

# Immanuel Messenger

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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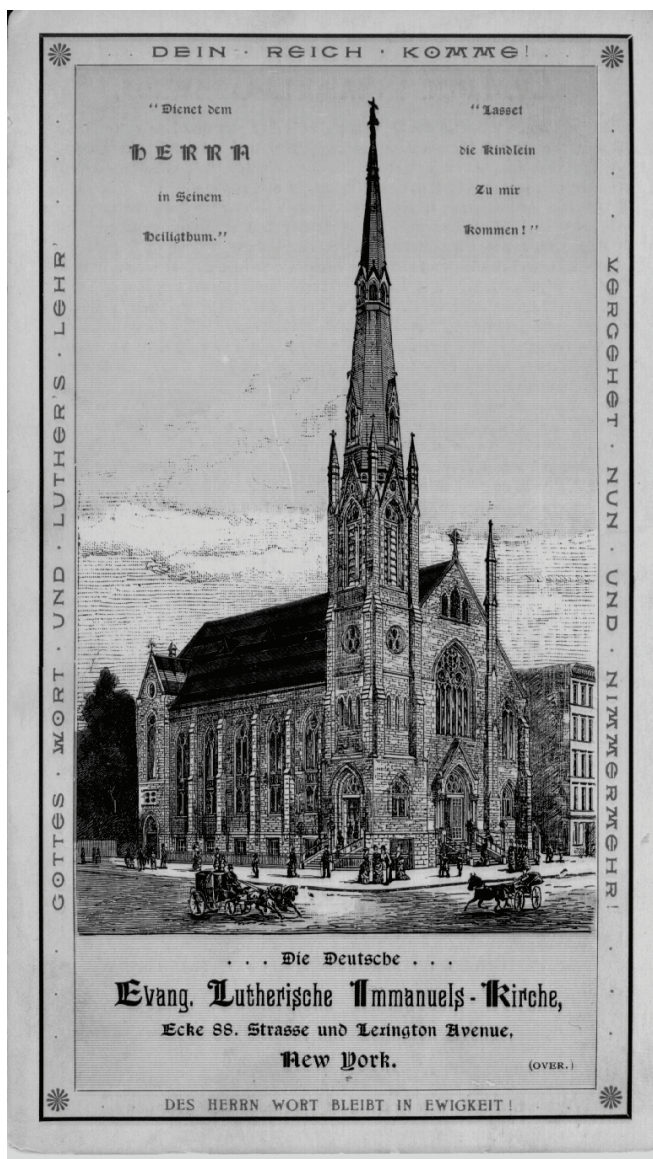
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January 2013

*A Word from the Pastor*

## Welcome to Immanuel's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year



Dear Members and Friends of Immanuel Lutheran Church,  
When we think of the long-ago days when our congregation was formed, we could well give praise to our Triune God for his inexhaustible hope and energy.

The times of our founding were violent and heartbreaking. Both before and after that 1863 Transfiguration Sunday when our Immanuel ancestors first worshiped, there was conflict throughout our land. The Battle of Antietam had taken place just the past autumn. It was the bloodiest single-day battle in American history, with 23,000 dead, wounded, or missing. The Battle of Gettysburg lay ahead, that summer: the three-day battle, July 1-3, brought the highest number of casualties in the Civil War—between 46,000 and 51,000. And, then, in our city, the awful New York City draft riots were soon upon us, also in July of 1863. Those riots were the largest civil insurrection in American history.<sup>1</sup>

Yet amidst all that commotion and heartbreak, the Holy Spirit was still moving in our town, still inspiring people, still establishing congregations.

Among those inspired people was our founding pastor, Rev. C. J. Renz.



PASTOR C. J. RENZ

I'll let our 1923 anniversary booklet tell the story of our beginnings:

Immediately after the New Year, the sainted Pastor C. J. Renz, founder of Immanuel Church, made his first trip to

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_York\\_City\\_draft\\_riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City_draft_riots)

Yorkville from College Point, where he was serving as pastor of St. John's Church.

