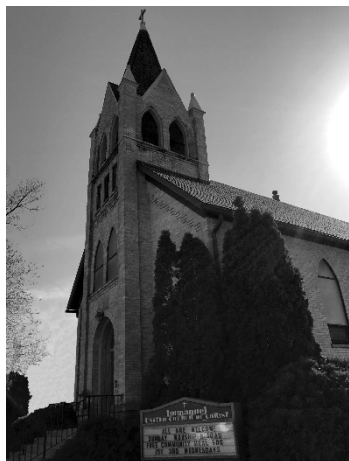


Immanuel United Church of Christ

118 Oak Street

Neenah, WI 54956-3034



JANUARY NEWSLETTER

January Birthdays

Cora Nelson Jan 1

Karen Wolf Jan 7

Tammy Mueller Jan 16





Immanuel United Church of Christ

118 Oak Street, Neenah, WI 54956

Church email:

iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net

Phone: (920) 722-0381

Web site: www.iuccneenah.org

Wise Men (and Women), Wise Gifts, and Shaping the Future . . .

As I write this article, I am anticipating the joy of Christmas. Everything will be a little different this year due to the virus, but I am confident that I and my family will find ways to rejoice and celebrate. One new thing we are doing is to forego gift giving among the adults—most of us have what we want and need already. Instead, we are all going to write checks to charities, hoping that we can bring Christmas joy to someone facing challenges this year. I am confident that our love for each other will be renewed in this new expressing of gift giving.

The gift giving of Christmas has its origins in the gift giving of those Wise Men who sought out the Messiah. You remember the story, don't you? A star appeared in the East, and three Wise Men followed it—some say for years. Finally it led them to the stable and the manger, where they found the Messiah. In joy and thanksgiving, they bowed down and offered their gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The gifts of the Wise Men are not only the foundation of our gift-giving practices; they offer an important message about what it means to seek the Christ-Child, to follow God's urgings. Each of the gifts given by the Wise Men was a gift directed to the future of the Messiah. Tradition teaches that the gold was what saw the holy family through when the threats of Herod forced them to flee to Egypt. One Wise Man knew that the Christ would face some financial challenges, so he gave gold to bankroll God's plan for the future. The second Wise Man offered frankincense, a gift given to acknowledge

the royalty of Jesus. He was the future King of Israel, and kings deserve fragrant offerings. This gift proclaims that Jesus is part of God's future intentions for the creation—that the Christ should rule in the hearts of women and men. The myrrh also spoke of the future. It was an ointment used in preparing bodies for burial. It spoke of the future suffering and death that the Manger Child would face and revealed that God's intentions are sometimes realized through sacrifice. The Wise Men gave gifts that were directed toward God's future, and which helped that future to become reality. They were willing partners with God in the work of redemption.

If we are to be Wise Women and Wise Men in our time, we also must look to the future to discern what God is calling us to do, and then we must act selflessly and generously to bring God's intentions for creation into reality. The gifts that the Wise Men gave provided blessings in times of challenge, and proclaimed God's presence in such times: gold for the time spent in Egypt; myrrh to soothe the pangs of death; and frankincense to proclaim a King's ascension—Easter's resurrection! If we want to be considered wise, our giving must do the same. Wise giving touches hurt with healing; touches despair with hope; touches the pain of death with the power of resurrection.

The Epiphany story also has lessons to teach us about facing the challenges of ministry. Most Biblical scholars think that the Wise Men began their journey about two years before the birth of Jesus. Some theorize that the two years ended on the day of birth. Others theorize that it began on the day of birth and that the Wise Men arrived when the babe was two years old. While we are not sure which scenario is the most accurate, it seems clear that the Wise Men pursued that star for two years, and they did so at great risk to themselves. The times that they lived in were perilous, and travelling with such gifts could have made them targets for thieves and robbers. They were willing to risk it, however, because they were inspired by a vision of God.

