



Immanuel
BAPTIST CHURCH
Frankfort, KY

CONNECTIONS

To Experience & Express God's Unconditional Love

Volume 4, No. 11 - December 2025 and January 2026

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Our Vision

To experience and express God's unconditional love.

Our Kingdom Mission

To live like Jesus Christ by unconditionally loving all people, compassionately serving God's world, openly discussing issues of faith, and intentionally inviting others to grow with us as followers of Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Being Rooted at Immanuel

One of the most unexpected benefits of attending the pilgrimage I went on in Switzerland in October was the ability to participate in a one-on-one chaplaincy session with a chaplain I have admired for the last decade. At this event, a chaplaincy session was basically a cross between coaching and therapy. We were told at the beginning of the pilgrimage to consider a question or life conundrum to discuss with the chaplain, who would help us parse out the issue and lead participants to discover new ways of thinking about or engaging with that particular topic in their lives.

Well, even though we were assigned ahead of time to bring a question to our chaplaincy session – and even though I signed up for a time on the second-to-last day so that I would have plenty of time to come up with a question – I failed to arrive to my session with a question in tow. So, my chaplain, Vanessa, simply asked, “what has been occupying your thoughts lately?”

Without much hesitation, I said, “planting roots.”

After noting the irony of coming all the way to Switzerland to talk about my hope to “bloom where I am planted,” I told her that my thoughts were often occupied with a desire to settle in and truly make Frankfort a long-term home for myself and my family.

I’m sure some of you are reading this and thinking, “wait – you moved here two and a half years ago and you’re only now occupied with thoughts about settling in?” But you might also



remember that the first year or two we were here consisted of one change after another. And, even the places and positions that seem like the best fit at first could turn out to be like square pegs in round holes.

Nearly two and a half years later, Scott and I both have talked a lot about how we feel like our whole family is finding our place in Frankfort. Our house is feeling more like a home; Our kids are making friends and are happy in their schools; and Scott and I feel a sense of belonging in our work environments that is hard to manufacture just anywhere. For the first time in our married life, we are planted. We are not constantly asking each other what’s next or wondering what it would be like to be somewhere else.

“Ok,” Vanessa chimed in after I had rambled on for a while. “But what is keeping you from feeling like you can plant yourself as deeply as you would like and really start letting your roots spread?”

At that point, I had to admit that the biggest hindrance to my personal ability to settle in and plant roots was my fear that our church was letting anxiety around an aging population keep us from embracing the steps we need to take in order to see a new, more vibrant future take shape.

Continued on Page 15

Zambia – Field of Hope Update



Out on the Zambezi River in Zambia lies a small island community — a place many may have never seen or heard of, yet where countless lives quietly unfold each day. Mothers with young children and babies, fathers, the elderly, and the sick — these are people of resilience. Their spirit remains strong, but the weight of their need is heavy.

These are the people often overlooked, left behind, or forgotten. But not by us - These are our people. For years, we've stood alongside this community, offering support in the form of life's most basic needs - clean water, shelter, and food - the very things many of us are fortunate enough to never worry about.

For these families, the essentials are a daily struggle, not a guarantee. At the heart of their daily survival is Mealie Meal, the staple food of Zambia.

We are reaching out today with a simple yet powerful request: help us provide Mealie Meal to those who need it most. Whether it's one bag or ten, every contribution makes a real difference. Because for someone out there, that single bag means warmth in their belly, strength in their body, and hope in their heart. But it's not just about feeding the body - we must also feed the mind.

Out on the island, there is a nursery school laying the foundation for the education of young minds.

Here is a picture of the nursery school children. Their bright faces are full of potential - but they are in urgent need of basic school supplies: books, pencils, school bags, and other essentials. These young ones are eager to learn, to grow, and to dream.

With your help, we can ensure their education doesn't end before it even begins.

"To be poor is a curse in this country. I pray for God to come down and save us. We don't need politicians but the mighty Lord. Enough is enough. We are poor but we are also human." - This is the cry of an African woman living in extreme poverty.



Let us not forget the forgotten.

Partners in Development

Gratitude from Partners in Development



Dear Immanuel Baptist:

Partners In Development (PID) is extremely honored to receive your contribution for Mama's Turner's Library and student aid.

