

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 7, No. 2

<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

January 2018



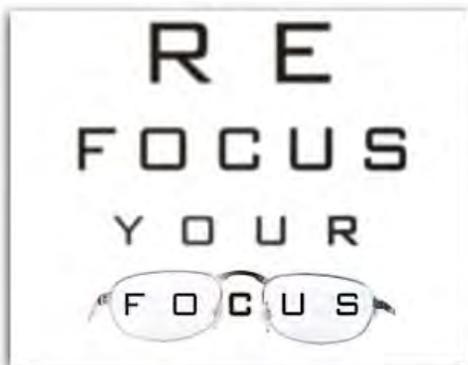
Eureka! I've Got It!



Have you ever heard these words, or even said them yourself? It's a familiar phrase that makes us think of little cartoon lightbulbs shining above our heads. There is that moment where something once hidden or obscured becomes crystal clear. Another way to say this is to have an "epiphany."

January 6 the Christian Church celebrates the Magi coming to the baby Jesus. These Wise Men from the East recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah, as the Christ. They had that "Eureka!" moment. They saw their salvation revealed in Jesus.

Each year during January, I hear so much about "New Year's Resolutions." It seems everyone has a list of things they want to accomplish that will change their lives. This year instead of focusing on what *you* can do to change your life, maybe you can focus on what Jesus has already done to change your life – here and eternally. Try thinking about it as "New Gospel Revelations" instead of "New Year's Resolutions."



There may be some things we should all do differently in the coming year to make our lives better and more God pleasing, but the biggest thing you can do is simply remember that you have new life revealed in Jesus TODAY! Eureka! I've got it.

~ Happy New Year,
Pastor King



Continuing To Meet ECE Staff

Once again, I did not meet my goal to meet all of our ECE teachers, aides, and staff in 2017. But I did get to enjoy the children's Christmas program. The children were divided into 2 groups to present the Christmas story. What a treat!

I was scheduled for the ECE's regular Chapel time on Wednesday, December 6, but when I got to the sanctuary, I saw Pastor King already there. I thought that perhaps Pastor King was doing Chapel that morning. But, no, there was a presentation of the Christmas story by the younger children. When I looked out the door, I saw parents, grandparents, and other relatives had filled half of the church!

The next week the older children presented the Christmas story. Once again, half of the church was full. Oh, what a show: Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and the singing. God's blessing to me and to the parents!

Pastor and I sat on one of the pews close to the exit. Parents on both dates said that splitting the children into two groups to present two programs was better than having all of the children at once. I looked forward to the outdoor presentation for the community that was held on Saturday, December 16.

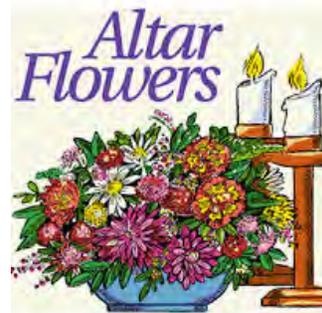
Even though my plans to meet and interact with teachers and aides were canceled, I was invited to read a book to one of the classes where Estella Tristan was an aide. I love to

read to children, and that includes telling stories. Too soon, it was lunch time, and also time for me to go home for my own lunch.

At least now I have a good New Years' resolution for 2018: meet the remaining ECE teachers and aides!

~Pastor Perez

(See Christmas presentation photos on page 3)



The 2018 Calendar for Altar Flowers is available in the Narthex (on the bulletin board at the bottom of the stairs to the balcony). Members may donate the cost of

the chancel floral arrangements to honor or in memory of a family member, friend, or special occasion, or to the glory of God for blessings received.

Simply sign up on the calendar for the date(s) and number of arrangements, and fill out a card for the church office to recognize your donation in the Sunday worship bulletin.

Arrangements are \$35.00 each, and checks can be placed in the offering plate or given to the church office. After the service, you can take your arrangement(s) home or donate them to brighten our staff and shut-in members.

If you have any questions, contact Denise Goehring, Chair of the Altar Guild, or the church office. And thank you in advance for helping to give praise and glory to God through the beautification of our sanctuary for our worship services.