In our fast-food world we sometimes lack for such patience. We expect everything to happen quickly, and waiting can lead us to frustration. If we are to be wise in our time, we must continually remind ourselves that doing God's work seldom leads to instant gratification. We seldom get to see the full extent of what we do in ministry, but we do it anyway—trusting that God's intentions will be fulfilled for others in some future time. Wise men and women see the "big picture" and trust that their efforts will lead to blessings for the future and bring the Kingdom of Christ a little closer to reality. Whether that reality is two minutes away, two years away, or two lifetimes away makes no difference. We do ministry because we want to shape the future in the short-term and the long-term.

This business of giving and planning for the future is of special importance for us as this New Year dawns upon us. Our ministry at Immanuel is in a state of flux. We are no longer partners with the good folks at St. John's in Oshkosh. We are venturing into the future on our own. What that future will be is unclear as the New Year dawns. Will we keep doing what we have been doing until we die in a few years? Will we try to revitalize our ministry and attract new members? Will we seek a merger or partnership with another church? There are so many questions, and seeking the answers is being impacted by the battle with COVID-19.

While our future may be shrouded in fog, one thing is clear—unless we give ourselves and our gifts freely and generously to God, not much will happen, and the kingdom will not draw nearer.

As you celebrate the New Year, and consider resolutions and plans for your future, I invite you to add an item to your list. Resolve to give your best to our common ministry—give your heart and soul to the unfolding process of discernment which is before us. Welcome this unfolding chapter with joy and gladness, not with bitterness or anger.

Together let us journey into the future as Wise Women and Wise Men, knowing that

God needs our gifts, and will use them to bring the kingdom near.

Peace and Joy, Pastor Tom

Message from the Treasurer:

End of the year giving helps catchup on the deficit of the year and enables giver to take advantage of tax deductions. Please consider making your contribution no later than 12/27/20 so that it can be counted before 12/31/2020. Also, you can take advantage of greater tax savings by donating stock shares instead of cash. Check with your financial adviser on how that can be done.

Bob Vande Hey



Prayer List

Margaret Lord

Angel Lord

All people affected by
Corona Virus

Ron Burow

"Out to Lunch Bunch" has been canceled until further notice.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE IS AT 6:30PM. Please arrive a little early to participate in Covid19 safeguards. Social distancing and masks required.

Remember to pick up your giving envelopes, as with every year they are in church Christmas Eve for pick up. Please pick up for friends, family and neighbors to save on postage. Each box is \$4-\$4.50 to mail.



EMERGENCY AND PASTORAL CARE PHONE NUMBER

If you are in need of emergency Pastoral Care please call the church at 920-722-0381 or Heather 920-734-7843. Pastor Tom's cell phone 920-268-5757. Please leave a detailed message. On the message, talk slowly and leave: 1. Your name and phone number; 2. Which hospital and who the person is and room number; 3. Anything else necessary that would help him understand the situation. For any other business matters, call Bob Vande Hey at 920-740-6177 or Gary Joosten at 920-810-9262.

IUCC Community Meal

**1st & 3rd Wednesdays of Every Month
5:00 – 6:30 PM**

The IUCC/New Hope Lutheran Community Meal Program is a non-profit 501c3 under IUCC and all donations are tax deductible. Send your donations payable to: IUCC (note on memo line "Community Meal") and mail to IUCC 118 Oak St., Neenah, WI 54956. Donations are always welcome. The community meal account balance is getting very low, any donations would be greatly appreciated. We always need paper products (toilet paper, plates and napkins, garbage bags-large black), and cleaning supplies. Also, beef and chicken broth, V8 juice, fruit juices, tuna, peanut butter, soups, and box meal mixes. We also accept frozen meat products such as turkey, chicken, ham, stew meats, etc. Contact the office before dropping off (920-722-0381).

Canceled until further notice.

**Food Pantry is open on Wednesday
1-3 for outside pick up.**

A big thank you to Byron for fixing computer problems on 12-13. Made updates and fixed sign-in/password problems.

Pastor Tom has started an incentive program. Each week a giving envelope # will be drawn from a basket with all those donations made for the week. The winner will win a \$10 gift card to an eatery. The same thing will be done with everyone who orders from Scrip each month. Heather will call the winners and they can pick from the cards that we have.

