

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 6, No. 2

<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

January 2017

## New Year's Top 10 List

Every year, as January rolls around, many people go through the ritual of making a New Year's Resolution. They pick something in their life that needs work, and they decide to make a concerted effort to work on it. Here is a list of the Top 10 Resolutions from this past year:



1. Lose Weight
2. Getting Organized
3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Staying Fit and Healthy
6. Learn Something Exciting
7. Quit Smoking
8. Help Others in Their Dreams
9. Fall in Love
10. Spend More Time with Family

As you can see the list is quite diverse, and most of these are admirable goals. If you or I were to pick ONE single thing to concentrate on improving this year, would our time be best spent on any one of these? Maybe God's Word could enlighten us.

*"Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73: 25-26.*

Sometimes it is difficult to figure out what is right and what is wrong. When we lift our hearts to the Lord all our other priorities in life can be straightened out. Where should our time be spent? On what should my money be spent? Whom should I give my heart and loyalty? These are all reasonable questions, and to live a fruitful life we must address them. Maybe this year you could follow the advice of Jesus in setting your priorities.

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37.*

God Bless you and Happy New Year!

~Pastor King

# Christmas Caroling

On Sunday, December 11, volunteers from Immanuel and Unveil made visits to shut-in and housebound members.

*(continued on page 3)*



*Fred & Marilyn Cooper (center) and Immanuel carolers.*



*Velma Harmel (center) with Pastor King and carolers.*



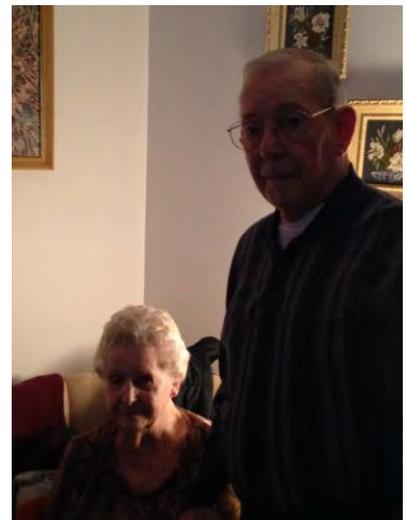
*Elma Hoffman (far left) with family – (right to left) Ray & Bonnie Thomas, Malachi & Cameron Whitener.*



*TC Koester (seated) with carolers.*



*Henry & Val Dietrich (center, back) and Immanuel carolers.*



*Dick & Vernice Wilson*

# Caroling

*(continued from page 2)*

They sang Christmas carols and presented each with a gift. The singers were: Lonnie and Kathy Angst, Genesis and Cross Gonzales, Ken Harvey, Pastor, Julie, Lawrence and Jacob King, Virginia Kleb, Evelyn Marsh, Maria Ortiz, Pastor Perez, Joel and Diane Robinson, Barbara Szalkowski, Ray and Bonnie Thomas and their grandchildren Cameron and Malachi Whitener.

The event put everyone in the Christmas spirit, and it was greatly appreciated by all those who were visited. Thank you to all who participated!

*~text and photos by Diane Robinson*

*Thanks also to Diane & Joel Robinson who organized this year's caroling outing and provided the map of the route, to Winnie McNamara who put together the gifts, and to Julie King who made the cards for the gifts.*



On Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, ushers will collect our regular 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday door offering to support our Social Ministry.

**Sunday January 29<sup>th</sup>  
Voters' Meeting  
@Noon  
after Bible Class/Sunday School,  
and a Light Lunch**



### Winter Drama: "Cirque la famille"

An original work written and directed by a LHN student.

