



# Messenger

JANUARY 2012

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 1

Immanuel Lutheran  
Church and School  
154 Meadow Street  
Bristol, CT 06010  
860-583-5649  
il.church@snet.net  
www.immanuel.lutheranbristol.org



## OUR MISSION

*The people of Immanuel Lutheran Church are living proof of the grace of God through salvation in Jesus Christ. Empowered by Christ, our mission is to reach out in love to those who have not yet responded to the Gospel that all may be united in Christ.*

Rev. Kevin A. Karner  
Pastor

Mrs. Claudia Bishop  
Interim Principal



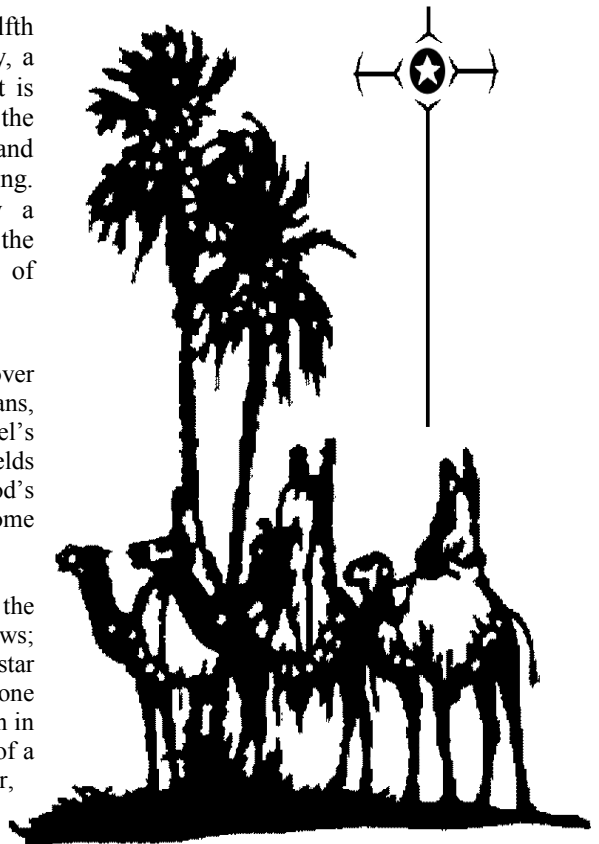
## Celebration of Epiphany

On the sixth day of January, the twelfth day of Christmas, we celebrate Epiphany, a revelation, that which is made known. It is the story of the Magi, emissaries from the east, who embarked on a very long and perilous journey to worship a child king. This birth was revealed to them by a heavenly star and the ancient texts of the prophets which led them to the King of kings, Jesus Christ.

While for most people, Christmas is over for another year, for Gentile Christians, Christmas has just arrived. The angel's message to the shepherds camped in the fields outside Bethlehem, was a message to God's chosen people, the Jews, inviting them to come and see their newborn King and Messiah.

The message of the star is for all the Gentiles: Jesus is more than King of the Jews; He is the King of all and Savior of all. The star is the guiding light that leads us to seek the one whose coming was foretold. This baby, born in humble surroundings, is not the poor child of a simple carpenter but the Messiah, the Savior, Son of God, Prince of Peace.

Wise men traveled a great distance and risked their lives to find Him 2000 years ago. All men may gain eternal life when they seek Him out today.



**New Years Eve**— Divine Service, 7:00 p.m.

**New Years Day**—Divine Service with Holy Communion, 9:00 a.m. (one service only)

## Women of Immanuel



At the Christmas meeting, year end donations were selected, and reading glasses were collected for Mercy Medical Teams. The next meeting of the Women of Immanuel will be held on Thursday, March 8, 2012.

### Lutheran Women in Mission



#### SAVE THE DATE - 2012 LWML CONVENTION

The women of the Koinonia Zone invite you to the 2012 Lutheran Women's Missionary League-New England District (LWML-NED) Convention April 27 & 28, 2012 at the Trumbull Marriott, Trumbull CT. Helping us with the biblical perspective of our theme "*COME ... an invitation, a promise, a prayer*" will be Pastor Walter Harper of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Danbury, CT who will serve as the Bible study leader. *More exciting plans are in the works! Watch for the coming details.*

#### MISSION GRANT UPDATE: *The Lutheran Malaria Initiative in Kenya, East Africa*

An LWML grant of \$100,000 supports the work of the Kenyan Lutheran Churches as they join with Kenya's national commitment to eradicate malaria. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) are working with Kenyan Lutheran church partners to mobilize communities, empower healthcare providers and medical facilities to strengthen institutional capacity to contribute to the shared goal of ending malaria deaths. Children and pregnant mothers in East Africa are in the most danger of contracting malaria through mosquito bites.

