

Vision Report

A news update from Immanuel Church

16 December 2007

God with us

The prophet Isaiah foresaw that Jesus would be Immanuel, which means "God with us." It was predicted in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled in Matthew 1:23. Tying the two testaments of the Bible together is this great truth. **God**, for all that he is, is with us. He is not far away but **with us**. He is not with me or you alone but with **us**. God with us – because of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

No one has to fight the battles of life alone. God is the best ally in the universe, ready to go into battle with anyone who will rely on him. **This is our story.** Let's believe it, live it, spread it!

Special Events

miles west of downtown Franklin. Call Ray and Jani

Ortlund at 591-3378 for further details. All invited!

Sunday, December 23, 6:00
Christmas worship. Todd

MacDonald leading our music, Ray preaching on Matthew 11:18-25 and "Immanuel."

Sunday, 30 December 6:00
Special year-end service with communion. Come prepared to share: "How I have seen Jesus in someone else here at Immanuel during 2007." The Bible

says, "Outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10).

Saturday, 5 January, 9:00-11:00

Special new year prayer event, with worship, prayer and encouragement as we build our ministry in this first great year.

Sunday, 6 January, 5:00-7:00

Come at 5:00 sharp for the first installment in a course on church membership and leadership. This will be a weekly event preparing us for formal membership and the election of officers in Spring 2008. Then at 6:00 we will worship, with a new sermon series on The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

"Christ in you"

This past year I have seen Christ in you. How? Tenderhearted prayers, costly personal courage, glad and radiant faces, hilarious laughter and fun, loving trust in one another, the wisdom and patience to wait on God, the boldness to begin anew in the power of the Lord. The great people I've known through the years always stayed focused on these basics, and those are the people who've made an impact on me. You are making an impact on me. I am glad to be your pastor. Thank you for the privilege of caring for you – and seeing Christ in you!

Ray Ortlund



This Sunday, 16 December, 3:00-5:00 Church Christmas party at the Westhaven Residents' Club. Come ready to enjoy one another, sing carols, hear a devotional and exchange gag gifts. Bring your best Christmas cookies or snack. Just off Highway 96, three

STEERING COMMITTEE



John Anderson, Melinda Perry, Carrie Marshall, C.A. Stilwell, Ray Ortlund (Bob Alley not pictured)

The Steering Committee assimilated all the information gathered from the previous months and unanimously recommended that we form a new church. Thanks to the committee for their work for Christ!

How to pray this week...

* *That God will display his glory through our new church name.*

* *That year-end gifts will boost our ministry start*

* *That the sermon series on The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), beginning in the new year, will attract many to Christ and to this church.*



Sara Benedict Ayanama, Jani Ortlund, Paulette Culpepper, Marion Alley at the first church worship service, December 2, 2007

Six ways to build, maintain and repair relationships

1. We rejoice in one another, because the Lord rejoices in us.

Psalm 16:3 sets the right tone: "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." There is so much to admire in every Christian. When this positive energy fills a church, the church thrives.

2. We create an environment of trust rather than scrutiny.

1 Corinthians 4:5 says, "Do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart." Human eyes are not competent to judge human hearts.

3. We judge ourselves, even as we give each other a lot of slack.

Matthew 7:5 says, "First take the log out of your own eye." And 1 Peter

4:8, "Love covers a multitude of sins."

4. If there is a problem that must be addressed, we talk *to*, not *about*.

Matthew 18:15 says, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone."

5. We do not make blanket statements but identify specific actions and offer a positive path forward, opening up dialogue.

"You are _____" or "You do _____" is too categorical. Better to say, "In this situation you said/didn't say/did/didn't do _____. It would be helpful to me if, in the future, you would do/say _____. What do you think?"

6. We extend kindness.

Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be kind to one another." The word "kind" is used in Matthew 11:30 when the Lord says, "My yoke is easy." Kindness asks, "How can I make this situation as easy for the other person as possible? How can I avoid embarrassing this person, putting this person on the spot, cornering this person? How can I make a positive response as easy as it can be?"

Did you know . . . ?

When Luke tells us about the birth of Jesus, he says that "a multitude of the heavenly host" (Luke 2:13) appeared to the shepherds. Did you know that the word translated "host" can also be translated "army"? (We get our word "strategic" from this Greek word.) So what was it that invaded the world of those shepherds? The angelic *army* of heaven. And what was their battle cry? "On earth *peace!*" God's invading army did not declare war; they declared peace – the only peace this world will ever know.

"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17).

This is a conquest anyone can welcome. Those who do are liberated. Those who oppose remain under enemy occupation.

Ray has a new blog.



The invitation is open. Let's have constant conversation about the things that matter most.

Go to: <http://christisdeeperstill.blogspot.com/>