

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 1, No. 1

December 2011

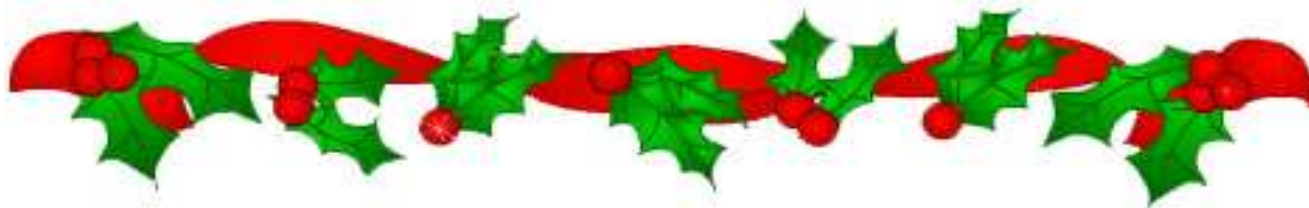
Welcome to *Connections*

I hope that this publication will inspire and encourage all of us to be more mindful of connections – making them and keeping them – and to infuse all of us with excitement and from that excitement, hopefully great things will emerge. I envision this publication making connections – between the readership and God and the Word; between members of Immanuel; between church members and ECE families; between Immanuel and the community; and any other connections we can make in the process! *Connections* will hopefully highlight events that will continue to be listed in the weekly “News and Notes”.

We have a terrific team of contributors and collaborators, and I thank all of them for their support! I also want to thank my son, Matthew, who designed the masthead and the layout for me – didn’t he do a great job? I look forward to hearing your thoughts, comments – good and bad! – and suggestions of what you want to see in future issues. You can contact me at bszalkow@sbcglobal.net, at home 713-868-2680 or office 713-646-1724 or through the church office immanuelhouston@gmail.com or 713-864-2651.

If you would like to save the postage for a copy mailed to your home, you can access the newsletter issues on the Immanuel website at <http://immanuelhouston.org> under the “News” quicklink. You can also register online to receive notice of a new issue via email by entering your email address in the box provided under the quicklinks. Please let me or the church office know if you select to do either of these options, so we can stop mailing you a print copy. Copies will also be available in the Narthex and in the Visitor packets.

~Barbara Szalkowski, Editor



Message from Pastor Hagan ...



This is an exciting time of the year. In a matter of days we will be celebrating Thanksgiving – a time that we anticipate being with family and sharing some of our favorite foods. Of course, some people get really excited about the day after Thanksgiving when they get to experience some of the best shopping deals of the whole year. In a few weeks we will be celebrating Christmas – and what child isn't already getting excited with the anticipation of gifts and surprises. And this year, in the middle of all of this, I have one more thing to be excited about. I am looking forward with anticipation of beginning my ministry with you.

So why do we get so excited over these events? Isn't it that in some way they are the experience of what we value the most? I think this is also the reason that when we can't experience them fully, it can be so disappointing. Family gatherings are important to us – we are with those we love. When we can't be with them, or when we feel we don't have much of a family, it can be devastating – because belonging is vital to each one of us. Christmas (more than just presents) is a time of joy – family, the miraculous, expectation – all these things rolled up into one. And, of course, for the Christian, this time does focus on what we hold most dear. At Thanksgiving, we have a special opportunity to thank our God who continues to give us far more than we deserve – He is a God of Grace. At Christmas we focus on His greatest gift – the gift of a Savior and the gift of His abiding presence (Immanuel!).

Likewise, I am exciting about my beginning of my ministry with you, because of some things that are so important to me. I love to share the Word of God and so am anticipating us growing together in a greater knowledge and depth of His truth. I am anticipating getting to know and care for you, for I am sure each of you has a story and journey of faith, and I am excited, just waiting to hear about those. I love the Church, and am convinced that God has a wonderful plan and future for Immanuel Lutheran, and I can't wait for us to discover together what that might be. I love to experience the Grace of God, and am anticipating how together we will be receiving His Means of Grace – Word and Sacrament – and how those will be transforming our lives, our church, and our community.

But you know, as much as we get excited with anticipation about this time of the year, I have to believe that our God also gets excited – as once again we begin a new Church Year and get to see the whole plan of salvation unfold. In 1 Peter 1:18-20, we read: "...you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown *before the foundation of the world* but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you." When God sent His Son, that first Christmas, the plans and preparations He had been making "before the foundation of the world" was finally beginning to unfold. He had been anticipating this – well, forever! And finally, the world was going to see His plan of Grace. I believe He was excited about this, because it involves what is most important to Him – you and your salvation.