ECE
2017



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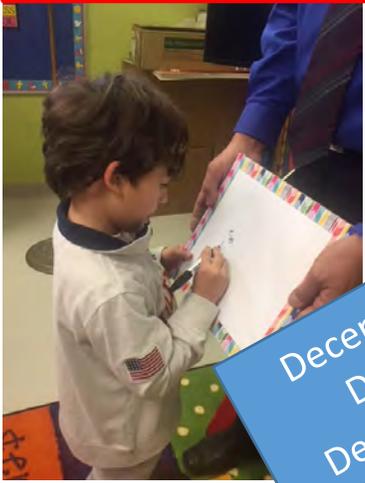
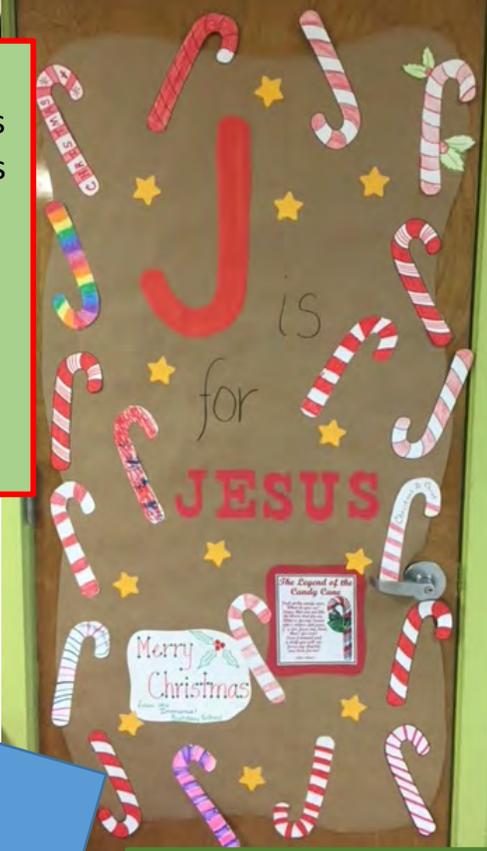
~photos by Audrey Cooper & Connie Meave

Sunday School in Action



Total of **6 Bags** of gently used **toys** were donated to the Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry

On Sunday, December 17th, all the children and teachers celebrated the Birth of Jesus with a party. We painted ornaments, read scripture, sang songs, played games and enjoyed snacks and presents. A joyous hour with our Christian family.



December Door Decoration

May you all have a Happy and Blessed 2018!
Start the new year off by attending Church at 9:00 am along with Sunday School or Bible Class at 10:30 am.
Join Us on a Walk with Jesus!



25 SHOEBOXES were donated to **Operation Christmas Child**
Because of the generosity shown by the congregation and the ECE families, the Sunday School children were able to fill and wrap 25 shoeboxes. (5 over our Goal of 20) On November 20th, the boxes were dropped at Trinity Klein complete with tracking labels. We have been able to follow our boxes to Panama and Mexico. We are now hoping to receive a reply from the children. Each of our boxes included a Christmas card with our church address and a picture of the SS children. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

Special Festivities

On Sunday, December 10, the Naomi Willing Workers celebrated Christmas a little early with their annual Christmas party, this year at the home of Cleo Fischer.



Enjoying the festivities were *(left-right, seated)*: Dora Schulle, Sigrid Reifel, and Cleo Fischer; *(standing left-right)*: Maxine Arndt, Evelyn Marsh, Martha McFarland, Elisa Perez, Carla Faske, Bonnie Thomas, Dorothy Klander, and Margaret Beacom.

~photo by Bob McFarland



January Events

Jan. 4th @ 7:00 pm - **Alumni Soccer Game**

Jan. 9th - **Slam Jam Preview Night**

Tours and multiple home games

Jan. 13th - **Middle School Basketball Tournament - Boys and Girls**

Jan. 20th @ 7:00 pm, Jan. 21st @ 3:00 pm
Winter drama

Jan. 29th @ 4:00 pm

Grade school student auditions for the musical "Honk"

Jan. 31st @ 12:30 pm

Academic Quest - Middle school academic competition

Home Games

JV Boys Basketball

Jan. 9th @ 4:30 pm, 11th @ 5:30 pm,
25th @ 5:00 pm

Varsity Boys Basketball

Jan. 9th @ 7:30 pm, 11th @ 7:00 pm,
16th @ 7:30 pm, 25th @ 8:00 pm

JV Girls Basketball

Jan. 20th @ 12:30 pm, 25th @ 4:00 pm

Varsity Girls Basketball

Jan. 9th @ 6:00 pm, 16th @ 6:00 pm,
19th @ 6:30 pm, 20th @ 2:00 pm,
25th @ 6:30 pm

JV Boys Soccer

Jan. 26th @ 5:00 pm

Varsity Boys Soccer

Jan. 9th @ 5:00 pm, 16th @ 5:00 pm,
17th @ 5:00 pm, 22nd @ 7:00 pm

Varsity Girls Soccer

Jan. 8th @ 5:00 pm, 22nd @ 5:00 pm

~Lynn Eickemeyer





More from the Ladies midweek Bible Study group members.

Mary's Poem

by Bonnie Thomas

About the time to leave,
Bethlehem to go.
Census to be taken.
Donkey to ride – how far?

Ever traveling, traveling;
Finally there at last.
Gathered people all around.
How can this be? No place to stay.

