

# The Image

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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715- 832-7832



Issue 1 January 2012

## Something New at Immanuel!

### Building Bridges

Building Bridges is a new ministry we are starting here at Immanuel. Our goal is to “build a bridge” between what we learn at Immanuel and what we practice at home to enrich our faith in our daily lives. Building bridges is for all families of all ages here at Immanuel, especially our young families, confirmation and SHYN families. Our first building bridges night will be January 11th, 2012 6-8pm.

There is a potluck dinner so please bring a dish to pass.

### Bible Milestone Recognition

On Sunday, January 22, we will be gifting our 2nd graders with the Word of God. They will receive a special blessing during worship and will be presented with Spark Bibles. Congratulations to the following youth:

**CJ Haas, Nathan Hagstrom,  
Sara Hegde, Kathryn Merten,  
Lukas Olson, Aiden Tarpenning**

### Dear Friends in Christ:

The tradition of a sabbatical is rooted in the Old Testament idea that for land to remain capable of producing good crops it needs to lie fallow, to rest, one year out of seven. And this was surely rooted in the idea that God rested from God’s work of creation on the seventh day.

*“When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath for the LORD. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard (Leviticus 25:3-5).*

Sabbaticals, typically occurring after six years of ministry allow pastors “to take an extended period of time for renewal, spiritual growth, skill development, research, exploration, enrichment, study, and/or travel (2012 Synod Salary Standards).” I think of a sabbatical as allowing body, mind, and spirit time to be restored for productive work ahead. My last sabbatical, eight years ago, allowed me an extended time of study and reflection out of which came a new personal direction—my need to return to school and earn my doctorate. In the process I learned a great deal about how the climate for churches has changed in the last 30 years and what is needed to lead churches through that change.

This year I have split my sabbatical into two pieces, January and June-July to make it easier for the congregation to plan for my absence. In January, Pastor John Yungerberg and Pastor Harold Oelschlager will be preaching and leading worship. Both will continue with visitation, our Family, Faith, Formation Ministry team will cover confirmation and other youth and family tasks. I have a huge stack of books I want to begin, I want to work on publishing my Overshoe manuscript, paint the kitchen, do some writing and attend a few learning events. I will be back at Immanuel in February looking 15 years younger. Thank you for this opportunity.

Peace,

Pr Dave

## Dear Immanuel Community,

Happy New Year! May the Lord bless and keep you as you consider the opportunities of the New Year. What did you do with the opportunities that you had last year? Hopefully you were able to use them to improve the lifestyle and health of yourself and your family.

Each year there are several “diseases of the month”. Glaucoma is one of these for January.

Glaucoma is the 2nd leading cause of blindness, and the most common major eye disorder in people over 60 in the US. It is really a group of eye conditions which cause an abnormal rise in the pressure inside the eye, that result in damage to the optic nerve which in turn results in loss of vision. The pressure build up is a result of some combination of increased production of fluid in the eye and decreased efficiency of the drainage system of the fluid in the eye. Often the loss of vision caused by glaucoma is so gradual that people do not notice it until the disease is at an advanced stage and has caused serious damage. The only prevention is early diagnosis and treatment. So it is important to have your eyes examined regularly and asking that the intraocular pressure is monitored.

There are 4 types of glaucoma: 1. Primary, chronic open-angle glaucoma, which is the most common form. It results in the gradual loss of peripheral vision in both eyes, resulting in tunnel vision. 2. Acute angle-closure glaucoma, characterized by severe eye pain, sudden onset of vision problems, blurred vision, and halos around lights. 3. Secondary to eye injury, inflammation, tumors, advanced cataracts, or diabetes. 4. Congenital glaucoma.

Risk factors for glaucoma are: 1. Over age 60; 2. African-American; 3. Family history of glaucoma; 4. Diagnosis of diabetes; 5. Diagnosis of hypothyroidism; 6. Other serious eye conditions; 7. Near-sightedness (difficulty seeing things that are at a distance); 8. Prolonged corticosteroid use, especially in eyedrop form.