Your donation will benefit many desperately poor people in Africa. The people we help have no voice, no one to advocate on their behalf, and receive little or no assistance from wealthier non-profit, non-governmental organizations.

Sincerely,

Greg Toulson, Treasurer

Lydia Greear Baptist Mission Women

On Monday, November 3 at 6 p.m., Jennifer True guided the Baptist Mission Women through a little clean up and organizational session with some of the unused Sunday School rooms. Snacks were provided and the ladies really did a lot of great work. Thank you so much to everyone involved!



Monday, January 5 at 6 p.m., will be the next Baptist Mission Women monthly meeting. Save the date for this time of fellowship and service. More information to come!



MONTHLY MEETING

LYDIA GREEAR BAPTIST MISSION WOMEN

Monday, January 5
6 p.m., at Immanuel Baptist Church

One of Us Donation Collection

DONATIONS NEEDED

- Vienna sausage, chips, protein bars, snack cakes
- New or used coats, scarves, hats, gloves

More than 50 lunch bags are delivered by One-Of-Us, Inc. to unhoused people in Frankfort every day.

LEAVE ITEMS IN FELLOWSHIP HALL BY 12/31

On Wednesday, November 12, we heard from Pastor Don Jackson, Executive Director of One of Us, Inc., an organization that serves unhoused people in and around Frankfort. As a result of his presentation, our group was inspired to collect donations for One of Us in order for them to provide a month's worth of meal boxes to the people they serve.

Please bring vienna sausages, chips, protein bars, snack cakes, new or used coats, scarves, hats, and gloves to the Fellowship Hall by December 31.

One of Us delivers more than 50 lunch bags to unhoused people in Frankfort every day. So, no amount of these food items will be too much!

Infant Resource Center Update

IBC Friends,

Thank you so much for your enthusiasm for the IRC Angel Tree! We had 27 ornaments taken from the tree, leaving only 4 others for me to shop for. I am planning to spend \$50 on each child. If you took an ornament, please tape it to the outside of the wrapped gift and return it to the Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall by Sunday, December 14. I will also be including a gas card for the parents. It's going to be fun!!

Our diaper ministry has grown for two reasons: 1) the Simon House women's shelter closed and it once provided diapers to the poor and 2) the Diaper Days we sponsored at IBC during the summer of 2024 increased our popularity for this necessity. The Simon House was replaced by Fresh Start, a program for women in recovery. We have recently helped women with young children in that program.



The IRC served 80-100 families at ImmanuelFest in September. This event gets better every year!

Thank you for your faithfulness to these families.

Gena Woestman

PRAYER AND CARE

Deacon of the Week



Week of
December 7
Tabitha Martin
270-589-2498

tabbyshaye@hotmail.com



Week of
December 14
Steve Dooley
502-226-0973
bubdooley51@yahoo.com



Week of
December 21
Rhonda Smith
502-319-3038
rhindagsmith@gmail.com

Week of
December 28
Carol O'Connell
502-545-3920
caornc@gmail.com



Week of
January 4
Sherron Jackson
502-229-7019
sdcjjack@aol.com



Week of
January 11
Jennifer True
502-226-8123
gjtrue81@gmail.com



Week of
January 18
Wyyette Williams
502-330-1326
williamswyyette@gmail.com



Week of
January 25
Joni Crowe
502-229-0624
jbelly12345@yahoo.com

The Deacon of the Week is here to support you with any ministry needs or to respond to any prayer concerns. Please feel free to reach out to them any time during the week of their service!

Prayer List

- Norma Barnes
- Roger Crittenden
- Glenn Ison
- Gary Lawson
- Janet Lewis

- Scarlett Moore
- Glenn Murphy
- Ernie Murphy
- Rhonda Smith

Noland Williams and Family

- Susan Wolfe
- Joyce Wood

For a completely updated list of prayer requests with addresses, visit <http://ibcfrankfort.com/prayers>

DISCIPLESHIP

Sunday School Classrooms Moving

Two of our adult Sunday School classrooms are moving to the hallway behind the sanctuary.

