

Immanuel United Church of Christ

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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

DECEMBER 2021 Newsletter

Interim Pastor Brad Brookins

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December, 2021

The Season of Advent comes to us every year as the days approach their shortest and the nights their longest and the air turns cold. From the 1st Sunday of Advent through the 4th Sunday we slide, week by week, deeper into the cold and darkness of Winter. But week by week, as we light the candles on the Advent wreath in our sanctuary—first

Hope then Faith then Joy and finally Peace—we move through that darkness toward the light that will break out in force on Christmas Eve.

The story we tell during Advent is the story of a world held in the darkness of greed and oppression; a world under the boot of Rome, an empire suffering under its own insatiable thirst for power. A world where “enough” was the possession of the very few and hope was a distant dream for the many.

We tell a story of the Palestinian people groaning for relief, longing for relief; waiting for God to keep God’s promise—to bring peace to the land that had not known peace in a long time and hope to the people who had known only fear and want for just as long.

But we also tell the story of a young Jewish woman who is asked to bear into the darkness the Light for which the entire world—whether they knew it or not—was waiting. She is asked to give birth to the Light; to bring to life, through the power of the Spirit and the means of her own body, the Light that would enlighten the world.

And somehow, for reasons that still mystify us, she says yes. On the slimmest of evidence that this might be a good idea, or even a remote possibility—in the face of enormous odds and unimaginable cost, she says yes.

This will be now the second Covid tinted Advent we will live through. And while the shadows have, thankfully, lifted just a bit, we still feel the darkness and danger of our own time. We still need to be careful. We still need and long for Hope and Faith and Joy and Peace.

In the deep shadows of that first Advent over 2000 years ago, Mary and Joseph were given a glimpse, a slight glimmer of the Light. In trust they walked toward it.

That Light shines in the deep shadows of this Advent.

Look for it.

Trust that light, even when it appears to be but dimly burning.

Walk toward that Light. It will guide you all the way to Christmas morning.

In Hope,
Brad Brookins



CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council met on November 17, 2021. Members present at the meeting were: Roy Berrey, JoAnn Geissbuhler, Roy Hardt, Fritz Hirsbrunner, Sheila Siegler, Jean Stauffacher, Randy Ubersox, and Pastor Brad Brookins. Absent: Brandi Ruf-Wepking, Dave Sutherland, and Matt Ubersox. Guests: Kim Havens of Havens Financial and Betsy Wiegel.

The Council approved the minutes from the regular October 2021 meeting as presented. and the special Council meeting on November 4th. The Council approved the financial report as presented.

Reports:

- a. **Pastor Report** – reached out to interested new members with only one response. Christmas Eve service will be at 5 p.m. on the 24th of December. Roy B will poll some church members regarding interest in communion during this service and will report back to the board his findings. Candles are available for this service. Sheila and Steve Siegler will offer them at the door prior to service beginning.
- b. **President Report** – Joys and concerns are hard to hear on facebook services, request someone in person repeat what is said for those listening on facebook. Hearing concerns about continuing services on facebook. Council discussed and does feel having other options for services is good for evangelism and will continue with it meeting the needs of all members. Christmas decorating will have to occur after this Sunday's service on Nov 21 to prepare for Advent. JoAnn will reach out to Marjean to send an e-mail to notify all members. OCWM funds may be short of pledge for 2021 of \$7500.00. Will discuss at December meeting to see how short and if we need to take money out of general fund to make up difference. The Council approved keeping the goal the same for 2022 at \$7500.00 budgeted.
- c. **Christian Education Committee** (JoAnn) No update, Roy B with work with Brandi on a Narrative that children can participate in for Christmas service.
- d. **Building and Grounds Committee** (Matt) 2 quotes for seal coating parking lot, \$3,100.00 and Green Thumb for the railroad tie wall and north rock area of lot \$4,825.00 for ties and \$1,500.00 for rock area. Council decided to table both items until spring.
- e. **Stewardship Committee** (Dave or Sheila) Chili supper received over \$800.00 in donations and served 185 meals. A Christmas Eve treat is being worked on.
- f. **EF & G Committee** Jean gave update. Committee is looking for a project to work on.
- g. **Pastor-Parish Committee** (Roy Berrey) Update on mask mandate changes. Pastor Brad's contract is up. Council approved extending the contract 3 months at a time is acceptable to Pastor Brad.
- h. **Worship Committee** (Roy Berrey) has met and is looking at ways to become more spiritual and increase community awareness/involvement. Ongoing.
- i. **Search Committee** (Fritz, JoAnn) Interview this week with candidate.

Old Business

- a. **Strategic Planning-by laws update** Fritz discussed changes to the by-laws. He will make corrections. Council will review and approve for Annual Meeting presentation to congregation. Annual meeting will be Jan. 30, 2022.
- b. **Investments** Kim Havens guest speaker presented literature with options for investing funds with Havens Financial. Discussed fees and moving money in/out as needed vs long term investment for returns. Also discussed who would be the “identified positions” that could perform transfers/deposits into investment funds. It was pointed out that not all investments may be in line with church beliefs versus going thru the UCC for investments. Council members to look over material presented by Kim and will make a final decision at December meeting.
- c. **Nominating Committee Update**
 1. A vacancy on this committee has occurred with Matt Ubersox stepping down. We will add this to the list of positions needed to be filled by nominating committee.
- d. **Flag in Church** the council has decided to ask the members at the annual meeting how they feel about this before the Council can make a decision.