<u>IMMANUEL UCC OFFICE HOURS</u>		
<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PERSON(S)</u>
<u>Monday</u>	9am-12pm	Heather
<u>Wednesday</u>	10 am – 2 pm	Heather
	12pm – 2pm	Bob
	10am – 2pm	Pastor
<u>Thursday</u>	9 am – 12 pm	Heather
Hours subject to change		

**Winners so far for Dec are:
Dec 6 – Koller – Giving
Dec 13 – Wolf – Giving
Dec 20 – Knight - Giving
Dec 14 – Hoppe - Scrip**



If you can't serve the week indicated, please exchange with someone else and call the church office Wednesday morning before 10:30 a.m. We list the names in the bulletin and request you wear your name tag to acknowledge your help and also help others, especially guests and infrequent attendees, to get "names and faces" together.

Dec - Jan, 2021- WORSHIP TIME 8:30 A.M.

GREETERS	Dec 27	Jan 3	Jan 10	Jan 17
Doty Street	Chuck Wolf 725-9036	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Heather Hessler 734-7843
Oak Street	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Judy Joosten 810-2962	Don Hessler 734-7843
Ushers	Chuck Wolf 725-9036	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Heather Hessler 734-7843
Ushers	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Judy Joosten 810-2962	Don Hessler 734-7843
Reader	Chuck Wolf 725-9036	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Larry Schroeder 268-7741	Anna Knight 809-4994
Communion Set Up	Cindy Anderson 727-4820			
Worship Technician				

GREETERS	Jan 24	Jan 31	Feb 7	Feb 14
Doty Street	Chuck Wolf 725-9036	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Heather Hessler 734-7843
Oak Street	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Judy Joosten 810-2962	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Cindy Anderson 727-4820
Ushers	Chuck Wolf 725-9036	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Heather Hessler 734-7843
Ushers	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Judy Joosten 810-2962	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Cindy Anderson 727-4820
Reader	Chuck Wolf 725-9036	Larry Schroeder 268-7741	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Anna Knight 809-4994
Communion Set Up	Cindy Anderson 727-4820			
Worship Technician				

Please check the sign-up sheet and sign up to be a communion assistant the first Sunday of each month for Communion Sunday.

We are in need of more people for greeting, ushering and reading on Sunday mornings. If you are able to do either of these please let Heather know.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sunday, Jan 3 **Service 8:30am – Second Sunday after Christmas**
Ps 147:12-20, Jer 31:7-14, Eph 1:3-14, Jn 1⊕1-9), 10-18
- Wednesday, Jan 6 Community Meal has been canceled until further notice
- Sunday, Jan 10 **Service 8:30am – The Baptism of Christ**
Ps 29, Gen 1:1-5, Acts 19:1-7, Mk 1:4-11
- Sunday, Jan 17 **Service 8:30am – Second Sunday after Epiphany**
Ps 139:1-6, 13-18, 1 Sm 3:1-10(11-20), 1 Cor 6:12-20, Jn 1:43-51
- Wednesday, Jan 20 Community Meal canceled until further notice.
- Wednesday, Jan 20 Council Meeting 7pm**
- Sunday, Jan 24 **Service 8:30am – Third Sunday after Epiphany**
Ps 62:5-12, Jan 3:1-5,10, 1 Cor 7:29-31, Mk 1:14-20
- Sunday, Jan 31 **Service 8:30am – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**
Ps 111, Deut 18:15-20, 1 Cor 8:1-13, Mk 1:21-28

Services will be recorded each week and put on our website to be viewed. iuccneenah.org. Click “services” select the service date you want to view, click the start arrow in bottom left corner, adjust volume in right bottom speaker. If you don’t have internet service request a CD from Chuck or Heather.

This calendar contains all information received by the church office as of Dec 20th.



