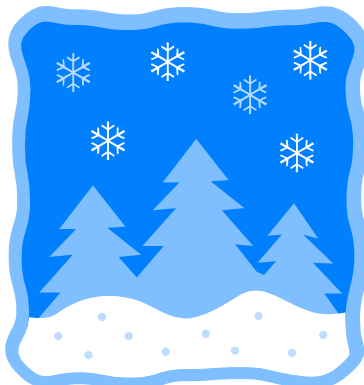


Immanuel Lutheran Church

December 2021

Messenger



Immanuel Lutheran Church
Called, Empowered, and Sent by God to Live, Love, and Learn God's Word
Nuestra Declaración De Misión
Somos llamados, autorizados, y enviados por Dios para vivir, amar, y aprender la Palabra de Dios
Pastor Leslie Mahraun
360-592-5876

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Immanuel Lutheran Church
5782 Lawrence Rd.
Everson, WA 98247

From Pastor Leslie

As we await the birth of the Messiah we wait with hope, we rejoice in his coming, and we live with gratitude for his saving grace in our lives and in the lives of the world.

This is our theme for Advent 2021: *hope, rejoicing and gratitude*. We have so much to hope for in the season of Advent. Hope for the world, our own lives, and one another. Rejoicing in the gift that is ours in Jesus. And gratitude for the many gifts we have been given through the saving power of Jesus, born to save us.

This holy season we are filled with wonder at the miracles that surround us and we pray for peace in the world, our nation and our communities as violence, war, racism, homophobia, ageism, and more still litter our world. The ways our world is broken can cause us to dwell on the negative, but I encourage each of us to pray for healing and peace during this holy season. God is at work in the world and in our lives to bring wholeness and goodness to each of us. By working to rid our world of all the hate, bitterness and woundedness, we can make a difference, and Jesus, for whom we are waiting, wants only wholeness and peace for us.

As we wait for his coming, we do things to make our surroundings beautiful. We decorate for Christmas and we cook and bake special foods for Christmas, and we make plans to visit or have visitors for the Christmas season. We do these things to celebrate the birth of the Messiah. My prayer for each of us as we prepare for the Messiah is that we do so with deep love and devotion for Jesus, one another and the world.

May this season of waiting bring you peace and love. And as Christmas arrives may you be blessed with the beauty and joy of the season, knowing that the holy child comes to bring you all the gifts of love and peace from God our Creator. God bless you this holy season and always,

Pastor Leslie

Wednesday Evening Advent Services:

Wednesday Night Advent Worship will be December 1, 8, 15 and 22 at 7:00 p.m. We will sing the Holden Evening Prayer Liturgy for the services. All are welcome.



Sundays in Advent:

This year for Advent we will use the following Scriptures and themes for worship on Sundays:

December 5 Wait upon the Lord with Hope

Psalm 130:5 ⁵ *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;*

The prophet Isaiah declared the coming of the Lord, which gave the people of Israel hope for the future. We wait with hope for the future because we know what the future holds.

December 12 Wait upon the Lord with Rejoicing

Isaiah 25:9 ⁹ *It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

Elizabeth rejoiced as she waited for the coming of her son, John the Baptist. And Mary rejoiced as she waited for the birth of her son, Jesus. In the same manner we rejoice as we wait for the coming of the Son of God.

December 19 Wait upon the Lord with Gratitude

Psalm 9:1 ¹ *I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.*

Zechariah's waiting days for John the Baptist's birth were filled with great gratitude for the Lord's promise about to be fulfilled. In these remaining waiting days before our Savior's birth, we are ever more grateful for the arrival of the promised One.

As we wait for the coming of the Messiah, born as a baby, we do so with Hope, Rejoicing and Gratitude. Come now to worship and experience the beauty of the season.



Blue Christmas

by Ben Workman-Smith

The Blue Christmas service is such an important service. It gives every person for whom Christmas is a not-so-joyous time of year (whether that's because of a lost love one, a close suicide, a current Christmas sickness, a pregnancy gone wrong, COVID blues, homelessness, a sudden dire expense where Christmas presents are no longer an option, and so many other people closer to us than we think) a place to commune together in sorrow and love in the presence of God. It gives validity to the negative emotions that the holidays can bring and makes Christmas for all of us that more joyous in our celebration of the One that brings healing!

UPCOMING EVENTS and IMPORTANT DATES AT IMMANUEL:

- **Advent Services** - Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. during Advent (December 8, 15, and 22). Holden Evening Prayer.
- **Blue Christmas Service December 12** at 4:00 p.m.
- **Christmas Eve Service** - 7:00 p.m.
- **Cancer Support Group** - 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. The group is open to those who have had cancer and those going through treatment currently. Caregivers welcome too!

