

IMMANUEL LIGHT



January at IBC

The trees are bare. The grass is brown. Some birds have left for a winterless climate. The stripped landscape of middle Tennessee looks terribly poor. The bleakness affects my mood.

The work on the farm shifts. The cold prohibits planting. Even if seeds managed to germinate, the January sun is too far away for the plant to mature and bear fruit. “The sun gives its light in faint intermittent explosions, ‘squibs,’ not rays,” observed John Donne.

In our everyday lives, we can miss the importance of light. Artificial light abounds. Trees, on the other hand, battle for every squib of light. Even from the sunlight of January, trees manage to soak up energy. How they do this without leaves is unknown. One theory holds that the buds play some role.

Phyllis Tickle writes about religion. She is a layperson, not clergy. She says, “Holy seasons were not so much invented by the church as they were invented by life itself.”¹ Take the season of Epiphany. Epiphany brings the twelve days of Christmas to an end on January 6. Epiphany marks the coming of the “true light that enlightens every man/woman”. (John 1.9)

The statement is not primarily about the nature of Jesus, but about his function in salvation. Jesus illuminates darkness. Epiphany celebrates illumination.

Epiphany begins at Immanuel Sunday, January 7. Think of the trees outside the sanctuary windows. They are specialized to grow in a particular niche. Similarly, we may grow in a place of worship, our niche. We long to soak up some spiritual energy for the living of these days. Leaves come with a kind of solar cell, which equips them to receive light waves. Man/woman comes with an inner mirror, to reflect the Light of the world. Thomas Merton wrote about such mirrors. He says, “The mirror is surprisingly clean and deep and serene and God shines there and is immediately found.”²

Join me for worship on the Sundays of Epiphany at Immanuel. In worship, the faithful learn what the land already knows. Growth depends on several constants, like how long the days are. The Light of Epiphany illuminates the church’s year. It does not illuminate the next 365 days, but far enough to walk the shortened days of winter.

The good news is that we can live the season this way.

-Pastor Steven

¹Tickle, Phyllis. *What the Land Already Knows*. P. 112.

²Merton, Thomas. *The Sign of Jonas*. P.207

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Deacon Nomination Process Begins January 21st

The three-week period for nominating deacons to replace those completing their current terms begins January 21. During that time, all Immanuel members will have the opportunity to nominate up to five members to “assist the church in the accomplishment of its total mission.”

• **Deacon Role and Function:** Collecting the offering, serving the Lord’s Supper, and looking after a deacon care group may be the most noticeable services they perform, but according to our Bylaws, the active deacons also work with the pastor and staff “with the goal of guiding the church and its members in worship, in service and ministry, and in effective use of the church’s personal and corporate resources.” They also serve “as advisors to the congregation, pastor, and staff in all areas of the church’s life. The deacons plan, review, evaluate, and recommend to the congregation proposals for improving the effectiveness of the church’s worship, witness, education, ministry, and fellowship.”

• **Nomination forms (ballots):** Shortly before January 21, deacon nomination forms will be distributed at church and by email. Anyone who needs to have a form sent by mail should contact the church office. For quick reference, a list of resident church members who, as of January 21, are eligible and qualify to serve as deacon will be distributed with the nomination forms. The same list will be posted on the bulletin board beside the library. (For a more complete discussion of qualifications, see Article III Section 6 of the Bylaws at right.)

• **Nomination period:** Nominations may be submitted anytime from Sunday, January 21, through Sunday noon, February 11. After prayerful consideration, all members are asked to recommend up to five people they believe to be qualified. Each member should fold the unsigned nomination form, place it in an envelope, then seal the envelope, print his/her name on the outside, and drop it in one of the two ballot boxes (near the church office and near the library), place it in the Sunday morning offering plate, or mail it to the church office in time to be received no later than Friday, February 9. Forms may also be submitted on Sunday, February 11 until noon.

• **Tabulation:** A tabulating committee composed of outgoing deacons will check names to be sure the voter is a member, separate ballots from envelopes so that privacy is ensured, then unfold ballots and prepare a list of nominees ranked according to number of nominations received. The church administrative staff will pass the resulting list of qualified nominees to the Committee on Deacons. The Committee on Deacons will contact the qualified nominees, in order of nominations received, asking them to consider serving for three years beginning May 1, and inviting them to meet with the Committee before accepting or declining. A slate of four qualified nominees who have accepted the call to serve will be presented for approval at the annual business meeting in April.

Please pray for God’s guidance for this significant church-life process. From your Committee on Deacons, Marilyn Shadinger, Ed Wasserman, and Lerma Hearn

Article III, Section 6 of Bylaws

Eligibility and Qualification of Deacons. To be eligible for service as a deacon of Immanuel Baptist Church, persons at the time the deacon ballots are distributed pursuant to Article V, Section 2 of these bylaws shall: (1) be a resident member of Immanuel Baptist Church; (2) be at least twenty-five years of age; (3) have been a member of Immanuel Baptist Church for at least one year; (4) have actively participated in the life of the church, by being a member of a church committee or being elected to a church office (i.e., treasurer, Sunday School teacher, etc.), at some point within the three years preceding their nomination; and (5) have financially supported the church, either personally or through their family giving unit, during each year of their membership or during each of the three years preceding their nomination, whichever period of time is shorter. Deacons should reflect those qualities that the church expects of its members including regular church attendance and financial support of the church. Persons nominated to serve as deacons should also agree to commit their time to serve a deacon care group, to attend deacons’ meetings regularly, and to study carefully the teachings of scripture before agreeing to serve. They also should examine the church covenant as an expression of what the church calls each of its members to be and to do.