Immanuel UCC
November, 2020

	November	YTD/2020
General Fund Income	\$7,412	\$51,309.85
General Fund Expenses:	(\$-7,786.87)	(\$-69,256.30)
Net Income/Loss	(\$-374.87)	(\$-17,946.45)
Change in investments:	\$10,772.85	(\$-1,335.26)
Scrip on hand:	\$0	\$ 0
Community Meal balance:	\$3,780.67	\$

- Bob participated the Wisconsin conference annual campaigns 101 Webinar on 9/1/20 and will brief the council on the ideas they presented. Pastor Tom looked over the information made available and will provide his ideas as to how we should proceed with an annual campaign as part of our long term future. **UPDATE: Bob & Pastor will work on this in January.**

Selection of new council candidates for 2021 to replace Gary, Angel & Bob. Council members will talk with church members about serving on council. **UPDATE: Bob will check with Olga to see if she would like to serve on council. Heather and Larry would run only if a council member would like to take a break. Bob asked Pastor Tom if he would contact any members that he felt were qualified and willing to serve. Pastor said he would try to find the records Pastor Jen had for the spiritual gifts inventory and review those interviews and contact possible candidates before the semiannual meeting. Bob pointed out that Pastor Tom explained how important it is to bring in new blood for new ideas and to prevent burnout for those who served their fair share. Sometimes we should replace people even if they are willing to serve back to back terms.**

- We need to implement the long-term future of IUCC by having council/church members volunteer to head committees to carry out the plan for scenario 1 with changes approved by the membership on 8/30/20.

The following committees were established with volunteer chairs.

Fundraisers: Cindy and Heather and Pastor Tom

Search Committee: Chuck and Karen G

Update church profile: ?

Programs to bring in new members: Lisa

Develop an annual campaign: Bob and Pastor Tom

**IUCC Council Meeting Highlights
December 13, 2020**

- Building/catch up Fund = \$4,933.91 as of 11/29/20. Contributions can be made through 12-31-20 when the fund raiser ends
- **Bob completed the application for the PPP loan forgiveness. The paperwork was submitted to Old National Bank and approved and forwarded to the SBA by 10-31-20. SBA approved 100% forgiveness.**
- **Bob will meet with Pastor Tom and Rev Jane to negotiate a new contract for 2021 with the same wages and benefits as 2020.**
- **Motion to approve paying the bills and the financial statements for November made by Gary, seconded by Karen K, Motion carried.**

Staff reports

Pastor will set up a new Zoom bible study Dec 9 through Dec 23. Interested parties should let Heather know so she can provide the study plan.

Pastor lost his laptop and was unable to complete his formal report prior to the council meeting. He will reconstruct his data files and submit his report prior to the semi-annual meeting.

Old Business

We agreed to request volunteers at the semiannual meeting to assist committee chairs for the projects above.

New Business

- Review the budget for 2021. Bob went over the budget line by line and explained the logic he used for each item. Reminded the council and committee chairs to let him know if they need any funds to complete their 2021 commitments. Pastor said he would review his needs and let Bob know in a few days.
Motion to approve budget made by Gary, seconded by Judy. Motion carries.
- Bob proposed having the 2021 council meetings for the odd months on the 3rd Wednesdays at 7pm so that Pastor can attend and on the even months on the 3rd Sunday after service. The council approved the proposal and feel it is important to get more input and participation from the pastor if we are going to implement changes to revitalize the church.
Motion to approve changing the 2021 council meetings for the odd months to the 3rd Wednesdays at 7pm and on the even months on the 3rd Sunday after service made by Gary, seconded by Cindy. Motion carries
- Lights were left on in several places.
PLEASE CHECK AND TURN LIGHTS OFF WHEN YOU LEAVE!
- Bob went over the Pastor's 2021 contract and pointed out what is expected of the Pastor & the congregation/council. Heather will mail a signed copy to Rev Jane Anderson.
- Bob asked Pastor Tom to go over the deadlines for the newsletter and bulletins with Heather and come to an agreement as to when they will be due to her so she can get them out on time. Meeting the deadlines

has been a problem. Bob also asked Pastor Tom if he was able to locate the Spiritual Inventory records that Pastor Jen worked on and review them to get to know more about our members. He didn't come across them yet but he will look for them.

