



# Immanuel's Story December 2025

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*Now may  
the Lord of peace  
himself give you  
peace at all times  
and in every way.  
The Lord be with all of you.*

2 Thessalonians 3:16, NIV

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**  
**2pm & 4pm**



# Christ the Lord: A Reflection on Luke 2:1

My dear friends, as we come once again to the familiar story of Christmas, let us pause at the very beginning, at those profound opening words:

*“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.”*  
(Luke 2:1)

These words, at first glance, simply set the stage. They give us the **time**—during the days of Caesar Augustus—and the **place**—the vast, powerful Roman world. Luke, the meticulous historian, assures us that the birth of our Savior was no myth, no spiritual fantasy. It was a once-for-all, **unrepeatable event** firmly planted in the soil of human history.

But we are reminded that Luke is doing something far more magnificent than merely dating a historical event. He is raising the curtain on the greatest drama the world has ever known.

## The True Crisis of History

At the very moment the great Caesar believes he is simply counting his subjects and consolidating his empire, unbeknown to him, world history is reaching its **true crisis point**. The birth in Bethlehem is not just a little story; it is the **watershed of human experience**.

From Caesar’s lofty throne, the birth of a peasant Jewish baby would have been an absurdity—a “waterless cloud in an outpost of the Roman Empire.”

But from the perspective of heaven, which Luke unveils for us, the truth is gloriously and decisively the opposite:

- **Jesus, not Caesar, is the Lord!**
- **Jesus, not Caesar, is the true Savior of the world!**
- **Jesus, not Caesar, is the true Prince of Peace!**

Caesar Augustus, with all his titles and armies, is merely the incarnation of those worldly powers and authorities that Christ came not merely to resist, but to **conquer**.

## The Call of Christmas

Think of the sublime irony: in the very days when the Promised Land was being integrated as a Roman province, **Jesus is born**—the One to whom all authority, in heaven and on earth, would be given. He comes to make His followers the true heirs, not just of a patch of land, but of the **entire world**, integrated not by Roman legions, but by His Gospel.

Immanuel, this is the deep, **practical significance of Christmas**. The issue raised that first night remains the same today: **Are we going to be found on the side of Christ or Caesar?** Are we living for the fleeting decrees of this world, or under the eternal, loving decree of our true King?

May this Christmas season find us firmly on the side of Christ, recognizing His sovereignty over all things.

Merry Christmas and may God bless you richly.

*Pastor Ian*



# DECEMBER

*birthdays & anniversaries*

## Birthdays

|    |                                          |
|----|------------------------------------------|
| 2  | Jim Walth                                |
| 3  | Pam Ballard                              |
| 4  | Jessica Klopfleisch                      |
| 9  | Charlie Frahm, Kirsten Nixon             |
| 10 | Sandy Johnson                            |
| 11 | James Hoyt                               |
| 12 | Gene Lofquist                            |
| 14 | Blaine Kreller, Bill Langton, Sally Oren |
| 15 | Tom Thiesfeld                            |
| 16 | Tom Nixon                                |
| 17 | Mary Aulie, Glenda Langton               |
| 18 | Christopher Klopfleisch, Eileen Patrick  |
| 21 | LeRoy Habighorst                         |
| 27 | Cassie Klopfleisch, Terry Wickman        |
| 28 | Barb Risnes, Paula Traylor               |
| 29 | Amanda Ballard                           |
| 29 | Eli McWilliams                           |
| 31 | Hunter VanHorn                           |

## Anniversaries

|    |                                 |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 3  | Jace & Kayla Christenson (2020) |
| 11 | Rich & Mary Aulie (2010)        |
| 16 | James & Erinn Hoyt (2012)       |
| 26 | Adrian & Jean Olson (1964)      |
| 27 | Jim & Judy Christenson (1981)   |
| 27 | Casey & Jenni Kannel (2008)     |
| 31 | David & Claudia Peterson (1987) |

## Funeral

Suzanne Bowles



## ATTENDANCE

|             |       |     |
|-------------|-------|-----|
| October 26  | 9am   | 80  |
|             | 10:30 | 119 |
| November 2  |       | 152 |
| November 9  |       | 118 |
| November 16 |       | 134 |
| November 23 |       | 137 |

## MEAL WITH A MISSION, 2026

*If you or your organization would like to provide a Meal with a Mission in 2026, please call the church office and speak to Deb Eatros.*



# STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE CARD TO SERVICE THAT MORNING  
AND A POTLUCK ITEM AS WE HAVE A CELEBRATION OF OUR  
STEWARDSHIP AFTER SERVICE

## GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET REPORT

|                      | <u>OCTOBER - 25</u> | <u>OCTOBER- 24</u> | <u>YTD 2025</u> | <u>YTD 2024</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| BUDGET               | 35,848              | 37,553             | 358,480         | 337,977         |
| GENERAL FUND GIVING  | 26,487              | 32,200             | 308,787         | 297,858         |
| GENERAL FUND EXPENSE | 33,162              | 36,937             | 307,774         | 313,761         |
| NET INCOME           | <b>-6,675</b>       | <b>-4,737</b>      | <b>1,013</b>    | <b>-15,903</b>  |

## Major Capital Improvement Fund

10/31/2025

October 1, 2025      **Balance:**                      **\$23,272.62**

**Deposits:**                      \$751.97

**Reserve:**                      \$250.00

**Withdrawals:**                      \$0.00

October 31, 2025      **Ending Balance:**                      **\$24,274.59**







## December 2025 Worship Service Schedule

Altar Guild – Sara Moe  
SRT Leader #3 – Pam Klopfleisch & Jody Bunio

### December 7

Greeters: Dan & Terri Wisniak  
Lector: Nancy Meyer  
Offering Counters: Paula Traylor & Bonnie Goshey  
Lock church after worship: Pat Neros

Ushers: Lynn & Shelly Harker  
Communion: Paula Traylor  
Tech: David Pundt and Jack Schubert

### December 14

Greeters: Mark & Debbi Carlson  
Lector: Becky Pakarinen  
Offering Counters: Jody Bunio & Sandi Erickson  
Lock church after worship: Pat Neros

Ushers: Mike & Karen Midthun  
Communion: Bonnie LaPierre  
Tech: Jack Schubert and Terri Wisniak

### December 21

Greeters: Mark & Nicki Bjornstad  
Lector: Judy Kirchoff  
Offering Counters: Erinn Hoyt & Darlene McNally  
Lock after worship: Mark Carlson

Ushers: Nick Zilmer & Dan Beseman  
Communion: Peter Nordell & David Pundt  
Tech: Vicki Burlet and Jack Schubert

### Christmas Eve 2:00 pm

Greeters: Bill & Jody Bunio  
Lector: Pam Klopfleisch  
Offering Counters: Count on 12/28

Ushers: Joe & Darlene McNally  
Communion: TBD  
Tech: Dave Peterson and Jack Schubert

### Christmas Eve 4:00 pm

Greeters: Ken & Barb Moe  
Lector: David Pundt  
Offering Counters: Count on 12/28  
Lock after worship: Nancy Heise

Ushers: Dale & Vi Klungness  
Communion: TBD  
Tech: Vicki Burlet

### December 28

Greeters: Youth  
Lector: Denny Henrichs  
Offering Counters: Jody Bunio & Sandi Erickson  
Lock after worship: Dave Peterson

Ushers: Youth  
Communion: Char Kinzer  
Tech: Dave Peterson and Jack Schubert

MERRY  
Christmas



This year is flying by. As we enter the season of Advent, I am working on a series of 4 lessons tying the advent season to the stories in the bible and how we celebrate within the church.

All youth age 4-11 are welcome to join us after communion for a 30 min lesson.

The confirmation students continue to study the 10 Commandments. Dec 3rd we will learn about the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment, Thou shalt not kill. The learning objectives are:

- We will identify the ways in which we sin against (and kill) our neighbor.
- Examine how God's protection is being extended outside the home.
- Know that God is in control of life and death, and that His control is good.
- State the negative aspect of this Commandment (what we are NOT to do), and also the positive aspect (what we ARE to do).
- Distinguish between our attempts at fulfilling the Fifth Commandment, and what Jesus Christ does.

Youth group continues to study Youth Alpha. Youth group is open to all students in grades 7-12. We had several youth help in the children's room at the bazaar as a service project. We will be bagging groceries Sunday November 23<sup>rd</sup> at Super One in Crosby as a fundraiser for attending Camp Shamineau in January 2026. Camp Shamineau is a weekend of praise, worship, and outdoor fun that our youth have enjoyed attending the last few years. We will have a Christmas party December 17<sup>th</sup> and look forward to a wonderful evening of fellowship.

Looking forward, I am planning to have the milestone of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade bibles in January. Please reach out to me if you have a child in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, that has not received their bible milestone.

