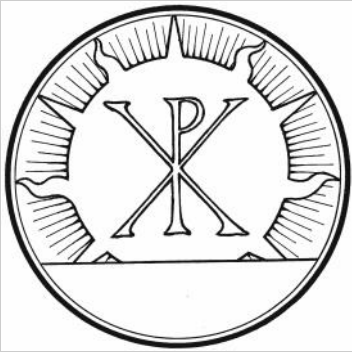


“The Sun of  
Righteousness shall  
arise with healing in  
His wings.”

MALACHI 4: 2

FROM THE  
OLD TESTAMENT FOR  
POPULUS ZION



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# Esprit

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December 2021

## Advent 2021

by Pastor Meyer

THE end of the liturgical year, these three “last Sundays in the church year,” lead us into the new church year with the First Sunday in Advent. “Advent” is a Latin word which means “coming.” Something’s coming. Someone’s coming. And important event will soon happen.

That important event is The Nativity of Our Lord. That’s really the proper name for the event that takes place on 24 and 25 December. The Nativity of Our Lord is His birth into this world as a true human being. “And was made man” is the way we confess it each week in the Nicene Creed. God himself became one of us! Such honor God has given our fallen humanity as to share it that we kneel, if possible, or bow the head to honor the deep humility our Lord has taken on himself for us.

The proper celebration of this event is the Christ-Mass, that is, the Divine Service of Word and Sacrament. The name Christmas has been so compromised in meaning that we Christians have a hard time defending it’s true meaning.


In some New England colonies it was forbidden to be celebrated. The Puritans had decided that it had too much a Roman Catholic influence and they would not be contaminated by such things. There were few, if any, Lutherans in those New England colonies. For the most part Lutherans were still in Germany celebrating the Christ-Mass in their sanctuaries and having Christmas trees in their homes, ala Martin Luther.


The Christian Church has always observed an Advent season as a time of spiritual preparation for The Nativity of Our Lord. Notice that I use the word spiritual! Most people in our society prepare for Christmas even though Christ is not really a part of their observance. Mostly, people focus on decorations and shopping for gifts, hosting parties which often have absolutely nothing to do with the Nativity of Our Lord. In short, most prepare for the wrong thing, and when the day is over the decorations are quickly taken down. Mostly. There will be Christmas trees [live, but really dead because they were cut down!] out for the trash even on Christmas Day! Would that this would happen with Halloween! Incidentally, another religious observance, All Hallows Eve, which is the evening before All Saints’ Day, seems to have almost as much preparation by the unbelieving world.


Advent should be a time of spiritual preparation for the In- Continued on page 2

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**Esprit** is the informational and educational newsletter of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church.

*Esprit de corps* indicates a sense of union and of common interests and responsibilities, as developed among a group. Our community of Immanuel is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to us in the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments.

**Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church** is an historic and centrally located parish—called, gathered, and strengthened by Christ's Word and Sacraments—confessional in doctrine, evangelical in orientation, orthodox in liturgy, cosmopolitan in membership; serving the Terre Haute community and the students of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and reaching out to the nations since 1858 as a parish of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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carnation of Our Lord. One should reflect on the Scriptures and why it was necessary for God to send his only-begotten Son into the flesh. He was sent to be the propitiation for the sin of the world, to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Proper spiritual preparation requires setting aside time to listen, reflect, and pray. When our children were young, my dear wife Gay said at the beginning of Advent: "This year I'm only going to prepare my heart. I don't have time do prepare all the other stuff." I've never forgotten what she said and how important that is. It should be a time to reflect on our sin and the joy that God sent his Son to redeem us. Advent is sometimes called a Little Lent. Perhaps so. Both are penitential seasons, a time to be repentant, yet Advent quickly gets into looking forward to The Nativity of Our Lord. Joy overwhelms the first two weeks. Repentance before forgiveness, or Law before Gospel. That's the proper order of things.

