

The Echoes

January 2019



Inside: Christmas Eve Decorations

Cookie Exchange

Day Care Christmas

Servant of the Month: Barbara Crawford

**Christmas
Eve at
Emanuel**

Emanuel Lutheran Church

Our Mission: To share Christ's unconditional love with everyone.

Greetings from Pastor Lyn

Happy New Year!

As I write, it is the 3rd day of Christmas, the holiday spirit remains high! A few of you have said you are celebrating with family and friends in-between the "big" days.

Perhaps waiting until after Christmas Day to celebrate Christmas provides a more relaxed and peaceful gathering. Whenever or however you celebrated the birth of our Lord, I hope it was a blessed and holy time for you and pray the season of peace on earth and good will toward all humanity will, indeed, extend into the new year.



The week between Christmas and New Year in the office is typically fairly low key and quiet. Yet, spirits remain high within the office and at church too. There is much to celebrate, as we ponder the year just ending and anticipate the year ahead. I'm grateful for a truly wonderful staff at Emanuel – they make the day-to-day business of the church enjoyable!

Thank you to everyone who sent cards, notes, phone calls and gifts for Christmas! As I said last month, I save the cards and notes to reflect upon for the next couple of years (at least) and I do appreciate every single comment and wish for well-being. The gifts are treasured, each holding a special memory. Again, thank you!

In the 2nd chapter of I Corinthians vs. 9, Paul quotes the Prophet Isaiah (64:4); "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." Isaiah was praying that God would reveal Himself in power and do "awesome deeds that we do not expect" as God had done in the past (vs. 3). Paul uses Isaiah's words, praying God's wisdom be revealed to those who believe God's plan for



Emanuel is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Sunday Worship: 9:30 am

Pastor Lyn Crase:
209-523-4531
pastor@emanuellutheran.org

Website:
www.emanuellutheran.org

Church Office:
Phone: 209-523-4531
Fax: 209-523-3643

Church Office Hours:
Monday through Thursday:
8 am – 3 pm
Friday 8 am – 2 pm

Paula Braxton, Administrative Asst.
209-523-4531
secretary@emanuellutheran.org

Laura Marquez, Day Care Director
209-549-0672
daycare@emanuellutheran.org

OUR VISION

Emanuel's vision is to be loving, supportive, and welcoming, as we reach out in service and in witness to our neighborhood and the city beyond.

We share a passion to nurture people in all stages and circumstances of life.

We, as disciples of Christ, minister to our changing community in challenging cultural times.

God is calling us to joyfully follow the Holy Spirit in ministry to others.

From Pastor Lyn, continued

humanity through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We cannot imagine all that God has planned for us, in this life or in the next but trust the best is yet to come.

The best is yet to come for the church as well. Yes, the church is changing but the church is not going away. God has plans for His church – some expected and some unexpected. God has plans for Emanuel that include both the expected and unexpected but remember, we cannot ask or imagine all that God has in mind for those who love and trust Him. It is and will be - all good!

With gratitude and eagerness for what the new year holds,

Shalom,

Pastor Lyn

About this issue of Echoes of Emanuel

This issue looks a little different than past issues. The changes have been gradual throughout the past year, as we deemphasized the newsletter aspects in light of the new weekly announcements page. The latter is the “real” newsletter of Emanuel and Paula Braxton is doing a great job on it. Please keep her informed of events so she can keep it accurate.

Going forward, the Echoes will be a magazine, rather than a newsletter, and its principal function will be to chronicle the events of our lives together, mostly through photos. There will likely be less to read, but that depends on you: if you give me articles to publish, there will be more for everyone to read. Not every issue will have as many photos as this one. December was, as usual, an extremely eventful month for us. However, I need your help with those, too. If you take interesting photos, please share them with me using the email address for the Echoes (by replying) or send them to mike@epting.org.

Missing from this issue are the lectionary, the Circle schedules, the Bible Study schedules, and general announcements, all of which are on the announcement page that you get in your bulletin. It’s also on our website, updated weekly, so you can always fetch the latest one if you didn’t keep your paper copy. You may notice that I kept the monthly calendar, but please check the announcements for updates and corrections.

