

Garden of Readin'



Emanuel Lutheran Church Newsletter

December 2020

Happenings!

Due to COVID 19 the church building remains closed for most activities except for Sundays mornings for worship and activities approved by the Church Council. We encourage everyone to connect with us virtually via Facebook, Twitter and our YouTube channel.

Sunday, December 6—Worship

Sunday, December 13—Worship with Joyful Noise Offering, Socially Distanced Caroling

Friday, December 18—Volunteers for Food Pantry Meet at Our Savior's

Sunday, December 20—Worship with Christmas Program

Thursday, December 24—Worship at 5 pm, 7 pm & 9 pm

Sunday, December 27—Worship

Mission Statement:
Forgiven
by Grace,
Serving by
Faith

Vision Statement:
To Grow in
Faith, Love,
and Spirit



The bell choir practicing in the community room. There are currently nine members of the bell choir. They have been practicing weekly in the community room.

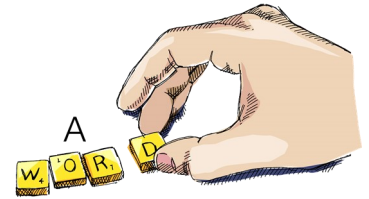
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Ponderings From Your Pastor

BY PASTOR CARA KNUTSON

Isaiah 43:19 For Behold I am Doing a New Thing; Do You Not Perceive It?



A new normal. By now we've all gotten the message there really will be no going back to things as they were before once we get to the other side of this pandemic. We're all going to have a new normal. And for now we wait. We wait for news of developments of a vaccine. We wait through the holidays, perhaps not seeing our families and friends like we normally would. We wait to see what our school boards and governors will decide about mandates and gatherings.

This week I saw a chart that helped you decide if you are thriving, surviving, struggling or in crisis. I can tell you depending on the day I'm surviving or struggling. At times I'm so tired and I wonder why—it's not like I'm working a physical job and on my feet all day like some of you. I have to remind myself just living through this difficult age takes its toll on all of us. A couple of weeks ago I heard Judy Garland's Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas and at the line, "until then we'll have to muddle through somehow", I began to weep. This year has been so incredibly hard.

At church we also wait. We weep and we wail internally, if not always visibly, grieving the many losses we've experienced individually, as a community, and as a country. We're filled with all sorts of emotions in response to the way this virus has impacted our lives. Sometime's were angry, sometime's were irritated and annoyed, we're worried, concerned, sad, even sometimes guilty when we see we don't have to struggle as much as someone else does.

I believe this Advent our faith speaks directly to our lives in ways that it maybe hasn't in the past. We may struggle to hang onto hope while we wait for new life, and freedom, grace, peace and love. But I'm here to tell you, if you find yourself struggling, barely holding on, struggling to just survive, one of the great parts of being the body of Christ and belonging to a community, is that we can hope for you. We're like a team of horses, when one horse tires, the other is able to step up and carry more of the weight. We can hold you up like Aaron did for Moses when he was too tired to keep his arms raised on the mountain top.

For we are a people of hope, trusting in the promise of God made through Jesus Christ for all old things will pass away and all things will become new. We trust in the promise that God is doing a new thing, even if we can't always perceive it. Each week, we trust that God's plan of love and salvation, freedom and new life will be slowly revealed to us, until the world is bursting forth with new life being born into the world. Until we can lift our hearts and our voices raised in song, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room. Let heaven and nature sing!"

Throughout Advent and into our new year in the church we will be looking very intentionally at the new thing God is doing in our midst. We'll look together and listen to where God is leading us into a new world and lots of new "normals". Throughout this year if anything we've learned that if God is with us who can stand against us! We've been thrust into total and utter chaos and the fact that we continue to gather together to pray and worship God is a witness to our resiliency and tenacity of the faith God has planted in each of us.

Whatever our new normal revealed to us may be, I have complete and utter faith that the people of God, and the community of Emanuel will rise to the challenge and continue on in faithful living and service! Thanks be to God!

