

## January Worship Schedule

*Sunday mornings – the heart of our life together*

*9:00 Sunday School*

*9:00 Nursery Care begins (infants – age 5)*

*9:15 Choir Practice in the Sanctuary*

*10:00 Worship for All Ages – Sanctuary*

*11:00 Refreshments and Fellowship Time – in the Narthex*

### **Sunday December 31:** First Sunday after Christmas

**Scriptures:** Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40

Pastor Dale will be with the St. Mark's United Church of Christ representing the Association and Conference as they hold their last worship service and their pastor retires. Our plan at Immanuel for the day will include a lot of Christmas Carols.

### **Sunday, January 7:** First Sunday after Epiphany

**Epiphany Scriptures:** Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7 and 10-14, Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12

**Baptism of Christ Scriptures:** Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11

On the day after Epiphany, we will primarily use the Epiphany scripture lessons which begin with the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Arise, shine; for your light has come." The prophesy continues stating, there will be an ingathering of all those who been exiled and seemingly separated from God. Psalm 29, sometimes called, "The Voice of God in a Great Storm," has the psalmist rewriting a Canaanite song to say my God is better than your God. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul speaks of the grace shown to him and his mission to the Gentiles. The traditional gospel lesson for Epiphany is the story of the kings following star to find Jesus, worship him, and present their gifts.

### **Sunday, January 14:** Second Sunday after Epiphany

**Scriptures:** I Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20), Psalm 139:1-6 and 13-18, I Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51

The Old Testament lesson from I Samuel recalls the somewhat humorous story of Samuel, the child under the care of the old priest Eli, waking up the old man three times before they realizes it is God speaking and calling the child to be a prophet. The psalmist portrays God as one who knows us intimately, even saying, "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Paul teaches us all things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial and we are all called to glorify God in body and spirit. In the gospel of John, Jesus calls Philip and Nathaniel to be his disciples.

**Sunday, January 21:** Third Sunday after Epiphany

**Scriptures:** Jonah 3:1-5 and 10, Psalm 62:5-12, I Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

The lessons today begin with Jonah, after his long journey away from God and through the belly of the whale, reaching his destination, Ninevah, and speaking God's word calling for repentance. Happily the people of the city respond appropriately. In the psalm we hear a song of trust in God alone, and the words, "God alone is my rock and salvation, my fortress. The letter to the Corinthians, written by Paul is not exactly an easy word for family counselors or long term financial advisors, because right after proclaiming marriage is stressful, Paul teaches that the present form of this world is passing away. In Mark, Jesus begins his Galilean Ministry and calls his first disciples

**Sunday, January 28:** Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

**Scriptures:** Deuteronomy 18:15-20. Psalm 111, I Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28

Our last Sunday in January has us witnessing Jesus' first miracle in the exorcism of a demon. The psalmist offers God praise for his wonderful works. Paul writes about knowledge, food, sacrifices, idols, and weakness, and encourages the church in Corinth to behave in ways that show love for God and care for others. Our first reading of the day from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy says God promises to raise, from among the Hebrews, a new prophet like Moses.

**Looking ahead –** Ash Wednesday is February 14 and the first Sunday in Lent is February 18.

## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

By the time you read this newsletter, Christmas will be over! Well, maybe not completely. If you get this before New Year's Eve, we will be having a Christmas Carol Sing on Sunday, December 31 and the twelve-day long season of Christmas continues until Epiphany (aka Day of the Kings). But, aside from those details, the kids are back to school on January 2, most of us have been back to something close to our daily routine, and most, if not all of those "all Christmas music" radio stations are back in their ten or eleven-month hibernation. Christmas is over and the next big Christian event is Epiphany on January 6.

For most of us in our tradition, Epiphany is not a big deal. In higher liturgical traditions, like Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and perhaps even a few Lutherans, one would actually go to church on January 6 for an Epiphany worship service. The practice with which we are more familiar is to move the celebration Epiphany to the closest Sunday and call it Epiphany Sunday. This year that is a difficult thing to do. Normally we could have a "First Sunday after Christmas," "Epiphany Sunday," and "Baptism of Christ Sunday," three weeks in a row without affecting the Sunday worship schedule that would come later. This year we must either "pick two" (which isn't a bad thing at Panera), eliminate one, or combine two. We will likely combine Epiphany and the Baptism of Christ on Sunday, January 7.

