

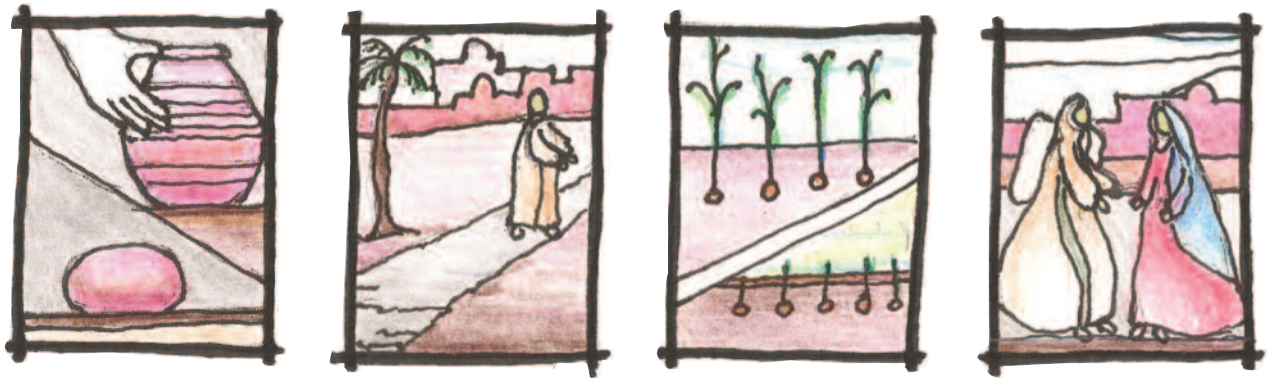


The Immanuel Light

For the Living of These Days

DECEMBER, 2020

VOL. 12 NO. 12



Christmas Connections

Advent is the Season of preparation for the birth of Christ. During this Season of Advent, Immanuel will provide devotions and special services to keep us connected, even during this time of Covid-19. Let us enrich our experience of the coming of Christ in our lives!

Daily Advent devotions will begin Sunday, November 29. Everyone on the church's email distribution list will receive a devotion each morning through Christmas. These devotions are provided by writers from the Immanuel church family. Those who do not have email access will receive a printed copy of all the devotions.

In lieu of our traditional Lessons and Carols service, this year we will have a service of **"Christmas Connections"** on Sunday, December 13 at 5:00 PM. Memories, favorite carols, and special music will help us connect this unique year to Christmas.

At the **Christmas Eve Service** on December 24 at 4:00 PM, we will celebrate the birth of our Lord with the singing of carols, a time for children, and homily.

THE WEATHER REPORT

I cannot remember the last time someone asked me what I wanted for Christmas. It has been years since I entertained the question. As a ten-year-old, I wanted a guitar. Santa came through that year!

In her novel *The Bluest Eye*, the late Toni Morrison tells the story through the various perspectives of a nine-year-old black girl, Claudia Mac Teer. As an adult, Claudia recollects childhood Christmases and the gift of dolls. “The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. What was I supposed to do with it? Pretend I was its mother?”

Looking back as a young woman, she names what she really wanted. “I did not know why I destroyed those dolls. But I did know that nobody ever asked me what I wanted for Christmas. Had any adult with the power to fulfill my desires taken me seriously and asked me what I wanted, they would have known that I did not want anything to own, or to possess any object. I wanted rather to feel something on Christmas day. The real question would have been, “Dear Claudia, what experience would you like on Christmas?”¹

On Sunday, December 13, in the late afternoon, we will gather for “Christmas Connections.” As the staff began the creative process for this program, we named what we hoped it would accomplish. A grown up version of “What do you want for Christmas?” guided our brainstorming. For most, it has been an unforgettable year. We decided that we wanted everyone in attendance to feel something, to feel it deeply.

One of the NASA engineers who worked on the first successful moon landing was asked years after the event how they did it. He said it was easy. “We started with the moon and worked our way back.” Starting with the desire to feel something on Christmas Day, the staff worked our way back toward the anticipated December evening. We settled on a combination of carols, special music, readings from scripture, prayer, and brief Christmas recollections. These recollections will center on particular Christmas tree ornaments and their meaning to three individuals.