If you have no risk factors for glaucoma it is recommended that you should have an eye exam for glaucoma starting at age 40, and be retested every 3-5 years. After the age of 60, you should be retested every year. If you have any of the risk factors for glaucoma, eye exams for glaucoma are recommended to start at age 20 – 39 (depending on what risk factor(s) you have) and you should be retested every 1-2 years after age 40. These guidelines come from the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Glaucoma, as we know it, is totally treatable if found early enough. The most common treatment is regular use of prescribed eye drops. There are several different eye drops available, so discuss any and all complications with your eye Dr. If eye drops alone does not adequately lower the eye pressure, oral medication will be prescribed to accompany ongoing use of eye drops.

For more in-depth information check [www.mayoclinic.com/health/glaucoma](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/glaucoma); [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov); [www.glaucoma.org](http://www.glaucoma.org) (research site); or [www.aoa.org/Glaucoma](http://www.aoa.org/Glaucoma).

Keep your sight healthy in this New Year! God is ever with you.

Alison Martin, Parish Nurse

## Progressive Rummy

The golden mantel of progressive rummy winners continues to be passed on. The wearer in November was Delores Brandt. Thanks to Delores and Arlen Brandt for treats in November and Dona and Dale Peterson in December.

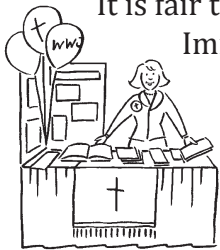
We will play progressive rummy once again on Tuesday, January 17th at 1:30 PM at Immanuel Lutheran Church. We always hope to start a 4th and 5th table of players.

## Thank you!

Many thanks to the people who sang carols on Sunday, December 18th. Thanks for the smiles that you brought to many faces. Thanks for the warmth that was in many a heart of those listening and those participating. "We wish you a Merry Christmas".

## Fair Time Again

It is fair time again! Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 29th. The 2012 edition of the Immanuel Lutheran Ministry Fair will place that morning in Luther Hall after worship.



Ministry Fair

As in previous years, the fair will be a great prelude to the congregational annual meeting which will be held the following week. This event provides congregation members with an opportunity to experience the breadth of the ministries and activities that take place at Immanuel throughout the year. Many of the groups and ministries of the congregation will have tables at the fair with information about their work. It is hoped that those attending the fair will leave with an idea of the impact these organizations have both within the congregation and in our community and perhaps inspire some into taking part in the work of one or more of these groups.

In addition to the ministries that exist within the congregation, some of the outside ministries the congregation supports will also be represented at the fair. Along with information about the various ministries, some of the groups will have free handouts and drawings for prizes. See you at the fair!

For more information, check with the church office or contact Steve Mikelson at 715-835-0336 or Pauline Anderson at 715-864-1292.

## Holy, Healthy and Happy - H3

Starting January 9th at 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM and January 10 at 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM the HHH groups have chosen to do a study of many of the world religions. We will use a book published by Augsburg Fortress called *Honoring Our Neighbor's Faith* as our main resource, but will refer to several other recommended texts. At the same time we will read and discuss the first 33 Chapters of Isaiah, which were written at a time when Israel was confronted by challenges brought on by many different faiths and cultures.

We pray weekly that our groups would be blessed by more people to give us a wider view of what we discuss. If you feel that the Holy Spirit might be calling you to pray, learn and discuss your faith, come and join us. We are waiting for you.

## Adult Forum

Sunday, January 22nd

Local Author Karen Olson of the book *Children of Light* will share her story of raising a child with multiple disabilities. Karen draws on personal experience and a less-than-smooth faith journey to provide a candid look at parenting a child with special needs. She also shares the tools she used to find balance and beauty in a life unexpected.

Grab a cup of coffee and join Karen in the library after worship.



## Youth & Family Task Force Update

We would like to thank the congregation for providing some wonderful insight and ideas in our conversations over the past several months. With the information you have provided, the task force has formed a job description for a Youth & Family ministry position. This job description will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting. A personal committee will then be formed to address staffing. Again, thank you for your insight and we are excited about this next step.

