



## Emanuel Lutheran Church

366 Cohansey-Friesburg Road

P. O. Box 363

Elmer, NJ 08318

Phone: 856-451-5669

## Sunday Opportunities:

Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

Sanctuary Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

in-person and via Facebook live

The Rev. Mark A. Werner, Pastor

*Emanuel Lutheran Church is a community of faith, leading people to Christ.*

# Happy New Year!

### \*\*\*ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING\*\*\*

The annual congregational meeting of Emanuel will be held Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> immediately following the worship service. According to our constitution to be eligible to vote, confirmed members must have communed and made a contribution of record (meaning that you put an offering in an envelope with your name on it or your church envelope) in the current or preceding year (2021 or 2022). In the event of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. It is important to gather together to review our actions over the past year and to discuss and determine how we want to further the Lord's ministry here at Emanuel as we continue our discipleship journey. Mark your calendar and plan to participate. Agenda Items include:

- † Ministry Financial Plan
- † Election of council members
- † Ratification of NALC convocation actions

## JANUARY ACTIVITIES AT EMANUEL

January 2 – We welcome Pastor Triller to the pulpit

January 8 – Men's Group at 9:00 a.m.

– Discipleship Combined Meeting at 11:00 a.m.

January 9 – Food Pantry Sunday

January 11 – Worship & Music Committee

January 15 – Anniversary Committee at 10:00 a.m.

January 18 – Council Meeting at Social Hall

January 21 – National March for Life

January 23 – Annual Congregational Meeting

January 26 – Acolyte article deadline

January 29 – Seed Group Meeting

## JANUARY CELEBRATIONS

Happy New Year and Happy Birthday to all celebrating this month.

- 1 Donald Bell
- 15 Parker Smith
- 15 Jordan Werner
- 19 Courtney Pilling
- 22 John Maloney
- 28 Sam Manno
- 29 Ellenore Cobb
- 24 Pastor David McGettigan



Many blessings are wished for the year to come. Please let the office know of any birthdays or anniversaries that we may have missed.

## JANUARY ALTAR GUILD

Dawn Clarke

## JANUARY USHERS

Jim Cobb and Allan Hermanson

## MEN'S UPDATE

Hope you all had a blessed Christmas season and are looking forward to a New Year. How about making a commitment to get together once a month for about an hour with the other men of our congregation? The next men's group meeting is set for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 8 in the Social Hall. It is an opportunity for all men of the congregation (and friends) to spend time together and share our thoughts and concerns. A short devotion starts us off and the fellowship begins. How about giving it a try? As the old commercial says, "Mikey likes it!" Perhaps you will, too. I hope to see you there. Questions? Call me at 856-832-4400 or email me at [aahermanson@comcast.net](mailto:aahermanson@comcast.net). *Allan Hermanson*

## STEWARDSHIP

Financials as of November 2021:

YTD Income: \$153,962.70

YTD Expense: \$142,347.47

YTD Net Income: \$11,615.23

Total yearly budgeted income/expense: \$165,009.00

## SOUP KITCHEN NEWS!

How many presents did you wrap this Christmas? Helen Cobb, Nancy Cobb, Amy Gheysens, Susan Shields and Amy's friend, Pam Casella, together wrapped over 100 hats and scarves in just a little over an hour. Members of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Sewell spent the year knitting hats and scarves for the clients of the soup kitchen for over twelve years. So, we pitched in and wrapped them to be ready for giving out at the Christmas dinner. Next year we are going to have a contest at Deptford Mall with the Hadassah ladies to see who can wrap the fastest. Come out and cheer us on. Bet we'll win.

*Nancy Cobb*

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

The study of angels in the Bible concluded just in time for Christmas. Pastor Mark will soon begin a new one. The Bible study is held on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 via Zoom. If you would like to be a part of this study, please let Pastor Mark know so that you can be added to the Zoom invitation. We do not yet know what the new study will be, so be sure to check the announcements in the weekly bulletin.

## BEARING FRUIT FOR OUR FATHER

*Pr. Brian Triller*

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean (pruned) because of the word that I have spoken to you."*

John 15:1-3 (ESV)

Recently, as I was pruning some fruit trees in my yard, I was reminded of John 15:1-8, where Jesus talks about the pruning of branches on a grape vine. We who are baptized believers in Jesus Christ are branches connected to Him, the True Vine. We were first pruned (cleansed of our sin) because of the Word of God joined with water in our Baptism.