Please Take Note



Wednesdays in January

3

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS FROM CHRISTMAS
Chapel @ 6 PM

10

THE GOSPEL OF MARK PART I
Steven Meriwether
Chapel @ 6 PM

17

THE GOSPEL OF MARK PART II
Aaron Butler
Chapel @ 6 PM

24

DR. SHAUL KELNER
Assc. Prof of Sociology &
Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt

31

BUSINESS MEETING
Chapel @ 6pm



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Steven H. Meriwether, Pastor

Stephanie Wyatt,
Associate Pastor

Tim Powell,
Minister of Music

Richard C. Shadinger, Organist

Beryl Vick,
Minister of Music Emeritus

January Birthdays

JANUARY 2

BETTY WASSERMAN
BILL VO

JANUARY 7

MARTHA BOMBOY

JANUARY 12

JERRY WARREN
MARTHA WINSTON

JANUARY 15

TIM REYNOLDS

JANUARY 17

SIMS CROWNOVER

JANUARY 18

MARIE BURR
CHARLIE NEWMAN
MARY VAUGHN

JANUARY 22

JONAH WILKERSON

JANUARY 25

TIMOTHY POWELL

JANUARY 27

IAN JARNIGAN
LAURIE WOODS

JANUARY 28

MARTHA JO BERRY
JACKIE EASTERLING
MADDIE GORE

JANUARY 29

SUSIE BELEW

JANUARY 31

GRACE
NORMAN-WILSON



Missions and Ministry



Immanuel will host 8 guests from Room in the Inn on Thursday evenings this season (see dates at right).

We can help our neighbors in various ways:

- Prepare and/or serve Thursday dinner
- Serve Thursday dinner & eat with our guests (this is a very important part of the ministry!)
- Play background guitar/piano music for guests
- Supply Friday breakfast
- Supply takeaway lunches
- Transport our guests in the church van (Thursday evening & Friday morning)
- Do laundry
- **Stay overnight - Finding overnight hosts is our biggest challenge, and we prefer to have two hosts each evening.**



Room in the Inn will take place on the following Thursdays in 2024:

January 4 and 18
February 1 and 15
March 7 and 21

Please contact Pastor Stephanie to book your date in advance:
swyatt@ibcnashville.org
or 615-297-5356



Kaelyn Newton, Meredith Crownover, Mary Claire Lutz, Finley and Lola Gale, and Grace Mitchell

ROOM IN THE INN Volunteers



Erik Kihlberg, Jonah Wilkerson, and Anna Kihlberg



UPCOMING IN JANUARY

JANUARY 7
EPIPHANY SUNDAY

DENOMINATIONAL
RELATIONS MEETING
FOLLOWING WORSHIP

JANUARY 13
HEARTSIDERS FOR
THOSE ASSIGNED
TO THIS DATE

JANUARY 14
YOUTH COMMITTEE
MEETING FOLLOWING
WORSHIP

JANUARY 21
DEACON'S MEETING
FOLLOWING WORSHIP

JANUARY 28
CHILDREN'S CHURCH (?)

BUILDING & GROUNDS
COMMITTEE MEETING
FOLLOWING WORSHIP



Youth Christmas Party: Clockwise from bottom center: Bennett Jarnigan, Lyla Gnetz, Geneva Wilkerson, Meredith Crownover, Campbell Gnetz, Ed Jarnigan, Sims Crownover, Jack Newman, Erik Kihlberg, and Jonah Wilkerson



Tim Powell, Pastor Steven, and Richard Shadinger sharing their musical talents at Young at Heart's December Luncheon



Open Circle Sunday School Christmas Party (L-R Middle) Craig Self, Brandon Gnetz, Steven Wilkerson, Stephanie Self, (Back L-R) Emily Gnetz, Brandon Jarnigan, Derek Crownover, and (Front) Tara Jenkins



Erik Kihlberg with Pastor Steven at Erik's hockey game



High School Sunday School Class (L-R): Erik Kihlberg, Jonah Wilkerson, Vivian Vu & Stephanie Brown (teachers), and Samuel Baker



Christmas Eve candle lighting



Church Family News



Lord's Supper Dates for 2024

February 4	August 4
March 3	September 1
March 28*	October 6*
May 5	November 10
June 2	December 24*
July 7	

* Mar 28 – Maundy Thursday

* Oct 6 – World Communion Sunday

* Dec 24 – Christmas Eve*

Worship Attendance

Dec 3 – 104	Dec 17 – 118
Dec 10 – 132	Dec 24 – 92
	Dec 31 – 71



Financials

(Through November 30, 2023)

Year-to-Date Budget

\$313,983.25

Year to Date Income

\$276,277.75

Year-to-Date Actual Expense

\$285,742.00

Year-to-Date Net Income

(\$9,464.25)

January 28

The Belmont Chorale,
under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Ames,
will join us in worship on Sunday, Jan. 28



January Sanctuary Flowers

Jan 7 – In honor of the community

Jan 14 – Grigsby Sunday School Class

Jan 21 – Stephanie Wyatt and
Adam DJ Brett

Jan 28 – Connie Evans and Patsy Duffy