## Christmas Tree Pick-up and Disposal

There's still time to sign up to have your tree removed. Sign up in the Narthex with name, address, and area of EC that you live. Also, mark which Sunday you'd prefer to have the tree picked up (January 8 or 15). Then, take a flier with donation envelope. Cost is free-will donation. Attach flier and envelope to the tree and place curbside on Sunday, January 8 or 15.

## SHYN!

Every Wednesday night at 7 pm, our Sr High Youth gather for about an hour of fun and fellowship. SHYN (stands for Sr High Youth Night... pronounced like "shine") is usually very informal, just a time to be together and "unwind." I have been truly enjoying meeting with them every week since the beginning of this school year. As you're all probably aware, Andy & I will be adding another member to our family in January. Because of this, there will be a few weeks I'll have to miss leading SHYN. I'm looking for a volunteer to spend this time with our youth for a few weeks in mid-late January, and possibly the beginning of February. If you are interested, please talk to me (Alyssa Engedal) ASAP! Thank you!

## Help Wanted!

Looking for a something to do this summer? Consider spending a week with 5 terrific High School students! Our mission trip planning is underway...we've got the dates, we've got the youth, we've got the location, we've got the transportation, we've got the fundraisers -- all we need are 2 caring adults to go along! We are looking for 1 male & 1 female who would be willing to donate a week of their time for what will surely be a wonderful, fun, faith-filled week. Talk to Alyssa Engedal, Julia Strand or Dan Strehlau if you are interested in participating or for more information. (familyministry@immanuelec.org)

## Parent's Night Out

Are you looking for a chance to celebrate Valentine's Day kid-free? We have just the thing for you! The SR High Mission Team will be having a "Parent's Night Out" on Saturday, February 11 from 4-8pm. An evening of games, crafts, and other activities as well as a meal will be provided for the kids while you enjoy an evening out. All we ask is for a free-will donation. Watch the table in the Narthex for registration forms.

## Family Fun Night

The Family's of Immanuel are invited to meet at the Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center from 6-8pm on January 13th for our next Family Fun Event. They have snacks that you can buy there otherwise please eat before you come. Look for a sign up sheet in the Narthex in the coming weeks.

## Family retreat at Luther Park Bible Camp

A big thanks to the families that turned in their registration forms this past Sunday. We have a very nice group going. There are still some spots open for more families to come. We have 7 families going so far with 3 staying over Friday night and 2 staying over Saturday night. The retreat is Feb. 3-4 (5 optional) there are registration forms on the Youth and Family Bulletin board in Luther Hall and in the Youth and Family office.

## Sr. High Retreat at Luther Park

The Sr. High retreat is coming up on Feb. 3-5. We have a nice group of youth signed up and have plenty of room for more. There are registration forms on the Youth and Family Bulletin board in Luther Hall and in the Youth and Family ministry office.

## **Annual Meeting**

**February 5th**

### **following worship**

The annual meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, February 5 following the worship service, election of council members, approval of the 2012 budget, approval of a Family Faith Formation Ministry job description will be on the agenda. Voting members are confirmed members who have communed and contributed during the past year.

### **Ruth Circle**

The Ruth Circle will meet on Wednesday, January 18th. The meeting will be held at the church at 12:00 noon. The group will study Lesson 9 of "The Greatest Story".

### **Men's Discussion Group**

The men's discussion group will be discussing the Marcus Borg video "What It Is To Be An Adult Christian". We will be meeting at 8:00 am in the library on Saturday January 7th and 21st.

### **Immanuel JONAH Potluck**

The Immanuel JONAH group will be meeting on Sunday, January 8 at 11:45am for a potluck gathering to discuss Immanuel's JONAH congregational goals for 2012. One of JONAH's (Joining our Neighbors Advancing Hope) aims is to build relationships within each faith community. All Are Welcome!

