

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 3, No. 2

January 2014

## ***“The Peace of Christ be with you.” “And also with you.”***

It has long been understood that we as sinners do not leave peace in our wake but much more often chaos. But I propose a question to you: “Does it *have* to be that way?” You and I are different. As we step outside and go out on the street and pass by people going about their daily tasks, ***we are*** by our very nature DIFFERENT. We have something they don’t. We have Jesus.



I know that may sound like it’s no big deal. Hey, we all get up to the same alarm clock, the same morning news, and all eat breakfast before we take on the day’s activities. But there is a difference. You have been redeemed. All the sin, death, aches, pains, flaws, hurts, and problems that you deal with every day of your life are MEANINGLESS! They don’t count. Yes, you still go through the same trials and deal with their worldly consequence, but in ***substance*** they don’t count. None of that horrible stuff is following you, and that my dear brothers and sisters, makes you extremely different.

It is downright transformational. God proclaims you a new person. Not just once, but every day of your life. When God redeems you, He literally buys you back from the consequences of sin and death. You are free. Free from the eternal consequence of death. Free from the burden and worry over what your eternity will look like. But you are also free from worries of tomorrow, because you know God is with you and He has granted you His Peace. That is a peace that can’t be gotten anywhere but from Jesus.

As a Christian you are delivered that peace in the Divine Service on Sunday morning. As a matter of fact, it is delivered to you in a number of places over and over again during worship.

*(continued on next page)*

*Peace Be With You*

## Peace of Christ. . .

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Let's think for just a moment – the absolution from sin, the sermon, Holy Communion, and lastly in the Benediction – just to name a few. But one of the places this Peace of Christ culminates is during the Prayers of the Church. We have received forgiveness, we have been strengthened and instructed; now we turn with SURE confidence to our Heavenly Father and place our cares at His feet. We come away charged up and full of PEACE! And scripture instructs us to share that Peace of Christ with our neighbor.

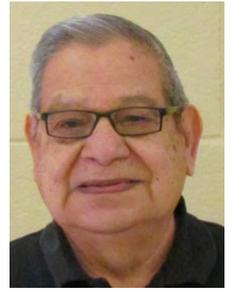
From the time of the early church we have practiced the "Sharing of the Peace" or the "Kiss of Peace" during the Divine Service in preparation for sharing the peace out in the world. Let me say, as an aside, this time is not a "Holy Howdy" time. It is not a Christian "meet and greet." That comes following the service. This is a HOLY thing that we have the special privilege of giving the Peace that can only come from Christ Himself. I hope and pray that this "new" practice here at Immanuel will grow to become one of your favorites as you get to share Christ's Peace time and time again over the coming years.

For further study, here are a few scripture verses that speak on this: Coming from Christ: Luke 24:36, John 20:21, John 20:26; Among the early church: Galatians 2:9, Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:25-28, 1 Peter 5:14; With your fellow man: Matthew 5:22-24, Ephesians 4:1-6.

God Bless, and the Peace of Christ be with you!

*~Pastor King*

## Happy New Year!



I was invited and looking forward to the Naomi Helping Hands Christmas party. I have for the last several years led the singing of carols and asked trivia questions on the Christmas season.

This year's celebration was held in the fellowship hall. Other years it has been hosted at a Naomi member's home. At this party, the women can bring their husbands or a male friend – Dr. Dube, Ray Thomas, Bob McFarland, and I attended. There were decorated tables and a table with food and desserts.

We decided to eat first – I was for that! We filled four tables, and the conversations were loud and happy. We shared the Christmas story, and discovered details we did not know. Prizes were awarded for a variety of things – Evelyn Marsh had the best, "Ho! Ho!" and belly laugh of all.

I observed that the members were all anxious to see what their Secret Pal had given them, and who she was. We again ate – second helpings – and new Secret Pal names were given out for next year. We all enjoyed the wonderful fellowship, and to all a good night.

*~Pastor Perez*





## Remembering Rod Anderson



Rod, You will be missed by family and friends but we know you will be running, playing, and singing songs of praise as God sings over you in His Fields of Grace.

### *"Fields of Grace" Big Daddy Weave*

*There's a place that I love to run and play  
There's a place that I sing new songs of praise*

*Dancin' with my Father God in fields of grace*

*There's a place that I lose myself within  
There's a place that I find myself again*

*Dancin' with my Father God in fields of grace*

*There's a place where religion finally dies  
There's a place that I lose my selfish pride*

*Dancin' with my Father God in fields of grace*

*I love my Father, my Father loves me  
I dance for my Father, my Father sings over me  
and nothing can take that away from me*

*Dancin' with my Father God in fields of grace*

*~Bill Eickemeyer*

Thank you to our Immanuel family for all the prayers, love and support you showed to our family during Rod's illness and since his passing. He was honored to serve as your president and it kept his retirement time busy and meaningful. Rod appreciated your cards and visits.

