



The Word

- FORETOLD
- ANNOUNCED
- WELCOMED
- MADE FLESH
- CONFIRMED

Advent and Christmas at Immanuel

December 31, 2023

Who We Seek to Be

In our love for Christ and guided by God's Word we seek to be a community of

Joyful Worship, thoughtfully centered in the wonder and wisdom of the living God and celebrating the diversity of the body of Christ.

Loving Fellowship, encouraging and serving one another in the unifying love of the Holy Spirit.

Life-changing Learning, biblically-based preaching and teaching to equip children, youth, and adults to grow in their relationship with God.

Enthusiastic Service, reflecting the servant heart of Jesus as we proclaim the gospel near and far in word and deed.

BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

A SERVICE FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

PRELUDE: *Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine*
Appalachian Yuletide

arr. by Hayes
arr. by Forrest

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

ANNETTE LAPLACA

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Lento assai, Movement 2 from Christmas Sonatina

Carl Reinecke

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Geistliche Leiden, 1539

From heav'n above to earth I come,
to bear good news to every home;
glad tidings of great joy I bring,
whereof I now will say and sing:

Glory to God in highest heav'n,
who unto man His Son hath giv'n,
while angels sing, with pious mirth,
a glad New Year to all the earth.

A NEW DAY

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made.

All: We will be glad and rejoice in it.

Leader: This is the year that the Lord has begun.

All: We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Leader: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning.

All: Great is your faithfulness.

Leader: The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to those who seek him.

All: Great is your faithfulness, Lord.

* INVOCATION

* OPENING HYMN: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

HYMN 218

A NEW NAME

OLD TESTAMENT READING: *Isaiah 62:1-5, 11-12*

¹ For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,
till her vindication shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.

² The nations will see your vindication,
and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.

³ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

⁴ No longer will they call you Deserted,
or name your land Desolate.

But you will be called Hephzibah,
and your land Beulah;
for the LORD will take delight in you,
and your land will be married.

⁵ As a young man marries a young woman,
so will your Builder marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.

(continued)

- ¹¹ The Lord has made proclamation
to the ends of the earth:
“Say to Daughter Zion,
‘See, your Savior comes!
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.’”
- ¹² They will be called the Holy People,
the Redeemed of the Lord;
and you will be called Sought After,
the City No Longer Deserted.

NEW TESTAMENT READING: *1 Peter 2:9-10*

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

* RESPONSE OF THANKSGIVING *(Please stand)*

Leader: Through the work of Jesus Christ, we belong to him.

People: Through Jesus’ work on the cross, God gave us a new name.

Leader: Let us discover anew and accept with new assurance that we are who God says we are – holy and redeemed people who belong to him.

People: Thank you, our Father, for changing our name.

Leader: We shall no longer be called Wounded Outcast, Lonely, or Afraid.

People: Our new name shall be the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord, Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted.

Leader: People of God, let us take up our new name with new confidence, to live this year as the people of God we are called to be, so that we may indeed be “Sought After.” May others seek God’s face because of us in this coming year.

* HYMN OF ASSURANCE: *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*

HYMN 211

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

OFFERTORY: *Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella*

Paul Laubengayer

* DOXOLOGY

All: Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below:
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host:
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

KEN WOLGEMUTH

A NEW SONG

OLD TESTAMENT READING: *Psalms 98:1*

¹ Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.

NEW TESTAMENT READING: *Ephesians 5:18b-20*

¹⁸Be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SONGS OF PRAISE

* HYMN: *Good Christian Men, Rejoice*

HYMN 207

* HYMN: *Glorious Light*

Keith and Kristyn Getty



1. Glor - i - ous light! See the dawn of sal - va - tion:
2. Long has the world fought the song of the an - gels;
3. There is a day all cre - a - tion has longed for,

5



An - gels in white fill the skies with their won - drous song, a -
Hea - ven - ly mus - ic is drowned by a war - ring world. Yet
when all of time has been spent and the Lord re - turns. His

10



wak - en - ing earth with news of His birth; Join the hymn of the
hope burns a light that shat - ters the night; Turn your heart to the
song we'll re - peat as Hea - ven com - pletes pro - mised peace that will

15



high - est hea - vens. Glo - ry to God in the high - est!
call of glo - ry.
fill the na - tion.

