



The Lantern



1500 Old Church Road
Streamwood, IL 60107

January 2012

630.837.0190
www.streamwoodiucc.org



2012

Sunday Worship Schedule

We worship in the sanctuary
at 9:00 AM each Sunday
(Traditional based service)

and

in Volkening Hall
at 10:45 AM

(discussion based service with communion)

Following the 9:00 AM worship service,
join us for coffee and fellowship with one
another in Volkening Hall until 10:30 AM.

All are welcome!

Childcare is available
during the 9:00 AM Worship Service

January Happenings

Wednesday night dinners are served by our HUB team in Volkening Hall every Wednesday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM . This is a full meal including a main entrée with beverage and dessert. The cost is \$5. Please look for January Menus in the weekly bulletins.

Our Prayer Group consists of a small group of individuals who meet every Monday morning at 9:30 AM in the church library. The meeting begins with coffee and fellowship and continues on with prayers requested from members and friends of Immanuel. This group always welcomes newcomers!

Immanuel has a Knitting Ministry that meets on the first Tuesday and third Thursday of each month from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. They work on knitting or crocheting projects such as hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, baby buntings and other items needed for the needy, hospitals and other groups that are in need of such items. If you enjoy knitting or crocheting and wish to be a part of this ministry, meetings this month will be held on January 3rd and 19th. Come give it a try!

Immanuel's vocal choir (The Tapestry Choir) meets 3 Mondays during the month for rehearsals from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. The first Monday of each month is rehearsal-free. Everyone interested is always welcome.

The Bell Choir meets every Wednesday evening at 6:30 PM to 7:15 PM. If you are interested in joining this group, please attend on Wednesday evenings. Nancy and the ringers will welcome you with open arms!

Immanuel's Women's Guild will have their first meeting of the new year on Thursday, January 5th at noon. Bring a sack lunch if you wish. Dessert will be provided.

Enjoy working on a craft of your choice during our Craft Night. This will be held on Friday, January 20th from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM in Volkening Hall. Uninterrupted time for yourself!!!

The Finance Committee will meet on January 5th at 6:30 PM.

Congregational Care will hold its meeting on Saturday, January 7th at 9:00 AM in the West Classroom. This group concentrates on helping with the needs of our shut-ins and others who need help in our congregation. Please plan to attend if this is a ministry you would like to help with.

Those who are involved with the Safe Church Policy will meet on Sunday, January 8th at 10:00 AM in the West Classroom.

The Church Council will hold its meeting on Tuesday, January 10th at 6:30 PM in the West Classroom.

The Worship Ministry will meet on Saturday, January 14th at 10:30 AM in the West Classroom.

SCRIP UPDATE

I want to thank everyone for your generous support of our SCRIP program. In the last two months there were 421 cards ordered and we realized a profit of \$778.05 for November and December.

Please note that the orders for January will be due on the third week instead of the fourth week. The dates were adjusted because there are 5 weeks in the month and the 1st of the month is on a Sunday.

Pick up an order form at the church or print the one that is emailed to you. Remember to share the order forms with friends, co-workers, neighbors or relatives. Look over the order form and choose your favorite store or restaurant. Pay IUCC for a gift card and then use the gift card at your convenience where you would normally shop or eat. Cards from SCRIP do NOT expire. Using the SCRIP program does require a little pre-planning but once you try it you will find it very easy to use. Keep in mind that you are paying it forward and helping IUCC in the process.

Thank you again for your continued support.

MONTHLY TIMETABLE FOR ORDERS

| ORDERS/PAYMENT DUE | CARDS DISBURSED |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| January 15, 2012 | January 22, 2012* |
| February 12, 2012 | February 19, 2012 |
| March 11, 2012 | March 18, 2012 |
| April 15, 2012 | April 22, 2012* |
| May 13, 2012 | May 20, 2012 |

*Adjustments made for holidays

Nancy Madsen
847-301-1573

The Text Message

Reflections on Scripture and Church Life

Tom Gough—Interim Pastor

Dear Friends,

A new year, and an annual reminder that our God is a god of renewal and new beginnings; auld lang syne, by-gones being by-gones and all that. Of course we are a people of herky-jerky false starts. We dream of things being different. We begin well, with every intention, and more often than not, slide back into the old habits we were meaning to change. Habits are very difficult to overcome for sure. The more deeply ingrained the habit, the more difficult in the conquering.