However, we remain sinners during this earthly lifetime; and so we have an ongoing need for repentance and the forgiveness of our sins. That is why we need to avail ourselves of the means of God's grace—the Gospel and the Sacraments--on an ongoing basis.

At the beginning of every Sunday's liturgy, together we confess our sins to God and seek His mercy for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ. And then, by the authority given to Pr. Mark by Christ Himself, he declares to us the entire forgiveness of all our sins.

When you receive the Lord's Body and Blood in the bread and cup of Holy Communion, you hear the Good News that Jesus gave His Body and shed His Blood "for you," for the forgiveness of your sins.

Having thus pruned us (cleansed us of our sins) during the service, God sends us out into the world to bear fruit for Him during the week. According to The Lutheran Study Bible notes for John 15:2-3, this fruit is "not just holy deeds, but love and witness leading to new disciples." \*

**Prayer:** *Dear Father, we thank You for pruning us so we may remain connected to the True Vine, Your Son Jesus Christ. Having been cleansed by Your Gospel Word, may we share this Good News with others. May we thus bear more fruit, not just of holy deeds, but of love and witness leading to new disciples. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

\*Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. (2009)

## The Light of Christ

Christmas week was a struggle for me. I had five bulletins to prepare, music to copy, presents to wrap, etc. When I walked out the door on December 21 (the winter solstice), the car was frosted over, so I had to take the time to scrape off the ice. Then, once on the road, the radio acted up, and I lost it. Yelling at an electronic instrument does no good, so I cried. (I do that when I am tired and frustrated!) I managed to get the radio to do what I wanted and drove on to work, praying for God to help me out of this funk.

Once at my first job, the computer did not want to cooperate. Now, I know a computer is another electronic instrument that I am supposed to control, but it really can be stubborn at times. So, I restarted it. That sometimes works. Not this time. Instead, an update began and continued...and continued...and continued. So, I cried some more and asked God, "Why? I have a lot to get done today." More than half an hour later, at the suggestion of my husband Allan, I shut it down. When I restarted it, everything worked, although slowly. So, I prayed and took a deep breath and completed my work and headed to my second job (Emanuel) which went smoothly.

The next morning, the temperature was the same as the day before, but it felt much different. Why? While there were still clouds, the sun was peeking through (no ice on the car) and there was some blue sky with no wind. It felt much different than the day before. As I was driving to work once again, I thought of how Jesus shines the light into our lives just like the sun peeking through the clouds on a cold December morning. Without Jesus, there is darkness and chaos blowing through our lives. With Jesus, there is joy if we let his light in. Prayer helps me with that. Oh, I still cry when I am frustrated, but I know that the Holy Spirit is right there with me and understands. Praise God!

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Yes, it is January, but summer will be here soon. The sunlight is already lasting longer each day.

Volunteers are needed to oversee VBS, to assist with learning stations, crafts, music, etc. Parents, please let Pastor Mark know your preference for time – morning or evening. Are you interested in serving in this ministry? (It is difficult to offer this activity without volunteers.) Do you want your children to have this opportunity to enjoy Jesus outside as part of their summer experience? Please indicate your interest to Pastor Mark.

## SERVICE MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

*Each of you should give what you have decided in "your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

Cheerful giving is not only monetary. Giving of your time and talent can be very rewarding and appreciated. There is a group being created at Emanuel to make quilts and blankets for NALC Disaster Relief. We will be meeting in the social hall one Saturday a month. In addition to fabric quilts, blankets can be knitted or crocheted and work can be done at home if you prefer. If you have a friend who isn't from our congregation who would be interested in joining us, please invite them. If you are interested in participating, please let me know. My email address is [pbmadden11479@gmail.com](mailto:pbmadden11479@gmail.com) or call me at 856-935-5552.

*Happy Stitching!*  
*Patsy Madden*

## COMMUNICATION AND CALENDARS

It is the responsibility of the Council and the office to ensure that the congregation is advised of Council decisions, as well as keep them informed of activities and events. One method of communication is this publication, *The Acolyte*, our congregation's newsletter. At other times, email is used as a way to disseminate information to everyone quickly.