## **Trust Fund News**

The Immanuel Lutheran Church Trust Fund will donate \$750 to "Lending With Hope," a project started by members of JONAH. The grant funds will be used as a "starter" for establishing short term emergency loans to members of our community who are experiencing an emergency monetary need and whose only alternative would be to apply for a high interest loan at a payday lending institute. Clients will be expected to repay the loan so funds continue to be available for others to use; clients must also be willing to accept financial education and counseling as needed. The Trust Board is confident that by helping neighbors whose struggles maybe different than ours, we will extend the love of God beyond our doors, strengthening individuals and the community as a whole.



### **Electronic Giving**

Pr. Will Gertner gave a Temple Talk this last fall about how easy, convenient and consistent electronic giving can be. Contact the office or talk to Sue Luthy about how you can wet this up. There are two ways to give. Through your own personal bank or by using the "Simply Giving" service at no cost to you.

### **Name Tags**

At Immanuel we like to get to know our neighbors. Please add your name to the clip board in the Narthex if you need a name tag. Thanks, Jan

### **Sanctuary Flowers and Oil for the candles**

Sign up sheets for flowers and oil are across from the library.

### **Thanks, again!**

Joyce and I continue to enjoy the thoughtful cards and gifts that we received for the 25th anniversary of ministry together celebration in November. As I mentioned in my first thank you, we have been opening a few each day in order to savor them and to think about and give thanks for the senders. We were surprised some weeks after the event to open one card from "Immanuel" with a large and generous gift to which a number of people had contributed anonymously. As we send thank you cards this next month we also wish to thank all the "anonymouses" for their gift!  
Thank you, Pr Dave and Joyce.

## **Immanuel Lutheran Church**

November 15, 2011

Members Present (10) Marianna Gilbertson, Steve Mikelson, Chris Johnson, Fletcher Gilbertson, Pastor David Anderson, Diane Kaufmann, David Nelson, Dave Langhus, Evelyne Yungerberg, Casper Haas  
Members Absent/Excused (3): Laura Bowman, Vic Lothe, Erv LaFave

Thanksgiving Recorder: Dave Langhus

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM by Chris Johnson

Thank you Notes: Temple talk volunteers (Will G., Dona P) & Committee for Dave's 25th Celebration: John Yungerberg, Pauline Anderson, Mark & Lois Helland, Tim & Gay Fehr, Steve Mikelson (chair) and Melody Dragseth. Ev Y. for donating 4 white tables.

Special Order of business: Guest- Joyce Anderson. Presented the idea that on Dec. 3 @ 8:30 AM, we would meet at Immanuel and then visit the Hope Methodist church on the corner of Golf and Fairfax for their Cookie Walk to support area churches and get cookies for shut-ins.

Approval of October Council Minutes: Motion made by Diane K. to approve council minutes after corrections were made. 2nd by David N. Motion passed

Pastor's Report -October 2011- Casper H. made a motion to accept this report as printed. 2nd by Marianna G. Motion passed.

Financial Summary Report -October 31, 2011 - Expenses are up (\$10,493.13) due to Office expense. Motion made by Steve M. to accept this report. Motion 2nd by Diane K.

Committee Reports:

Church Directory: 137 families photographed. Booklet will be available January 2012.

Budget Report was printed for review by Casper Haas

Audio/Video Grant: Trust Fund granted \$5000 to update the audio/video system at church. The first look at systems revealed that we would need \$30,000 to do this job. More research needed.

Other Actions and Business:

- Election of Trust Fund Board Members: Doug Olson (2nd- 3 year term) and Jay Peterson (1st- 3 year term). Council made a motion to accept and motion passed.
- Q & A Pastor's Opportunities and Challenge Letter was reviewed by council.
- Replacement of ceiling fans in church. David N. will check out need.
- Garage Repair: CJ Woletz will be completing this project as part of his Eagle Award.
- Need for a new Office Chair for pastor. Ev Y made a motion to purchase a new chair. Dave L. 2nd the motion. Motion passed.
- Faith Letters are complete and will be available to the congregation for a free will donation. Copies are placed in the Narthex.
- Decision was made by council to meeting sooner than Dec. 20. All agreed to meet on Dec. 13 - Tuesday @ 7 PM.
- Fletcher G. made a brief report about the Meditation Trail and the bid from ABA/ Brain Becker to clear the trail behind the church in April 2012. Tentative date- April 11-15 (after Easter).

