

# *Immanuel Lutheran Church*



1002 Powell Avenue

Erie PA 16505

814-833-4062

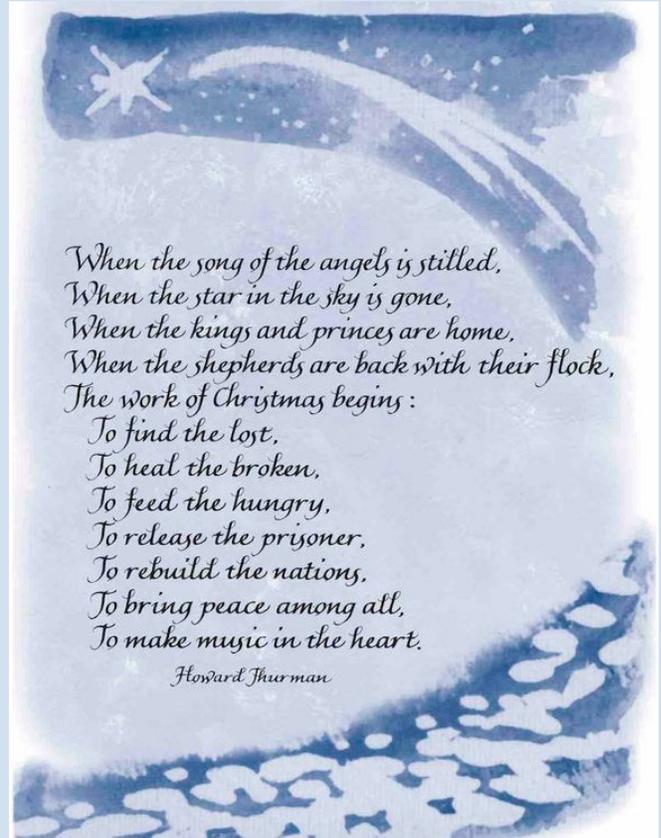
# What you can find inside this edition!

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- **Soup Cookoff**
- **Social Outreach Ministry**
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## *Grace & Peace from the Pastor's Desk*



He has told you, O mortal, what is good,  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice and to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Christmas is over and a new year has begun. We usually begin our year with resolutions to lose weight, exercise daily, eat healthier, save money, whatever we think we need to get along better in the new year. They last, what, 2 weeks, and then we go back to our old habits?

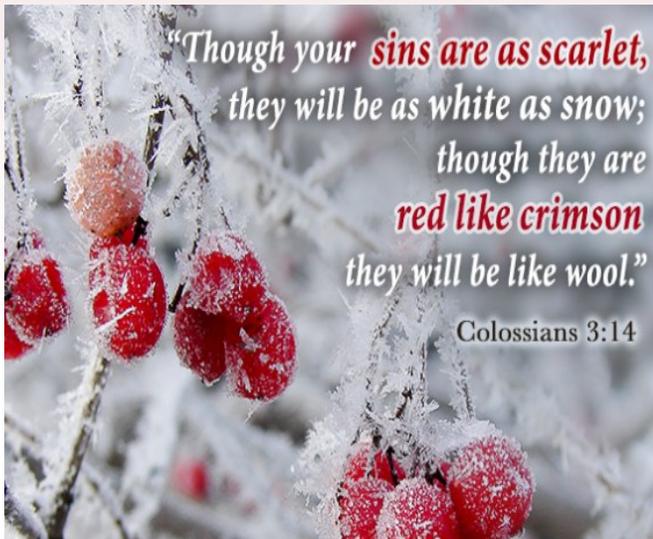
I heard a suggestion that we have new year's resolutions to have new year's suggestions. It makes sense, suggest something, then you won't feel guilty when you don't succeed in keeping it.

My suggestion is to reconsider what is important in the new year. Instead of making improvements for your self, make improvements for others. As Thurman writes in the poem above, share the gospel, the message that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Don't concern yourself with how the message is taken, just plant the seed and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work. It's not your responsibility to change people's hearts, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. May we live a kinder, gentler year in 2026.

