

Immanuel Lutheran Church

20 Rocky Mountain Blvd. West
Lethbridge, Alberta
403-327-4336

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2014

LAW AND GOSPEL PREACHING

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. – 2 Timothy 4:1-5

We have just entered the season of Advent, which is a season of waiting for Jesus to come. Although none of us were present when Jesus came on the first Christmas morn, we are not without Christ. Not only will he come again in glory on the Last Day, but even now he continues to come to us in the preaching and teaching of His Word and Sacraments. Before Jesus ascends to heaven he says, **"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"** (Matthew 28:18-20).

Jesus promises to be with his disciples who teach and observe his commands. And so it's no wonder that the central command that Scripture gives Pastor Timothy is **"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season."** That means, preach Law and Grace, Command and Promise, God's Wrath and God's Love, and don't concern yourself about whether you perceive it to be the right time for seeding. Wise farmers don't plant out-of season because it's a waste of energy and seed. Good preachers don't presume to know God's times and seasons, they simply remain ready preach all that Christ has commanded, for it is God who gives growth and reaps a harvest.

Preaching God's Word is not a skill or a special talent. Preaching God's word is simply telling it like it is---that is, saying it like God said it, and letting the Holy Spirit sort 'em out. I don't mean to sound glib, but that's exactly what is to happen in preaching. **"For the word**

of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God doesn't need creative and clever pastors, it simply needs Pastors who are ready and willing to set it loose...and the Spirit will do the rest.

There is a common misconception that the preacher must carefully ration out how much law and how much grace to portion out in his sermon. And it's true that preaching is not to be a careless undertaking. Jesus warns, **"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak"** (Matthew 12:36). Really though, what's most important is that a sermon preach the *whole counsel of God...both* his judgment against sin and the salvation given in Jesus Christ, and in so doing to encourage faith and rebuke error. And whether the hearer hears too much law or else not enough, will depend not so much on the preacher, but on the listener.

I carefully study the Scriptures before I preach and am very careful in every sermon to preach the whole counsel of God. I don't decide how much law and how much grace to preach. I preach the Word as taught and the Holy Spirit does the parsing in the heart of the hearer. Consider this word from God, **"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"** (Romans 8:1). Are these words of Grace or Law, of encouragement or rebuke? Well that all depends upon the listener when the Holy Spirit confronts him with these words. To illustrate: if a nuclear missile is heading for Canada, and then you hear a news report that it will only touch down and destroy Lethbridge, whether that is good news or bad news to your ears will depend entirely upon whether you happen to be "in Lethbridge." So too, to the listener who is "in Christ", Romans 8:1 is pure gospel, good news of grace that will encourage and comfort. However, to the listener who is outside of Christ, serving false gods and living in denial of Christ's commands and promises, these words are pure law, bad news of wrath that will rebuke and condemn, and hopefully lead them to repentance and faith. Only those in Christ can be comforted by God's word; those outside of Christ can only be condemned. And that

has little and less to do with whether the preacher sounds angry or happy, whether he says the words with a smile or a frown. That's the proverbial fallacy of "judging a book by its cover." The preacher is only a cover; Christ is the book.

God's Word to an unbeliever will be law and judgment. God's word to a believer will be grace and love. In either case, it is not the preacher, but Christ who comes in his rightly preached words, and it is the Holy Spirit who works faith according to His rationing of Law and Grace. *"And at the Spirit's advent, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world [Satan] is judged"* (John 16:8-11). This scripture is bad news (Law) for Satan and the World and their followers; but it Good news (Gospel) for those who suffer because of them, and long for the Saviour to come again. Lord Jesus, Come Quickly. Amen!

A Blessed Advent to all,

Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

"WHO IS COMING FOR CHRISTMAS?"

For to us a child is born, ... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

This year's advent booklets have arrived for the Sunday School children.

They will be handed out on Sunday, November 30th. If you do not pick yours up on the 30th please remember to get it on a following Sunday, there are enough for each child to have their own.

The Sunday School children will be participating in a Christmas Drama during the children's object lesson on December 14th. Be sure to invite special family and friends to this church service. Parents, please help your children practice their songs and parts for the program. All your efforts help us share the message of Christmas to everyone.

In order to prepare for the Christmas Drama we will be practicing during our regular Sunday School time on Sunday, November 30th and after the 11 am worship service on Sunday, December 7th. On December 7th we will be practicing in the sanctuary. Please make arrangements to stay for a few minutes after that service so your children can practice their parts.

Sunday School is looking for donations of Christmas oranges, individually wrapped chocolates and candy canes. We need about 50 of each, to create goody bags, to give to the children after their Sunday School Christmas Drama on Sunday Dec. 14th. If you can help out please put your name on the signup sheet or speak to Kathy Withage. Please bring the oranges the



morning of December 14th and bring the other goodies to the church by December 12th. Your assistance is appreciated.

