



The Image

December 2019



The Greatest Gift

Immanuel Lutheran Church

3214 Golf Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701
immanuelec.org
715-832-7832

Pastor Jamie Brieske
pastor@immanuelec.org

Alyssa Engedal
Family Ministry/Camp Create Director
familyministry@immanuelec.org

Dee Schlieve
office@immanuelec.org

Katy LoRusso
Director
Create-A-World Preschool

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A Different Beginning

From trauma to hope in Matthew's gospel

By Pastor Jamie Brieske

"You'll never guess what happened at the store today!"

"I'm really sorry to have to tell you this."

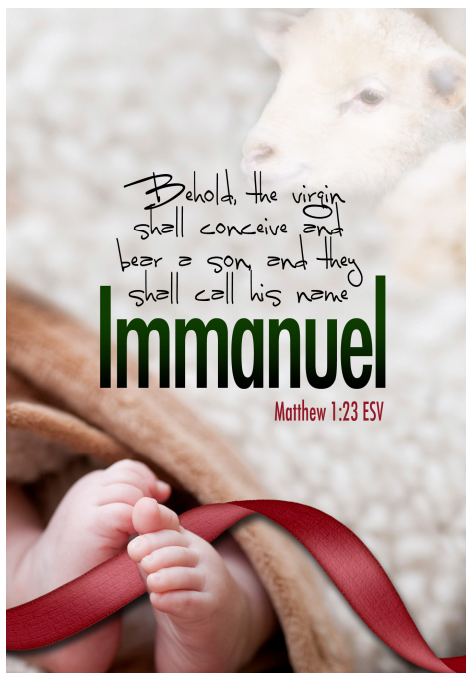
"Oh this reminds me of the time..."

"You really have to know what happened twenty years ago to understand this situation."

The way a story begins sets the stage for the impact and meaning that story will carry. It is true in our everyday lives and it is true in the biblical sense. Let me tell you the story of Jesus, but I have to start at the beginning. And by the beginning, I mean the day that Rachel wept because all of the male babies in Bethlehem were killed by Herod. All the male babies under two. All of Jesus' cousins on his Dad's side. Maybe even some of the grandmas and aunties and moms who refused to give up their little ones to the state. But not Jesus. Jesus was spared because his dad Joseph was warned in a dream to flee to flee to Egypt. From the beginning, Jesus was the one who survived. Jesus' entire childhood is a story of trauma, state violence, a family on the run, and survivor guilt.

Jesus' story as told by Matthew begins with trauma. Matthew is the only gospel to share the story of Herod killing the children and it's also the only gospel to refer to Jesus as Immanuel, *God with us*. Suddenly *God with us* means more than it ever has. God is with us when we have endured the absolute worst of humanity. God is with us in the messy reality of war, abuse, pain, and PTSD. God is with the refugees who had to run from violence. God is with the women and children in detention centers. God is with the families left behind. God is with the lonely, the scared, the forgotten and oppressed of this world. That day in Bethlehem, Jesus was the only one left, and his very name means, *God saves*, as well as Immanuel, *God with us*.

This fall the pastors of our synod attended a continuing education event called, "Provoking the Gospel of Matthew." The presentation was based on the biblical commentary by the same name written by our presenter, Richard Swanson. In addition to studying Matthew's gospel, we also heard the beginning and the end of the gospel, told by storyteller Pam Faro. When you hear the beginning of Matthew's gospel spoken aloud you can't help but see the pain and terror of the slaughter of the innocents. You can't help but hear the pain in Rachel's voice as she wails for God's children. You can't help but see that it is significant that Matthew begins his Jesus story in this way.