21



Peace to men on earth. Come and a - dore Him with

27



won - der - Christ, Lord of Hea - ven and earth.

A NEW WAY

Westminster Longer Catechism

Q. 157 How should the Word of God be read?

- A. We must read the Bible with high and reverent esteem, being absolutely convinced that it is truly God's word and that only he can enable us to understand it. We should read with a desire to know, believe, and obey his will as revealed in the Bible. We should pay careful attention to its content and the extent of its meaning, meditate on it, apply it to our lives, deny ourselves under its direction, and use it as a basis for our prayers.

SCRIPTURE READERS: *Jerry and Mona Firebaugh*

(Please stand for the reading of God's word.)

* Psalm 1

- ¹ Happy is the one
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
and does not stand in the way of the sinners,
and does not sit in the seat of scoffers.
- ² Rather, whose delight is in the instruction of the LORD,
who meditates on his instruction day and night.
- ³ This one is like a tree transplanted by streams of water,
which produces its fruit in its season,
Whose leaves do not wither;
but who prospers in everything.
- ⁴ Not so the wicked!
Rather, they are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not arise in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. NICOT

* Luke 8:4-15

- ⁴ While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: ⁵“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. ⁶ Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”

(continued)

When he said this, he called out, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

¹¹ His disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰ He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

“ ‘though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not understand.’

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. ¹² Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³ Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. ¹⁴ The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. ¹⁵ But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. NIV

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON: *With Christ in the School of Meditation*

JIM WILHOIT

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

SCRIPTURE: *Revelation 21:1-5a*

¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

PARTING WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

God says: God says: “Behold, I am making everything new!” In this new year, let us move forward with the confidence our new name gives, with a new song in our hearts and on our lips, with the new way before us, and with our eyes fixed on the horizon when Christ will return and make a new heaven and a new earth.

- * CLOSING HYMN: *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* HYMN 224
- * BENEDICTION
- * POSTLUDE: *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* Traditional, arr. by Hayes

TODAY

Thank you to Rev. Jim Wilhoit for filling in today so Pastor George can take some time away. Jim taught spiritual formation at Wheaton College for 38 years and is ordained as a Teaching Elder in the EPC. He and Carol have been at Immanuel since 2008.

If you have concerns or are **in need of prayer**, elder Steve Westfall will be available to pray with you near the platform.

Thanks to our musicians: Mary Hopper, Alethea Funck
Readers: Ron and Sophie Netzel

The Food Pantry is closed today.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Food Pantry open
Next Sunday, January 7	9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Sunday School, Adult Ed Worship with Communion

IN IMMANUEL AND BEYOND

Year-end Giving: Giving last Sunday brought the total of giving to the General Fund for 2023, with one week left, to just over our budget of \$872,100! Donations received today December 31, will appear on your annual giving report for 2023. Offerings are now certain to exceed both the budget and expenses, so any surplus will help make up for use of reserve funds for the parking lot project, which cost just over \$122,000, and prepare for future needs, such as the church roof. Your generosity was also evidenced by record giving for Holiday Food Boxes distributed by the Food Pantry (\$2,730) and Missionary Christmas gifts (\$6,841).

Adult Ed Classes for the month of January: During the four Sundays in January, Jim Wilhoit will be teaching on spiritual formation in church life (sanctuary) and EPC church-planter Jeffrey Lancaster will be teaching on neighbor evangelism (Ministry House). See website for full course descriptions.

NOTES

ELDERS

Katherine Anderson (Clerk of Session), Dan Balzer, Bill France, Sarah Holman,
Ron Netzel, Sheroll Ritchie, Leon Sinclair, Steve Westfall, Ken Wolgemuth

DEACONS

Phebe Balzer, Tim Curley, Seth Ehorn, Debby France, Ron Haydon, Dee Netzel,
Tom Nguyen, Katie Pickard, Amy Treier, Becky Williams

STAFF

George A. Garrison: Senior Pastor, Annette LaPlaca, Minister of Congregational Life;
Mary Hopper, Minister of Music: Annika Durbin, Children's Minister;
Anna and Scott Scheidt, Ministers to Youth;
Barbara Lawrence, Church Secretary; Frank Lawrence, Church Sexton

STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS

Bev Burch, Leon Sinclair, Angela Wisdom, Annette LaPlaca