New Business

- a. Fritz and Connie served on the Budget committee for 2021. Fritz will serve another year and Randy U. will ask Connie if she is willing to serve another year.
- b. Covid Testing Site – we will not pursue this.

The next Council meeting will be Wednesday, December 22, 2021 at 6:15 p.m.



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Women's Guild Christmas Party

Just a reminder that the Women's Guild Christmas party will be December 9th starting at noon. It will be potluck. Meat and sandwiches will be provided. Remember to bring a gift for a game we will be playing.

The envelopes for the Women's Guild monetary cash drive are included in the December newsletter for those that receive a paper copy of the newsletter. Donations are greatly appreciated if you are able.

Also, there will be a tub of dishcloths on the table in the fellowship hall foyer along with some envelopes. Anyone wishing to purchase dishcloths please help yourself and put the money in the envelope and put it in the Guild mailbox located in the Pastor's office. The cost is \$1.25 per dishcloth.

Thank you

Debbie Loken
Guild President



THANK YOU!!

Thank you to our members who volunteered to ring bells for the Salvation Army: Roy & Pam Hardt, Peggy Lancaster, Nancy Slama, Dave & Marjean Sutherland. Special thanks to members of the Grace Lutheran Church who helped us out: Linda Considine, Marilyn Johns, Jacqueline Thompson & Kitty Wilson. The money raised will help many people who are struggling in Lafayette County.



SUNDAY SCHOOL PLAY

On December 19th there will be a Sunday School event during worship. There will be a children's play. Please have your children at church by 9:30 a.m. so that they have time to rehearse the play."



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

The Christmas Eve Service at Immanuel will be at 5:00 p.m. Please come and join in the celebration of the birth of Jesus.



MEMBER PHOTOS

We would like to start adding photos of our members into their profile in Churchtrac. The pictures can be family and/or individual. This will be very beneficial when we get a new pastor. If you have a digital copy, please e-mail them to

Marjean Sutherland at marjeans@hotmail.com or text them to her at 608-482-0091. To get a digital copy, you could take a picture on your smart phone of the photo you want to use or snap a selfie. Actual photos should be mailed to 14293 County Shop Road, Darlington WI or give them to her at Church. She will scan and return them to you. Thanks for your help.



PASTORAL CARE

If you know of any church member that would appreciate a pastoral visit, please let Janice Ruf know and she will follow up with the contact, or contact Pastor Brad Brookins at 608-669-2926.

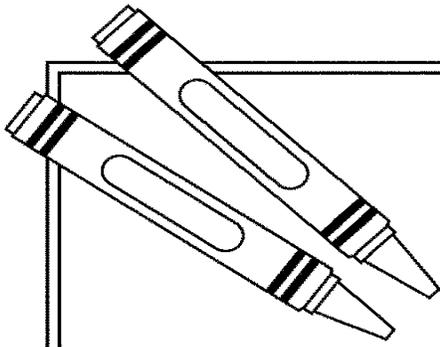


**Wishing all of you a happy, healthy
and safe Christmas season.
Merry Christmas!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

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- Dec. 9** – Women’s Guild Christmas party at noon
- Dec. 22** – Church Council Meeting at 6:15 p.m.
- Dec. 24** – Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 p.m.
- Dec. 25** – **MERRY CHRISTMAS**
- Dec. 27** – Deadline for January newsletter articles
- Jan. 17** – Deadline for Annual Report articles
- Jan. 30** – Annual Meeting after worship



Just for **KIDS**

Unscramble the letters under the blank spaces to find the words that complete the Psalm.



Psalm 148 (verses 1-4, 7-14)

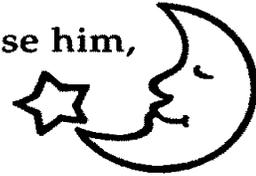
Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his _____; praise him, all his host!
(legans)

Praise him, _____ and _____; praise him,
(uns) (nomo)

all you shining _____!
(stras)



Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters
above the heavens!...



Praise the Lord from the earth, ... _____ and hail, _____
(reif) (swon)

and frost, stormy _____ fulfilling his command!
(dwin)



_____ and all _____,
(snaitMoun) (slihl)

fruit _____ and all cedars!
(seter)

Wild animals and all _____, creeping things
(taclet)

and flying _____!
(dribs)



Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and
all rulers of the earth!

Young _____ and _____ alike, old and young together!
(nem) (nowem)

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone
is exalted; his _____ is above earth and _____
(rylog) (veenah)

Praise the Lord!



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1ST Diane Ritchie
- 2nd Chuck Gratz
- 7th Janette Steger
- 9th Kerry Black
- 12th Maddox Reilly
Ron Blaser
- 13th Cindy Pluemer
- 17th Jaci Kammes
- 24th Suzanne Marx
- 25th Carol Glendenning
Gary Paynter
- 29th Ardith Kundert
Anthony Buss
- 30th Mary Leahy

DECEMBER LITURGISTS

- 5th Dave Sutherland
- 12th Joan Blaser
- 19th Roy Berrey
- 24th Christmas Eve – Jared Reuter
- 26th Brandi Ruf-Wepking



Deadline for the January newsletter articles is **December 27, 2021.**



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 11th Travis & Nicole Lewin
- 12th Ron & Carol Johnson
- 31st Sara & John Gleason
Jay & Peggy Lancaster