



**Welcome to ReFresh at Emmanuel
(Restoring Energy, Faith, and Relevance to Every Soul's Heart)
December 14, 2025**

Welcome to ReFresh at Emmanuel

Welcome Visitors! We extend a special welcome to our visitors. Thank you for worshiping with us. We strive to live as a Safe and Healing Spiritual Community for all who come, regardless of socio-economic status, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or spiritual path. All are welcome in this holy space.

We invite you to worship with us on Sundays at our 9:00 am Calvary/Emmanuel Traditional Worship Service in the chapel or our ReFresh 10:30 am Service either in person or on ZOOM. The Recorded Service is available on Facebook after the service.

To gather online by computer, tablet, or smartphone, use the following link.

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/82726742888?pwd=WFEwOVBXZGd3OHFzSXQ1WXIVTHppZz09>

Don't forget to sign the greeting cards for our Emmanuel Family Members.

The cards are on the table in front of the Celebration Room.

Bible Study on Wednesdays at Noon on zoom.

By phone, Dial 312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 893 5688 8344

Wednesday Bible Study

People have asked if someone can join the Wednesday Bible Study (12 noon) on a phone instead of by computer. A person can join the Bible Study with a cell phone or land line. To join by a land line or cell phone, dial the number below and then enter the meeting id and passcode when prompted. +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 893 5688 8344 Passcode: 11999

Assisting in Worship Today

Presider: Pastor Frank Langholf

Lectors: Cathy Ritts, Erik Knaus

Candle Lighters: Cathy Ritts, Erik Knaus

Special Musicians: Austins and Wilsons

Accompanist: Clea Arbogast

Altar Guild: Marcia Terrill, Taj Guzzardo

Consultant: Bill Houtkamp

Sound: Andrew Ehrhardt

Greeting Cards: Taj Guzzardo

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 920 Third Avenue, Rockford, IL 61104

Mailing address, P. O. Box 4362, Rockford, IL 61110

815-963-4815 Fax: 815-963-4808 emmanuelchurch07@gmail.com elcrockford.org

Pastor Frank Langholf, phone 309-509-5241, email: fslangholf@gmail.com

Date: December 14, 2025

Theme: Third Sunday in Advent: Christ Comes to the Least of These

Prelude: Here I Am, Lord. (ELW 574)
led by Austins and Wilsons

Welcome: Pastor Frank Langholf

Meditation: "Whenever I meet someone in need, it's really Jesus in his most distressing disguise." —Mother Teresa

Our Community Declaration:

**Guided by Spirit's Wisdom, Inspired by Creator's Imagination,
Centered in Christ's Love, and knowing that God is our Source,
Emmanuel is a Spiritual Community that is progressive, inclusive, creative, and
called to serve.**

Advent Song: Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (ELW 240), verses 1- 3



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Advent Candle Reading and Lighting

Third Advent Candle —

Beautiful mother of creation, you who imbue every facet of this universe with the spark of all being, teach us to find joy.

Help us to open our hearts wide enough to let in the wonder of miracles, the anguish of suffering, the blessings of compassion, the beauty of Truth.

Help us to know that our hearts and our fists are of the same size, that the work of our hands must always be guided by the love of our hearts, to not only speak truth in the halls of power, but to sing out for the joy of change and of justice.

In the true belief that someday this world can become a Beloved Community that holds us all in care, we light this candle of Joy.

Amen.

(Light two purple candles and one pink candle.)

Gathering Song: O Come, O Come Emmanuel (ELW 257) verse 3

**O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law in cloud and majesty, and awe.**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

First Reading—Mother Teresa

"I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus"...

It is so beautiful for us to become holy to this love, for holiness is not a luxury of the few, it is a simple duty for each one of us, and through this love we can become holy.—

Liturgical dance—Grace Czchowicz and Maggie Arango

Scripture/Meditation Song: Come Now, O Prince of Peace (ELW 247) verse 3

O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm
1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.

u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Scripture: Matthew 25: 34-40 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

Presider: This is the witness of an early Christian community.

All: May we find wisdom for our living.

Offering Presider: We take this time now to offer our gifts and intentions.

Special Music: "Wandering Shepherd" by Dan Fogelberg -Austins and Wilsons

Time for Gratitude

Prayer Song and Response: Unexpected and Mysterious (ELW 258) verse 1

1 Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - te - rious is the gen - tle
2 In a mo - men - tar - y meet - ing of e - ter - ni -
3 We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the

word of grace. Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain -
ty and time, Mar - y learned that she would car -
com - ing Christ, to em - bod - y God's com - pas -

ing is the peace of God's em - brace. If we fal - ter
ry both the mor - tal and di - vine. Then she learned of
sion for each frag - ile hu - man life. God is with us

in our cour - age and we doubt what we have known, God is
God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy, and she
in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth, while we

faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.
ran to greet the wom - an who would rec - og - nize her boy.
watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

Prayers of the People

Pastor Frank, Allison, Jonathan, Julaine, Ray, Donna, Jim, Susan, David, Wanie, Bob

Ron, Norm, Jennie, Judy, Shannon, Mike, Matthew, Tom, Sophie, Vince, Todd, Bina, Deborah, Jeff, Peg, Karen & Jerry, Mary Jo, Dr. Abu, Emi, Isaiah, Manny, Leeza, Louis, Barbie, Janine, Mike, Wade, Cindy, Billy, Denise

The Lord's Prayer —from the Ecumenical Order of Charity

**Abba of us all, you dwell in all places, yet make our hearts your home.
Precious and sacred is your name. May your kinship more deeply bind us,
as we follow your ways as faithfully as those who already dwell in Light.
Provide us what we need for each day and forgive our failures as fully as we
forgive others theirs. Walk with us when we tread the paths of trial and be our
rescue from all that would lead us away from you; for you are our origin and
destiny dwelling in everlasting wonder and might. Amen.**

Announcements

Sending Song: "This Joy That I Have" by Shirley Caesar

This joy that I have

The world didn't give it to me

This joy that I have

This world didn't give it to me

This joy that I have

The world didn't give it to me

The world didn't give it

And the world can't take it away.