A final reference to *The Bluest Eye* is in order. If Claudia had been asked as a little girl what she had wanted for Christmas, she was confident as to her answer. “I want to sit on a low stool in Big Mama’s kitchen with my lap full of lilacs and listen to Big Papa play his violin for me alone. The lowness of the stool was made for my body, the security and warmth of Big Mama’s kitchen, the smell of the lilacs, the sound of the music, and, since it would be good to have all the senses engaged, the taste of a peach, perhaps, afterward.”

What do you want for Christmas? Better stated, what experience would you like on Christmas? I want to feel something deeply. I anticipate the phrase of a familiar carol or the expressive face of a child will put me on the right trail. “Christmas Connections” has been planned with the hope of assisting in us in this discovery. Whether present in person or connected by live-stream, I am confident that the service will shake your memories like a child shakes a snow globe.

—Steven

¹Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. P.21



Immanuel Baptist Church

The mission of Immanuel Baptist Church is to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to deepen our love for God and others, to fully engage our neighbor, and to wholeheartedly serve those on the margins of society.

God is calling Immanuel Baptist Church to practice the radical, compassionate discipleship taught by Jesus Christ.

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Church Family News

PRAYER LIST

- Marjorie Johnson
- Jennie Mills
- Sue Conn
- Ben Rowan
- Ike and Mina Harris

In Memoriam
Walton T. Conn
10 November 2020
Joined Immanuel
1 January 1967

Sanctuary Flowers

December 6 - given by Jenny and Scotty Dean in loving memory of Ken and Norma Dean and Harold and Dorothy Spencer.

December 13 - given by Melanie and Randy Dover in loving memory of their fathers, Jack McEwen and Bob Dover.

December 20 - given by Larry and Debbie Maxwell in loving memory of their parents, Charles and Willa Maxwell and Hank and Kathryn Batts.

Christmas Eve and December 27 given in loving memory of Liston O. Mills, by his wife, Jennie W. Mills, and his daughter, Sarah Mills Collier.

Thank You

"It's been a long recovery and you, the Immanuel family, have continually shown me your care, concern, and support. Many cards decorated the hospital room! Phone calls kept me up to date. Bright faces brought such joy when you visited. Flowers brightened the day and my mood. Hand-drawn pictures came from children and riddles made me smile. Even Pastor Steven sometimes got involved in some of the activities. I felt your prayers being answered. You made me feel blessed. Thank you, Immanuel family. You are wonderful!"

—Yvonne Justis

"We would like to thank each of you for all your prayers during my recent surgery, and the death of Charles' sister, Sarah. It has been quite a journey for us over the past several weeks. All of your cards, phone calls, emails, and visits have truly been a blessing to us during this time. We are so thankful for the friendship of our church family." —Love, Judie and Charles

December 2

Belle Butler
Malcolm Horner

December 3

Ronnie Littlejohn
Stefan Gore

December 4

Sophia Brown
Penni Gregg
Lerma Hearn

December 5

Sharon Bates
Cliff Vaughn

December 9

LaNieve Coles

December 10

Greg Sharpe

December 13

Judy Skeen
Kenny Cooper

December 14

Diane Sharpe
Laralee Page

December 19

Natalya Fleming
Lynn Woodall

December 21

Jenny Dean
Melanie Dover

December 24

Mary-Claire Lutz
Rob Roberts

December 28

Kristen Winston
Allen Schlamp
Georgina Businaro

December Birthdays



Pastor Stephanie's Christmas Movie Reviews

With the onset of colder days, many of us will be inside, at home, this Advent without the usual festivities and gatherings. Christmas movies are a staple at this time of year even when we are not enduring COVID-19 restrictions, so I imagine they will be an even larger part of our holiday rituals this year. Most of us are familiar with the time-tested seasonal classics like, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), and *White Christmas* (1954), as well as newer favorites like *A Christmas Story* (1983) or *Elf* (2003). Some love the contemporary romantic predictability of Hallmark's *Countdown to Christmas* while others prefer timeless narratives like Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* or O'Henry's *Gift of the Magi*. Whatever your druthers, holiday films are a convenient and shelter-in-place-friendly option for small-group togetherness and contemplation this year. Here are some of my favorites for kids, families, and adults (numbered for ease of reading, not preference). I hope you will find something new or forgotten on these lists that will enrich your meaning-making throughout the season.