I hope you like the changes. I welcome your comments and suggestions. I want to make the Echoes Magazine useful and pleasant for everybody.

Mike Epting

Announcements - December 23, 2018

Emanuel Lutheran Church // 324 College Ave, Modesto, CA 95350 // Phone: 209-523-4531
 Pastor: Lyn Cruse // Email: pastor@emanuellutheran.org
 Administrative Assistant: Paula Braxton // Email: secretary@emanuellutheran.org
 Church Website: emanuellutheran.org
 Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8 am-3 pm // Friday 8 am-2 pm

WELCOME GUESTS AND VISITORS!

Welcome in the name of Jesus Christ. We are glad that you have come to worship with us. Please help us to know you by introducing yourself to those you encounter and please be sure to sign our guest book (located on the stand in the Narthex).

Please use your “soft” voice during and following the Prelude, as others may be in prayer and meditation. Thank you.

• LARGE PRINT BULLETINS are available. •
 (Please ask an usher)

Current Prayer Requests: Jesu Salazar—health (Schmidt); Kim Hankal—cancer healing (Kraft); Watson—healing & well-being (Waskins); Van Allen—healing & comfort (Allen); Donnie—healing (Nelson); Aaron Schmidt—healing & recovery (Schmidt); Robert Dieterich—healing (Dieterich); Aaron Strait—spiritual strength and connection to the Word (Strait); Priscilla Pino—health, healing & well-being (Iccott); David Romano (Barbara Romano’s son-in-law)—healing; Julia Pustilo—healing & well-being (Silva); Penny Zarate—health & well-being (Dieterich); Laurie Spinuzzi—healing (Silva); Ian McKenzie—mental healing & acceptance (Schmidt)

Beard Brook Park “Village” if you have anything that you would care to donate, contact Paula Barton (call/text 209-988-3189 or email p.l.barton@mac.com)

Volunteers are needed for the Point in Time annual census of homeless on January 24. Training required. Register online at www.scostan.com/pit.

Choir rehearsal after the service.

Tuesday Breakfast with MJC in Katie’s Kitchen. You are welcome to come and enjoy breakfast with the students on Tuesdays at 7 am. We are on break until January 15.

Text Study Tuesdays at 12:00 noon. Lively discussion on upcoming texts. Bring along your lunch. No meeting 12/25 or 1/1/2019.

Thursday Bible Study—9:30 am in Katie’s Room. On break. New study on Peter begins January 10.

First Saturday Worship Every 1st Saturday of the month at 5:30 pm. An informal & interactive worship experience.

1st Sunday Care Cupboard
 Bring your donations for the Care Cupboard (please refer to the list for current needs). Donations will be accepted anytime. Next Care Cupboard date is 1/14/2019.

Community Service Project—Alora Skustad
 Donations are needed for those experiencing hospital stays, chemo treatments, etc. See the flyer in the Narthex for a complete list and further instructions.



The Sock and Underwear Tree
 New socks and underwear are being collected and will be given to the Gospel Mission.
 ~The Outreach Team

The Joy
 of CHRISTMAS
 CELEBRATE THE SEASON



Christmas Eve Decorations



Normally an empty church is a little sad, but between services on Christmas Eve, Emanuel's sanctuary was dazzling!



