



## Pastor's Monthly Message

# One Year Later...

by Pastor Rebecca Craig

*So much changes over the course of a year.*  
 One year ago we were preparing to take a vote on whether or not to merge with Prince of Peace in Stuart. One year ago, I still had my dear little Georgie with me and knew nothing about a sweet little puppy named Gracie. One year ago, Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce weren't usually mentioned in the same sentence. One year ago, I wasn't a member of AARP.

But here we are, one year later. Another year seemingly has gone by too quickly. We've said hello to new friends and loved ones, good-bye to others. We've had weddings and births, birthdays and baptisms. We've had funerals and people moving away, homecomings and graduations.

We've been through a lot of change this past year. Pastor Chad and I have adapted to the fact that we both have to preach each weekend now. I've had to figure out how to split my time between the two campuses given as the director of publications, I still need access to all of the printers, etc. we have at Palm City. As much as I try to have "regular office hours" over at the Stuart site, practical needs sometime just get in the way of my being able to do that, so still working on figuring out some of those issues.

And I know for some, the changes have been hard. More so I think for the Stuart campus than over at Palm City, but I've appreciated the grace with which many have embraced the changes that have occurred. We of course



have had some bumps along the way as we all navigate different communication methods and just different church cultures in general merging and melding together.

One of our preaching texts recently was on the rebuilding of the Temple after the Israelites came back from exile, how the people both cheered with excitement, and cried in sorrow: sorrow over what had once been, excitement for what was yet to come. Sorrow for what was lost, excitement for a new beginning.

As each new year dawns, I think we always meet it with this same mixture of both sorrow and excitement. A sadness that is involved of letting go of what once was, and an excitement as we embrace what is yet to come.

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## Pastor's Message

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As people of faith, this is a constant cycle we find ourselves in. Sorrow over traditions and people who have passed or moved on, but excitement about what God is doing and where God is leading us into the future.

Change can be scary, because so often we fear that which we do not know or understand. Yet change is necessary if we are to become the people and the community Christ is calling us to be. Ultimately when such changes come, we need to lean into the promises that God has given us.

That even from rubble like the destroyed Temple, God is at work and rebuilding and doing new things. God has a future for us, and is working in and amidst all the changes we have gone through and will to continue to go through into this new year and beyond.

Happy New Year! ■

<i>Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matt. 6:21</i>	<b>My Offering</b>
	Name: _____
	Address: _____
	Amount: _____

### Offering Envelopes

If you use offering envelopes, they will be available in the Narthex starting Dec. 30th. Numbers have changed so please make sure to take note of your new number.



## President's Message

# Happy New Year

by Pete Morello, Council President

**H**appy 2024! Thank you to all the members of the congregation. As we talked about during our annual meeting, we have not only gone back to where we were before Covid, we have fixed some things. From industrial air conditioners to a new parking lot, Immanuel is better because of all of you. When we voted unanimously for the ministry plan, I was inspired and moved to know that we all are intending to: be intentional with our giving, visit both the Stuart & the Palm City campus throughout the year, and to share with us the other non-profits you all support, so Immanuel can help support them as well. We have a great group of folks returning to the council and some new folks joining in. We are blessed to have a great staff and great leadership. Here is to more growth in 2024. ■

## ENDOWMENT FUND NEWS

The Endowment Fund Management Committee recommended, and the congregation council approved, grants from Immanuel's Outreach Endowment Fund to the following three organizations:

- Family Promise of Martin County (\$1,500.00)
- House of Hope (\$2,500.00)
- Project Lift (\$1,000.00)

In addition, grants were made to the following Immanuel restricted funds:

- Pastors' Discretionary Restricted Fund (\$500.00). This fund is available at the pastors' discretion to provide assistance for people experiencing temporary shelter, travel or hunger setbacks.
- ILC Youth Gathering Restricted Fund (\$1,036.84). This fund will be used to help send Immanuel's youth to next year's ELCA Youth Gathering.

