Immanuel

 Church 129

 Shining God’s light for 129 Years

 **Immanuel Church Newsletter January 2021**

**Pastor Pete’s Pen**

**Happy 2021**

It has been 21 years since Y2K . . . the possibility that our world, business, both personal and corporate, information systems, society in general, could be negatively impacted by the change of a number –

“1999 to 2000” was prominent in most people’s minds. The continuum ranged from outright head-for-the- bunkers fear, to a care-free let’s celebrate attitude.

The Schroeder household was somewhere in the middle. We had a back-up generator, supply of gasoline, our cars were full of gas (the fuel pumps won’t work) and some extra food supplies stored away including

rice, powdered milk, oatmeal, other nonperishable items, and an assortment of canned fruits and vegetables. I had another tub full of hard candy and army rations. Plus, we had water just in case the rural water system failed to make the gigantic leap of recognizing the number 2000 in its computer system.

My family still kids me about my tub of rations and candy. In my defense, I thought the hard candy would help sweeten the oatmeal or be used to barter. Hey, times might get really tough, and I didn’t want my family to run out of hard candy.

Along with being physically “prepared??” Vi and I took the opportunity to spiritually prepare ourselves for the unknown. While some newscasters were spreading what seemed like “end of the world fear” we wanted to answer with the certainty that God was in control. Since He was the one who created the concept of time and He had moved the universal clock forward century upon century, we knew that we could rely on Him whatever the situation would be.

It was interesting how perceptive our children were.

We talked to them about trusting God, exercising our faith, being totally dependent upon Him and then one

of them asked, “So if we are totally dependent upon God, why do we have the Y2K supplies?”

That was a fair question, and it allowed us to explain the concept of trust. Was our trust in our Y2K supplies or were we trusting God to see us through? That

was a teachable moment for me. Yes, being ready

with a few supplies to help my family survive a few days was a matter of parental stewardship, but my

faith had to be in the sovereign will and providential plan of the Heavenly Father.

Faith in God does not remove our human responsibility to plan and prepare for the future. In fact, faith in

God helps us embrace the unknown with a rationale understanding of how limited we are and how

limitless He is.

During one of Immanuel’s fellowship events, I had the opportunity to sit with Billy and Virginia Rekart. Billy was valiantly fighting cancer, and I wanted to cheer them in their fight. Toward the end of our conversation, Billy took hold of Virginia’s hand, looked me straight in the eye and said, “Pastor, I’m not afraid of death, I just love living.”

That is providential confidence. Assured that the Good Shepherd will lead us into the portals of heaven, but until that time, knowing He has placed us here to enjoy abundant life is living by faith. Faith in God is His answer to irrational fear and personal paranoia of the future. Faith is not fatalistic. It is a compelling understanding that the Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and The Spirit of God – the Ones who have known us before the foundations of the world – will provide for us just as the Creator provides for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. (Matthew 6:25 – 30)

Place your trust in Him, every hour of the day in 2021

and for eternity. (Proverbs 3:5 & 6)

**Please join us for Prayer Week**

**January 10 – 14, 2021**

**Immanuel Church Sanctuary**

Dear Immanuel Church Friends, Warm greetings to you all and Happy New Year!

2020 was a year like none other, and I am sure many of us were happy to see it end. The funny thing is that based on the circumstances that surround us, there is no guarantee that 2021 will be any better any time soon. I am sorry to say there just will not be a magical return to “normal” on January 1st.

I do not mean to sound negative, quite the contrary. I am filled with hope of what this coming year will bring forth. As believers have done for every century since our Lord was resurrected and arose into Heaven, I am looking forward to His return. It looks more and more imminent to me. What a day that will be!

It makes me think of that beautiful and encouraging old hymn…

“There is coming a day when no heartaches shall come. No more clouds in the sky, no more tears to dim the eye. All is peace forever more on that happy golden shore. What a day, glorious day that will be!