**UPDATE:** Kurt Buchholz of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) reports the following : LMI program staff, Hilaire Zon from West Africa shared that the most recent LMI program in Mali had some surprising results. Since 2006 the percentage of children under 5 years old sleeping under a bed net has increased from 27% to 99%. Households owning at least one bed net jumped from 66% to 99% and pregnant women sleeping under a bed net the previous night went from 31% to 86%. All of these

changes are directly related to the programming of LMI and its partners. Please support this grant with your prayers and mite offerings, so that by God's grace, malaria deaths can be contained in Kenya and throughout the globe by 2015.

### Shopping for School Dollars

If you shop for groceries at Stop & Shop, Price Chopper or Shoprite, you can register to support Immanuel Lutheran School through the programs those stores sponsor.

Simply register your store card with Price Chopper's "Tools for Schools", Stop & Shop's "A+ School Rewards" or the "Shoprite Education Program".

Please register your store cards and if you have any questions please contact Dawn Milano.

The school also collects Box Tops for Education and Campbell's Education Labels year round.

### Waiting to blossom

A song called "The Rose" (written by Amanda McBroom and made popular by Bette Midler) encourages listeners to keep the faith, even when the source of our hope isn't visible.

In the depths of winter, we especially need the reminder that beneath mounds of snow lie seeds already being prepared to burst forth "with the sun's love" into springtime flowers.

When you're in the cold depths of despair, grief, illness or other struggles, remember the deeply buried seed. Beyond your view, God's love is already tending that seed, readying it to blossom into healing, new friendship, joy and life.





Messenger is published monthly by Immanuel Lutheran Church and School for its members and friends.

Immanuel is a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

**Michael Krampitz**  
Newsletter Editor

**Karen Smith**  
Church Secretary

## SUNDAY DIVINE SERVICE

8:00 A.M.  
10:45 A.M.

## BIBLE STUDY

9:30 A.M.

## KIDS4CHRIST

9:30 A.M.



**WHEELCHAIR  
ACCESSIBLE**

Worship Services are broadcast each Sunday on

## WXCT RADIO

**990 AM**

1:00 P.M.

## From the Pastor's Desk

### "How to Shrink Your Church" By Tim Suttle



Pastors and churches spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year attending conferences, buying books, hiring consultants, advertisers and marketers, all to try and accomplish one thing: to increase attendance -- to be a bigger church.

I'm absolutely convinced this is the wrong tack. Success is a slippery subject when it comes to the Church. That our ultimate picture of success is a crucified Messiah means any conversation about success will be incompatible with a "bigger is better" mentality. Yet, bigger and better is exactly what most churches seem to be pursuing these days: a pursuit which typically comes in the form of sentimentality and pragmatism.

Sentimentality and pragmatism are the one-two punch which has the American Church on the ropes, while a generation of church leaders acquiesces to the demands of our consumer culture. The demands are simple: tell me something that will make me feel better (sentimentality for the churchgoer), and tell me something that will work (pragmatism for the church leader). Yet it is not clear how either one of those are part of what it means to be the church.

Sentimentality is mother's milk to the church which has ceased to believe our faith should really make a difference in the way we live our lives. Instead of proclaiming resurrection, the sentimental church will devote their entire Sunday worship service to Mother's/Father's Day -- or worse yet, Valentine's Day. Not that we don't appreciate our parents and sweethearts, but the yielding of precious worship time to the celebration of greeting card companies signals a much deeper problem: we have lost track of the story of God. Yet, for a church to grow bigger, losing track of the story is precisely what is required.

Instead of pursuing faithfulness the sentimental church must provide a place where people can come to hear a comforting message from an effusive pastor spouting fervent one-liners which are intended only to make us feel good about the

decisions we've already made with our lives. If our beliefs aren't actually, really true then at least we can have a Hallmark moment, right? Above all the sentimental church must never teach us that in the kingdom of God, up is down, in is out, and nothing short of dying to ourselves and each other can help us truly live.

Perhaps more than sentimentality, pragmatism is ravaging the church. Pragmatism has led to a fairly new niche industry I call the Church Leadership Culture. Taking their cues from business, church leadership manuals are more than willing to instruct the interested pastor in how to gain market share. I once heard church consultant and leadership guru Don Cousins say that you can grow a church without God if you have good preaching, great music, killer children's ministry, and an engaging youth minister. Cousins should know. He helped build Willow Creek Community Church and the church leadership culture. In the pragmatic church, there is only one question that matters, "What will work to grow my church?"

The fundamental problem with the one-two punch of sentimentality and pragmatism is, of course, the church's job is not to affirm people's lives, but to allow the gospel to continually call our lives into question. The church's job is not to grow -- not even to survive. The church's job is to die -- continually -- on behalf of the world, believing that with every death there is a resurrection. God's part is to grow whatever God wishes to grow. Growing a church isn't hard ... being faithful as the church, that's a different story.