As always I'm available anytime on my cell, 724-557-2386 (leave a message and I will get back to you). I'm in the office Tuesdays from 1:30 – 3P.M. and Thursdays from 9:30a.m. – 2p.m. (Bible study is at 11 and choir at noon). Please don't hesitate to call or visit, I'd love to hear from you.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Karen



## COFFEE HOUR

Don't forget to join in on the first Sunday of every month following worship. Come on down to the lounge for some laughs and some conversation. Grab a cup of coffee and a sweet treat and spend a little time with your Immanuel Family!



Don't forget the first Sunday of the month is Quarter Sunday. Drop a few quarters in the collection plate!



# **January 18th following Worship**

**We are back on track following a busy holiday season for our monthly fellowship brunch!! This is a time to spend with your friends & family as we sit down and share a meal together and unwind after a busy, stressful few months of hosting family and friends as we celebrated the birth of Jesus.**

**PLEASE join us following worship on Sunday, January 18th for a meal with your Immanuel Family for brunch and fellowship.**

**Bring a dish to pass.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME! We hope you will join us!**



# ***SOUP COOKOFF***

## ***FEBRUARY 1, 2026***



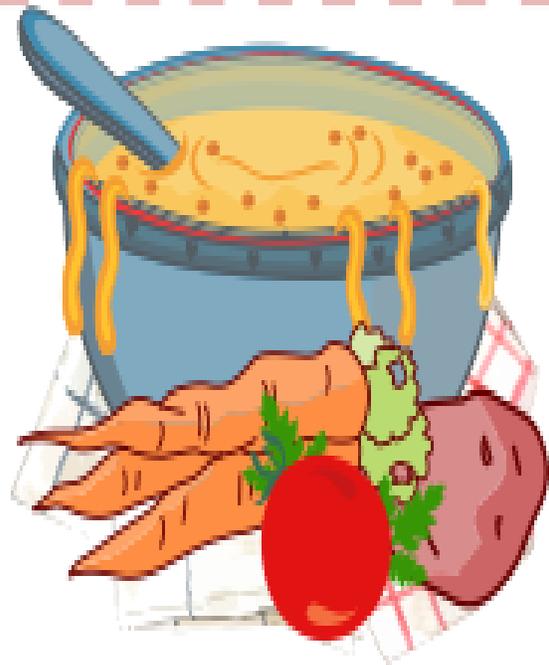
Get ready for the annual competition of the Immanuel soup chefs as we have our cookoff on February 1st!

Get busy planning on the soup you plan to enter this year! Do you have what it takes to be this years winner? Get out those cookbooks and find a delectable soup to tempt our tastebuds!

With the cold weather this is the best time of the year to enjoy a hot, steamy bowl of soup!

Get creative and share something new with us!

We can't wait to try your soup!  
Be daring and have fun with your soup entry!



***February 1, 2026***



As you know, our ladies at Immanuel Lutheran Church make some gorgeous quilts. The quilts are blessed and then shipped to the Lutheran World Relief, where they are then distributed to areas of the world that are in need.

In 2025 803,181 quilts and kits were collected and sent to 15 countries.

The break down of the quilts and kits:

There were 315,818 quilts, 179,200 school kits, 231,811 personal care kits, 66,984 baby care kits and 9,368 fabric kits.

The countries served by the quilts and the kits:

Angola, Djibouti, Georgia, Honduras, Jordan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Ukraine, Zimbabwe and of course, the United States.



ARE YOU

ARE YOU  
AFFECTED BY  
SOMEONE  
ELSE'S  
ADDICTION?

NAR-ANON  
OFFERS HOPE

Nar-Anon Family Groups

for those affected by  
someone else's addiction.  
are a worldwide fellowship

As a twelve step program, Day  
+ Time we offer our help by  
sharing our experience,

strength, and hope.

\* TOGETHER we HEAL - NEW 6-gouP TAN.