Sat. Jan. 14 7:00 pm

Sun. Jan. 15 3:00 pm

### Plan ahead for the spring musical



Matinees for senior citizens and children:  
Thursday, May 27 9:00 am and 12:30 pm

Evening performances:  
Friday-Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm

See the online calendar for all activities:  
<http://lutheranhighnorthtxus.tandem.co/>

*~Lynn Eickemeyer*

### Newsletter Staff

Editor.....Barbara Szalkowski  
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.....Cathleen Chevallier  
.....Audrey Cooper  
.....Lynn Eickemeyer  
.....Karen Evans  
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.....Bob & Martha McFarland  
.....Winnie McNamara  
.....Diane Robinson  
.....Cathy Swanstrom  
Graphic Design.....Matthew Szalkowski

# Mus N c N o t e s

## O God, Our Help in Ages Past - LSB 733

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Psalm 90:1 *TLSB*

At the time of the Reformation, one of the issues was the people's participation in worship. The proper devotional style of music in the vernacular was questioned. Luther embraced the idea of folk music, wrote hymns himself and encouraged others to do the same. But John Calvin in the Reformed Church was convinced that the only fit body of poetry to be sung in church was the *Psalms* themselves. In English song collections the number of tunes tended to be reduced to those in Common Meter. Meter is indicated under the hymn tune name in the *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB) and Common Meter (CM) is a tune of four lines with the number of syllables 8, 6, 8, 6. These two things had a stifling effect on church music. Finally, change came about as the Psalm was expanded from strict translation to paraphrase, and then freer paraphrase. It was time for Isaac Watts.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was a prominent Dissenter and influential London minister. His first hymn was written on his father's suggestion that he write something better when Watts had complained that the Psalm versions were harsh and uncouth. Watts wrote

over 600 hymns, and his paraphrases were in great demand. They expressed a freer expression of devotion and of the Gospel, God's revelation in Christ. "*O God, Our Help in Ages Past*" paraphrases Psalm 90 but also includes ideas from 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 and Romans 8:18. There are fourteen of Watts' hymns in the *Lutheran Service Book*, including "*Joy to the World*," "*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*," "*O That the Lord Would Guide My Ways*," "*O Bless the Lord My Soul*," and "*From All That Dwell Below the Skies*."

The hymn tune *St. Anne* is attributed to William Croft (1678-1727), organist and composer at Westminster Abbey in England. It was first published in *A Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms* in 1708. The tune *St. Anne* appeared in music by various composers, notably George Frederick Handel's sixth Chandos anthem and J.S. Bach's Fugue in E-flat Major.

In *The Lutheran Hymnal* this hymn was in the New Year section probably because it mentioned the past and years to come. In *LSB*, it is more appropriately in the Trust category. It concludes with the beautiful prayer "O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, be Thou our guide while troubles last and our eternal home!"

[Information for this article comes from *Hymnal companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*, Marilyn K. Stulken, Fortress Press, 1981.]

~Diane Robinson



# Sunday School



From a focus of “Being Thankful” in November to “Amazing Choices” in December, the Sunday School took on a community outreach project. Children and teachers drew pictures and wrote messages of Christmas on bags (left), which were then filled with Ramen noodles, applesauce, crackers, hot chocolate, water, trail mix, candy, a spoon, and napkins. Bags were finished with a Christmas card from Immanuel and an ornament decoration. Each child took bags to share with the homeless and less fortunate on the street.

The hard-working children showed great teamwork decorating and filling the bags.

The decision to reach out with those in need helped us all focus on the greatest Christmas gift of all, Jesus and to share the Christmas spirit of loving, giving and sharing with others. We finished up the Christmas season with a birthday party for Jesus on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Sunday School will start again in the New Year on January 8<sup>th</sup>; we invite children of all ages (under 3 with an adult) to join us as we learn about Jesus through story, songs, games and crafts



“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

**May Jesus Light  
shine on you all year  
long.**

**Blessed New  
Year**



# Thank you for all your donations to the 2016 *Thanksgiving Share-A-Meal*

A successful outreach project for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row.

On Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, Immanuel blessed (6) Pastors and their families, (5) Congregational families, and (1) Friends of Down Syndrome family. Families were given a boneless ham, (2) boxes of food, paper goods and gift cards. Some were blessed with personal items, food, and gift cards, while others received just gift cards. This project was supported through your very generous "feather plucking" contributions and \$250 from Thrivent Financial.

This event would not have been possible without you. All the recipients were very appreciative and could not say "thank you" enough.

