



THE CHIMES

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1905 Edmondson Avenue • Catonsville, Maryland 21228
PHONE: (410) 744-5014 • E-MAIL: welcome@immanuelucc21228.org • WEB: immanuelucc21228.org

December 2016

The Consistory

Officers

President
Karl Briers

Vice President
Sue DiPaula

Treasurer
Bryan Holley

Assistant Treasurer
Larry Dunham

Financial Secretary
Steve DiPaula

Asst. Financial Secretary
Tyleshia Monroe
Diana Voelkel

Secretary
Christina Jimenez

Comptroller
Les Luco

The Consistory Elders
Sue DiPaula
Steve Schreiner
Susan Souder

The Consistory Deacons
Kineta Rotan
Larry Dunham
Karl Briers
Bryan Holley
Christina Jimenez

Ministers
All Members

Ministers of Music
Les Luco
Marjay Contwor
Nevin Oklumfor

Administrative Assistant
Jill Thomassen

Custodian
Lori Hamilton

“Reflections”

As Christmas quickly approaches, the quest to set the stage for the happiest day of celebration with all of the final preparations tend to push us into mostly happy chaos. If you're still shopping, have fun. If you're trying to figure out who can sit where to avoid any post-election friction, good luck with that! And just in case there's a glitch, be careful where you get last minute gift cards!

Did you ever wonder how Christmas lights got started? Get out your hot chocolate and munchies. Here's the story, so get comfortable for a short history lesson!

It all started one night when Martin Luther was walking through the woods in his native Germany. He was fascinated by the way the starlight shown through the branches of evergreen trees. He said that he felt like God's very hand had reached down and touched his soul, allowing him to see the world in a different way. He got such a sense of peace from it that he decided to duplicate the look and feel in his house. So, he attached candleholders to his tree's limbs. His family and neighbors loved it! From then on, the custom of putting candles on limbs of Christmas evergreen trees spread, if you pardon the pun, like wildfire.

Of course, that isn't just a pun, because candles did cause a lot of fires. But that all changed when, three years after Edison invented the light bulb, one of Thomas Edison's employees, Edward Johnson, decided to take this new invention and use it on his Christmas tree.

In the Edison laboratories Johnson produced a string of 80 small and brightly colored electric lightbulbs. They were a hit! BUT, not a lot of people had electricity yet and the bulbs were very expensive, so only companies or wealthy people could afford to buy them. Fast forward to 1924, when G.E. and Westinghouse produced better bulbs at a lower cost and suddenly the average American could have them in his or her home.

Pretty cool history, wasn't it? Who knew? But now, here's the important part to remember. Martin Luther told his kids that the candles that burned on their Christmas tree represented Jesus and the light that he brought into the world. It was so simple and it didn't take Hallmark to begin the tradition.

So, when Christmas Day rolls around, don't turn off your lights! Keep them lit for another few days. In fact, why not keep them lit at least until January 6? Then the lights can stand in for that blazing star that the shepherds and Magi saw shining over the place when Jesus lay. And, once the Magi have made it safely to the child, you can turn them off and put them away until next year.

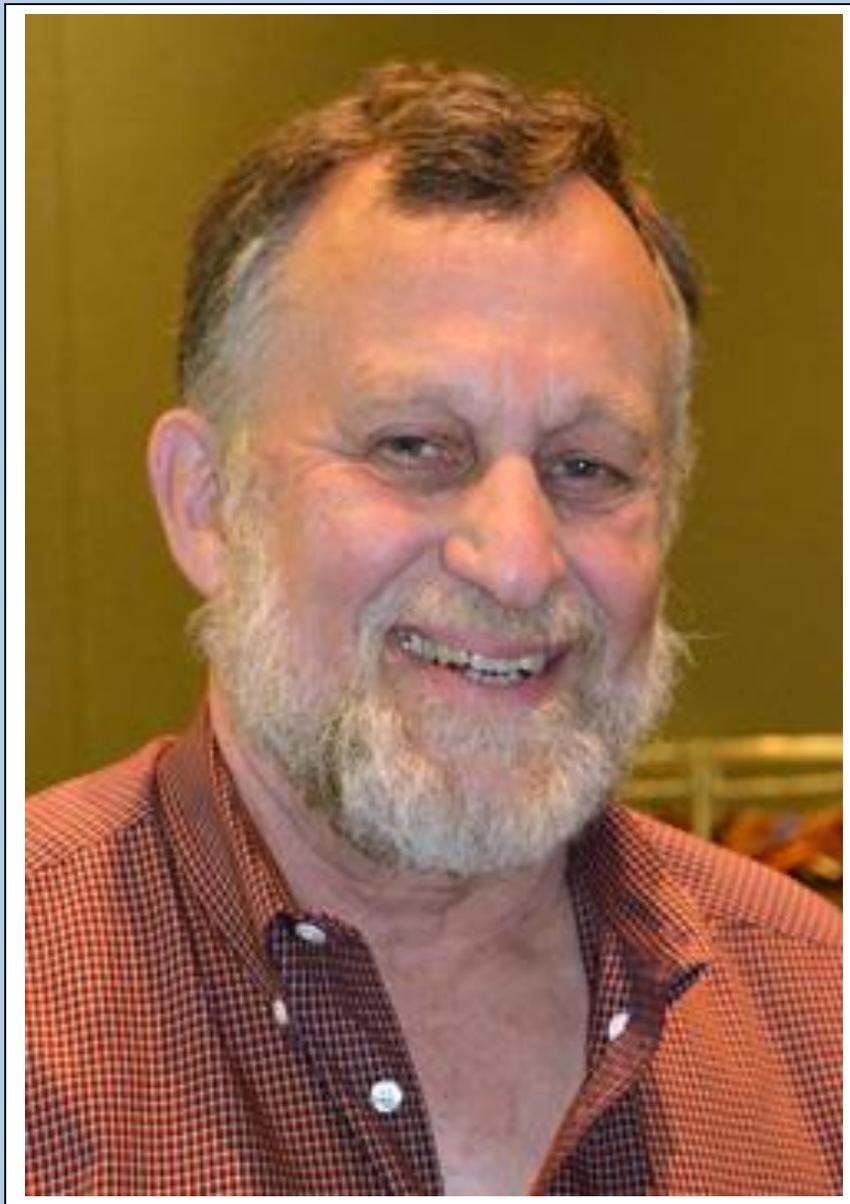
Just make sure that you keep the light shining brightly in your eyes, in your smiles and in your hearts. If you and I can do that, then maybe we can make the spirit of Christmas last even longer, not just for a day, or a twelfth night, but all year long. Keep those lights burning, for the Son shines brightly in the darkness and the darkness has never overtaken him.

