

December The Contact

inspire renew empower

Incarnation Lutheran Church



South Carolina Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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Worship has Changed to One Sunday Service!

Starting Sunday, November 29th, we will have one Sunday Service at 10 a.m. This service will be live streamed on Facebook as well.

New Weekly Activities at Incarnation

Incarnation's sanctuary is open for a time for Self-directed Worship on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am to 1 pm. Wednesdays at noon, Incarnation will be hosting a short devotional Bible study. Bible study will be held over Zoom and the office will email out the link for the meeting each Wednesday morning.



Advent Evening Worship:

Evening Worship will be taking place at 6 pm on Wednesdays, December 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd.

These services will be live streamed on Facebook as well.

Highlights of the ILC Council Meeting November

- Council Meeting Agenda Approved
- Backyard Task Force – Initial brainstorm meeting held.
- Communications – Devine Night Out event Saturday, December 5, new office assistant Charlotte making great changes to website
- Stewardship – Mailing went out to renew pledge
- Worship/Music – Planning Advent evening worship. Christmas Eve service sign-up will start 1.5 weeks early to gauge interest and need for second service, proposed times 5pm (children) and 7pm (brass ensemble)
- Financial – Giving did not increase as expected for Fall with return to in-person services, but expenses also down. Assess what Stewardship letter promotes and continue to stress online giving.
- Pastor's Report – Welcomed a new member from PA. Conducted Confirmation meeting. Baptism held. No St. Nicholas service this year. Devine Night Out event to be expanded to include some St. Nicholas festivities.
- Funeral/Wedding policies – Rediscussed with some reservations on Wedding policy to be revisited. Funeral policy approved with language changed (re: social/organization-related ritual and with removal of officiant honorarium.)

November Annual Congregational Meeting

- Synod-recommended changes and updates to ILC's bylaws and constitution were approved.
- Ed Skinner, Jeff Shealy, and Cal Johnson were elected to ILC's council.
- Marc McKenna was elected to serve on the ILC Foundation Board
- The 2021 budget was amended and approved. The amendment increased the budget for worship and music by an amount of \$250.
- The building committee was recognized and thanked for their hard work in completing the sanctuary renovation.

Stewardship Committee

It is hard to believe that the end of the year is coming, and we are already planning for Christmas! We are also, thankfully, planning for 2021. We all hope and pray that a new year will bring us relief from the turbulence of 2020 and begin to move us forward toward a more “normal” year.

As we are planning our church ministries for 2021, be on the lookout for a letter in the mail containing your pledge package. This year we have included a narrative budget to help everyone easily see where their pledge dollars go. In addition to providing for worship services, your dollars also provide for ongoing study for faith formation, caring for our congregational members, and reaching out to the community.

Take a minute to look through it and see all of the good work our church family does and think about ways you can join in and support these ministries. You’ll also find a magnetic version of your pledge card that you can put on your refrigerator to remind you throughout the year of how you are supporting God’s work.

Please prayerfully consider your pledge and return your card by **December 6th**. You can drop it in the mail, bring it by the church office, place it in the offering box on Sunday or snap a picture and email it to financialsecretary@incarnationlutheran.com. However you return your card, please know that it is much appreciated and a critical part of our ongoing mission to continue God’s work within our congregation and community.

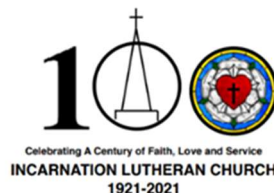
Debbie Shurr

Anniversary Committee

We have a logo for our 100th anniversary year!

You will become very familiar with it, as it will be used on many communications and items throughout the anniversary year. Our thanks go to designer Kim Yerrick and all others who submitted suggestions!

- **Put these dates on your calendar:** (and hope and pray the pandemic is under control by then)
 - **January 3, 2021: Covered Dish lunch**, on the day closest to the actual date of Incarnation’s organization on January 2, 1921. While this is our actual kickoff date, larger events follow later in the year.
 - **April 18, 2021: Homecoming**, a day filled with a catered meal, outdoor seating, and celebratory worship. Invite your friends, neighbors and former members!
 - **October 31, 2021: Reformation Sunday**, a day to wear red and celebrate the past century as we look forward to the next one!



Personnel Team

The Personnel Team has been hard at work behind the scenes!