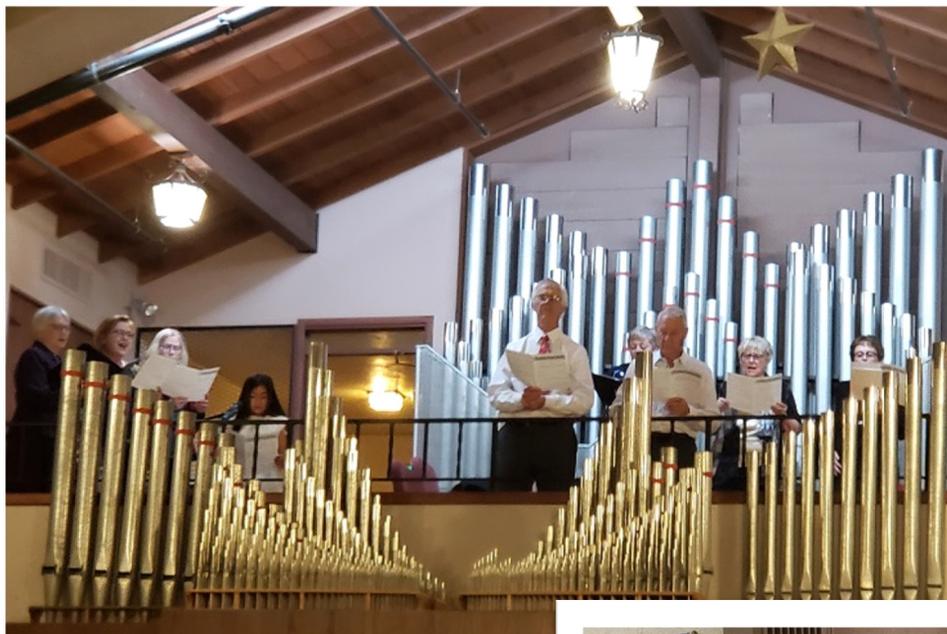
More Christmas Eve Decorations!



The Narthex Area was beautiful; such a treat to see first thing when you entered the church.



More Christmas Eve



The choir sounded superb during their warmup, but even better once the 9 pm service began.

Fanney lit the final candle.



Pastor Lyn delivered two different sermons for the 5:30 and 9 pm services! We are so blessed!

Yet Still More Christmas Eve!



Did you see
Luther Hall and
the "Fireplace
Room"?



Christmas Cookie Exchange and Carols



We sang, we ate cookies, and we saved some for the rest of you, too! Dave Holtz and Barbara Vukich provided the musical accompaniment. Barbara Crawford MC'd and kept us on time. There were a lot of cookies!



Day Care Christmas Celebration



The Church was full! The children sang. Santa came, and the kids were at their best behavior. What a great night for everyone!



Advent Soup Suppers (with Projects)



Luther Hall looked great, the soup was tasty, and the group made the stars that hung in the Sanctuary for Christmas Eve. It took a lot of focus to get those stars right!



Caroling with David Holtz



David hosted the carolers at his home again this year and all enjoyed a meal before venturing out into the cold to sing for his neighbors.



Servant of the Month

Barbara Crawford serves us faithfully, month after month. She is one of a small group who has labored to keep our WELCA chapter vibrant. This is a very important ministry and we are fortunate that it carries on at Emanuel. In December, Barbara was a key driver in seeing to it that our annual Cookie Exchange and sale took place and was a success.



Barbara is also a critical member of our worship team. She serves as an Assistant Minister, a Communion Assistant, and a Lector (lesson reader) on a regular basis.

You will also see Barbara setting up and cleaning up the altar before and after services as a member of that service group.

Barbara, along with Marsha Waggoner and Kristine Kraft, attended the most recent WELCA Annual Gathering in Minneapolis in July 2017. You can read their report on that meeting in the August, 2017 Echoes. They hinted that they may be going again in 2020 in Phoenix.

Please be sure to thank Barbara personally for all that she does for us.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all who helped decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. A substantial group turned out after the service on December 23 to produce the results shown in the photo spread in this issue:

- ◆ Marty Strand
- ◆ Paula Kroeze
- ◆ Dennis Strand
- ◆ Arie Kroeze
- ◆ Nirul Castleberry
- ◆ Suzanne Wilke
- ◆ Karen Harris
- ◆ Paula Barton
- ◆ Kathleen Reuter

We are blessed to have such talented and energetic members. When you walked into the church on Christmas Eve, you shared that blessing.



December Council Notes



Council met after church on Sunday December 9 for the last meeting of 2018. Pastor led off with a devotional reading by Madeline L’Engle.

New Business

A nominating committee was elected for the purpose of finding candidates for the 2019 council. Council heard and accepted a letter of resignation from Mike Clarke as unofficial photographer and bulletin board maintainer. Council heard and considered a suggestion that church doors be locked about 20 minutes after church starts. After discussion, no action was taken.

