



Looking Forward

We are looking forward to a great Advent and New Year here at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. Advent is the season of expectation. The expectation is focused: what God has done through his people in the past he is still doing and will do it in ways that will shock and surprise us all! God saves his people once again but at Advent we celebrate that he is doing it in a brand-new way, that we could never have imagined. God sends his Son, Jesus, to save the world. God's deliverance is not done, and this is Good News. I'm always reminded of John 3:17, "For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him!" Make sure you join us for the Choir Concert on December 10th and the Children's Choir on Sunday morning the 17th. This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday. We will have a Sunday morning service at 9 am. Then our Christmas Eve services will be at 4pm and 8pm. The 4pm service is a fun, interactive event for the whole family. You won't want to miss this! At 8pm we will have a more traditional service of Carols and Candlelight. Both will be wonderful events.

During this season, we are endeavoring to finish 2017 well so we can begin 2018 on strong financial

footing. This will allow us to focus on mission and ministry that will move us forward in our witness to the community and the world. We ask you to be generous at year-end. We also ask you to consider raising your support for the coming year so we can continue to staff and support the work God is raising up here at Emmanuel.



This last year we identified our code as a congregation. We are a people who are experiencing the grace of Jesus: Deeply Caring for others; Bridging Differences; and Moving Beyond Church. Our financial and staffing resources will be focused on living into these values more and more. We are a great congregation with a great history. Let's lean into it in 2018!

Looking forward,

Faithfully yours,

Craig

What Kind of Throne: A Christmas Musical of Wonder

Emmanuel Church will offer a fresh look at the story of a baby born 2,000 years ago in a manger when the Elation Arts Series presents "What Kind of Throne" this holiday season. The Christmas musical, written by Tony Wood and Michael Farren and arranged by Cliff Duren, will be presented on Sunday, December 10, at 5 p.m. in the sanctuary.

The musical extravaganza features choruses by the Christmas Choir and orchestra, along with handbells and guest artists Daniela Podobea and Siuzanna Iglidan on bandura. This musical narrative presents beautiful arrangements of some well-loved carols and seasonal anthems. Epic soundscapes, complex textures, scripture and poetic lyrics combine to inform and inspire in this special peek at that wondrous night so long ago.

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Newcomers: Meet Up with Emmanuel!

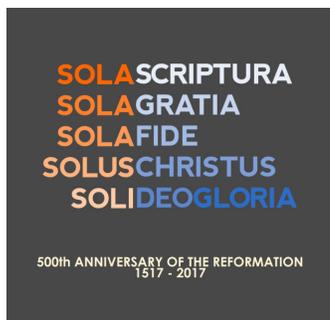
Are you a first-time visitor, a frequent attendee, or seeking a church to call "home"?

Sunday evening gatherings with our pastors and lay leaders provide opportunities to learn more about our church, our programs, and our vision for Emmanuel's "way forward." We share dinner and fellowship while answering questions you may have—about the Presbyterian denomination, worship traditions, Christian education, baptism, or mission and service outreach. There is time for

informal dialogue to help you get to know us as a church family.

Our next gathering is planned for Sunday, January 21 at 5 p.m. Make a note on the Sunday worship Connection Card that you'd like to attend. Online registration on the church website (emmanuelthousandoaks.org) begins the first week of January. Questions? Call elder Patti Yomantas at 805.469.5600. We look forward to getting to know you!

Senior Luncheon to Highlight 500th Protestant Reformation Anniversary - *Wednesday, January 17 - Noon*



Do you know the **Five Solas of the Reformation**? You are invited to come and hear the Rev. Kapp L. Johnson, an ELCA pastor and attorney with a joint appointment in the School of Management and Religion and professor at Cal Lutheran. Kapp has a B.S. (Economics), University of Wyoming M.S. (Theological Studies), Claremont School of Theology M.Div., Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary J.D., University of LaVerne College of Law Member, California Bar Association, International Leadership Association, Society of Business Ethics.