We wanted to make sure that all areas of Personnel were reviewed, and adjustments or updates were made where needed.

Our first task was to update all our staff's job descriptions. This took some time and effort, but we are pleased to announce that all job descriptions have been completed.

Our next task was to hire a part time office assistant. We received more than 100 resumes. We went right to work and narrowed down the top applicants. We held the interviews in person at the church with proper social distancing and masks. A special thank you to Sarah Sawicki for volunteering to be on the interview committee.

We are very excited to have Charlotte Dover as a member of the Incarnation team! She comes to us with a wealth of experience and passion for her job. Please stop by and say hello.

The next items on the agenda are:

- Review of Employee files
- Employee Evaluations
- Review of Personnel Manual

We want to wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday!

Eugenie Parker, Ron Fulmer, Steve Graves, Susan McArver and Leslie Skinner

♥ HAPPY ♥
thanksgiving

Music Notes

One of the favorite hymns during the season of Advent is "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Dating from the Medieval era, the hymn can roughly be traced back to the twelfth century. According to scholars, it began as a series of Antiphons - short statements sung at the beginning of the Psalm or of the Magnificat at Vespers during the Advent season in the Roman Church. Starting the first week of Advent here at Incarnation Lutheran Church we will be singing (outside of the church) a different stanza of the hymn each week leading up to Christmas Eve.

Here is an outline of the meaning of these stanzas as written by Kenneth Osbeck:

Verse One - "Emmanuel" - Deliverer. God's people now separated from heaven are here compared to Israel, during its Babylonian exile, being separated from God's holy temple in Jerusalem.

Verse Two - "Lord of Might." This is addressed to Almighty Jehovah, the One who first gave the Law at Mount Sinai to the awesome accompaniment of lightning and thunder. (Exodus 19:16)

Verse Three - "rod of Jesse." This is a reference to Isaiah 11:1: "and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." This prophecy was perfectly fulfilled with the birth of Christ, who came from the kingly line of David, the son of Jesse.

Verse Four - "Day Spring." This address to the Messiah means literally "sun-rising." This prophetic reference was re-echoed by the priest Zacharias in these words upon hearing of Christ's birth: "The day-spring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." (Luke 1:78b, 79a).

Verse Five - "Thou Key of David." This expression is first recorded in Isaiah 22:22: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder." The well-known verse from Isaiah 9:6 also confirms this royal authority of Christ: "and the government shall be upon His shoulder..."

Yours,
Dr. Patrick Hawkins
Cantor and Organist



2020 Church Directory!

You read that right! The office is currently putting together a photo directory! We only need a few things from you!

- A current picture of you and your family! It does not have to be a professional picture, just make sure everyone in your household is included.
- We also need updated contact information, even if you recently gave updated information. We want all information to be up-to-date! Please include your family's primary address, preferred phone numbers for all adults in the household, and current email addresses for all adults.

Please send all information with pictures attached to Charlotte at:

office@incarnationlutheran.com

If you are a household with adult children, please forward this information to them so we can have their updated information and images as well!

A Note from Pastor Emily

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

As I write this reflection, the church bells are ringing outside of my window, marking the passing of yet another hour. Incarnation's bells are one of my favorite parts of life at this church. They are a constant reminder that time marches forward and that God has a plan for this next moment, too, no matter what it brings. This has certainly been a year when we have needed that reminder. Life has been upended, and everything looks a little strange right now. But the life of the church continues no matter what strange developments show up in the next hour or week, because God's work in this world does not stop even for a pandemic. Our scripture reminds us that there is a time for everything, and that this, too, will pass.

Our own church calendar reminds us of the essential work of God in the world, as it takes us through the life of Christ, and of the church, each year. And we are about to experience it again as we enter into the season of Advent, preparing our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ.

No matter how many times I experience it, this journey from the manger to the cross to the empty tomb never seems to get old. It is both familiar and new, comforting and challenging, each time. I suspect some of that familiarity and comfort is because we all live our lives in cycles. There are times of illness, and there are times of robust health. There are times of growth and learning, and times of senescence. There are periods of life that are overflowing with abundance and, in equal measure, times of drought and difficulty. There are irrepressible moments of joy and overwhelming times of grief. But through it all runs this thread of new life, even in the face of death. It is there that we find the challenge and the novelty.