In order to make room for a Godly Play classroom for the children (see page 5 for more information about Godly Play), the Koinonia Class has moved to Room 134, at the end of the Adult Sunday School hallway.

At the beginning of 2026, the Adult II and IV combined class will move to Room 132. This will allow all our adult Sunday School classes to be on the same hall and make space more intimate for conversation.

If you've been interested in joining one of our Sunday School classes, now is the perfect time to check them out! There's a seat for you!



WOMEN'S RETREAT

Save the Date and Pre-register Now For Women's Retreat

All women are invited to attend the Women's Retreat to Paducah to see theologian, author, and podcaster Kate Bowler speak at Immanuel Baptist Church Paducah. More detailed information to come, but the loose schedule is:

- Leave Friday morning - lunch either on the way or upon arrival
- Visit the Quilt Museum
- Check into hotel and rest or roam
- Reservations for Dinner at Freight House (owned by Top Chef Contestant, Sarah Bradley)
- Event on Saturday morning - ends at 12:30 p.m.
- Lunch in Paducah
- Back home before dark

The event cost is:

- \$225 for private room
- \$150 for shared room (two people, two beds)

Cost includes hotel room, event registration, and quilt museum fees. Breakfast Saturday morning is included with the event. Attendees will be responsible for lunch Friday, dinner Friday, and lunch Saturday, as well as any souvenirs purchased in Paducah. Scholarships are

available for those who would like to attend, but cannot afford the full amount, so please do not let finances stop you if you are interested in attending!

A \$25 deposit is due upon registration in order to secure a spot. The final balance is due by February 15. You can register in the church office or online.

Please invite friends!



CHILDREN'S DISCIPLESHIP

Godly Play Coming to Immanuel!



Thanks to the generous support of Godly Play Trainer and former Minister of Spiritual Formation at First Baptist Church on St. Clair, Cynthia Williams Insko, IBC is instituting the

Godly Play Curriculum as the primary Sunday School material for preschool and elementary school children in 2026. Cynthia helped us to acquire most of the needed supplies (a \$5,000+ value) and has provided trainings to Sam to be able to lead Godly Play lessons.

The Godly Play Foundation describes Godly Play in this way:

Godly Play is a creative, imaginative approach to Christian formation and spiritual guidance.

Godly Play has a Montessori foundation, with 40+ years of research and practice.

Godly Play values process, openness, discovery, community and

relationships.

Godly Play models the worship life, stories, symbols and rituals of Christian congregations.

Godly Play allows practitioners to make relevant and personal theological meaning.

Godly Play nurtures participants to larger dimensions of belief and faith through wondering and play.

On Sunday, December 14, Sam will be leading the children and church in a Godly Play lesson in lieu of the sermon so that we can all experience the wonder of this amazing spiritual practice that will be such an amazing addition to our children's spiritual formation.

Wednesday Night Dinner Recap: Homelessness in Frankfort

Our Wednesday Night Dinners and programs in October and November provided a wonderful time of fellowship, listening, and learning. We committed ourselves to learning about the unhoused community in Frankfort and hearing from people throughout the city and county who work with those who are living without homes in our community. Some of our guests have been partners with Immanuel Baptist Church in ministry for many years, while others have provided new connections and insights that will help us to be more actively involved in serving the community around us.

Our hope was that these meetings would help us to be better able to fill in gaps in service to the unhoused community in Frankfort and end the series with both long and short term ideas for transformative ministries we can engage in. We know that not everyone was able to join us for the meals and programs, so we wanted to share some recaps from the meetings to help inspire more Immanuelites to get involved!

Night One: Wednesday, October 15 **Understanding Homelessness - A Simulation Experience, Led by Sara Early Jenkins**

During the first week, we discussed poverty, housing insecurity, and homelessness. We learned from statistics related to Franklin County specifically and Kentucky more generally.

After establishing a baseline understanding of the topic, we split into small groups and did a short simulation where each group embodied a different unhoused person and talked over barriers and opportunities to help. We took the opportunity to list what's available in Frankfort, what is missing, and what services or resources would be most helpful.

More detailed information from this presentation is included in the post on the church website.

