

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Celebrating 100 Years • 1919-2019

Vol. 9, No. 1

<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

December 2019

## The Festival of Christmas

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For the newsletter article this month I thought I would share with you the following sermon from Kramer Chapel, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, given in 2004.



*But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)*

Christmas is a time to ponder. Take time to ponder this sermon and the gift of Christ it delivers:

"The heavens do not turn three shades of red when God is born a babe. They sing. Glory to God in the highest...whose birth room smells of manure and hay. 'With milk is fed the Lord of all / Who feeds the ravens when they call.' There lies the swaddled Creator, all wrapped up in the things of creation – infant holy yet infant lowly, a diapered divinity.

But you're wrong, you who suppose this is 'beneath God.' For this is not so much God-made-small as it is man-made-big. The God who made man in His own image outdoes Himself: He makes Himself into His own image and thereby exalts us. Jesus becomes what you are – a woman's child – that He might make you be what He is – sons of the Father. That's what this is all about. One small step for God, one giant leap for mankind. He becomes no less; we become infinitely more in Him. For within the womb of Mary something new happens under the sun. A woman is pregnant with God, by God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, Jesus issues forth as the first man of a new race: those who call God 'Father,' and mean it. For in the fullness of time, He sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under Law, to redeem those under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

*(continued on page 2)*

# Festival of Christmas . . .

*(continued from page 1)*

This is what you need: redemption, adoption. You don't need a god who strokes your ego with applause from on high when you 'do good.' You don't need a deadbeat deity who's so busy caring for his universe that he shows no concern as his children go astray. You need the God for whom nothing matters more than to save you, to adopt you as His own flesh and blood. You need the God who cares enough to tell you the truth, to say, 'Apart from Me, you are depraved, dead, damned. I love you. I want you. I desire you to be My child more than anything else. And I have done all and everything necessary for you to be Mine.'

This is the God – the God-made-man – you need, the Lord you have. Giving purity to the depraved, life to the dead, salvation to you under hell's thumb. He did not come to save the trees or the spotted owl. He was not born to rid the world of hunger or stop the ravages of war.

He came to be for every man what no man has been or could be for himself. Born under law, Jesus fulfills the law He Himself had given. He is the perfect infant, perfect teenager, perfect adult, bearing your flesh and blood to the cross, bearing your flesh and blood out of the grave - so that as He is, so it is credited to you. You – perfect infant; you-perfect teenager; you – perfect adult, all in Jesus. For God so loved the world, He strapped the world to the back of His Son, so that where He went and what He did, you went and did also.

So shout greatly, O daughter of Zion, for a virgin daughter of Israel has entered motherhood. Humble and mounted on a manger, Jesus rides into our world, and heaven follows after Him. Hosanna to the Son of David, born in David's town. Blessed is He who comes from the bosom of His Father to the bosom of His mother. He comes for all. Are you bruised and battered by the cares of this world? He comes for you, this Great Physician of soul and body. Are you betrayed and abused, divorced and lonely? His advent is for you, this faithful Bridegroom of the Church. Are you rich and happy, well-fed and comfortable? Yes, He comes for you, to show you that true riches and true happiness are found only in Him.

The infant Jesus: 'Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, / The cross be borne for me, for you.' That is why He came down from heaven, to let the earth have its way with Him that He might have His way with you. And His way is life. So be not afraid, for I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born a Savior, God in the flesh, who fills you with life divine." Merry Christmas!

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"  
(Luke 2:14)*

*~In Christ,  
Pastor Richard Gaub*





# Advent & Nativity Quiz

Answer choices:

- A. Elizabeth
- B. Joseph
- C. Gabriel
- D. David
- E. Caesar Augustus
- F. Messiah
- G. Mary
- H. Judah
- I. Peace
- J. Nazareth
- K. Shepherds
- L. Stable

Match the words on the right to the statements below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. This woman was told that, although a virgin, she would have a child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ruler of the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus' birth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. What Jesus is known as in the Old Testament.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Angel who told Mary she was chosen to have God's son.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The family line of Israel that Jesus is from.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The cousin Mary shared her news of having a baby.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The person who was told, "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The village where Joseph and Mary were likely married.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The other king who was born in Bethlehem in addition to Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. An important word found in the song of the choir of angels.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The only place available for Mary and Joseph to sleep in Bethlehem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The first to receive the invitation to see the newborn.

*(answers on page 10)*

*~Pastor Claudio Perez*

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Mark your  
Calendar!