We sum it up colloquially as, “when God shuts a door, God opens a window”. While this can seem a overly simple way to talk about the agency of God, it is certainly how many of us experience a life of faith. God never fails to use whatever it is that is going on in our lives to create moments of grace, opportunities for the gospel, and a chance at new life. Even in the midst of endings, God is doing a new thing and inviting us to participate.

During these four weeks of Advent, we are asked to confront and name the sin and need of the world in order to better understand the incarnation and our desperate need for an encounter with God. We are reminded of the power of the dark, and look forward with incredible expectation to God’s promise to dwell among us. We find hope, even in the midst of doubt, and we find joy, even in the midst of grief. And we are able to do this because we understand that no season lasts forever. God has promised new life, incarnation and resurrection, and we find our hope in that promise.

May God bless you this Advent,

Pastor Emily

Meet Our New Office Assistant!



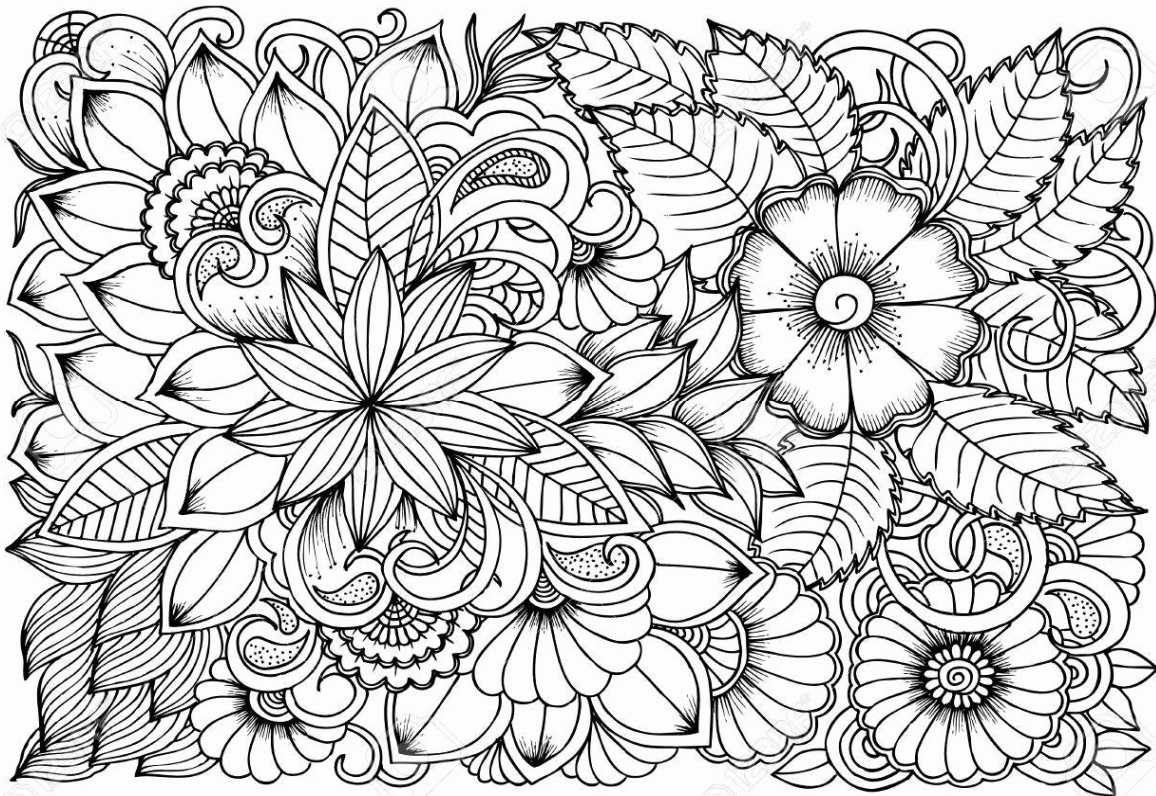
This past month we welcomed an addition to our church staff to fill the position of Office Assistant. Charlotte Dover grew up here in Columbia, South Carolina, and is a graduate of Midlands Technical College. She has a yellow lab named Ruby, and a deep and abiding love for BBQ. Charlotte brings an incredible organization and enthusiasm to our front office, and has already begun streamlining and improving our communications, including email, social media, and our website. Please make sure to stop by and welcome her to the Incarnation family. If you’re not able to come in person, drop her an email with your picture so that she can begin putting faces to names.

