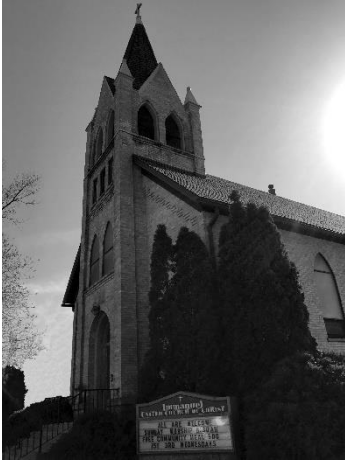


***Immanuel United Church of Christ***

118 Oak Street  
Neenah, WI 54956-3034



# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

## December Birthdays



***Heather Hessler Dec 2***

***Nevan Burow Dec 6***

***Gary Joosten Dec 6***

***Scott Erdmann Dec 9***

***Kathy Radtke Dec 10***

***Jody Hoppe Dec 16***

***Leonard Blank Dec 30***

***Brenda Wege Dec 31***



## Immanuel United Church of Christ

118 Oak Street, Neenah, WI 54956

Church email:

[iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net)

Phone: (920) 722-0381

Web site: [www.iuccneenah.org](http://www.iuccneenah.org)

### **“Well Done, good and faithful servant . . .**

Jesus often spoke in parables, stories of life meant to convey deeper understandings of the holy. In those stories he used simple every-day occurrences and examples to explain the more complex nature of God and God’s love for us all.

Among all the parables that Jesus tells, the “Parable of the Talents” is among my favorites. Luke recounts the story which tells about three slaves who were entrusted with some of the wealth of their master. Out of respect for the trust that was shown to them, two of those slaves engaged in financial undertakings that grew their master’s wealth. Out of fear, the third servant buries the money in a safe place in order to return it to his master when it came time to settle accounts.

Interestingly the parable uses the term “talent” because that was a measure of gold and silver in Biblical times, much like “troy ounces” or “karat weight” are used to measure them in our day. (In our day the word “talent” has different meanings, but the parable still applies—we all have God-given talents.) A “talent” of gold in those days was comparable to about \$10,000.00 in our time. Those three slaves received \$50,000.00, \$20,000.00, and \$10,000.00 respectively--definitely not what we might call “chump change”. The wealthy master placed a great deal of trust in those servants. Two of them expressed their appreciation for that trust by increasing the value of what was entrusted to them—doubling their master’s wealth. The third slave was consumed by fear and did nothing to increase what was entrusted to him. When the master settles accounts with his three slaves, he commends those who acted out of gratitude and faith, and condemns the servant who acted out of fear,

The parable recounts the master’s response to the good slaves with these words: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in small things; I will set you over bigger things.” The master is grateful for the faithfulness of two of his slaves, and rewards them for it.

In about three weeks, our in-person ministry will come to a close. It began more than one hundred and fifty years ago when God entrusted a vision to a group of German immigrants who responded by forming our congregation. Over those fifteen decades we have sought to be faithful to that vision, sharing God’s love with Neenah and the world by acts of generosity and compassion. As we prepare to bring our ministry to a close it is time for us to “settle accounts” with our master, Jesus Christ. Have we taken that original vision and made it greater, or have we squandered it out of fear?

While I have not been part of this congregation since its inception (although from time to time I feel like I am older than a century), I think it is obvious that we have made that original vision of ministry far greater than those original church members might have imagined. Lives have been changed by the love of God, and for the glory of God. That is praise worthy! I am convinced that our master, Jesus Christ, is pleased and grateful for all that has been accomplished since that vision was first hatched. Like the master of his parable told so long ago, Jesus says to us now: “Well done, good and faithful servant(s). you have been faithful in small things, I will set you over bigger things.”

It has been my honor and privilege to walk with you on this faith journey for the last five years. You have taught me much about faithfulness and constancy in the face of change and challenge. It has not been easy to grapple with our aging, shrinking congregation and the decreasing revenues that came about as a result. While there has been sadness, frustration, and heart break on this leg of the journey, you have not given in to the frustration by becoming bitter or fearful. You trusted in God’s love to guide you and in wisdom you chose to transform this ministry rather than let it die a lingering death. As a result, our newly emerging vision of “Endowing Ministry” will become far greater than we might ever have imagined, and our impact on

Neenah and the surrounding area will continue to touch lives with the love of God for decades and centuries into the future. God is surely smiling at all that you have accomplished!

**WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS!**

Peace and Joy—one last time, Pastor Tom



**Prayer List**

Beverly Wilfling

Chuck Wolf

Jean Vande Hey

Lois Hoppe

Tom Rihm

**IMMANUEL UCC OFFICE HOURS**  
**DAY TIME PERSON(S)**

Tuesday 10am-1pm(home) Heather  
10am – 2pm Pastor

Wednesday 10 am – 1pm(home)Heather

Thursday 10am – 1pm Heather  
10am – 2pm Pastor

Friday 10am – 2pm Pastor  
Hours subject to change



**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 Judy Joosten at 920-810-3208.

**After the church closes  
the Out to Lunch Bunch  
will continue. The first  
date will be Jan 3, 2025  
will be at Papa's Café @  
1pm. Please contact  
Karen Koller if you plan  
at attend.**

**Michiels will be doing  
our catered brunch Dec  
22. It will be a hot  
breakfast buffet.  
PLEASE HAVE ALL OF  
YOUR RESERVATIONS  
IN BY DEC 12!**



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, 2024- WORSHIP TIME 9:30 A.M.**

<b>GREETERS</b>	<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>Dec 8</b>	<b>Dec 15</b>	<b>Dec 22</b>
Doty Street	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Don Hessler 585-2093	Gary Joosten 810-2962
Oak Street	Judy Joosten 810-2962	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Heather Hessler 734-7842	Judy Joosten 810-2962
Ushers	Gary Joosten 810-2962	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Don Hessler 585-2093	Gary Joosten 810-2962
Ushers	Judy Joosten 810-2962	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Heather Hessler 734-7842	Judy Joosten 810-2962
Reader	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Communion Set Up	Cindy Anderson 727-4820			
<b>GREETERS</b>	<b>Dec 24</b>	<b>Dec 29</b>		
Doty Street	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Don Hessler 585-2093		
Oak Street	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Heather Hessler 734-7842		
Ushers	Bob Vande Hey 740-6177	Don Hessler 585-2093		
Ushers	Jean Vande Hey 707-0083	Heather Hessler 734-7842		
Reader	Pastor	Pastor		
Communion Set Up	Cindy Anderson 727-4820			

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, Dec 1	<b>Service 9:30am Communion – First Sunday of Advent</b> Ps 25:1-10, Jer 33:14-16, 1 Thess 3:9-13, Luke 21:25-36
<b>Sunday, Dec 1</b>	<b>Larry Schroeder celebration of life after service</b>
<b>Wednesday, Dec 4</b>	<b>Council meeting 6pm</b>
<b>Friday, Dec 6</b>	<b>Out to Lunch Bunch 1pm @ Hong Kong Buffet</b>
Sunday, Dec 8	<b>Service 9:30am – Second Sunday of Advent</b> Bar 5:1-9, Luke 1:68-79, Phil 1:3-11, Luke 3:1-6
Sunday, Dec 15	<b>Service 9:30am – Third Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Zeph 3:14-20, Isa 12:2-6, Phil 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18</b>
<b>Sunday, Dec 15</b>	<b>Council meeting after service</b>
Sunday, Dec 22	<b>Service 9:30am – Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> Mic 5:2-5a, Luke 1:46b-55, Heb 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-45
<b>Sunday, Dec 24</b>	<b>Service 4pm – Christmas Eve</b> Ps 97, Isa 62:6-12, Titus 3:4-7, Luke 2:1-7), 8-20
Sunday, Dec 29	<b>FINAL Service 9:30am – First Sunday After Christmas</b> Ps 148, 1 Sam 2:18-20,26, Col 3:12-17, Luke 2:41-52

**Byron will be making 1 DVD for our 3 special services.**

**Services will be recorded each week and put on our website to be viewed. [iuccneenah.org](http://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 Nov 20th.*

**IUCC Council Meeting Highlights**  
**Nov 17, 2024**

**Treasurers Report:**

As of 10-31-24 investments are: \$237,415.78 that's a loss of -\$6,246.72 .