January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020

New Sunday School  
Class for Ages 1-5!  
Children 3 and under,  
bring an adult

**JOIN US!**



*Merry Christmas  
From the Sunday School Children*

# Annual Thanksgiving Share-A-Meal

Brrrrrrrr!  
All my feathers have  
been plucked!



The turkey may be cold, but your giving hearts and overwhelming generosity will warm **8** families in need. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

# Thank You! Thank You!

Your enormous support of our SS **"Love"** Project enabled us to fill **"50"** shoeboxes for children in other countries. Our goal was 30. **67** of the **80** **Ornaments** were returned.

*May the Lord bless and keep you all this holiday season!*



~Cathleen Chevallier



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN ECE



Costume or Pajama  
Dress Up Day





# Advent Comfort for All

*"Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. 'Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.'"*  
(Isaiah 40:1)

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen. The world thinks that religion is about guilt. It's about feeling bad about yourself and finding some emotional crutch to get through the bad feelings. The more religion, the more you beat yourself down, the more you feel terrible about yourself, the better the religion!

But that's not Christianity! Your Father in Heaven doesn't enjoy smashing anyone with His Law. He preaches the Law to you because He wants to save you! His Law needs to kill you of all the religion that you hold dear—all the deals you try to make with Him, all the false comforts you trust in, and all your living for yourself you do. You need to die to all of that in order that you might rise to new life in Him.

Your Heavenly Father doesn't leave you in the guilt and shame of your sins. He comforts your troubled conscience! He rescues you from your guilt! He frees you from the sadness and shame of this world. He doesn't just have comfort for you. He has double comfort!

"Comfort! Comfort!" These are not just empty words! Backing up His double comfort word is His Good Friday and Easter work! He sent His Son who lived the life you should live before God's Law. His Son died the death you should die. Good Friday is your Good Friday because

of Jesus, and that makes Easter your resurrection, too!

You are the comforted. God, Himself, is the Comforter. You are washed in His comfort. You are worded with it. It fills your ears and your life. You are bodied and blooded of His Son. You receive His double comfort in His gifts—that's faith.

Jesus gives comfort in all situations. Because of Jesus, everything will always be okay in the end. It has to be. The expressions that are supposed to give us comfort take on new meaning.

Your faith and religion are centered on Christ for you. It's not about your feeling guilty or working harder to get better. Repent of that false religion. Trust that Christ, Himself, has taken on the guilt of your sins. God now has only forgiveness for you, only eternal life—achieved by Jesus on the Cross, and delivered to you in His gifts. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

*~submitted by Stephen Hernandez*

*[Taken from Higher Things Reflections: Advent 2016  
<https://higherthings.org/reflections/monday-of-the-third-week-of-advent/>]*

## Midweek Advent Meals

Before each midweek Wednesday Advent service, there will be a meal 5:30-6:30 pm; freewill offerings will be taken at each meal:

Dec. 4. Spaghetti (ECE)

Dec. 11. Baked potatoes w/chopped meats (Bells/Choir)

Dec. 18. Soup & Salad (Evangelism)



## Focus on Stewardship

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, is teaching those who follow Him that worrying about the necessities of life is idolatry: worshipping a false god. This is because worry and anxiety show what we care about. Our anxiety reveals what we love and to what we're devoted. It reveals what we trust in.

This is why our Lord begins this section with an overarching principle: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

But you say: "I must eat and drink. I must have clothing to wear and have a home in which to dwell." Yes, all these things you need. And Jesus says that your Father in heaven will ensure that you have them. He demonstrates this with a simple argument.

Your Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air, who neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. He clothes the lilies of the field, who neither toil nor spin but are arrayed more luxuriously than Solomon in all his glory. If, then, your Father in heaven feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, how will He not also feed and clothe you when you are worth more than they are?

For you know that you are worth more than them. You are worth infinitely more. You are worth the price of the eternal Son of God. Did the Son of God come down from heaven and become a lily? Did he descend and take on the form of a bird? No!

He came down from heaven and became a man: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He is one of us, our brother. And what did He do when He became flesh to dwell among us? He gave His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death, that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.

God became man in Christ Jesus. He lived the life we failed to live, and He died the death we deserve because of it. He was raised again on the third day to overcome sin and death ... for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification. So, if your Father in heaven has given His Son to die for us in order that we might live with Him eternally, how will He not also give us all things to support this body and life?