In Advent, we begin the church year anew and this year we will focus on Matthew's gospel. Perhaps it's perfect timing to hear this "trauma-informed gospel" as Richard Swanson calls it, and wonder what God might be up to in our world today. Perhaps God has a word of good news for immigrants and refugees, for survivors of school shootings, for victims of hatred and abuse, for veterans suffering with PTSD. Perhaps God has a word of hope for all of us who see the crushing pain of this world and cry out, *how long God?*

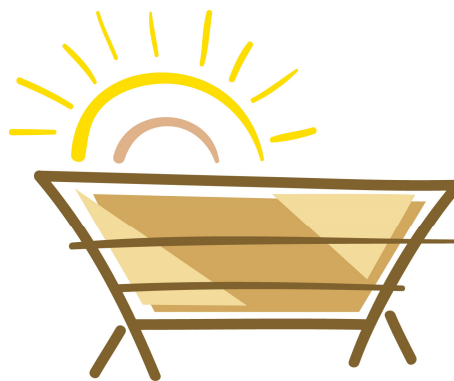
Our story begins with God arriving in the cruel reality of this world in flesh and blood, Immanuel, God with us. Let's see where this story leads us in this new church year. Perhaps we may find a road to healing for ourselves and for this hurting world God loves so deeply.

People of Immanuel: God sees you. God is with you in your new beginning.



02 Chad Hanson
 04 Aidan Tarpenning
 04 Elijah Drier
 05 Kevin Bogstad
 05 Sarah Nix
 06 Stephanie Fey
 08 Donna Lehmkuhl
 09 Jason Luthy
 10 Diane Kaufmann
 10 Kurt Lothe
 12 Marty Fankhauser
 12 Brian Manning
 12 Michael Hokanson
 13 Dave Langhus
 13 Andrew Wilcox
 13 Elizabeth Redetzke
 13 Ava Weber
 13 Rozi Balts
 14 Erv LaFave
 14 Lynn Fox
 14 Jennifer Lashley
 14 Holly Johnson
 14 Blake Lattimore
 14 Trevor Lattimore
 15 Raegan Schumacher

16 Greg Kaufmann
 16 Dave Christopher
 16 Erika Albano
 18 Arica Johnson
 19 Eric Lundberg
 20 Campbell Dean
 21 John Bowman
 22 Mark Olsen
 22 Karyn Odell
 22 Amber Calkins
 23 Jennifer Dean
 23 Karla Hegde
 23 Nick Degen
 24 Melissa Haas
 24 Leah Carter
 25 Meggie LaValley
 26 Emilie Anderson
 26 Bryon Rassbach
 27 Klair Hanson
 28 Diane Blanshan
 28 Nathan Schlieve
 29 Carol Hanson



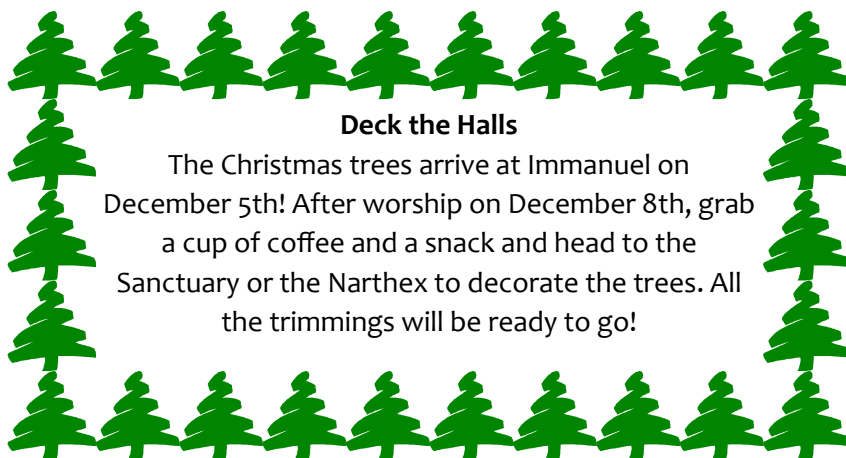
CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve - 5:00 PM

Christmas Day - 9:00 AM



06 Mike & Luella Calkins
 27 Greg & Diane Kaufmann
 31 Chuck & Becky Ihle



Deck the Halls

The Christmas trees arrive at Immanuel on December 5th! After worship on December 8th, grab a cup of coffee and a snack and head to the Sanctuary or the Narthex to decorate the trees. All the trimmings will be ready to go!

Youth and Family Ministry

Parent's Night Out

The 2020 Summer Service Trip team invites all parents to have a night off! On Friday, December 13 from 5 PM – 8 PM they will entertain your kids while you take some time to yourself. Please contact Alyssa or get a registration form from the narthex. Cost is a freewill donation towards our trip.

