

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 8, No. 1

<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

December 2018

## Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I consider it a great honor and privilege to serve the saints at Immanuel Lutheran Church as your vacancy pastor. I look forward to the months ahead as we continue to get to know one another and share in receiving our Lord's gifts of forgiveness and salvation.



As the seasons of Advent and Christmas are almost upon us, we look forward to the penitential season of Advent, and the wonderful celebration of our Lord's coming during the Christmas season. I look forward to our time together as we begin a new church year.

I have included the following, provided by the LCMS:

**QUESTION:** *Why does the church year begin at Advent, what is the history of Advent, and what is the history behind the Advent candles and wreath?*

**ANSWER:** *The word "advent" is from the Latin word for "coming," and as such, describes the "coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ into the flesh.*

*Advent begins the church year because the church year begins where Jesus' earthly life began — in the Old Testament prophecies of his incarnation. After Advent comes Christmas, which is about his birth; then Epiphany, about his miracles and ministry; then Lent, about his Calvary-bound mission; then Easter, about his resurrection and the sending of the apostles; and then Ascension (40 days after Easter) and Pentecost, with the sending of the Holy Spirit.*

*The first half of the church year (approximately December through June) highlights the life of Christ. The second half (approximately June through November) highlights the teachings of Christ. The parables and miracles play a big part here. That's "the church year in a nutshell," and it should help reveal how Advent fits into "the big picture."*

*Advent specifically focuses on Christ's "coming," but Christ's coming manifests itself among us in three ways — past, present, and future.*

*(continued on page 2)*





## New Life, Eternal Life

Sunday, November 11 was a red letter day as the baptismal party walked into Immanuel Lutheran Church to have Genevieve May Nelson baptized. I, the officiant, was nervous, having to baptize a baby; it had been a long, long time since there had been a baby's baptism.

The children in church were invited to witness the baptism close up. The parents invited relatives, friends and neighbors to witness the baptism. A reception was held for fellowship and celebration to see and hear God's creation being washed free from sin and welcomed into the membership of God's people who meet at Immanuel Lutheran Church. This made my day.

Saturday, the day before the baptism, I held a funeral service for a longtime member known and loved by Immanuel members, Edmund Walther. Strange that we say good-bye to Edmund and follow with a welcome to a brand new soul in the family of God at Immanuel. Sadness and joy, God has his way in two situations, both are victories, one receiving the crown of eternal life, and the other a washing away of inherited sin and the honor of being called a child of God.

We have an awesome God.

~Pastor Perez



## Advent . . .

*(continued from page 1)*

*The readings which highlight Christ's coming in the past focus on the Old Testament prophecies of his incarnation at Bethlehem. The readings, which highlight Christ's coming in the future, focus on his "second coming" on the Last Day at the end of time. And the readings that highlight Christ's coming in the present focus on his ministry among us through Word and Sacrament today.*

*The traditional use of Advent candles (sometimes held in a wreath) originated in eastern Germany even prior to the Reformation. As this tradition came down to us by the beginning of this century, it involved three purple candles and one pink candle.*

*The purple candles matched the purple paraments on the altar (purple for the royalty of the coming King). The pink candle was the third candle to be lit (not the fourth) on Gaudete Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent. "Gaudete" means "Rejoice!" in Latin, which is taken from Phil. 4:4.*

*("Rejoice! ... the Lord is near"). Hence a "pink" candle was used to signify "rejoicing." Some also included a white "Christ candle" in the middle to be lit during the 12 days of Christmas (Dec. 25 to Jan. 5).*

The Peace of the Lord be with you all!