We will have a Sunday School class on December 14th, following our Nativity program. That class will be the last one of the year. Sunday School classes will resume on January 11, 2014. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!! Luke 2: 14Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men! **MERRY CHRISTMAS** to everyone, from all the Sunday School Staff!!!

LITTLE LAMBS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

November has been a great month for the staff and students at Little Lambs Christian Preschool. They have been taking advantage of the nice weather when it happens, having gym time outside before the cold of winter really sets in! The children have been preparing for their Christmas concert, which will take place on Wednesday December 10th. December 18th will be the last day of classes before the Christmas break, and classes will resume on January 5th. There are still a couple of spots open, if you are interested in registering for the rest of the 2014/15 school year, please call Tanya at 403-892-6627. Early registration for returning families and ILC congregation members will open in mid January for the 2015/16 school year. Please watch the January Newsletter for exact dates. You can also email us for details - preschool@littl lambspreschool.ca

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TURKEY DINNER & SILENT AUCTION!

It truly warms my heart and makes me proud, to see so many people give of their time, talents and gifts, to work together and support the Turkey Dinner and Silent Auction, each and every year. This event is our major fundraiser, but beyond that, it is our opportunity to come together and build community, working side by side with our brothers and sisters in Christ in order to make the evening a success, **"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" Psalm 133:1**

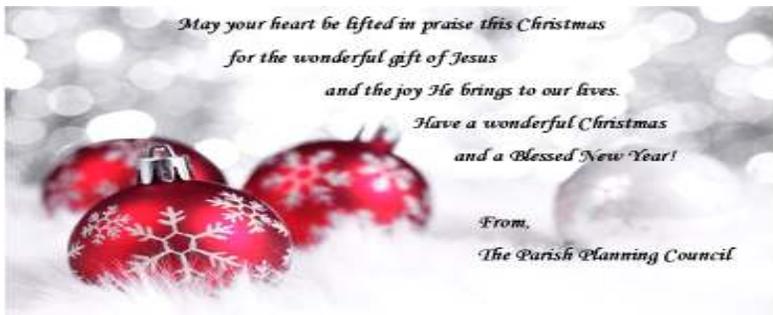
This year was no exception, as we had almost 100 people involved in some capacity. From set-up and prep, cooking, serving and clean-up, to donations of food and auction items, we truly are a congregation that is blessed, **"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10**

Although we hold this annual event to raise funds, it also provides a huge Outreach opportunity. Many of our members invite friends and many of those friends look forward to the event each year. It is so gratifying to hear guests comment on the wonderful meal and the spirited competition of the auction, but most

importantly, they express their gratitude towards feeling-Welcomed! That makes the efforts and hours put in by so many, worth it.

A huge thank-you to Katherine Canfield, Irm Kuhn and Rita Boltezar, who were instrumental in the planning and organizing of the dinner and the auction. As well, a sincere thank-you to everyone else who stepped up and participated. This event would not happen without your generosity and you are all appreciated. Your efforts helped raise over \$10,000 with an additional \$500 matching grant from Faith Life. This money will be applied to the mortgage. **“From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.” John 1:16**

Until next year!
Sincerely,
Kerri Masnyk, Chairman



Mom's Time. All mothers are encouraged and welcome to join our Moms group. This group is an opportunity to build community by providing an open, caring and accepting atmosphere where women can come together to share & learn. A place for mentoring where mature women listen, encourage and offer information and perspectives gained through experience. A place for practical instruction, teaching focuses on areas of common interest, offering inspiration and information that is relevant to the life of a mother. **Interested?** Our Moms group meets the 2nd & 4th Thursday mornings of the month from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. **We will have only one session this month December 11th.** January sessions are Nov 8th & 22th. The program is free and everyone is welcome. If you need more information or wish to attend please call Katherine Canfield Parish Coordinator 403-327-4336 or 403-756-2149.

Stephen Ministry. Prayer Power. James tells us that the prayers of righteous people are powerful and effective James 5:16. During this coming month, we invite you to pray about our congregation's Stephen Ministry. We began training the week on Oct 22. Our group is growing in knowledge and bonding. We are blessed to have these committed care givers amongst

us. We are currently about 1/3 of the way though the training. Please continue to lift these Trainees, Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders up in your prayers: Angie Bloos, Bev Baczuk, Coreen Bates, Monica Baczuk, Lori Friesen, Daryl Lindgren, Tracey Hamilton, Joshua Langill, Kathy Mitschke, Leonard Lorenz, Sandra Zasandy, Julie Lorenz & Katherine Canfield. Thank you



SHINES through you! Thanks for sharing it!
The light of the righteous shines brightly. Proverbs 13:9

Thank You to each and every one who participated in making the Turkey Dinner & Silent Auction a success. From those who donated items, organized, prepared, cook, cleaned and those who purchased items etc. your contributions to this **Team Effort** where and are valued. Thank You!