(continued on page 3)

New Connections at ECE!

Melissa Robles, teacher in the Toddler Class, and her husband, Angel Reyes, welcomed a son on [October 30, 2011](#). Baby's name is Arian Angel Reyes. He weighed 8.4 pounds and is 18.5 inches tall.

Oonagh Ryan and Ben Dockrill welcomed a daughter, Auden Artemis Ryan-Dockrill, on [October 26, 2011](#). Baby Auden weighed in at 7.5 pounds and is 20.4 inches tall. Proud big sister, Freyja, is a student in the Toddler-2 Mother's Day Out program.

~Winnie McNamara



Advent Prayer Vigil

Thursday, December 1, 2011
2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Join us in joyful preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Savior at Christmas. On Thursday, December 1, our sanctuary will be open for prayer and meditation. In addition to your own prayer intentions, a prayer guide will be made available to you to pray for members of our church family and others who have made special requests. Additional prayer request cards will be available in the narthex of the church. You can also make prayer requests through our website

<http://immanuelhouston.org>.

You are welcome to spend a few minutes or as much time as you like in quiet contemplation.

Childcare will be available in the church nursery. Please feel free to extend this invitation to your friends and family.

~Kathy Angst & Winnie McNamara

Pastor Hagan ...

(continued from page 2)

And perhaps, that is why I am most excited. In the coming year together, we will have the opportunity to touch lives in a way that will affect them forever – our lives are going to be touched, and through us, God may be able to touch the lives of many people in our community.

May God continue to bless and keep you as we begin our adventure together.

Pastor Ray Hagan

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.....	Winnie McNamara
.....	Connie Meave
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Welcome, Pastor Hagan!

Pastor Raymond "Ray" Hagan will begin his ministry among on December 4. He received his education from Concordia Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN and post-graduate education at Concorida Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He has served congregations in California, Washington State, and as an active duty Air Force and Air Force reserve officer for more than 24 years. He served in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Iraq, and in the United Arab Emirates. Pastor Hagan and his wife of 37 years, Elizabeth, have three grown children, two sons and a daughter. Welcome, Pastor!



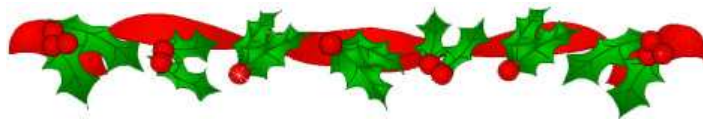
Annual Candy Sale

The Annual Holiday Candy Sale will be held after the 9:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 11. All proceeds from the sale will go to the Immanuel Social Ministry fund.

~Carol Whitefield



Christmas Concert
Sunday December 11, 2011
3:00 p.m.



December Special Worship Services

Pastor Hagan Installation
Sunday December 4
9:00 a.m. w/Communion
Brunch or Lunch

ECE Christmas Program
Wednesday December 14
7:00 p.m.
No meal prior to service

Christmas Day Service
Sunday December 25
9:00 a.m. w/Communion
No Bible Class/Sunday School



New Years' Eve Service
Saturday, December 31
7:00 p.m. w/Communion

Midweek Advent Service
Wednesday December 7
7:00 p.m.
No meal prior to service

Christmas Eve Service
Saturday December 24
7:00 p.m.
Special Music – Handbells

New Years' Day Service
Sunday January 1, 2012
9:00 a.m. w/Communion
No Bible Class/Sunday School

November Voters' Meeting Recap

A number of issues were brought before the Voters' Assembly on Wednesday November 16, 2011. Here are the highlights:

- The LINC proposal and the City of Houston Conservation Easement Lease proposals were both tabled for future decision. Anyone who was not able to attend and needs copies of either of these items should contact the church office.
- The Day School Board required number of members has been reduced from 7 to 5 (bylaws amendment).
- The number of regular Voters' meetings per year has been increased from 2 (May and November) to 6 (January, March, May, July, September, November). The meetings remain scheduled for the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. with the Council retaining the option to schedule as needed.
- Lonnie Angst has been named Immanuel's representative to the Texas District convention in 2012.
- Immanuel recommended the following candidates for Texas District for the elections at the 2012 Texas District convention: President: Ken Hennings; Vice-President: Ralph Hobratschk; Circuit Counselor: Mark Koch.
- Immanuel's contribution commitment to the Old Church Restoration Fund has been increased from \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00 and will be immediately

transferred from the Memorial Fund to the Church Restoration Fund.

