



# Immanuel's Newsletter

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## From Pastor Sullivan's Desk

The tragedy that happened in Newtown, CT reminds me of a similar tragedy that happened in Bethlehem. It is part of the Christmas story that we easily gloss over because reading it sort of bothers us. It is the account of what happened after the wise men visited Jesus.

*<sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. <sup>13</sup> When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." <sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: <sup>18</sup> "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." (Matthew 2:12-18)*

We don't know how many children were murdered in Bethlehem, but given the size of the little village, many people think it was around 20 – the same number that were killed in Newtown. There are differences between what happened in Bethlehem and Newtown; for example the motive of the crime. The children in Bethlehem were slaughtered because of King Herod's rage against Jesus. Authorities are still trying to piece together why the gunman in Newtown did what he did.

But despite the differences you have the similarities of an evil, raging man – bent on killing children. You have parents weeping for their children. You have people shocked by the event. How could this happen? Why? And so many start searching and blaming - all the while missing the bigger picture.

And what is the bigger picture? What was the root cause behind the tragedy in Newtown, CT? It is the same thing that caused Herod to slaughter all the boys of Bethlehem: sin is the problem. The selfish sinful heart is what led Cain to kill his brother Abel and Hitler to kill millions of Jews. This is the same sinful nature that leads a wife to cheat on her husband and a father to abuse his children. It is the same sinful human heart that leads to 1.2 million abortions per year in the United States and to all the wars and rumors of wars that are being waged on this earth. The sinful human heart is the

problem - the same heart that you and I possess. True, you and I would probably never dream of killing children. Nevertheless, our selfish hearts hurt our children, spouses and loved ones everyday. Even worse, our sinful heart is constantly at odds with God.

Last week, we came face to face with the absolute ugliness of sin. What happened in Newtown shows how depraved the human heart actually is. It shows that we need help. We need a Savior from sin.

And this is what we are celebrating at Christmas: God loving the world so much that He sent His Son to be our Savior. He would live the perfect life we failed to live before God - thereby winning the righteousness we need to stand before Him. He would take all of mankind's sins upon himself and go to the cross to suffer and die for them all. After rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, he would send out messengers armed with the Gospel. Because the Holy Spirit would go out with them, they would be able to call people to faith. Their message of repentance and forgiveness would purify the hearts of all who believed in him. It would create in their hearts a new nature that loved God and desired to serve their fellow man. This is what the Gospel has done for us and this is what the Gospel continues to do for all who believe it. No, this side of heaven will never be perfect. But we are forgiven, and in this forgiveness that comes by faith, we are able to love.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: what happened in Newtown is tragic. It shows us sin in all its ugliness. There is nothing anyone can say or do that will take away the pain that community is feeling right now, so pray for them. Pray for everyone affect by all tragedy. Pray that they may find relief. Pray, more importantly, that they might find hope in the Savior.

But having prayed such prayers, be sure to also tell you family and friends the good news of Christ. Let them see how important the Gospel is to you. Invite strangers to Church and Bible class. Spread the Gospel of Christ. Why? Because sin is the root problem from which every tragedy on this earth stems. And only Christ can and does save us from sin, that we might have the sure hope of living eternally with him in the sinless paradise he is even now preparing for us. And so we pray:

"Lord, have mercy on all those affected by what happened in Newtown Ct. Have mercy on everyone suffering everywhere. Let your Gospel shine forth in the world so that those without hope might find hope, peace and forgiveness in you. Direct everyone to your Son, and let us also be involved in doing the same. Sin is the problem. Thanks be to you, that you give us the victory over sin in your Son. We look forward to the day you will return to take us to be with you forever in heaven. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

## President's Letter

Your Church Council is working hard to accomplish the goals established for 2012. We drafted and passed Policy IL12-001, Student Aid for Elementary Education. This policy establishes the level of tuition support for our families at one half the tuition cost for each child. Efforts are ongoing to expand Little Lambs and reestablish our youth programs. Bible Studies have been added to our newsletters. A survey of the congregation regarding our ministries and a First-fruits Giving Table were developed. The Planned Giving Committee became more active under the leadership of Lou Richard and they published a Gifting Table. Upgrading of our Church Library is ongoing. Evangelism is working to establish contact with our visitors, reaching out with Christian love. A significant expansion of the Elders board is planned for 2013, which should assist with their efforts. Our excellent Board of Property is continuing to do outstanding work in maintaining our facilities including taking on much of the cleaning responsibilities. Plans for next year include working on our stained glass windows and sidewalks.