To help maintain the church calendar and avoid conflicts, it is necessary for the office to be made aware of scheduled meetings and activities so that those dates and events may be shared with the members of Emanuel. If you are a committee chair or schedule events or activities, please share that information with the office via email at [office@emanuelelmer.church](mailto:office@emanuelelmer.church) so that it may be shared via this newsletter or email as appropriate. If you need to use the Social Hall for an outside organization, please submit a Facilities Use Application form to the office for approval by Council. The form is available on our website or in the office

## Pastor's Perspective

I do not often do this, but I wish to share with you in writing what I shared in my sermon on Christmas Eve. As we move past the Christmas season, we tend to reset our lives to what they were before the holidays. However, I invite you as we begin the new year to consider the question that I raised, for it goes directly to how we go about our lives on a daily basis. Is there room in your heart for Jesus?

It is an important part of Jesus birth story that Luke doesn't want us to forget. It is a detail that occurs three times. Jesus' first bed is a manger. The reasons are explained. There is no room in the inn. The reason there was no room in the inn was because people needed to travel to their hometowns in order to be registered for the updated taxes that would be imposed. As a result, it was difficult to find a place to stay.

At what may clearly be viewed as bad timing for Mary and Joseph, it is during this time in Bethlehem where Jesus lays aside the glory of heaven, is born of a virgin, to sleep where animals eat, all so that he would save us from our own inherited sinful condition that leads to our death. The angel Gabriel revealed to Joseph that "Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

But what of us? Christ has come, but is there room in our lives for Jesus beyond the call for people to wish us a Merry Christmas as opposed to Happy Holidays? We sing "Joy to the World" and we pray in that carol, "let earth receive her king." In all the preparations for the day and for the Christmas season, have our hearts prepared him room?

Mary received him with the conviction, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." So, it was set for her to bear the one who is called Son of the Most High." This very Son of the Most High was present with God in the beginning of creation. "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." To put it another way, Jesus has come to move into our lives. He has come to reside in our hearts, to govern and order our lives.

In saying yes to Jesus, to dwell in our lives, understand what that entails. Jesus isn't going to insist that our hearts be clean before he comes. In fact, it is because our hearts are dirty, that he comes to begin with.

But he doesn't come into our lives so that our hearts remain dirty. With Jesus there is no room in our hearts for greed. There is no room for bitterness, hate, deceit, selfishness, arrogance, immorality, idolatry, or any other evil thought or desire. Jesus has come to remodel our lives.

The prophet Jeremiah records this word of the Lord, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God and they shall be my people." The law of God's love will be written on the new hearts that Jesus gives in answer to the prayer of Psalm 51. Jesus creates in us a clean heart and renews a right spirit within us.

A heart in which Jesus resides results in a humble life, which Jesus himself applied for our benefit, namely, our salvation.

Recorded in Philippians 2, "Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." (Jesus claims no entitlement).

As an adult, Jesus humbles himself submitting to the baptism of John, that he might more clearly identify with humanity. Jesus humbled himself, refusing the temptation of the evil one to use his status, power and privilege as the Son of God to meet his own needs in the wilderness.

“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Death on a cross was no ordinary death. It was a disgraceful death. It was a death we deserved for our sins.

From Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’”

A life in which Jesus lives in us is a life of humility. It is a life of servanthood, following Jesus own example. “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Being a servant of our Lord is a commitment of sharing our time, talent and treasure to the glory of God and for the well-being of our neighbors.

A heart in which Jesus resides is a forgiving heart, one that rejects any notion of retribution or revenge. It was on the cross that Jesus prays, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

That Jesus dwells in our hearts is to live life in full devotion to God, which is nothing short of a life of love. For it is out of love that we have life now, and the joy of a life to come.

So, I leave it to you to answer, Is there room for Jesus in your heart? And if you find the answer to be anything less than 100%, consider what steps you need to take in your life, that Jesus may fully dwell in your heart and in your life. Amen.

*God bless,  
Pastor Mark*

## FOOD PANTRY THANKS!

Please tell everyone that we love them all. Tell them that we thank them for all they had one for our food pantry. God bless them all. Love you all.

*Thanks again!  
Vera Matish  
and Christ Lutheran Church*



# About Jesus

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- JESUS
- SAVIOUR
- HELPER
- CROSS
- RESURRECTION
- VINE
- WAY
- LOVE
- CREATOR
- MESSIAH
- HEALER
- FRIEND
- SINS
- LIGHT
- FIRST
- TRUTH
- BELIEVE
- RIGHTEOUSNESS
- KING
- FORGIVENESS
- LORD
- TEACHER
- GATE
- LAST
- LIFE
- LEADER