I'm the pastor of a church called Redemption Church in Olathe, KS. Our church was planted in 2003 and founded upon church leadership principles that worked like a charm. We grew from 2 families to around 200 families in the first three years. We planted another church in a nearby town and continued to grow. But, when we decided to reject sentimentality and pragmatism and chase faithfulness instead we really began to grow ... smaller that is. I don't know for sure because we no longer count, but my best guess is that we have decreased by more than half. If pressed about my church's growth strategy, I usually say it is to get smaller and die; to continually decrease the amount of time,

(Continued on page 4)

## From the Pastor's Desk

(Continued from page 3)

resources and energy we spend trying to have the ultimate church experience, and to spend more time actually being faithful. Nowadays, faithfulness -- not success -- is our only metric. Success is about "doing." Faithfulness is about "being," and it's really hard to measure.

Convincing the church she does not exist for the benefit of her members, but for the life of the world is a bad church growth strategy. It's also exactly what the church must do. It's a tough sell because crucifixion seems like a losing strategy unless you believe in the resurrection. Faithfulness seems like a losing strategy unless you believe that the power of the gospel trumps our ability to come up with all the right answers to all the right questions.

So, God save us from the successful church. Give us churches who shun sentimentality and pragmatism and aren't afraid to face the inevitable shrinkage which comes as a result of following Jesus. God save us from church leadership strategies. After all, it takes zero faith to follow a strategy, but incredible faith to pursue the kingdom of God and leave the rest in God's hands. If I've learned anything as a pastor, it is this: faithfulness flies in the face of sentimentality and pragmatism, and if you pursue it you have to expect small numbers.

Pastor Karner  
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

## Witness, Mercy, Life Together

Pastor Karner has recently begun a new Bible study each Sunday morning at 9:30, in the old school basement—Witness, Mercy, Life Together. Where the Holy Trinity is present and received in faith, there cannot but be witness, mercy, and life together. These three reflect God's very being as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier and encompass His holy and gracious will for all in Christ Jesus, namely that all come to believe in and bear witness to Christ, reflect divine compassion, and live together in forgiveness, love, and joy in the Church. Join Pastor Karner as this study explores the biblical basis of WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER, the threefold emphasis of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## Young At Heart

Our group held it's annual Christmas Luncheon at Nuchies with almost 70 people in attendance.

We enjoyed great food, fellowship, music, door prizes and singing. Our lunch group does not meet during the winter months due to travel problems, but the Planning Committee will be meeting to plan a great schedule for 2012.

Our new project: "Friendly Visitor Volunteers" will be visiting our church's homebound members

during the winter months. If you would like to help out as a volunteer on this project, contact the church office or Carol Maron, who setup this new project of visitations.

## Church and School Property Clean -up

The Board of Trustees is asking all organizations, Boards, clubs, scout troops, etc., to organize your stored items, and clean out storage areas which you use in our church and school—this needs to occur by the end of the first week of January. Areas that need to be maintained include the gym stage, each of the rooms on the sides of the gym, the basement of the school and church, and any unused classrooms where "items" have mysteriously landed. If you have questions, please contact the church office.

## From the Quilters

During the fall months we donated 2 quilts to Habitat for Humanity—5 to tornado relief assistance in Springfield,

Massachusetts—and 10 to storm Irene relief assistance in Vermont. We currently have 120 quilts ready for LWR pick-up in the spring.

If anybody would like to join us on Tuesday mornings at 9 a.m., you will be very welcome. Weekly attendance is not mandatory—just come whenever you can. We'll be glad to see you.

**Faster than  
a speeding  
camel!**



You can have *Messenger* delivered to your computer inbox every month. Simply send an e-mail to:

**immanuel.news@yahoo.com**

Ask to have the newsletter sent to your e-mail address

**Saves paper, postage and time**

*Wisemen and wiser women have made the switch!*

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” —Frederick Buechner

**Living Above the Weather**

Have you ever boarded an airplane in a snowstorm? The sky is gray with heavy clouds. Snow is coming down hard, with no sign of letting up. Plows clear the runway and unfamiliar machinery de-ices the wings. Passengers might consider it madness to fly in such weather.

But the pilot knows the storm is earthbound. Past the clouds is glorious sunshine. The plane can fly above the weather, if only it can get off the ground.

When troubles overtake us like a storm, we may wonder in the midst of the darkness if God still cares or if he is even there at all. But if we believe that God, like the sun, is unchanged in good weather and in bad, we can ride it out. For storms are earthbound, but we are not.

—Kari Myers

**New Mercies**

Everyone seems to have at least one resolution that seems impossible to keep. And that can become very discouraging.

The prophet Jeremiah, who had his own reasons to feel down, wrote, “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23, NRSV).

God refuses to give up on us. When we lose hope, when we fail and fall short, his mercy never runs out. Tomorrow is full of promise and our Lord’s unceasing love.