What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see, when I look upon His face the one who saved me by His grace, when He takes me by the hand and leads me to the Promised Land, -What a day, glorious day that will be!”

Let’s be like the five wise virgins in Matthew 25: 1-13 who were prepared to meet the Bridegroom by having plenty of oil with them. They trimmed their lamp wicks so the flame would be clean and bright. They prepared and were ready to meet him for the wedding feast.

We do not want to be like the foolish virgins who had brought no oil and whose poorly trimmed lamp wicks created a flame that was dim and smoky. They used excessive oil and had left none left for when the bridegroom would arrive. They needed to go out and find some oil to buy for their lamps. When they returned it was too late the bridegroom had come, and the door was shut. They lost all opportunities to be with the bridegroom at the wedding feast. Wow! That is certainly a parable to be learned. Jesus could return today or 1000 years from now. But let us be looking upward and ready for His return.

Looking back to last month: Many of us were able to meet on Christmas Eve for a new blended service. There were elements from the Sunday School’s traditional Christmas Eve children’s program combined with the Guilding Light Ladies Annual Candlelight Service. It was beautiful! I am so glad we were able to have a Christmas Eve program. It was wonderful and very edifying.

That night, Immanuel kept its tradition of giving treat sacks to everyone attending the Christmas Eve service. Additional bags were delivered to some of our elderly members who were surprised and delighted by getting a bag. We miss all our dear members who are unable to attend church for whatever reason. Hopefully, we will be able to see you all soon.

On a lighter note, New Year’s! In Russia, German Russian children were taught little poems to say on New Year’s Day. The children would travel between houses of family and friends sharing these wishes for a Happy New Year. Other poems asked listeners to share coins with the children. It was a fun tradition that was brought to the Americas with the GR immigrants. My own Grandpa Hergenrader taught me one of the little poems, and I can still say it today.

If you would like to learn more about New Year’s traditions in the German villages in Russia go to [www.norkarussia.info](http://www.norkarussia.info). There you will learn so many wonderful facts about the German Russian villages and traditions.

Thank you Lord for all your blessings, and “Alles Gute zum neuen Jahr!” (Best wishes for the new year!)

Sherry Pawelko

**+Guiding Light Ladies will not be meeting in January; they are looking for someone who will be willing to decorate the Church throughout the year. If you would interested, please contact Susan Corey or Joyce Halvorsen.**

**Heritage Club- We have not scheduled anything due to Covid. Watch the Newsletters and Bulletins for any future Heritage Club activities.**

**Sunday School-**

**Children’s Sunday School**- 9:15am lower level of the Church

**Adult Sunday School-** Will resume Sunday January 10 at 9:15am Fellowship Hall

**Bible Study:**

**Lamb’s Club** (Ram’s welcome) Tuesday 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. Currently is not meeting.

**Adult Bible Study**- Tuesday 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to attend via Zoom, you can contact Joe Jensen for details on how to do that.

**Prayers**

Marie

Virginia

Tim Hardt

Vangie Brehm

Esther Burback

Donna Day

Harry & MaryAnn Schneider

Becky Schenaman

Margaret Jones

**Birthdays**

7 Becky Siefker 21 Makensie Jisa

8 Esther Burback 22 Molly Grau

8 Joe Jensen 22 Gabe Grasmick

14 Brandon Halvorsen 30 Jerry Edmunds

18 Evan Hughes 30 Kyle Kelley

19 MaryAnn Hahn

**Anniversaries**

6 Christy & Ward Funcke

21 Annie & Rob Parks

**Immanuel Military Prayer**

Lord, please hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for their selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need.

Please keep Immanuel’s Military and Law Enforcement Personnel and Families in your prayers. Let me know if I left anyone out, please.

Toby Rekart-Law Enforcement

Kyle Kelley-Military

Dustin Skinner-Military

Chance Huck- Military

Terry Wagner-Law Enforcement