

I Need More...Joy

After hastily opening the wrapped package and making the obligatory thank yous, it certainly didn't take long to turn away from the thoughtful gift as something ho hum.

Just then three-year-old Eleanor came along and stopping by the discarded item exclaimed, "Oh, my, what a beautiful gift! Is that yours? You must be so happy?" As she walked away I thought to myself, "Why don't I have the joy of that little girl?"

At times we have those feelings which cause us to cry out, "I need more joy in my life!" That is so often true at this time of year when for one reason or another we find ourselves lacking joy. There are indications everywhere that joy should fill our lives. Decorations are going up inside and outside. Christmas music surrounds us, and cards are arriving daily.

Some days the festive joy fills our hearts as we excitedly go about our holiday shopping and schedule planning. Yet deep down we know that this joy will not last. Planning becomes overwhelming, schedules start falling apart, and decorating gets tiresome. Above all, we know from experience, there will be no joy when we find we don't have enough money to purchase the perfect gift or when credit card payments come due. All of this leads us to shout out, "I need more joy! I need joy that will last!"

Here's some great news. Christmas brings us joy that does last—the true joy found in Jesus.

With a love that we cannot comprehend, our heavenly Father gave his only Son, born to be our Savior. With perfect obedience Jesus lived the life all of us are unable to live. Each and every evil thought, evil word, and evil deed we have done has been picked from us by our heavenly Father and placed on Jesus. On Calvary's cross, Jesus bowed his head in death declaring, "It is finished." These words of Jesus bring us true joy. They mean that all is done and Easter's announcement "He Is Risen!" guarantees that God our Father has accepted Jesus' life and death as payment in full for all our sins. True joy is the forgiveness of sins that is ours through faith in Jesus.

While we are in the midst of the season when it seems hard to keep joy in our lives, focus on the true Joy Giver. Ponder again the words of the angels to the shepherds, "Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord." Come and worship the Babe born in Bethlehem and may God the Holy Spirit fill you with a joy that never ends.

1 Thessalonians 3:9 ***"Indeed, how can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have before God on account of you?"***

The Apostle Paul wrote these words about the Thessalonians. He established a church in Thessalonica but had to leave suddenly because some people wanted to have him arrested. He did not have the chance to finish his work there, so Timothy took his place and sent reports back to Paul about how things were going. Paul was grateful to hear good news about them.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say thanks to all of you as well. Paul's words express how my family and I have felt coming to Immanuel. We wanted to make sure we expressed our thanks to everyone who has helped make us feel welcome in our new home. We know we cannot possibly thank everyone by name, because we don't know who all has helped out with things at church and parsonage since the vacancy started.

I have served seven other congregations as vacancy pastor and I can tell you from experience that it is easy to let the ministry come to a screeching halt when a pastor has left. It is obvious you were determined that would not happen at Immanuel. This has made it easy to step in and begin serving as your pastor. Thanks to everyone, no matter how great or small the contribution, for your work.

It is also obvious, not only to us, but also to our neighbors, that a lot of time, effort, energy, and love has been poured into making everything ready for our arrival. The neighbors have complimented the work done on the parsonage. They have noticed the hours spent making everything ready for us to come. It has been wonderful to move into a new home that was made ready for our family to settle

right in! Again, thanks to everyone who helped. You all know who you are and what you have done.

We also wanted to thank you for all the prayers said on our behalf. We know the Lord answers those prayers as he sees fit. What a blessing to know the Lord has placed us all here at this time to carry out the work of His Church. He has promised that he will bless our work together and we are excited to see it unfold.

In the past two months, we have had the chance to meet many of you, but not everyone. We will continue to work on that in the coming year. Lord willing, the Coronavirus will pass soon, and life can get back to normal. Until then, thanks again for being willing to make necessary accommodations around the virus.

May the Lord continue to bless our celebration of Christmas and may He richly bless you in 2021. And again, we can't thank God enough for every one of you and all you have done, whether noticed by others or not, you have made us feel right at home.

The Fricks

Christmas Services

Thank you to everyone who helped put our special services together. This year was especially challenging due to COVID restrictions. Our very determined and dedicated volunteers made sure that we were able to worship and celebrate, even if it looked a little different from years past!

Christmas Eve Luminary Booklets

If you were unable to attend any of the Christmas Eve or Day services, extra luminary booklets will be out on the shelf in the main hallway if you would like to take one home. Thank you to Mary Schultz for putting this project together!

Bible Study Opportunities

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class are Sunday mornings at 9:15 am. Adults meet in the sanctuary, children meet in the east side of the lower level. If you happen to worship on Thursday, come just for the fellowship and growth on Sunday.

New Beginnings “Change for Life”

The Change for Life program is a group effort to help support *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*, which is a WELS-based home for single mothers. This program supports the well-being, continuing education, spiritual growth, and personal progress of generationally-poor mothers and babies. The baby bottles will remain out for members to take home and fill until January 3. Please have your change-filled bottles returned to the church by **January 17**. Thank you, we have had an amazing outpouring of generosity from our members so far!



New Offering Envelopes for 2021

Boxes of offering envelopes for 2021 are now available on the tables at the south end of the Sunday School area. Assigning new envelopes is not a perfect process, if you do not see a box with your name on it please let Dale, Jackie, Carla, or Pastor know and we will be happy to get a box for you. Thank you to everyone who continues to give, your offerings are what keeps the ministry of Immanuel running and spreading the message of the Gospel to our members, our community, and to the *ends of the earth!!*

Blood Drive

The Red Cross will again be holding a blood drive at Immanuel on **January 5** from 9 am to 2 pm. Visit redcrossblood.org if you would like to save time and pre-register. Please consider donating blood during this critical time. Thank you!