I don't know about you, but it is often the habits I am most in need of changing that I am least public about in my commitments. I want something to be different perhaps, but have too little faith in my ability to make consistent change. I generally make my New Year's resolutions in private so as to avoid the incumbent humiliation when I fail. Do you ever do that? The prospect of failure can often terrorize the attempt to make change. We also live in a world of such instantaneous communication that the digital video of our failure is often available on YouTube before we have started dusting ourselves off. It hardly seems fair, and certainly does nothing to encourage our convictions.

Still, one potential asset for maintaining our resolve is both obvious and much overlooked. Our biggest advantage is often the community with which we surround ourselves. Asking for some community support in seeking to make a change in our lives can mean the difference between success and failure. I don't mean publishing your whim as your Facebook status, I mean engaging genuine community in a genuine attempt. Whether your family, your church community, or a few select friends, laying out the parameters of what you hope to accomplish, and inviting their support, can offer hope, inspiration, and encouragement. Sometimes we may even find a co-conspirator, someone who wants to make a similar change and is willing to share the privilege of support.

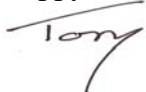
Large or small, communities are wonderful in this way. Yet, in this day and culture, real community often feels counter-cultural. We are so regularly encouraged to see ourselves as the products of individual effort. We feel we must bear our burdens in silence, share no credit for our successes, and see ourselves as disciplined individuals responsible only to ourselves. From every kind of mass media I witness the expression of this destructive belief system. Everybody seems to want things to be different, but few are willing to engage in the necessary sacrifice and collective effort. Everyone seems to deserve more, yet they expectantly rely on someone else to deliver it. This never works on any scale for very long. We humans are wired for community. We work best through community. We begin to go a little haywire without it. When we treat our communities as mere service providers, we miss nearly everything of value that they have to offer. Surely we live in a culture that encourages us to see ourselves as simply consumers in a network of providers, but such a vision demands that we remain children grasping at the next shiny thing.

This is one of the great gifts of a place like Immanuel UCC. All the hallmarks of genuine, supportive, community are here. We make every effort to construct a Large or small, communities are wonderful in this way. Yet, in this day and culture, real community often feels counter-cultural. We are so regularly encouraged to see ourselves as the products of individual effort. We feel we must bear our burdens in silence, share no credit for our successes, and see ourselves as disciplined individuals responsible only to ourselves. From every kind of mass media I witness the expression of this destructive belief system. Everybody seems to want things to be different, but few are willing to engage in the necessary sacrifice and collective effort. Everyone seems to deserve more, yet they expectantly rely on someone else to deliver it. This never works on any scale for very long. We humans are wired for community. We work best through community. We begin to go a little haywire without it. When we treat our communities as mere service providers, we miss nearly everything of value that they have to offer. Surely we live in a culture that encourages us to see ourselves as simply consumers in a network of providers, but such a vision demands that we remain children grasping at the next shiny thing.

This is one of the great gifts of a place like Immanuel UCC. All the hallmarks of genuine, supportive, community are here. We make every effort to construct a common vision, to set common and meaningful goals. We try, to the very best of our ability, to be forthright and supportive in our efforts. Imperfect we are, I grant you. We can't meet every wish or desire with the wave of a magic wand, but we can work together toward something significant and meaningful, something life changing. And, as we work together toward our common goals, we support each other, deepen our own connections, grow together, and become the people God intended for us to be. IUCC is a safe and, most often, forgiving place in which to try the benefits of real community. The caveat is however, that being a part of a genuine community means participation, presence, and practice. It means grace, forgiveness, flexibility, negotiation, and mostly love made real.