### **INFORMATION:**

Offering Count: Marianna G.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2011

Meeting adjourned 8:43 PM

Chris Johnson led us in the closing prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianna M. Gilbertson, Council Secretary

Email: Marianna@gilfarms.com

## Service Volunteers

### Assisting Ministers

01 Jo Stolp  
08 Jo Stolp  
15 Mark Likkel  
22 Mark Likkel  
29 Mark Likkel

### Lectors

01 Ray Koch  
08  
15  
22 Pauline Anderson  
29 Becky Ihle

### Ushers

01 Please Volunteer  
08 Curt & Tom Carlson  
Thom & Michael Hokanson  
15 Chloe Stoddard  
Sharon Stake

22 The Johnson Family  
29 The Ivey Family

### Greeters

01 Please Volunteer  
08 The Hegde Family  
15 The Olson Family  
22 The Redetzke Family  
29 The Knutson Family

### Bread and Wine

01 The Engedal Family  
08 Ray & Sue Koch  
15 Tim & Tammy Leibham  
22 Jan Heitkamp  
29 Renee Ahrens

### Acolyte

08 Joydan Ivey  
Emma Knutson  
15 Elizabeth Johnson  
Zach Heck

22 Elizabeth Johnson  
29 Alyssa Hegde

### Altar Care

Jackie Johnson

### Offering Count

Sue Luthy & Ev Yungerberg

### Other Connections

#### Pastor David K. Anderson

[pastor@immanuelec.org](mailto:pastor@immanuelec.org)

#### Ministry Administrator

Jan Carlson

[office@immanuelec.org](mailto:office@immanuelec.org)

#### Dan Strehlau, Alyssa Engedal,

#### Julia Strand

[familyministry@immanuelec.org](mailto:familyministry@immanuelec.org)

#### Choir Director

Owen Wahlstrand

#### Council President

Chris Johnson

#### Create-A-World Preschool

Katy LoRusso - Director

**If you would like to be a  
worship service volunteer.**

**Contact the appropriate  
Coordinator.**

#### Assisting Ministers

##### Dona Peterson

723-7550

#### Lectors - Pauline Anderson

864-1292

#### Ushers & Greeters

##### Barb Hokanson

835-1524

#### Bread and Wine

Melissa Tarpenning

858-1190

#### Altar Care

Jackie Johnson 834-7532

#### Church Website

[www.immanuelec.org](http://www.immanuelec.org)

#### Northwest Synod Office

[www.nswi.org](http://www.nswi.org)

#### Synod Resource Center

[www.synodresourcecenter.org](http://www.synodresourcecenter.org)

#### Lay School of Ministry

[www.layschoolofministry.org](http://www.layschoolofministry.org)

01 Carol Ebel  
01 Rachel LaValley  
01 Megan Zimmerman  
02 Mercedes Isham  
03 Ardyth Krause  
03 Pam Johnson  
04 Deanna Larson  
05 Bob Lodahl  
07 Zachary Heck  
08 Todd Pickett  
08 Patrick Stoddard  
09 Laura Brandt  
09 Ayva Peterson  
11 Marianna Gilbertson  
11 Kim Bowman  
11 Scott Calkins  
12 Brenda Johnson  
12 Alexander Dragseth  
13 Greg Peterson  
14 Doly Rakotomahenina  
17 Irv Peterson  
22 Lori Rosemore  
24 Allison Leibham  
25 Larry Blanshan  
25 Sandy Finseth  
26 Janet Forster  
26 Marcey Hageness  
27 Lois Dahlby  
27 Seth Redetzke  
28 Dan Malnory  
29 Neil Hanson  
29 Leslie Pospishil  
29 Marquerite Gilbertson  
30 Owen Wahlstrand  
31 Marcia Bowman  
31 Angie Knutson



