



**IMMANUEL**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# *The Image*

December 2023



## ***A Church Without Walls***

### **Immanuel Lutheran Church**

3214 Golf Road

Eau Claire WI 54701

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

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

715.832.7832

Like us on Facebook!

[Facebook.com/immanuelec](https://www.facebook.com/immanuelec)

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!

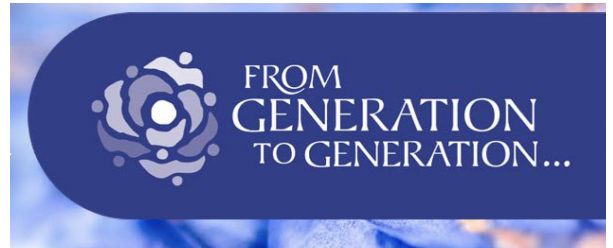
[Youtube.com/c/immanuelchurcheauclaire](https://www.youtube.com/c/immanuelchurcheauclaire)

## From Generation to Generation

*“Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
For the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
And holy is God’s name.*

*God’s mercy is for those who hear him  
From generation to generation.”*

-Mary in Luke’s gospel



As a youth I sang in the Christmas choir at church on Christmas Eve. Every year we sang an anthem which was an arrangement of, *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* and *Dona Nobis Pacem*. It was a favorite of our volunteer director. To this day if I hear either of those songs I am transported back to our little church on the hill. I remember the fun family traditions as well as the beauty of hearing the Christmas story at church. There is something magical about sharing the stories of Christmas.

Stories passed on at Christmastime are perhaps the most memorable stories we have. Perhaps it’s the vivid tastes, smells, sights and sounds of Christmas that seal these memories in our minds. Perhaps it’s the ritual each year that helps us recall them. Traditions of Christmas shape our faith and our families.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ and really the birth of our faith. Birth is a new beginning, a starting over. And just as we tell the story anew every Christmas, Christ is born anew in our hearts each year. The word ‘generation’ comes from the Greek origin or birth. Each new generation of faith tells a new story of how God is with us.

This Advent, Immanuel will celebrate *From Generation to Generation*, a liturgy from Sanctified Art. You will hear the opening liturgy in the voices of different generations. We will ponder together what people of every age and stage have to share with the community. What makes our elders feel connected? What keeps our teens up at night? What brings people of all ages joy? How will we share the story anew with our faith family?

*“From Generation to Generation reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding - in and through us. This Advent, may you remember that you belong- to a story etched into the wrinkles of time, to generations that have come before and will come after, to a love that won’t let you go.” (-Sanctified Art)*

God’s blessings to you this Advent and Christmas season. If you have a Christmas story you would like to share with me, please email me or catch me after worship!

Pastor Jamie Brieske



*Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday  
this year.*

*There will be no 9 am worship service.*

*Instead, we invite you to join us  
for a Candlelight Service  
at*

*3 pm or 5 pm.*

### **Christmas and Cookies!**

Join us December 17th following worship and share in the warmth of the season! We encourage everyone to bring one dozen Christmas cookies which will be enjoyed during our fellowship time.

We will also package and deliver cookies to Immanuel members who are homebound or otherwise in need of a little holiday cheer.



### **Green Team Tips for the Holidays** by Pira Mueller

Christmas is just around the corner and our time-honored tradition of gift-giving is so much fun, but often leaves behind a big pile of paper, which ends up in the landfill. We have some suggestions for alternative gift wrap that can be used many times. Most of us are familiar with decorative paper gift bags. Easy to fill and unpack, fold, store and re-use. Win-win! Another option would be to sew fabric bags in different sizes, tie them with ribbon or string. A cookie tin is not just for cookies and a bottle bag can hold other things, i.e. a rolled up T-shirt or socks. You name it. Christmas cards sometimes come in very beautiful boxes that can be used again.

If your gift comes in a box, it's sometimes hard to fit in a bag - maybe you have some trail maps or colorful flyers from places you visited that can wrap your gift, especially if it's a souvenir from the trip. If you're like me and have a collection of maps and never gave them a second glance (even though you thought you would), it might be ok to let some of them go to find a new purpose. You can come up with more creative ideas, I'm sure. Enjoy the challenge!



