

# The Visitor

## Immanuel Lutheran Church

December 2023 \* Volume 62 #11



### God is Still with Us

Last summer, guided by a consultant from the New England Synod, Immanuel entered a “transition process” which we expected to carry us into a bright future. We recently received a letter from the synod summarizing their observations from the process. It was not what we had hoped for. Here are some of my observations and comments:

**We have a lot of strong feelings now.** Disappointment. Anger. Grief. Hope. Despair. Sadness. We need to acknowledge them and express them. Most of all we are sad. We are sad our children, grandchildren, and friends are no longer active in the church. We are sad our community is not as supportive as it once was. While we grieve for the church we once had, and in all likelihood will never have again, we need not direct those feelings inappropriately or disproportionately. We can have strong feelings, but we don’t have to let them have us.

**We are still here.** We still gather for worship. We just distributed food to people who needed our help for Thanksgiving. We continue to share our building with nine other groups on a regular basis. We still gather for fellowship and to support each other. We are not planning to close or planning to plan to close.

**We are still gathered in Christ’s name.** We are still called by Christ to worship God and serve God’s people. (The Biblical word for “church” means those who are assembled, those who are called.) We are still responding to Christ’s call and we will continue to respond as we are able.

**We are called by Christ to be his Church in Meriden in 2023.** We are not called to be a megachurch in Florida. We are not called to be the church of the 1950’s or 1960’s or whenever things were whatever they were as we remember them in our “golden age”. We are called to be here now, even though that means being called to a world that is troubled, hard to be in, and difficult to serve. We are called.

**Read your Bibles.** A huge portion of the Biblical story is about troubled times. Slavery in Egypt. (Then God led them out of Egypt and into the promised land.) Exile in Babylon. (Then God had Cyrus send them back home.) Roman occupation in Palestine. (Then God morphed the Roman Empire into Christendom.) Family betrayals. Bad kings. Disciples who panicked and abandoned Jesus on the cross. (And three days later resurrection.) God called God’s people, had a plan, and provided.

**We too are called by a God who is with us** and has a plan for us. God will always be with us. (Remember “Immanuel” means – “God with us”.) And God will continue to provide for us and guide us into the future.

**Hang in there.** Acknowledge and process your feelings, especially your sadness and your grief. Remember while God’s plans are usually longer term than ours, God always includes us in those plans.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. (Psalm 46.7 NRSV)

Pastor Burgess

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rev Richard M. Burgess, Pastor: (860) 462-6545 [richardmburgess@gmail.com](mailto:richardmburgess@gmail.com)

Diane Murphy, Administrator: (203) 238-1248 [office@immanuelmeriden.org](mailto:office@immanuelmeriden.org)

## OFFICE HOURS

9 am – 1 pm Monday – Friday

## **THE NEXT VISITOR**

**Articles for the January Visitor are due no later than December 21<sup>st</sup>.**

Please submit all articles via email to both Diane Murphy and Pastor Burgess (addresses above). Alternatively, submit hard copy (ie, “paper”) to Diane Murphy. This will avoid miscommunication and make sure all articles get printed in the Visitor each month.

### ***Another way to receive Immanuel's Visitor***

If you wish to receive Immanuel's monthly newsletter via email, please email the office at [office@immanuelmeriden.org](mailto:office@immanuelmeriden.org) using the email address you want the Visitor sent to. Please note “Visitor email listing” in the subject line.

## Prayer List Updates

Please contact the office if you would like someone added or taken off the prayer list. They need not be only people who need help – prayers of thanksgiving are also welcome.

## Current Prayer List

Dawn Aliou; Ginette Anziano; Gigi Balducci; Jimmy Burlison; Timothy Carmody; Elliott Gardner; Matthew Gerry; Anthony Grego; Adrian Hyatt; Doreen Jenkins; Carol Kania; Kathleen Kilbride; Jean & Bob Kozuch; Tammy Luft; Herta Marin; Jan McGrath; Carla McLeod; Dwight McLeod; Connie Mezzio; Ann Phipps; Donna Rackie; Katie Reeves; Dawn Stitham; Hillary Taylor; Greg White; Carolyn Ziemelis; those suffering from environmental disasters; and those suffering from wars, especially the wars in Israel & Ukraine.