As of 11-14-24 Community Meal/Food Pantry balance was \$1,390.30.

A question was asked if we could use the leftover Community Meal money to pay for part of our brunch Dec 22, 2024. Bob said that yes, it could be.

Motion to approve using the Community Meal money to be used to help fund our Dec 22, 2024 brunch made by Judy, seconded by Byron. Motion carries.

Kwik Trip profit sharing check about \$25 came in after financials were done, it will be added to the report next month.

Bob closed out the RBC undesignated account, about \$21,000 and put it into our checking account.

Road assessment will be mailed before the end of Nov.

Motion to approve the Treasurers report and pay the bills for Oct made by Heather, Seconded by Karen K. Motion carries.

**Old Business:**

- Bob got in touch with the Historical Society and found out how they would like to receive records. Bob and Heather will work together on preparing the hard copy records and Bob will work with Byron on providing electronic data. UPDATE: Bob will have a copy of Power Church. Byron will download

everything from the cloud so that everything is current for the Historical Society.

- Bob noted that he received communication from the realtor regarding activities pertaining to the sale of our facilities. UPDATE: Bob sent an email to the realtor asking for a report, and email the council with their update.
- Cindy and Byron met with the Pastor from Congregational UCC in Menasha and gave them items that they could use.

**New Business:**

- Employee severance packages will be presented by Bob after he talks with Andrew. Bob will present the severance packages without the recipients involved after the regular meeting. Lisa, Heather, Pastor Tom and Spencer. UPDATE: Heather, Pastor and Lisa left the meeting while council was going over packages.
- A closed-door meeting was held by 5 council members not directly involved in severance pay for employees and discussed how we should show our appreciation for the many years of service. It was pointed out that in most cases when a church closes, they don't have funds to make such payments so the Wisconsin UCC conference hasn't set a precedent. We were reminded that severance pay is designed to help pay the bills while laid off people look for a new job if they don't have advance notice. That isn't the case here, so it was agreed that we call it an appreciation bonus for staying with us until we close our doors. It was also pointed out that we have many people that volunteered their time to do many tasks that saved the church a lot of money over the many years of existence and made our ministry a success. Spencer expressed an interest in buying the piano a while back and Bob asked him to make a free will offering for what he thought it was worth NLT 11/17/24. His offer was considered a fair market value and agreed to by unanimous

consent. After receiving input from all members present a motion was made by Bob & seconded by Judy to unanimously approve the amounts agreed to, including a gas gift card for B&G Committee Chair and authorized Bob to make the payments before the end of the year.

- Pastor thought it would be a good idea to make a dvd of the Worship services for Dec 22, 24 and 29 to whomever would like it.

Motion to approve Byron making one dvd for our last 3 services made by Judy, Seconded by Cindy. Motion carries.

- Our website will be up until Jan 26, 2025.

#### Administrative:

##### Buildings and Grounds:

- Bob is working with Jeff to do minor repairs and maintenance to help repair the building for sale and authorized him to bill his hours for the work.
- Memorial Hall heat has been turned on. UPDATE: Gary called Johnson control because the heat kept running and it got quite warm, Gary turned it off until it can be fixed. He'll call right way on Monday. UPDATE: This is still getting fixed. Gary will be calling right away in the morning and get an estimate of what needs to be repaired.

#### Endowment committee:

- The committee will receive and review all applications for funding through our Endowment Fund with the Wisconsin Conference. Bob will coordinate with Rev Andrew on how this will be done. Pastor Tom will put together the first draft of an article for the local paper to announce the creation of the Endowment Fund and invite charities to make an application. Once the EC has received and reviewed the applications submitted, they will make a

recommendation to the Council. Council will then approve or amend the recommendations and present a proposal to the congregation at the Semi-Annual Meeting on December 8th.