The above is not all-inclusive of the work being done. Your Church Council, boards and committees are doing wonderful things. If you think you can contribute in any area please contact the appropriate board chairman or give me a call.

Your boards will report their status in January's Annual Meeting. Please plan on attending. I think it is vitally important that we pay more attention to our ministries, so your participation is critical. Our 2013 Spending Plan will have a separate section that deals only with our key ministries to help us focus on them.

As always, please help me remember all the hard working members who work behind the scenes doing great work we all benefit from. If you think someone deserves a little recognition give me a call or send me an email at ([glennbrunner1@yahoo.com](mailto:glennbrunner1@yahoo.com)).

Merry Christmas to all,

Glenn Brunner

## Elder's Board Report

Here at Immanuel, we continue to enjoy many blessings at church, in worship and our many events. To God be the Glory, many thanks must go to all the hard working individuals that make these happen. I wasn't sure about a news worthy topic for this edition. I could not think of an idea special enough, until I looked in my Bible case lately.

It is the Bible I got while in grade school at Immanuel, about 1960? Students could sell Christmas cards, and a higher level of sales got a Bible for the bonus. So I have used this King James Version for a while. A few years ago, and longer ago than I thought, I had made a protective leather case for it. Too many book marks, and the book cover was worn. Since the Bible was getting crowded, this was a better option to hold those past, and future keepsakes.

As I look through the contents I am reminded of so much past, some happy, some sad. Special cards and letters from my children and now grandkids, the last Christmas candle my son Jon held on Christmas Eve singing Silent Night, some photos of family and important events, and many other personal treasures.

My idea here is simple. If you need a gift idea for someone, "that has everything," I highly recommend a case for their favorite Bible. It can be handmade for someone, or a carefully chosen container that fits. Enclose an encouragement to add a few items as I exemplified. Include a special Bible if need be!

Someday when the next generations review my "stuff," they will find a collection of what I valued most, and what was important to me. God's Word and the many blessings I have received, will encourage future family, witness to my faith, and pass on important family history in a very personal way.

Merry Christmas, from the Elder's Board

Dan Fager

## Adult Discipleship Board Report

“If you live in My Word, you are really My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will free you.”

In the last newsletter we included a survey form. What was the point of it? Well, it was an attempt to improve our communication, namely feedback, which might provide some ideas on ministry, how better to spread the Gospel, the use of Christian schools the Lord has provided us, and how to encourage the study and sharing of the Gospel within the congregation. This information would have been provided to the Church Council. However, few responses were received, which was very disappointing.

Our Planned Giving Committee has updated, and published in the last newsletter, a Planned Giving table of recommended gifting opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services (October), Christian Aid and Relief (November) and Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society program called Kids c.a.r.e (December). We hope you like the idea of using the alms boxes to support the various ministries of our synod as a convenient way of returning some of our blessings to these important but all too often forgotten ministries.

As you know, we have been trying to improve our library this year. Along with adding some new books we have removed many old books, which were not in use or of not the right subject material for our church library. This made room to expand our library with the purchase of excellent resource and educational books. We hope to find enough funds in 2013 or receive contributions to update our tables and chairs.

In this newsletter you’ll find another home Bible Study sponsored by your Adult Discipleship Board. We hope you will set aside some time to go through this short Bible study and that you will find it spiritually uplifting.

Your brother in Christ,

Glenn Brunner  
Chair, Board of Adult Discipleship

## Property Board Report

Volunteers continue doing very good work cleaning and maintaining the Immanuel buildings and grounds. Thanks for keeping the church property looking nice!

The padding on the church pews has been professionally steam cleaned. It has been some time since this has been completed. It is a refreshing comfort to sit on clean seats.