~Pastor Gaub

**Holiday Nights and Lights (Galleria)**

Sunday December 2nd 2:00 pm  
4444 Westheimer  
Band and Choir performing

**Christmas Concert**

Sunday Dec. 9 3:00 pm  
Band and Choir at Lutheran High North

**Boys Basketball**

Fri. Dec. 1 Varsity 7:30 pm  
Tues. Dec. 4 Varsity 7:00 pm  
Fri. Dec. 14 Varsity 7:00 pm

**Girls basketball**

Tues. Dec. 4 JV 4:30 pm, Varsity following

**Admissions Preview Brunch**

Tues. Dec. 4 9:00 am

**Thank** you for your support of the ministry of Lutheran High North. We appreciate your prayers for the staff and students.

About half of the students at Lutheran High North are Lutheran and most of the rest are Christian. But there is also a mission field at LHN with some students who are not Christian and with some who are questioning what they believe. The teachers and staff are intentional about sharing the words of scripture and the love of Jesus with all of the students.

The mission of Lutheran High North is to offer students excellence in academics and meaningful ministry that prepares them to be leaders in their schools, churches and communities.

*~Lynn Eickemeyer*

**A Special Musical Opportunity!**



This year during our Christmas Eve service, we will feature a new seasonal musical ensemble - Family Choir. What is Family Choir? Family Choir is an intergenerational ensemble open to all of our families and members, and even friends and relatives visiting for the holidays. We will prepare two pieces to be sung during the Christmas Eve service. This is a short-term commitment, so it is hoped that you will set aside some time in your Advent/Christmas preparations to be involved musically!

Rehearsals will be held Sundays, December 9 and 16, immediately following the Bible Class/Sunday School hour, in the Music Suite adjacent to the Sanctuary balcony. Light refreshments will be provided.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Stephen Hernandez, Music Director at [music@immanuelhouston.org](mailto:music@immanuelhouston.org).

*~Stephen Hernandez*



**2019 Schedule**

All Voters' meetings for 2019 will be held on Sundays @11:30/11:45 a.m., immediately following the Bible Class/Sunday School hour.

Here is the tentative schedule for 2019:

January 27 <sup>th</sup>	March 24 <sup>th</sup>
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	July 28 <sup>th</sup>
September 22 <sup>nd</sup>	November 24 <sup>th</sup>



## Focus on Stewardship

Throughout his epistles and his preaching recorded in the Book of Acts, St. Paul refers, in one way or another, to thanksgiving and thankfulness nearly 50 times. Whether vertically toward God, or horizontally toward the neighbor, thanksgiving is a major theme within St. Paul's body of work.

What does this mean? It means thankfulness is intrinsic to the life of those baptized into Christ. In other words, giving thanks is what Christians do as they live out their lives in this world.

The problem is that we often forget this. Consider your average, run-of-the-mill, normal day. When you get home, and your parents, your spouse or your children ask about your day, what first comes to your mind? After 99 percent of things went right, went exactly as planned, were enjoyable and blessings, we tend to focus on and remember the 1 percent of things that went poorly, that didn't go as planned, and that were nuisances.

We remember the bad things. We focus on discontent. And we fail to give thanks in all circumstances for everything (Eph. 5:20) and to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

Thankfulness and contentment go together. We are content with things for which we are thankful. St. Paul could be content with having

plenty or when in need because He gave thanks to the Lord for all things. He thanked the Lord for those who had prayed for him and listened to his proclamation of the Gospel. He gave thanks for their good works in and for the Church of Christ. He gave thanks for the grace of God in Christ Jesus and found that God's grace was sufficient for him.

So, give thanks for all things and in all circumstances dear brothers and sisters in Christ. For you have been saved from sin, death, and hell by the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You have been added to the very family of God in an adoption of grace through Holy Baptism. God is your Father. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is your brother.

But He not only provides for your spiritual well-being, He cares also for this body and life. Your Father in heaven provides food and clothes, house and home, husband, wife, and children. He gives you reason and all your senses. He has given you the raw talents that you have developed into careers. Everything you are and everything that you have is a gift from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in you.

Give thanks for these things. Make a list – every morning if you must. Say them out loud. Sing about them within the congregation of the saints. And remember this: God has given you these things so that you may be of service to those around you – your family, your neighbors, your brothers and sisters in Christ. For to whom much is given; much shall be required (Luke 12:48).