Night Two: Wednesday, October 22 **Community Policing Advocates, Shelley Hearn and Tricia Hamilton**

On the second night of our Wednesday Night series, Frankfort Police Department Community Policing Advocates, Shelley Hearn and Tricia Hamilton, joined us. They discussed their extensive roles in the community and how they connect folks in need to community helpers. They highlighted specific programs in Frankfort, like the Situation Table, the Angel Program, and more.

The position that Hearn and Hamilton fill provides an innovative way of resourcing the community and

helping to meet needs before they become crises. Those in attendance at this gathering left feeling assured that this model in Frankfort would be an example for many other cities and police departments.

Hearn and Hamilton left us with some specific ways we could be involved, such as an electronics drive, adding our name to the community resource guide they are compiling, and sharing our events with them. We have already done these things and will continue to engage with them more.

After their visit, the Missions Team also committed to donate up to \$500 a month (as needed) until March for people who needed a hotel room. In March, they will evaluate this partnership and determine if it is a service we can continue providing beyond the original six month commitment.

Week Three: Wednesday, October 29 **Fresh Start Frankfort Executive Director, Ashley N. Browning**



Imagine this.

You've completed treatment. You've left a relationship, a courtroom, a shelter—or simply hit rock bottom. What you need now is safety. Stability. A second chance.

At Fresh Start Frankfort, we provide more than housing—we create space for recovery, reconnection, and renewal. Whether you arrive alone, with your children, or with only a dream of something better, we walk with you toward lasting independence.

Fresh Start Frankfort is a non-profit that provides residential and recovery services to those in the community who are attempting to free themselves from addiction or other struggles. Many people in these circumstances do not have a safe place to go to build the skills necessary to rehabilitate their lives and avoid recidivism.



Wednesday Night Dinner Recap Cont.

Week Three Cont.

Ashley Browning gave us a picture of the ways that Fresh Start seeks to serve members of the unhoused community in recovery. Those present were surprised to hear that Fresh Start's primary demographic is white women aged 55+. The higher age is, in part, because people have to meet certain sobriety standards in order to be placed in the Fresh Start Housing. For the health and safety of all in the houses, residents must pass regular drug and alcohol screenings. They also only have room in their housing for up to two families with children.

More information related to Fresh Start Frankfort is available at www.freshstartfrankfort.org.

Week Four: Wednesday, November 5 Together for Hope Appalachia Regional Vice President, Keith Stillwell



Together for Hope (TFH) is a ministry originally founded by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in order to address systemic poverty in the 20 poorest counties in the United States. Now, TFH has expanded its mission to serve counties across America dealing with persistent poverty

(defined as counties with more than 20% of people in the county living below the poverty line for 30 years or more). Of the 338 counties in the United States classified as living in persistent poverty, 42 are in Kentucky alone.

Keith Stillwell shared that TFH's primary role is to resource and equip people in the counties with tools for sustainable solutions to escape persistent poverty through a process of asset based community development. Rather than recreating services that are already available, TFH helps make connections between the communities and organizations or people that can offer support.

Stillwell listed off a number of different organizations that are doing the type of work that could be models for us or that we could support in some way. Examples of these organizations were: New Opportunity School for Women (Berea), Appalachian Immersion Experience, and White Flag Ministry (Corbin). He also recommended the book, *Poverty by America* by Matthew Desmond.

Week Five: Wednesday, November 12 One of Us Inc. Founder, Pastor Don Jackson



One of Us is a Christian non-profit in Frankfort whose mission is to give back to the community by helping meet basic and immediate needs. Since May, they have been renting a space next to Save-a-Lot on Versailles Road that Pastor Jackson has decorated and situated to become a safe space for people in the community to meditate, receive counseling services, do laundry, and build community. Everyone who works for One of Us is a volunteer, including Jackson, who works nights and weekends remodeling and decorating homes to make money to run this ministry.

Pastor Jackson said he started One of Us, because he realized that people were afraid to enter the church's front door, so he said, "I'll bring the church to them." He inspired us with his dedication to prayer and asking himself, "am I doing what God is calling me to do?" His persistence in listening for God's voice has led him to serve many people in seemingly miraculous ways.