Thank you to Emanuel for all the phone calls, prayers, cards & food during my illness. I'm getting stronger every day.
- Ruth Sullivan



Thank you Jan and John Husmann for the beautiful Autumn display at the altar!!!



Baptism

On November 21st we celebrated the baptism of Kajanie Schaal. Kajanie is the daughter of Danielle & Jesse Schaal. Godparents are Ryan Babcock, Nate Larson & Julia Bartlett.

Have
You
Pledged?



Pandemic of Generosity Update

BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Last Sunday was commitment Sunday, where members had the opportunity to bring forth their pledge for 2021. Like most things in 2020, we had to alter plans on how this was to be done.

It's understanding that many of us may not yet have returned to church services in our building, but instead have viewed services weekly on Facebook or YouTube. For that reason, many of us will need to mail our pledge for 2021 to the church office to the attention of the stewardship committee. In an earlier mailing you received a pledge card and an addressed envelope for this purpose.

To date, Emanuel has received 31 pledges totaling \$64,000. We thank each of you who have either mailed your pledge into the church or placed in the offering during church service. With a total budget last year of \$165,000, you can see that we still have some work to do for 2021. We are looking at about forty additional members who pledged or gave to Emanuel this current year, yet have not pledged for 2021. We ask you to prayerfully consider your 2021 commitment.

Emanuel thanks all of you for your commitment of time, talent and financial support during this unusual year. Year to date nearly eighty percent of our pledged members have given 80% to over 100% of their 2020 commitment. Even with all the hurdles and roadblocks, Emanuel continues a strong influence with our members and the community in their daily lives.

Changes to Christmas Eve Schedule

BY MICHAELA LEWIS

This year due to the pandemic, we are adding a third service Christmas Eve. This is to help people have enough room for social distancing at each service. We are asking that people let us know which service they plan on going to if at all possible. We do have links on our Facebook page, but you may also go directly to Eventbrite to RSVP too. We know that your plans may change, but we are just trying to get a rough idea of how many people to expect at each service.



5 pm—Christmas Eve Service with safety candles

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/130453757701>

7 pm—Christmas Service with Festival Candles

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/130454907139>

9 pm—Christmas Service with Festival Candles

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/130455139835>

You may also let us know via email (office@emanuelcb.org) or phone (712-323-9665) if you do not feel comfortable doing this online.

For those who are not comfortable coming in person, we also plan to livestream the services on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas by ordering a poinsettia. Please indicate how many you would like along with any notes below.

Return form to church by December 15.

Your Name: _____

Number of plants: _____ (\$6.00 each)

All are red poinsettias this year

☐ In honor ☐ memory of ☐ other/as listed below



Total Enclosed: _____

***Plants may be taken home
Christmas Eve following the service
you attend. You may also pick them
at the church by December 31st.***



Paul Heath
Bob Vergamini
Irv Mass

Daralene Smith
Deloris Christensen
Norma Mass

Robert Hesseltine
Phyllis Fowler

Esther Bender
Jim Fowler

DECEMBER Birthdays

Dec. 01 Mason Garreans
Sarge Schuchard
Maggie Schwartz

Dec. 04 Connie Eyberg
Zach Winter

Dec. 05 Judy Dillon
Shirley Schuchard

Dec. 06 Wesley Bradshaw
Shelby Rickard
Mike Winter

Dec. 08 Andrew Borwick
Jamie Hansen

Dec. 09 Bob Juhl

Dec. 10 Tina Larson

Dec. 12 Richard Borwick
Cael Hansen

Dec. 13 Karen McPartland

Dec. 16 Susan Wilson

Dec. 17 Carrie Hansen

Dec. 18 Emily TRUE

Dec. 19 Allen Martens

Dec. 20 Kobie Ferguson
Taryn McSorley
Jade Wohlers

Dec. 21 Kaitlyn Egner

Dec. 22 Sam Heithoff
Jan Husmann

Dec. 23 Clarissa Haats

Dec. 25 Elaine Sasso

Dec. 26 Emily Longnecker

Dec. 27 Sid Dillon
Tristan Steensland

DECEMBER Anniversaries

Dec. 2 Larry & Sharon Hansen

Dec. 15 Cara & Maja Knutson

Dec. 17. Ron & Elaine Sasso

Dec. 31 Dan & Judy Heithoff

*If we've missed a birthday or anniversary, we apologize. Please let the church office know!
Contact Michaela at (712) 323-9665 or office@emanuelcb.org*