*~Cathleen Chevallier*



**Wray family  
from Hope**



**Herrera family  
from Jesus and Me**



**Gonzales family  
from Unveil**



**Avila family from  
Jehova Jireth**



**Hernandez family  
from Iglesia Cristiana  
Emanuel**

# ECE Christmas Program

This month, our classrooms learned about the baby Jesus' birth. The children learned that Christmas is Jesus' birthday, but we are the ones that are getting the most special gift; the greatest gift is JESUS! God gives us so many gifts through Jesus. He gives us forgiveness, life and salvation through this baby – Jesus. These gifts are even better than the gold, frankincense and myrrh!

The children's program was our way of sharing the story of Jesus' birthday with their parents. Each class was dressed as a character in the nativity. Then, class pictures were taken and given to the parents so that each family will always remember that Jesus' birthday is special time. A time given to us by a God that loves us so much that He gave us His Son; the baby in the manger.



*~Cathy Swanstrom  
photos by Audrey Cooper & Bob McFarland*

# Staff Christmas Party



The Immanuel ECE Staff and School Board had their annual Christmas Party on Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

Everyone enjoyed a game of First and Last where the object was to create a “model” Christmas tree. The goal was to be in First place or Last place. Lynn Eickemeyer's team won 1st place, Tyler Tate's team won 2nd place, Joel Robinson's team won 3rd place, and Pastor King's team won last place.

The Staff also enjoyed a “potluck” dinner, a game of secret Angels and a good ol’-fashioned game of White Elephant. The staff was treated to a stress relieving massage from a licensed masseuse, courtesy of the King family. Overall it was a wonderful night of games, food and fellowship. Thank you, Lord, for another great calendar year.

*~Audrey Cooper*

*Santa made an appearance at the Staff party! (photo by Diane Robinson)*



*Lynn Eickemeyer*

*Tyler Tate*

*Joel Robinson*

*Pastor King*



## Focus on Stewardship

Celebrating New Year's is a celebration of the past and the future. We take stock of the past with thanksgiving and sometimes even relief (that it's over), and we look to the future in the hope and anticipation and perhaps even worry of what it holds.

The point is that New Year's celebrations remind us of who we are as opposed to who we would like to be; what we have done in comparison to what we want to do. It reminds us of our accomplishments, but mostly it reminds us of our failures. What we've lost. Who we've lost.

New Year's is our own version of Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*. And we all play Scrooge. We are visited by the ghosts of our pasts, presents, and futures.

St. Paul writes: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor 9:6–15).

St. Paul tells us that the Lord of all will both supply and increase what you need to give to the church for its work in and for the world. He tells us that this work that God is doing in us will enrich and bless us in every way and through this it will produce thanksgiving to God. With this in mind, here is some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving of years past, which will help you to change what needs to be changed, improved, or done away with altogether.

First, attend the Divine Service to receive God's gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. If you've not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God's Word, to receive forgiveness, and feast of the rich food of our Lord's body and blood for the eternal benefit of your body and soul, then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn't want your money. He wants you—all of you (Matt 22:20–22).

Second, pray for the Lord's help. Your right as a Christian is to speak with your Father, the King of all creation, freely through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to follow His bidding faithfully (John 15:1–16).

Third, consider what the Church is and what the Church does. The Church is a mercy place. It inhales the mercy of the Father by the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments.

It exhales this mercy in love toward the neighbor. You are a member of the Church, of God's family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God's mercy, but a bearer of that mercy for

*(continued on page 10)*

# Alaska Ministry

*[Excerpt from an email sent December 7, 2016.]*

Exciting things are continuing to happen. But there is much work to do. The Church building being constructed by the village of Tetlin is almost complete and we are still working to hold regular services there.

We are in the process of obtaining funding for a van/shuttle bus to facilitate ministry. As the Pastor of the non-geographic congregation of Denali Lutheran, I have about 50 parishioners "on the books" scattered throughout Alaska and we are working to have better communication and more frequent contact.