Thank you, Immanuel and friends, for all you are and for all you do to help each other, your neighbors and friends, and for the ways you reach into a world of complexity and pain and create pockets of peace and compassion. And thank you for being such a wonderful part of my life as we continue to walk together. May the blessings of God be with you throughout this season of lights, sharing and joy.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

And to all...peace...

Rev Bev and Walter (the Kleenex TP beagle!)



In remembrance of our friend, Reverend Dr. John Deckenback.

The Christmas Fund

In 2015, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Small pension supplementation for 464 retired clergy and lay employees - \$1,500,203
- Health benefits supplementation for 235 retired clergy and lay employees - \$452,561
- Emergency grants for 58 individuals and families - \$91,694
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 528 retired clergy and lay employees - \$211,200

Your gift in 2016 will be combined with the gifts of others to continue this vital mission. Thank you.

Christmas Prayer for 2016

God of love and mercy, thank you for your great gift of your Child, Jesus Christ, who fills us with all that we need.

Merciful God, we are fully aware that not all your children are able to bask in joy or peace during this season.

We pray for peace within all walls:

walls within our own homes, walls that surround each city and town.

We pray that during this season of Advent

we may share the Good News of our Savior with others.

We pray that the promise of your birth may be the promise that we live in and share at home, at work and at school.

May we be moved to compassion and action in your name.

We pray this in the powerful name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Upcoming Events

January 1st we will welcome Rev. Janice Mosby.

Global Café Bible Study on the Book of Revelation will resume
On Wednesday, January 11 at 7:15 in the Fireside Room



December Birthdays

06— Nathan Oliver

07— Sarah Garner

09—Roberta Davies

10— Pearl Hahn

12— Rev. Bev

16— John Walsh

19— Rudy Berg

19— David Schatz

23— Lisa Ianuzzi

24— Elizabeth McCoy

25— Sandi Young

26— Sue DiPaula

30— Cindy Garner





IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1905 Edmondson Avenue
Catonsville, MD 21228-4231

Lectionary Readings

(Day-Date; First Reading; Psalm; Second Reading; Gospel)

Second Sunday of Advent –December 4, 2016

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

Third Sunday of Advent – December 11, 2016

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 18, 2016

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve – December 24, 2016

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

Christmas Day – December 25, 2016

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12); John 1:1-14

New Year's Eve – December 31, 2016

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

Prayer Concerns

PRAYER CONCERNS IN THE CHURCH FAMILY:

Steve DiPaula (injured back)

PRAYER CONCERNS IN THE EXTENDED CHURCH FAMILY:

Charles, Earl's Place resident with cancer; Debbie Cardwell, Fred Wille's daughter, ovarian cancer; Central Atlantic Conference; General Synod 2017

PRAYER CONCERNS IN OUR REGION:

United Ministries; victims of hate crimes.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PRAYER CONCERNS:

People of Berlin, Germany; Tennessee wildfire victims and Great Smoky Mountains; prayers for our country; families across all law enforcement communities who have lost their loved ones; victims and families of gun violence; refugees across the world; people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria; all U.S. military deployed and stateside.