December 2020 – Emanuel Lutheran Church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29 9:30 am Worship & Holy Communion  FIRST SUNDAY OF Advent	30 11 am Tai Chi	1 Office Closed 5:30 pm Girl Scouts in Youth Center	2	3 9:30 am Bible Study in Conference Room 11 am Tai Chi	4	5
6 9:30am Worship & Holy Communion  SECOND SUNDAY OF Advent	7 11 am Tai Chi	8 5:30 pm Girl Scouts in Youth Center	9	10 9:30 am Bible Study in Conference Room 11 am Tai Chi	11	12
13 Joyful Noise 9:30am Worship & Holy Communion 2 pm Socially Distant Caroling  THIRD SUNDAY OF Advent	14 11 am Tai Chi	15 5:30 pm Girl Scouts in Youth Center	16	17 9:30 am Bible Study in Conference Room 11 am Tai Chi	18 Office Closed 4:30 pm Volunteers for Food Pantry meet at Our Savior's 	19
20 9:30am Worship with Christmas Program  FOURTH SUNDAY OF Advent	21 7 pm Church Council Meeting	22 5:30 pm Girl Scouts in Youth Center	23	24 5 pm Worship with Safety Candles 7 pm Worship with Traditional Candles 9 pm Worship with Traditional Candles  Christmas EVE	25 Merry Christmas!  Christmas DAY	26
27 9:30am Worship & Holy Communion	28 11 am Tai Chi	29 5:30 pm Girl Scouts in Youth Center	30	31 9:30 am Bible Study in Conference Room 11 am Tai Chi	1  Welcome 2021!	2

Birth of Jesus Foretold Word Search



Read the story below. Find and circle the words that are **underlined**. The words can appear in any direction: horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backwards.

Birth of Jesus Foretold - Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month after Elizabeth had become pregnant, **God** sent the angel **Gabriel** to **Nazareth**, a town in **Galilee**. He was sent to a virgin. The girl was **engaged** to a man named **Joseph**. He came from the family line of David. The virgin's name was **Mary**. The angel greeted her and said, "The Lord has **blessed** you in a **special** way. He is with you."

Mary was very upset because of his words. She wondered what kind of **greeting** this could be. But the **angel** said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. You will become pregnant and give **birth** to a **son**. You must call him **Jesus**. He will be **great** and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king like his father **David** of long ago. The Son of the Most High God will **rule** forever over his people. They are from the family line of Jacob. That **kingdom** will never end."

"How can this happen?" Mary asked the angel. "I am a **virgin**."

The angel answered, "The **Holy Spirit** will come to you. The **power** of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. Your relative **Elizabeth** will have a child even though she is old. People thought she could not have **children**. But she has been pregnant for six months now. That's because what God says will always come **true**."

"I serve the Lord," Mary **answered**. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." Then the angel left her.



www.BibleGamesCentral.com

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For more games and activities for all ages, visit the Bible Games Central website.

Emanuel Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2020

RECORDED BY ROSIE SPANGENBERG, EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY

Members present: Pastor Cara Knutson, Mike Winter, Rosie Spangenberg, Nick Rickard, Char Les Kemmish, Matt Solon, John Spilde, Greg Steensland, Alan Ellis

Members absent: Joel Hauschild, Mike Loos, Jane Anderson, Stephen Lewis

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Mike Winter. Greg Steensland gave devotions.

Secretary's minutes from the October meeting: Motion to approve by Alan Ellis, seconded by Matt Solon. John Spilde corrected the minutes to read that the Prayer Chain is being worked on, not up and running. Pastor Cara will check into where this stands and report back next month. Motion carried with the correction.