For Kids

1. Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)
2. Emmet Otter's Jug Band Christmas (1977)
3. Klaus (2019)
4. Best Christmas Pageant Ever (1983)
5. The Christmas Gift (1986)
6. Prancer (1989)
7. Samantha: An American Girl Holiday (2004)
8. Miracle on 34th Street (1994 version)
9. Santa Clause: The Movie (1985)
10. The Grinch Who Stole Christmas (2000)

For Families (more of interest to older kids)

1. Christmas Comes to Willow Creek (1987)
2. Grumpy Cat's Worst Christmas Ever (2014)
3. The Preacher's Wife (1996)
4. Christmas with Holly (2012)
5. Man Who Invented Christmas (2017)
6. A Christmas Memory (1997) and its companion One Christmas (1994)
7. Christmas Story (Finland, 2008)
8. Meet Me in Saint Louis (1944)

For Adults

1. While You Were Sleeping (1995)
2. Serendipity (2001)
3. Christmas Around the Corner (2018)
4. A Very Brady Christmas (1988)
5. Last Holiday (2006)
6. It Happened One Christmas (1977)
7. Nothing Like the Holidays (2008)
8. How About You (2007)
9. Mixed Nuts (off-beat dramedy, 1994)

Thank You, Immanuel!

We collected over 100 bags of egg noodles to send to Luke 14:12!

Good Job!



Calendar of Events

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

6:00 Room in the Inn

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

Second Sunday of Advent

10:30 Worship

9:15 Sunday School

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

5:00 Youth ZOOM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

6:30 Stewardship ZOOM Mtg.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

Third Sunday of Advent

9:15 Sunday School

10:30 Worship

5:00 Christmas Connections

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

5:00 Youth ZOOM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

6:00 RITI

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:15 Sunday School

10:30 Worship

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

4:00 Christmas Eve Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

9:15 Sunday School

10:30 Worship

Holiday Office Closing

The church office will be closed Monday, December 28, through Friday, January 1.

Year-End Giving Reminders

Immanuel's fiscal year ends on April 30, 2020. However, if you would like tax credit for donations made to the church in 2019, be sure to have them in the church office or postmarked by December 31.

If you are interested in donating stock to the church before the end of the year, please contact the church office for information.



December 3 and December 17

January 7 and January 21

February 4 and February 18

March 4 and March 18

*Thank you to all who have
volunteered to help!*

Denominational Christmas Offerings

If you would like to donate to denominational Christmas offerings, you may send them directly to the addresses listed below:

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
3806 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA 23230-0767

CBF Global Missions Offering
160 Clairemont Avenue Suite 500
Decatur, GA 30030

Special Toy Store Note:

Due to Covid-19, there will be NO NBA Toy Store this year. If you would like to contribute to a Christmas toy drive, contact Pastor Stephanie for more information.

Notes from the Library

As the Library team is entering books from our collection in the automated system, we have discovered that several "classics" are worn beyond repair and need to be replaced. If you are interested in replacing one of these classics, contact Georgina or Pastor Stephanie for suggestions. What about adding the church library to your Christmas gift list this year?

Some of the titles include *Henry and Mudge*, *Old Yeller*, and *Wuthering Heights*.

Church Improvements . . .

Even in Covid-19 times!



New and much improved outside lighting near the Honeywood entrance.



Refurbishing the walls in the Bride's Room.

Repairing and painting the front steps.

Celebrating Immanuel's 133rd Anniversary

Our church called Immanuel, God with us, was established on December 12, 1887. With each anniversary, it is interesting to look back as well as to the future! Even an antique communion table serves a current need!

The communion table purchased for the 1913 sanctuary on West End was provided by O. C. Demerich in memory of his grandmother Hilda Jones Adams. When the church relocated to Belle Meade Boulevard, the table and other pulpit furniture were stored in the house on the property. After the Heritage Room was completed in 1989, the table, pulpit and pulpit chairs were placed on display in the new room.

When the chapel renovation study group considered furnishings in 2015, we discussed what type of table was needed and never reached a decision. As we prepared for the first Maundy Thursday communion service in the newly renovated chapel, we moved the communion table from the Heritage Room to the chapel. This table was ideal for that worship experience and has proven functional many times since then.

The 1913 pulpit and pulpit chairs were given by former pastor I.J. Van Ness and his wife, Frances. The Van Ness family plot at Mt. Olivet Cemetery features a tombstone made as an exact replica of the Immanuel pulpit. A photograph of the tombstone is adjacent to the pulpit in the Heritage Room.

—Charles Businaro,
Church Historian



Fall Fest ... the BEST!

