

The Messenger – January 2025



*Sometimes a wild god comes to the table.
He is awkward and does not know the ways
Of porcelain, of fork and mustard and silver.
His voice makes vinegar from wine
And brings the dead to life. Tom Hiron*

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' Luke 3:21-22

The busyness of the holidays is behind us and January stretches before us. January seems like a long month with frigid temperatures and still long night hours. The cold seeps into our homes, our cars, and follows us wherever we go. Nature cannot be tamed, though we have tried. It remains beyond our control. We along with all beings must simply accept and adjust to what will be in depths of winter. Wild ones have gone into burrows and caves. It is a time for survival. Yet more than that is a time to renew and rejuvenate. We too can live into the winter as it is while finding a place of comfort, warmth, and renewal. January invites reflection both as the heart of winter, and the beginning of a new year. A good practice for January may be to sit down with good stories which can be windows into life.

January is also the season of Epiphany. The season begins with Epiphany on January 6. (We will celebrate Epiphany on Sunday January 4.)

Continue...

This season is filled with stories that reveal the identity of Jesus. Matthew's stories include: the coming of Magi, fleeing as refugees to Egypt, Herod's desperate murder of children, and the return to live in Nazareth (Matt.2) Luke's stories include: meeting Anna and Simeon in the Temple, and a later visit to Jerusalem. (Luke 2: 21ff). Other Epiphany stories include Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:21-22), Jesus sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30), John's turning water into wine (John 2:2-12), and the Transfiguration. These stories may have been worn smooth by the frequency of their telling and our familiarity with them. However, they may surprise us if we read through a different lens.

You are probably wondering why I began this article with the final stanza of a strange poem about a wild god. (You can find the entire poem and an audio of the poem here

<https://tomhiron.com/poetry/sometimes-a-wild-god>.) I invite you to read or listen to the poem, perhaps even before continuing to read my reflection. This poem and the image of a wild god, may help us read the stories of Epiphany with new eyes.

How can God be either tame or wild? Consider the difference between a domestic animal and a wild animal. Domesticated animals have been 'tamed' to fit in with human beings, and serve human purposes such as herding, hunting, or companionship. Wild animals on the other hand are not 'tamed' to fulfil some human desire, but are free to live on their own terms beyond fences and expectations. A domesticated god serves human needs and fulfills human expectations. A wild god is free from human control and is encountered on their own terms. The wild god in this poem is not familiar with the proper dining etiquette. Is Christ domesticated or wild? Jesus came up out of the water then out of the wilderness with words and works which shattered expectations. People, especially those closest to him, and those responsible for religious and political systems, were uncomfortable in his presence. He seems to be wild and untamed as he embodies God's love and fulfills his Divine purpose.

Continued....

I invite you to join me in reading the stories of Epiphany: the stories of the untamed Christ. Perhaps here at the beginning of a new year and in the depths of winter we will be encountered by a wild god who brings the dead to life.

Wild Blessings

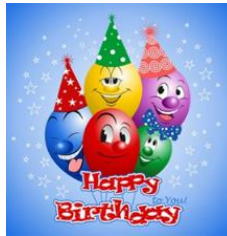
Pastor Frank

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

JANUARY 26, 2025

FOLLOWING THE 10:30 AM SERVICE.

Your 2025 Offering Envelopes are on the buffet as you come in the North entrance. Please remember to take them with you when you leave.



Birthdays in January

1/5 Nickee Aldana
1/6 Julaine Lofquist-Birch
1/7 James Carlson
1/14 Kristi Ream Hoerres
1/15 Martin Wolfe
1/16 Lucille Dunphey
1/17 Lisa Novak
1/17 Jennifer Olson

1/19 Bryn Fleming
1/19 Anthony Jardine
1/20 Kristie Heath White
1/22 Craig Campbell
1/24 Kathryn Schulz
1/28 Netha Morgan
1/31 Dan Goldberg



Introducing Hannah Wearsch

Hannah is Emmanuel's new Financial Secretary, replacing John Timmerwilke who retired from the position in August.

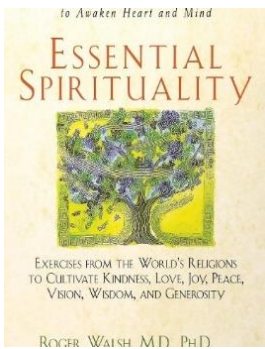
She is married to Jeremy and they are the parents of three children, Isabella-17 years old, Myles-10 years old, and Ben-7 years old, and two dogs, Sammy and Reese.