Services continue wonderfully in the village of Tanacross averaging about 10-15 village residents every week. We look forward to an anticipated Christmas Eve candlelight vigil service with about 70 present, along with an "impromptu" children's Christmas program. Along with all this we are also involved in a youth ministry in Tok, as well as with a women's Bible study. We have been blessed to host a number of activities in our home now that the remodel is mostly complete.

Prayer requests: for the youth ministry in Tok, which continues to grow; for wisdom and insight as Stacey and I seek to minister to the villages, and patience for the Spirit of God to work in his own timing; for thankfulness for those who are currently victorious in their battle against addiction and for continued perseverance in that fight.

We give thanks for each of you!

*~Rev. Keith Aschenbeck  
Missionary - Upper Tanana Valley, AK*

You can now support the Alaska Mission for Christ via Thrivent Choice Dollars  
<https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/>  
and Amazon.com's Smile program  
<http://smile.amazon.com>

## Stewardship . . .

*(continued from page 9)*

the life of the world. You spread that mercy in showing mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the Church in and for the world, as the Israelites did in the Old Testament (Lev 27:1-34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament's teaching on supporting the work of the Church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first, or does God get what's left over? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church's work. Are you relying on God's promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If your answer is no to any of these, repent. If God gave you His only Son, will He not provide for you all things, even physical things? Trust Him, His Word, and heed it.

So, don't let your past define your future. Rather, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, which is God's gift to you for this body and life.

*(Stewardship newsletter insert for January 2017,  
provided on the LCMS website <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=4428>)*

*~submitted by Kathy Angst*

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Community Service Project a Huge Success!

On behalf of the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) Holiday Express, *I thank you all* (church and ECE families) for your generous contributions of time, cash, gift cards, and toys. We exceeded our cash goal of \$5,000.00 and were able to deliver \$5,481.00 to HAWC along with lots of toys and gift cards. They were so grateful for our generosity. The cash donation provided \$25 gift cards for almost 200 children between the ages of 11 and 17.



Thanks to Cathy Swanstrom, Connie Meave, and all the ECE Staff for assisting with the collection of toys and gifts.



Every woman living in the shelter got one of the 55 beautiful "Mom Baskets" we made. Kudos to Karen Evans, Lauren Neu, Carol Whitefield, and Meredith Whitefield for assembling and wrapping all those



baskets, and to Cathleen Chevallier for making the gorgeous bows.



A special thanks to the students of the Friends of Down Syndrome Academy and their job coach, Bert Castillo, for taking every single price tag off the items donated for the baskets. It was a time-consuming effort (two days of work), but the students were happy to help and accomplished their task very efficiently.

Ken Harvey, our Congregation President,



presented the check to Aly Kramer Jacobs, HAWC Manager of Counseling and Advocacy, the day we made the delivery.

*(continued on page 12)*

# HAWC Project . . .

*(continued from page 11)*

It took four vehicles to get everything to the HAWC offices. Thank you to Kathy Angst, Lonnie Angst, Ken Harvey, and Cheryl Kramer for helping with this task on a drizzly day.



Thrivent Financial has graciously provided assistance with this project over the past five years and, this year they again provided toys and items for the gift baskets.

Our annual Scholastic Book Fair offers a program called "All for Books." During the book fair we collect loose change to be used to purchase books. "All for Books" and outright book donations made by ECE families allowed us to donate 63 new books to the Holiday Express.



The need for providing "Mom Baskets" is not as great as it has been in the past. We will be changing the focus next year to provide 50 small gift bags for teenage girls and boys that have about \$15 worth of product in them.

The teenagers will get a \$25 gift card along with the little bag of goodies. We will still need travel items, cosmetics, gloves, and makeup bags for the girls and music cd's, movies, thumb drives, and head phones for the boys. We will begin collecting these items now for next year. Of course, we always need toys.

Again, I thank you for sharing your Christmas. You did, indeed, make a difference in the life of a child.

*~Winnie McNamara*

## Christmas at Village in the Heights



Residents Alice and Herb Richter (left) enjoying the festive decorations and good company.

*~Martha McFarland  
photo by Harvey Richter*

# 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!



Although this is the first issue of 2017, this is the second issue of Volume 6 – *Connections* started in December 2011, which seemed fitting since

Advent and the beginning of the Church year starts then.