FAITH LUTHERAN, [c.140ec.H.](#)

5414 EAST LAKE RD, ERIE, 16:

**Location + Address**

THURSDAYS, [00. 2:00 P.m.

[valerie@erle23456@gmail.com](mailto:valerie@erle23456@gmail.com)  
814-897-5900

**Contact Information**

STARTING JAN. 22, 202

**Please join the Faith  
Lutheran Church for the  
Celebration of the  
Epiphany of our Lord.**

*Celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord*

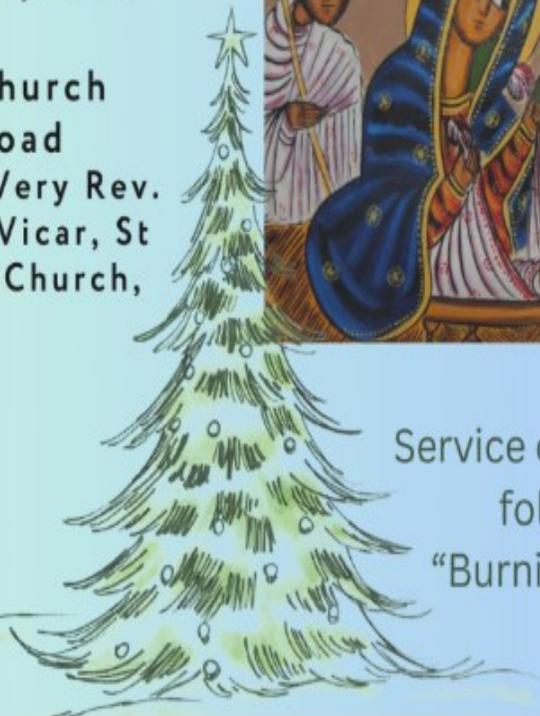
With the congregations of  
the Erie Lutheran Conference  
Tuesday, January 6, 2026  
7:00 pm @  
Faith Lutheran Church  
5441 E. Lake Road  
Guest Preacher: The Very Rev.  
Dr. John P. Downey, Vicar, St  
Stephen's Episcopal Church,  
Fairview



*All are welcome!*

*"Come,  
let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!"*

Service of Holy Communion  
followed by the  
"Burning of the Greens"



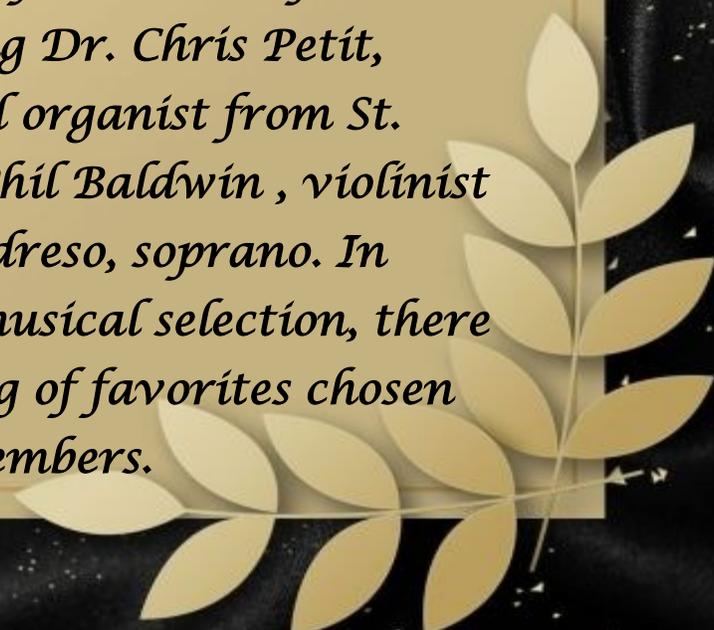


*Invitation from Mt.  
Calvary Lutheran*

*1603 W. 32nd St at the corner of  
Greengarden Blvd.*

*On Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 2:30 PM  
Mt. Calvary will be dedicating their  
new organ console and honoring Vicki  
Baldwin, their late organist and choir  
director. Vicki dedicated 33 years as the  
organist and choir director.*