*~submitted by Kathy Angst*

*(Stewardship newsletter insert for December 2018, from the LCMS website <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=Ft56JhucyIUQOTW1wQWHiZKiVKWFCaqA>)*

## Fall Community Gathering 2018

Despite starting the evening in heavy rain, we were able to hand out about 400 goody bags and several Bibles, in English and in Spanish. We gave out popcorn, bottles of water, and handfuls of candy. We started in Miertschin Hall at 5:30 p.m. and around 7:00 p.m., the rain had stopped so we moved out under the drive-thru by the church. The night was a soggy success. Praise the Lord!



## Big Thank you!

Thank you to all who donated candy. Thank you to Cleo for helping stuff goody bags. Thank you to Kathy, Lonnie, Karen, Bert, Winnie, Robert, Ray, Philip, Maria, Carolyn, Max, Daniel'e and Nikki who came out to work the event. Without all your help, events like this would not be possible.



## 2018 Share-A-Meal

Thank you all for your donations of food, paper goods and laundry detergent. The items gathered help to share Thanksgiving with **5** separate families within the Immanuel church and ECE family. Helping others in a time of need is one way of doing the work of the Lord.



Thank you all for your generous donations and support. You are all a true blessing to Immanuel.  
God bless you all.

## 2018 Sunday School "Love" Project Operation Christmas Child



On Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, the SS children had a packing party. The morning was spent filling **43 shoeboxes** with love and all the donations received from the Christmas tree ornament project. Love will be shared to boys and girls ages 2-14. We included a picture of the children and their robot (above) on a Christmas card in each box along with our church address in hopes of a return message. This project was also supported with the help of a \$250 gift card from Thrivent.

Reaching out to those in need.



# Sunday School



*Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
From the Sunday School Dept*



**Our Seasonal Tree**

Our evergreen tree was decorated with the various colors of Fall leaves. Each week, we added a new color leaf. The yellow leaf reminded us to slow down and take time out for Jesus. Orange told us to be cautious for false gods. Red showed us that Jesus rescued us by shedding His blood on the cross. The green leaf reminds us that we have a new life in Christ.



**The Front of the SS Door (Left)**

When we enter on Sunday morning, we fall for Jesus like the leaves that fall from the trees. The leaves were done by the children.



**The Inside of the Door (Right)**

A pumpkin reminder to let our light shine to all we meet.





# Immanuel ECE





# What is Advent?

[From the Lutheran Hour Ministries website  
<https://www.lhm.org/advent/>]

The Church divides the year into different seasons that emphasize the life of Christ and the life of the Church. Beginning on Sunday December 2, we will enter the season of the Church year called Advent. Advent is the season of preparation and anticipation leading up to Christmas, and continuing to Epiphany January 6, 2019.

The focus of Advent is two-fold. On the one hand, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world as both God and man so that our sins might be forgiven. On the other hand, we anticipate the day when Jesus will return to Earth and bring an end to this world. Those will be scary days, but we can look forward to the end of the world with hope because through faith in Jesus, the end of this world will mean the beginning of a new life with Christ for eternity.

Advent, then, is a time for us to repent and believe. Knowing that Jesus was born to forgive our sins, we repent (admit our failures to God) and believe that we are forgiven because of the death and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf. Also, knowing that Jesus is coming back, we repent and believe that when He returns, He will give us eternal life.



# Midweek Suppers

There will be a meal prepared by volunteers 5:30-6:30 pm before each of our midweek Advent Services at 7:00 pm. The menus currently planned are:

December 5 – ECE staff  
*Hot Dogs*

December 12 – Evangelism Board  
*Menu: Polynesian Chicken and Rice, Salad, Pineapple Upside Down Cake*

December 19 – Bell Choir  
*Tostadas*

We hope to see you all as we prepare for the coming of our Lord and Savior.