December Birthdays

12/7 Joe Woodbury
12/10 Helen Freeman
12/14 Joanie Hirt
12/17 Dennis Finsrud
12/18 Jacob Short
12/18 Dawn Durand
12/22 Ben Andrews
12/27 Kathy Graham

December Anniversaries

12/20 Salvador & Belia Estrada
12/27 Randy & Linda Carson



Women of Immanuel News

WOI have distributed the funds raised from the **Pie Social and Bake Sale** as follows: \$300 to Ukrainian Church rebuilding fund, \$150 Thank Offering to Women of the ELCA, and \$1000 to Immanuel Lutheran Church. Again, we would like to thank both our own Immanuel congregation and the Ukrainian congregation for making this event a success.

WOI will be sponsoring two families by having a **Giving Tree** in the Parish Hall once the families have been assigned to us. More information to follow.



December Scripture Readings

December 5 - 2 Advent

Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

December 12 - 3 Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

December 19 - 4 Advent

Micah 5:2-5a
Luke 1:46b-55
Psalm 80:1-7 {alternate}
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-55

December 24 - Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

December 25 - Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

December 26 - 1 Christmas

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

Welcome New Members!

We welcomed Joyce Hawkes and Helen Folsom to the Immanuel Family as members on December 5.

Looking for GOOD GIFTS this year?

Shop ELCA Good Gifts and choose from more than 50 unique, charitable gifts to give in honor of friends and family.

They'll get a card to let them know about what you've done, and you'll get the joy that comes with making the world a better place.

God's love is a gift, given through Christ. This Christmas, let us celebrate that gift by sharing God's love with others!

December Worship Assistants Schedule

December 5, 2021

Ass't. Minister: Laura Hookham
Greeters/Ushers: Brulands
Readers: Ron Bruland/Salvador Estrada

December 12

Ass't Minister: Ben Workman Smith
Greeter/Ushers: Hunters
Readers: Kim Roe /Salvador Estrada

December 19

Ass't Minister: Bob Jacobson
Greeters/Ushers: Brewers
Readers: Dennis Workman/Salvador Estrada

Christmas Eve - ? Please talk to Pastor Leslie if you can assist on Christmas Eve

December 26

Ass't Minister: Kelsey Mordecai
Greeters/Ushers: ?
Reader: Dawn Durand/Salvador Estrada

A big thank-you to all the helpers; you are greatly appreciated and needed!

If you are unable to serve on your assigned Sunday, please call someone that you can either switch an assigned Sunday with or sub for you.

Email address for Pastor Leslie:
lmahraun@hotmail.com
Pastor Leslie's cell phone: (360) 599-0531
Church email address:
immanuel.everson@gmail.com
Office phone: (360) 592-5876
Church website:
immanuellutheraneverson.com/



Finger Labyrinth - We are beginning the season of Advent - preparing ourselves for the birth of Jesus. The dictionary defines a labyrinth as a complicated irregular network of passages or paths - an intricate and confusing arrangement. That can certainly describe most of our lives. As you prepare for the Birth of our Savior prepare yourself each day with a finger walk through the labyrinth. As you complete the labyrinth offer thanks to God for your day and for his son.



PRAYING WITH A FINGER LABYRINTH

FIRST MOVEMENT: RELEASING (CONFESSION)

Place your finger at the opening of the labyrinth. Pray silently or aloud a prayer of confession. When finished, slowly move your finger forward along the labyrinth. Move at your own pace toward the center. Let the words of the prayer stay with you.

Quiet your mind as you move through the labyrinth. Make room for emotions and stirrings that arise. What needs to be changed, forgiven, cleared, confronted, or healed in your life? Offer these situations to God as you move forward.

SECOND MOVEMENT: RECEIVING (CENTERING)

When you reach the center, rest your finger there for a moment before you read a scripture reading for the day.

When you are ready, read the passage slowly, as if you have never read it before. Center on God's Word and be open to what God reveals to you through the reading. Return your finger to the center of the labyrinth and reflect on the passage and what it holds for you.

THIRD MOVEMENT: RETURNING (INTERCESSION)

As you prepare to leave the labyrinth, place your finger at. Now lift up your intercessory prayers for the day and when finished, begin to move your finger along the path to the place where you entered. Let the intercessory prayers stay with you, and add to them as you make the turns and move along the pattern out of the labyrinth. Be mindful of people and circumstances in the world that are in need of your prayers. Hold each one in your heart for a part of the journey outward.