*Please join Calvary Lutheran for a  
program of "Music for a Sunday  
Morning" featuring Dr. Chris Petit,  
music director and organist from St.  
Paul's Episcopal, Phil Baldwin, violinist  
and Margaret Andreso, soprano. In  
addition to their musical selection, there  
will be a hymn sing of favorites chosen  
by Mt. Calvary members.*





ST. PAUL'S  
FREE  
CLINIC

**JANUARY 18, 2026**

**Immanuel Lutheran will be  
taking a special offering for the  
St. Paul's Free Clinic on January  
18th.**

The St. Paul's Free Clinic is staffed by a team of volunteer physicians, dentists and support staff who work to eliminate the health care gap that many people are facing today.

The medical gap includes the people who work and earn too much for Medicaid but earn too little to afford quality health insurance that has reasonable co-pays.

St. Paul's Free Clinic team of medical professionals provide care completely free of charge to Erie's working poor. The care they provide, whether it is managing diabetes, treating an impacted tooth or ensuring someone has access to life saving medication helps the hardworking people to main their health.

So many people in our community depend on St. Paul's Free Clinic to get the health care they need.

Please consider giving on January 18th. Your generosity will help St. Paul's to continue to provide dignity, compassion and healing to those who are striving for a better life.

*~Thank You~*

**The 2025 Holiday Poinsettia & Hunger Appel was a success.**

**15 poinsettias were purchased to adorn the altar.**

**We collected \$410.50 for Meals-on-Wheels.**

*~Thanks to everyone who donated!~*



### **Poinsettia's :**

Honor of: Addison, Madelyn, Ethan, Sydney & Paige

Given by: Tom & Judy Stewart

Memory of: Alice & Samuel Kuntz, Jeannine Kuntz, Carolyn Kuntz, Jane Andrews

Given by: Debbie & Bill Redditt

To the Glory of God

Given by: Cindy & Dave Eckman

Honor of: Derek Matson, Logan Wrisley & Serenity Matson

Given by: Brenda Matson

Memory of: George, JoAnn & Eric Popplewelll, Dan, Sally & Pat Coughlin, Jeanne Richardson

Given by: Barb & Wally Coughlin

Honor of: Jennifer, Jason, Rucha, Diva & Vanya

Memory of: Carolyn Kuntz

Given by: Rick Kuntz

Memory of: Wilbur & Dora Mays & Charles & Anne Reed

Given by: David & Hannah Mays

Memory of: Donald & Jeanette Swanson

Given by: Lori Nemenz



### **Erie Meals-on-Wheels donations:**

Memory of: Parents, Siblings & Friends

Given by: Tom & Judy Stewart

Memory of: Alice & Samuel Kuntz, Jeannine Kuntz, Carolyn Kuntz, Jane Andrews

Given by: Debbie & Bill Redditt

To the Glory of God

Given by: Cindy & Dave Eckman

Memory of: Dallas Leonard, Rose Lawhorne-Leonard, Patrick Shimo

Given by: Brenda Matson

In Honor of: Dennis, Cara, Greg, Kristin & Grace

Given by: Barb & Wally Coughlin

Memory of: Carolyn Kuntz

Given by: Rick Kuntz

Memory of: Charlene Feiler & Janet & Jusin Lee

Given by: Kim Lee

Memory of: Reva & Harold Baker, Margaret & Harold Durst

Given by: Rick & Brenda Durst

Honor of: John & Susan

Given by: Diane McGranor

Memory of: Cynthia Swope

Given by: Claudia Skerlong

Memory of: Larry Nemenz, Larry's parents & John

Given by: Lori Nemenz

Honor of Ronan, Taylor, Evelyn & Grace

Memory of: Lawrence, Ruth, Chalotte & Christine Dorler and Domenic & Lucille Gabastese