## Newsletter Contributors

- Editor.....Barbara Szalkowski
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- .....Pastor Claudio Perez
- .....Laura Rocha
- .....Ray Thomas
- Graphic Design.....Matthew Szalkowski

# Support Our Sponsored Missionaries

## Dominican Republic Ministry Rev. Joel Fritsche & Family

### Seminary Support

You can donate online through the following link: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-support>.

By mail, make a check payable to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and specify “Dominican Republic Seminary” in the memo line. Mail to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
Mission Advancement  
PO Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

### General Support

Support/prayer card:  
[http://prayercards.lcms.org/Fritsche\\_DR\\_April%202017.pdf](http://prayercards.lcms.org/Fritsche_DR_April%202017.pdf)

To support the Fritsche's ministry, you may send a tax- deductible gift to either of the following:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

### OR

Mission Central  
40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks “Support of Joel & Clarion Fritsche.”

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on our online giving page at <http://www.lcms.org/fritsche> or call (888) 930-4438.

## Puerto Rico Ministry Rev. Richard & Gema Schuller

Send a tax deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, PO Box 66861, St. Louis MO 63166-6861

### OR

Mission Central-LCMS World, 40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, Iowa 51034-7105

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and include Schuller, Puerto Rico, and A-10898-69376 in the memo line.

Gifts can also be given securely online through their website <http://www.lcms.org/schuller>

## Alaska Ministry

Donate online at:

<http://www.alaskamissionforchrist.org>

Mail donations to:

Alaska Mission for Christ, 8100 Arctic Blvd., Anchorage AK 99518

Donate via Thrivent Choice Dollars:

<https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/>

Donate via Amazon.com's Smile program

<http://smile.amazon.com>



# Immanuel Lutheran Church - December 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
BC/SS = Bible Class/Sunday School	(#) = Usher Team					<b>1</b> FoD's Holiday Market Noon to 5:00 pm
<b>2</b> <i>Usher Team #1</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am BC/SS @ 10:15 am Voter's Meeting @ 11:30 am	<b>3</b>  <i>No Evening Bible Study</i>	<b>4</b> FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00-1:30 pm  RDCDS @ 7:30-9:30 pm  All Boards @ 7:00 pm	<b>5</b> ECE Christmas Program @ 9:30-10:30 am Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am Dinner @ 5:30-6:30 pm Advent Worship Service @ 7:00 pm (#2)	<b>6</b> Bingo @ 1:00-3:00 pm FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00-1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00 - 9:00 pm Choir @ 6:30 pm Bells @ 7:30 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> <i>Usher Team #3</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am BC/SS @ 10:15 am Family Choir 11:30 am (Sanctuary balcony)	<b>10</b> Decorate (MH) ECE Polar Express @ 12:00 noon	<b>11</b> FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00-1:30 pm RDCDS @ 7:30-9:30 pm	<b>12</b> ECE Christmas Program @ 9:30-10:30 am Dinner @ 5:30-6:30 pm <i>Usher Team #4</i> Advent Worship Service @ 7:00 pm	<b>13</b> FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00-1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00 - 9:00 pm Choir @ 6:30 pm Bells @ 7:30 pm	<b>14</b> (MH) ECE Polar Express Take down decorations @ 12:00 noon	<b>15</b> Live Nativity Carols 6:00 pm 
<b>16</b> Worship Service w/Communion (#5) @ 9:00 am Candy Sale BC/SS @ 10:15 am Family Choir 11:30 am Naomi Christmas Party 4:00 pm	<b>17</b>  <i>No Evening Bible Study</i>	<b>18</b>  RDCDS @ 7:30-9:30 pm	<b>19</b> Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am Dinner @ 5:30-6:30 pm <i>Usher Team #1</i> Advent Worship Service @ 7:00 pm	<b>20</b> ECE Closed Daycare Open for All Day Students only  Choir @ 6:30 pm Bells @ 7:30 pm	<b>21</b>  ECE Closed Daycare Open for All Day Students only	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> <i>Usher Team #2</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am BC/SS @ 10:15 am Christmas Luncheon @ 12:15 pm	<b>24</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed Christmas Eve Worship Service w/Communion @ 7:00 pm (#3) 	<b>25</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed <i>Usher Team #4</i> Christmas Day Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am 	<b>26</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>27</b> ECE Closed Daycare Open for All Day Students only	<b>28</b> ECE Closed Daycare Open for All Day Students only	<b>29</b> (MH) Rental/Perez 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party
<b>30</b> Worship Service w/Communion (#5) @ 9:00 am BC/SS @ 10:15 am Social Ministry Door Offering	<b>31</b> New Year's Eve  Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>1</b> New Year's Day  Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>2</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>3</b> ECE Students Return to School		