Immanuel's Endowment Funds provide a perpetual legacy of good works through contributions given by and in memory of Immanuel's saints. What legacy will you leave?



## Deacon's Message

# All Things New

by Cheryl Gundersdorff, Deacon

Happy New Year! The word “new” can be both exciting and intimidating. A new house, a new baby, a new loving relationship, a new gift, a new opportunity, and a trip to new places on the bucket list, are some of the things we get excited about. They encompass anticipations of joys and adventures. Those same things we see as exciting can also have an element of intimidation. Because they are new, we have to make adjustments, encounter unfamiliar situations, and go where we have not gone before.

That is kind of what it is like to be on this journey of faith. It is exciting to know that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit invites us into a loving relationship. It fills us with undefeatable joy that we have a constant companion through the Holy Spirit. It is an exciting adventure when God asks us to partner with him to share His love. Oh, wait...that is also the intimidating part! Wait, God wants us to do what? Go where? Do something different than how we have always done it?

God is in the business of making all things new. God knows that it takes newness to get us out of our settled routines in order for our faith to grow. He loves taking the mundane and infusing it with something new and amazing. All through history God has taken His people out of their comfort zones to accomplish His will throughout the earth.

A journey of faith can be both exciting and intimidating. Thanks be to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who makes our journey exciting and tempers our intimidating fears with His peace. As we begin a new year walking with Jesus, let us be excited about the new adventures He has in store for us. Happy New Year! ■



## Stewardship Message

# Let Go and Let God: A Counter-Cultural New Year's Resolution

by Paula Tsufis

The New Year brings thoughts of resolutions and promises we make to ourselves to change, to finally get “organized.” Jane Grizzle, a writer and Doctorate of ministry at Western Theological Seminary, suggests that rather than “Marie-Kondo-ing” our lives, we throw in the towel in our attempts at control. Our secular American culture tells us that self-reliance, self-determination and rugged individualism are best, so her suggestion veers wildly from the mainstream of usual advice. If we then “let go,” what might God be telling us about moving forward in our lives and how do we know?



**Spiritual practices continue to be a means to engage with God's presence.**

Spiritual practices are merely tools that place us in the space where God resides so we can listen to, learn from, and love our Creator. They are encouraged as part of healthy spiritual growth. Just like any human relationship, our connection with God needs tending, too. Spiritual practices help us to better understand ourselves and God, leading to spiritual maturity.

*(continued on page 5...)*

## CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

### President

Pete Morello  
shipperpete@gmail.com

### Vice President

Drew High  
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### Secretary

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### Worship

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### Stewardship

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### Service

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### Learning

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### Property

John McCluskey  
John@Floridaoutdoorsrv.com

### Faith, Fun & Fellowship & Small Groups

Belinda Lowe  
lovymille@comcast.net

## AED Memorial Gift

Former Immanuel member, Joan Hager, has donated an automated external defibrillator (AED) to Immanuel for placement in our Palm City sanctuary. This gift is given in memory of her husband, Sam Hager, who was an active member of Immanuel and served several years as a member of Immanuel Congregation Council. Sam suffered from cardiology issues. Hopefully, this AED may possibly help to prevent a death due to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

Several years ago our memorial fund committee, with congregation council approval, added AEDs to our designated memorial gift list in hopes of being able to place AEDs in our sanctuary, Faith Development Center and office/preschool building. Monetary and designated gifts made to the Immanuel Memorial Fund are used to provide tangible assets that enhance our worship experience and congregational life and to maintain our two memorial gardens.

## We now have more ways for you to give!



### Mobile

Text: IPCGIVE to 77977



### Online

[ilcbethelight.org](http://ilcbethelight.org)



### Envelopes

## MONTHLY GIVING REPORT

A report of our combined Palm City & Stuart giving compared to the approved budget the congregation agreed to at the annual meeting.