So, this year, this New Year, perhaps we can do more than make secret resolutions to change this or that little thing in our lives. Perhaps this will be the year where even more of us become an active part in the community at IUCC. To gain some support for the things we really need to change, but more significantly, to find ourselves transformed by our commitments, into the very people God calls us to be.

Happy New Year!



Friends: I was overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude when I received your much unexpected and terribly generous Christmas gift. I cannot thank you enough for this tangible expression of your care and grace. You continue to be an outstanding community with which to work, and I am both honored and fortunate to work among you. Thank you.—

Tom

Wednesday Study Opportunity

In conversation with a variety of interested parties during the Advent season, it has become apparent that one of the most popular forms of Wednesday night study is also one of the most simple to provide; namely, the humble Bible study. So, for the next little while, that is what we will offer. Each Wednesday we will gather after our HUB meal and discuss one or more of the texts assigned by the Revised Common Lectionary for an upcoming Sunday service. We will try and work two weeks ahead of the worship schedule so that our collective inquiry may be useful in worship preparation. We will discuss the context and background of each text so that we can understand where it came from and what it was intended to accomplish, and then we will discuss possible applications of the text(s) for our own time and place. This promises to be an engaging way to acquaint ourselves more deeply with scripture and gain a different perspective on the worship experience as well. Bring your friends and neighbors. Best of all – no homework!

For January we will look at one or more of the following texts:

January 04, 2012

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

January 11, 2012

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Mark 1:14-20

January 18, 2012

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

January 25, 2012

Isaiah 40:21-31

Mark 1:29-39

February 01, 2012

2 Kings 5:1-14

Mark 1:40-45

A Message from Brandyn...

Here we are again. The beginning of a new year and a time when good intentions and famous motivational quotes get dusted off and pulled out of the recesses of our minds to be put on display on our lips and the front of our t-shirts. We start new diaries and tell ourselves the same stories that we are telling everyone else. “This is the year.” “This year I’m going to do . . .” Then, come January 15th, or if we’re really ambitious, mid February and the quotes are put back in their rightful place among the dark, undusted, cobwebby shelves in our minds and are promptly replaced with excuses.

Such would-be business wizards as Bruce Judson in books like *Go it Alone* tell us just that – Go it alone. Hence the subtitle, *The Secret of Building a Successful Business on Your Own*. Those of us with entrepreneurial aspirations and inclinations get excited when we read such titles because it tells us that we already have what we need to be successful and to do something different. The only problem is, once the book is read and placed back on the shelf, the same things remain as before – questions marks and excuses.

In the church, it is not only in our theology and soteriology that we have become individualists, but also in our aspirations. If I can do it alone, I do not have to rely on others. This is where one of my favorite examples comes in. Imagine you want to make money flipping houses. I’m sure everyone is familiar with the term by now although those who have been doing it for a while loathe the term. Nonetheless, the idea is the same regardless of what one calls it: buy a house well under market value, rehab it, and resell it.

Ok, so, you have your house purchased and some money set aside for fixing it up. Here’s the question – do you fix it up yourself or do you hire someone else to do it? Most who are handy would say that the answer is obvious. Do the work yourself so that you can save the money on labor and make more profit. But is this really the right answer if your goal is to make money? If a side project to keep you busy after retirement is the object, then it’s the perfect answer. If you are looking to make money, however, you would definitely not want to do the work yourself. Sounds like a contradiction, doesn’t it? But it’s not.

The faster the house gets to market, the faster you can turn a profit. But how fast can you really get the work done by yourself? Ok, you’re decent with carpentry, but maybe a mediocre plumber or electrician at best? If someone else can do the job better, why not let them? If they can get the work done faster, that’s that much faster that you will not only get money in your pocket, but even get to start on another house – or if you’re really wanting to make money – have a couple of houses going at the same time.