# Youth & Family Ministry Corner

Alyssa Engedal familyministry@immanuelec.org



## **Children's Christmas Program: December 17**

Generation after generation has shared the amazing story of Jesus' birth, and this year our Children's Program will share it in story-telling fashion! Our program this year is called, "A Storybook Christmas" and we will get to watch the story come to life right in front of us. We will also have several youth sharing special music, and we will join together to sing some favorite hymns. The kids are hard at work preparing, and are excited to share this program with the congregation!

## **Christmas Tree Pick Up: January 7, 2024**

Advent is here...that must mean it's Christmas tree time! Following the holiday, will you have a tree to get rid of? Our 2024 Youth Gathering Team will once again be hosting a Christmas Tree Pick Up! This year's pick up will happen on January 7. You can sign up online using Sign Up Genius or on paper in Luther Hall. Donations can be left attached to the tree, given via PayPal ([paypal.me/ImmanuelYouth](https://paypal.me/ImmanuelYouth)) dropped off in the church office, or mailed in. Just sign up, get your tree out to the curb by 8 am, and we'll stop by your house and take away your tree! The cost is a free will donation to our trip. Thank you for your support! [CLICK HERE](#) for the link to sign up!



## **Christmas Cookie Fundraiser - December 10**

Do you love cookies but not baking? The 2024 Youth Gathering Team is here to help you! Following worship on Sunday, December 10 the team will be providing Christmas cookies and other baked goods. In addition, we will have a variety of hand made items for sale from the Immanuel knitting group. Any donations given will go towards our upcoming trip to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this coming July.

## **Cozy Christmas - December 13**

Join us for a Christmas-themed WoW on December 13th! Come in your coziest Christmas PJs. We will worship with our favorite carols and hear the Christmas story. Hot cocoa will be provided! After worship, our youth will work on service project.



## **Family Fun Night - December 20**

On Wednesday, December 20 there will be no WoW or learning...instead, we will have a family bowling night! All are invited to join us! Watch upcoming e-blasts, emails and Facebook for details.



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidix Montoya, Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow

## Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love.<sup>1</sup> I am still carrying my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love. This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos<sup>2</sup>.) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world.

To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs.

History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman.<sup>3</sup> She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God, made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was brave.

Her encounter with the living God made her brave. Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her; God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed. May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave!

This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

*Luke 1: 26ff In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you..." "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, ... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God... For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.*

1 Robert Munsch, I'll Love You Forever, Firefly Books (September 1, 1995) 2 Since the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as theotokos, "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God | uCatholic 3 Mary the Brave: Neither Meek nor Superhuman - CBE International

**Beacon House** provides safe shelter and meals for up to six families for 30 days. It is operated by Family Promise of the Chippewa Valley, Inc. and is located at 309 E Lake Street. Support is provided by the Interfaith Hospitality Network, comprised of volunteers from more than twenty Eau Claire area congregations who provide evening meals for the families staying at Beacon House.



**Unitarian Universalist and Immanuel Lutheran Church** will provide evening meals from **Tuesday, January 2 through Saturday, January 6, 2024**. Volunteers are welcome to serve and to share meals with the residents. Your coordinator will give you a count of adults and children that we can expect; 12 to 15 residents is typical. Meals are served at approximately 5:30 pm. Please plan to deliver meals shortly beforehand.

Sign up [HERE](#) if you are interested in preparing or serving a main or side dish.  
Thank you!



- 01 Rylie Hansen
- 01 Evander Krueger
- 04 Aidan Tarpensing
- 04 Elijah Drier
- 05 Sarah Nix
- 08 Donna Lehmkuhl
- 10 Diane Kaufmann
- 10 Kurt Lothe
- 11 Gavin Lutteke
- 13 Dave Langhus
- 13 Rozi Balts
- 14 Lynn Fox
- 14 Jennifer Larson
- 14 Jennifer Lashley
- 16 Greg Kaufmann
- 20 Campbell Dean
- 21 John Bowman
- 22 Mark Olsen
- 22 Carrie Hansen
- 22 Amber Calkins
- 23 Jennifer Dean
- 23 Karla Hegde
- 24 Melissa Haas
- 24 Leah Carter
- 26 Emilie Anderson
- 26 Bryan Rassbach
- 27 Klair Hanson
- 28 Diane Blanshan
- 28 Nathan Schlieve



- 06 Mike & Luella Calkins
- 20 Nathan & Linda Aaseng
- 27 Greg & Diane Kaufmann
- 30 Monte & Violet Pederson
- 31 Chuck & Becky Ihle



Thanksgiving Baskets were received by several families that have visited our food pantry and/or live in our community.

