



Celebrating at ELC

A LOOKBACK AT RECENT MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

January & February 2025 Issue

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Happy **NEW YEAR**

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

PSALM 65:11



Dear Emmanuel Household of God,

This Celebrating at Emmanuel provides a time of looking back on the past to celebrate what the Lord has been doing in and among us.

The months of November and December end the previous Church Year and begin the new Church Year. We joined for thanksgiving to God for His blessings and gathered in anticipation of His present and future blessings!

- **The National Election Day on Tuesday, November 5, 2024**, provided the ELC Welcome, Hospitality, and Prayer Table many opportunities to share our kindness and love with the voters.
- **The Watoto Children's Choir on Saturday, November 9, 2024**, brought several hundred members and attendees from the Miami Valley area together for a very uplifting concert filled with testimonies, music and dancing.
- **Pregame Devotional Service and Prayer with the Valparaiso Football Coach, Trainers, and players led by Pastor Mark** on Saturday, November 16, 2024, prior to their game with University of Dayton. FYI – ELC has many longstanding members who are Valpo graduates.
- **The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Sunday, November 24, 2024**, was a great day to celebrate the many ELC members who help our congregation fulfill her Mission and Vision.
- **The Thanksgiving Eve Service and Dessert Fellowship on Wednesday, November 27, 2024**, created an attitude and atmosphere of gratitude for the blessings of our nation, congregation, and families.
- **The Celebration of Life and Reception for Tiiu Volmer on Saturday, November 30, 2024**, resulted in a unrehearsed Estonian song shared by Tom and others, to further comfort and celebrate with the gathered friends, family, and fellow believers.
- **The Holy Family Advent Season and Services through the month of December** resulted in many ELC members sharing their devotional thoughts and several messages delivered by Tony Latessa, Dan Deisher, and Ron Whisler.
- **The Emmanuel Call Committee** has officially begun with Chairman, Bruce Phillippi and Co-Chairman Greg Earley along, Zack Jones, Valorie Kulesza, Kim Merritt, Jim Sattler, Joyce Stapleton, Kirk Zamzow working under the supervision of Circuit Visitor, Rev. Dan Herb.
- **Children's and Congregation "God's Family Tree" Christmas Service on Sunday, December 8, 2024**, directed by Catherine Brown was a very uplifting service delivering the message of God's plan of salvation through the family line of Jesus Christ.

- **Adult Worship Choir Special Christmas Music on Sunday, December 15, 2024**, directed and led by Priscilla Acuff brought the singers and the Emmanuel Brass together to share a variety of classic, gospel, and contemporary expressions of praise, worship, and anticipation around the birth of the Messiah and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **Rite of Membership and New Member Reception on Sunday, December 22, 2024**, blesses our Emmanuel Church Family with many new brothers and sisters who bring their spiritual gifts, talents, and skills to join everyone to serve the Lord.
- **The Wedding of Tyler Hardy and Stephynie Kimball on Saturday, December 28, 2024**, seemed especially appropriate with the Advent and Christmas focus in The Holy Family upon God's gift of marriage and the family. May the Lord bless their future together as husband and wife!
- **The "Vision of the Pews" New Year's Eve message**, allowed for a longer and fuller "Voice from the Altar" to speak of God's future promises for all of us as we enter the New Year.

May the Advent and Christmas focus upon "The Holy Family," and all Christian marriages and families continue to live in our hearts and lives as "A Family for Everyone." Once again, I want to acknowledge and give thanks for all "The Holy Family" devotional writers and proclaimers of God's Word.

Joining in celebrating with all of you,
Pastor Mark

ELC Operations

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Through the first three months of the 2024-2025 fiscal year (Sept-Nov 2024), our revenue is \$267,081 and expenses total \$227,028 for a net income of just over \$40,000. We are blessed by all the donors and their support of Emmanuel Lutheran Church!

CAMPUS MINISTRY PROJECTS

The Campus Ministry Team added its newest member with Herbie Stumph joining in October. Herbie is a freshman honor roll student at Bellbrook High School and enjoys rock climbing. Please join us in welcoming Herbie to the Campus Ministry Team!

COMMUNICATIONS



You may have noticed that the old "Connection Cards" in the pew racks have been replaced by three separate cards: a new Connection Card, a new prayer request card, and a new "Family for Everyone" card to replace the old green cards. QR codes have also been added to make it easier to complete these cards online if you wish to do so. Check them out today!

The updates in the Narthex continue with new signage above the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and Resource Center doors. While we pause during the busy Christmas season, the updates will continue in 2025 with new areas that focus on those new to our church, how to get connected at ELC, volunteering, and a ministry information center.

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch occurred on Sunday, November 24th and was catered by Olive Garden. Over 150 people attended to share in fellowship, recognizing our many volunteers, and lots of pasta, salad, and breadsticks. We want to thank everyone who has served as an ELC volunteer throughout the 2023-2024 ministry year!



ELC Care Ministries

OUR CARING MINISTRY IS A TWO-WAY STREET...

... for those providing the care as well as those receiving the care. At Emmanuel there are many opportunities for our members to take advantage of this give-and-take. Several of our members, including several of our Elders have made visits to those who are homebound or in re-hab. Assistance has also been provided to those needing transport to and from medical appointments. You may have noticed a new cabinet on the wall next to the elevator. It has been stocked with emergency supply materials, including an anti-choking device. We are also blessed to have several medical professionals who have volunteered to respond if there is a medical emergency during a service. Also, outlet plugs have been installed in all child-accessible electrical outlets.