Ok, ok, I’ll get to the point. There are ambitions that come out this time of year and ideas about how to achieve them. When we realize that the work is insurmountable for ourselves we set it aside only to be reminded again when we set the next year’s resolutions. This time, we actually have to start. After all, if nothing ever makes it past the idea stage, that’s all it will ever be – just another good idea. We know that we cannot change the world alone, but together, we can do great things. I think this is why Margaret Mead said “A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” People. It’s what we need, what we have, and who we need to help. At IUCC that’s the business we’re in. Throw in some people from the community to team with us and let your imagine run wild for the amazing things that we can accomplish.

Since this is the season of cool quotes, I’ll leave you with one that you may have heard from me before:

It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the [person] who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends [him or herself] for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his/her place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.

See you in the arena.

Those Who Serve

Sunday, January 1st

USHERS

Two volunteers needed

GREETER/USHER: **Sanctuary Door**

Two volunteers needed

Hallway Door

One volunteer needed

Sunday, January 8th

USHERS: Two volunteers needed

GREETER/USHER: **Sanctuary Door**

Two volunteers needed

Hallway Door

One volunteer needed

Sunday, January 15th

USHERS: Two volunteers needed

GREETER/USHER: **Sanctuary Door**

Two volunteers needed.

Hallway Door

One volunteer needed

Sunday, January 22nd

USHERS: Erin Bryant and

One volunteer needed

GREETER/USHER: **Sanctuary Door**

Two volunteers needed

Hallway Door

One volunteer needed



- 3 Jay Olriksen
- 6 Sarah Camson
- 6 Amanda Sigler
- 7 Susan Fasse
- 8 Sandy Mann
- 9 Billie Tucker
- 12 Kathy Buthman
- 20 Austin Fry
- 22 Christina Fascia
- 23 Al Berkner
- 24 Ron Evenson
- 24 Eve Dodohara
- 27 Helen Hassett
- 27 Theodolf Camson



29 Linda & Hank DeLisle

Sunday, January 22nd

USHERS: Erin Bryant and

One volunteer needed

GREETER/USHER: **Sanctuary Door**

Two volunteers needed

Hallway Door

One volunteer needed



Prayer List

Matthew 18: 19-20

Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

We pray for our shut-ins...

Sue Fasse
Frances Learn
Hertha Peterson
Elmer & Grace Heinrich

We also pray for ...

Takashi Dodohara
Myrle Olriksen
Helen & Art Cwerenz
Those people residing in nursing facilities
All caregivers
Those suffering from cancer and other diseases
The homeless
Our soldiers
Our situation with the economy
Those seeking employment
All who have lost loved ones and are having a hard time coping with their loss
The hungry and homeless
Our Congregation as we seek the will of God as servants of God
Immanuel members & friends as we seek to transition into a missional church

GIVE TO THE PANTRY!

With the Christmas Holidays drawing to an end, the Hanover Township Pantry will need to replenish its shelves. Let us continue to be relief for those in our community that are hungry.

You can help by adding an item or two to your weekly shopping cart and dispensing them in the basket in the narthex for the pantry. Each item that a person brings in helps refill the shelves thus helping those in our community that are in need. A little bit can go a long way!

Let's help the pantry go from this



to this!



“There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.”

Deuteronomy 15:11

FYI - IUCC

In late November, Jay sent a summary of information points to the Council that explained activities we seldom see but are important for our safety and wellbeing. About the same time very positive feedback on what the ministries and groups are engaged in was received (see the December Moderator's Moment). We will try to keep everyone up to date with what is happening as we move forward. Sometimes it will be short clips, sometimes it will be Q & A formats, and other times it will be explanations. If you have questions, please contact a member of the council with your questions and ideas. We will do our best to provide you with the info. Dave Madsen.

New Council Members, Staff & Activities

Stewardship Council Rep. – Stacy Walsted – Time/Talent Pledge - Tithing Challenge

Children's Ministry – Jenn Traversa – Little Church curriculum in place – Staffed until 3/5/12.