20 Diane & Larry Blanshan  
20 Dan & Zan Degen  
25 Deanna & Bob Larson

## Malawi Update

2011 has been another year with lots of things at Sadzi. Proceedings of fund raising activities at Sadzi Congregation, We have also seen ZIP meetings at Kachipama Congregation. Meetings aimed @ strengthening the companionship. Nomination of the new ZIP information Committee in Zomba Parish. It's also a year of Dean Msuku's induction as the Dean of Zomba Deanery. The year has also taken away a member of Sadzi completely

In early 2011 we saw the rapid raising of funds in order to furnish Sadzi Church with wooden chairs. Sadzi also managed to buy the Speakers for special ceremonies.

Early this year we also welcome Pastor Chimwaye, Assistant Dean of Zomba in a special way at Sadzi .

In June 2011 Dean Msuku also visited his deanery in a very special way. And that Sunday's Ceremony was conducted by Mrs Dean Nsuku. It was really the massage of hope.

We still have fresh memories of the Companionship meeting held at Kachipama on 2nd July 2011. It was indeed an important meeting where Pastor Dave led the Immanuel delegation. I remember it was a 'full house' attended by Visitor from Immanuel. Pastor David and Pastor Chimwaye, represented the leadership of the Companion. At the same time, they represented all men in the companionship. While Pastor Ammy and Diane represented the women. Emily represented the youth. The meeting was indeed the step ahead for the existence of the companionship.

The Information team was nominated with members like Hosh Libanga, Gift Tawakali, Allan Nyirongo of Sadzi Finley Mikundi, Sukali, of Mbidi .These were nominated in order to make sure that members of the Zip are always supplied with information from all.

The Visit was spiced up by the Sunday Ceremony conducted by Pastor Dave in English and translated to Chichewa by Pastor Chimwaye.

August 13, 2011, was a Deanery invent, where the Bishop encouraged members of Zomba Deanery, by providing various items including bicycles, ambulance bicycles, motor cycles, to Pastors, Evangelists, Parish workers to promote the work of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It was indeed a big day in Zomba.

On 14th August 2011, we had an induction ceremony for Dean Msuku as Dean of Zomba Deanery. The function was spiced by gifts given to Our Dean and Our Lord Bishop as a symbol of warmly welcoming them.

On 23rd August, 2011 we received a Computer set from Immanuel Lutheran Church for Zomba Parish. Representatives fro USA for the Women's Assembly brought the Machine.

The computer has improved the communication system of Zomba Parish. The Assistant Dean, The Deanery Accounts and Administrative Assistant, The Deanery Women's Coordinator and the Parish Worker, among others are to be using this computer.

We had a confirmation Sunday on 28th August 2011. 10 young members were confirmed this day upon completion of confirmation class.

The year didn't just end but also brought tears to Zomba when we lost a Member, Mr Mahipo. "May His Saul Rest In Peace"

WE ARE WISHING ALL OF YOU A MARY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS 2012

Hoshiwa Libanga

# Homeless Youth in Your Neighborhood

## A message from Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

Homelessness does not discriminate against age, race, gender, or the social standing of youth or their family. Common reasons for teenage homelessness include abuse (physical, sexual, or verbal), pregnancy, and/or chemical dependency. A number of youth are what are sometimes referred to as, “throw-away kids” — young people whose parents moved to a different town or state and left the youth behind. In some cases the youth is homeless because of a misunderstanding between the parent and child.

Homeless youth struggle with numerous issues because of their age and lack of safe housing, including:

- They’re too young to obtain rental housing on their own; they simply do not have adequate income or savings to pay a security deposit.
- Without job experience or personal identification with a current address, they struggle to gain or improve their employment.
- They’ve had little or no access to health care, mental health, legal support or social services.
- Very often, their education is interrupted or it’s difficult for them to concentrate.