Inspection of the church stain glass windows drew favorable review. The glass work is in good condition while some of the exterior wooden trim has been found rotting. The wood simply needs replacing to repel moisture from entering the interior of the building.

The church elevator was found to have a safety defect which needed repair. The cause of the problem

was a switch that allowed the elevator to operate even though a door was open. The problem has been repaired and the elevator is back in operating condition.

The furnaces are now in operation for the winter season. The temperature in the church had remained at last year's setting of 65 degrees. For some reason this setting drew many complaints that it was too cold in church. The temperature was then increased to 70 degrees. This drew complaints that this is too warm and uncomfortable. The temperature was then set to 68 degrees with hopes of some mutual agreeable comfort zone.

The boiler has been inspected as required by the State of Wisconsin. A three year permit has been obtained to operate such a heating vessel.

A cross connection survey has been conducted at the church facility. This survey is performed in accordance with local, state regulation to ensure safe drinking water. Three minor violations have been identified which will need correction. Costs of back flow prevention devices for some faucets will be very minimal and already have been completed to meet code compliance.

The property board has contributed to a list established by the Planned Care Giving Committee. Consideration was given to projects on a priority basis. Projects will be undertaken only if/or when funding is available. Budget planning for the upcoming year also took place at our meeting. The board has selected three priority projects to accomplish (1) replacement of the concrete walk way at the front of church (2) Carpeting replacement at the back of church and (3) stained glass window repairs.

Have an enjoyable Christmas Season.

As always, you're hard working property board keeping God's house in good order.

Greg Hlinak  
Steve Ihlenfeldt  
Gary Hardtke

## Manitowoc Lutheran High School (MLHS) Delegate Report

The MLHS calendar can be found by accessing the Calendar of Events link on the MLHS web page ([www.mlhslancers.org](http://www.mlhslancers.org)). The electronic calendar will be updated as changes occur throughout the year.

Plans are made to expand the football field bleachers. This project is presently estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$69,000.00.

The science rooms have undergone a complete renovation over the summer months. The facilities are top quality and competitive with any school in the state, a wonderful blessing from the Lord.

Current school enrollment numbers are 233 (including International students). This includes 62 freshmen, 60 sophomores, 53 juniors and 58 seniors.

Staffing Update. Michelle Luebke was hired as the new full-time office assistant. The Registrar position and Guidance Director position will be combined, saving about \$6,000.00. Mrs. Nass will serve in this new capacity in the next school year.

The MLHS New Friends program continues to be a success. New Friends brings MLHS students and

special needs children together for fun and friendship once a month.

Phase III Capital Appeal status: Gifts and Pledges (thru 10/31/12) = \$1,003,512.00

MLHS Endowment Account status: Total Balance on Hand (as of end of Sept) = \$1,903,964.01.

Accumulated Interest (FYTD) = \$21,782.61 (\$92,243.28 was distributed in July.)

Of this \$8,624.47 is marked for Operation Budget, \$10,971.74 for Tuition Assistance and \$2,186.40 for Worker Training. If you are interested in various ways of supporting Christian education consider a future endowment to MLHS.

MLHS SCRIP Report: SCRIP sales through 10/29/12 (6 months of their fiscal year) = \$1,573,331. What a blessing!

I have been actively encouraging holding tuition cost steady. The school has done so for several years. However, without increased support from congregations (which has dropped significantly over the years) a rise in the tuition fee to families may have to occur. Christian Education is one of our ministries. I have asked for an increase in our annual support for MLHS in the 2013 budget.

Glenn M. Brunner  
MLHS Lead Delegate

### **MLHS Christmas Concert on the Radio**

As you fill your homes & hearts with Christ's birth this season, two more options for tremendous Christmas music are available! MLHS' 2011 Christmas concert will be re-played on area radio stations on two separate occasions: at 4pm on Sunday 12/23 on WCUB (980 AM) and again at 4pm Christmas Day on WOMT (1240 AM).

### **Christmas Concert Recordings Available**

CDs of MLHS' 2012 Christmas concert are being professionally recorded, and are available for purchase. If you didn't order a CD, a downloadable version of the concert will also be available for \$20 by Dec 21<sup>st</sup> at [www.tuneswoon.com](http://www.tuneswoon.com).