Come enjoy a great meal, fellowship, and refresh your thoughts regarding the Reformation! Bring a salad or hot dish to share and your own table service. Dessert and beverage will be provided.

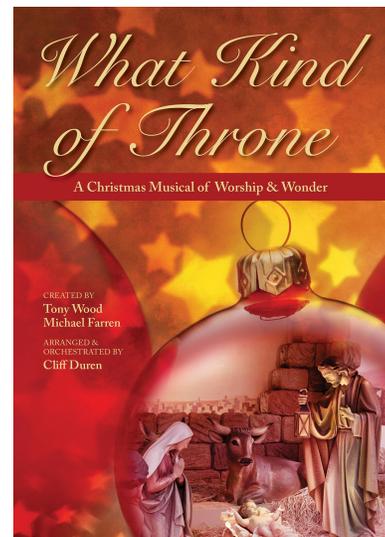
"What Kind of Throne", continued from Page 1

The narrative helps to set the mood. The audience can't help but feel the miracle of that night as the stage is set. *"It was a moment like none other in heaven. One night in history, one instant in time, God the Son, who existed always and forever in perfect communion with God the Father, was preparing to step from Heaven onto the earth below..."*

Guest artist Daniela Podobea, an operatic soprano, was born in Romania and grew up in a family of musicians, studying music since she was seven. Daniela moved to Los Angeles in 2009 to continue her career as an operatic singer. Siuzanna Iglidan is a mezzo-soprano, bandura player, pianist and composer from the Ukraine. Siuzanna has won more than 30 Ukrainian and International music competitions. In the United States, Siuzanna has performed in concerts, recorded and composed film music, and volunteered in fundraising events benefiting

orphans from the Ukraine.

The concert is free and open to the public. So, bring your friends and family to this glimpse at that precious moment in history 2,000 years ago. This holiday season may you stand in wonder of the one who came, pursuing us and offering himself to us so that we may live in Heaven with him and his Father for all eternity.



Claudine Schooley and Buddy Break

Three years ago, Claudine Schooley, along with Mark Chulack and Dan Pemberton, visited The Bridge to observe the Buddy Break program, which serves the parents and/or guardians of young children with disabilities and their siblings, with or without disabilities. Soon after, Claudine helped launch a branch of Buddy Break at Emmanuel for the first Saturday of each month, which has grown from hosting about six kids to hosting up to 18 VIPs (children with disabilities) and their siblings through a dedicated, multi-generational team of volunteers.

Claudine's passion helped establish the vibrant Buddy Break ministry at Emmanuel and has been key in keeping it growing. For the last three years, Claudine has personally welcomed in families with VIPs from throughout the greater Conejo Valley area and worked together with three other Buddy Break churches (Calvary, The Bridge and God Speak) so that these families would have respite care available each Saturday. She also

volunteered nearly every month for crafts, snacks for the volunteers, set-up, teardown and clean-up. Claudine has continually partnered with Emmanuel's staff to coordinate Buddy Break and its leadership to ensure a budget for the program, as well as being the local contact to Nathaniel's Hope, the organization that developed Buddy Break.

Claudine is moving to Ohio this month with her husband, Dave, and we wish them well! We are so appreciative of Claudine's vision and efforts for Buddy Break over the last three years. She will be missed by all who worked with her at Emmanuel, and the other churches and organizations that she helped and inspired in her role with Buddy Break.



Upcoming Youth Activities

The fall is always a slow season for the Youth program. Students get back into the swing of things with their education and extracurricular activities, and none of the annual trips occur in the Fall. However, December marks the beginning of the annual events, and we kick them off with an Over-Nighter!

In the new year we will be going on all sorts of adventures. In February we go on two fantastic trips: Santa Barbara Mission Conference and Forest Home. These trips stretch us in great ways! The Mission Conference always challenges us to grow in love for our community and world, and helps us go down new avenues of thought in how the Christian worldview relates to new topics. At Forest Home, we get an interesting mix of service and retreat. We assist the kitchen staff and handle all of the programmatic elements ourselves. We spend time meditating and singing, as well as investing in one another through fellowship and fun.