However, getting back to the celebration of Epiphany, in some cultures Epiphany is much more important. Again, in our tradition, we may probably only sing, “The First Nowell,” “We Three Kings,” “Go Tell It on a Mountain,” or songs about the Star. However, in other traditions, Epiphany, or Day of the Kings, (not Christmas) is the day gifts are exchanged. In some traditions, Epiphany is celebrated with a big party with celebrants wearing crowns and eating a Three Kings Cake. The King’s cake has a bean or coin baked into it and whoever finds it is treated like a king for a day. At the last church I served we baked such a cake and had an Epiphany Party as well as the usual Christmas party. It was a wonderfully fun time, but as you might expect, the new tradition was celebrated by only the most faithful families. The local tradition had not yet built up a following! The point, though, was to recognize the importance and varied ways to celebrate an important holiday in the church liturgical calendar.

We might ask why is there such a holiday and what does it mean for our faith and spiritual life. The answer lies in the definition of Epiphany. Very likely most of you know the secular meaning of epiphany. Epiphany, with a small “e,” is defined as:

**a** (1) : a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something, (2) : an intuitive grasp of reality through something (such as an event) usually simple and striking, (3) : an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure

**b** : a revealing scene or moment

**c** : an appearance or manifestation especially of a divine being

Again, we are talking about Epiphany with a capital E and from a Christian perspective, so Epiphany, most simply, is the day we recognize, or acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. So, what does it mean to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord? It means, that we say, with our words and deeds, with all of our being, that Jesus Christ is the powerful force in our lives. It means that all of the choices and decisions we make in our lives are made considering the will and teachings of God. It means that of all the powers and principalities in this world, we choose to believe that God, shown to us through Jesus Christ, is the greatest power in the world.

If you are into computers, you might say, Jesus is our operating system. If you are into political science, Jesus Christ would be the Constitution that shapes and guides us. If you study the earth, you might say Jesus Christ is like our sun, which determines, shapes and sustains just about everything that lives and breathes on this planet. On Christmas we acknowledge that Jesus is the divine, incarnate presence of God among us. On Epiphany we focus on Christ the Lord’s role in our lives. It is a role that should be central and of the utmost importance. No ideology or idol should be more powerful. No power or principality should rise above Jesus Christ. God’s flag should fly higher than any other flag. We cannot hold citizenship in any other realm or kingdom. This is the meaning of Epiphany – Christ first and foremost in every part of our life.

I hope your Christmas was merry and meaningful. I hope and pray we are ready for Epiphany!

## **Confirmation Class Invitation**

In January we will begin a Confirmation for youth in the seventh grade or older. There will be a meeting for youth, parents, Council and Spiritual Council members, and anyone interested in the Confirmation process. We would like to meet after worship on Sunday, January 7 to discuss expectations, requirements, supervision, and schedules. Our goal is to offer an opportunity for our youth to grow in faith and commitment to God and the church. Please plan to join us on that Sunday as we begin our journey. Please see Pastor Dale if you have any questions or would like to participate.

## **Central Atlantic Conference News**

In the last weeks, several announcements have been made by the leadership of the Conference. It was stated:

- Sarah Petermann, Acting Executive Administration Assistant, resigned effective November 30, 2017.
- Rev. Denise Mason-Bullitt, our Interim Conference Minister, is responding to charge against her and participating in a Church and Ministry Fitness Review. Because of this she is required to take a leave of absence.
- Rev. Alex Vishio asked for and received a year-long leave of absence to care for his father who has cancer.

This means, as reported by the Conference President:

- While Rev. Denise Mason Bullitt is on Leave of Absence an Acting Conference Minister will join the CAC staff. The Executive Committee of our Board of Directors is hoping this person will be on site by early January.
- In the meantime Rev. David Popham as "lead team member" can be contacted by phone, 973-558-0620, or by email, [dpopham@cacucc.org](mailto:dpopham@cacucc.org).
- The Catonsville office will close December 21 and open January 2. The New Jersey satellite office will close December 22 and open January 2. Rev. Popham will be on call during this time.
- The present support staffing pattern is extended to January 15. New staffing positions will be posted January 2.

## **Regional United Church of Christ Youth Event.**

Every four years the United Church of Christ hosts a National Youth Event. In the summer at 2016, Leah and I and several thousand youth from around the country and world gathered in Florida to hear fantastic speakers, serve others, make friends, and grow in faith. In between those events many there are several Regional Youth Events where youth from several states gather to do the same type of things. Our Regional Youth Event has just been announced! Here are the details.

## **St. Mark's United Church of Christ closing and Pastor Retiring**

We have received an invitation from a Chesapeake Association Church

The invitation states:

Sunday, December 31, 2017, 10:00 AM.

St. Mark's UCC

1805 Wickes Avenue, behind the Dunkin Donuts on Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-7225

Our final liturgy will be one of thanksgiving and celebration of 101 years of ministry to both members of the church and the community of Morrell Park. It will also recognize the retirement of its pastor. The Central Atlantic Conference and the Chesapeake Association will conduct the service of Release/Farewell. A luncheon will be held after worship.