Pastoral Intern – Brandyn Simmons – Evangelism/ Community Outreach/Startup of 501[C]3 – Part-time - Supervision by Pastor Tom

Being Safe and Taking Care – Jay Olriksen

As I was thinking about what we have done over the last year, it got me thinking. We have been thinking about being a SAFE CHURCH over the last year. But if you think about it, there are different areas as to what a SAFE CHURCH might be. The B & G Ministry already is being part of a SAFE CHURCH by the many inspections that must be done and also the snow and ice operations. Let me try and explain. Here is a list and cost of the many ways we try and keep IUCC a SAFE CHURCH.

MANDATORY SAFETY AND HEALTH INSPECTIONS

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. FIRE EXTINGUISHER INSPECTION once a year | \$ 80.00 |
| 2. FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM once a year | \$ 300.00 |
| 3. FIRE ALARM SYSTEM once a year | \$ 250.00 |
| 4. ANSUL SYSTEM (kitchen oven/stove protection) twice year | \$ 204.00 |
| 5. BACKFLOW PROTECTION once a year | \$ 600.00 |
| 6. EXIT SIGNS and EMERGENCY LIGHTS once a year | \$ 220.00 |
| 7. ALARM SYSTEM four times a year | \$1092.00 |
| | TOTAL \$2846.00 |

INSECT CONTROL

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| TERMINEX monthly | TOTAL \$ 800.00 |
|------------------|-----------------|

SNOW & ICE OPERATIONS

1. SALTING OPERATIONS We pay \$ 100.00 to salt each lot, so to have a full salting done it cost \$200.00 each application. We usually salt for any snow 2" and below. The thing to remember about salt it takes heat (car traffic, sun, or temperature) to make it work. So, salting on a really cold night does not make much sense. We try and wait for some kind of heat. That is why it sometimes may seem like we have not done any salting - we are just waiting!.

2. PLOWING OPERATIONS here is the break down on the plowing cost

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 2" to 4" of snow | \$155.00 |
| 4" to 6" | \$ 235.00 |
| 6" to 8" | \$ 310.00 |
| Over 8" (God help us) | time & material |

3. S & I TIDBITS The contractor has a full approval to do whatever needs to be done for the west lot only on Weds. They also have full approval to get ready for Sundays. Full approval means they do not need our permission to do anything just go ahead and do it. They need our approval for anything else. We also send them our monthly calendar so they have a heads up as to what is going on at IUCC, just in case we need them. During the months Nov. thru April we add a fee to all weddings in case any operation is needed; if not they get a refund. As for snow accumulations we use the O'Hare report or just our good judgment. This seems to work out fine for both IUCC and the contractor.

4. SUPPLIES I ordered 24 bags of sidewalk salt (1500 lbs.). This should last us for some years. We will store it outside under a tarp until I can find space for it. Because of different chemicals in salt and ice melt it is best to have only one type. The cost for this is about \$500.00. Instead of donating bags of melting products, you can do your part by adding something extra to your offering whenever it snows. (As for donations I would rather have donations of paper goods).

As you can see the B&G Ministry is trying to keep the Church as safe as we can be.

As Chairperson of this Ministry I went ahead and made some decisions that I feel had to be done

5. PLUMBING Had some plumbing work done. Drinking fountains fixed - no more leaking. The two faucets in the kitchen were leaking – cost of repair was similar to new faucets – new upgraded faucets (with lifetime guarantee) were purchased and installed. Cost for this will be covered from the Volkening Trust fund. The cost for all of this will be about \$1400.00.

Jay Orlksen

Faithful Anxiety

The last two weeks I have been busy doing a lot of recycling of stuff that has become junk; work that is finished and needed to be put away; tying up loose ends; and identifying what left overs I have and what new tasks lie ahead. Do I have any anxiety about all that stuff? No. In fact I am excited about what I have seen being accomplished in the last year, especially at IUC. A year ago we, as a group, were exhausted, frustrated, nervous, scared, perhaps depressed. We were in a “grand funk”!

We had misplaced the “advantage of anxiety”. Soren Kirkegaard calls it the “dizziness of reason; T.S. Elliot called it the “handmaiden of creativity” and author Angela Carter described it as the “beginning of conscience”. I call it the stage fright that an actor feels as they go on stage or athletes as they go forward and then surpass the goals they had set for themselves and/or their team. The right dose of anxiety can produce the ‘get up and go’ that we all need to attempt the most difficult things – often that which we fear.

