

# Immanuel Lutheran Church

20 Rocky Mountain Blvd. West  
Lethbridge, Alberta  
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Newsletter

DECEMBER 2013



## WE DON'T KNOW...AND THAT'S OKAY

*"Why would God create the world, knowing ahead of time that so many would be separated from Him, in anguish (Hell) for eternity?"*

THIS QUESTION was posed to me recently by a committed Christian and friend who has wrestled with it from time to time and who wanted to know the best way to answer it. It's a good question to be aware of and have a response for. After all we're told to **"always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"** (1 Peter 3:15). Being prepared to defend the faith we have certainly involves answering questions asked of us, both easy and hard ones. And so I gave the best answer a Christian can give on this matter. Why would God create those he knew would end up in hell? **We don't know.**

I know that answer isn't going to write books, or make much material for a bible study...but there you have it. **We don't know.** And yet **we do know why** we don't know; it's because God doesn't tell us. God has given us his Word, but not in order to make us omniscient. He has given us his Word for the express purpose of saving us (John 20:30-31). Any knowledge beyond that is not our business or concern. And so when God is silent about something, we don't need to fill in the blank with our own speculations or opinions in an effort to make excuses for Him. There will always be mysteries of God that are too great for us (Romans 11:33-36). And that's perfectly understandable lest we should seek forbidden fruit and strive to be His equal (Genesis 3 & 11).

Christian friends, we don't have every answer, and yet we have been given everything. We don't have the keys to the universe, but we have the Gospel, which reveals that we have a loving and merciful God who spares no expense in saving us. With that question answered, we should be satisfied because in it we have life in His name. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has graciously revealed his mercy to the world, and because of this we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

And that last little bit says everything we need to know

on this topic. We are more than conquerors through **Him who loved us.** You see, we don't always know the full details of why God does things in the way he does them-- and that's okay. Even if we don't understand his method, we should always understand His motive. God's central motivation for all things is His Love for the world (John 3:16, 1 John 4:8). Why did he create the world?...love. Why did he redeem it?...love. Why does He punish the wicked to an eternity in hell?...love for the world. Why does he discipline his children?...love for the world. God does all things to manifest His glory, which is His love for the world...specifically sacrificial, self-giving love *a la* being "lifted up" on the cross for the life of the world (John 3:14).

This Christmas, remember that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to the world. Two thousand Christmases ago, the glory that the Father shared with the Son in eternity was veiled in human flesh. In that day, He sent His Word to be conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. The almighty God became a man. The one who is called the Lord and Christ and Saviour of all was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger...a child worshipped by shepherds and adored by kings. Why did God plan it that way?...We don't know that either, and that's okay. All that matters is that He did plan it that way, and in so doing God revealed his love to and for the world in the sending of His Son.

Have a Blessed Christmas!

Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

everyone, from the Sunday School!!!

Luke 2: 9-10 (And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.")

Sunday School is looking for donations of Christmas oranges, individually wrapped chocolates and candy canes. We need about 50 of each, to create goodies bags, to give to the children after their Sunday school

performance, on Sunday Dec. 15th. 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 15<sup>th</sup> and bring the other goodies to the church by December 12th. Your assistance is appreciated. Thank you for helping in this way to make our children feel special & appreciated by their church family.

Sunday School will be performing a Nativity program during the children's object lesson on December 15<sup>th</sup>. 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. We will have a Sunday School class on December 15<sup>th</sup>, following our Nativity program. That class will be the last one of the year. Sunday School classes will resume on January 5, 2014. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

Luke 2: 14 (Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men!)

**LITTLE LAMBS CHRISTIAN PRE-SCHOOL**

This school year is going by so quickly, it's hard to believe that the Christmas break is just around the corner! The children have been learning about Fairy Tales in the month of November, and will soon be changing gears to learn about and celebrate the Birth of Jesus, and will be doing a variety of fun Christmas crafts and making little gifts for loved ones for this Christmas season. The Little Lambs Christian Preschool will be having a Christmas program on December 9th, at 6:30 in the Sanctuary, where the children will sing a few Christmas songs, and recite a poem, followed by some Christmas treats to share in the fellowship hall.

There are a couple of spaces available in our preschool program, if you are interested in registering, please call Tanya @ 403-892-6627.