(Repeat & substitute Love for Joy, then Peace & then again Joy)

Benediction/Sharing of Peace

Special Notice: David Stocker will be leading a children's music program Sunday, December 21st during the 10:30am worship service in the Nursery. Anyone who would like to volunteer to assist is invited. Contact Pastor Frank at 309-509-5241, fslangholf@gmail.com

Emmanuel Food Pantry is in need of food for the holiday season.

Stuffing, turkey or chicken gravy, dry mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, canned yams, cream of mushroom soup, canned corn, canned pumpkin.

Place your donation in the cart outside of the Celebration Room.



Silent meditation practice in the Benson Room at Emmanuel.

Thursdays from 5:30 – 6:00pm – All are welcome.

Enter by parking lot entrance.

Questions or text Sara 815-742-0581.

Winnebago County Forest Preserves Interest Hikes

Come hike for an hour in Winnebago Counties Forest preserves. Text Holly if you want to join the hike: 815-543-1191. Meet at the Forest preserve entrances unless otherwise instructed. Link to Descriptions of all 44 Forest Preserves <https://www.winnebagoforest.org/items> All hikes begin at 10:00 a.m. This will be our last hike of this year.

We will change from J. Norman Jensen Forest Preserve originally scheduled. Instead we will hike at Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve again because it has a paved pathway!

Wednesday, December 17th @ 10:00am

Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve

5757 Blackhawk Rd, Rockford, IL 61109



Always remember you are braver
than you believe, stronger than you
seem, smarter than you think and
twice as beautiful as you'd ever
imagined. Yesterday I was clever, so I
wanted to change the world. Today I
am wise, so I am changing myself

RUMI'S WEDDING NIGHT

Wednesday, December 17th, 6:30 pm at Emmanuel

Rumi's Wedding Night is the night the world's greatest spiritual poet died at sunset, December 17, 1273. He called that night his "Wedding Night" with the "Beloved"! Rumi comes from the Muslim world (Turkey) yet became someone that brought religious traditions together. We are celebrating this for the 35th year here, and 752 years in the Eastern world.

You may memorize a short Rumi poem and share it with us, along with Zikhr meditation (chant with body movement), music, and a sacred walk/chant. Bring a drum/percussion if you like, to join in rhythms between poetry, and chant. This is a joyous and mystical night, especially in the magic of this Cathedral. Emmanuel is 3rd Ave. and 6th St. Come in from the north parking lot entrance. Try to be here by 6:30pm. There is no cost. David Stocker and I (and Frank) will have just had surgery..."So come, come, whoever you are, worshipper, wanderer, lover of leaving". Come... with your walker, crutches, casts, splints, and slings and join us. Questions...Jim Roberts (779-537-0328)

"Jars of spring water are not enough anymore,
take us down to the river!"

" Because the One I love lives inside of you,
I lean as close to you as I can!" --Rumi

2026 Offering Envelopes

Please remember to pick up your 2026 Offering Envelopes. They are available on the buffet in the hallway as you leave the north entrance.

Happening at Emmanuel

Yoga With Claudette Pirrello, Mondays at 5:00 pm

Cardio Drumming With Beth Campisi Mondays at Emmanuel, 4:00 – 5:00pm

Spiritual Journeys on Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 am on Zoom

Belly Dancing Session Wednesday, December 17 at Emmanuel

No previous dance experience required and great for all fitness levels.

Register with Emily Rice 773-456-1245 - Cost: \$10/class

Silent meditation practice in the Benson Room at Emmanuel.

Thursdays from 5:30 – 6:00pm – All are welcome.

Bible Study on Wednesdays at Noon on zoom.

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YULE WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION
Friday, December 19, 6:30-8:30pm at Emmanuel

Join us for a Yule Celebration that is an inclusive, inter-faith event that embraces a blend of solstice traditions. Engage in a yule log ceremony, sing some carols, paint candles and make wassail kits, and finish with a festive snack spread. We'll spend some time outside and some time inside, so dress for the weather!

Folks of all spiritual paths are welcome to attend and we are happy to answer any questions you may have in advance.

Attendees are welcome to bring a festive dessert or snack to share if you are able. Recommended donation is \$10 a person, although monetary donations and potluck items are not an expectation and should not restrict people from participating. Donations will go toward supporting future Wheel of the Year celebrations! Emmanuel is currently facing financial hardships due to unanticipated building maintenance costs, so all donations are appreciated.



THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATIONS

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church
920 Third Avenue, Rockford, IL**

**5:00pm Candlelight Family Christmas Eve. Service
Calvary Choir
Christmas Eve Message: Pastor Chuck Olson**

**Dec. 24: 10:30pm Christmas Concert
11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Christmas Eve Message: Pastor Frank Langholf**

**Music by Special Vocalists and Musicians, Emmanuel Choir, Piano/Organ
Accompaniment: Clea Arbogast**

Thursday, Dec. 25: MERRY CHRISTMAS

**Sunday, Dec. 28: 10:00am Calvary/Emmanuel
Service of Lessons and Carols
Organist: Mark Calvert**