- Expenditures from the Chrest Johnson bequest for school technology will be made with approval of the Day School Board and Church Council with reports to the Voters on the expenditures when money is spent.
- The Church Secretary's hours have been increased to 40 hours/week, the School Secretary's hours have been increased from 30 hours/week, and one ECE employee's hours have been increased 40 hours/week.
- The money designated in the budget for Missions will be disbursed to Foreign Missions.

Announcements:

- Church Council and the Day School Board have approved ECE spending a portion of the Johnson technology bequest for 20 Ipads and various accessories, hardware, protection plan, and staff Technology labor time.
- The yellow Church School Bus has been sold.
- Immanuel will be supporting Ronald McDonald House by collecting aluminum can pop-tops in a box in the Church Office and an envelope in the hall off the Narthex. Mary Osborn will deliver the collection as needed.

~Barbara Szalkowski, Secretary



December 2011 Birthdays & Anniversaries This Month

Birthdays

1st Rebecca Emshoff
Tessa Emshoff
2nd Estelle Hillman
Bess Queen
3rd Elisa Pérez
5th Dallas Batterson
Marsha Perez
7th Kayla Adair
Maris Frost
8th Justin Bond
Dorothy Klander
11th Jason Feit
12th Lane+ Hairgrove
Heidi Luker
13th Maxine Arndt
Marguerite Hirsch
14th Cameron+ Whitener
17th Juan Banda
Martin Theiss

18th Theresa Garcia
Ronald Wood
19th Rosemarie Emshoff
20th Steven Goodson
21st Melissa Hairgrove
23rd Virginia Kleb
Derek Zwernemann
25th Avante+ Levine
26th James Froehlich
Emilie Guettner
Xiomara Litinas
27th Max+ Dalston
Suzanne Graska
28th Craig Feagins
30th John Lutjemeier
31st Corey Spangler

Anniversaries

Audrey & Robert* Cooper
5 years on the 14th

Rev. Claudio & Elisa Pérez, Sr.
53 years on the 20th

James & Robin Ford
22 years on the 30th

Planning Ahead for 2012...

Scrapbook Saturday

January 14
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Beginning Scrapbook Class
(supplies provided) with snacks -- \$20.00
Crop for Experienced
Scrapbookers with snacks -- \$10.00

Genealogy Session/ Trip to Clayton Library

February 2012
Beginning genealogy session
by Winnie McNamara
Possible Saturday trip to
Clayton Library for research

Immanuel Lutheran Church and School

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Bingo Christmas Party @ 11:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil @ 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.	2	3
4 Worship 9:00 am w/Communion Pastor Hagan's Installation Adult Bible Class and Sunday School 10:17 am Naomi Christmas Party @ 4:00 p.m. At Diane Schreiner's	5 Handbell Practice @ 6:30 in the basement	6 All boards Meeting @ 7:00 pm	7 Advent Service @ 7:00 p.m.	8	9	10
11 Worship 9:00 am Annual Candy Sale in Narthex Adult Bible Class and Sunday School 10:17 am <i>Pionsettia Order Deadline</i>	12 Handbell Practice @ 6:30 in the basement	13 Church Council @ 6:00 p.m. in the Library	14 ECE Program @ 7:00 p.m.	15 <i>Newsletter submission deadline</i>	16 ECE Christmas Break Begins	17
18 Worship 9:00 am w/Communion Adult Bible Class and Sunday School 10:17 am Social Sunday Chili dinner @ 5:00 p.m. Neighborhood Caroling after dinner	19 Handbell Practice @ 6:30 in the basement	20 Worship Committee 6:00 p.m.	21	22	23 Burmeister/ Richter Wedding Office Closed	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00 p.m.
25 Christmas Day Worship 9:00 am w/Communion 1 January New Year's Day Worship 9:00 a.m. w/Communion	26 Office Closed <hr/> 2 Office Closed	27	28	29	30 Office Closed	31 Rivera Wedding @ Noon New Year's Eve Service 7:00 p.m. w/Communion



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Houston, TX 77008

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Return Service Requested

First Class

God with us, transforming and sending



Immanuel's December "Social Sunday"
Sunday, the 18th of December

Dinner @ 5 PM
(Chili, dessert and drink)

Followed by Neighborhood Caroling
If unable to go caroling, stay for a good game of
Dominoes with friends



Free Will Offering

Everyone welcome! Join us for an evening of fun and fellowship!