

Immanuel Messenger

“God With Us”

December 2022 – Volume 22 Issue 7

“Love Came Down from Heaven”

By Pastor Patrick Curley

Love is a paradox. People want to be loved as themselves. But to be loved in this world, you have to fit in. Being yourself runs the risk of being rejected. Dress extremely, have radical ideas, look different, or have unconventional tastes and chances are you won't be loved by many. A few lucky souls make a living at being absurd and have a following but that's only because their fans are trying to do the same thing. That's really just another attempt to fit in somewhere. There are the rebels who say they don't care if they fit in, but they are usually brooding loners. Not much love there. No, to be loved in this world you must be loveable which means basically looking, acting, thinking, and living like everybody else. Stand out in the crowd too much and soon you'll be standing alone.

God doesn't love like that, however. He loves His creation though it is very different than Himself. Even when His creation fell into willful sin and was now very, very different from Himself, God didn't stop loving us. Not only did God not stop loving us but He planned a rescue mission to save us from ourselves and our selfishness. He came down to earth from heaven as one of us but with His very unique way of loving what is difference intact.

God became man. He was born as a baby through a virgin and was given the name Jesus. God had to come as one of us even looking like us so He could come among us and save us from our sin. Jesus wanted to restore God's love to everyone, so He initially had to come in that loveable way; in other words, looking and sounding like everyone else. If He came as the Holy and Almighty God that He is, everyone would have run and hid from Jesus. So, He came as a human in every way except without sin.

But it wasn't long before the sinless difference in Jesus became apparent. He truly loved as love was meant to be. He loved everyone as they were- the sick, the poor, the elderly, children... all who were different. It didn't matter who you were or how beautiful. Jesus didn't love based on appearances or anything else that supposedly makes people popular. He just loved.

The difference of Jesus' divine love was no better seen than when He died on the cross for those who didn't love Him. He loved anyway, even while taking His last breath. Jesus is our hope that we are loved always by God. Not because of who we are or what we do. Not because we fit in somehow or are particularly loveable. God loves us simply because He chooses to do so. This is grace. Though all very different, God loves everyone for Jesus' sake. And despite those differences, He makes us one with Him and with each other. That's what the angel said at His birth, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people”. Then they sang, “Peace on earth, good will to all.”

Merry Christmas! You are loved.

Message from Our Interim Chairman

To the Members of Immanuel,

Our Chairman Jeff Peters has tendered his resignation from the position due to health reasons effective immediately. As Vice Chairman, I will assume the duties in the interim till such time as the congregation has the opportunity to vote. The Board is pursuing quotes for several projects on the church campus. Projects include retrofitting the doors of the church to maintain proper security, as well as repairing the stucco due to water damage, and the putting a fresh coat of paint on our church. Projects will be pursued at the beginning of the new year.

The Board will not meet in December and will resume meetings in January. I hope to provide the leadership that the church requires for this position.

It is my hope that as we enter the Advent season, and ultimately Christmas, that we will be encouraged to share the gospel with family and friends bringing them to Gods house.

Pray for our church, our future development, and outreach to the community.

In the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
John Gilkinson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Interim Chairman: John Gilkinson

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Youth: Christine Cline

Pastor: Patrick Curley

New Year, New Time, Same Gospel



Immanuel will be changing its **Sunday** worship time from **9 AM to 10AM** beginning **January 1, 2023**. This was the majority vote in our November congregational meeting as this question came before the congregation. As was pointed out by a long-time member, Immanuel has had a variety of service times throughout its many years. The hope is that this recent change will help to increase the attendance throughout the year. As schedules have changed significantly in modern times and as many members are traveling some distance to come to worship, perhaps the extra hour will offer some relief and encourage more regular participation. **Bible study will move to the 9 AM slot.** Linger Longer will follow worship as usual. One other thing that was mentioned was with the service ending closer to the lunch hour, maybe we can plan some more potlucks in the coming months instead of just dessert items and coffee?

My advice through the years has always been pastorally that Christians should simply block out Sunday mornings until noon as the Lord's time. The hour of worship should not be so determinative. Indeed, the whole Sabbath is His but having the afternoon free has been important for some. Regular worship is, too, however. So, I am trusting we will grow spiritually at Immanuel through the time we gather each week around the unchanging Gospel given through God's Word and Sacraments. I am praying regular worship will be a high priority in the lives of all our members.

