



Emmanuel Lutheran Church

1229 Jefferson Heights Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

eastmontelc@hotmail.com

www.emmanuelutheraneastmont.org

412-824-4525 (office); 412-401-5742 (Pastor's cell)

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-3, Thursday 9-1

December 4, 2024

Happy New Year!

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT WAS DECEMBER 1. The church year begins with Advent.

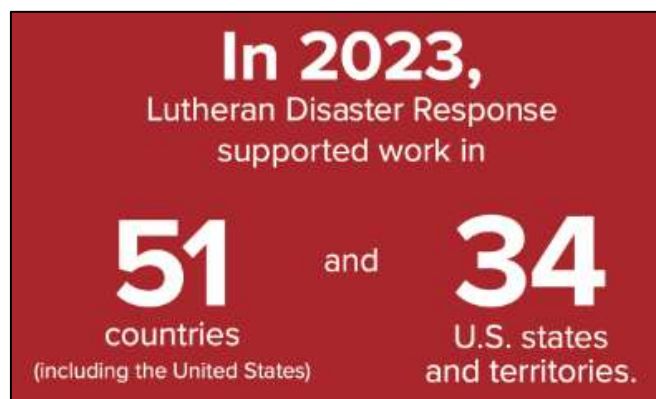
Advent Midweek Worship with Holy Communion on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.
December 4, 11 and 18 in the fellowship hall (no stairs!!)

Advent devotions and Advent activities for children and adults are available at Emmanuel

Advent Special Offering

We are collecting a special Advent offering for Lutheran Disaster Response. You will receive blue envelopes for this purpose. Every contribution given in the blue envelopes (or clearly designated in regular envelopes) will be forwarded to the ELCA Domestic Disaster Response for hurricane/relief and other additional disaster response.

Lutherans focus on the long rebuilding. This week's insert is about Hurricane Helene.



Our gifts are now funding things like rebuilding private bridges in North Carolina, repairing homes, and assisting essential workers who speak Spanish.

Planning for Spanish Language Worship

There is a meeting scheduled for Friday, December 6, at 7:00 pm to discuss plans for a weekly Spanish language worship service. The meeting will be conducted in Spanish at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1516 Beechview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216. Contact Pastor Theophilus for more information.



PRAYER REQUESTS: Call Pastor Theophilus for yourself or others to be included in prayer. Contact Marsha Kennedy also; she sends cards to let people know that we are praying for them. You can reach Marsha at 412-824-4966 **or** Marsha_Kennedy@verizon.net **or** 415 Kingston

Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235.

A TASTE OF VENEZUELA

We began the new church year on December 1 with a Taste of Venezuela, a lunch prepared in Emmanuel's kitchen by our friends from Venezuela. The menu consisted of Amarillo Rice, Venezuelan Chicken and a Caribbean fruit salad. **Thank you to the Venezuelan Cooks!!**

Emmanuel provides office space for Casa San José, a social service agency reaching out to the Latine Community. The profit from this event will help Emmanuel to offset costs related to this space. We received a Thrivent Action Team grant of \$250 for the supplies for this event.

The purpose of Advent is to prepare us for Jesus' coming.

Have you heard of a **Jesse Tree**? This year at Emmanuel we have Jesse Tree Advent calendars for everyone. Each day, you can learn about one of Jesus' ancestors, going back to King David's great-grandfather Jesse who was the son of Ruth and Boaz, and to the very beginning of all life. Each day you can place a sticker with a picture for the Bible reading. You will have a small, beautiful Christmas tree on December 24, ready to celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.



To order altar flowers for our weekly worship services, contact Judy Mayhood (412-760-0986), call the church office, or sign up on the Flower Chart in the entry way. The cost is \$50, or \$25 per vase. You can pay for flowers online or by check.

Worship and pray

Come in person at 10 am every Sunday

By phone: Call 312-626-6799. When prompted, enter the meeting ID 923 3815 0341.

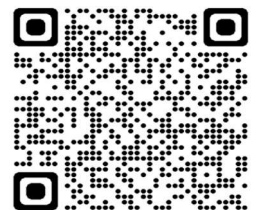
By computer or smartphone: Go to www.zoom.us. Enter Meeting ID 923 3815 0341.

At home without technology: Read the bulletin. Read the Scripture. Pray. Meditate.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS GIVING. You may give in person, send a contribution in the mail or donate online.

Go to <https://www.emmanuelutheraneastmont.org/> and you'll see the link.

Or use the QR code for easy connection on your smart phone.



