

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights  
Celebrating 100 Years • 1919-2019

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<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

January 2020

## Epiphany: The Christmas of the Gentiles



Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

I have provided below a very fine newsletter article from Pastor David Jay Webber that was published in January 2016.

[Editor's note: The original can be viewed at <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2016/01/epiphany-the-christmas-of-the-gentiles-pr-david-jay-webber/>]

Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord is one of the four major festivals of Christ in the church year. The other three are Christmas, Easter, and Ascension. The word "epiphany" means "manifestation." The theme of the Festival of the Epiphany, which commemorates the visit of the Magi to the boy Jesus, is the *manifestation* of Christ to the gentiles.

God had established his chosen nation from the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But most of us who are reading this article are, according to our ethnicity and family heritage, gentiles. The patriarchs of Israel are not our ancestors. But this does not mean that God forgot about our forebears, or about us. When the Messiah of Israel was finally sent, he was sent also for us.

When Jesus was born, the angel announced to the Jewish shepherds outside of Bethlehem that their Savior had been born. And they then walked the few miles that they needed to traverse, to find him and worship him. But Jesus came into the world not only for those who were close to him – religiously, culturally, and geographically. He came also for those who were far away. He came also for our ancestors, and for us.

The story of Epiphany is the story of the star announcing to the Magi in the East – many, many miles from Bethlehem – that also *their* Savior had been born.

*(continued on page 2)*

# Epiphany . . .

*(continued from page 1)*

And so they launched out on a major trek, traversing deserts and plains, crossing rivers, and exposing themselves to all kinds of danger, so that they could find, and worship, the Redeemer of the entire human race. Epiphany is, in a sense, the Christmas of the gentiles. It is, in a sense, *our* Christmas.

Those in the world today, who are invited by the story of Epiphany to come and worship Christ today, are indeed often very far away from him when they receive that invitation. Their hearts are enslaved by the fear of death. Their minds are darkened by the satanic lies they believe. Their wills are perverted by a self-destructive yearning after sin. Their consciences are twisted by a hatred for that which is their only hope. But these gentiles of today are nevertheless invited by the star of Bethlehem to come and find Jesus, and to worship Jesus, as he makes himself available to us today in his Word and sacraments. Even if they must come, as it were, from a great distance, they are still invited to come. The star of the gospel draws them, and energizes them, to come. That star invites all gentiles – and all Jews as well! – to receive Christ into their hearts, minds, wills, and consciences. The star offers to all gentiles – and to all Jews! – the liberation, the enlightenment, the purification, and the peace that only Jesus can give.

The visit of the Magi was an important event in the life of Christ on earth. The Festival of the Epiphany is, accordingly, an important observance in the church year for us. Especially if you are a gentile, go to church on Epiphany. Worship the Savior who was sent for

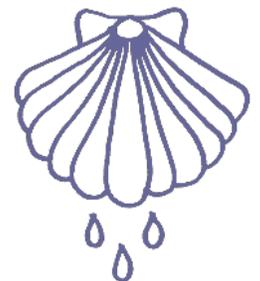
you, and who has been manifested to you. This is your festival! This is your Christmas!

*A blessed season of Epiphany to you all!*

*~In Christ,  
Pastor Richard Gaub*



Immanuel will observe the festival of Epiphany with a special Divine service with Communion on Monday, January 6, 2020, at 7:00 pm. We invite everyone to come and adore Him, Christ the Lord!



We rejoice with Mr. and Mrs. Devin Konarik that their son, Brentley, was received into God's family through the rite of Holy Baptism in mid-December. Devin and brother Drew attended Immanuel School.



*~submitted by Max Bolen*

# Mission Report

## The Fritsche Family: A La Republica Dominicana

*[Excerpt, Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2019 newsletter]*

Since our return from home service, we've jumped right back into ministry in Pueblo Nuevo. We have two new seminarians, Hector and Josué, working with us. They join Vicar Mario, Deaconess Caitlin, Clarion and I for our work in the church and community around our mission. New seminary students mainly observe during their first semester of field work. But these guys have taken a very active role in the regular ministry of the congregation. We are pleased to officially have Clarion on the team. Her work in Pueblo Nuevo is part of her practicum for the deaconess program in Ft. Wayne.

If you remember, three families of our church lost their homes in a devastating fire back in September. The Lord has been merciful, as all three have received assistance for reconstruction. One family is already in their rebuilt home with the other two in process. It has not been easy, but it was an opportunity to learn how the Lord works through death and resurrection. Despite the stress and anxiety of a terrible tragedy, the Lord has worked tremendous blessings for these families and they are rising up not only with a new roof over their heads, but a lively faith that trusts our Lord who mercifully cares for us in Christ.