Given by: Bob & Donna Dorler

***Please remember the members of Immanuel who are “shut in,” or having some health challenges and cannot make it to service, you may want to offer them a ride, give them a friendly call, send them a card. Maybe just stop to share a moment of your time.***

***The current Shut-In Mailing List is available in the office.***



***If you are sick or in the hospital, please notify the church office.***

***If you would like home communion or a copy of our newsletter, please contact the office.***



## **KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:**

Denise Arnold

Vince Belinski—Diane’s Nephew

Karen Byrd

Rev. Bill Cox

Janice Kreger

MaryAnn Long and Russ Long

Penney Maloney

The Botwright family

Connie Cooper

Jim and Lorraine Hornaman

Rich Hornaman

Kyle Husted

Carol Ketchel

Diane McGranor

Brenda Matson

Katie Coughlin-Palotas— Wally Coughlin’s niece

Carole Rickrode

Bob Roemer

Leslie Woodruff—Carole Rickrode’s Granddaughter

Logan Wrisley —Brenda Matson’s son

All of our members & friends who are grieving;

Who are in nursing homes;

All who are ill at home

**We pray for those in the military.**

**Pray for the homeless & those who are hungry & those who are cold.**



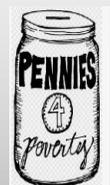
# January Celebrations of Life and Love



## **Capital Campaign - Boiler:**

Funds for the boiler campaign currently show \$35,642.38 toward our goal of \$58,803.

Pennies for Poverty collection is an ongoing effort in support of the Women of the ELCA – donations welcome in the Donation Center canister.



## LITTLE FREE PANTRY AT IMMANUEL

IF IN NEED – TAKE SOMETHING

IF YOU CAN SHARE - LEAVE SOMETHING

**Feel free to bring items to church office & we will make sure they get in the pantry for you.**

# My Prayer for the New Year

Dear God,

As dawn unveils another year,  
I thank You for all I hold dear:  
For health, for family, and for friends,  
For love that grows and never ends.

Protect my loved ones, keep them strong,  
And fill their hearts with heaven's song.  
Help us let go of sin and strife,  
The chains that steal a peaceful life.

Bless our journeys, as hopes take flight,  
With faith that brightens the darkest night.  
Guide our steps to walk Your ways,  
And light our paths through all our days.

Make me a vessel of Your grace,  
And let me share Your kind embrace.  
Through each moment, may Your truth shine,  
With every word and deed of mine.

You are my rock, my refuge still,  
The quiet voice that shapes my will.  
This year, I'll strive to honor You,  
In all I seek, in all I do.



Amen.

— David Ritter



## Green Corner NWPA Synod Green Team

### LEARN ABOUT NATURE TO CARE FOR NATURE

In winter it can be easy to stay inside where it is warm and avoid putting on all the clothes it takes to be comfortable outdoors. However, winter is a great time to learn more about many of the species that share our neighborhoods. Teaching ourselves and our family members about God's creation is the first step to being good stewards.

As we learn to identify different species of animals or plants, the way our brain stores that knowledge changes. That change leads to an appreciation and, eventually, to caring about that species. It is the things that we care about that we are willing to take action to preserve. Thus, our stewardship begins with knowledge.

Thankfully, there are many tools available that can help us learn to identify the species around us. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology produced the Merlin Bird ID App (<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>) which allows users to identify birds by sight or sound. (Having a way to identify birds by sound alone, is a wonderful tool!) Apps are also available for identifying animal tracks. Cornell University has also released two keys for identifying trees; one for the winter and one for the summer: <http://bhort.bh.cornell.edu/tree/keys.htm>.

If books are more useful for you, the Nature Study Guild has a series of pocket field guides that cover flowers, trees, ferns, berries, animal tracks, and weeds. Most can be purchased for about \$5.