Learn more about One of Us at www.oneofusky.org.

Week Six: Wednesday, November 19 Recap and Brainstorming Session led by Pastor Emily and Sara Early Jenkins

On the final night of our Wednesday series, we discussed each week's presentation, taking time to note what stood out to us and how we might partner with the people we heard from or fill gaps that we noticed through the presentations. During the series, we began collecting electronic devices, adding ourselves to the community resource list, and sharing our financial and other resources with the Community Policing Advocates. As you will see on page 3, we decided to collect food items for the many lunch bags that One of Us passes out each day.

In the coming weeks and months, we will continue developing ideas for future projects and intentional engagement.

CANDID CAMERA

ImmanuelFest 2025 - September 27



Capital Pride Festival - October 11



CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Trunks of Fun – October 31



Senior Adult Thanksgiving at Faith Baptist



SEEN AROUND TOWN

Thanksgiving Breakfast - November 27



Baptist Mission Women Christmas Dinner



Decorating the Church - November 28



HANGING OF THE GREEN PICTURES

Hanging of the Green – November 30



STAFF UPDATE

Gena Woestman Stepping Down from Infant Resource Center



After nine years of service to IBC, first in the church office and then as Director of the Infant Resource Center, Gena Woestman has decided that it is time for her to step down from these roles. Her last day with the IRC

will be December 31.

Gena has been such an asset to the IRC over the last two years. She has been creative and compassionate in her service to those in need in our community. Through her ministry, we have expanded the services that we offer and have become even more well-known throughout the Frankfort community. We can not overstate how much we appreciate Gena and

everything she has meant to IBC.

Pastor Emily and the Personnel Team will work alongside the Missions Team to identify an interim plan for staffing the IRC after Gena's departure. We will work to fill the position as early in the coming year as possible. Please let Pastor Emily know if you or someone you know might have interest in the position.

Gena wanted to share these reflections with the congregation:

IBC family,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in the IRC for the past two years. I know we have made a significant investment into the lives of young families. At the time of this writing, 175 families have been served.

“Do small things with great love.” Mother Teresa
Gena Clark Woestman

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones Group to Meet at IBC



Family/Parents of Addicted Loved Ones

Family/Parents of Addicted Loved Ones Meetings Starting in January

Tuesdays at 6 p.m.

Room 134 (Koinonia Classroom)

Beginning in January, IBC will become a host site for a Family/Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) support group. According to their website (<https://palgroup.org>), "PAL is a nonprofit that provides hope through education and support to parents of adults dealing with substance use disorder. The free

weekly meetings follow evidence-based practices, and the curriculum is designed specifically for parents by professionals in the treatment and recovery industry."

The closest PAL support group to Frankfort currently is in Georgetown, with the majority of PAL meetings in the area in Louisville or Lexington. PAL facilitators recognized the need for a service like this to support parents and families in the Frankfort community and reached out to Pastor Emily about whether or not

Immanuel would be willing to be a host site for these gatherings.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to share God's unconditional love with people in our community who are going through some of the most difficult journeys in parenting. Please share this information with people you know who may be in need of a group like this, and be in prayer for all who will find support and healing through this transformative and hope-filled ministry.

From Pastor Emily:

The PAL facilitators I met with mentioned that other churches who host PAL support groups have provided Keurig machines or some other type of drink set-up to help the meetings feel more inviting. I would like to set up a drink station in the "Sunday School Hallway" that could be used for this group and for our Sunday School classes.

Please let me know if you'd be willing to help donate to or help decorate this space! We need between \$500-700 to make it a beautiful space!

Upcoming Events in the Community

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Service

Speaker: **The Rev. Dr. Kilen Gray**,

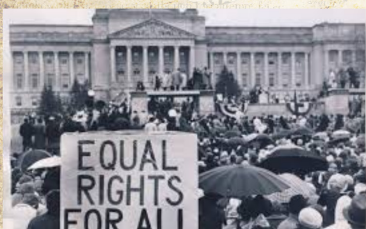
COO & Program Coordinator for

Creative Spirits Behavioral Health in Louisville

Sunday, January 18 at 5:00 p.m.

at First Christian Church

(316 Ann St.)