We started a new Catechism class with about 10-12 new people to be confirmed on Easter. Advent and Christmas are often a challenge in new missions. In one sense, you have the blessing of starting from scratch with new Christians. On the other hand, this can make it

difficult to establish traditions. Dominicans are used to Christmas being all about family. That's wonderful, but we ought not make that to the exclusion of the most important part, that our Lord came in the flesh and is coming again.

*(continued on page 4)*

## Naomi Christmas Gathering 2019



*(clockwise from left) Mary Osborn, Margaret Beacom, Sigrid Reifel, Dora Schulle, Carla Faske, Maxine Arndt, Elise Perez, Bonnie Thomas, Evelyn Marsh.*

The Naomi ladies group at Immanuel had their annual Christmas party on Tuesday morning, December 10, sporting festive attire and enjoying good fellowship.



*(left to right) Margaret Beacom, Carla Faske, Dora Schulle, Maxine Arndt, Mary Osborn, Evelyn Marsh, Bonnie Thomas, Elise Perez, Sigrid Reifel, Martha McFarland.*

*~photos submitted by Martha McFarland*

# Fritsche News . . .

*(continued from page 3)*

Pray for us and for our people as we preach Christ incarnate, Christ crucified and risen in these holy days ahead. Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly!

## Seminary News

As Director of a regional seminary that serves 19 countries, I spend a lot of time on seminary relations, that is, communicating with partner churches and promoting the work of our institution throughout the region. That part of my job has taken me far and wide these past few months. Thankfully I had the month of September and the first part of October to get back into the swing of daily life at the seminary— preaching in chapel, teaching Hebrew, and of course, faculty and other administrative meetings. We have 15 residential students, 9 of whom are on campus, the other 6 on vicarage. I have all 9 of the residential guys who are on campus in Hebrew this year. With 6 of them being new, we've been moving slowly through Hebrew grammar, but the guys are super excited to be reading simplified readings from Genesis.

## Updates from the Missionary Wife

Time stops for no one and has kept us marching to its steady beat. I am actually just finishing up my second round of deaconess classes and am looking forward to Christmas break. It has been a hectic time for me with Joel traveling quite a bit in November and adding two furry members to our family. We, sadly, had to say good bye to Dodger and

Dandy after thirteen years of love and fun. Shortly after their passing we started over with two Weimaraner puppies named Axel and Ada.



We had a rough start as they had to fight parvovirus but things are going very well now. We are having a ball with our new friends!

The boys are doing very well and are very excited to enjoy their Christmas break. Both older boys have finished their first trimesters with Wittenberg Academy and have moved on to new classes for the Christmas term. They were very helpful to me and other missionaries as Joel was traveling. They are growing up very fast and it is interesting to see how they have adapted to missionary life.

Andrei took on the challenge of online classes and is keeping up very well. He has really enjoyed a new friendship with Diego, whose father is here studying at the seminary. He takes his injections every night and the doctor is very pleased with how he is growing.

So many blessings we have to count this holiday season and all of our supporters among them. We never forget what a special part you play in our lives here.

*~Pastor Joel and Clarion Fritsche*

*[The entire newsletter can be viewed online at <https://tinyurl.com/Fritsche201912> or via their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/lcmsfritsche/> ]*

# Focus on Stewardship

Our God is a God who works through means. He can and has worked immediately without agency, as the Bible testifies, but primarily, our God works through means. He does this not only for all of our earthly needs but also for all of our spiritual needs. And He does this for our benefit.

He provides for all our needs of this body and life through means. He gives us fathers and mothers to care for us when we are young. Through them, God provides house and home, food and clothing, education and training in the arts and work of this world.

He gives us good government to protect us from harm and danger; He gives us faithful neighbors and good friends to help in times of need and lack. He gives us employers who trade our work for income so that we may acquire the needs of the body. He gives us brains and brawn so that we will have something to trade with those employers for that needed income. This work, which we are able to do only because of what God has provided to us, redounds to the benefit of others. And so, the cycle of God giving through means continues.

He provides for all our needs of our souls. He sent His Son into the flesh to be our Savior. In that body, our Lord Jesus Christ lived the life that God demands of us all – a life we have failed to live because of our sins – and, in that body, He made payment for those sins on the cross, once and for all.