We will have the full schedule of Divine Services for The Nativity of Our Lord, the two Christmas Eve services, 7pm and 11pm, and the Divine Service on Christmas Day at 10:30am, which falls on a Saturday this year. Prepare your heart in Advent and the Nativity of Our Lord will be blessed for you! ✕

*Teas the Season*  
*Ladies Luncheon & Tea*



*Enjoy an afternoon of fellowship and fun  
for ladies of all ages.*

A light lunch with a variety of Teas and Christmas Treats will be served.

<p><b>\$8</b> per person</p> <p><small>This is a pre-sale event. Seating is limited to 50</small></p>	<p><b>Join Us-</b> Sunday, December 12th at 12:30 p.m.</p> <p><small>(following Divine Service)</small></p>	<p><b>Ladies!</b> Bring friends &amp; reserve a seat or host/decorate a table!</p>
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**RESERVATION DEADLINE IS DEC 5TH FOR THE TEA PARTY.**

Can't make the event, but want to participate?

**Sign up for the Silent Auction Baskets & Raffles!**

These events are a fundraiser for the  
*Sutton Family*  
For complete details ask Leslie Bilyeu (leslie@ielcth.org) or Kari Cress (painter1963@ma.rr.com)

## Saint Nicholas

by Vicar Norris

DURING the Advent season and Christmastide, we see the image of Santa Claus plastered on everything from sugar cookies to soft drinks. As Americans, we are familiar with the image of the white-bearded, rosy-cheeked old man dressed in red who brings presents to nice children and coal for those who were naughty during the year. The most prominent portrayal of Santa Claus for Americans was created in 1931 when Coca-Cola commissioned illustrator Haddon Sundblom to paint Santa Claus for their Christmas advertisements.



Santa Claus also takes on different personas across the world. He even has helpers like the chain rattling Belsnickel who visits children in Germany before Christmas day to check on their behavior and swat them with switches if they are misbehaving. There is also Knecht Ruprecht who carries a long staff and a bag of ashes and asks children if they know how to pray. If they can recite their prayers they receive treats, if not they are smacked with the bag of ashes!

As popular as Santa Claus is, most of us probably are vaguely familiar with the notion that Santa Claus is based upon a real person whom we know as St. Nicholas. But who was this man and why has this image of a person bearing gifts persisted so long in history? The legend of Santa Claus is based on the very real person, Bishop Nicholas of Myra (270–343 AD), whose tomb is believed to be located in a church in Turkey. He also attended the Council

of Nicaea in 325, where legend has it, struck the heretic, Arius. Although to be fair, this report of a physical conflict with Arius is questionable and no doubt has been embellished over time.

Why the connection with Santa Claus? We do not know much about St. Nicholas' early life but we know that he was born into a family that was pretty well off for the time. He was baptized into the faith and received a good education. Unfortunately, his parents died when he was young, likely when he was about 18 years old.

This was a harsh transition into adulthood for St. Nicholas, but in their deaths, they left him a substantial inheritance of wealth. Perhaps one outstanding characteristic of the early church was that Christians cared for their neighbors and each other. St. Nicholas was able to use his family's wealth to help others in need.

The connection to Santa Claus, and one of the reasons that St. Nicholas is so highly regarded, is because of what he did for others. The most famous story about St. Nicholas' generosity is when he came to the rescue of a man who so suddenly fell from wealth to poverty that he considered selling his daughters into prostitution to ensure their welfare. Learning of this man's situation, St. Nicholas secretly acted. Compelled by Scripture and his Christian convictions, he placed a few gold coins in a small bag. In the middle of the night, he tossed it through an open

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window into the man's house. When the miraculous gift was found the next morning, the family praised God and the father used the money (the exact price of the girl's dowry) to prepare his eldest daughter for marriage. When St. Nicholas heard that the man had used the money for this purpose, St. Nicholas again visited at night and did the same thing again, this time resulting in the youngest daughter being able to marry. Upon receiving this gift the destitute man prayed:

"Tell me, O Lord, what good angel from among the people you designated for us. Tell me who has prepared this banquet full of delicious treats. Who is administering the riches of your immense kindness to humble people like us? Thanks to that person we have been released, beyond all hope, from misery and the spiritual death of sin that had ensnared us. Behold, for your indescribable gift, allowed me to legally marry my second daughter, freeing her and me from the ugly desperation and wickedness in which we had fallen. Glorify your holy name, and glory be to your great goodness without end—which is for us, your unworthy people."