Masks in Church

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility consider one another better than yourselves. **Let each of you look carefully not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*** (Phil. 2:3-4) The official mask mandate issued by our governor has been extended and this pandemic is far from over. For this reason, we ask that, out of Christian love and concern, everyone continues to wear masks while in the church building. Thank you for helping work together to protect each other as brothers and sister in Christ's love!

Thank you!

Thank you to the anonymous donor who gave cards and stamps to Bernice Sukow of the Ladies Aid to send to our shut-ins. This is no small expense and the gesture is appreciated!

Save the Date

Immanuel's annual voters' meeting will be on **January 24, 2021**. Many important ministry decisions are made at this meeting and we value the input of ALL our members!



Worship Service Videos

During this pandemic, anyone who is considered high risk, who is feeling sick, or who is just not comfortable with gatherings yet is encouraged to continue to worship at home. Videos of our worship services are being posted to our website regularly and DVDs are being delivered, upon request, to those without internet.

Lakeside News

Mr. Peter Langebartels returned the call to teach Science at Lakeside that the Holy Spirit guided the board to issue him on November 24. A special call meeting is scheduled for **January 11** at 6:30 pm, in the West Gym. The single agenda item for this meeting will be to issue a divine call for a Science teacher.

Twice is Nice December 2020 News

TiN will have 75% off Christmas items from December 26 - 30. We're easy-to-find and open Mondays-Saturdays from 10 am-4 pm: just a minute east on the Hwy 18 exit off the 26 bypass at 907 W. Racine St., next to the Jefferson Piggly Wiggly. As always, new volunteers are welcome! Help us support Lakeside Lutheran High School.

Giving Options

What a blessing to have members who continue their regular offerings during this uncertain time. Thank you so much for making the support of God's work a priority in your life! Physical (check) offerings can be mailed to the church address if you are not comfortable coming in person. We also offer online giving through our church website. Click on the orange button that says ONLINE GIVING and follow the easy steps to set up offerings. Thank you!



Employment Opportunities:

St. John School in Jefferson is seeking a Learning Coordinator to work one-on-one with students. This is a part time position available during the second half of the current school year, Monday - Friday from 8:30-11:30am. If you are interested in applying for this position, please contact the principal, Mr. Peter Lemke at 920-674-2922 or plemke@sjlwels.org. Or contact our School Board Chairman, Allan Meske at allan.meske@gmail.com.

St. John School in Jefferson is considering adding the hot lunch program back in January. Although currently not approved, we need to understand if there is any interest in filling 2 cook positions. Hours would be Monday - Friday from 10 am-2 pm. If you have any interest in this position, please contact the school office at 920-674-2922.

St. John School in Watertown is currently taking applications to fill open full-time and part-time child care positions. St. John offers competitive wages for all staff, and vacation benefits for full time workers.

Offerings vs. Budget as of 11/30/2020

Offerings: \$276,911.27 Budget: \$315,351.67 Difference: -\$38,440.40

January 2021 Usher Teams

1/3	Sun	8:00 am	John & Vicki Morris
1/3	Sun	10:00 am	Klausch Family
1/7	Thurs	6:30 pm	Lee & Toni Braatz
1/10	Sun	8:00 am	Mark & Dona Snyder
1/10	Sun	10:00 am	Eric & Jody Shuppe
1/14	Thurs	6:30 pm	Jody & Monica Gehrke
1/17	Sun	8:00 am	Baum Family
1/17	Sun	10:00 am	Altreuter Family
1/21	Thurs	4:30 pm	Emrath Family
1/24	Thurs	6:30 pm	Braunschweig Family
1/24	Fri	9:00 am	Gordon & Rhonda Butzine
1/28	Sun	8:00 am	Jim & Barb Buglass
1/31	Sun	10:00 am	Demoe Family
1/31	Thurs	6:30 pm	Buxa Family



JANUARY

Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Alissa Heald, 1/1 | Kyle Genz, 1/22 |
| Bailey Kerr, 1/3 | Ruth Schmidt, 1/22 |
| Joshua Snyder, 1/3 | Sue Henselin, 1/23 |
| Amber Kruesel, 1/4 | Courtney Schultz, 1/24 |
| Ronald Milbrath, 1/4 | Rhonda Emrath, 1/25 |
| Jackie Higgins, 1/5 | Jameison Guld, 1/25 |
| Brad Meinel, 1/5 | Rodney Wildes, 1/26 |
| Scott Sukow, 1/6 | Kristine DeBlare, 1/27 |
| Lee Braatz, 1/7 | Lawrence Mohr, 1/27 |
| Donald Genz, 1/8 | Hayden Trimborn, 1/28 |
| Richard Jr Draeger, 1/10 | Vickie Genz, 1/30 |
| Joseph Metzger, 1/12 | Dean Staude, 1/30 |
| Emily Fricke, 1/13 | Taylor Emrath, 1/31 |
| Norman Matzinger, 1/14 | McKenna Lamp, 1/31 |
| Brenda Killips, 1/17 | Rocky Lamp, 1/31 |
| Tori Buglass, 1/19 | Michael Sukow, 1/31 |
| Levi Christian, 1/19 | |
| Kathleen Crawford, 1/19 | |
| Brittany Joseph, 1/21 | |
| Aaron Sellnow, 1/21 | |

*Happy
New
Year!*

*Join us in worship
New Year's Eve at 6:30 pm!*



WELS

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