Since that beginning, *Connections* has been published every month, so this is issue #62. 2017 will bring a slight change in our schedule – for all of the 5 years, it has been a struggle to get enough content for a July issue. So, beginning this year, there will only be 11 issues, and no July issue. And, don't worry, the July calendar, and birthday and anniversary lists will be in the June issue.

I want to thank each and every person listed in the "Staff" box on page 3, and all who have ever helped with an issue. Thanks to the writers and others who have submitted content, especially those who do so often. Special thanks to the gifted members who artistically arrange photos and text on a page. Thanks to the proofreaders and production helpers. And, finally, that you to all you readers! I thank God for each and every one of you!

*~Barbara Szalkowski*



SEEK. DISCIPLE. MULTIPLY.

**Mission Sunday • January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Rev. David Kim, Glocal Mission**

**Preaching Sermon and  
Teaching Adult Bible Class**

**A Door Offering will be taken  
to support Glocal Mission**



# Immanuel Lutheran Church - January 2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Usher Team #3</b> <b>New Year's Day</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am <i>No Sunday School,</i> <i>Adult Bible Class</i>	<b>2</b>  <b>Offices</b> <b>Closed</b>	<b>3</b>  <b>ECE</b> <b>First day back!</b>  All Boards @ 7:00 pm	<b>4</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Glocal Mission Bible Evening Youth Room @ 7:00-10:00 pm	<b>5</b>  <b>Bingo</b> <b>@ 1:00-3:00 pm</b>  Music Ministry Social @ 6:30 pm @ Robinson's	<b>6</b>  Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00-8:00 pm	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Usher Team #4</b> Worship Service @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	<b>9</b>  Bible Study @6:30-8:00 pm	<b>10</b> Naomi Meeting @10:00 am  Church Council @ 7:00 pm	<b>11</b> Glocal Mission Bible Evening Youth Room @ 7:00-10:00 pm	<b>12</b>  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>13</b>  Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00-8:00 pm	<b>14</b>  <b>FOD</b> <b>New Year's Dance</b> <b>@ 4:00-9:00 pm</b>
<b>15 Usher Team #5</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	<b>16</b> <b>Martin Luther</b> <b>King, Jr. Day</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Glocal Mission Bible Evening Youth Room @ 7:00-10:00 pm	<b>19</b>  <b>Hamburger Fry</b> <b>11:00 am-1:00 pm</b>  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>20</b>  Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00-8:00 pm	<b>21</b>
<b>22 Usher Team #1</b> <b>Mission Sunday</b> Worship Service @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	<b>23</b>  Bible Study @6:30-8:00 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Glocal Mission Bible Evening Youth Room @ 7:00-10:00 pm	<b>26</b>  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	<b>27</b>  Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00-8:00 pm	<b>28</b>
<b>29 Usher Team #2</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am <b>Voters Meeting</b> <b>@ noon</b>	<b>30</b>  <b>Young Life Club</b> <b>Gym</b> <b>@ 5:30-9:00 pm</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Newsletter</b> <b>Deadline</b> <b>Sunday</b> <b>January 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mission</b> <b>Sunday</b> <b>January 22<sup>nd</sup></b> <b>Rev. David Kim</b> <b>Glocal</b>	<b>Social</b> <b>Ministry</b> <b>Door Offering</b> <b>Sunday</b> <b>January 29<sup>th</sup></b>	



Immanuel Lutheran Church  
306 E 15th St  
Houston, TX 77008

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ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT NO. 2489  
NORTH HOUSTON,  
TEXAS

**Return Service Requested**

To the Family of:

*Loving God ~ Loving Neighbors ~ Serving Others*

**Adults – Get Into the Word In 2017!**

**Bible Class on Exodus  
Sundays • 10:15 am**

**Weekday Bible Study on Martin Luther  
1st & 3rd Wednesdays • 10:00 am**

**Weeknight Bible Study on Acts  
Regularly 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays • 6:30 pm  
(January: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays)**