To be anxious about the necessities of life, to devote yourself to food and clothing, to care about this and find security in it, is to serve another god. It is to deny that you will live forever because Jesus, the Son of God is risen from the dead, lives and reigns for all eternity. It is to believe that God – who created you, redeemed you by the death and resurrection of His Son, and sanctifies you by His Spirit – will not keep His promises of sustaining you in this life.

*(continued on page 10)*





In December, the Sunday morning adult Bible class will continue our study of **Subjective and**

**3.Objective Justification.** Did Jesus die for the sins of the whole world, or did He die only for the sins of those who believe in Him? Has the entire world been justified, or only those who believe?

~Pastor Gaub

Quiz Answers			
1-G	4-C	7-B	10-I
2-E	5-H	8-J	11-L
3-F	6-A	9-D	12-K

## Stewardship . . .

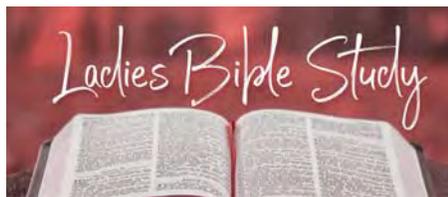
*(continued from page 9)*

Jesus says this: Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. God's kingdom is His rule among us. His rule among us comes when our Father in heaven gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. This is what we ask God to do for us in the prayer Jesus taught us.

Your Father in heaven knows what you need – food and clothing, house and home, etc. – and He promises to give it to you. Chief of the things you need is His grace and mercy in His Son, Jesus Christ. So, seek after that. Those who seek will find. And all the necessities of life, our Lord says, will be added to you.

~submitted by Kathy Angst

*(Stewardship newsletter insert for December 2019, from the LCMS website <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=YEB6VzMzW0c0bfigPafkjm9Fptqp4jKO>)*



Having completed our series on angels in the Bible, the Ladies' Wednesday morning Bible Study will begin a series of stand-alone lessons using, primarily, the *Lutheran Women's Quarterly*.

~Sandi Hrozek



## December Events

### Basketball Game

Tuesday Dec. 17 - Varsity Boys 7:00 pm

### Soccer Games

Monday Dec. 2 - Varsity Girls 5:00 pm  
 Thursday Dec. 5 – JV Boys 5:00 pm  
 Friday Dec. 6 - Varsity Boys 6:00 pm  
 Tuesday Dec. 10 - JV Boys 5:00 pm  
 Thursday Dec. 12  
 - Varsity Boys 6:00 pm

### Christmas Concert - Band and Choir

Sunday, Dec. 8 3:00 pm. Free

~Lynn Eickemeyer



**Mark Your Calendars:  
 Celebration Service w/Communion  
 Monday, January 6, 2020 • 7:00 pm**

# Mission Report

## The Fritsche Family: A La Republica Dominicana



To commemorate 502 years of the Lutheran Reformation, LCMS mission congregations across the Dominican Republic celebrated with a street procession preceding their Divine Services (*photo above*).

A large Reformation service was held in Juan Pablo II Park, across the street from the mission in Ensanche Ozama, Santo Domingo, to accommodate the crowd. Members of both Santo Domingo congregations.

A family of two adults and three children were brought into membership at the Pueblo Nuevo mission in Santiago.



*The Seminary and Mercy Center*

## Concordia Reformer Lutheran Seminary

The seminary occupies a small portion of a building that also serves as a day school, a regional mercy center and a congregation. Next door is a group home for disabled children, and on the mountainside above sits the dormitory for the single seminary students.

An emphasis at the seminary is to train the students to plant churches so when they go back to their countries as pastors, they can do that.



*A seminarian leads daily chapel at the center.*

## 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

*[Excerpts from <https://engage.lcms.org/dominican-seminary-winter-2018/> and <https://www.lcms.org/worldwide-regions/latin-america> viewed on November 17, 2019]*