Join Us for a Christmas Lunch!

Free Will Offering

Date: December 23

Time: 12:15

Christmas Salad

Roast Beef

Mashed Potatoes

Dressing w/ cranberry sauce

Winter Vegetable Medley

Rolls

Desserts

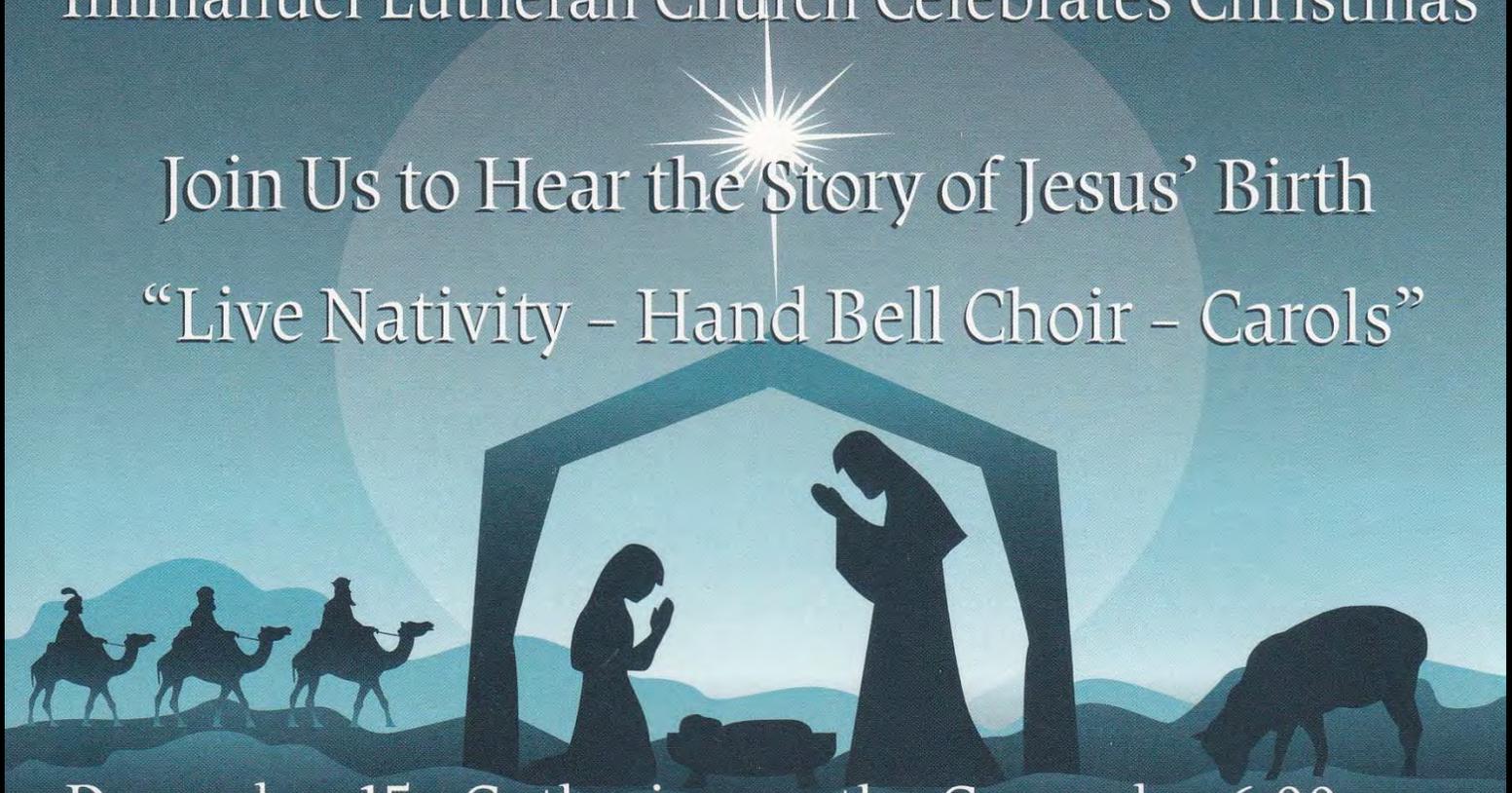
Coffee and Tea



Please call (713-861-8787) to reserve a seat by December 14

## Immanuel Lutheran Church Celebrates Christmas

Join Us to Hear the Story of Jesus' Birth  
"Live Nativity - Hand Bell Choir - Carols"



December 15 - Gathering on the Grounds - 6:00 p.m.

# Serving Immanuel in December 2018

	Sunday December 2	Wednesday December 5	Sunday December 9	Wednesday December 12	Sunday December 16
<b>Elder</b>	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.
<b>Acolyte</b>	Emily H.		Nikki B.		Molly H.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.	#3 Ralph E.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.
<b>Media</b>	Karen E.	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.
<b>Audio</b>	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.	Ray T.	Max B.
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.
<b>Trustee</b>	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.

	Wednesday December 19	Sunday December 23	Christmas Eve Monday December 24	Christmas Day Tuesday December 25	Sunday December 30
<b>Elder</b>	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.
<b>Acolyte</b>		Emily H.			Nikki B.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.	#3 Ralph E.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.
<b>Media</b>	<i>No Media</i>	Karen E.	<i>No Media</i>	<i>Media</i>	Jackie A.
<b>Audio</b>	Gerald O.	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.	Ray T.