The man prayed to God that his third daughter would also be taken care of. St. Nicholas returned and again threw money in the window, but this time the father was determined to see who had done this and caught up with St. Nicholas as he was trying to leave. The father gave thanks to St. Nicholas and also rightly identified that God had provided this gift.

"If it were not for your goodness, which was stirred up by our Lord Jesus Christ, I would have long since consigned my life to ruin and shame."

Because of this story, St. Nicholas is known as one of the greatest gift-givers of all time. The story has been embellished over the ages, some adding that the windows were closed, so St. Nicholas had to put the gold down the chimney which fell into the girl's stockings which they had hung to dry on the mantle.

As Jesus taught, to love our neighbors is to love Christ in St. Matthew 25.40, so also St. Nicholas took this to heart and used his earthly wealth to help those in need. As St. Nicholas day approaches, (December 6) let us remember the generosity of St. Nicholas and his desire to be anonymous as God used him to care for and love his neighbor. ✕

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**ADVENT DAILY REFLECTIONS** from Higher Things are available to download to print or for your electronic device at [higherthings.org/reflections](http://higherthings.org/reflections). If you are unable to access them online, copies are available in the Narthex and outside the Parish Office.

**HIGHER THINGS REGISTRATION** Registration forms for Immanuel youth are on the table across from the Parish Office. A \$150.00 non-refundable registration fee must accompany the completed registration and turned into the church office ASAP. The deadline for registration is January 15.

**ONLINE GIVING WITH VANCO MOBILE** If you are traveling during the holiday season, please consider continuing your normal periodic giving online with Vanco Mobile! You can download the free Vanco Mobile App at Google Play or Apple App store.

**WABASH VALLEY RIGHT TO LIFE** is sponsoring their annual pro-life billboard campaign, where positive life messages will be posted around Terre Haute in January and February 2022. We would like to raise \$375 to sponsor a billboard this year. If you would like to contribute, please do so before January 5, marking your donation "Right to Life." Please call the church office with any questions or e-mail [Stacy.Gibbens@ielcth.org](mailto:Stacy.Gibbens@ielcth.org).

## Christ the Shepherd, Tender, Caring by Kantor Schultz

EVERY November, Concordia Theological Seminary hosts the Good Shepherd Institute annual conference. The conferences began in 2000 as a symposium for pastoral theology. The Good Shepherd Institute is dedicated to fostering study of sacred music and pastoral practice. With the exception of a year or two, I have attended the conference each year. It is something to which I look forward as an opportunity to hear wonderful music, learn from our seminary professors and guest lecturers, and visit with friends and colleagues from around the country.

This theme for this year's conference on November 7-9 was "Christ the Shepherd, Tender, Caring," which is a verse from stanza one of "Christ, Our Human Likeness Sharing" (*Lutheran Service Book* 847). The hymn is by retired Anglican bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith, who has authored over 400 hymns.

Dr. Charles Gieschen, academic dean at CTS, began the presentations with "Hearing the Voice of the Good Shepherd over the Din of Many Clamoring Voices." His presentation combined exegetical study while also addressing current issues. Our society has become increasingly hostile to Christianity, and recent events have tempted Christians to stray from regular attendance at Divine Service, Bible study, Sunday School, and other church events. He discussed how these trends have developed for decades, and have accelerated in the last two years. Christians, as always, must listen to and heed the voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd, in the midst of many loud, distracting calls from elsewhere.