#### Worship Committee

- The council discussed who to have at our catered brunch Dec 22, 2024 after service. Heather made ballots to vote on if we wanted just our members and special guests or invite other churches as well. UPDATE: Catering will be handled by Michiels. We will be having a Hot Breakfast buffet. ALL RESERVATIONS NEED TO BE IN NLT DEC 11, 2024.
- 9 ballots were collected, Bob and Karen K who could not be at the meeting voted head of time. Gary counted 9 ballots. It was 6 to 3 that we have just our members and special guests. Pastor will contact Pastor Jen as well. UPDATE: Pastor Jen will not be here for our last service, however, she will be sending either a video or letter that will be read at the service.

Motion to approve having a catered meal for our members and special guests on Dec 22, 2024 made by Heather, seconded by Byron. Motion carries.

- Pastor thought about making certificates for the charities that the congregation approves and invite them to the brunch. UPDATE: Pastor and Heather will be working on this.
- The cost of each plate for our catered meal Dec 22, 2024 comes to \$34.04. We have to confirm the head count no later than Dec 12, 2024. UPDATE: Special guest invites will have a due date of Dec 8, 2024.

#### Fundraising:

- Our last Free Giving Rummage sale is Nov 16 8am to 2pm, after which we will dispose

of everything left. All members see Judy or Lisa if you are wanting something. UPDATE: \$270.51 was collected for the Free Will Offering. Clean up of everything leftover is underway, boxed up and will be dropped off to charities.

Next Council meeting dates:

- Dec 15, 2024 – after service
- Dec 22, 2024 – Bunch after service
- Dec 29, 2024 – Final service

**Message/Update from the Council President/Treasurer**

I talked with the realtor recently who is encouraged with a potential buyer who will be touring the property at the end of Oct, keep your fingers crossed. Judy and Lisa will hold the last free will offering rummage sale on November 16th. Church members should check with them if you want anything in the rummage room before the sale.

We can expect a billing from the city in November. Street work is complete, we can now park in front of the church again.

I remind all members to contact any member of the Endowment Committee (Judy, Jody, Dawn, Jim or Jean) if you would like to recommend any non profit that serves the Neenah area for a recipient of our legacy endowment funds that will be administered by the Wisconsin Foundation United Church of Christ. They will also handle any funds that members would like to leave the church as a bequest in their will. You should update your will before the end of the year as directed in the article below.

**A Gift in Will for Immanuel UCC**  
Thank you for considering a bequest to support the Immanuel Church UCC Legacy Fund at the Wisconsin Foundation United Church of Christ. Your gift will sustain the witness of our congregation. You can designate the fund in your will or as the beneficiary of a financial account (such as an IRA account).

When writing your will or establishing the beneficiary of an account, please use the following information: “Immanuel Church UCC Legacy Fund of the Wisconsin Foundation United Church of Christ (EIN: 84-2128752), W1000 Spring Grove Road, Ripon, WI 54971.” The foundation also offers a free will writing tool at [www.freewill.com/wisconsinucc](http://www.freewill.com/wisconsinucc). It takes about 20 minutes to create a will. Immanuel Church UCC is listed among the local church options for a designation. You do not need to make a charitable gift in order to use this service.

For more information please contact:  
Rev. Andrew Warner  
Wisconsin Foundation UCC  
(414) 758 6233  
[awarner@wcucc.org](mailto:awarner@wcucc.org)

Any questions or concerns please give me a call. (920-740-6177)  
Bob Vande Hey  
IUCC Council President/Treasurer

**DECEMBER 2024  
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

<b>1</b> Worship Serv 9:30am Communion Larry's Celebration after serv	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>4</b> Heather 10-1 Council mtg 6pm	<b>5</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>6</b> Pastor 10-2 Out to Lunch 1pm @	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Worship Serv 9:30am Semi Annual mtg after serv	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>11</b> Heather 10-1	<b>12</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>13</b> Pastor 10-2	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Worship Serv 9:30am Council mtg after serv	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>18</b> Heather 10-1	<b>19</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>20</b> Pastor 10-2	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Worship Serv 9:30am Brunch after serv	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 4PM	<b>25</b> Merry Christmas!	<b>26</b> Heather 10-1 Pastor 10-2	<b>27</b> Pastor 10-2	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Worship Serv 9:30am FINAL SERVICE	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

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