed that the bulbs are no longer being manufactured. A new supply will need to be found.

It was reported that the OAFK visit was a success and they plan to return in September of next year. It was also noted that the deadline to apply for a DCO intern is February 1, 2012.

A decision was made to make only the reading and sermon available on the web.

Katie Martin discussed the directions meeting she will be holding each Saturday in January. More information will follow.

Keith Rohl reported that Empty Tomb is in need of financial help and also in assembling furniture. A work session will be held on March 3 and workers are needed to help with the assembly.



Dear Family and Friends,
Greetings in the name of our newborn Savior! Have you developed your New Year's resolutions yet? Whether we write them out, or just think about them, most of us can't help but consider the fresh beginning a new year brings. The making of resolutions brings with it thoughts of past failures and guarded hopes for the future. This month I would like to share with you a poem.

My Resolution

I won't look back; God knows the fruitless efforts, The wasted hours, The sinning, The regrets; I'll leave them all with Him who blots the record, And mercifully forgives, And then forgets.

I won't look forward; God sees all the future, The road that, short or long, will lead me home, And He will face with me its every trial, And bear with me the burdens that may come.

But I'll look up - into the face of Jesus, For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled; And there is joy and love, and light for darkness, And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

The Lord is your partner and He will bless your efforts at growth. (...He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus! Php 1:6). Enjoy the knowledge that all things are in the hands of our loving Lord. If I can be of any help to you in setting new physical, emotional, or spiritual goals, please contact me.

Your Parish Nurse,
Tiffany Paul

Blood pressure screenings will be available before and after church on January 8 and 22 in the Parish Nursing office.

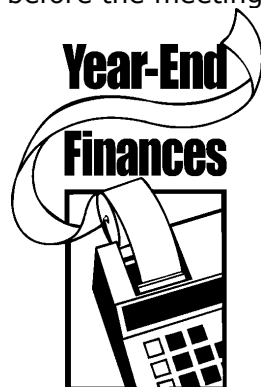




Flower Calendar The 2012 flower calendar is up. Please select special dates you would like for flowers on the altar for your special occasion. We will order the flowers from Blossom Basket and they will deliver to the church and bill you direct. We will put an announcement in the bulletin with your special occasion.



Sunday, January 29th, we will hold our Quarterly Voters Assembly and election of Officers. It will be at 10:30 am. We recommend all voters attend the meeting. If you are not a voter and would like to join, see Brian Rutledge or the pastor before the meeting.



A reminder that the annual reports/financial reports from our groups and committees, including Sunday School, Adult Bible Class, Men's Club, Pathfinders, Youth Group, etc. are due in the office by January 15, 2012.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE
Board of Worship

The Board of Worship very much appreciates your willingness to be Greeters and hope you will sign-up on the schedule for next year that is on the bulletin board.

We especially want to thank Jeri Luth's 1st & 2nd grade Sunday School Class for

putting Communion cards, Scribble pads and Offering envelopes in the pews.

Regarding placing the Church Service on our website, we have been searching and Concordia Publishing House, says that is copyrighted and may not be used in that manner. We are looking at some alternative ways to provide information for Shut-Ins, etc.

The Board hopes that you have been enjoying the music from Choir. We thank God for Gretchen Ryerson's direction thus far. Because of a change in her job, she will be unable to continue after December 31. Please help us express our joy for her service and our sadness that she cannot continue in this position.

We are working on changes in the AV system to enhance our worship service. We hope you will tell us how you like it.

Merry Christmas to You
Board of Worship

SPECIAL DATES

- New Year's Day, January 1, 2012
- Epiphany, January 6, 2012
- Baptism of the Lord, January 8, 2012
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance, January 16, 2012
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2012

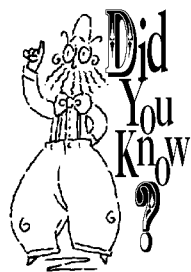


Special thanks to *Caleb & Diane Bundy, Don Clem and Sharon Rothermel* for picking up donuts for December.





Christy and I extend our heartfelt thanks for the special gift from the congregation at Christmas time. Your generosity and kindness to us are beyond words. Merry Christmas to all of you. Pastor and Christy



July 8-10 the Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will sit in convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. Immanuel needs to address at least two items of business in order to prepare for the convention.

The first is that Immanuel has the right to elect a laymen from the congregation to serve together with pastor as a delegate to the convention. The delegate will receive all district mailings relevant to convention business. He or she will cast votes in elections of district officers and regarding resolutions that come to the floor of the convention.