Advent Celebration, Sunday, December 15

Our Journey of Faith kids are working hard on memorizing lines this year to share a creative telling of the meaning of Christmas with all of you. And after worship, plan to stay and enjoy our traditional congregational Advent Feast! Sign-up to provide food is in the Narthex.

Family Fun Night

Roller Skating at High Roller!

Our December Family Fun Night will be an evening at High Roller. All are welcome to join us for fellowship & pizza at the skating rink (on Melby Rd in Eau Claire) from 4:30 – 6:30 pm on Wednesday, December 18. Freewill donations will be accepted to offset the cost of our event. Included in the event are skating, roller skate rentals (blades are a small fee, or you can bring your own), use of the jungle gym, pizza & soda. We hope to see you there!



Return your LSS Gifts

Don't forget to return your LSS gifts - no later than December 8. Presents should be returned to the church office, unwrapped & with the shopping tag. Thank you for your generosity.

Need extra baked goods?

Need Christmas baked goods but don't want to bake? Our Summer Service Trip team is here to help you out! Following worship on Sunday, December 8 the team will be hosting a Bake Sale. All items will be available for a Freewill Donation to our trip.

Family Retreat

The 2020 Immanuel Winter Retreat at Luther Park Bible Camp in Chetek is fast approaching! Mark your calendar for the weekend of Feb 14-16. This retreat is for everyone! There will be a variety of games, crafts, and activities for all ages. We'll also spend time enjoying God's creation by taking winter walks, sledding, and (for those of you who prefer the great indoors) just enjoying the beautiful view of the lake through the large windows in the Shalom center. The cost for the weekend is any donation towards the cost of the retreat center. Watch for more information and registration forms!

Summer Service Trip update!

We have 19 youth participating in our trip this year, and we are SO excited! We will be heading to Tennessee (around Nashville) to spend a week serving our siblings in Christ. Watch your Image over the next few months to get to know our team a little better. We appreciate your prayerful and financial support of this awesome faith opportunity.

Christmas Tree Pick-up

Since it's Advent...that must mean it's Christmas tree time! Following Our 2020 Summer Service Trip team will be offering to pick up and dispose of your Christmas tree! This year's pick up dates will be January 5 & January 12. It's simple - grab a flier & envelope from the display tree, sign up on the table, and leave your tree by the curb on the day you've selected for pick up. We'll stop by your house and take away your tree! The cost is a free will donation to our trip. More information and the sign up info will be available in the narthex as the dates get a bit closer. Thank you in advance for your support!

Advent Benefit Concert

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd will be hosting nationally known Christian rapper AGAPE* for a benefit concert Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. The proceeds from the concert will be going to Positive Avenues – the only day shelter for the homeless community in Eau Claire. See Pastor Jamie or Alyssa for tickets and information.

Blue Christmas - A Service of Hope

St. John's Lutheran Church invites you to A Service of Hope on Saturday, December 7 at 2:00 PM. They will provide a worship service of quiet reflection, prayer and hope. The service includes lighting of candles in memory of or in prayer for loved ones along with prayers and anointing for healing and Holy Communion.



Immanuel Food Pantry

Winter is an especially trying time for folks who are food insecure. Consider making a monetary donation to the Immanuel Food Pantry. We also need

volunteers to greet guests during our hours of operation - Monday 5:30-6:30 PM and Thursday and Friday, 9:00-11:00 AM. Contact Dee to sign up!



AMMPARO at Immanuel

“Dios es nuestro amparo y fortaleza,” (“God is our refuge and strength,”)-Psalm 46:1

AMMPARO is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany children today and in the future.

The word “amparo” in Spanish means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. The ELCA’s strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) was envisioned after witnessing the plight of children who are forced to flee their communities in Central America and Mexico because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities.