## The Word in Season

Resolve to read the Bible more in 2023! The fourth quarter addition of The Word in Season (October, November and December) is now available as you enter the building. Pick up a copy for yourself and a copy to share.

The Word in Season is a daily devotional booklet; a tool that can help strengthen one's relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Devotions can be tailored to anyone's daily routine. Read as much or as little as fits your schedule.

## **Congregational Meetings**

Our constitution has been updated and needs to be voted on by the congregation. We will be presenting it and voting on it at these congregational meetings:

Sunday, January 7, 2024 after worship	Proposed Constitution presented
Sunday, January 21, 2024 after worship	Annual Congregational Meeting, incl voting on budget, council member, and updated constitution
Sunday, January 28, 2024 after worship	(Snow Date for Annual Meeting)

## **Advent Dinner Church and Christmas Eve**

During Advent we will gather for fellowship and worship Tuesday evenings for Dinner Church:

The agenda is simple: pot luck dinner at 5:30 followed by a short worship with scripture, prayer, and singing after dinner at 6:15 or shortly after.

Join us Tuesday nights as we prepare for Jesus coming to us in Advent. Bring a simple dish to share, and bring yourself to be nourished by the Spirit of Christ.

Since we are having Dinner Church on Tuesdays in Advent, there will be no Bible Study or Pub Theology in December. Both Bible Study and Pub Theology will resume in January of 2024.

Since Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year, we will be celebrating Christmas Eve only during the usual Sunday Morning Worship time of 9:45 am. This should allow for both worship in the morning and family time in the evening. We are blessed with a sanctuary that is both well-lit when it is dark outside and is also dark enough in the day to provide a nice candle ambiance inside. Join us Christmas Eve at 9:45 for a candle lit worship of the Christmas story, many Christmas carols, and Christ's presence in Holy Communion.

## **Advent and Christmas Schedule at Immanuel**

Tuesday, December 5	5:30	Dinner Church	Augustana Hall
Tuesday, December 12	5:30	Dinner Church	Augustana Hall
Tuesday, December 19	5:30	Dinner Church	Augustana Hall
Sunday, December 24	9:45	Christmas Eve Worship in the Sanctuary	
Tuesday, December 27		(no Tuesday activity)	
Sunday, December 31	9:45	Sunday Morning Worship in the Sanctuary	

## **Check Your Mailbox**

Due to the increasing cost of postage, if you give a donation to a fund at Immanuel, please check your church mailbox for your acknowledgement. Some of the church mailboxes are overflowing with mail. Please clean out your mailbox. If you are a member, and do not have a church mailbox please contact Diane in the church office or Cindy McCarthy. If you are a non-member your acknowledgement will be mailed.

**Thank you to the members and friends of Immanuel who have been donating postage stamps. The stamps are greatly appreciated.**



Outreach thanks all who have made our Thanksgiving bags donation a success. We were able to help 9 families put a Thanksgiving meal on their table. It took a lot of planning, coordinating and shopping, but with committed and caring people we did it. We could not have done it without the help of the Congregation or with Pastor Joey Lugo of the Pentecostal Church.

Thank you to all.

## **Finance Committee News**

We are grateful for everyone who has made donations to the Contingency Fund. Through October 31st we have received \$6,535 in donations to offset the \$13,359 deficit in the 2023 budget. That's approximately \$816.00 a month since we started the campaign. With that monthly average we should expect to reach \$8,200 by year's end. As we acknowledge that all of our wealth comes from the Lord; Can we do better? There are many ways to donate for those giving online, the online giving portal includes the Contingency Fund as a selection. For those giving with weekly envelopes, every month there is an envelope dedicated to a miscellaneous offering; those envelopes can be used to direct funds to the Contingency Fund. We also have dedicated envelopes in the Sanctuary and in Augustana Hall. There is also a Pasta Dinner fundraiser scheduled for Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> beginning at 4:30.