Pastor Dale will be with them on that December 31, representing the Association and Conference.

### **CALL TO THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018 - 11:15 a.m.**

In accordance with Immanuel United Church of Christ By-Laws, Article V, an annual meeting for conducting business of the Congregation is to be held each January. All members of Immanuel are encouraged to attend to cast your vote for our 2018 Church Council members and review the 2018 budget. This year we will be electing three people to the council for a 3 year term, replacing John Dodson, Kim Leonard, and Danny Luthy, who have completed their term of service.

We will also need to elect members to serve on the Christian Education Board.

If you have the desire to participate in any of these areas, please contact a current member of the Church Council.

While all members and friends of the Congregation are invited to attend and participate at the Annual Meeting, only members are eligible to vote.

### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

Please have your committee reports into the office by **January 7, 2018**. The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, January 21 and this will allow the office time to get it assembled and have it available for you to pick up a copy on Sunday, January 14.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY – EMERGENCY COLD WEATHER SHELTER**

Our local shelter serves some of the most vulnerable people in Dorchester County: those without homes who struggle with joblessness and, in many cases, addiction and mental illness. The Shelter opened in December at the Salvation Army on Washington Streets in Cambridge, where the guests are provided a warm bed, hot dinner, and breakfast in the morning. In addition, guests receive counseling regarding local transition resources for their various needs. All of this is made possible by the generosity of local congregations such as ours, donations from businesses, foundations and community groups and the hard work of many volunteers.

Immanuel Church is responsible for preparing and serving dinner and breakfast on the second and fourth Thursdays from December through March. Usually Frank Spillman has been preparing our dinners, however, during this season he will not be able to do all of them, so we will need people to step up and help. A sign-up sheet is located on the table in the Narthex. We also need people who will take the food down to the Shelter, reheat and serve, and be a compassionate presence with the guests from 6:00 -7:00 p.m. on our appointed evenings. See the sign- up sheet in the Narthex. No one under the age of 18.

### **CHRISTMAS FAMILIES**

This year the Salvation Army presented us with approximately 38 names (6 families) for the “Angel Tree”. We have a very giving congregation as all the names were taken and presents purchased. Thanks to all who gathered together on Wednesday morning, December 20, to make the Christmas season a little brighter for the families we adopted. Thank you for your continuing support!

### **FLOWER CHART**



The Flower Chart is now available for the 2018 calendar year. . The congregation has the opportunity to sign up for a specific Sunday to supply the flowers in the sanctuary for that date. Maybe you'd like to memorialize a loved one, or recognize a particular occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, baptism or some other special date. When the time of your Sunday approaches, someone from the Chancel Committee will contact you to arrange the necessary details.

A dedication for the flowers will be requested, which will be printed in that Sunday's bulletin. Please have your dedication into the church office by Wednesday of the week you are giving the flowers. Please contact Helen Krom, Chancel Committee Coordinator, at 410-228-8085 if you have questions. A BIG thank you goes to the volunteer members of the Chancel Committee who provide the flowers on the Sundays of their designated month.

*Helen Krom, Chancel Coordinator*

### **SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE**

Thanks to everyone who continues to support our food pantry. Communion Sunday, the first Sunday of each month, we have asked that you bring some item(s) to add to our pantry and you have certainly responded.

Thanks to you and Robin Burton, through our Special Benevolence efforts, we were able to offer support to many in our community who are struggling with today's economy. Keep up the good work!

## **WITH GRATITUDE AND THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED IN 2017**

To Robin Burton, Kathy Kelly and the Missions Committee for coordinating another successful Christmas for the families we adopted from the "Angel" program through the Salvation Army.

Thanks to our Christian Education Board for the splendid performance by the children and youth of Immanuel in presenting the Christmas Story during worship on December 11, and for coordinating the Family Christmas Party with Santa and gifts for the children. To all the children who took part – THANK YOU!

To all our dedicated people who participated in working with our young people in Sunday School and assisting in our nursery. Thanks to all our helpers!

To the Chancel Choir, our Music Director, Curtis White, pianist Lynne Breil and Bill Bair for his contribution during many of our worship services on the violin. Thank you!

To the Spiritual Council and the Pastoral Relations Committee who handled many duties this past year. Thank you to the Chancel Committee for the flowers that grace our sanctuary each Sunday.