Financial Secretary report: Motion to approve by Alan Ellis, seconded by John Spilde. Motion carried.
Treasurer's report: Motion to approve by Char Les Kemmish, seconded by Nick Rickard. Motion carried.

Capital Fund report: Motion to approve by Greg Steensland, seconded by Char Les Kemmish. Motion carried.

Memorial Fund report: Motion to approve by Alan Ellis, seconded by John Spilde.

Discussion: Greg Steensland noted that several of the names/funds on this report have been on there for a long time. Should relatives be contacted about their wishes for how to use the funds? Char Les Kemmish brought up using some of the funds to purchase a new sign for out front. Allan Ellis has done extensive research on this and will update his findings and report back. Motion carried after discussion.

Committee reports:

- John Spilde reported for the Fresh Start Committee. He has been in contact with Dwight Rogers, who is doing well.

Pastor Cara gave her monthly written report. She highlighted the bell choir practices being held and a conversation she had with Mike Klinefelter, a regional ELCA representative who has some different investment opportunities available and is willing to share those with us. The Tai Chi group is still willing to make a donation to the church. Pastor Cara is in contact with the group to offer suggestions.

Old Business:

- Jane Anderson submitted her thoughts to the Council that a portion of the funds received from Elizabeth Miller should be used for some kind of music purchase, since this was an area Elizabeth was deeply interested in. Purchasing a set of bells for the bell choir was one idea discussed.
- Michaela Lewis gave an update to President Mike Winter on the cameras/equipment purchased (approved up to \$750 using funds from memorials at last month's Council meeting.) Some items have had to be returned and others will need to be purchased. President Winter will get an estimated cost from Michaela and report back to Council members. Additional purchases would also be made using memorial funds.

New Business:

- A new computer was purchased for Pastor Cara for \$565. A motion was made by John Spilde, seconded by Nick Rickard, to approve this purchase using funds from the Office Supplies account.
- Rosie Spangenberg brought up the need to set plans in motion for the Annual Meeting to be held on January 24, 2021, and how the meeting may look different than in past years. This will be an action item at the December Council meeting.
- New Council members will be needed to replace Rosie Spangenberg, Stephen Lewis, and John Spilde, who cannot be on the Council for another term, according to the bylaws.
- Council members whose terms are up but have agreed to serve another term and are eligible to do so include Nick Rickard, Alan Ellis, and Mike Winter.
- Any Emanuel member who is willing to serve on the Council for a two year term should contact President Mike Winter.
- Next meeting is December 21, devotions by John Spilde.
- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Matt Solon, seconded by Alan Ellis. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned by President Mike Winter at 7:50 p.m.

Bethany Lutheran Home. Christine Gochenour, Marketing Director, says thank you for all your help in making Halloween a success during this hard time. All of your donations went to making goody bags for the community members for our reverse trick-or-treating. When they received these goody bags they were so thrilled! The prize money that was donated went to our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in our costume contest. Attached is a picture of our winners. 1st place went to the Sanderson Sisters from Hocus Pocus, 2nd place went to the Mummy and 3rd place went to the Butterfly. We had a lot of staff dress up and give the community members a good laugh. Thank you again for all of the generosity you have shown to Bethany.



Bethany Lutheran Heights. Michael Thomas, Activity Director, says things are going well, I feel. We're trying to distance ourselves from virtual activities as responsibly as we can by wearing our masks and keeping six feet apart. We, the staff as well as our residents, really value social interaction and mental and physical stimulation. Research shows that it is essential for our elderly loved ones. It has been a challenging line to walk between safety and activity. We've been incorporating a lot of trivia based activities and a lot of music. Music is a big draw and I think it's great in every way. It encourages physical movement, jogs their memory, paves the way for discussion, and improves overall happiness, which is especially important during these times. We have a lot of fun with it. December is always our busiest month, but even with that we're going to try a lot of new things in the department by offering alternative exercises, as well as more activities at different times. Our primary commitment is to the overall well-being of our loved ones.