Professor Todd Peperkorn, newly-appointed professor at CTS, recently pastor at Holy Cross—Rocklin, CA, and previously pastor at Messiah—Kenosha, WI, was another speaker at the conference. I have known Pastor Peperkorn since college when I would attend conferences at Kenosha on Lutheran history and practice. He is a fine addition to the seminary faculty. His presentation was "Come, O Living Christ, Renew Us: Preaching and Pastoral Care Post-Pandemic."

The afternoon sessions were sectionals, where each participant can choose which presentation they would like to attend. The first sectional I attended was a demonstration on how to administer a children's choir rehearsal with Kantor Matthew Macheimer and the seminary children's choir, which currently has 14 singers aged 7 to 14. This was a fun and inspiring activity which reviewed practical information and invited insight from the other conference participants.

The second sectional I attended was by Dr. Barry Bobb, director of the Center for Church Music at Concordia University Chicago. The Center for Church Music began in 2010 by cataloging an extensive collection of hymnals donated by Dr. Carl Schalk. The Center has published video and text interviews with American Lutheran church musicians, digitized historic Lutheran hymnals, cataloged the works of numerous American Lutheran composers, and has published nine monographs in the "Shaping American Lutheran Church Music Series," among other things. You can check out their work by searching for "Center for Church Music" at [cuchicago.edu](http://cuchicago.edu).

One of my favorite parts of the conference is the *Continued on page 6*

(Continued from page 5)

hymn festival. This year the commentary was given by my seminary classmate Rev. Sean Daenzer, who is the director of worship for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and chaplain of the International Center in St. Louis. He did an excellent job presenting history and application of the hymns together with beautiful music on the organ, instruments, and choral settings sung by the Seminary Kantorei. I invite you to listen to a recording of the hymn festival, available on the seminary Facebook page, or on ctsfw.edu under “Daily Chapel.”

The conference also included an organ recital by Dr. Steven Wentz, professor emeritus at Concordia University Chicago, and a

recital by violinist Emily Thompson and pianist Jonathan Young.

The conference concluded with presentations by Dr. Paul Grime, dean of the chapel, and Kantor Kevin Hildebrand with practical ideas for worship planning; and a tribute to Dr. Carl Schalk, long-time professor of church music at Concordia University Chicago, who died in January. Dr. Schalk was an unparalleled force in Lutheran church music for many years, and I use some of his choral and organ compositions here at Immanuel.

The Good Shepherd Institute conference was once again an excellent time of inspiration and education, and I look forward to next year. ✕

### Immanuel Parish Membership

<b>Transfer In</b>	November 7	Conner Walts <i>from</i> Our Shepherd – Avon, IN Emily Walts <i>from</i> Zion – Seymour, IN
<b>Baptism</b>	November 14	Elizabeth Katherine Eckardt, daughter of Joseph and Emily Eckardt



**T**HANK you to everyone who supported the Young People of Immanuel (YPI) by attending the Chili Cook-off and Euchre Tournament on Saturday, November 6. Vicar Norris had the winning chili, and Kole Mullins won the Euchre tournament. ✕



## Board of Outreach, Assimilation, and Fellowship

by Leslie Bilyeu

THE Board of Outreach, Assimilation and Fellowship would like to share upcoming dates of activities with hopes you are able to attend as many as possible. The season of Advent will be soon upon us and you won't want to miss out! Watch for more details as we get closer to the dates. If you have any questions or would like volunteer with any of these events, please contact Leslie Bilyeu at 812.249.5671 or [leslie@ielcth.org](mailto:leslie@ielcth.org).

