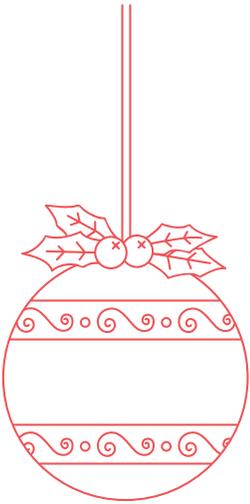


# Prepare A Place

Newsletter for Immanuel Lutheran Church in Charleston

## Pastor's Thoughts

Written by  
Pastor Ken Hoover



We are entering into the strangest Advent/Christmas season any of us will likely ever see. The COVID-19 pandemic has effected everything about this season. How we gather together; the ways we can worship and celebrate the birth of our Savior. Gone this year are the multiple services, the children's service, the Christmas caroling, the candlelight service.

Will it seem like Christmas with all the things we won't have? It can; if we keep our focus on the true heart of Christmas—that a Savior was born in a stable and placed in a manger in Bethlehem for you and for me. That this Christmas-born Savior came into our world to take away our sin and to bring us back to God. This is what Jesus did for us. And it all began in that little town of Bethlehem as Mary and Joseph huddled around that manger bed.

This December, maybe more than any other, we need to prepare ourselves to receive the Christ-Child into our hearts and into our homes. That is what this season of Advent is intended for: preparation. Isaiah says it in chapter 40: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Each weekend in Advent we will work at preparing ourselves to receive Jesus once again. Together we will Ponder, Pray, Praise, and Proclaim this holy message which we are to know and to share. I hope you will join me each weekend as we prepare a place for Jesus together.

Blessings to you all.

### 9TH ANNUAL TOY DRIVE

Immanuel's Ladies Aid is again sponsoring a toy drive to be given to HOPE House here in Charleston. They are collecting new, packaged toys for children infants to teens. Donations can be brought to the church and placed in collection boxes at the back of the sanctuary. Donations will be received until December 9th.

For more information about our Bible Studies and Immanuel Lutheran Campus Ministry, please visit our website at: <https://immanuelcharleston.com/> or contact our office administrator, Rachel Percy, at (217)345-3008.

### DECEMBER'S WEEKLY THEMES:

**November 28-29:**

**"Ponder"**

**December 5-6:**

**"Pray"**

**December 12-13:**

**"Praise"**

**December 19-20:**

**"Proclaim"**

## *United In Song:*

One of the negative effects this ongoing pandemic has had with all its restrictions is a feeling of separation and disconnection between families, friends, and church members. There are so many who are feeling isolated and alone in these times. On Christmas Eve we would like to remind ourselves that even in these pandemic days we are still united in Christ Jesus. It will happen like this: At a designated time Christians from every church in Charleston will step outside their home into the street and join in singing Silent Night. Many churches are working together to coordinate this effort. Details are still being hammered out. But think of it: All believers raising their voices as one proclaiming a united message that Jesus Christ the Savior is born! In the midst of such a dark winter, what greater light could we let shine. Look for more specific details to come, and plan to join in on Christmas Eve.

## *Online Family Christmas Eve Worship:*

All the health officials are in agreement when it comes to protecting yourself against this COVID virus—avoid large gatherings in confined spaces. There is no larger gathering at Immanuel than our Christmas Eve Candlelight service. Not knowing how to safely limit the number of worshippers in such a service, it was decided to not hold an in-person Christmas Eve service this year. Instead we will offer a more intimate online Family Christmas time with some carol singing, the Christmas Gospel, and a special message from Pastor Hoover. This service will be available on YouTube and our Facebook page for families to use in their homes on Christmas Eve. For those without internet connection, copies of this service on a DVD will be available. Our prayer is that God will use this to bless your Christmas worship at home.



### **NOVEMBER'S ATTENDANCE:**

#### **November 7-8:**

In Person: 79

Online: 48

#### **November 14-15:**

In Person: 95

Online: 57

#### **November 21-22:**

In Person: 66

Online: 47

#### **November 28-29:**

In Person: TBA

Online: TBA

### **2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES:**

New Offering Envelopes for 2021 will be available to pick up at the back of the church later in December. If you did not have offering envelopes in 2020 but would like them in the new year, please contact the church office so your name could be added to the list.

### **NOVEMBER'S FINANCIALS:**

**Revenue: \$58,940.43**

**Expenses: \$45,599.21**

**Net: \$13,341.22**