Acting upon the suggestion of Prof. G. Seyfarth, the noted Egyptologist, who at that time was residing in Yorkville, Pastor Renz had cards printed and an invitation extended to the Lutherans of Yorkville to gather together for a Lutheran Church service.

The congregation, "Die Ev.-Luth. Immanuelsgemeinde Ungeaenderter Augsb. Konfession zu Yorkville, N.Y." was organized on February 11, 1863, with 18 persons appending their signatures...

So, here we are: born in the midst of the Civil War, and flourishing, by God's grace, a century-and-a-half later.

Our official founding date is the one mentioned above: February 11, 1863. Our official first liturgy was Transfiguration Sunday 1863. So, this Transfiguration Sunday, February 10, will be our most precise 150th anniversary celebration.

We will celebrate that Sunday with a distinguished guest preacher very dear to many of us: Rev. Thomas Nelson Green. He is our only surviving Senior Pastor besides me. He served as Interim Pastor in those difficult days between the pastorates of Rev. Robert Wiltenberg and Rev. Raymond Schulze. It was a long interim ministry, with many disappointments, with our church ceiling collapsing, and with lightning striking our steeple cross and bending it downwards. Rev. Green helped keep us together and to keep the liturgy and the preaching strong until that great day when Pastor Schulze took over.

Rev. Green and I are blessed to stand alongside Rev. Dr. David W. Lotz, our distinguished and esteemed Pastoral Associate and pillar of our congregation for so many good years. Pastor Lotz will most likely be unable to be with us during our anniversary year. He and Norma are retired to Florida, and it is becoming physically hard for them to visit our hurly-burly city. But we can look forward to a letter of greeting from Pastor Lotz later during this anniversary year, probably in the autumn.

We begin our 150th anniversary year, then, on Transfiguration Sunday, February 10, 2013. But we aim to have something special each month of the year, culminating in Heritage Sunday/Homecoming Sunday in the autumn and Reformation Sunday, October 27, 2013.

Here is an overview of some of our plans:

✦ First we lift up three spiritual enrichments this year. Anniversary Chair Barbara Edwards and I are especially pleased by them, they seem so lovely for our worshipful congregation:

- Spiritual Direction Group, led by Pastor Carol Fryer. She gives us this invitation:

*From time to time, Jesus and his disciples took a break from their busy schedule preaching, teaching, healing and serving people to retreat to a quiet place to pray. It would be good for us to do that too! One possible way of dedicating a particular time apart for prayer is to become part of a Spiritual Direction Group.*

*If you are interested in learning about such a group, please join me for an introductory session on Monday, January 21, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther Room.*

*Please RSVP to Karen Rombey so that we know how many to expect.*

- Spiritual Practices Group and Evensong, led by Rev. Kelly-Ray Meritt. Rev. Meritt is off to Ankara, Turkey now for interim ministry in that land so holy in the history of the early church. I am eager for him to return, to bring his learning and beautiful liturgical voice for a Spiritual Practices Group and Evensong, probably for early Sunday evenings. Rev. Meritt will likely be back and ready to begin this summer 2013.
  - Later in this newsletter you will read about a small-group Bible Study on the Sermon on the Mount, led by Irene Zimmer, in the home of her and her husband, Douglas Puffert. Such small groups often strengthen the congregation and provide instruction and encouragement for people.
- ✦ Transfiguration Sunday, February 10, 2013, the first of our 150th anniversary celebrations. Rev. Thomas F. Green, preaching.
- ✦ Valentine's Sunday, February 17. Let's have a reunion of those I have married over the years. Following the 11 a.m. liturgy, I am planning a Coffee Hour lecture "The Love Story of Martin and Katie," in honor of Valentine's Day.
- ✦ The Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 17, with Dr. David Yeago, preaching. Dr. Yeago preached for us on Reformation Sunday 2011.
- ✦ Good Friday, March 29. Besides the Good Friday evening liturgy, Music Director Gwendolyn Toth is also planning a sacred concert, which will be very moving.
- ✦ The Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 28: Coffee Hour pilgrimage to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, 211 East 83<sup>rd</sup> Street – home of one of the two Immanuel congregations in our early days.
- ✦ Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 5: Youth Sunday.