**11TH ANNUAL TURKEY DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION**

Yet again, the support and attendance was overwhelming for our annual Turkey Dinner and Fundraiser. The event raised \$10,097.75 combined with \$500.00 worth of matching funds from FaithLife Financial, totaled **\$10,597.75** and of course, it is due to the generosity of members and friends of Immanuel. A very special thanks goes out to all of the many volunteers, donors, guests and organizers that gave their time, talents, and money, to make this wonderful evening a success. It is truly a



blessing that we have such a wonderful congregation and facility in which we can invite our friends and family to fellowship and enjoy a fabulous dinner and some friendly bidding competition.

**GERMAN LESSONS AND CAROLS**



Immanuel Lutheran Church will also host our annual German language service of Lessons and Carols here on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. Walter Egli will serve as master of ceremonies. While there is no admission, we will take a free will offering in support of Interfaith Food Bank. Please consider attending, and bring a friend who would appreciate hearing the Christmas message and singing the familiar carols in the German language.

**CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**

Special services during the Christmas season are as follows:

- Dec. 15 The Sunday School children will hold their Christmas concert during the 11:00 a.m. worship service.
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight services will be held at **5:00 p.m.** and at **7:00 p.m.**
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day Worship at 11 a.m. with Holy Communion



Note: There will only be one service at 11:00 a.m. on December 29<sup>th</sup>.

**BUSINESS CARD CASE**



If you are church member that owns a business you may place your business card on display in the Narthex. Please drop off your card in the office to Irm. We will accept cards until Dec. 9th, 2013.

**BOARD OF OUTREACH NEWS**

The Board of Outreach in partnership with the Salvation Army is asking for your assistance. Please consider donating a New Toy for children 0-17 years of age and Non-Perishable Food Items. Donations are needed before Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. Two marked boxes are in the foyer of the church for your generous donations. Thank you for your help.

The Board of Outreach would like to encourage every church family to take one or more of the Christmas Card Invitations with the dates of events going on at Immanuel in December and invite a friend. Christmas Card Invitations are on the small table by the entrance into the sanctuary.

**MOMS & TOTS GROUP**

**Moms & Tots Group** Will run the second & fourth Thursday morning of each month 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. More moms are always welcomed and encouraged to attend. We will only have one sessions this December it will be on **Thursday** Dec.12<sup>th</sup> Then we will start up again in the new year on the second & fourth Thursday of the month Jan. 9 & 23.

**Volunteers are very much** needed for the Moms & Tots. If you are a grandparent, a student or anyone else with a Thursday morning open please consider giving us 1 ½ hours of your time one or two Thursday a month providing childcare to a handful of children it would be greatly appreciated.

**CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY**

Thank you to everyone who participated and had their picture taken for the church directory; it was very much appreciated. There were still a few in to get their pictures in November so look for the new Church directory to be out sometime in late January early February.

**CHRISTMAS JOY TO SHUT-INS**

Would you please help us to spread some Christmas joy to some of our shut-ins. We would like to get several groups of families individuals together where can go and sing a few Christmas carols and perhaps give a small tray of baked goodies to our shut-in church family. We would meet at 2 p.m. on Sunday Dec. 15 at the church and divide up be given a few addresses and then meet back at the church for some Hot Chocolate & apple cider and fellowship. Please speak to Katherine Canfield or Sandra Zasandy if you would like to assist with this project or put your name on the signup sheet.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Financial Statement  
October 31, 2013**

**MISSION OFFERINGS**

A-BC District Mission Donations for Month . . . . . \$48.00  
 A-BC District Mission Donations to Date . . . . . 1166.50  
 CLWR Mission Donations for Month . . . . . 190.00  
 CLWR Mission Donations to Date . . . . . 5294.20

**BANK ACCOUNTS**

Servus Credit Union Cheq. Acc.t Balance . . . . \$7931.28  
 Dedicated Accounts Balance . . . . . 23905.23  
 Church Extension Savings . . . . . NIL

**CURRENT MONTH**

Budgeted Income . . . . . 31,803.50  
 Actual Income . . . . . 27874.73  
 Budgeted Disbursements . . . . . 31,803.50  
 Actual Disbursements . . . . . 29572.90

**YEAR TO DATE**

Budgeted Income . . . . . 318035.00  
 Actual Income . . . . . 293998.92  
 Budgeted Disbursements . . . . . 318034.99  
 Actual Disbursements . . . . . 349832.58

**UNANSWERED PRAYER**

*The preacher's 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why. "Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon." "How come He doesn't answer it?" she asked.*