Pictured above, MLK-led march, Frankfort, 1964



The Winter Wonderland GALA

A Black Tie Affair

Presented by

The Community Life Center Foundation, Inc.

(a 501 (C) (3) Non-profit organization)

Saturday, December 13, 2025

6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Featuring An Exclusive

Early Access to Bourbon and Spirits Tasting and Early Bids During the Silent Auction!

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

(doors open 5:30 p.m.)

Harold Benson Demonstration Farm

1525 Mills Lane,

Frankfort, KY 40601

Reserve Your Seats

Bourbon & Spirits Tasting Early Auction Access - \$125.00

or

Gala - \$100.00

Seats are available online (Scan The Qrcode) or by calling:

www.clcfoundationky.org | 502.319.3882



Bennie J and Friends



DJ Gold The Mixologist



Kor'ee Jackson

Mark your calendars now for these community events. Each one is an opportunity for us to show support for different groups within Frankfort who want to experience God's unconditional love in only the way that Immanuel Baptist Church is able to share!

Upcoming Special Services



Christmas Eve Service December 24, 6 p.m.

Please join us for our annual Christmas Eve candlelight service on December 24 at 6 p.m. We will sing carols, hear the Christmas story, and light candles to celebrate the coming of the Christ child (battery operated candles available for those who

cannot hold wax candles). All ages are welcome.

Service of Lessons and Carols December 28, 10:30 a.m.

We will have our second annual service of Lessons and Carols the Sunday after Christmas during the normal worship hour. Dress comfortably (even in your Christmas pajamas, if you would like), and come to enjoy singing Christmas carols, hearing the story of Jesus' birth from



different perspectives, and celebrating Christmas with your IBC family!



Star Words Service and Epiphany Celebration January 4, 10:30 a.m.

On Sunday, January 4, we will celebrate the journey of the Wise Men as they followed the star to Bethlehem. As we enter the new year, we will once again choose star words to help guide our own paths in 2026. This is such a meaningful way to step into the new year and celebrate Epiphany, so we hope you will join us!

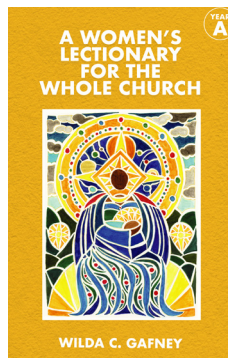
A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church

Over the course of the next church year, you may begin to notice something a little different in the bulletin: our scriptures will come from a translation called *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church*. The Women's Lectionary centers the voices of women by lifting up biblical stories featuring women and/or bringing attention to where women have been minimized to uplift the male perspective.

Author Wilda C. Gafney says, "it is the stories of women and girls, female characters and their names (when given), that are most likely to be unknown by congregants and seminarians and, all too often, clergy."

Marginalized voices have a lot to teach us about God's grace and Christ's compassion. They are often the first to tell of the Holy Spirit's movement among us. Pastor Emily has wanted to use the Women's Lectionary for many years, and as this is the year that the 3-year lectionary cycle restarts, this felt like a good time to begin a journey through scripture in a new way.

One aspect of the Women's Lectionary that might be a little jarring for some is that it uses feminine



language for God (which is often how the Hebrew Scriptures recognize the Holy Spirit/Wisdom). Gafney notes, "Exclusively masculine language constructs and reinforces the notion that men are the proper image of God and women are secondary and distant." Our church has long eschewed that notion, so it will be good for us to read in ways that open ourselves to expansive understandings of the God who cannot be contained by our language.

The book is available online and does offer some devotional prompts, if you would like to follow along. Otherwise, look for updates and further reflection from Pastor Emily throughout the year in Connections.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Finances Through November

2025 Ministry Plan	\$509,493.00
Amount Needed Each Week	\$ 9,798.00
Amount Needed Through November	\$470,304.00
Undesignated Receipts Through November	\$372,090.88
% of Annual Budget Needed	92%
% of Annual Budget Received	73%
CURRENT ASSETS	
Church Checking Balance	\$181,162.74
Designated Checking Balance	\$120,677.01
Total Current Assets	\$301,839.75

Year-End Giving

Thanks to each and every person who has supported IBC financially during 2025, especially those who have stepped up so magnanimously since the budget letter went out in November. The report on this page reflects some of that giving, but the December report will show some incredible generosity on the part of many Immanuelites. In fact, due to the gifts we have already received towards the roof replacement, we will no longer need to take out a loan to pay for the roof (we now only need around \$50,000 to keep us from using any of our reserves on the roof).