Bringing the wildlife to you can also be very rewarding. Putting a birdfeeder within view of a window can bring the birds close enough to identify them and learn about their habits and preferences. To be a responsible bird feeder follow the guidelines of Project FeederWatch: <https://feederwatch.org/learn/feeding-birds/>

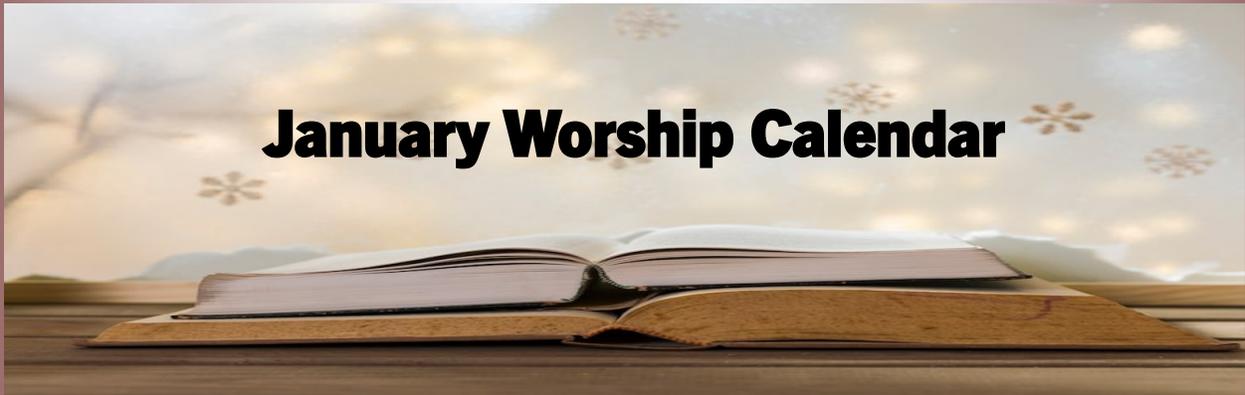
In the words of Baba Dioum, a Senegalese forestry engineer, "*In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.*"

The Green Team's purpose is to "raise awareness of and advocate for the care of creation." Our mission is to support and encourage creation care ministries, raise awareness, model creation care advocacy consistent with ELCA teachings in our faith communities and public life.

Like and follow us on Facebook: [Northwestern PA Synod Green Team – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#).

Contact us at: [nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com](mailto:nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com)

January 2026



# January Worship Calendar

Date	Presider	Assistant	Lector
01/04/2026 9:30 AM	Pastor Kostur	Bob Dorler	Bob Dorler
01/11/2026 9:30 AM	Pastor Kostur	Debbie Redditt	Brenda Matson
01/18/2026 9:30AM	Pastor Kostur	Bob Dorler	Brenda Matson
01/25/2026 7:30 PM	Pastor Kostur	Anita Byrne	Brenda Matson



If God put so much effort into a snowflake, think how much HE put into YOU!



**Counters:**

**Bill Redditt & Debbie Redditt**

**Altar Guild:**

# The Original Marry Me Chicken



- 3 Tbsp.** extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4** boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2** garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp.** fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp.** crushed red pepper flakes
- 3/4 cup** low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup** finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/2 cup** heavy cream
- 1/4 cup** finely grated Parmesan
- Torn fresh basil, for serving

[See All Nutritional Information](#) ▾

Keep screen awake

## Step 1

Arrange a rack in center of oven; preheat to 375°. In a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 Tbsp. oil. Generously season chicken with salt and black pepper and cook, turning halfway through, until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer chicken to a plate.

## Step 2

In same skillet over medium heat, heat remaining 2 Tbsp. oil. Stir in garlic, thyme, and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in broth, tomatoes, cream, and Parmesan; season with salt. Bring to a simmer, then return chicken and any accumulated juices to skillet.

## Step 3

Transfer skillet to oven. Bake chicken until cooked through and an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part registers 165°, 10 to 12 minutes.

## Step 4

Arrange chicken on a platter. Spoon sauce over. Top with basil.