Please continue to pray: *Heavenly Father, please bless Bethany Lutheran Home and the Heights and make them a true home for all who live here. Grant Your blessings to all who work there. We thank you for Your hope filled promises that bring comfort and peace to their hearts this day. In Jesus' name, amen.*

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ?

Where did the child Jesus and his parents flee for safety?

- A. Ethiopia
- B. Syria
- C. Rome
- D. Egypt



Answer: D (See Matthew 2:13.)

Lutheran Family Services Bags

WIDER MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Thanks to everyone who donated products, money and time to this project. Am always amazed at how willing everyone is to help the children and families of this organization. Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas.



Emanuel Lutheran Safety Group

BY STEPHEN LEWIS

As we are moving into the colder holiday season, I thought I would share some tips that I found on NSC.org, the National Safety Council. Most of them we know, but it's always good to have a refresher.

If you are traveling:

- Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency preparedness kit with you
- Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid drowsy driving
- Leave early, planning ahead for heavy traffic
- Put that cell phone away; many distractions occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit

If you are decorating:

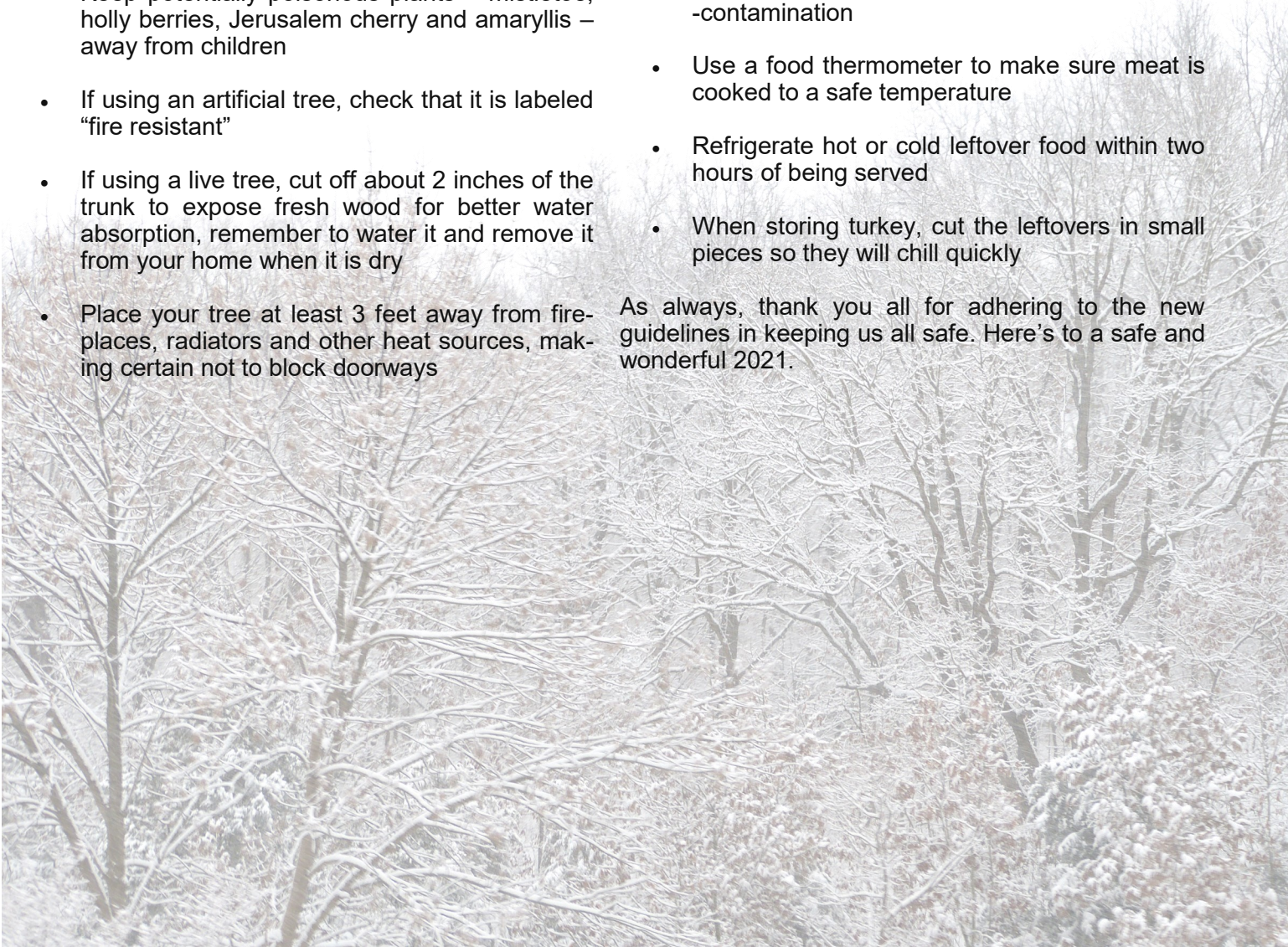
- Keep potentially poisonous plants – mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis – away from children
- If using an artificial tree, check that it is labeled "fire resistant"
- If using a live tree, cut off about 2 inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption, remember to water it and remove it from your home when it is dry
- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, making certain not to block doorways

- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower tree branches where small children can reach them
- Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights
- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections

If you are cooking:

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food
- Keep raw meat away from fresh produce
- Use separate cutting boards, plate and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftover food within two hours of being served
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly

As always, thank you all for adhering to the new guidelines in keeping us all safe. Here's to a safe and wonderful 2021.



Children & Youth Programs

BY STEPHEN LEWIS

As we bring 2020 to a close we have can look back at both the good and the bad of the year. True the pandemic has hindered a lot of things for the youth. Mission trips, camps, VBS, etc. it has also brought new ways of reaching out to each other to spread the word. We as a church have made leaps in the technology foot print of Emanuel. We have utilized zoom, Facebook and other forms of social media. We have also started our own children's online programming and it has been a success so far.

As a church I would love to hear some feedback on the online programming and maybe some suggestions on what you would like to see in a lesson or who might be



good candidate to be a guest on Emanuel Lutheran Sunday School Show. Please email me at youth@emaunelcb.org or drop a message on our Facebook page.

This year has also brought us the challenge of a children's Christmas program. Though it will not be our traditional get the kids together play, we will have something wonderful. We will be using children of all ages, that includes teenagers and adults. If you would like to be part of this, please reach out to myself or Michaela Lewis. Our program will be shown at service and online, December 20.

Thank you to everyone for your support and participation. Let's work together to make 2021 a great year.

Merry Christmas from LSI

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." — John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! This year has been challenging for all of us, and we are grateful for the Iowans who have stepped up just for the sake of giving and helping LSI in 2020. Thank you for bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these important services!

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of foster care, who fear they will never have a forever family to love them.

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for our neighbors who are so often overlooked in our society. In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI's director of philanthropy and church relations, at 563.676.2065 or Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org. LSI is also available to provide a customized virtual shared ministry opportunity for your congregation. If you would like to share the message of LSI with your community, please contact our Waverly office at 319.352.2630 to get started.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.



**Joyful Noise for November will be on December 13 for
Interfaith Response.**

Ramblings from the Back Corner

BY CINDY RICHARDS



When one door closes, another one opens. But right now, it's hard to find the other door. It feels like we are in one of those escape rooms, unable to figure out the clues to get out.

Sometimes the door is open but hidden from plain sight because it's not what we're expecting. We're expecting what we've had before, what we've enjoyed before, what we're used to. However, to grow and mature, we have to experience new things, try new things and step outside our comfort zone. And isn't that what life, real living, is? We often stop choosing to change and rather, try to endure that change which is trust upon us. Both are changes. So perhaps it's a matter of perspective.