Immanuel has become a partner with the ELCA’s AMMPARO ministry and has begun to work on how we see this fitting into our ministry as a “Church Without Walls”. Our first action will be to present a “Migrant’s Journey”, an interactive simulation developed by AMMPARO ELCA. The goal is to increase public awareness of the reasons families from Central America and Mexico are forced to flee their homes and the kinds of things they experience and witness along the way. We will be presenting this simulation during an Adult Forum in January at Immanuel and at the Synod’s Walking Together event at UWEC on February 22, 2020. For more information or to get involved please contact Diane Kaufmann or Ray Koch.



| | Assisting Minister | Lector | Ushers | Greeters | Counters |
|--------------------|---------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| December 1 | Janet Carlson | Diane Kaufmann | | Bob & Linda Lodahl | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |
| December 8 | Dave Langhus | Dee Schlieve | Steve & Brenda Johnson | Toni & Teckla Wahlstrand | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |
| December 15 | Marianna Gilbertson | JOF | Chad Drier, Brandon Gullicksrud, Kyle Neidermire & Scott | Nate & Linda Aaseng | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |
| December 22 | Please volunteer | Lois Helland | Johnson Family | Elaine Schultz & Jackie Johnson | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |
| December 24 | Please volunteer | Becky Wilcox, Dee Schlieve & Lois Helland | John Bowman, Mark Bowman, Steve Mikelson & Bob Wilcox | Jo Stolp, Pam Anondson & Barb Carlson | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |
| December 25 | None needed | Please volunteer | John Bowman & Sharon Lehman | John Bowman & Sharon Lehman | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |
| December 29 | Dave Langhus | Alison Martin | Felling Family | Keith & Alison Martin | Sue Luthy & Bill Schwengel |

December 2019

If you shop on Amazon, log into Amazon Smile. We receive \$ from your purchases. <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/39-0990139>

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1 Advent 1 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Learning & Fellowship | 2 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open 6:30 PM - H3 | 3 9:30 AM H3 6:30 PM Knitting | 4 10:15 AM Sr Bible Study Noon—Material Witness Quilting 5:30 PM WoW Meal 6:00 PM WoW Worship, Learning & SHYN 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Mentor Mtg | 5 9-11 AM Food Pantry open | 6 9-11 AM Food Pantry open | 7 AGAPE* Concert @ Good Shepherd |
| 8 Advent 2 9:30 AM Worship Bake sale fundraiser 10:30 AM Learning, Fellowship, Deck the Halls, Book Group meets | 9 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open 6:30 PM - H3 | 10 9:30 AM H3 | 11 10:15 AM Sr Bible Study Noon—Material Witness Quilting 5:30 PM WoW Meal 6:00 PM WoW Worship, Learning & SHYN 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal | 12 9-11 AM Food Pantry open | 13 9-11 AM Food Pantry open 5:00 -8:00 PM Parent's Night Out fundraiser | 14 9:00 AM - JOF program practice 8:30-9:45 AM Men's Group |
| 15 Advent 3 9:30 AM Worship JOF Christmas Program 11:00 Advent Potluck 3:00 PM Inclusive Ministry (IM) Church @ Lake Street Methodist | 16 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open 6:30 PM - H3 | 17 9:30 AM H3 7:00 PM Council meeting | 18 10:15 AM Sr Bible Study Noon—Material Witness Quilting 4:30-6:30 PM Family Fun Night @ High Roller No WoW activities 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal | 19 9-11 AM Food Pantry open 10:30 AM CAW Christmas Program 10:45 AM Camp Create Christmas Program | 20 9-11 AM Food Pantry open 11:00 AM CAW Christmas Program | |
| 22 Advent 4 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship | 23 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open | 24 5:00 PM  | 25 9:00 AM - Christmas Day worship service  | 26 Office & food pantry closed | 27 Office & food pantry closed | 28 8:30-9:45 AM Men's Group |
| 29 9:30 AM Worship | 30 5:30-6:30 PM Food Pantry open | 31 | | | | |

Immanuel Lutheran Church

At Immanuel we recognize that every person has a valuable story that carries infinite worth. We are called by Jesus to love expansively and make this unwavering pledge to welcome all people, without exception. We affirm the image of God in people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, relationship status, physical or mental ability, health status, and



cultural or ethnic identity. In our church family we welcome all regardless of socioeconomic situation, addiction, imprisonment or anything else that too often divides us.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
3214 Golf Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701
Address service required

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Dated Material—useless if delayed



*A congregation of the
Northwest Synod of the ELCA of Wisconsin*