### **Position Opening at MLHS**

Manitowoc Lutheran High School is seeking applications for the part-time position of evening custodian to assist with general custodial duties and building lock-up. More information is available on their website - [www.mlhslancers.org](http://www.mlhslancers.org) or by calling the school office. Applications are must be received at Manitowoc Lutheran High School by January 2, 2013.

### **MLHS Office Hours:**

MLHS will be closed from Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> through Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. The main office will have limited hours, open the 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> from 9am-2pm; the SCRIP office will be closed the entire break. From all MLHS' faculty and students, may God richly bless your Christmas celebration!

### **Inter-Active Calendar**

Curious about the date of a concert or time of a game? Check out everything on the MLHS calendar, UPDATED DAILY, by visiting our website. Dates, times, locations & more info is updated everyday so YOU can ALWAYS have the most current info possible!

### **Facebook**

If you haven't yet, keep track of all-things-Lancer by liking us on Facebook. Keep an eye on how we're doing toward our \$100K Science Room Renovation gift challenge via the "Beaker-Watch". Invite your friends, too!

## Home Bible Study

### Read Hebrews 13:1-6

“Christians, keep on loving one another. Don’t neglect to welcome guests. This is how some without knowing it had angels as their guests. Remember those in prison as if you were in chains with them, and those who are mistreated as if you could feel it.

Everybody should think highly of marriage and keep married life pure, because God will judge those who sin sexually whether single or married.

Don’t be greedy. Be satisfied with what you have, because He said: *I will never leave you or desert you.* And so we have the courage to say: *The Lord is my Help. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*”

### Consider the Lord’s lessons for how we should live.

According to our text, list some things that God wants us to do as Christians.

Why does God want us to do these things (cf. Ephesian 2:1-10; Matthew 5:16)?

Where can we go to find out what pleases God and equip ourselves to do the good works he wants us to do? (Romans 10:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

On the last day, what will God say concerning the good works we do out of love for Him and his salvation? (cf. Matthew 25:14-23; 31-40)

What will God say to us on the last day if we use his forgiveness as a license to sin and abuse his grace by living only for ourselves? (cf. Matthew 25:24-30; 41-46)

6. What, then, should be our greatest concern while living on this earth? (Matthew 6:31-33)



# Christmas Worship Schedule

**Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**9:00am**

**Children's Service (24<sup>th</sup>)**

**5:00pm**

**Christmas Eve Service (24<sup>th</sup>)**

**7:00pm**

**Christmas Day (25<sup>th</sup>)**

**9:00am**

**Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00am**

**New Year's Eve (31<sup>st</sup>)**

**7:00pm w/Holy Communion**

## Membership Changes

**Baptism:** Kaylin Vandermause

**Transfer In:** None

**Received by Affirmation of Faith:** None

**Release:** Keith Siegmund to St Paul, Montpelier (LCMS)

**Loss to Eternal Life:** None

## Announcements

**Automatic Transfer Available for Church Offerings** Immanuel participates in a program called Simply Giving that will automatically transfer funds from your bank account to ours either Weekly, Semi-Monthly, or Monthly. There is NO cost to you. This is a great option for many reasons. It encourages regular giving, eliminates the need to write a check (which saves you money) and saves Immanuel money on purchasing church envelopes. Please contact Julie Siegmund at 388-4541/juliesiegmund@charter.net if you are interested in this option. You would also cancel or change your authorization directly with Immanuel. More information and a sign up form is included in this newsletter.

**Church Greeters** The new church greeter schedule will start at the beginning of January. Please contact Julie Siegmund if you no longer wish to serve Immanuel in this capacity. We're also looking for a couple of new people to help out. We welcome couples or single people who can be paired with one another.

**Offering Envelopes for 2013** Envelopes for 2013 will be available for pick-up starting on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> and as always: **Do Not Use Envelopes from a Previous Year as Your 2013 Number May Be Different than Your 2012 Number, And We Record Contributions by Number – Not by Name.**

**ALMS Recipient for December**

*Kids C.A.R.E.*

Since the 2005 LWMS convention children have been supporting the mission work of WELS through the Kids C.A.R.E project, alternating each year between Home and World Missions. The current Kids C.A.R.E offerings will help support music, sports, and other kinds of VBS Camps in our home missions. Some congregations don't have funding for VBS programs and this offering will make it possible to reach out to their communities and share the good news of our Savior with the children.