Faith Formation

Happy New Year! You might be thinking, “Savannah it’s too early for all of that!” But it isn’t too early, the first Sunday of Advent kicks off a new church year! November 29th is the First Sunday of Advent and that means the church is now in Lectionary Year B! Most of our readings will be from the Gospel of Mark and we will start over with Advent, Epiphany and so on.

We are bringing 2020 to a close but that means end of semester stressors are starting. As we wind down the year, we have exams, papers, and grades waiting for us before Christmas break. It can be a stressful time of year but it is important to remember tips and tricks to decrease stress. One of the most important things we can do to cut back on stress is to take a few minutes to exercise. Take a quick walk around your neighborhood or have a dance break and shake the stress away. One of my go to ways to destress is to make a cup of Green tea, without caffeine, of course. Consuming caffeine can increase stress and can negatively affect your ability to focus. During late night study sessions, it can be helpful to light a candle and take a moment or two to catch your breath: count to ten, change subjects when studying, or play with a family pet. Finally, it can be helpful to find an activity that doesn’t require a whole lot of thinking: color a picture, clean up your study space, or even work a crossword puzzle.

With all these tips and more, the end of the semester will be a breeze. You can use the Adult coloring sheet below or download Adult Coloring Book from the App Store or Google Play.



DIY Advent Wreath

Advent is the season of the Church year where we as Christians celebrate and get ready for the birth of Jesus! Things are a little different this year and you might not feel ready for Christmas, but that is why we have Advent. There are four Sundays in Advent and they are spent getting ready for Jesus' birth. So even if you don't feel ready now, you will soon!

One way the church gets ready for Christmas is by lighting an Advent Wreath. An Advent Wreath is a symbol you can touch that helps you walk through the four weeks of Advent and get ready for Christmas. The Advent wreath usually has greenery around the base and has five candles: four around the wreath and one in the middle. Each candle represents something too.

On the first Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Hope, this candle reminds us that hope is a light shining in a dark place. On the Second Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Peace and on the Third Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Love. On our final week of Advent, we light the Candle of Joy. The fifth Candle in the middle represents the birth of Christ so we light it on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

This year I want you all to make an Advent Wreath at home so we can walk through Advent together even though we are apart.

Step 1: Go out into your yard and find greenery or leaves to make the bottom of your Advent Wreath. This is a great way to remember the beautiful creation that God has given us.

Step 2: With the help of an Adult, find five candles and set them up on each corner of your wreath. Then set the final one in the middle. As we walk through the four weeks of Advent, we will light a candle each Sunday.

It's as easy as that. They don't have to be fancy, just need to help us get ready for Jesus' birth. We will all be celebrating Advent together, even though we are apart. Also, keep an eye out during worship on Sundays and see if you can see where the Advent Wreath is.



CDC

Wishing you the joy, miracle and magic of this holiday season.

~ The children, families, and staff of Incarnation Lutheran Child Development Centers



Upcoming Events in December



Advent Evening Worship:

Evening Worship will be taking place on Wednesdays, December 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd at 6 pm. In addition, these services will be live streamed on Facebook.

Christmas Eve Schedule:

Christmas Eve Services on Thursday, December 24th:

5 pm: Festival Service with Holy Communion. In addition, this service will be live streamed on Facebook.

7pm: Service with Holy Communion

We will again ask you to sign up for worship. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding!

Palmetto Chamber Orchestra Concert:

Sunday, December 13th at 4 pm on Facebook Live. We will share this to the ILC Facebook page.

December is Pledge Month:

Please remember to turn in your pledge cards!

Devine Day Out:

Join Us for a Devine Day Out on Saturday, December 5th in partnership with the Devine Street Association. We will have a static display honoring St. Nicholas as well as a great photo opportunity!

We will be celebrating from 10 am – 3 pm!



Drive-Through Nativity Scene:

Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church is holding a Drive-Through Nativity Scene on Sunday, December 6th from 5 pm – 7 pm!



Location:

1000 B Avenue, West Columbia, SC 29169

Like and Follow us on Facebook and **Subscribe** to us on Youtube!

 Incarnation Lutheran Church

 Incarnation Lutheran Church Columbia, SC

Lutheran Church of the Incarnation

3005 Devine Street, Columbia, SC 29205

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Our Ministry Staff contacts are:

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