2024 offering envelopes will be available beginning Dec 10, 2023.

The Audit Committee completed and the Council approved the mid-year 2023 audit. A copy is available in the church office.

The audit committee is in need of two volunteers. This committee meets two times a year to audit Immanuel's books. You do not need accounting experience to participate. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested, please reach out to any member of the Finance Committee.

## Stewardship



"The church is called to be a 'disturbing presence,' confronting injustice and violence; a 'reconciling presence,' drawing people together across boundaries that divide us; and a 'serving presence,' advocating for justice and meeting the needs of vulnerable neighbors." (ELCA social statement For Peace in God's World (1995), p.5)

The above statement is from the ELCA World Hunger's Advent Study 2023 which we will be using for Dinner Church. Please consider joining in on food, fellowship and worship the Tuesday evenings during Advent. More information regarding Dinner Church appears on page 3 in this Visitor.

- 2024 offering envelopes will be available to pick up starting on December 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The next Stewardship meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, following worship in the library.

Advent begins Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, wear something blue all 4 Sundays.



### **December Celebrations**



#### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Harriet Doeher	12/03
Heather Hesseltine	12/05
Daniel Luft	12/06
Brandon Mroczka	12/06
Emily McKenzie	12/10
Patricia Brooks	12/10
David Chasse	12/11
Shelby Korb	12/14
Jerri Coleman	12/19

Marilyn Kronenberger	12/20
John Uraco	12/21
Meghan Tomassetti	12/23
Douglas Gardner	12/24
Carol Kania	12/25
Samantha Caruso	12/26
Carlos Rivera	12/29
Raiden Hesseltine	12/30