An Open Invitation To All Members of Immanuel - You have undoubtedly encountered friends, relatives, neighbours, work associates who are inactive members of Christian congregations. Few people join a congregation intending to become inactive. But something happens—within the individual, in the congregation, or both—that changes people's initial commitment, and they drop out. Research indicates that on average about a third of any congregation's members are inactive. Caring people within a congregation want to do something to Make God's house a Home for all of its members, to help them find comfort and care they need, to provide an arena for spiritual growth. I invite you to prayerfully consider participating in a course in the New Year entitled "Caring for Inactive Members: "How to Make God's House a Home." This course could be provided in six one hour sessions or three 2.5 hours sessions or two half day retreats. Dates & Times will be announced. Sign up for more information, to show your desire to participate and or speak to Katherine Canfield. This course will teach us to be deeply concerned about caring, in the way our Lord Jesus Christ cared. All of us will find beneficial spill over into other ministry areas and other areas of our lives. My hope and prayer is that this course will empower concerned members of this congregation to relate more effectively to those who need or want to find a way to "come home".

MARVELOUS Psalm 98:1A, **MARVEL IN WHAT GOD HAS DONE! Sing to the Lord a New Song, for He Has Done Marvelous Things...** Parents & Youth 13 – 18 years Mark your calendar **July 2-5 2015 ABC District Youth Gathering** at Trinity Western University, Langely, B.C. please contact Katherine Canfield 403-756-2149 as soon as possible to participate in this exciting event so we can start planning now! Youth fees are \$300 per youth before April 1, 2015. Plus transportation cost. If you are an adult or at least 19 years old and would like to attend as an volunteer (IBOD) there are many opportunities and the first 10 (IBOD) volunteers have a special registration fee of \$100.00 including room & board but must sign up before April 1 2015. After April 1 fee is \$233.per person plus transportation cost.

PUERTO PENASCO MISSION

Greetings from Penasco! It is great to be back to where the sea is calm and temperatures are still in the 70's. Miles and I have been here for just over a month and have made several visits to the barrio to check on the 5 families that Immanuel assisted last fall. We are currently assessing what our focus will be for the next few months and what dates to select for another Mission trip for interested members of the congregation. We have also met with Mission Jim who has introduced us to another family in desperate need. After viewing their living conditions, to ignore this request will not be an option.

Our primary project last fall was to supply more living space for Maritza and her boys so I will give you a quick update on that family. Victor and Hector are doing well; they now attend kindergarten class. Maritza was recently diagnosed with epilepsy which will limit her chances for steady employment outside the home. In the past few weeks she has been attending beauty classes at the local technical institute. She is also accumulating donated clothing for resale. Perhaps she will be able to generate some income from home if these two enterprises work out for her. She would love for us to continue to improve her home, especially to create a workable kitchen. We have some donated cabinets that we will adjust to fit and install as soon as possible (along with a kitchen sink).

Because of the generous and continued support of the congregation (especially from the recent pie auction) our funds in the Penasco Mission account will allow us to purchase materials for another project and/or materials to be used on existing homes for upgrading. As we did last Christmas, we will deliver food hampers/vouchers and gifts for the families on or before Christmas Day, on behalf of Immanuel.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support. If you are interested in participating in a "Vacation with Purpose" mission trip to Mexico, please fee free to

contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. My email is shirleymasnyk@gmail.com.

May you have a blessed Christmas season!

In His Service,

Shirley Masnyk

The Alberta-British Columbia district of the Lutheran Church-Canada is having it's triennial district convention in Calgary from May 22-25, 2015. Our congregation must nominate and elect a lay delegate and an alternate to attend on behalf of Immanuel. If you would like to nominate someone to be a lay delegate, please bring the nomination to the voter's meeting on December 7th. All nominee's must be present or else accept the nomination in advance of the meeting.

The A-BC District of LC-C is accepting nominations for District President and Vice-President. If you would like to nominate any rostered Pastor of the Lutheran Church-Canada for either position, please bring your nomination to the Dec. 7th voter's meeting. Also, you may nominate a Circuit Counsellor from the active or emeriti Pastors in the Lethbridge Circuit, incl. Pincher Creek, Vulcan, Lethbridge, Magrath/Milk River, Taber/Dutches, and Medicine Hat.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church
Financial Statement
October 31, 2014**

MISSION OFFERINGS

A-BC District Mission Donations for Month	\$50.00
A-BC District Mission Donations to Date	2899.00
CLWR Mission Donations for Month	355.00
CLWR Mission Donations to Date	1765.00

BANK ACCOUNTS

Servus Credit Union Cheq. Acc.t Balance . .	\$15,477.37
Dedicated Accounts Balance	27,372.91
Church Extension Savings	-12,075.84

CURRENT MONTH

Budgeted Income	32,584.42
Actual Income	30,747.23
Budgeted Disbursements	32,584.42
Actual Disbursements	30,423.27

YEAR TO DATE

Budgeted Income	325,844.17
Actual Income	291,123.65
Budgeted Disbursements	325,844.18
Actual Disbursements	297,164.74