**A New Year’s blessing**

May God make your year a happy one!  
 Not by shielding you from all sorrow and pain,  
 But by strengthening you to bear it as it comes;  
 Not by making your path easy,  
 But by making you sturdy to travel any path;  
 Not by taking hardships from you,  
 But by taking fear from your heart;  
 Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,  
 But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;  
 Not by making your life always pleasant,  
 But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,

and by making you anxious to be there to help.

God’s love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

—Author unknown



- |                      |                        |                      |                      |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Betty Bauer        | Kristi Yurko           | 16 Jeanette Eschner  | Gail Roberts         |
| Karl Bielert         | 8 Jeffrey Andrews Sr   | Robert Senesac Jr.   | John Tessman         |
| Joyce Jacy           | Ruth Neumann           | 17 Vernon Koch       | Katelyn Wallace      |
| Tanya Sakowski       | Robert Palmisano       | Clifford Mccorriston | 25 Robert Jankowski  |
| Kelly Tower          | 9 Judy Eichorn         | 18 Tracy Bielert     | Amelia Malsheske     |
| James Washcalis Jr.  | Robert Eschner         | Joseph Ravita        | Jeffrey Maron        |
| 2 Courtney Anderson  | Charles Mcintyre       | Heather Tessman      | Brad Schaffrick      |
| 3 John Kane          | Tiffany Mockler        | 19 Cynthia Armington | 26 Philip Saglimbeni |
| 4 Ella Mcintyre      | George Rindfleisch     | Caleb Beaudoin       | 27 Michael Dalger    |
| Paul Neumann         | 11 Jill Croce          | Doug Fitz, Sr.       | Kris Lorancaitis     |
| Christa Rakich-kelly | Brian Saucier          | Sandra Mcintyre      | Derek Werner         |
| Tami Raspanti        | 12 John Coelho         | Doreen Reed          | 29 Arthur Beger      |
| Wayne Stange         | Brendan Haras          | 21 Dawn Milano       | Milton Kissner       |
| 5 Lynda Hintz        | Rhianna Schab          | Bram Pesce           | Jeffrey Parent       |
| Reed Licki           | 13 Eleonora Erling     | Benjamin Wallace     | 30 Natasha Campion   |
| Howard Schmelder     | Warren Jobs            | Hannah Woodward      | Karen Cydylo         |
| 6 David Cormier      | Rebecca Krosnicki      | 22 Denise Coelho     | Gary Eschner         |
| Edith Frechette      | Jason Lindstrom        | Jill Tonn            | Dylan Lee            |
| Elizabeth Hill       | 14 Madeline LaBrecque  | Matthew Zurell       | George Sammito       |
| Samuel Lopa          | Mark Simonides         | 23 Phyllis Erling    | 31 Amanda Dennis     |
| Amelia Lopa          | Genevieve Wentland     | Ernest Spiess        | Glenn Triplett       |
| 7 Edward Bodick      | 15 Edward Krampitz Jr. | 24 Rodney Grekula    | Beverly Werner       |
| Hannah Mcintyre      | Donald Schaffrick      | William Mazzaccaro   |                      |
| Todd Romaniello      | Adam Swicklas          | Ralph Milano         |                      |
| Arlene Tonn          | Jacqueline Tessman     |                      |                      |



**PUZZLE**

## A caring disciple

In Acts 9, Peter tells of a woman who lived in Joppa. She performed good works and helped the poor. Solve the puzzle below to reveal this disciple's two names.

**Instructions:** Cross out the letters that spell each object and write the remaining letter on the blank.

___ adcltne			
___ rohmtae			
___ srgbape			
___ rbieda			
___ pehtshred			
___ rdhaenlca			
___ fadoo			
Her name in Greek			
___ pdeesh			
___ dchilnero			
___ drove			
___ acehtr			
___ sarcos			
___ nusoatim			

Answers: Tabitha, Dorcas

# NO-SEW FLEECE SCARF



Winter is a difficult time for people in need, so make this scarf to help someone stay warm.

### What you need:

- Medium-weight polar fleece, 60" standard width (a 9" portion will make one scarf)
- Scissors
- An adult to help

### What you do:

1. Cut a piece of medium-weight polar fleece to the size of 60" x 9". Cut the fabric across its width so the material is stretchy.
2. Trim off the edge binding. To add "fringe" along each end, make a 6"-long cut every half inch.
3. For curly fringe, pull each strand and then let go sharply. Another attractive option is to tie an over-hand knot at the top of each strip.
4. Donate your scarf to a local group that helps people in need. For greater impact, encourage your Sunday school classmates or other friends to make scarves, too.



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BRISTOL, CT 06010  
PERMIT NO. 382

*Messenger*  
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
154 MEADOW STREET  
BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT 06010