Hannah completed a Bachelors in Finance from NIU. She currently is a teacher at "Play Town Preschool" at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Rockford. She works in Emmanuel's finance office on Monday and Friday afternoons, after her teaching is finished for the day.

In her "spare time", besides raising her children and leading cub scouts, Hannah enjoys reading "all types of books", jigsaw puzzles, playing board and card games. Their family goes fishing in Minnesota every year.

In answer to the question, "What would you like to do with an unlimited amount of time and money", she said, "I would like to live in a lake house with no mosquitoes".

Stop into the office on a Monday or Friday afternoon and welcome Hannah to Emmanuel.



Spiritual Journeys Tuesdays

9:30 -11:00am.

We are reading the book "Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind," by Roger Walsh. It is available on Amazon in various formats, used and new, and also through Thrift Books and other sites. We

will be reading together and discussing it, so no need to read ahead. Please join us with this Zoom link on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89838350099?pwd=O4Hu08ruXp2VHLOZLm9lsHyRKypPv9.1>

Women's Interfaith Potluck

All women are invited to the Women's Interfaith Potlucks

- Monday, January 27, 2025, at Grace Lutheran Church, 343 Grand Ave., Loves Park. Sarah Catalfu, Literacy Coordinator for the Literacy Council/YWCA will speak about tutoring adults.

****NOTE: The potlucks always begin at 6:00 p.m., and are always on the LAST Monday of the month, UNLESS that is a holiday, in which case it will likely be the preceding Monday. We will NOT meet in December.*

Hope to see you soon! Susan Goldberg



All female members of the ELCA are considered a part of WELCA and are invited to join us on the third Thursday of each month, except July and August at 9:30am at Emmanuel. Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 16th at 9:30am. Hope to see you there.

Something for Everyone at Emmanuel

We invite you to worship with us on Sundays at our 9:00 am Calvary/Emmanuel Traditional Worship Service in the chapel or our ReFresh 10:30 am Service either in person or on ZOOM. The Recorded Service is available on Facebook after the service.

To gather online by computer, tablet, or smartphone, use the following link.

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/82726742888?pwd=WFewOVbXZGd3OHFzSXQ1WXIVTHppZz09>

Bible Study on Wednesdays
at Noon on zoom.

Dial 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 893 5688 8344

Everyone welcome to join
the Bible Study

Spiritual Journeys Book Study
“Essential Spirituality” by

Roger Walsh

Tuesday group 9:30 - 11:00am

Breathe Meditation Service
5:00pm on January 11, 2025
in Emmanuel’s Sanctuary

Youth Group Book Study
Tuesdays, 6:00 – 7:00pm

Emmanuel Food Pantry
Fridays, 9:30 - 11:30am

Yoga With Claudette Pirrello
Mondays at 5:00 pm

Belly Dancing at Emmanuel
New 8-week class beginning
January 8th - 6:00 – 8:00pm

Cost: \$10/class

Register with Emily Rice
773-456-1245

Cardio Drumming on Mondays
Adaptive Cardio 4:00 – 5:00pm
Regular Cardio 6:00 – 7:00pm

From the Food Pantry: WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Food is running out in our pantry! We have received very few food items from the Hunger Connection. People are coming in who are hungry. We have little to give them. Statically, in the **On Sundays, we will have the grocery cart outside the chapel for the first service and outside the sanctuary for the second service. Or bring pantry items to the church during the week. T-W-TH 8 – 1:00pm.**

Thank you so much for any donation you may bring.

St. Nicholas Celebration And Christmas Eve



Breathe - January 11th, 5:00pm

At Emmanuel's Breathe Meditation Service we gather for one hour to enter a sacred time -- the "thin place" between the worlds -- and Breathe. We listen to sacred scriptures and poetry from many traditions, we chant, and we sit in silence as we open ourselves to the Great Mystery.

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The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.
Don't go back to sleep

You must ask for what you really want.
Don't go back to sleep.
-Rumi

Next Breathe is January 11, 2025 at 5:00pm at Emmanuel.
Enter by the north parking lot entrance.