Thank you to Pastor King, Pastor Ben and Pastor Perez for all your support and caring. The service for Rod was a wonderful celebration of Rod's faith and the message touched all in attendance, just as Rod would have wanted.

Thank you to Mary Osborne and all who helped with the luncheon.

A heartfelt wish to all for a blessed Christmas,

*~Jackie, Carrie, Chris and Claire Anderson*



*Immanuel members and ECE families donated extra bags of food for the Lutheran Inner city Network Coalition (LINC) for Thanksgiving. Thanks to all who contributed to this special offering.*



welcome new members with whatever musical talent God gave them.

Blessings in Christ,

~Diane Robinson

Merry Christmas! Yes, even though the secular world abruptly ended any mention of Christmas on December 26<sup>th</sup>, and Christmas trees started appearing on curbs that day, we are still in the liturgical season of Christmas. Remember the 12 days of Christmas? The twelfth and last day of Christmas is January 5<sup>th</sup>.

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, the church celebrates the feast day of Epiphany. The word "epiphany" means to reveal, to shine upon, or to make known. Epiphany celebrates God revealing or manifesting Jesus' identity as true God, Messiah, and Savior of the world. We remember God revealing Jesus to the Magi as the Savior for all people, not just for the Jews. During Epiphany we celebrate Jesus baptism as God reveals Jesus as His beloved Son. During Epiphany we also see Jesus power revealed in His first miracle at the wedding at Cana. The season of Epiphany ends this year on March 4<sup>th</sup>, which is the day before Ash Wednesday.

Many thanks to the members of the adult choir and handbell choir for their dedication, patience with me, and love for their Lord during the busy time of Advent and Christmas! Your contributions to the worship services are immeasurable. You are truly a blessing! Remember, our Music Christmas party is Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, at my house (I guess it is really an Epiphany party!) Regular rehearsals for both bells and choir begin again in the music room off the sanctuary balcony on January 16<sup>th</sup>, bells at 6:30pm and choir at 7:30pm. We



*About 20 members of all ages gathered to sing Christmas carols at 4 homes of our shut-in members on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.*



*Children from the ECE program sang Christmas songs and presented a Nativity scene on Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.*

## ECE Celebrates Christmas



Mrs. Vida's and Ms. Winnie's Two-Year-Old classes had lots of fun during the weeks leading up to the Christmas break. The children dressed up as Santa's helpers, made lots of Christmas decorations, learned about nutcrackers, wore Santa and Snowman sunglasses and had loads of fun at their Christmas Party!



~ Winnie McNamara



## Sunday Morning Coffee/Donut Brigade

Your Help is needed with fellowship time between the Worship Service and SS/Bible Class Hour.

Duties involve:

- Picking up donuts or
- Making the coffee,
- Setting up and cleaning up

### Current Schedule

January: Coffee – Evelyn Marsh  
Donuts – Julie King

Slots are open and waiting to be filled February through June. Sign up in Miertschin Hall or contact Cathleen Chevallier at [jcsnchevallier@gmail.com](mailto:jcsnchevallier@gmail.com) or (936) 499-5531.



**Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**  
6:00 – 10:00pm

A Community Service provided  
by the church.

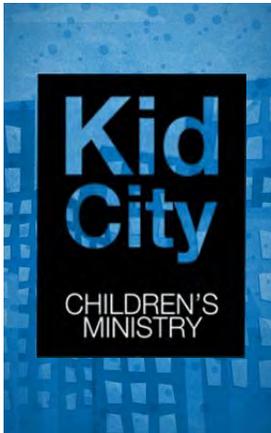


Our next movie night has not been scheduled. We will let you know as soon as the plans are made.

~Cathleen Chevallier

## Sunday School/Adult Bible Class

Happy New Year! Here is an invitation to start the New Year off by attending Sunday School or Bible Study class for your age. If you would like to volunteer to lead or help with one of the classes, the opportunity is always open. The Sunday school department welcomes new faces along with the extra help.



### Sunday School Designed for Kids

10:15am

Miertschin Hall  
Classroom 3  
Pre-School  
(Ages 3-Kindergarten)

Classroom 4  
Elementary  
(Grades 1<sup>st</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup>)

Interactive lessons, video message, games and snacks. Your child will learn who Jesus is and how much God loves them.



Ages 13-18 years

Sunday Mornings at 10:15am in the Gym Basement. Discipleship via video, live teaching and small group discussion.