	November 2023	YTD 2023
Given	\$35,354.19	\$447,169.99
Budgeted	\$45,340.00	\$544,080.00
Difference	(\$9,985.81)	(\$96,910.01)

## OPERATING FUND INCOME & EXPENSES

Our year-to-date operating income and expenses using the latest report of the treasurer.

Through 11/30/2023	ILC & IELC
Income	\$1,149,920.87
Expenses	\$1,150,978.96
Difference	(\$1,058.09)

## Stewardship (...continued from page 3)

Since there are so many possible practices, how do we know where to start? It can be helpful to think about spiritual practices as falling into two distinct categories: doing and not doing.

### **Spiritual practices that involve doing are about action.**

These are practices of engagement where we say yes to participating in God's kingdom. Examples include intercessory prayer or making requests to God on behalf of others. Pick one person each day to silently pray for throughout the day. Consider what small acts of service you can do for others in your family, neighborhood, community or church. Invite your children to join in and have them think of other ideas for the weeks to come. Be intentional about your church and charitable giving and discuss it with your family.

### **Spiritual practices that involve not doing are about surrender.**

These are practices of abstinence or disengagement where we say no to things that may be unhelpful to us. For example, movies or other media content that we know to be particularly gratuitously violent, sexualized, or divisive. Silence and solitude are means to temporarily withdraw from the busyness of life to listen for God. An hour (or less) by myself on the beach listening to the waves (and God) is a favorite time. I've always been much more productive on Monday when I've taken time out on the "Sabbath" to rest. Sundays are also a good time to try to spend some family time together making a meal or playing games. Scripture meditation using the daily lectionary, or Christ in Our Home allows surrendering our understanding of the text so God can speak through it.

Jane Grizzle notes that in her church, they have a prayer that begins, "Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners ..." She states that "As much as I might believe I play a part in controlling my will, it is not we who bring our wills and affections into order but only God through the work of the Spirit. We cannot discipline or habit our way to righteousness. We are given that through Christ Jesus so we too can throw in the towel and rest in his grace." Resting in God's Grace is a breathtaking 2024 New Year's promise for all of us! Thanks be to God. ■

Source:

<https://faithlead.org/blog/the-life-changing-magic-of-giving-up/>

## MONTHLY GOOD NEWS DEADLINE

The deadline to submit items for the monthly newsletter is the 15th of each month. Items received after the 15th may or may not make it into the newsletter. To submit items, send an email to: [ilcmedia2655@gmail.com](mailto:ilcmedia2655@gmail.com)

## IMMANUEL STAFF

Lead Pastor

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Pastor & Media Director

Rebecca Craig

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Deacon

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Stuart: Joyce Milligan

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Sexton

Mania Mejia

# Children, Youth & Family



2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

**CREATED**

**TO**  
the table

**BE**  
MYLE  
Young Adult  
Gathering

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Confirmation:  
January 21st

Rock the Universe:  
January 26th

Youth Gathering:  
July 16-20, 2024



Children, Youth and Family

# Happy New Year!

by Brittany Peralta, Youth Director

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's holiday. Thank you all for contributing to the youth gathering donation tree. In just a few short months, our youth will be traveling to New Orleans for the youth gathering. We still have a lot to raise, so be on the lookout for upcoming fundraisers.

December was full of holiday activities. We decorated the sanctuary with love and laughter. Our Early Learning Center performed at Palm City Chamber's Holiday Village, and it was spectacular! Thank you for coming out and supporting our preschool.