#### **HAPPY Anniversary**

Robin & Mike Coon	12/13
Kara & Andrew Hopko	12/22

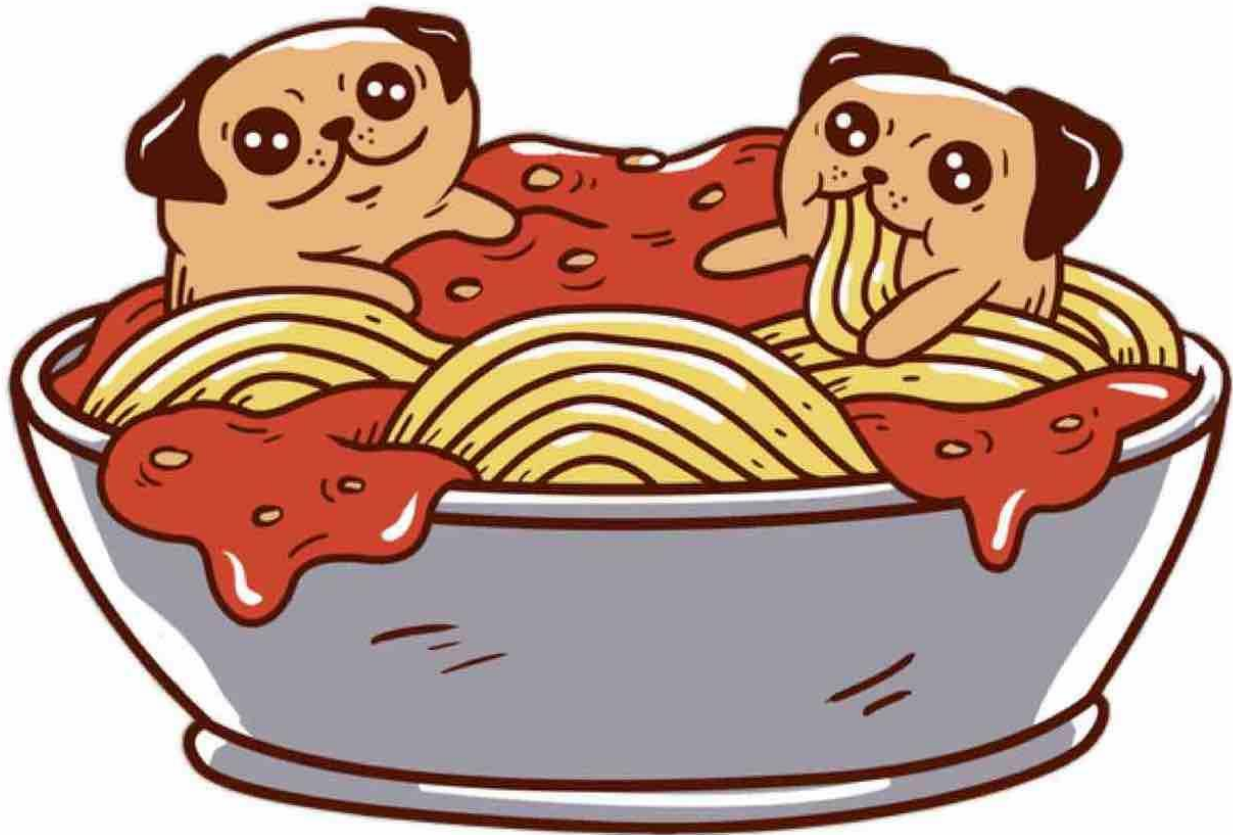
# *Pasta Dinner Fundraiser*

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

**164 Hanover St, Meriden CT, 06451**

**Sat. Dec 09, 2023, 4:30pm - 7:00pm**

*Eat in or take out!*



**\$15 Adult / \$5 Child 7+ / Children Under 7 Free**



## Box Top Labels

Thank you to the congregation and friends for participating in the Box Tops for Education program. This is a project that my mother, Ruth Tozier, started many years ago. A collection box is attached to the bulletin board, outside Augustana Hall. Please continue to save your grocery receipts for this worthy cause. Once the receipts are scanned credit is given to the Navajo Lutheran Mission in Arizona.

### THE NEW BOX TOPS LABELS



Eventually the Box Tops program will become digital-only. Participating brands are starting to change their packaging from a traditional Box Tops clip to the new Box Tops label.

If you see this label, use the new Box Tops app to scan your receipt.

**Box Tops are still worth 10¢ for your school.** The app will find participating products purchased at any store and instantly add cash to your school's earnings online.

It's the easiest way to earn for your school: just use the Box Tops mobile app to scan your store receipt. It automatically finds participating products and instantly adds 10¢ Box Tops to your school's earnings online. No clipping required!



The grocery receipt needs to be scanned within 2 weeks of purchasing. This box top is useless without the receipt. Thank you for saving your grocery receipts.

If you download the app, the zip code for the Navajo School is 86545. If you do not want to or know how to download the app, you can place your receipt in the collection box and I will upload the receipt. Just a reminder, if you are collecting this box top label, please supply your grocery receipt for scanning.

Cindy McCarthy



# December 2023

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
164 Hanover Street, Meriden, CT 06451  
203-238-1248

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 10am Library Group	2 10am NA  7pm NA
3 9:45am Worship 5pm Pent Serv.  5:30pm NA	4 7pm Women's Area NA Meeting	5 5:30 Advent Dinner Church	6 7pm Pentecostal Service  7pm NA	7 6:00pm Cove  7pm NA	8 10am Library Group	9 10am NA 4:30 pm Pasta Dinner Fundraiser  7pm NA
10 9:45am Worship 5pm Pent Serv. 5:30pm NA	11	12 5:30 Advent Dinner Church	13 7pm Pentecostal Service  7pm NA	14 6:30pm Council 6:30pm Action 13  7pm NA	15 10am Library Group	16 10am NA  7pm NA
17 9:45am Worship 11:00 Stewardship 5pm Pent Serv 5:30pm NA	18	19 5:30 Advent Dinner Church	20 7pm Pentecostal Service  7pm NA	21 6:00pm Cove 7pm Finance  7pm NA	22 10am Library Group	23 10am NA  7pm NA
24 9:45 am Christmas Eve Worship 5pm Pent Serv. 5:30pm NA	25	26	27 7pm Pentecostal Service  7pm NA	28  7pm NA	29 10am Library Group	30 10am NA  7pm NA
31 9:45am Worship 5pm Pent Serv. 5:30pm NA						