- ✦ Cabaret, early June. On January 29, 2011, our Choir treated us to such a cabaret as a fund-raiser for our church roof and steeple project. If you were there, I bet you marked it down in your memory and said to yourself: “I sure hope they have another cabaret!” We mean to, this coming June.
- ✦ Hymn Sing, early autumn, most likely. Music Director Gwendolyn Toth has invited Music Director Thomas Schmidt of Saint Peter’s Church in midtown to play organ for us for the hymn sing, while she takes the microphone and introduces the hymns for us.
- ✦ Heritage/Homecoming Sunday, autumn. We aim to reproduce some history here at Immanuel, including parts of the liturgy and hymns from old hymnals, together with Immanuel’s old tradition of the Ushers and Greeters in grey morning coats.
- ✦ Reformation Sunday, October 27, with Rev. Dr. Robert W. Jenson preaching. This will be the culmination of our 150th anniversary.

Other good things are planned too. We hope to have two banquets prepared by our member John Stevenson, similar to the Roof Fund Campaign banquet he prepared for us in April 2010. We hope to invite back some of Immanuel’s distinguished Assistant Pastors to preach. And we are planning a big church banner, stretching along our anticipated Lexington Avenue scaffolding: “Celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.”

We mean to include our newsletters to our full mail list, including former members, throughout this year. These newsletters will include more details about our celebrations as we go along.

As you look over the above list, you might find yourself saying, “I hope to attend that service,” even if you are a former member and live far away. That would be great! In fact, we hope that as many of you as possible will plan to visit our city and visit Immanuel during this, our 150th anniversary. We are filled with gratitude to God for what we have received from him and from our forefathers and foremothers here at Immanuel, and we are dedicating ourselves to carry onwards in their spirit and with gratitude to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In Christ,  
  
 Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

# Epiphany Sunday

11 a.m. Sunday, January 6, 2013

Epiphany Sunday this year joins with the Name of Jesus liturgy on January 1 as moving invitations to spiritual renewal for the coming year. What better exhortation can we hear than Epiphany's cry to us: "Arise, shine, your light has come"? No spiritual drowsiness, then, for us in our anniversary year.

Plus, Epiphany Sunday is fun because of the Three Kings party for the children in the undercroft during Coffee Hour. Do your best to attend this major festival of the church year.

## Thank you for Advent and Christmas

Besides all the beauty of choir and liturgy and Christmas decorations, we also had this beauty: the beauty of many worshipers for Christmas. For Christmas Eve we had 252 people and for Christmas Morning, 73.

It takes the labors of many people to enjoy such a good Advent and Christmas as we have year by year. Thank you to everyone!

## Fraternité Notre Dame Toy Collection and Sunday School Mitten Tree

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Christmas mitten tree and to the toy collection for the Fraternité Notre Dame. The toys were given to the Fraternité Notre Dame for their Christmas party for needy children held in the middle of December and the mittens will soon be distributed to needy children.

## A Small-Group Bible Study

On The Sermon on the Mount

Led by Irene Zimmer, starting 8 p.m. Wednesday evening, January 9, 2013

In the home of Irene Zimmer and Douglas Puffert

Irene has experienced and enjoyed small-group Bible Study in a home setting. Now she is offering to lead such a study in her home. Small groups are great! They strengthen community, provide mutual support, and encourage and inspire members in Christian discipleship.

Once you reach our church, you do not have far to go to get to Irene and Douglas's apartment. They are in the same building as our church office building, next door to the church.

This small group will follow the Serendipity Bible Study "The Sermon on the Mount: Examining Your Life." If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Parish Secretary Karen Rombey so that we can order the books.

Karen's church phone number is 212-289-8128, and her email is [krombey@juno.com](mailto:krombey@juno.com).

## Upcoming ARTEK Concert

Thursday, February 28 at 8:00 p.m.

Potpourri: Music for Guitar and Fortepiano

Hold the date! Another wonderful concert is heading our way on Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. See the February newsletter for more details.