# New Beginnings for the New Year

Millions of people commit to New Year's resolutions, yet most people give up pretty quickly on their newfound promises. Many people set unrealistic goals instead of making a small goal and moving on as each step is achieved. This is why it is so easy to "quit". The best way to start a new beginning, though, and truly transform your life is by turning to God and the Bible. The New Testament is a treasure trove of Bible verses about new beginnings, with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross saving humanity from sin—and opening the door for personal change.

Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us that by accepting Christ, it allows us to push away our "former way of life" and to push aside our "old self." Of course, this includes our negative attitudes and "deceitful desires" that sometimes creep into human conscience. Accepting Jesus and pursuing the journey to live like Him helps to transform each of us into a better person.

The New Year is a time of reflection, renewal and setting intentions rooted in faith. There are many Bible verses about new beginning that offer hope, inspiration and guidance as we step into a fresh new year with the promises of God in mind.

Take a moment and read each of these verses and reflect on the path and journey that God has laid before you.

Jeremiah 29:11

Psalm 100:4

Lamentations 3:22-24

Ephesians 4:22-24

Philippians 4:6

Colossians 3:9-11

James 1:17

Psalm 20:4

Isaiah 43:18-19

2 Corinthians 5:17

Psalm 40:3

1 Chronicles 16:11-12

As we move forward into 2026, it is important to leave the past behind and embrace the fresh start that the New Year has to offer.. While the past year may have been a trying year for many of us, we can find comfort and hope in knowing that God has a divine plan for our lives. As you pursue the new beginning of 2026, remember to place your trust, confidence and reliance in Christ. He has the power to transform our lives completely.

# WHY WORLD RELIGION DAY MATTERS SO MUCH

World Religion Day is always on the third Sunday in January to promote harmony and understanding among all faiths, a tradition that started in 1950 by the Bah'ai community

When you believe in a higher power—whether divine or secular—it gives a person the feeling of control and a sense that life is inherently meaningful. Regardless of color, creed or culture, the history of humanity is a history of searching for something unifying and timeless that adds meaning and richness to life. For centuries, for many, religion has served that need.

Catholics, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews may all follow different religions and practice different beliefs, but they all are universally bonded by the common theme of their faith.

Faith is the light that never goes out. Faith is what gives us all the courage to do the right thing without being rewarded or recognized, to stand stoic and unwavering in the face of scorn and to hold fast to our beliefs and convictions when we are pushed to the limit of our endurance.

Faith is the consolation of the lonely, the balm for a wounded soul, the strength that can turn any fief and the voice inside that urges us to carry on even when we feel helpless, hopeless and lost. Faith has the courage of a lion and the might of a mountain, and burns as fierce as the brightest star in the sky. It is the bottomless well of inspiration and nourishment we can all draw upon, and it is the very essence of World Religion Day.

World Religion Day aims to remind everyone that the spiritual principles underlying all faiths can act as the common ground for us all. It seeks to end the hostility and misunderstandings between those who have different beliefs and to remind of humanity's essential oneness and the similarities that all faiths share.

World Religion Day is all about celebrating how faith enriches our lives and why religion has and continues to play an integral part of the modern world.

The responsibility of all religions is to practice tolerance, understanding and to encourage all our brothers and sisters to reach their true potential and to become a force of positivity for the universal good. That is why it is encouraged for everyone to participate in World Religion Day this January.