Thank You, Immanuel, for your continued support of this much-needed ministry! Your generous food and monetary donations helped many families have a very Happy Thanksgiving!





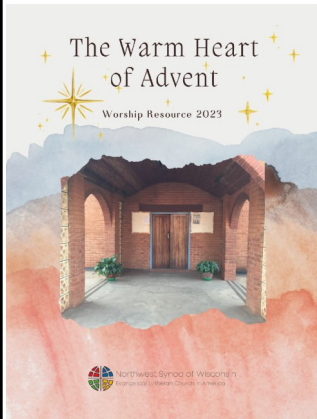
# December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1	2
3 Advent 2 9 AM Worship 10 AM Learning & Fellowship Hanging of the Greens ZIP Mtg	4 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 4 - 8 PM Panera Bread Fundraiser 6:30 PM - H3 & Mindset Monday Bible Study	5 9:30 AM - H3	6 10 AM Bible Study  5:15 Meal 6 PM Worship 6:30 PM Learning 7 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM NYG Mtg	7 Noon - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting	8	9
10 Advent 3 9 AM Worship 10 AM Learning & Fellowship Youth Bake Sale	11 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 6:30 PM - H3 & Mindset Monday Wholly Yoga	12 9:30 AM - H3	13 10 AM Bible Study  5:15 Meal 6 PM Cozy WoW 6:30 PM Learning 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	14 Panda Express Fundraiser Noon - 4 PM Material Witness Quilting	15 5 PM Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal	16
17 Advent 4 9 AM Worship Children's Christmas Program Followed by Fellowship and Congregational Cookie Share Green Team Mtg	18 4 - 5:30 PM Food Pantry Open 6:30 PM - H3 & Mindset Monday Somatic Practices	19 9:30 AM - H3  7 PM Council Mtg	20 10 AM Bible Study  CAW & Camp Create Christmas Programs NO WoW Family fun Night— Bowling 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	21 CAW & Camp Create Christ- mas Programs	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 3 PM Worship 5 PM Worship  	25 Christmas Day Food Pantry Closed  	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed Immanuel serves at Community Table	28 Office Closed	29 Office Closed	30
31 9 AM Worship Lessons & Carols 10 AM Fellowship						



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## The Warm Heart of Advent



Hello dear friends,

Advent is a relatively short season in our Lutheran liturgical year, but in it we find space for many meaningful traditions and rituals in our homes and congregations.

Have you ever experienced or wondered what Advent and Christmas traditions exist in other regions of the country or around the world?

Christianity is present in 158 countries... what elements do you suppose are consistent across all cultures? What practices or traditions might be different as we prepare to share the story of the birth of Jesus Christ this season?

The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin has a partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi, a geographically small, sub-Saharan country in Africa. During my first visit there in July of 2016 I asked our ELCM guide what Malawians did to prepare for and celebrate Christmas. He said, "Christmas is a religious holiday...we go to worship." There are, of course, festivities that happen in Malawi to celebrate the birth of Christ - dancing and singing and enjoying food together, children often participate in a nativity drama during worship, and some families give gifts, but in Malawi, this season has a simpler presence - Jesus is the heart of faith and life.

Malawi is fondly known as the *Warm Heart of Africa* - a nickname given to them by visitors who had received generous hospitality and love by the people there. Receiving this kind of generosity continues to be our experience when we visit. During this season of Advent, you are invited to use this resource, [\*\*\*The Warm Heart of Advent\*\*\*](#), which will include elements to help us remember our friends in Malawi through words, prayers, and action. It will provide a time to ponder what it looks like to embody hospitality, generosity, joy, and love together as we prepare for Emmanuel, *God with us*. Together we can lift up the truth that God's church is global, comprised of varied languages, worship spaces, and imaginations of Jesus. What curiosities might God be stirring in us as we consider these things?

As you begin your own Advent journey, whether in your household or at a church, know that you are not alone. We are beloved children of God. We are church together, messy and wonderful and meant to be in relationship with God and each other on this journey. We prepare for the coming of Jesus, the One who is central in our faith and in our lives, who embodies and calls us into unconditional, radical, and transforming peace and love.

May God be with you this advent season,  
(*Mulungu akhale nanu*)

[Download Complete Resource Here](#)

~Deacon Laura Ramlow