- ✘ **Congregational Assembly Meeting:** Sunday, December 5 following Divine Service a light lunch of sandwiches, chips, veggies and cookies will be served.
- ✘ **Ladies Christmas Tea and Luncheon:** Sunday, December 12 following Divine Service. All Ladies of Immanuel and their guests are invited to join in Christmas festivities with a light lunch and a variety of teas. This event will include a gift basket fundraiser and raffle to help support the Sutton family with their daily, travel, and medical expenses. There is still time to donate a gift basket valued at \$25 or more. Gather your friends to create a basket or make it a fun family event! The silent auction and raffle items are open to all members—men, women, and children—and will be available for viewing and bidding Sunday, December 5. The winners will be announced at the Christmas Tea. You do not need to be present to win. Monetary donations in support of the Sutton family will also be accepted. Stop by the Parish Center to check it out!
- ✘ **Advent Midweek Meals:** will be served from 5:30-6:30pm Wednesdays, December 1 (Soup, Salad & Sandwich), 8 (Mexican Night) and 22 (Deutschen Fest). Please make your

reservation on Sunday and Wednesday bulletin inserts.

- ✘ **Children's Christmas Service:** Wednesday, December 15 at 7pm with a reception will follow hosted by the Board of Education.
- ✘ **Decorating the Church and German Christmas Service:** Check out the volunteer sign-up sheet posted next to the Parish Office.
- ✘ Thursday, December 16, 5pm; six people are needed to help set up the tree, add lights and bring down all decorations from upstairs.
- ✘ Friday, December 17, 5-7:30pm; Decorate the tree, hang greenery in the choir loft, balcony, and Narthex. Come as your schedule allows! Includes appetizers!
- ✘ Saturday, December 18; 10:30am Set up tables and chairs, decorate the Parish Center and prep the kitchen for the German Service reception.
- ✘ Sunday, December 19 at 3pm; Volunteers are needed to help cut, plate, and prepare donated foods/beverages for reception. Donations of baked goods and savory snacks are needed to serve our many guests. Please consider donating one or more items. These items can be left in the kitchen at any time that day. The German Service begins at 4pm
- ✘ **Undecorating:** Thursday, January 6 following the 7pm Epiphany Divine Service. Plan to stay to pack up and put all decorations away.
- ✘ **Valentine Bake Sale:** Sunday, February 13 following Divine Service. Proceeds to help support the Sutton family's needs. Watch for more information next year!

We hope to see you at many of these events. The Board of Outreach, Assimilation and Fellowship is always looking for volunteers to help with sponsored events! Come join the fun! ✘

**DIVINE SERVICE** is celebrated every Sunday at 10:30am and on Feast Days as announced.

**DIVINE OFFICE: LAUDS** (MORNING PRAYER) and **VESPERS** (EVENING PRAYER) are prayed as announced in the weekly *Parish News*.

**PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** is offered the fourth Thursday of the month from 5-6pm (December 23), or anytime by appointment.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY** are Sunday at 9am.

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT BIBLE STUDY** with dinner is on Sunday at 6pm.

**ADULT CHOIR** rehearsals are Thursdays from 7-8:30pm and Sundays from 9:45-10:20am in the Parish Center.

**"WORSHIP ANEW,"** produced by Lutheran Media Ministries of Fort Wayne and supported by Immanuel's special gift collection, airs every Sunday morning on WTWO at 8am.

**YOUTH CATECHESIS** is on Saturday at 9am.

**ESPRIT DEADLINE** for January/February is Wednesday, December 15. Volunteers are needed to help with the mailing. Watch the *Parish News* for the date.

### Serving in December at Divine Service

Altar Guild: Faith Fenner; Janet Crucitti

Tellers: Kathy Taylor; Jamie Thomas; Barb Seliger

Ushers: Brad Bilyeu; Jeff Allen; Cam Casassa; Kris Wineinger

### Schedule of Divine Liturgies for December

December 1	Wednesday of Ad Te Levavi, 7pm	Vespers
December 5	Populus Zion—Second Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 8	Wednesday of Populus Zion, 7pm	Vespers
December 12	Gaudete—Third Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 15	Wednesday of Gaudete, 7pm	Children's Christmas Service
December 19	Rorate Coeli—Fourth Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
	4pm	German Christmas Service
December 22	Wednesday of Rorate Coeli, 7pm	Vespers
December 24	Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Eve, 7pm	Divine Service
	Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Midnight, 11pm	Divine Service
December 25	Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Day, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 26	First Sunday after Christmas, 10:30am	Divine Service