We Pray for Healing



Allison, Jonathan Chell, Jeff Birch,
Sally Susan, Peg Burns,
Karen & Jerry Johnson,
Merry, Roycealee Wood, Kathlyn,
Lorraine Harding

Char, Linda, Judy, Shannon, Ian, Joel, and Rick, Miguel, Mike,
"CeCe", Beverly, Brooke, Mary Lee, Tammi, Lucinda & Mark,
Matthew, Margie, Tom, Sophie, Vince, Todd Anderson,
Bina Holland, Deborah Lucas



Adaptive Cardio Drumming Every Monday 4:00-5:00pm

This class provides all the awesome benefits of regular cardio drumming while seated in a chair. No drumming experience needed. All levels welcome!

Regular Cardio Drumming Every Monday 6:00-7:00pm

Cardio drumming combines cardio exercise and drumming to music to provide an easy but effective workout.

Contact Holly Blair-Cascio if you would like to Cardio drum with us! 815-543-1191 hollyblair@mac.com

NEW YEAR'S EVE BLESSING

The New Year represents a time to wipe the slate clean.

A time to start over and build something even better.

A time to grab onto second chances and turn them into blessings.

So, leave behind all the regrets, all the “could have’s” and the “should have’s” and make a new beginning.

Don't worry about what you didn't get done, and what you didn't accomplish this past year.

Go into the New Year with gratitude and a positive attitude.

Make 2025 your year!

*Wishing You God's Grace
and the Blessings of New Beginnings!
Have a Blessed New Year!*

Expanding Rockford Promise: The City, Rockford Promise and Rockford University announced an expansion of the Rockford Promise Program last month. The new program will provide eligible students with a fully-funded tuition opportunity to attend Rockford University, enhancing access to higher education for local high school graduates. This initiative is designed to support students living in the City of Rockford, offering them a pathway to a debt-free college education and empowering the next generation of local leaders.

The Rockford Promise-Rockford University Scholarship Program will begin in the 2025 academic year, allowing graduates from public or private Rockford Promise partner schools within Rockford city limits, who meet specific academic and financial qualifications, to attend Rockford University tuition-free. With annual support from the City of Rockford, Rockford Promise will administer the program to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities, aiming to increase educational attainment and foster economic growth throughout the region.

The City of Rockford has committed \$500,000 annually towards the tuition of eligible students. This is funded through the casino tax from the Rockford Hard Rock Casino and is part of the Casino Tax Revenue Investment Plan. Meanwhile, Rockford University has pledged to cover any additional tuition costs that exceed this contribution, guaranteeing that all qualifying students can benefit from this opportunity.

Eligible students should complete their FAFSA and Rockford University admission applications by February 1 of their graduating year. They must apply through the Rockford Promise website application. Rockford Promise and Rockford University will coordinate to confirm student eligibility and manage the enrollment process. The City of Rockford will confirm address requirements.

To qualify, students must: Be a resident of the City of Rockford. Graduate from a public or private high school located within the city limits. Achieve a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. Qualify for Federal Pell Grants and Illinois MAP Grants.



Serving the people who live, work, worship, and play in the neighborhoods of Midtown

January 2025 MLP Newsletter

Check out our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Midtown-Lutheran-Parish-101030175425386>

Opportunities in MLP—ALL ARE WELCOME!

Katie's Cup is open Tuesday thru Friday 8 am - 2 pm

Katie's Walking Club—Thursdays at 9:15 a.m., weather permitting

Katie's Choice Book Club—Second Thursday of the month, 10 am.—11:15 am. Check with Katie's Cup for book selection

Katie's Cup Conversations— noon (11:30 room open):

*December 17, 2024, Father Bannon on icons.

*January 21, 2025—Rev. Dr. Stephen Bowie on The Once and Future Church

First Saturdays— Indoor Market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Midtown Market Music:

***Winter Festival and Market January 4, 2025—Rare Privilege** (acoustic Gaelic)

***Valentine Festival and Market February 1, 2025—Wattle and Daub. (folk)**

Swedish pancakes!!!

Open mic with Christopher Sims: Jan. 14, 2025. From 5 p.m.-7 p.m.

Benefit Concert for Katie's Cup with Mike and Sue Blair

January 23, 2025, at 7 p.m.

(Open at 6 p.m.)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

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Elrockford.org

Pastor Frank Langholf

309-509-5241

fslangholf@gmail.com