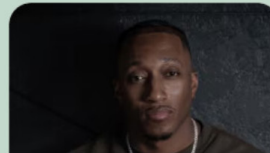
We had a Christmas lock in with our middle school and high school youth, and it was a blast! I love spending time with our kids, and let me tell ya, we have some great youth. Our elementary school kids played the chimes with such grace and precision for the contemporary Christmas Eve service. Great job guys! I can't wait to see what this new year has in store for Immanuel and our families. Sending you all my love! ■



FRIDAY, JANUARY 26TH  
4PM-1AM



We The Kingdom  
Music Plaza Stage



LECRAE  
Music Plaza Stage



Blessing Offor  
Music Plaza Stage



Cody Carnes  
Hollywood Stage



ELEVATION RHYTHM  
Hollywood Stage



Riley Clemmons  
Hollywood Stage

# Council SPOTLIGHT



**Alex Bell**  
Treasurer

It is an honor to serve as Council Treasurer and I look forward to serving our Immanuel community.

My wife Mandy, our daughter Farren, our German Shepherd (Hunter) and I currently live in Stuart, having relocated to Florida from the Chicago suburbs in late 2019. I was born in England and just before I turned five, my family emigrated to South Africa, where I grew up. After university, I worked in London for a short period prior to emigrating to the United States. My professional background is in accounting and finance as a Chartered Accountant and CPA. Presently, I work in finance at Carrier in Palm Beach Gardens.

In my free time, I enjoy fishing, reading, travel, and being outdoors—especially by the water here in the Palm Beaches/Treasure Coast area. ■

## Thank You's

Thank you to John Wakeman for all of his tireless work painting the Stuart offices, bathrooms, Fellowship Hall, and Family Promise room the past few months. It is greatly appreciated!

- Immanuel Staff

To Karen Coombs from a Soup Kitchen recipient: You are so nice to us & everybody! Bread pudding is great once in a while. It has to take you a while all that beating and long time baking for all of us that just love it. I always check to see you are here for all of us and make it so much more fun to be here. You always make sure we get a reasonable and healthy package to go! Thank you!



## Altar Guild Christmas Party



**Stuart**  
**Decorating**





Early Learning Center

# That's a Wrap!

by Natalie Davis, IELC Director

Well, that's a wrap friends. December has quickly come to an end, and we have had a great year. This last month has been a busy month for all of us at Immanuel Early Learning Center. We practiced singing, created crafts, designed costumes, and made some yummy snacks. In addition to our annual Christmas program, we enjoyed singing at the Palm City Holiday Village. The children were amazing, and we even had a visitor from the North Pole. Everyone experienced a wonderful holiday season. We are looking forward to blasting off into a new year in 2024. Our preschool would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year. ■



IELC

## Christmas Program

## Adult Education

### Deborah Circle

2nd Monday of the month  
3 pm • Rm 201

### Sisters in Spirit

3rd Tuesday of the month  
7 pm • Panera

### Word on Wednesdays

2nd Wednesday of the month  
5:30 pm • Townies

### Bible Study

Wednesdays • 5:30 pm  
Stuart Fellowship Hall  
Bring your own dinner.

*Does not meet on the 2nd Wed of the month due to Word on Wed.*

## Fellowship & Service Ministries

### Quilts of Valor

Weds 6:00 pm • Room 202  
Info: Jackie Koch, 772.834.8058

### Altar Guild

2nd Wednesday of the month  
10 am • location varies  
Info: Marj Smith, 772.286.8974  
or Belinda Lowe, 772.634.0194

### Stephen Ministry

2nd Monday  
6:30 pm in Room 202

### Super Sundays

Every Sunday @ 4:30 pm • FDC  
Immanuel's Weeks to help are the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays  
Contact: Marcie Balow  
772.283.0982 or  
mbalow45@gmail.com

## PLEASE UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Some of our member information in church windows is out of date. We would greatly appreciate it if you would please go to our website and fill out the online information form:  
[www.immanuelpalmcity.org/update-information](http://www.immanuelpalmcity.org/update-information)

# Ministries & Groups

## Word on Wednesdays



2nd Wednesdays • 5:30 pm at **Townies**  
Tavern

Join Pr. Rebecca for our Word on Wednesday this month at Townies Tavern in Palm City.