A new responsibility of the lay delegate to the convention has been added by the 2010 Synod Convention*. It used to be that the president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was elected by the Synod Convention. That is no longer the case. It was felt by the 2010 Synod Convention that the old process unnecessarily restricted the franchise. The change is that every lay delegate to District conventions will be able to cast a vote for the Synod President so long as they attend their District Convention. Such voting will be done in a secure manner online.

To that end if Immanuel wants her voice

heard in voting for the Synod President we would also need to elect an alternate lay delegate to the District Convention in case the lay delegate was ill when the convention was seated.

The second item of business has to do with Immanuel's right to nominate for the office of District President. Our current District President is Rev. David Buelmann. He has served for a number of years and according to district rules there are no term limits for the district president in the Central Illinois District. That means that Rev. Buelmann is eligible for nomination. The congregation has the right under our polity to nominate any ordained man in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. That nomination is due in to the nominating committee March 2.

The third item, if Immanuel should so chose to do it, has to do with mission and ministry emphases for the 2013 Synod Convention.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod recently developed a new way for mission and ministry emphases of the entire Synod to be brought to a Synod Convention's attention. Congregations may still send their resolutions directly to the Synod Convention as in the past, but they will no longer have the same weight in the agenda of the convention as they have had in times past. In order to have a resolution from Immanuel receive faster attention in the agenda of the Synod the polity asks us to submit any mission and ministry emphases to circuit forums. If the circuit forum approves them, they would go on to the District Convention. If the District approves them they would go on to the Synod Convention for consideration.

Our Circuit Forum will meet Sunday, March 11, 2pm at Immanuel, Tuscola. Keith Rohl has already volunteered to be the congregation's lay delegate to the circuit forum.

Mission and Ministry Emphases are things that we would like to see the Synod do for the triennium beginning in the summer of 2013. Such emphases should be specific actions that Immanuel would like the Synod to take in that triennium. They should not be broad general

recommendations. In other words such emphases should be something like "we will spend 10% of Synod's budget on x", or "we send so many missionaries to x place," or "we should start mission work in x country or among x group of people." They should not be things like "we should encourage more Bible reading," or "we should get along a little better with each other." Pastor is willing to assist the congregation in writing appropriate Mission and Ministry Emphases to send to the circuit forum should the congregation so desire.

These items of business will be dealt with at the next quarterly voters assembly of the congregation.

*Just to prevent some confusion: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is a nation wide organization of congregations who share a common confession of faith. Immanuel is a member. Since there are over 6000 Missouri Synod congregations in the United States the Synod has divided itself into smaller parts called Districts. The Districts each have their own conventions all of which will meet in 2012. Such conventions take care of business for the congregations located in the geographic area of the District.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod also has a national convention which meets the year following the District conventions. The national convention or Synod Convention takes care of the business of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on a national level. The president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod used to be elected at Synod Conventions.

STEWARDSHIP MATTERS

With Jackie Joines, CFRE

How do you start each new year? Some make resolutions that are often quickly broken. Others take the time to clean, organize, and set priorities in their life. And some reassess various aspects of their life, including insurance, investments, and estate plans.

The new year is a good time to give thoughtful consideration to making a charitable gift to Immanuel Lutheran

Church. Whether it be in the form of a gift of a current asset, or through plans made in your estate, a charitable gift is a way to demonstrate the purpose that God has for our lives. Do you question your ability to make a gift? If so, keep in mind that we have ownership over various assets. Therefore, whatever we own, we can give away.

As you begin your reassessment, cleaning, and set priorities, please think about what you have that could benefit Immanuel. There are many resources within the Lutheran Church that can help you determine what assets are the best to give to minimize tax implications. A good resource for information can be found www.lcmsfoundation.org and within the leadership of Immanuel.



Empty Tomb:

The Board of Lay Ministry and Katie are currently working on a planning committee for the 2012 Empty Tomb Mega-Work-A-Thon. The event will be on March 3rd 2012 at three different locations. Empty Tomb is looking for 1500 volunteers and needs to raise 120,000 dollars. People with many gifts are welcome to join and soon registration will be available for 12 different teams including: Assembly, Delivery, Hospitality, Registration, Clean-up, etc. Please consider helping with this event that serves needs right on our own back yard! Questions? Contact Katie Martin, Keith Rohl, or Murray Franzen