## Adult Bible Class: The Book of Mark

All adults (over 18) are always welcome to join the journey through the Book of Mark led by Pastor King. The Book of Mark's intended audience was God-fearers of the time, people who already knew about Jesus, so it could be considered best for Christians today. Mark is less wordy and keeps moving, using "immediately" four times more than the other Gospels.

*(Description from Pastor's introductory class)*

My Prayer for the New Year is that all members of Immanuel would consider sharing an hour (10:15 to 11:15am) of their Sunday morning with fellow Christians in a time of Bible Study. No matter what age we are, we can grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ in the Bible along with the joy of Christian fellowship. Join us as we grow. Immanuel grows. Our community grows. Let's work to make the **LOVE of Jesus** contagious. Invite a friend or family member to join you on Sunday morning.

*"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6*

*~Cathleen Chevallier  
Sunday School Superintendent*



*Bonnie Thomas (far right) gave a homemade crocheted baby blanket to Ethan Thomas, born in September, and pictured here with big brother Caleb (ECE Two Year Old class), mom Jennifer and dad Derek.*

## Houston Area Women's Center Gift Project Recap

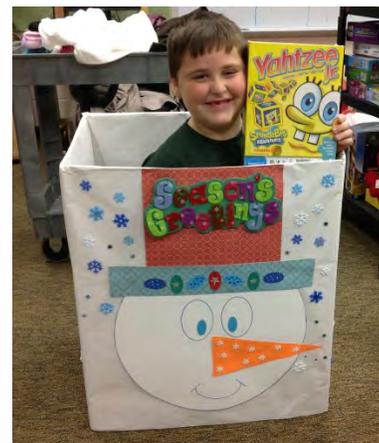


We are delighted to report that our toy/donation drive for the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) Holiday Gift Express was a complete success! Cathy Swanstrom, on behalf of Immanuel Lutheran School Early Childhood Education and Immanuel Lutheran Church, presented Pam Hobbs, Manger of Children's Court Services, with a check for **\$4,000**. We exceeded our cash donation goal by \$500 and still hope to receive matching funds of \$1,000 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.



*(l-r) Pam Hobbs, Manger of Children's Court Services, along with Winnie McNamara, Immanuel Teacher and Cathy Swanstrom, ECE Director of Immanuel*

In addition to the check, we delivered a van full of toys (about 150 items), clothes and seven \$25 gift cards. Many of the HAWC donation boxes were filled to the brim and we needed a little helping getting all those toys out from the bottom of the boxes. Pastor's younger son, Jacob, dived right in to help! Thanks, Jacob.



The ECE Staff and the Church Evangelism Committee assembled twenty-five women's gift baskets. The baskets were beautifully and festively decorated and were loaded full of goodies. The "Mom" gift baskets are always a big hit.

You did, indeed, make a difference. We arrived in the nick of time with our load of goodies because the Holiday Gift Express Store was in danger of running short on toys and gift cards this year. There are more than 1,000 children in programs at HAWC and you enabled the provision of gifts for about 250 of the children in those programs. We were told that gift cards would be purchased with our cash donation for the older kids who love receiving a gift card because they seldom get to buy anything for themselves.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your kind generosity and support of our 2013 community service project. May you and your family enjoy all the blessings of the New Year! The Staff of ILS ECE: Cathy, Agnes, Anita, Audrey, Connie, Kelli, Liz, Melissa, Randi, Tyler, Ursula, Valinda, Vida and Winnie.

*~Winnie McNamara*

## ECE Thanksgiving Feast

The Early Childhood Education Thanksgiving Feast was hosted by the ECE Staff held on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> to show our thanks for our school family and friends.



*ECE Teachers (l-r): Back Row: Anita Wiese, Vida Triana, Winnie McNamara, Liz Cooper, Ursula Fisler . Front Row: Director, Cathy Swanstrom, Audrey Cooper. Not pictured: Melissa Robles*

Although the weather was a little chilly and wet, the children had a great time playing in the bouncy houses, making sand art projects, fishing in the fishpond and participating in the cakewalk! More than one hundred plates of delicious traditional thanksgiving foods were served at this fun event!

The children stole the show by singing several cute Thanksgiving songs including *Albuquerque Turkey*, *Ten Little Turkeys*, and *If You're Thankful and You Know It*. The children also recited a poem that is loved by young and old alike: "The turkey is a funny bird! His head goes wobble, wobble! He only knows just one word, GOBBLE, GOBBLE, GOBBLE!"