FRESH

# COOKBOOKS

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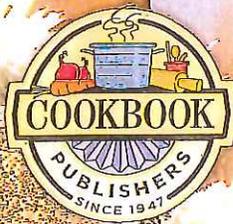
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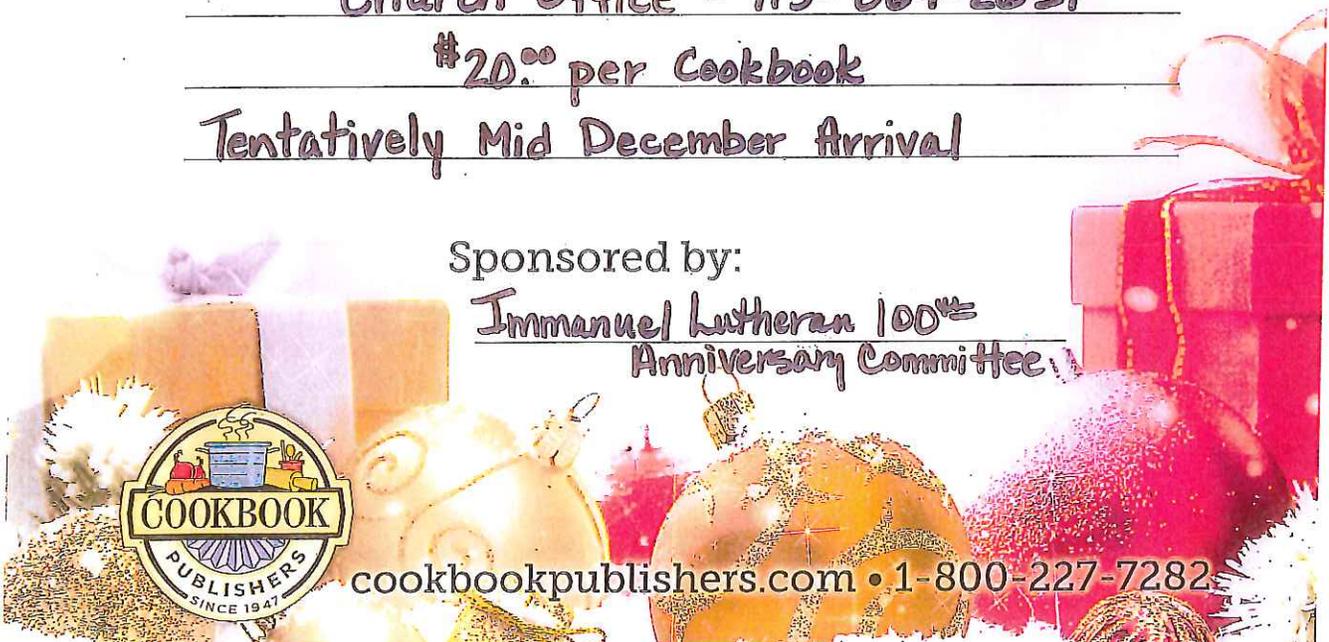
Tentatively Mid December Arrival

Sponsored by:

Immanuel Lutheran 100<sup>th</sup>  
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# Serving Immanuel December 2019

	<b>Sunday December 1</b>	<b>Wednesday December 4</b>	<b>Sunday December 8</b>	<b>Wednesday December 11</b>	<b>Sunday December 15</b>
<b>Elder</b>	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.
<b>Acolyte</b>	Molly H.	<i>Elder</i>	Emily H.	<i>Elder</i>	Nikki B.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.
<b>Media</b>	Jackie A.	<i>No Media</i>	Karen E.	<i>No Media</i>	Melissa T.
<b>Audio</b>	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Margaret B. & Melissa T.		Margaret B. & Melissa T.		Margaret B. & Melissa T.
<b>Trustee</b>	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.	Karen E.

	<b>Wednesday December 18</b>	<b>Sunday December 22</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Tuesday December 24</b>	<b>Christmas Day Wednesday December 25</b>	<b>Sunday December 29</b>
<b>Elder</b>	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.
<b>Acolyte</b>	<i>Elder</i>	Molly H.	Emily H.	Nikki B.	Molly H.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.
<b>Media</b>	<i>No Media</i>	Jackie A.	<i>No Media</i>	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.
<b>Audio</b>	Gerald O.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.
<b>Altar Guild</b>		Margaret B. & Melissa T.	Margaret B. & Melissa T.	Margaret B. & Melissa T.	Margaret B. & Melissa T.
<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 January 2020

	Sunday January 5	Epiphany Monday January 6	Sunday January 12	Sunday January 19	Sunday January 26
<b>Elder</b>	Steve H.	Steve H.	Steve H.	Steve H.	Steve H.
<b>Acolyte</b>	Emily H.	<i>Elder</i>	Nikki B.	Molly H.	Emily H.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#3 Lonnie A.	<i>Ushers</i>	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.
<b>Media</b>	Karen E.	<i>No Media</i>	Melissa T.	Jackie A.	Barbara S.
<b>Audio</b>	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Sigrid R. & Carolyn B.	Sigrid R. & Carolyn B.	Sigrid R. & Carolyn B.	Sigrid R. & Carolyn B.	Sigrid R. & Carolyn B.
<b>Trustee</b>	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.	Mike R.