What is the right dose of anxiety? I don’t know; I haven’t got a prescription for a magic drug, but I do know that a mega dose of FAITH has got to be in there somewhere! Faith that God will provide the 411 we need before we go completely off the track. Our faith is what we understand as doing something positive; making a difference in our community; feeding a person who is hungry. Our faith lies in our God-given skills. It is in the skills of our friends and neighbors that give us a hand – because they understand what it means to care! Our faith understands that trying to do everything by ourselves’ will result in fatigue, overload, and exhaustion. The best thing we can ask for is many people and many hands to make a difference at how and what we do as a Congregation. Sometimes we don’t listen as well as we should, but that is just being human – the good news is that we can help each other when we have a question. Between the people of God and our ever faithful God, we can do it all!

As we begin 2012, we will be attempting a large agenda. Perhaps we won’t complete everything in 6 or 12 months, but with the grace of God, our faith in what we want to accomplish, and why we want to do it, we can make a difference in the lives of everyone we meet.

On behalf of the Council and the Ministries join us by creating some very powerful FAITH ANXIETY - TO MAKE THIS YEAR THE BEST IT CAN BE. Build on what we learned and did in 2011 and take the next step in our united faith journey. It may be a long trip, but a tank full of FAITH will get us a lot further than the best miles per gallon than any car out there.

Let’s Go
Dave Madsen

From the Knitting Ministry...

A HUGE THANK YOU, to everyone who donated hats and scarves in 2011 to the Knitting Ministry !! The small group of ladies who meet twice a month to knit/crochet and gab, and the other ‘unknown knitters and crocheters’ have all been very busy this past year. In early December, the mission group went downtown to serve in the Night Ministry. Not only did they help feed many, they also distributed the many hats and scarves that were donated from the Knitting Ministry. Helen Hassett and her granddaughter, Natalie, counted, as they bagged them: 49 scarves, 19 hats, 7 pairs of gloves, 3 earmuffs, and 8 hat and scarf sets !! Thank you to all who donated !! The Knitting Ministry will continue to meet each month, the 1st Tuesday night, and the 3rd Thursday night, at 7 pm, at church. Our first meeting is Tuesday, January 3rd, 2012 at 7 pm.



Please check the calendar for the dates, and please join us if you are able. If you need a ride, please contact the office.

From Missions ...

“Missions” Impossible? I don’t think so!

What a busy year it has been for the Missions ministry at I.U.C.C.!

This year we continued our relationship with the “Night Ministry” in the Pilson neighborhood of Chicago. It is such a rewarding experience that during the summer of 2011 we decided to do this locally as well.

At first we thought we would try to serve people in the church parking lot. After some reconsideration we decided to “take it to the streets”. Since we already have an association with the Hanover Park Food Pantry, we agreed to set up nearby on Astor Ave. Drive by on a Thursday evening at dinnertime and you are sure to find a small group of church members enjoying the company of the local community. Anyone who has ever participated by donating food, baking, knitting and crocheting, making sandwiches, wrapping hot dogs, stirring chili, packing food or serving can tell you what a wonderful experience this is. What we provide is given back to us ten fold!

Many members have volunteered time this year assisting the food pantry and its many projects. We have distributed weekly food boxes, unloaded the Northern Illinois Food Bank truck (once in a monsoon!), grown vegetables in our garden to share and helped store, sort and deliver food while the “Pantry” is being renovated.

In November we assisted the Streamwood V.F.W. with their first Thanksgiving dinner. Although attendance was low, it was a lovely event sure to grow in the coming years.

Through the Township we helped wrap presents for many of the local children whose Christmas would otherwise be very lean. I.U.C.C. also

purchased and wrapped presents for 3 families (7 children) who provided us with some very “practical” wish lists...we made sure they got what they needed and some fun stuff as well!