In a barn will be all right, I guess,
Just with the cows and lambs.
Keep the manger close by—
Looks like time for birth.

My goodness, my blessed Boy is here.
Now I see the angel's message.
Opening my eyes, I see His love.
Praise to my wonderful God above.

Quiet, only the sound of the Baby's breath.
Raised voices I hear from the distance.
Sounds like praise to my God,
Thanks and praise for this special Baby.

Up from their sheep the shepherds come,
Voicing their praise and the Heavenly message.
Why, Lord, was I chosen for this joy,
X-periencing this miracle of perfection?

You, my baby Boy, will be the world's Savior,
Zion's Lord and King.

By Sandi Hrozek

Almighty Lord is what I call Him,
Blessed and worshiped in Heav'n and earth.
Cause of all things right and holy,
Designer of our souls, our lives.

Everlasting His dominion,
Forever is His power shown.
Gathered round in praise eternal,
Heavenly hosts surround His throne.

In a ransom for my evils,
Jesus died on Calvary.
Keeps me by His side forever,
Loves me into eternity.

Many praises will I give Him;
Never will His love depart.
Open armed, He me embraces.
Peace, joy, love invade my heart.

Quietness, mercy He has taught me,
Raising me from depths of gloom.
Stalwart devotion is my answer
To the Father, Spirit, Son.

Use me, Lord, to show Your glory,
Voicing Your name to all the world,
Walking where Your hand would lead me,
X-periencing Your daily love.

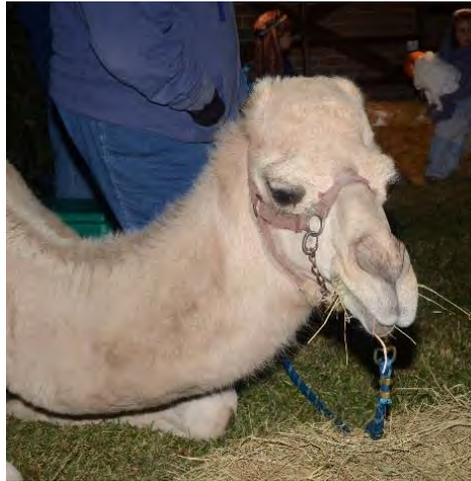
You, oh Lord, who died for me,
Zealous may I be for Thee.

If you have any poetry or prose that you would like to share, please email it to the Editor or drop it off in the Newsletter box in the Office.

Christmas Celebration

On December 16, we held our Christmas Celebration. It truly felt like Christmas as we braved the weather with about 150 neighbor friends and family members to enjoy a live children's nativity and sing carols to celebrate Christ's birth. A huge thank you to all who came out and celebrated with us. Enjoy the photos of the event!







Focus on Stewardship

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless. But it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the Small Catechism informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties and our questions arise in giving to the church.

So, what is our duty as members of the church with regard to giving? The Table of Duties, again, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer, a member of the church who receives instruction, St. Paul taught: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

(continued on page 8)



What IS That White Stuff?

On Friday morning, December 8, the greater Houston area woke up to enough of a dusting of snow to see and photograph, and to make a little snowman out of it.



--photo by Winnie McNamara



--Snowman photos submitted by Connie Meave

Stewardship . . .

(continued from page 7)

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

(Stewardship newsletter insert for January 2018, from the LCMS website <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=4916>)

~submitted by Kathy Angst



Sunday January 28th, @11:30 am

Mission Report: Los Schullers for God in Puerto Rico

Although little, Puerto Rico still needs to keep hearing the Gospel! Puerto Ricans are a resilient people! Even after being swooped down on by Hurricanes Irma, Harvey, Maria, and Jose, they smile, walk, laugh and dance! "God has kept me alive!"

We now care for two churches, Principe de Paz and Fuente de Vida. (Prince of Peace and Fountain of Life). Gustavo Arturo Maita, sent from the Dominican Republic, helps with Lutheran Disaster Relief. Bill Lohmeyer will help to get systems going and organized. Both are from the Lutheran Church in the Dominican Republic. We have been helping with food, prayer and encouragement of the Gospel for those with damaged homes.



Yes, many trees have fallen and electrical lines are down, but the Lord, God in heaven is still our Power. We continue with prayer at the



YMCA, Bible study, Psalms y Café at a huge mall, as well food distribution in Mayaguez on the west Coast, and in Ponce on the southern coast. In fact, the great news is that we are about to begin renting a building only two blocks from the center of Ponce for Lutheran Disaster Relief to provide spiritual care and outreach to Ponce.