God delivers this forgiveness through the means of His Word and Sacraments. He calls pastors to proclaim, in His stead and by His command, that our sins are forgiven for

Jesus' sake. Through these same pastors, God Himself claims us as His own in Holy Baptism, placing His own name on us in water and Word, igniting faith by the gift of the Holy Spirit. And He gives us His life-giving body and blood to nourish us in this same faith until the end. Our God is a God who works through means.

This is true also of stewardship. This is what St. Paul wrote in Philippians: "I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (*Phil. 4:18–19*).

The gift St. Paul received from the Philippian church is a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. They gave to God. God provided for St. Paul through the Philippians. And the God who loves both Paul and the Philippians will supply their every need according to the riches in Christ Jesus. Our God is a God who works through means.

"For all the promises of God find their Yes in [Jesus Christ]," St. Paul tells us in *2 Cor. 1:20*. This is true also of you. Trust in the God who provides for all that we need in body and soul through means. And not only will you find His "yes" to you, but others will find it, too, through you. "But as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you – see that you excel in this act of grace also" (*2 Cor. 8:7*).

*~submitted by Kathy Angst*

*[Stewardship newsletter insert for January 2020, from the LCMS website <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=pgXfPM3pmR7h6xyJgKOuIxR6CwPaqAc>]*



## New Sunday School Class

Ages 1-5

(children under 3 accompanied  
by an adult)

Sunday, **January 12<sup>th</sup>**

at 10:15 am

-meeting downstairs, last room on the right  
(story time, singing, playing)

# JOIN US!

The new year will bring good changes to the Sunday School department. Welcoming the younger children to an hour of Jesus time will help to build a foundation on Jesus. Please continue to pray for everyone in Sunday school. Pray this change helps us to spread God's Word to more children.

*~Cathleen Chevallier*

*Sunday School Superintendent*

## A Special Blessing Received!

A kind note and generous donation to the Sunday School was received in the mail during December. It came from a sweet longtime Immanuel member who served as Sunday school teacher for over 40 plus years. It was so great to hear from her and we are thankful for your gift that will be used to share Jesus with the children of Immanuel.





**Sunday School Christmas Party**  
Singing, Story time, Tinsel Pictionary, Candy Cane Pick Up  
and Delicious Snacks. A great time was had by all.





# IMMANUEL ECE GRANDPARENTS' DAY 2019



~submitted by Connie Meave



# CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 2019



# Immanuel Lutheran ECE 2019



## HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS



**January 2020 Events**

**Basketball games**

- 7 – Girls: JV 4:30 pm, Varsity 6:00 pm
- 9 – Varsity Boys 7:00 pm
- 10 – Varsity Girls 6:00 pm
- 17 – Varsity Girls 6:00 pm  
Varsity Boys 7:30 pm
- 18 – Houston Area Middle School Tournament
- 21 – JV Girls 4:30 pm, Varsity Boys 7:30 pm
- 28 - Varsity Girls 6:00, Varsity Boys 7:30

**Soccer games**

- 6 – Varsity Girls 5:00 pm
- 7 – Varsity Boys 6:00 pm
- 9 – Varsity Girls 5:00 pm
- 10 – Varsity Boys 5:00 pm
- 14 – JV Boys 5:00 pm
- 16 – Varsity Girls 5:00 pm
- 20 – Varsity Girls 5:00 pm
- 23 – Varsity Girls 5:00 pm  
Varsity Boys 7:00 pm
- 27 – Varsity Girls 5:00 pm
- Jan. 30 - JV Boys 5:00

**Winter Drama**

Jan. 24 & 25 – 7:00 pm

**Academic Quest**

Jan. 29 – Middle School competition

*~Lynn Eickemeyer*



**Rehearsals Resume  
Thursday, January 9**

**Vocal Choir – 7:00 pm  
Handbells – 8:00 pm**



**2020  
Schedule**

All Voters' meetings for 2020 will be held on **Sundays @11:40 a.m.**, immediately following the Bible Class/Sunday School hour.

Here is the 2020 schedule as presented to Voters at the November meeting:

February 2 \*\*\*

*No meeting during March/Lent*

June 7

August 2 \*\*\*

September 27

November 22

\*\*\* Dates adjusted due to Centennial events



**Newsletter Contributors**

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- .....Pastor Richard Gaub
- .....Steve Hairgrove
- .....Stephen Hernandez
- .....Sandi Hrozek
- .....Martha McFarland
- .....Winnie McNamara
- .....Connie Meave
- .....Lauren Neu
- .....Pastor David Jay Webber
- Graphic Design.....Matthew Szalkowski



## What Would Happen If We Treated Our Bible Like We Treat Our Cell Phones?

- What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?
- What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
- What if we flipped through it several times a day?
- What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
- What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
- What if we were "lost" without it?
- What if we gave it to our children as gifts?
- What if our children asked and begged for it?
- What if we used it as we travel?
- What if there was an emergency and everyone around pulled one out (and knew how to use it!)?