Come April we will be visiting an orphanage in Mexico that cares for people with physical and mental disabilities. This trip will take place over Easter Break, and I cannot imagine a better way to spend Resurrection Sunday than then at this orphanage which is bursting with life.

Summer approaches quickly after, and both high



school and middle school head to Forest Home for trips of learning and fun.

Please be keeping the youth program in your prayers throughout the next season! Ask us how our events have been, or maybe you will even be with us there! Whether you are already going to the Mission Conference, or you are interested coming on a trip with us, let us know by contacting Jared! Jareddeldosso@gmail.com

Thank you for always investing in us and caring for us.

Love,
The Emmanuel Youth

Deacons' Corner: Giving the Gift of Love

Christmas is a joyful time of year, filled with laughter, music, parties and love. However, it can also be one of the loneliest times of the year for some. People who have no family, or can't get out to see their family and friends, or who may have lost hope due to life's circumstances may find this joyous season very difficult. So, please keep these folks in mind as you go through your day.

Send someone a card or an email letting them know you are thinking of them, or take them a poinsettia or a plate of homemade cookies, or just give them a call to say hi. For those who are unable to get out and about, having that human contact is so important. We all need to know we are not alone. Move "Beyond the Church" and reach out to someone you don't know

and offer a word of kindness, or show a stranger the beautiful heart God gave you—the one Jesus came to save.

Spreading God's love doesn't have to take a great effort, and it's the little things that count. If you know of someone in the Emmanuel community who needs help, please let a deacon or someone on staff know so we can reach out to help them. If God lays someone on your heart, take the time to reach out. You may just be the only Jesus they see, and what better season to reach out in love to our neighbors and friends than at Christmas time as we celebrate the birth of our Savior?

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to our Emmanuel Family from the Deacons.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 12/9 Parents Day Out
10am-2pm, Nursery
- 12/10 Christmas Musical
"What Kind of Throne"
5pm, Sanctuary
- 12/20 Senior Luncheon Cancelled
Join us on January 17
- 12/24 9am Sunday Worship Service
4pm Family Eve Service
8pm Lesson & Carols Service
- 12/25 Merry Christmas!

January

- 1/1 Happy New Year!
- 1/6 Buddy Break, EPC Campus
9am arrival for volunteers
10am-1pm, Kids Here
- 1/7 Installation Service for
Pastor Craig Williams
4pm, Sanctuary
- 1/17 Senior Potluck Luncheon
12 Noon, Fireside Room

Kids Sewing for Others

Our Sunday morning sewing class met in the fall each week from the end of September through October during the 9 am service. Led by Sara Sinclair and her team, nine kids from kindergarten through middle school sewed a number of very cute bags. Then the kids approached others to talk about caring for people who have been impacted by the hurricanes and offer the bags they made as a fundraiser. In all \$54 was donated to the Presbyterian Relief Fund. The kids also made four dresses to send to the organization Little Dresses for Africa.

Our next sewing class will focus on a project for the disability orphanage in Mexico that our youth will be going to over Spring Break. The ongoing goal of our sewing classes is to teach and equip the children of our church to care for others in practical ways. If you would like to take part in our next project, contact Debbie at dbarber@epconline.org.

Advent Prayer Stations

The narthex has been transformed into an Advent Prayer Room. Stop by anytime to take part in the various prayer activities (just follow the written instructions at each station) and discover some different ways of praying and participating in worship together. The prayer room will be open each Sunday during Advent and during the week whenever the office is open.



Groups Meeting at EPC

- Women's Bible Study
Wednesdays at 10am, Room 6
- Men's Bible Study
Fridays at 6:30am, Room 18
- MOPS & Mom's Next - Mother's of Preschoolers & Elementary age,
2nd & 4th Wednesdays
- MOTS - *Moms of Teens & Beyond*,
1st & 3rd Wednesdays
12pm Rm 18
- ROMEOS - (Retired older men eating out), Thursdays 8am at the Newbury Park Denny's
Wendy Off Ramp from 101 Fwy



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