As many piles of limbs and downed trees are removed, so the rat and mice populations and mosquitoes diminish. A Savior, Jesus Christ, has been born in a broken world, yet Jesus offers new life, fresh like a newborn baby for those who believe. Praise to the only King, in His being born into a human world, in the flesh but greater than the Kings that worshiped and tried to destroy Him. In the manger, the Savior Jesus begins His rule from a humble throne: Savior, King, God, Lord, human Baby. "For unto you a King is born!"

Thanks for all your prayers and gifts that the word of God might go out in word and deed to all here.

*~ In Christ,
Missionaries Richard and Gema Schuller*

*See the full report at
<https://spark.adobe.com/page/r60Ih7fAttZdV/>*



(Excerpt from 2017 #3, December)

Isabel, with the help of a microphone, sings a song she wrote for her son. Everyone in the hall listens in hushed silence as another elder softly beats a drum to the cadence of her voice. It's a beautiful song about the love of family for a man known for his generosity. A mother praising the life of her son while also mourning his death, a hard fought battle against cancer to which he finally succumbed.

Suddenly Isabel puts down the microphone, yet continues singing. Mouths gasp and eyes swell with tears, as this 98 year old rises and begins to dance, bouncing her cane on the floor in unison with the drum. A community of family and friends surround her and join in the song. It has been a long week since his death, and much of this night still looms before the group gathered, but in the midst of their mourning they celebrate Isabel and the life of her son.



In the midst of moments like these there are undercurrents of darkness that flow deeply in the shadows. In the midst of that darkness

light breaks forth. Earlier in the day, the Light of Christ shown forth during the funeral service. The result of that light drew "Carlos" to seek me out. As I was walking to the community hall for the evening meal, he approached and pulled me to the side. Evidently he had been waiting and watching for some time. The pain and suffering in his eyes was telling. For about an hour, standing outside in 20 below zero temperatures, he confessed his many sins and his desire to be free from the bonds of Satan. The pronouncement of forgiveness and prayer brought hope and peace.

Traversing this valley of death we call life, it can often seem victory is followed by defeat. As I approach one of the elders of the village he turns away and refuses to greet me. This isn't exactly a new experience with this man. My relationship with him ebbing like the tide in and out. The day before he greeted me warmly and we sat next to each other the entire evening with good conversation. Somewhere, somehow between the one day and the next I managed to offend him. As usual I have no idea what I did or did not do and he won't say a word. Any attempt to find out is rebuffed with a cold shoulder. Such is the ministry of being present in the moments of life of the people of Alaska.

Please keep the people of Alaska in prayer that the light of Christ would shine forth. Pray also for my family that we would continue to bear the light of Christ in all we say and do.

~Rev. Keith Aschenbeck

(See the complete newsletter issue at <https://www.alaskamissionforchrist.org/s/December-2017-Newsletter-zplp.pdf>)

Support Our Sponsored Missionaries

Alaska Ministry

Rev. Keith Aschenbeck & Family

Donate online at:

<http://www.alaskamissionforchrist.org>

Mail donations to:

Alaska Mission for Christ, 8100 Arctic Blvd.,
Anchorage AK 99518
(Memo: "Keith Aschenbeck")

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>

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>

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

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.

Immanuel Lutheran Church - January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MH=Miertschin Hall	1 	2 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00 – 1:30 pm All Boards @ 7:00 pm	3 ECE Chapel @ 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am	4 Bingo @ 1:00–3:00 pm	5 Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00–8:00 pm	6 Unveil Worship Service (Gym) @ 10:30 am
7 Usher Team #5 Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	8 Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club (Gym) @ 5:30–9:00 Evening Bible Study @ 6:30–8:00 pm	9 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Council @ 7:00 pm	10 ECE Chapel @ 9:30 am	11 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm	12 Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00–8:00 pm	13 Unveil Worship Service (Gym) @ 10:30 am
14 Usher Team #1 Worship Service @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	15 Newsletter Deadline Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club (Gym) @ 5:30–9:00	16 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm ILC Youth Night @ 6:30 pm	17 ECE Chapel @ 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am	18 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00 – 1:30 pm Hamburger Fry @ 11:30–1:00 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00 – 9:00 pm	19 Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00–8:00 pm	20 Unveil Worship Service (Gym) @ 10:30 am
21 Usher Team #2 Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	22 Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club (Gym) @ 5:30–9:00 Evening Bible Study @ 6:30–8:00 pm	23 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm	24 ECE Chapel @ 9:30 am	25 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm	26 Unveil Lutheran Church Gym Setup 6:00–8:00 pm	27 Unveil Worship Service (Gym) @ 10:30 am
28 Usher Team #3 Worship Service @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am Voters Meeting @ 11:30 am	29 Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club (Gym) @ 5:30–9:00	30 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm ILC Youth Night @ 6:30 pm	31 ECE Chapel @ 9:30 am			



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**Youth
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Tuesdays

January 16th & 30th

6:30-8:00 pm