See you Sunday! Pastor Curley

Welcome to New Members

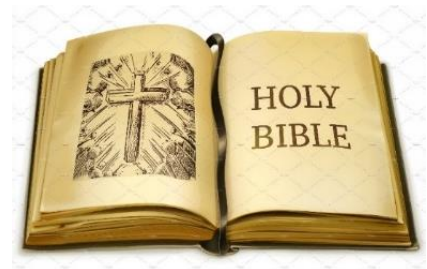
We are very pleased to welcome 2 new members to our congregation. Valerie Brown and Glenda McMurtrey were received into membership Sunday, November 13, 2022. Let's all welcome them and make an effort to get to know our new sisters in Christ. Our fellowship is enriched by their presence among us.



Bible Study Classes

Sunday Mornings at 10:30 AM we will study the meaning of Advent. Starting November 23 (Thanksgiving Eve) we will transition the Wednesday morning (11:00 AM) Bible Study to the evening (7:00 PM) through Advent.

Sunday and Wednesday Bible study attendance could be stronger, but we have a steady group and, relative to Immanuel's current size, isn't too bad either. Being a church that is growing through the Word is also vital to any future growth otherwise. True growth is always fueled by the Holy Spirit who is better apt to guide those in tune with and motivated by Holy Scripture.



Shut-Ins

Pastor Curley visits those on this list, but let's all remember them in our prayers.

Pete Busso (Chino)
Pat Cook (Chino)
Richard and Sharon Fiel (Rancho Cucamonga)
Nyla Gibson (Ontario)
Gretchen Johnson (Butterfield Ranch)
Audrey Lensch (Rancho Cucamonga)
Dick and Nancy Manning (Fountain Valley)
Jane Pratt (Chino)
Tim and Carolyn Rennegarbe (Rancho Cucamonga)



Update on Oktoberfest

This was never meant to be a fundraising event but rather a church sponsored event. It has been on the budget for many years but this year new elements were added, and many hands and generous donations made it special. With all the generous donations we broke even and didn't go over our budgeted amount. Again, thank you to everyone for all your donations, time, and fellowship!

E-Waste Collection Nov. 13th Update

We netted \$57.57. Definitely a win/win for getting rid of some junk and bringing in some money for the church.

Operation Christmas Child Project



Our goal was 50 boxes! We all stepped up and hit our goal! Pastor Curley and his wife Lulu dropped them off at the collection site. Thank you for your generosity in supporting this worthy project.



Important Upcoming Dates for Your Calendar

December 4 – 9:00 AM	Worship Service
December 7 – 7:00 PM	Advent Service
December 10 – 5:00 PM	Christmas Tree Trimming and Soup Dinner
December 14 – 7:00 PM	Advent Service
December 24 – 7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service
December 25 – 10:00 AM	Christmas Day Service
January 1 – 10:00 AM	Worship Service

This is the **season** This is the **reason**



An Opportunity to Serve

It has been a custom of long standing at Immanuel that our members participate in the morning service. Please consider signing up for one of these important duties.

Sunday Lector: This person is responsible for going forward and reading the scriptures at the lectern.

Linger-Longer Host: Bring goodies to share after the service.

Altar Flowers: Honor someone or an occasion by donating \$45 to purchase the arrangements.

Did You Know?

The wrought iron sconces that adorn the arches in the sanctuary were originally built by Jeanne Sewell's father Eiler Griffin (unknown what year). Sometime later it was thought that they were no longer useful, so they were taken down. For many years the church did without them until Bruce Bickley had an urge to refurbish them. Bruce started welding in his freshman year of High School and it became his life's career. In 2009, he designed, built, and installed the beautiful candle sconces you see today in the sanctuary. The seven-candle wreath that hangs in the front of the sanctuary was also designed and built with the help of Bruce's wife Gloria who scavenged some of the pieces from a shop in Pomona. If you attend the Christmas Eve service, please take special notice of these incredible pieces dedicated to the glory of God to enhance worship services for many years to come.



December Birthdays:

01 Timothy Kranawetter
04 Charlotte Cline
14 Christina Cline
16 Carol Gilkinson
18 Richard Fiel
20 Joseph Daniel
23 Phyllis Tolliver
31 Abigail Coleman

December Anniversaries:

03 Robert & Pam Vermons
12 Jerry & Lisa Vicario
22 Patrick & Ingrid Gruen
28 Joseph & Hepzibah Daniel

Mission Donations for 2022

District	\$ 8,000
Seminarian	\$ 1,500
Orphan Grain Train	\$ 1,000
Garuna Foundation	\$ 3,000
Faith by Hearing	\$1,000
Lutheran High School	\$1,000
Trinity Lutheran – ARK	<u>\$ 500</u>
TOTAL	\$16,000

Financial Report: As of October 31, 2022, the General Fund had the following balances:

General Fund Checking	\$83,747.63
Dedicated Funds	<u>\$19,116.74</u>
Adjusted Balance	\$64,630.89

Total income for the month of September was \$18,899.00 and expenses of \$16,922.67.