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.	Bob & Martha M.
<b>Trustee</b>	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.

If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.

# Serving Immanuel in January 2019

	Sunday January 6	Sunday January 13	Sunday January 20	Sunday January 27
<b>Elder</b>	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.
<b>Acolyte</b>	Molly H.	Emily H.	Nikki B.	Molly H.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.	#3 Ralph E.	#4 John C.
<b>Media</b>	Barbara S.	Karen E.	Jackie A.	Barbara S.
<b>Audio</b>	Max B.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Denise G. & Delores Q.			
<b>Trustee</b>				

If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.

# Candy Sale

Join us for a

## Homemade Christmas Candy Sale

Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>

Minimum donation of \$5 per plate



Please see sign-up sheet in Narthex or contact Lauren Neu if you would like to donate candy



Immanuel Lutheran Church  
1440 Courtlandt St  
Houston, TX 77008

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To the Family of:

## *Love God ~ Care for Others*

### **SPECIAL DECEMBER EVENTS**



**Wednesdays December 5, 12 & 19**  
**Dinner 5:30-6:30 p.m.**  
**Midweek Advent Service • 7:00 p.m.**



**Saturday December 15 • 6:30 p.m.**  
**Outdoor Christmas Celebration**  
***Live Nativity – Handbells – Carols***



**Sunday, December 23**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**Christmas Dinner**  
***(Reservation Required, Free will offering)***



**Monday, December 24 • 7:00 p.m.**  
**Christmas Eve Communion Service**

**Tuesday, December 25 • 9:00 a.m.**  
**Christmas Day Communion Service**