Wed., Dec. 4, 11, 18 – 12:30–1:15 pm – Midweek Advent Worship with Holy Communion

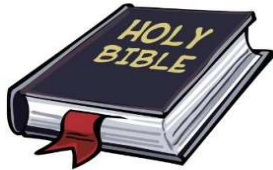
Tues., Dec. 24, 3 pm – Christmas Eve Worship

Wed, Dec 25, 12 noon – Christmas Day Worship in Spanish

Wed., Dec. 25, 2 pm – Christmas Day dinner in Fellowship Hall

MEALS FOR FRIENDS CHRISTMAS CANDY SALE

If you purchased Betsy Ann Chocolates from Meals for Friends, the candy will be ready for pickup at Emmanuel on Monday, December 9. Thank you for your support!



BIBLE BOOKS OF THE MONTH: Zephaniah and Malachi

The Bible Books of the Month for December are Zephaniah and Malachi. During Advent this year, both of these prophets are in the Sunday readings. The introductions to these books are included in this mailing.

As a reminder, introductions to all the Bible Books of the Month can also be found on the home page of our website, www.emmanuelutheraneastmont.org.

Christmas Worship and celebrations!

Christmas Eve – 3 pm. Candlelight Service with Holy Communion
Christmas Day – 12 noon. Worship in Spanish

Don't eat alone on Christmas Day! Following its Spanish/Bilingual service at noon, Emmanuel is hosting Christmas Day dinner. Dinner prep begins at 1 pm, feasting at 2 pm. Emmanuel will provide ham, potatoes and beverages; you're asked to bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert.



Good Gifts

We believe that God is calling us into the world – together. And with generous, loving hands, we can make a difference. ELCA Good Gifts is your opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs that mean the most to you and the people you love.



Give bees, chickens and cows.

Give Bibles or support a missionary.

Help a refugee or a family displaced by hurricanes.

You can get a cute or quirky card to send the person whom you are gifting.

How to give a Good Gift?

Get a Catalog at Emmanuel. You can send a check in the mail.

Go to www.elca.org. In the upper right corner of the home page, choose the button for good gifts.

ZEPHANIAH AND MALACHI

These small books pack a powerful double punch. Each begins with frightening descriptions of God's judgment to come. Each ends with the joyful promise of the day of the Lord. In these six chapters (three in each book), Christians find words that describe the first and second comings of Jesus.

We hear each prophet during worship on the second and third Sundays of Advent this year. Malachi 3:1-4 sounds like John the Baptist, *the messenger who prepares the way for Jesus*. Zephaniah 3:14-20 is an expression of joy for the coming time when God *restores your fortunes before your eyes*.

Malachi is quoted in music associated with Christmas:

Risen with healing in his wings (4:2) describes Jesus in "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

Who shall abide the day of his coming? (3:2) is the beginning of a portion of Handel's Messiah.

ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah begins with dire warnings on Judah, the southern kingdom. Zephaniah brought God's word soon after Manasseh's evil 55-year rule had ended. His son Ammon had a very brief reign which ended with his assassination in 640 B.C. Manasseh had made idol worship and child sacrifice common. He "shed very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." (2 Kings 21:16)

Josiah, only eight years old when he took the throne, was guided by wise men who trusted God. Zephaniah was one of the voices who showed why reform was necessary. Under Josiah, the temple was restored, and idols were removed. After scrolls of Scripture were discovered, Josiah insisted that the Passover be celebrated.

To learn more about the historical context, read 2 Kings 21-23 or 2 Chronicles 33-35.

The Day of the LORD

Zephaniah begins with the horrifying description of God coming to sweep everything away from the face of the earth. "On that day" Judah with its capital city of Jerusalem will be devastated. In chapter 2, God's punishment is directed at surrounding cities and nations. In chapter 3, "that day" becomes a day of healing, for the "proud" and "haughty" will be removed; the "humble and holy" will fill Jerusalem. Zephaniah concludes with a song of joy about God's renewing love. God says: "I will remove disaster from you ... I will bring you home ... Gather you ... restore your fortunes before your eyes."

MALACHI

Despite good leaders like King Josiah and the prophet Zephaniah, Judah continued to look to other gods, to seek protection from other countries, to ignore the Law of Moses, and to despise the prophets' words of passionate love and warning. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and many of the survivors were taken into exile. Under King Cyrus, they began to return. The temple was rebuilt. Faithful devotion to God gradually gave way to apathetic obedience and corruption.

Malachi – the name means "my messenger" – brings God's confrontation to half-hearted worship, the greed of the priests. People disrespect God. They rob from God because they do not tithe. God will come to judge and purify. It will be like a *Refiner's fire* (3:20) (This image of purifying comes from the process of refining silver). Yet like all the prophets, the real message is the invitation of our loving God, "*Return to me and I will return to you!*" (3:7)

The Day of the Lord

Malachi is unique in speaking of a "messenger" who prepares the way before the Lord comes. (3:1) He goes so far as to identify the prophet Elijah. (4:5) This verse is the basis for the Passover custom of leaving a cup for Elijah and going to the door to welcome Elijah in. Jesus names John the Baptist as Elijah in Matthew 11:14 and Matthew 17:9-13 and quotes from Malachi.