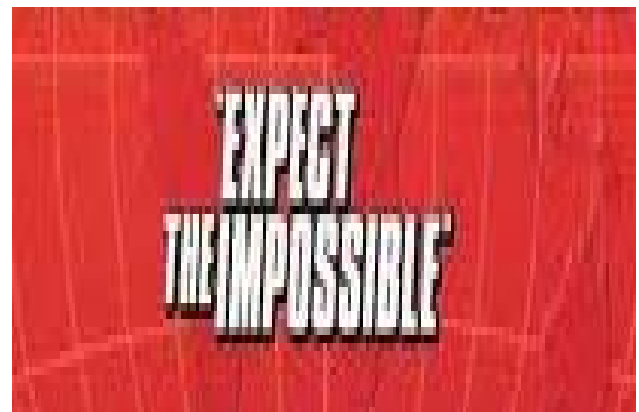
As you can see, 2011 was a very busy year for the Mission’s Ministry.

According to a Scottish proverb “Many hands make light work. Because it is but little to everyone”. With everyone pitching in and sharing their gifts, skills and talents we are able to accomplish so many things. Everyone working together can help lighten the load of so many carrying a much heavier burden. There is a popular bumper sticker right now that says “God bless everybody-NO EXCEPTIONS!” Thanks to all of you who try to practice this each and every day!

Submitted by Judy Dutton



NOT!



A Message of Hope

This year I received a letter from an old friend, tucked inside her Christmas card. I am going to share a small portion of the letter with you because I feel it is very inspirational. IUCC has been struggling for some time. Last year, we were talking about the option of shutting our doors. My friend goes to a church that also has financial struggles; then, I don't think churches struggling financially are unusual anymore. Here is the excerpt from her letter:

"I am grateful for my church and Pastor. Through everyone's hard work and determination we have turned a once almost dying church around. Little less than 4 years ago, we were almost going to have to close the door, no children in Sunday school and fewer people in services. Today we have over 40 children in Sunday school, and our numbers are over 225 each Sunday. We may not be financially out of the woods yet, but it's looking better all the time, and I thank God for that. People are attending Tuesday Bible study, and becoming more involved in all aspects of church life, it's so wonderful to see. I end my letter on a high note, grateful for my church and friends both young and young at heart."

Over the past year, I have seen people striving to help our church turn around. We went from no Sunday school, to having a Sunday School, called Little Church. People are committed to helping with nursery care and educating our little people. Wednesday night HUB and bible studies are a highlight of the week. People are serving the communities in ways great and small. To bring about this turn around, to make IUCC a place where your grandchildren and great grandchildren can worship, I think the important thing is to participate. To be there. Get involved in various aspects of church life. It *is* wonderful to see people get involved. But it will take *all of us*, not just a few, to make IUCC flourish. Let us not let apathy win. We cannot think, "Oh, someone will take care of it." Because we are someone. We are taking steps in the right direction. Think about what you would like to see happen...then participate in a focus group; listen, offer up ideas, lend a hand. What is *your* vision for IUCC? Let us step boldly into the new year, *together*, with hope in our hearts and then resolve to be part of something wonderful...being God's hands in our world. Happy New Year!

Pat Diehn



The Temporary Tithing Challenge

Stewardship Corner



Some of the more interesting conversations to be had around IUCC of late, are the general conversations about tithing. Some of these conversations begin with the honest confession that tithing is only the most vague of notions in the person's

mind. Not all of us came out of traditions, church or family, where tithing was an expected practice. Many of us associate the practice with "those" Christians, in with whom we would as soon not be lumped. We have heard horror stories about churches that demand to see the 1040's of all the member's, or pastors who brow beat parishioners into impressive contributions. Some of us know that a tithe is a biblical ten percent (dealt from the top not the bottom), but we are confused about whether this is supposed to be net or gross. It can certainly be vexing.

Yet, as we demonstrated at a recent congregational meeting, 10% of the incomes just in that room would have left the church in excellent financial shape; more than able to stop fretting and get down to the business of mission and growth.