**Next Word on Wednesday: January 10th**



## HARLOTS & Heroines

of the Bible

Wednesdays  
5:30 PM • Stuart FH  
Resumes January 17

## Prayer Chain Ministry

Our Immanuel prayer chain is always available to pray for you or those you know in need of prayer. Contact Deacon Cheryl Gundersdorff 485-1954 to request prayer or to become a member of our prayer team





## Altar Guild Meeting

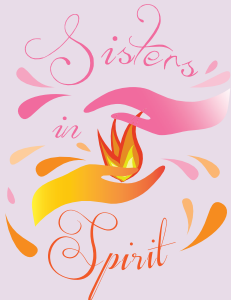
We begin the new year by meeting on Wednesday, January 10, at 10 am in Room 202 of the FDC in Palm City. We will be cleaning the candles used on Christmas Eve. Please try to attend as "many hands make light work." If you have been thinking of joining us, now is the right time. Many opportunities are available to help serve communion or take care of the altar. We welcome ALL interested volunteers.

For more information, call Marj Smith at 772-286-8974 or Belinda Lowe at 772-634-0194.

## Deborah Circle

Are you looking to start the new year with a desire to deepen your faith? Join the Deborah Circle Women's Ministry as we study our way through the New Testament. We meet the 2nd Monday at 3PM in room 201. Contact Deacon Cheryl Gundersdorff at 485-1954 for more information and to RSVP.

## Sisters in Spirit Women's Ministry



Start your new year off with a commitment to deepening your faith and join the Sisters in Spirit Women's Ministry Bible study. We meet the 3rd Tuesday at 7PM at Panera Bread Palm City. Contact Deacon Cheryl Gundersdorff 485-1954 for more information and to RSVP.

## STEPHEN MINISTRY

Life can be filled with heavy challenges, but we don't have to bear them alone. Stephen Ministry offers one on one confidential care as you navigate through the challenges. To get you connected with a Stephen Minister contact your Stephen Ministry leader: Deacon Cheryl Gundersdorff 221-8939 or 485-1954, our pastors or our Stephen Ministers wearing a blue badge.



## Music Ministries

**Contemporary Worship Team**  
Sundays @ 8 am • Sanctuary  
Contact Brittany Peralta  
brittanyperalt@ilcbethelight.org

**Bell Choir**  
Contact Sandy Foley  
772-240-6753

**Chancel Choir**  
\*Suspended until further notice\*

**Cornerstone Singers**  
Saturdays @ 5:15 pm  
Sanctuary

**Children's Choir/JAM**  
Wednesdays at 12:30 pm • FDC  
Contact Brittany Peralta  
brittanyperalta@ilcbethelight.org

## Share a Shawl



Do you know someone who could use some extra love of Jesus? Shawls knitted or crocheted by members of Immanuel are in the baskets in the Palm City lobby for you to share with them. Immanuel's prayers go with the shawls that they may feel the warmth of His loving presence.



**Immanuel**

ilcbethelight.org

**PALM CITY:**

2655 SW Immanuel Drive  
Palm City, FL 34990  
772.287.8188

**STUART**

2200 NW Federal Hwy  
Stuart, FL 34994  
772.692.1171

Nonprofit  
Organization  
US Postage  
PAID  
Stuart, FL  
Permit No. 144

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

**Worship Schedule**

**Palm City**

Saturdays:

6:00 pm

Relaxed Traditional

**Sundays:**

9:30 am Contemporary

11:15 am Traditional

*watch our livestream of  
all Palm City services:*

*ilcbethelight.org*

**Stuart**

Sundays:

10:00 am Traditional



# Church Directory



January 26th & 27th  
ILC Palm City

Book Your Photo!  
[ucdir.com](http://ucdir.com)  
Username: fl840  
Password: church



Click Here

Universal Church Directories

contact: *Kyla Mericle*  
772-215-6583