**Altar Guild Flowers** If you wish to donate flowers or an arrangement to beautify the altar for worship, please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the narthex or contact any of the Altar Guild members for that particular month.

**New Scrip Vendor!!** Walter's of Rio Creek is now available in scrip. Gift certificates can be purchase in any dollar value and Immanuel gets 5% profit from each certificate purchased.

**Immanuel Pizza Making Day** Mark your calendars! Immanuel's pizza making day will be held on Saturday, Feb. 23, 2013. Plan on a day of pizza making, eating pizza & lots of fellowship!

**THANK YOU!!!** The Athletic Club would like to sincerely thank everyone who helped in any way to make this year's Time 'n Talent/Silent Auction a success. This year's event raised approx. \$7,200. All proceeds benefit the Family Life Center. God has blessed us with a wonderful facility and we appreciate the members of our congregation, and the people and business in our community who help in any way to help support it. Thank you! To God Be The Glory!

**Basketball Tournament** The Athletic Club members are planning a boys 5th & 6th grade basketball tournament for Saturday, February 2nd in the Family Life Center. Please watch the bulletin for future updates as we will be looking for helpers.

**Athletic Club** If you are interested in joining our club as a member or would like information regarding it, please contact Greta Bloniarz (255-4919). We are always looking for new members. Thank you!

**Ink Cartridge Recycling Program** Please donate your old ink and toner cartridges to Immanuel. Office Max has a recycling program that earns us “points” towards future purchases (like paper). They will even take copy machine toner – clean out your work copy rooms! A collection container is located in the 1<sup>st</sup> classroom by the copy machine. Please contact Julie Siegmund with questions.

**Little Lambs** Little Lambs is meeting again on Tuesday’s at 10:00am. This free playgroup is for babies through preschoolers and their caregiver. For more information or to register, talk to Laura after church, call 388-6009 or check out the Little Lambs page on the church website. Hope to see many of you there! *Members of the congregation can also check the website to find out ways to help the Little Lambs program.*

**Sunday School** Sunday School meets from 7:45am to 8:50am each week. If you know of someone who would like to send their children to our Sunday School program please have them call Pastor.

**Worship Service DVD’s** The A/V committee has made DVD copies of last week’s service and they are available in the Narthex. Please take one and share it with a family member or friend.

**Cable TV Broadcast** Our Sunday Morning Worship Service is broadcast on local Cable TV Channel 97 or Charter Channel 984 at 7:00pm on Wednesday evenings.

**Church Library** We have been compiling books, CDs, DVDs, etc. in a “loaning library” for our members located in the Church Office in the Educational Wing. We will soon be adding items to it to build up the material available for the spiritual nourishment of our members. Feel free to stop in today and see what’s available and don’t be afraid to make suggestions for new acquisitions!

**Address Updates** In an effort to stay in communication with our members, please keep the church office updated on your current address and telephone number. Thanks for your help!

**Use of Immanuel’s Facilities** It is Immanuel’s policy that anyone wanting to use the Fellowship Hall or any of the classrooms should contact **Greg Hlinak** or indicate the use on the calendar in each room. Requests for rooms should be made at least one week in advance. **Chair and table rental should be coordinated through Greg Hlinak and the Property Board.** Please only call Paul Nimmer with questions related to the Family Life Center.

**Aluminum Can Collection** The Immanuel Pioneer program continues to collect aluminum cans as a fundraiser. Aluminum cans should be bagged and secured and placed in the metal cage located east of the gymnasium. If you have a large quantity at your home, you may contact Fred Steffen at 388-0875 to arrange for pick-up. The meals on wheels containers may also be recycled, but must be washed clean. In the past a scheduled recycling week-end had been arranged, but that is no longer the case. The cans may be brought at any time. Thank you for your support of the Pioneer Program.