As my piano students prepare for a recital, they often realize they are afraid of playing in front of others. Getting down to the root of this fear is understanding our physical reactions to fear. As adrenaline rushes throughout our bodies our hearts race, our palms sweat, we breath faster, and our minds go into over-drive. We are physically preparing for flight.

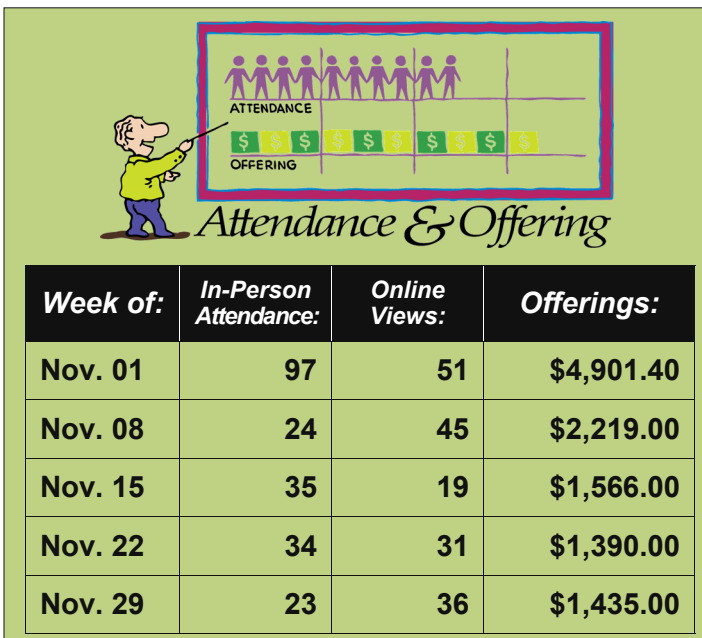
This is the same way the body reacts to excitement. Our heart races, palms sweat, breathing rates in-

crease, and we think a million thoughts in a second. The same physical reaction. So why is one called fear and the other excitement? It's a matter of perspective. And we can change that.

We can change our perspective on most things in our lives that affect us. Like this pandemic. Many people are focusing on what has been taken away from our daily lives. But what has been added? Most people will have a different holiday season than ever before. A forced change. An escape room with few clues? Or an escape room with the biggest clue right before us if we change our perspective.

We can have the calm season we've wished for in the past. Time to write Christmas cards, time to listen to online concerts, time to make new decorations, time for baking those cookies and special dishes we enjoyed in past Christmases, time to have devotions around the advent wreath and candles.

Let's change our perspective. Let's see what we've overlooked in the past. Let's use our physical reactions to stress/excitement to hunt for those clues and prepare for Christmas in different ways.



Finance Team Update

Income & Expenses Monthly and YTD

October Income:\$6,807.00
 October Expense:\$13,986.10
 October Balance-\$7,179.10

YTD Income:\$135,454.47
 YTD Expense:\$129,406.24
 YTD Balance\$6,048.23
 Plus Carryover.....\$16,983.29
 General Budget Fund\$23,031.52



Emanuel Lutheran Church

2444 North Broadway
Council Bluffs, IA 51503-0499

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



HEBREWS 13:2, NRSV

Do not neglect to show
hospitality to strangers, for
by doing that some have
entertained angels without
knowing it.

Mission Statement: Forgiven by Grace, Serving by Faith
Vision Statement: To Grow in Faith, Love, and Spirit

Contact Us

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Like us on facebook: [facebook.com/emanuellutherancbia](https://www.facebook.com/emanuellutherancbia)
Visit us on the web at: www.emanuelcb.org

Worship Services:

Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary.
Virtual services live on YouTube, Facebook & Twitter.

Staff:

Pastor Cara Knutson (pastor@emanuelcb.org)
Director of Music Ministries, Cindy Richards (music@emanuelcb.org)
Parish Assistant, Michaela Lewis (office@emanuelcb.org)
Kidz Kamp/Activities, Stephen Lewis (youth@emanuelcb.org)
Financial Secretary, Darlene Reed