Some fast facts on homelessness and runaways in Wisconsin & Upper Michigan:

- Each year, nearly 30,000 Wisconsin teenagers are reported as runaways.
  - 40% of Wisconsin runaway programs are managed by LSS, such as the Runaway & Youth Services (RAYS) program.
  - In 2011, LSS Voices for Youth programs across six counties in Upper Michigan provided services or housed close to 200 homeless young adults in transitional living homes, transitional apartments and emergency hotel stays.
  - LSS Positive Avenues, a daytime drop-in center in Eau Claire, Wisconsin serves over 200 clients annually with the help of volunteers who put in nearly 1,700 hours of service a year. Clients range in age from 18 to 82 years of age.
  - LSS Off the Square Club, a daytime drop-in center in Madison, Wisconsin serves over 133 clients annually with the help of volunteers who put in nearly 2,400 hours of service a year.
  - Wellspring, a daytime drop-in center in Green Bay, Wisconsin serves more than 150 women who visit us 2,300 times each year. Women range in age from 19 to 89 years of age.
  - The LSS Welcome Home program has been placing homeless families and individuals in apartments in Marquette and Alger, Michigan counties for 14 years.
- Lutheran Social Services (LSS) offers programs for homeless youth and adults throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. For more information on how you can make a difference visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org)

## Calling all Creative people!

### Create a Logo!

Luther Park Bible Camp’s 80th Anniversary Committee is looking for a logo for the event that will be used on all promotional material as well as mugs and apparel. This is a great opportunity for you to create a logo that is a symbol of 80 years of camping ministry at Luther Park, The Farm and The Woods. Creations from all ages are welcome!

Look for all the details on the Community News Bulletin Board.

## *A Christmas Message From Bishop Pederson*

**M**ost of us will be in worship on Christmas Eve. We'll listen to Luke 2, the nativity account beloved by most, and we will envision a manger scene with animals and angels and three gift-bearing kings. Our tradition creates a glow around this scene — star light illuminating the baby Jesus surrounded by the adoration of various players in a holy drama.

Our tradition has made it somewhat crowded around the manger. Our tradition tends to favor a cattle feeder in a wooden shed, not the possibility of a cave commonly used as animal pens. Never mind that the angels left after announcing the birth; never mind that no animals are mentioned in the story; never mind that gift-bearing men are not identified as three or kings or that they wouldn't make an appearance until much, much later. Yet, we crowd all of these details and characters into a sentimental image we hold about the birth of Jesus.

**Confession:** I am not that sentimental. I am perfectly content to remove the animals and angels and three kings, and all the other unattested, pietistic additions to the scene of the manger, *so that there can be room for you and me!*

You see, it's very comforting to crowd this Christmas scene with all kinds of pretty images that make us feel good. But the danger is that we fill that scene so full that we don't really have to get ourselves into the picture. I want you to get in there!

The traditional image might be cherished and lovely, but the sentimental image is not necessarily what we need, even though it may be what we like. The *child* is what we need, and it may be that many of us who celebrate the birth of Jesus need to unclutter our picture of the manger a bit, so that the Christ who came to save us can actually get close to us; *close enough to allow the newborn Jesus to unsettle our lives.*

For Jesus has a habit of embracing the lost, the least, and the last, and calls us to do the same.



For Jesus completely claims us as his own, and invites faith and commitment completely in him.

For Jesus reveals God's grace in his self-giving, and bids us to share this same

unmerited love with all, even the most undesirable or difficult to love.

There is no guarantee that this child is going to bring you the warm fuzzies many of us look for when we hear the Christmas story, light the candles, and sing of a silent night. But this child *will* bring you a sense of God's nearness, a promise of love that will never end, and meaning for your life that sustains through thick and thin. Note that the story itself doesn't do that. The child does. A story crowded with pietistic, sentimental notions will not do this. The Christ who calls you unto himself does.

**Merry Uncrowded Christmas!**

*Duane C. Pederson*

Bishop Duane C. Pederson