In March, I plan to schedule 2 sessions for first communion education. Traditionally, the first communion milestone is taught to our 5<sup>th</sup> graders, however if there are older students who have not participated in this milestone, you are welcome to join us. First communion will be celebrated at the Maundy Thursday service before Easter.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or feel called to join the youth advisory group or our core group of Sunday school teachers.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Heise

## December Lectionary Scripture Readings

|        |                |                      |                 |                 |
|--------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Dec 7, | Isaiah 11:1-10 | Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19 | Romans 13:11-14 | Matthew 3:1-12  |
| Dec 14 | Isaiah 35:1-10 | Psalms 146:5-10      | James 5:7-10    | Matthew 11:2-11 |
| Dec 21 | Isaiah 7:10-16 | Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19 | Romans 1:1-7    | Matthew 1:18-25 |
| Dec 24 | Isaiah 9:2-7   | Psalms 96            | Titus 2:11-14   | Luke 2:1-14     |
| Dec 28 | Isaiah 63:7-9  | Psalms 148           | Hebrews 2:10-18 | Matthew 2:13-23 |

# Advent Luncheon

*Immanuel Lutheran Church, Crosby*

## Saturday, December 6, 2025

### 12pm-2pm

All are welcome!

Bring a friend and a dish to share



## Tis' the Season, Family and Friends!

I truly think this is the most wonderful time of the year!

A season filled with so many of my favorite things: family, Hallmark Christmas movies, gift-giving, and, of course, time with the One who gives us a reason to celebrate — **Jesus**.

But if we're honest, it's easy to get swept up in the moment and miss the deeper meaning of the season. The joy that comes with Christmas can sometimes feel like it should cover up the hardships and sufferings of our everyday lives. Yet, there are times when the glitter and music seem to amplify our pain instead.

In the midst of gift-giving, we may notice that *empty chair* across the room. The pressure to buy presents can weigh heavy when finances are tight. The ache of loss, loneliness, or uncertainty can quietly steal the sparkle of the season.

### **Suffering is real — but you are not alone.**

In your suffering, anxiety, anger, grief, or loneliness, **He is there**. You were created by a Heavenly Father who knows you inside and out (*Psalms 139:1–4*). A Father who cherishes you and hurts with you, who draws near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (*Psalms 34:18*).



Wherever you find yourself this Christmas, remember this: the joy of life with Christ is a *different kind of joy*. It's not dependent on circumstances or perfection. It's the deep, abiding joy that flows from knowing that you are fiercely loved, seen, understood, and saved by an awesome God who is always with you.

**“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And he will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**  
— *Isaiah 9:6*

This is the heart of Christmas — the coming of Jesus, Emmanuel, *God with us* (*Matthew 1:23*). Because of what He did on the cross, salvation and everlasting hope are available to all who believe (*John 3:16*).

So, take a quiet moment this “Christ”mas season to come before God. Acknowledge your burdens — your pain, your stress, your loss — and ask Him to help you release them into His hands. He promises rest for the weary soul:

**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”** — *Matthew 11:28–29*

My prayer for you this season is that you find true **rest, peace, and purpose** — not just in the beauty of Christmas lights or the gifts beneath the tree, but in the presence of Jesus, the Light of the World (*John 8:12*).

May His joy fill your heart and home this Christmas and always.

**Lovingly & Faithfully,**  
**Sally Oren**



# IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Special Council Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2025 11:00 a.m.

### ATTENDEES & Church Box #

|   |                     |     |   |               |     |
|---|---------------------|-----|---|---------------|-----|
|   | Pastor Ian Hewitson |     |   | Vacant        |     |
|   | Jerry DeCent        | 50  | X | Tom Nixon     | 7   |
| X | Char Kinzer         | 104 | X | Peter Nordell | 222 |
| X | Bonnie LaPierre     | 119 | X | David Pundt   | 295 |
| X | Debbie Lindahl      | 125 | X | Paula Traylor | 145 |

### OPENING PRAYER

### CALL TO ORDER

Char Kinzer called the Council to order at 11:02 am

### Addition(s) to Agenda:

**Agenda Acceptance:** Paula Traylor moved and Debbie Lindahl seconded a motion to approve the agenda. It passed on a voice vote.

### OLD BUSINESS

1. **Audio/Visual Equipment Upgrades:** Debbie Lindahl made a motion which Tom Nixon seconded to authorize up to \$10,000 to upgrade the audio/visual system in the choir loft, work to begin in mid-November. The motion included a directive to take the money from the Major Capital Account, #1135 and was approved by a voice vote.
2. **Update on Interim Minister Agreements:** Item was tabled to be brought up at the regular Council Meeting on November 25 (5:30pm) Updates were shared and no action was needed.

### NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

### ADJOURNMENT:

Peter Nordell made a motion and Tom Nixon seconded it to adjourn.

## **A Note from the Council President, Char Kinzer**

Wow, the end of a year, and beginning of a new one gets a person's 'to-do' anxiousness level up a bit, doesn't it? It's probably a good time to take a deep breath, pray for God's guidance and forgiveness for procrastination, and prioritize the big picture first.

With that in mind, I am thankful for the accomplishments we've achieved with our congregation this year, and I envision planning for a new year that will be productive on many levels. It will be a big year, full of interim work and togetherness planning.

Progress is being made on some minor upgrades to our newest endeavor, the property on the corner. Randy Stanfield, with assistance from Amy, installed two new, larger windows in the bedrooms! Because of Randy's construction knowledge, we were able to buy cheaper windows with no jams, and he constructed the framing in his shop.

About that property – I've heard a bit of a buzz from some visionaries.

- It's been mentioned that we should no longer call it the former Kehl house, but have a naming contest. I agree. Watch for that.
- I've heard from several that it would be so great if we could pay off the \$95,000 mortgage and own that free and clear, free to do whatever we want with it. It's only a block away from the high school. Could it be a place for Youth in Christ in our church zone for students? Could God have other plans for us? A huge thank you to those of you who have helped with your generous donations thus far!
- Renting may be the inevitable fiscally responsible move to make, but I pray for guidance and God's plan for Immanuel on that, as well.
- Someone mentioned a church that recently had a well-organized auction that produced major dollars for a fundraiser. I'll check that out.

What kind of visionary buzz have you heard? Any other thoughts as we plan a new year? Share the buzz if you will. We, as council members, need to hear your thoughts and ideas. And, by the way, we have a few seats opening on the Council. Would you be interested?



# DECEMBER 2025



| SUNDAY                                                                                                      | MONDAY                                                                                    | TUESDAY                                                                                                                                                   | WEDNESDAY                                                                                             | THURSDAY                                                                             | FRIDAY                                                                                    | SATURDAY                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | 1<br>8am-3pm Homeschool Community<br>4pm TOPS                                             | 2<br>9am Staff Meeting<br>9am Quilting<br>12pm Renewal Group<br>3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller                                                           | 3<br>8am Bible Study – N. Evans<br>10am Bible Study – P. Collignon<br>5-7:30pm Confirmation           | 4<br>7am Men's Den<br>6pm Churchyard Practice                                        | 5                                                                                         | 6<br>9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg<br><br><b>12pm Advent Luncheon</b> |
| <b>7 Stewardship Sunday</b><br>9:30am Worship<br>10:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Fellowship & Coffee       | 8<br>8am-3pm Homeschool Community<br>4pm TOPS                                             | 9<br>9am Staff Meeting<br>3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller                                                                                                 | 10<br>8am Bible Study – N. Evans<br>10am Bible Study – P. Collignon<br>5-7:30pm Confirmation          | 11<br>7am Men's Den<br>6pm Churchyard Practice                                       | 12                                                                                        | 13<br>9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg                                   |
| 14<br><b>No Prayer Fellowship</b><br>9:30am Worship<br>10:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Fellowship & Coffee | 15<br>8am-3pm Homeschool Community                                                        | 16<br>9am Staff Meeting<br>9am Quilting<br>12pm Renewal Group<br>1:30pm Tabitha Study<br>3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller<br><b>5:30pm Council Meeting</b> | 17<br>8am Bible Study – N. Evans<br>10am Bible Study – P. Collignon<br>5-7:30pm Youth Christmas Party | 18<br>7am Men's Den<br>6pm Churchyard Practice                                       | 19<br> | 20<br>9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg                                   |
| 21<br>9:30am Worship<br>10:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Fellowship & Coffee                                | 22<br>8am-3pm Homeschool Community                                                        | 23<br>9am Staff Meeting<br>3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller                                                                                                | 24<br><b>CHRISTMAS EVE<br/>Candlelight Services<br/>2pm &amp; 4pm</b>                                 |  | 26                                                                                        | 27<br>9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg                                   |
| 28<br>9:30am Worship<br>10:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Fellowship & Coffee                                | 29<br> | 30<br>9am Staff Meeting                                                                                                                                   | 31                                                                                                    | <div>December 2025</div>                                                             |                                                                                           |                                                                            |



