



NEWSLETTER

December
2014

Jesus is...Immanuel

“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)



In 1995 Joan Osborne released the song “One of Us.” Catchy tune. Provocative lyrics. A repeated question: “What if God was one of us...just a slob like one of us?”

I don't know the songwriter's intent in asking the question. Was there a searching desire to know the answer? Or was it a commentary on God as he is often portrayed and perceived—a distant god who doesn't care about the human condition? I don't know. However, I do know that in the Bible God gives an answer to the song's question.

God is one of us. Come again? It's true! God is one of us. In the Bible we are told of a promise God made to become one with the human race: *...they will call him Immanuel—which means, God with us.* Those words are spoken of Jesus Christ at the time of his birth. The Bible teaches that Jesus is true God and true man at the same time! This is the mystery and miracle of

Christmas. This is the mystery and meaning of the special name for Jesus, Immanuel.

Let that thought sink in during these days around Christmas. God is one of us! Think about it when you're having a rough day and it seems like nobody cares. Jesus knows and cares because he once lived in our world. In fact, he had it much worse than we do. He was perfectly innocent of all wrongdoing, and yet he suffered humiliation and scorn. He hadn't hurt anyone or broken a law of God and yet he was sentenced to death.

Jesus died...for no fault of his own. But that's what he came to do. He was born to die, because our relationship with God is totally messed up otherwise. We have been slobs in the way we've lived before God. We deserve his anger for disobeying his commands and living according to our own standards. But Jesus became, not a slob like one of us, but a slob instead of us! He died on the cross in our place. He rose from the dead...in victory.

What if God was one of us? In Christ Jesus, he was and truly still is! Through faith in Jesus Christ we have what he came into our world to win—complete forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Look to Immanuel who promises to be your compassionate and powerful companion in this life...and the next!

CHURCH NEWS

Christmas Caroling!! We are planning to go Christmas caroling on Saturday, December 6th. All members are invited to join and spread the story and spirit of Christmas through song. Schedules of the caroling itinerary are available in the narthex. If you have any questions or would like additional information, you may speak with Lonnie Rabe or Pastor Reichow.

Christmas Program with Jesus Cares: We will be celebrating Christmas with a special program of songs and narration entitled, *Christmas – Color It Joyful* performed by the Jesus Cares members on Thursday, December 11th here at church. All St. John's members and families are invited to attend this great opportunity and to experience the Christmas story in a unique way. Jesus Cares participants will be arriving between 6:15 – 6:30pm to prepare for their program. Their program in the sanctuary will begin approximately at **7:00pm**. Treats will be served afterwards for those in attendance. We hope to see you there!

Christmas Eve Program Practice will begin on Sunday, Nov.30th in connection with Sunday School. The children will be practicing until noon each week. Parents please take note of this time extension. Thanks for your cooperation in making this program a success.

Change of Service Times: Please NOTE that our Christmas Eve service and our New Year's Eve service this year will be at 6:00pm.

Directory Updates: If your address or phone number has changed over the past year, please contact Carol Dammann before the printing of the 2015 directory.

CHRISTMAS AT MLC

The annual Christmas concerts at Martin Luther College are on Saturday, Dec. 6th at 7:30pm and on Sunday, Dec. 7th at 4:00pm in the Chapel of the Christ on the MLC campus. This year's concert is titled "**Light Revealed.**" The choirs, wind symphony, and handbell choir invite you to join them in this celebration of the birth of Christ.

LADIES AID

St. John's Ladies Aid is sponsoring a Christmas party on Sunday, December 7th beginning at 12:30pm. All church members, relatives and friends are cordially invited to the catered dinner.

The cost of the meal is \$9.00 per person to be made payable to St. John's Ladies Aid. There is a signup sheet in the narthex for all who wish to come to the party. Please bring an item for the food shelf and also a donation for the Belle Plaine Lutheran Home.

The Ladies Aid has Christmas cards for sale. Check out the selection on the table in the narthex. Your support to our ladies group is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

We are continuing to collect Campbell soup labels, Box Tops and Food Club / Top Care points for St. Paul's Lutheran School in Arlington to be used as fund raisers. Collection containers for these items are on the bulletin board in the meeting room.

YOUTH NEWS

Our Sr. Youth (grades 9-12) members enjoyed a fun evening at the Budahn's home on November 9th. Along with food and fun, they discussed plans for their Christmas party in December.

We are planning to have our Christmas party here at church on Sunday, December 14th from 2:00pm to 4:30pm for all our youth members – grades 5-12. Please bring a snack to share. There will be fun games, gift exchange and talk about future plans. If youth members want to be a part of the gift exchange (bunco dice game), please bring two wrapped gifts equaling a total value of \$5. Youth members are welcome to invite as many friends as they would like. If these friends want to participate in the gift exchange, have them bring two gifts as per the above instructions. See you there for a fun time!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2 nd	Leonard Lange
4 th	Richard Gorr
6 th	Diane Dittmer
7 th	Tim and Janet Schuth (23 rd Anniversary)
10 th	Tanya Reichow and Cindy Schuth
12 th	Jaime Mathwig
14 th	Brock Warren
15 th	Betty Gorr
22 nd	Sunok and Allan Ganson (26 th Anniversary)
23 rd	James Dammann and Dylan Schuth
24 th	Melanie Schmidt and Benjamin Goette
26 th	Mike and Jessica Wills (7 th Anniversary)
29 th	Emily Rabe
30 th	Darlene Mackenthun and Kaitlyn Scherer
31 st	Mavis Lange