# January 2026

				1 Community Sloppy Joe Dinner	2 AA 7 pm Game Night 6 pm	3
4 Worship 9:30 Quarter Sunday Coffee Hour	5 Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	6 AA Mtg 7:30 pm	7 Tops 9:30 am AA Mtg 7:30 pm	8 Bible Study 11 am Choir 12 pm	9 AA 7 pm Game Night 6 pm	10
11 Worship 9:30 am	12 <b>Poinsettia Orders Due!</b> Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	13 AA Mtg 7:30 pm	14 Tops 9:30 am AA Mtg 7:30 pm	15 Bible Study 11 am Choir 12 pm Book Club 7 pm	16 AA 7 pm Game Night 6 pm	17
18 Worship 9:30 am	19 Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	20 AA Mtg 7:30 pm	21 Tops 9:30 am Worship 7:30 PM AA Mtg 7:30 pm	22 Bible Study 11 am Choir 12pm	23 AA 7 pm Game Night 6 pm	24
25 Worship 9:30 am	26 Quilters 9:30 am Flagship City Chorus 7 pm	27 AA Mtg 7:30 pm	28 Tops 9:30 am AA Mtg 7:30 pm	29 Bible Study 11 am Choir 12 pm	30	31

# God's Promises Word Search

## God's Promises

I	L	R	H	H	E	A	L	I	N	G	N
F	A	I	T	H	F	U	L	N	E	S	S
P	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S	E	W
R	P	H	Y	S	I	C	A	L	A	E	E
O	T	S	S	E	N	I	P	P	A	H	D
M	O	R	A	G	A	P	E	L	O	V	E
I	A	G	E	D	R	O	W	S	D	O	G
S	E	N	S	S	P	R	S	E	F	S	V
E	H	I	U	E	E	L	E	O	F	E	M
S	P	R	S	O	A	D	P	H	O	S	S
F	A	E	E	R	C	D	R	E	T	L	F
C	C	V	J	E	E	F	T	T	A	A	N
E	T	O	F	I	N	A	N	C	E	S	F
E	S	C	H	O	L	I	N	E	S	S	P

GODS WORD  
 AGAPE LOVE  
 PROMISES  
 PEACE  
 FAITHFULNESS  
 BLESSINGS  
 PACTS  
 HAPPINESS  
 PHYSICAL  
 COVERING  
 JESUS  
 DESERT  
 HEALING  
 FATHER  
 HOLINESS  
 FINANCES



*Happy* NEW YEAR

*You crown the year with Your goodness,  
And Your paths drip with abundance.*

PSALM 65:11

## Immanuel

Church Office 814-833-4062

Office Hours

8:30—12:30 Monday—Thursday

## Staff

Pastor Karen Kostur 814-833-4062

or Cell#: 724-557-2386

Pastor's Office Hours – Tuesday 1:00-3:00

Thursday, 9:30am-2:00pm

Church Caretaker: Wally Coughlin

Organist/Music Director: Allan Slovenkay

Admin. Ofc.: Brenda Matson

## Sunday School

Coord: Anita Byrne & Janice  
Kreger

Teachers: Anita Byrne & Pastor  
Kostur & Brenda Durst

## **2026 Congregation & Church Council Officers**

Pres: Rick Kuntz 814-572-3719

VP: Joe Byrne 814-397-7319

Sec.: Brenda Durst 814-873-0451

Fin. Sec.: Debbie Redditt 814-449-1855

Treasurer: Bob Dorler 814-833-9756

## **Church Council Committees**

*We invite all members of Immanuel to join any of these committees and/or offer your gifts where you can – many hands make light work!!*

*Council usually meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month*

### Fellowship, Outreach & Growth

Council liaisons: Sally Leubin

**COFFEE HOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF THE MONTH**

**ONGOING COLLECTION FOR LITTLE FREE PANTRY**

### Finance

Council liaison: ANNUAL Budget

### Property

Council liaison: Rick Kuntz

Committee Chair: Debbie Redditt

**FACILITY MAINTENANCE**

**RENTAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE**

**ONGOING BOILER CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

### Stewardship

Council liaison: Dave Mays

### Social Ministry Committee

Committee chair: Debbie Madurski

Council Liaison: Brenda Durst

### Worship & Music

Liaison to Worship: Joe Byrne

### Christian Education

Council liaison:

**Check out our website and "FRIEND" us on [Facebook](#)**

**Did you miss church? Need to keep updated and want easy access to the church calendar, newsletter or annual report?**

**Check out our website <http://www.ilc-erie.org/>**