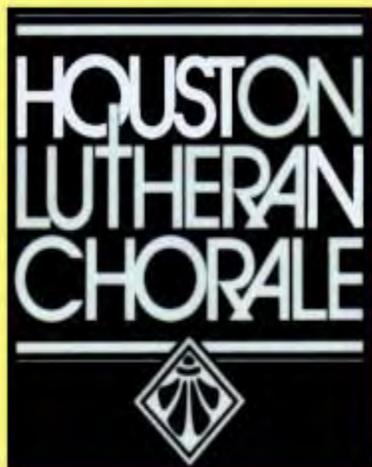
If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.



# Immanuel Lutheran Church - December 2019 - REVISED



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Usher Team #3</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	<b>2</b> <i>NO Evening Bible Study</i> Young Life (Gym) @ 6:00-9:00 pm	<b>3</b> All Boards @ 7:00 pm Scottish Dancers @ 7:30-9:30 pm	<b>4 Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am</b> Usher Team #4 Dinner @ 5:30 pm Worship Service @ 7:00 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:30-9:00 pm	<b>5</b> Bingo @ 1:00-3:00 pm Choir @ 7:00 pm Bells @ 8:00 pm	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Usher Team #5</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	<b>9</b> Young Life (Gym) @ 6:00-9:00 pm	<b>10</b> Naomi Christmas 10:00 am Scottish Dancers @ 7:30-9:30 pm	<b>11 Usher Team #1</b> Dinner @ 5:30 pm Worship Service @ 7:00 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:30-9:00 pm	<b>12</b> Choir @ 7:00 pm Bells @ 8:00 pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Live Nativity @ 6:30 pm
<b>15 Usher Team #2</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	<b>16</b> <i>NO Evening Bible Study</i> Young Life (Gym) @ 6:00-9:00 pm	<b>17</b> Scottish Dancers @ 7:30-9:30 pm	<b>18 Usher Team #3</b> Dinner @ 5:30 pm Worship Service @ 7:00 pm Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am Men's Basketball @ 6:30-9:00 pm	<b>19</b> Choir @ 7:00 pm Bells @ 8:00 pm	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 Usher Team #4</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	<b>23</b> ECE Closed Daycare Open	<b>24 Usher Team #5</b> Christmas Eve Worship Service w/Communion @ 7:00 pm  Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>25 Usher Team #1</b> Christmas Day Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am  Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>26</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>27</b> Hall Set-up Rental McFarland	<b>28</b> Hall Rental McFarland @ 11:00 am-2:00 pm
<b>29 Usher Team #2</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am Social Ministries Door Offering	<b>30</b> ECE Closed Daycare Open	<b>31</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed	<b>1 January</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed  <i>Blessed New Year!</i>			



# Wake Awake

*J. S. Bach's Cantata 140*

*"Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme"*

*plus contemporary Christmas choral arrangements  
including works by Dan Forrest, John Rutter and others  
Focusing on the nativity and the wondrous mystery of  
"God in flesh".*



*December 6, 2019*

*Memorial Lutheran Church  
5810 3rd St.*

*Katy, Texas 77493  
7:30 P.M.*

*~ ~*

*December 7, 2019*

*Lord of Life Lutheran Church  
3801 S Panther Creek Dr.*

*The Woodlands, Texas 77381  
7:30 P.M.*

*~ ~*

*December 8, 2019*

*Trinity Lutheran Church  
800 Houston Ave.*

*Houston, Texas 77007  
4:00 P.M.*



Immanuel Lutheran Church  
1440 Cortlandt St  
Houston, TX 77008

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To the Family of:

*Witness, Mercy, Life Together  
In Christ, for the Church and the World*



**SPECIAL DECEMBER EVENTS**  
**Wednesdays December 4, 11 & 18**  
**Dinner 5:30-6:30 p.m.**  
**Midweek Advent Service • 7:00 p.m.**



**Saturday December 14 • 6:30 p.m.**  
**Outdoor Christmas Celebration**  
**Live Nativity – Carols – Refreshments**

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

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