Prayer is a fundamental need for all members of our fellowship to do on a consistent basis. The Simply Pray ministry continues every Monday at noon time. For one hour, Pastor Mark and several members meet by video to pray over all the requests that have been received the previous week. This group is open to anyone who would like to join us. PLEASE NOTE!! There is a new card in the pew racks for submitting a prayer request on a Sunday morning or at other services. We also hope that you will take advantage of the availability to submit a prayer request on our website, www.emmanuelc.org. At the recent election, a hospitality table was set up and voters stopping by were offered water, a snack and to be prayed for. The response of those requesting prayer was truly amazing and very much appreciated.

In addition to their ongoing caring relationship responsibilities, our Emmanuel Stephen Ministry Caregivers recently completed three months of reading and providing a formal review of a draft study guide to accompany a recently published book titled *The Gift of Empathy* by Kenneth Haugk (founder of Stephen Ministries) and Joel Bretscher. Our Meals from the Heart ministry under the leadership of Melinda Claucherty continues to provide meal support to new moms as well as some members with temporary inability to cook or provide for themselves. But new volunteers to join this team's efforts are always welcome!

It is important to note that these activities are a vital part of our life as a church. Jesus said "... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40) In his letter to the Roman church, Paul says that we are to "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." (Romans 12:10) If you think that any of these activities could be a fit for you, as either a giver or receiver, please contact Christine Tripp, Care Ministries Manager, at ctripp@emmanuelc.org or by phone at 937-312-5356.

Children's and Youth Discipleship

OCC Packing Party

Our Kingdom Kidz joined together with our Youth team and assembled 200+ boxes to help reach children internationally with the Gospel. Operations Christmas Child Emmanuel shares in the joy of families



Advent Musicians & Instrumentalist

Emmanuel has been blessed by the many talented and gifted children and youth by the sharing of their music. We had folks playing the clarinet, piano, organ and liturgical dancers fill each Wednesday with their gifts during our worship services.



Christmas Program (Children's Led Service)

We welcomed program leader Catherine Brown in leading her first children program themed "God's Family Tree". We saw our Advent theme of "The Holy Family" seamlessly tied well into this Christmas worship service led by our 50+ children and volunteers readings, narrations, bells, chimes and choral pieces as the congregation worshiped together. We celebrate our continued blessing of our organist Priscilla in using her gifts in providing full live worship music.





Friendsgiving (A Junior & Senior High Gathering.)

Each year we celebrate our continued support of our Prayer Pals (Junior high) and Mentoring Program (Senior High) by our Emmanuel congregation. The gathering was full of team building activities, fall festive food and many joyful moments spent connecting and encouraging one another with over 60 attendees present of youth and adults in fellowship.



Christmas Party (Jr. & Sr. High)

Our ability to welcome the season of Advent and the coming birth of Jesus inspires both the Junior and Senior High teams hosting evening celebrations full of joy. We are grateful for these many moments where we see a high attendance of 14 middle schoolers and 17 high schoolers gathered to engage in community with each other.



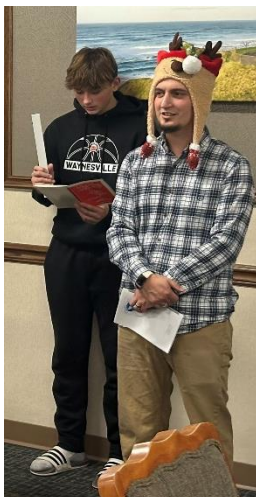
Junior High Party

Senior High Party



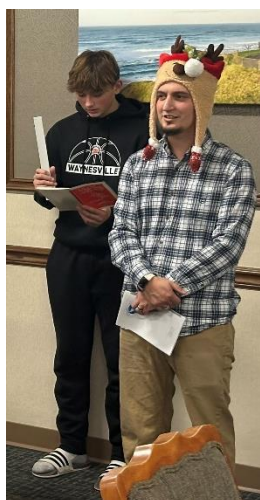
Christmas Caroling (Kingdom Kidz and Family)

Caroling at Oak Creek Terrace in Kettering. The children and families walked the halls with Pastor Mark as they sang Christmas songs while some even played chimes. They finish in the dining room and then visited and wished the residents a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



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Confirmation 2024-25

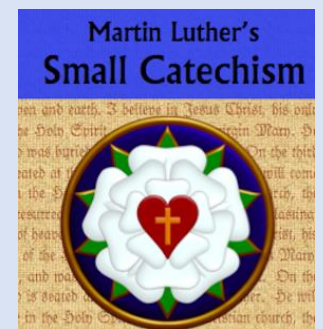


Vesper Services

Learning and living out elements of worship has drawn many of our confirmation families and a few guests to attend our evening Vesper service. It has been impactful to see all generations of folks' worship and embrace this element of worship. We saw 70 attendees participate at our last November service.

Fall & Winter Block

Our 2024-2025 class year of confirmation wrapped up with a recap class of trivia of how well do they know the catechism. The team will enjoy December off and will resume in January but not without reflecting on the impact of scripture and what does it mean to me. Course Instructor, Jim Sattler, has shared delights of how informed and inquisitive this group of confirmation students have been.



Hope Rising Giving Tree



Thank you to everyone that provided an item from the giving tree, benefitting Hope Rising! These items will be used to stock their “store” where mothers can “shop” for their little ones. Hope Rising is a non-profit women’s center that counsels and guides women who are pregnant to choose life. They provide free ultrasounds, parenting classes, post abortion counseling, and more.