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED

As you lift your finger from the labyrinth's end, offer thanks to God.



FROM THE BISHOP

Miriam sings, *“Sing to the Lord, for God has triumphed gloriously!”* Exodus 15:21

Hannah sings, *“My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in my God!”* 1 Samuel 2:1

Mary sings, *“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!”* Luke 1:46

I am so grateful for the stories of Miriam, Hannah, and Mary. I love their spirit. I love their faith. I love their songs. I love that even with the great adversity, sorrow, and difficulty each of them endured, Miriam, Hannah, and Mary defiantly sang.

Each of these women’s stories unfolded in a world that seemed bleak. A world of systemic injustice and no safety nets. A world where people upheld their own power to the detriment of others. A world where people refused to see another person made in God’s image before them. A world where people threw away people because they were perceived as “less than.” A world where people threw away people because they could not bear children. A world where people threw away people because they became pregnant without being married.

And while their experiences are not our experiences, for many still today, the world feels desperate.

Today, so many people are living in dire conditions. So many who are hungry, houseless, voiceless. We have injustice and violence, racism and hatred. We have anger and acrimony. We have the spreading of lies and misinformation. As I write this, our world is grieving the deaths of over 5 million people who have died of COVID. Over 100,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States this past year. And so many other deaths and losses. There are still people that society throws away. There are still people that other people don’t even look at as human.

And yet...And yet...

We have Miriam, Hannah, and Mary. We have their defiant voices lifted up singing not only to their world in their time – but beyond their time – to us – and to future generations beyond us.

In this Advent time, let us turn to the stories and the songs of Miriam, Hannah, and Mary. Let us remember their prophetic voices. Let us remember their perseverance, their faith, and their grit. For even as the reality around them was difficult, they continued to sing of a new day, a new promise, a new reality.

May these amazing prophet women bring hope to us in this time. May we remember that new life is coming. May we trust that the world now is not how the world will be. May we hold before us that, through Christ, a new day is being born.

In this Advent time, we live in anticipation and in faith. And we sing. We sing.

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:

“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”;

She conceived him, “God with us,” our brother, whose birth Restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

ELW #266, All Earth is Hopeful vs. 3

In Advent Hope,

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee bishop@lutheransnw.org



From the VEEP

Happy New Year! Here we are once again at Advent, the beginning of our liturgical year – a four-week period of waiting and anticipation. Many of us mark the season by getting out our Advent calendars and candles and marking off the days and weeks until Christmas. However, we are not just called to wait, but also to “prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

This road building is complicated and difficult. As Isaiah 40:4 declares:

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

My husband’s grandfather was part of the team that built the ALCAN (Alaska-Canadian Highway) and he knew a great deal about making uneven ground level. A lot of mountains and hills had to be made low to carve a passable road through that wilderness. This is not passive anticipation; this is actively going forward to meet the coming Christ, clearing out obstacles as we go. This is also not a finite activity – once the road is built it must be maintained. Some portions of the ALCAN are subject to frost heave, even now with all our more advanced road building technology. Here in Washington, during the November rains, we’ve seen roads flooded and washed out, landslides eroding our hillsides, fallen trees blocking our progress. It can be disheartening. Here we are, building and preparing and running to meet Christ, only to have our path diverted, our roads washed away. It can feel a bit hopeless.

During this Advent, I will look to see what new lessons I can learn from the paths I forge as I prepare the way, what wisdom or insight is revealed as the rains wash away old routes. I will look forward in anticipation, watching for Christ rushing to meet me, ready to turn the world upside down again with God’s endless love and grace. I leave you with this excerpt from Robert Frost’s poem, “In Time of Cloudburst.” I love its take on mountains being made low and valleys being lifted up. May you also begin all over to hope.

*Some force has but to apply,
And summits shall be immersed,
The bottom of seas raised dry –
The slope of the earth reversed.
Then all I need do is run
To the other end of the slope,
And on tracts laid new to the sun,
Begin all over to hope.*

Here are a few things I or the Synod Council have been up to:

- Synod Assembly planning has commenced.
 - Executive Committee met on November 11. Among other actions, we approved a disbursement from the Racial Equity and Reparations Fund.
 - Synod Council met on November 20. We focused this meeting on our Intercultural Development work, specifically on communication and conflict resolution.
- Kay Edgerton, Vice President NW Washington Synod/ELCA veep@lutheransnw.org