~ Winnie McNamara



## Thinking about New Years' Resolutions?

What sort of New Year's resolution should a Christian make? Here are some suggestions: (1) pray to the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5) in regards to what resolutions, if any, He would have you make; (2) pray for wisdom as to how to fulfill the goals God gives you; (3) rely on God's strength to help you; (4) find an accountability partner who will help you and encourage you; (5) don't become discouraged with occasional failures; instead, allow them to motivate you further; (6) don't become proud or vain, but give God the glory. Psalm 37:5-6 says, "Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

*Excerpt from <http://www.gotquestions.org/new-years-resolution.html>, Got Questions Ministries, CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.*

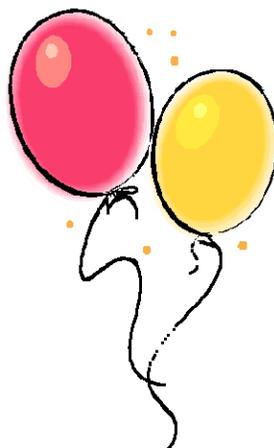
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# January 2014

## *Birthdays*

- 8<sup>th</sup> Fred Cooper
- 9<sup>th</sup> Ramona Glenn
- 11<sup>th</sup> Harry Arndt
- 12<sup>th</sup> Walter Kain
- 15<sup>th</sup> John Whitefield
- 16<sup>th</sup> Jackie Anderson  
Jay Ford  
Troy Henderson
- 17<sup>th</sup> Olivia Garza  
Gail Walther
- 18<sup>th</sup> Geoff Luker  
Frank Petway
- 19<sup>th</sup> Ronnie Cade  
A. B. Kleb Jr.  
Melissa Theis
- 20<sup>th</sup> Toyia Evans
- 21<sup>st</sup> Alicia Spangler  
Barbara Szalkowski  
Tyler Tate
- 22<sup>nd</sup> T.C. Koester  
Chance Ledoux  
Larry Stephens Jr.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Laura Morgan  
Daniel Ortiz Jr.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Karen Henderson
- 25<sup>th</sup> Carolyn Breithaupt  
Linda Wehring
- 27<sup>th</sup> Austin Pena
- 28<sup>th</sup> Keith Lutjemeier
- 29<sup>th</sup> Gerald Owen
- 31<sup>st</sup> Sara Vanover



## Birthdays & Anniversaries This Month

### *Anniversaries . . .*

Wesley & Bernice Stringfellow  
58 years together on the 14<sup>th</sup>

Karen & Norman Henderson  
28 years on the 17<sup>th</sup>

Xiomara & Nicholas Litinas  
11 years on the 23<sup>rd</sup>



# Immanuel Lutheran Church - January 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <b>New Years' Day</b>	2 Bingo 1:00 pm	3	4 Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 12:30 – 3:00 pm
5 Worship @ 9:00 am w/Communion Adult Bible Class and Sunday School @ 10:15 am Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	6 P.I.M. 4:00 pm	7 All Boards @ 7:00 pm	8 9:30 – ECE Chapel	9 7:00 pm – Music Party @ Diane's House	10	11 Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 12:30 – 3:00 pm
12 Worship @ 9:00 am Adult Bible Class and Sunday School @ 10:15 am Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	13	14 Men's Breakfast @ AAA Restaurant @ 6:00 am 6:00 pm Council Meeting	15 <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> 9:30 am – ECE Chapel Women's Bible Study @ 10:00 am	16  Hamburger Fry 11:00 am – 1:00 pm 6:30 pm – Handbells 7:30 pm - Choir	17 Parents' Time Off 6:00–10:00 pm	18 Rental Miertschin Hall Friends of Down Syndrome 10:00 – 3:00 pm Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 12:30 – 3:00 pm
19 Worship @ 9:00 am w/Communion Adult Bible Class and Sunday School @ 10:15 am Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	20 <b>M L King Day</b>	21	22 9:30 am – ECE Chapel	23 6:30 pm – Handbells 7:30 pm - Choir	24	25 Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 12:30 – 3:00 pm
26 Worship @ 9:00 am Adult Bible Class and Sunday School @ 10:15 am Unveil Church @ 10:15 am Social Sunday 11:30 am	27	28 Men's Breakfast @ AAA Restaurant @ 6:00 am 7:00 pm Voters Meeting	29 9:30 am – ECE Chapel	30 6:30 pm – Handbells 7:30 pm - Choir	31	



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Houston, TX 77008  
<http://immanuelhouston.org/>

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HOUSTON, TEXAS

**Return Service Requested**

To the Family of:

*God with us, transforming and sending*



January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
Serving 11:30 -12:30

Menu: Meal-in-a-Peel,  
Salad, Dessert, and  
Drink

Stay and visit with old  
friends, make new  
friends, play games