To those who prepare the meals, especially Frank Spillman, and to those who served the meals at the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter- Robin Burton, Terry Melius, Lynne Browne, Chad Malkus, Thom O'Connor, Dennis & Lou Jones, Jen & Brian Burton and to our dessert providers – Marlene Waldis, Dolores Dixon, Jen & Brian Burton, Cassie Burton, Lou Jones and Lynne Browne ,and thanks to Jim & Diane Murphy, who handled all the shopping requirements to make this happen and to those who provided desserts

To our Hospitality Committee who worked long and hard to put on the many dinners that we have each year. To C. R. Newman who works tirelessly in the kitchen and in resolving all the little maintenance problems that arise from time to time. Thank you!

To the rest of our staff: Janice Haller, our church secretary, who wears many hats; to Stephanie Dixon for caring so lovingly for our little ones; and to all you "behind the scenes" people who keep this place thriving! Thank you!

To the many volunteers who provide refreshments during fellowship after our worship services, especially to the Bair's for covering on many Sundays.

To Michal Dixon for her help in recycling the ink cartridges with Staples.

We know that it is impossible to cover all the people that need to be thanked for your contributions throughout 2017 and I'm sure we have omitted some that should be listed, but know that you are appreciated and we welcome your continued help and support in the years ahead.

*Church Council 2017*

## 2018 Plans

We have seen 2017 come to an end and look forward to the New Year with many hopes. As we begin the year, we wanted to thank everyone for their help and gifts for the many "fund raisers" held during the past year, which assisted in the funding of the Church operation.

Another fund raiser was a "**Holiday Bazaar 50/50 Raffle**". This was a year-long effort to sell tickets and it was very successful. The winner was George Barnett. We hope to do the same in 2018.

We will continue to have our other fundraisers throughout the year and will need your help supplying desserts and items for both the Spring Sale and Holiday Bazaar, plus your continued help with the various events. We have been very blessed this past year with your help and hope that you will continue your support in the coming year.

The Hospitality Committee

## **UNHANGING THE GREENS**

What goes up - must come down....helpers are needed to "unhang the greens". If you can stay after church on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> to lend a hand to do this it would be appreciated.

## **FAMILY WATERFOWL HUNT**

Plans are underway for our Waterfowl Hunt which will take place on Saturday, January 13, 2018. Registration will begin at 5:15am. The cost will be \$80 (continental breakfast, hunt and lunch); \$50 for youth 16 and under (must be accompanied by an adult). You may also come for lunch only (donation accepted and welcomed). Contact Jock Luthy 410-463-0985; Robin Burton 443-521-7869 or the church office 410-228-4640 if you have questions or would like to have a registration form mailed to you.





**IMMANUEL PRAYER LIST:** *You are invited to remember these people in prayer*

***Members of Immanuel:***

Dorothy BURTON, health issues, at Mallard Bay  
Norma Lee BURTON, broken hip, recovering at home  
Wylie & Shirley BURTON, Robin Burton's parents, health issues  
Bill FOXWELL, facing health challenges  
Evan KOZAK, undergoing treatment for Perthes disease  
Helen MALKUS, health issues, at home  
Doris RAE, health issues at home  
Elsa SCHNOOR, health issues, at home  
Irene TAYLOR, health issues, at The Dixon House, Easton

***Friends of Immanuel Church:***

Harold FERGESON, friend of Bette Adams & Sherry Hoefer,  
health issues at home  
.Judy SMITH, friend of Bette Adams & Sherry Hoefer, health  
issues at home  
Joe Franklin SPILLMAN, Frank's brother, health issues

**Other Prayer Requests:**

Guidance in Immanuel's leaders for 2018 and beyond

***Members and Friends Serving in Our Armed Forces:***

Christopher ANTENEN, U. S. Air Force, now stationed in the USA,  
grand-nephew of Jean Haddaway  
Buddy HAYDEN, friend of Robin Burton, enlisted in U.S. Air Force  
Timothy Scott MOXEY, JR., U. S. Navy, stationed in San Diego, grandson  
of Debi & Jay Book. Great-grandson of the late Ted Malkus  
Thomas PARENT, U. S. Army, friend of George & Connie Barnett,  
serving in Colorado  
Keagan ROSARIO, U.S. Air Force, friend of Kim Leonard, now  
stationed in the U.S.  
Matthew L. RUBLE, II, U.S. Army, nephew of Michal Dixon,  
stationed in Iraq  
Seth M. RUBLE, U. S. Air Force, nephew of Michal Dixon, stationed  
in Seattle, WA  
Jimmy WINDSOR, U. S. Army, stationed in Arizona



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## **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018**  
**FOLLOWING WORSHIP 11:15 A.M.**



**SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2018**  
**FOLLOWING WORSHIP**