What a tithe is intended to be is a vote of confidence in our divine provider. 10% off the top suggests that we are willing to take the risk of relying on God, before we set about taking care of all our own needs. For a lot of people a genuine 10% tithe can seem like a gigantic mountain to climb. We can think of a thousand ways to justify something much less. Mainline Protestant congregations have gotten so good at this that we regularly hover right around 1-2% of annual income in our giving. So, we spend all our time arguing about how to spend the little we can raise and never quite get to the business of being a church. Still, it is a very daunting, even nerve wracking, prospect to trust God to this extent.

So, just for the fun of it, your Stewardship ministry will be running a Tithing Challenge during the Lenten season (February 22 to April 7th). We are inviting whatever intrepid souls we can find at IUCC to try the Tithe during that short period. We will be talking more about this as we approach the Annual Meeting, and you will hear more about it in sermons and discussions upcoming. But for now, as we enter a new year, why not take this opportunity to think about it, and gear yourself up for the challenge.

So, who got the best gift this year? Who got something they wish they didn't get? How many people gave to charity in someone's name? Outside of Church, did you give to anything or anybody? Did you put money in the "Red Bucket"? Did they let you ring the bell? My nephew always looks forward to that part of giving!

As I was writing this I heard a question asked on the radio. The radio DJ asked, "How have you Paid it Forward this Season?" I stopped and thought about and questioned, did I really give as much as I could have? Have I done as much as I could have for someone other than myself?

As I was listening to this radio show, a woman called in and said every year she goes to K-Mart and pays off several Lay-aways for people that couldn't afford to buy their kids gifts. She stated she always makes sure the lay-aways are toys or items for children and always pays up to \$100 per lay-away! What an amazing person. She does this without ever seeing the expression on the receivers face. She does this without knowing if these people are truly going without. She does this with complete compassion.

Now, I'm not going to be the first person to run and pay several hundreds of dollars for other people. Mainly because I just don't have the funds. But I know we all would if we had unlimited resources.

But it does raise the question, what could I be doing better, differently? How can I pay it forward? I think I am going to start by giving someone a helping hand when they need it, without them asking. I know life is busy but are we ever too busy to give someone a hand with loading up their groceries or take their empty shopping cart? How about helping someone get to their car safely in the icy weather?

Stewardship is always talked about as money, money, money. But let's remember that God provided us our hands and feet, our heads and our hearts. He didn't give these to us just to make money and donate, he expected us to use all of these parts of us to learn and show compassion - To help even when others don't ask. So, Christmas may be over, but let's continue to "PAY IT FORWARD".

 **Pay it forward**



Stacey Walsted

Immanuel Staff

Interim Minister: **Rev. Tom Gough**

Pastor Tom's e-mail address:

jtomgough@gmail.com

Bell Choir Director: **Nancy Madsen**

Music Ministry Director: **Val Bartlein**

Office Administrator: **Bonnie Berkner**

Custodian: **Jay Olriksen**

Immanuel UCC website:

www.streamwoodiucc.org

Church e-mail:

office@streamwoodiucc.org

Office Phone # 630.837.0190

FAX # 630.837.4077

Church Council Contacts

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------|
| Dave Madsen | Acting Moderator | 847-301-1573 |
| Donna Schmidt | Vice Moderator | 847-997-3388 |
| Pat Diehn | Treasurer | 630-550-4166 |
| LaVerne Ryman | Clerk | 630-837-7337 |
| Jay Olriksen | Building & Grounds | 847-980-0376 |
| Donna Bowers | Congregational Care | 630-372-8580 |
| Al Berkner | Finance | 312-617-4741 |
| Stacey Walsted | Stewardship | 630-742-0925 |
| Renee Diehn | Worship Focus Group Representative | 630-550-4166 |
| Donna Bowers | Mission Focus Group Representative | 630-372-8580 |
| Pat Diehn | Fellowship Focus Group Representative | 630-550-4166 |
| Nancy Pappa | Discipleship Focus Group Representative | 630-965-1314 |