Since the last two council meetings were held at a different time, after church on Sunday, Pastor Lyn asked if that should be made a new regular meeting time. Those present unanimously agreed that this would be a good idea. It would eliminate an evening drive to the church for

council members. We agreed that the new day/time would be on the second Sunday each month, beginning at about 11 am. We also agreed that ministry committee meetings should be held on the first Sunday, also after church. All agreed that these meetings are valuable and should precede the council meetings, so all are up to speed beforehand.

President’s Report

Sue informed us that beginning January 15, Katie’s Kitchen will serve breakfast on both Tuesday and Wednesday each week. It would be helpful to have a few additional volunteers to help with this ministry.

Financial Summary

Bob Reuter reported that, in November, General Fund income and expenses were both under budget,

offsetting each other. However, because we are operating on a deficit budget, we had a net General Fund shortfall of almost \$1800, as the table below shows. The Building Fund and Day Care also had shortfalls in the most recent month’s figures.

Bob also reported that, for now, the budget presented in last month’s Echoes is still valid for our January 27 Annual Meeting.

	November Income	November Expenses	November Gain/Loss
General Fund	18,088	(19,884)	(1,796)
Building Fund	5,282	(6,929)	(1,647)
Day Care	25,155	(28,522)	(3,407)
TOTALS	48,485	(55,335)	(6,850)

January Birthdays

Birthday Blessing Sunday is January 20

All those celebrating their births during the month of January will receive a Birthday Blessing Prayer from their Emanuel Family. Don't miss out!

- 1/11 Steve Walker
- 1/11 Jeremy Lastra
- 1/12 Julia Poston
- 1/14 Bill Fox

- 1/15 Carolyn Crenwelge
- 1/17 Eric Obermeyer
- 1/20 Mary Lou Dieterich
- 1/20 Henry Yeoman

- 1/24 Sebastian Thompson
- 1/29 Gerry Castleberry
- 1/30 Matthew Yeoman



Epilogue

(You may safely skip this...)

by Mike Epting, Echoes Editor

If a new Christian were to ask you how to go about reading the Bible, do you have an answer ready? I stumbled into an online debate about this question and found a great diversity of opinion. Some felt that the only way is to start with Genesis and work through to Revelation. Others suggested reading John's Gospel first and then Acts. Someone else felt that Psalms was an optimum place to begin.

I once answered this question by suggesting Mark, then the rest of the Gospels. Mark is the shortest, but still tells the important parts of the story of Jesus. I do like Luke best of all, though. I think the question of John vs Luke boils down to a left-brain/right-brain thing. If you are a creative right-brain sort, then John is the one for you. If you are, like me, a left-brain engineer, then John is a bit harder to read than Luke.

No matter where you start, reading the Bible is a good idea for all Christian folk. Paula Barton is in the midst of a 6-month cover-to-cover program. She's reading "The

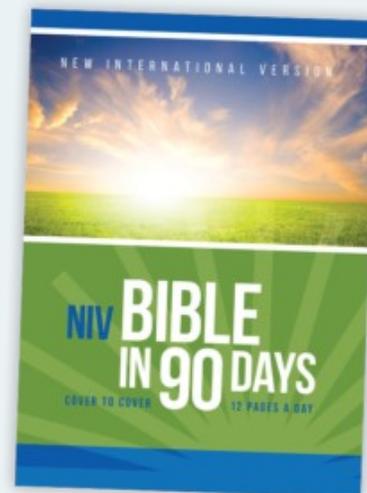


Message", the Eugene Peterson translation that I mentioned last month. I think that's a great idea. Rose and I have read the Bible front-to-back twice. The first time was a 3-year program where we basically read a book per week, but with accompanying commentary and explanation written by experts at Sewanee School of Theology. This was an excellent experience but also a large time commitment.

The second time, we ripped through in 90 days, per a specific schedule that averaged 30 minutes per day, 7 days a week. It was possible to miss a day and catch up, but barely. The strategy for this program was to read but not get side-tracked. If you had trouble understanding something, the instructions were to just move on. The concept was to get a broad-brush grasp of the entire Bible and not sweat the details. When we finished, I felt that it had been a worthwhile investment of time.