### With The Bible

- No Battery Pack is needed, it is always charged and ready to go.
- No call waiting, you get right in every time.
- It is World Wide ... works no matter where you are.
- Direct connect to His ears ... no need to leave a voice message.
- Unlimited minutes every day!

### *God's Phone Number: Jeremiah 33:3*

*"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things,  
which you do not know."*

**Make a Lifetime Resolution Today!**

# *Immanuel Lutheran Church*

## *100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Luncheon*



*The Bell Tower*  
*901 W. 34<sup>th</sup> St.*  
*Houston, Texas 77018*  
*January 26, 2020*  
*11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.*

*Lunch Served at 12:30 p.m.*  
*Complimentary Valet Parking*  
*Dressy Casual Attire*

*For Tickets / Information, please contact Cheryl Kramer at 713-864-2651*

# Serving Immanuel January~February 2020

	<b>Sunday January 5</b>	<b>Epiphany Monday January 6</b>	<b>Sunday January 12</b>	<b>Sunday January 19</b>	<b>Sunday January 26</b>
<b>Elder</b>	Phil N.	Phil N.	Phil N.	Phil N.	Phil N.
<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>	Barbara S.	<i>No Media</i>	Melissa T.	Jackie A.	Karen E.
<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.

	<b>Sunday February 2</b>	<b>Sunday February 9</b>	<b>Sunday February 16</b>	<b>Sunday February 23</b>
<b>Elder</b>	Steve H.	Steve H.	Steve H.	Steve H.
<b>Acolyte</b>	Nikki B.	Molly H.	Emily H.	Nikki B.
<b>Usher Team</b>	#2 Larry G.	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.
<b>Media</b>	Karen E.	Melissa T.	Jackie A.	Barbara S.
<b>Audio</b>	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Bob & Martha M. & Denise G.			
<b>Trustee</b>	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.

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



# Immanuel Lutheran Church - JANUARY 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31 <i>NO Ladies Bible Study New Year's Day</i>	1 <b>New Year's Day!</b> Offices Closed ECE Closed 	2 Bingo @ 1:00–3:00 pm	3	4
5 <b>Usher Team #3</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	6 <b>Young Life (Gym)</b> @ 6:00-9:00 pm Epiphany Service w/Communion @ 7:00pm <i>NO Evening Bible Study</i>	7 <b>All Boards</b> @ 7:00 pm  <b>Scottish Dancers</b> @ 7:30–9:30 pm	8  <b>Men's Basketball</b> @ 6:30–9:00 pm	9  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b> <b>Bells 8:00 pm</b>	10	11
12 <b>Usher Team #4</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	13  <b>Young Life (Gym)</b> @ 6:00–9:00 pm	14 <b>Naomi Meeting</b> @ 10:00 am  <b>Church Council</b> @ 7:00 pm <b>Scottish Dancers</b> @ 7:30–9:30 pm	15 <b>Ladies Bible Study</b> 10:00 am  <b>Men's Basketball</b> @ 6:30–9:00 pm	16  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b> <b>Bells 8:00 pm</b>	17	18
19 <b>Usher Team #5</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:15 am	20 <b>Martin Luther King Day</b>  <b>Evening Bible Study</b> 6:30–8:00 pm <b>Young Life (Gym)</b> @ 6:00–9:00 pm	21  <b>Scottish Dancers</b> @ 7:30–9:30 pm	22  <b>Men's Basketball</b> @ 6:30–9:00 pm	23  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b> <b>Bells 8:00 pm</b>	24	25
26 <b>Usher Team #1</b> 100 <sup>th</sup> Centennial Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am <b>No Bible Class/SS</b> 100 <sup>th</sup> Centennial Luncheon @ Bell Tower @ 11:30 am	27  <b>Young Life (Gym)</b> @ 6:00–9:00 pm	28  <b>Scottish Dancers</b> @ 7:30–9:30 pm	29  <b>Men's Basketball</b> @ 6:30–9:00 pm	30  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b> <b>Bells 8:00 pm</b>	31	1  <b>Voters' Meeting</b> <b>Sunday February 2</b> @ 11:40 am



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**Return Service Requested**

To the Family of:

*Love God ~ Care for Others*



**Epiphany  
Worship**

**Divine Service  
w/Communion  
Monday  
January 6  
7:00 pm**