Building and Grounds

- Calibration of the thermostat. Chuck and Gary will look into replacing and calibrating thermostats in rooms that are not working properly after the boiler is turned on. We may have to go to Johnson Controls for professional help with this but Chuck will look into upgrading the system with a newer technology that we can maintain & install.
- Gary is meeting with a volunteer group that may help out with building and yard cleanup in the Spring. Rock The Block has agreed to help us with this.
- Church mutual provided 2 water indicator sensors that we can install in most likely areas where we have experience water damage in the past. Hopefully the sensors will give us advanced notice before damage occurs. Chuck & Gary will select the locations. UPDATE: We have the indicators and are waiting to hear from Church Mutual before installation. In case of water leak monitoring will contact Gary or Chuck.
- Consider a request from a church neighbor, Paul to remove a tree near their lot line that twice during the past year had limbs fall on nearby garages. Gary will talk with Bucklins tree service on removal of the tree. Paul agreed to pay the full cost of tree removal. Bob will provide a letter giving permission for the contractor selected by Paul to remove the tree as long as the contractor is insured and provides proof to hold IUCC harmless of any liability. Motion by Bob and seconded by Gary to allow Paul to remove

the tree under the above conditions was unanimous approved. Angle asked if she could have the wood so Bob passed that on to Paul who will check with the contractor and let us know. UPDATE: Bob left 2 messages for Paul but has not heard from him. Some of the dead limbs were removed and Gary will check with the company who removed his trees for an estimate.

Christian Education

See Pastor's Report – last zoom bible study for 2020 is 12-23-20. We can talk about a new program for 2021 if we have enough interest.

Endowment Committee

- Next meeting date ??? Depends on when/if they get a request for help!
- Need a new committee member to replace Jean. (see semi-annual meeting agenda)

Worship Committee

Next WC meeting will be scheduled when Pastor Tom presents his plan for the Advent/Christmas program.

Community Meal/Food Pantry

- Gary and Judy to continue operating the pantry on Wed 1-3. They have found additional sources for more food beside using scrip cards and doing the shopping themselves.
- We will be picking up in Oshkosh in addition to Greenville as soon as the service begins.
- Thank you to Pastor who donated 15 turkeys that were handed out. Recipients were very thankful.
- Gary and Judy requested volunteers when they are not avail. Heather and Don will be backup.

Administrative Issues

The office will stay closed to the public. When someone rings the bell, Heather will communicate with them through her office window. She will not be opening the door. UPDATE: She is selling yarn and Embroidery thread on Facebook, so far the Crafty Ladies have made \$178 as of 12/7/20. File sorting is still under way and will be complete by 12-31-20 and the computer directory updates have been completed 12-7-20.

Fundraising

- Scrip will continue every other month or monthly if we have enough orders to make it worthwhile. Make a purchase & get in the GC drawing. **Scrip order will go in Jan 4th. Orders need to be into Heather by 9:30am. Heather will send email to all members and friends of the church.**

Next meeting dates:

- Jan 20 Council meeting @ 7pm
- Feb 17 Council meeting Sun after service
- Mar 17 Council meeting Wed 7pm
- TBD Annual Meeting

JANUARY 2021

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

					1 <i>New Year's Day</i> Office Closed	2
3 Worship Serv Communion 8:30am	4 Heather 9-12	5	6 Heather 10-2 Pastor 10-2 Community Meal canceled	7 Heather 9-12	8	9
10 Worship Serv 8:30am	11 Heather 9-12	12	13 Heather 10-2 Pastor 10-2 Bob 12-2	14 Heather 9-12	15	16
17 Worship Serv 8:30am	18 Heather 9-12	19	20 Heather 10-2 Pastor 10-2 Community Meal canceled Council mtg 7pm	21 Heather 9-12	22	23
24 Worship Serv 8:30am	25 Heather 9-12	26	27 Heather 10-2 Pastor 10-2 Bob 12-2	28 Heather 9-12	29	30
31 Worship Serv 8:30am						