While I love the Lectionary and our weekly lessons, I think they would be very difficult to make sense of if that were your only exposure to the Bible. They are little pieces picked out almost at random and often begin and end at somewhat arbitrary verses. If you want to know the Bible, listening to these lessons on Sunday is just barely better than nothing.

We have plenty of opportunity for Bible study at Emanuel. Traditionally, these studies focus on one book and cover it thoroughly with lots of discussion. Often, however, we read books other than the Bible.



For example, we have read several of C.S. Lewis's books, including "The Screwtape Letters" last year. The Thursday group has read a couple of books by Max Lucado and Leah's Circle read "Accidental Saints" by Nadia Bolz-Webber. I think these are legitimate Bible Studies because we learn about the Bible through them.

I, personally, really enjoy works of fiction about the Bible. One of the frustrating things about the Bible is what is missing. Many of the great stories lack detail or back-story. Some modern fantasy writers have attempted to fill in the blanks. While their efforts are likely heretical, I find many of them quite entertaining. Ted Chiang, for example, wrote an excellent short story ("The Tower of Babylon") about building the Tower of Babel that offered up a new way of thinking about that Bible story.

Still, there is no substitute for reading the Bible itself. It is, after all, an international best-seller. It has some excellent writing and a quite interesting ending, though I won't spoil it for you, Paula!

Emanuel Calendar of Events

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Day Care is closed until January 1, 2019 OFFICE CLOSED	2 10:00 am Weekly Staff Meeting	3	4	5 10:00 am Organ practice 5:30 pm SAT. EVENING WORSHIP	
6 9:30 am 10:30 am CARE CUPBOARD COLLECTION Worship Service Ministry Mtg.	7 5:00 pm 7:00 pm MSYC Rehearsal Women's Bible Study	8 10:30 am 12:00 pm Day Care Yoga Class Text Study	9 10:00 am 11:30 am 4:00 pm Weekly Staff Meeting Multi Faith Leadership Meeting at Emanuel	10 9:30 am 4:30 pm 7:00 pm Adult Bible Study @ Emanuel Day Care Board Mtg. & Self-Study LEAH CIRCLE	11	12 10:00 am 2:30 pm Organ practice Facility Use - Luther Hall & Kitchen
13 9:30 am 10:30 am 10:30 am 10:30 am 10:30 am HEALING PRAYER SUNDAY Worship Service Choir Rehearsals resume COUNCIL Mtg. Day Care New Room Blessing	14 8:00 am 5:00 pm 7:00 pm Care Cupboard New Day Care classroom officially opens! MSYC Rehearsal Women's Bible Study	15 7:00 am 10:30 am 12:00 pm 3:00 pm Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen Day Care Yoga Class Text Study Focus on Prevention Mtg.	16 7:00 am 10:00 am 4:00 pm Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen Weekly Staff Meeting at Emanuel	17 9:30 am 1:30 pm Adult Bible Study @ Emanuel REBECCA CIRCLE- Katie's Room	18	19 10:00 am Organ practice
20 9:30 am BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS SUNDAY Worship Service	21 5:00 pm 7:00 pm 7:00 pm No MSYC Rehearsal - MLK Holiday LYDIA CIRCLE Women's Bible Study	22 7:00 am 10:30 am 12:00 pm Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen Day Care Yoga Class Text Study	23 7:00 am 10:00 am 4:00 pm Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen Weekly Staff Meeting at Emanuel	24 9:30 am Adult Bible Study @ Emanuel	25	26 9:00 am 10:00 am Family Promise Set-Up Quilting Bee Organ practice
27 9:30 am Family Promise INTER-FAITH SUNDAY Worship Service	28 5:00 pm 7:00 pm Care Cupboard Echoes Deadline Family Promise MSYC Rehearsal Women's Bible Study	29 7:00 am 10:30 am 12:00 pm Family Promise Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen Day Care Yoga Class Text Study	30 7:00 am 10:00 am 4:00 pm Family Promise Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen Weekly Staff Meeting at Emanuel	31 9:30 am Family Promise Adult Bible Study @ Emanuel		