



Emmanuel Newsletter December 2024

*Merry
Christmas*

Look at all we do to keep the story going.

The nativity costumes come out along with the crèche, the special bulletin covers and advent wreath. Hymns that weave scripture from both testaments, sung only this time of the year. Candles, cards and stars. We have children physically act out the story in front of congregations all over the world. We put more energy into this part of the church calendar than any other.

Why do we do this? Certainly not out of some out-sized love of history and definitely not out of a worry that we'll forget the details. It must be that there's something we need to pass on, something more than simply remembering. I think we focus so hard on Jesus' physical entry into the world so that we can have eyes to see where he is appearing to us today.

We remember Jesus' crib as a manger not to sanctify barns or stables but to remind us of his presence amongst the dispossessed. We remember the shepherds not out of a love for pastoralism but to remind ourselves that the good news is often directed first to those on the margins. We remember Mary to know that faith and strength can come from the most unexpected places.

So, let each of these cards, bulletin covers, costumes and nativity sets be a sign, a much needed map, which we can follow to find Jesus as he is – still at work, still present in the world around us.

Rev. George Bozanich



We hope you will join us as we celebrate the seasons of Advent and Christmas at Emmanuel.

The first four Sundays of December are dedicated to anticipating the arrival, or "advent," of Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah. We celebrate this time with reflections on hope, peace, joy and love.

On Christmas Eve, our candlelight service is at 7PM.

In the spirit of community and sharing our holiday traditions, we invite members of our congregation to share their own Crèche displays on particular Sundays during Advent. If you have a nativity scene that you would like to showcase, we would love to feature it at the back of the sanctuary for one of our Sunday services.

Please speak to Mary Dagenais if you are interested in participating.

Thanks to everyone who has helped decorate the sanctuary and prepare for the Christmas season.





Sunday December 15 at 7 p.m

Mark your calendars for our wonderful large choir to sing you into Christmas.

This event represents many hours of work and practice with Nick and the choir and incorporates such beautiful music. Approximately 50 musicians will be participating.

The donations from the evening service/performance are part of our fundraising for Emmanuel. Please come and bring a friend and let others know about this special evening.

We want to fill the church!

Refreshments will be served following the service

There is also an afternoon service at Church of the Ascension on University Ave. Donations at this service are given to Church of the Ascension.

White Gift Service- Sunday, December 22

The story of White Gift Sunday began in 1903, in Painesville, Ohio, where a woman was troubled by her children arguing over the value of different gifts. She suggested that they, together with other children of the Sunday school who were bringing gifts to church for those in need, should wrap the gifts in white paper. The uniformity of decoration would obscure the gifts' value. The idea allowed everyone to participate in the joy of giving without regard to economic status. However, we are asking that you do not wrap your gifts. First, it creates waste and second, more work for those sorting these gifts.

Our White Gifts are given to the Downtown Mission. We've asked what would be most useful and protein was the answer. Cans of tuna, ham, turkey, beef or other meats would be welcome. White Gifts are given as an act of worship while the whole community is present. Please leave these items unwrapped.

The ideas behind the origin of the White Gifts tradition resonate for us today. Poverty may be obvious to the attentive observer, but there are many communities in which poverty goes unseen. Our congregation continues to play a vital role not only in making someone's Christmas with simple gifts, but also in declaring that unseen needs are not forgotten. This is the joy that

Mary expresses in the Magnificat—that God sees the needs of the people and desires us to rectify injustice, reconcile relationships, and mend the broken.



Join us for a **Christmas breakfast at 9 a.m. on Sunday, December 22** in Central Hall. All are welcome.

November was a Busy Month!

The Christmas Bazaar was a great success, filled with warmth and good cheer. **With a profit of over \$8000, it made an enormous financial contribution to the church.**

Thanks to everyone who donated crafts, jewelry, books, scarves, baking, and most of all to everyone who gave their time to make it a success.





We had many pie making sessions in preparation for the bazaar. This was the delectable fruit pie session.



The All Saints Service was held on November 1. We remember many people including the lives of Jens Hanson, Esther Foote, and Lenore Purdy.

We took time to remember lives lost and reflect on our commitment to peace for Emmanuel's **Remembrance Day Service**. Thanks to Jenna Perisinotti for laying the wreath and reading, and to Peggy and the Sunday School youth for making a very special wreath.



Finance Committee Report

1. The financial report to the end of October shows a deficit to the end of October of \$23,961.00. Let's work to erase this by December 31!
2. The Finance Committee continues to receive, record, and report rental payments and will continue to do so considering the growing number of rental agreements now in place.
3. The 2025 counting team roster has been distributed. There is still room for more counters.
4. The 2025 Budget Development process for the 2025 budget has been defined. The January 7, 2025, Finance Committee meeting will be devoted to budget preparation



A team from Emmanuel provided a delicious **dinner for parents staying at the Ronald McDonald House** in November. The price of groceries has risen and remarkably they provided dinner for people for \$96. **Please consider contributing to purchase groceries and let Mary know if you would like help with one of the dinners.**

Outreach for November/December

The Ruth Byrnes Giving Tree is up and the branches are waiting to be filled with hats, mittens, gloves, socks, and other warm items for Hiatus House and Matthew House. A list of needed items from each organization is also provided on the back table. If you have questions, please see Michele.

If you go to the websites, you will see a list of current items needed. Let me know if you need help navigating the websites. Please also place a copy of the items needed on the bulletin board downstairs.

Finally, let's remind the congregation that December 22 is **"White Gift" Sunday** and this year the Mission would appreciate donations of canned meat and fish, although all non-perishables are welcomed and needed. Please do not wrap the items to easily stack them on the Food Bank shelves.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to support a family through the Windsor Essex Children's Aid Society. This is a significant help to the family who will receive these gifts.

UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA ANNIVERSARY ANECDOTES

The year 2025 will be an especially significant time in the history of the United Church of Canada. One hundred years ago, on June 10, 1925, three protestant denominations united to form the United Church of Canada. The United Church was founded in 1925 as an amalgamation of the Union of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches. The new United Church of Canada was inaugurated at a large worship service at Toronto's Mutual Street Arena on June 10, 1925. Participants were handed a 38-page order of service containing the full text of the liturgy, prayers, hymns, and music. Hymns from all three churches were sung: "All people that on earth do dwell" from the Scottish Presbyterian psalm tradition; the Methodist favourite "O for a thousand tongues to sing" by Charles Wesley; the Congregationalist "O God of Bethel"; and "When I survey the wondrous cross" by the British Nonconformist, Isaac Watts.

In recognition of this historic occasion, we will include these ANNIVERSARY ANECDOTES in each monthly issue of the Emmanuel United Church newsletter until June 8, 2025, when Emmanuel will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada.



Affirming Committee

As we head into the Christmas season and ponder how best to spread the love of Christ, this piece from CNN illustrates why it matters that we, as Christians, affirm and lift up LGBTQIA+ people. A sad, moving, but ultimately uplifting and inspiring story of a conservative Christian family's journey as and after their son came out as gay:

["After their son came out, this conservative Christian couple went into a closet of their own"](#)

Heading into a new year, facing a great deal of sorrow and trouble in the world, the Affirming Committee is grateful for the enthusiasm and support from the entire Emmanuel Community, and we are committed to learning from and supporting marginalized people in our community. If you have suggestions for people or organizations supporting any marginalized people you would like to see EUC support or partner with in 2025, please reach out to a Committee member. The Affirming Committee hopes to broaden our discussions about the inclusion of all at Emmanuel.