This is a tremendous testimony to how IBC comes together during times of challenge, and of the belief each of you has in the future of our church. Please prayerfully consider how you can add to the example set by many of your fellow church members and help us end the year strong. And may we all commit to make 2026 a year that sees us continue these trends towards a bright and vibrant future!

WITH GRATITUDE

Sandy Altom



I want to thank everyone for their support, encouragement, calls, food and especially prayers during my recent surgery and hospital stay. Your expressions of love, support, and concern have been invaluable in helping me in my recovery. I am progressing and am so glad to be back on the organ with you.

Thank you,
Sandy Altom

Rhonda Smith

Dear Immanuel Family,

Thank you for the many expressions of love and care following my accident. The meals, correspondences, and prayers have eased my road to healing.

We are so blessed to have each other through God's grace.

With love and appreciation,

Rhonda Smith



Share Your Thoughts!

Do you have a word of gratitude you would like to share? Or would you like to contribute an article for an upcoming edition of the Connections Newsletter?

We would love to hear from you. Whether you want to thank your Immanuel family for being present in your life in a meaningful way or you want to share about something that you've experienced recently, there is room for you in Connections! Send your thoughts - short or long - to Joni at joni@ibcfrankfort.com, and we will be glad to feature you!

The Pastor's Column Continued

I told her what I have told you – that I believe we are at a precipice moment, during which the decisions we make now will determine whether we are planting seeds for trees the next generation will sit under or allowing the church to succumb to the inevitable conclusion of old age. I said that my dream was to see us dig in and look towards the future, but that I am often met with trepidation when I talk about ideas that will require the church to make financial or time investments that, in this moment, feel unnecessary or even audacious given our current congregational make-up.

While I was speaking to Vanessa, I was aware that the church would be taking a vote that day to determine whether or not we should we replace the roof (and how we would finance that project), and that there had been some anxiety over how the church would respond. Some wondered if it would be worth getting into debt for a building that, in some future possibilities, might outlast the congregation itself.

I was confident that the vote would pass and that I would come home to find the church in preparations to replace the roof. But, honestly, I was concerned about the number of comments I heard about what an “old” congregation we are and how trepidatious we are about making significant contributions to a church whose future is unknown.

In 2026, we will mark our 65th Anniversary as a church. When I realized that this milestone birthday for the church was coming up, I began dreaming alongside the staff, Deacons, and Church Council about what we might begin to build in celebration of this big year and in anticipation of future anniversaries. We've started visualizing how

changes to the building and renewed outreach efforts could lead us into a new day – could help us to look beyond our current “age,” and live as if we have decades ahead of us – to be more nimble and inclusive of people of all ages and stages of life.

Kurt Vonnegut said, “What should young people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured.”



The most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured.

KURT VONNEGUT

I would add that this is not just the work of young people, but is the work of all of us in the church – especially those of us in a church whose mission is to “experience and express God’s unconditional love.” How, though, can we creating stable communities when we let anxiety about our age keep us from building in ways that will help us to grow? How can we truly root ourselves in a place where we don’t expect branches to spread forth?

Vonnegut goes on to say, “Be patient. Your future will soon come to you and lie down at your feet like a dog who knows and loves you no matter what

you are.”

We serve a God whose unconditional love is, believe it or not, far greater than any dog’s! We follow a God who called us to dream bigger than ourselves. For nearly 65 years, we have committed ourselves to this God who is constantly creating something new in and through our church.

When Vonnegut says to be patient – he doesn’t mean to twiddle your thumbs. His patience is an active patience – a patience that tells our fears and anxieties to step aside. His patience is persistently focused on a future that is far greater than we can imagine. A future that is inevitably ours and inevitably good.

As we journey through the season of Advent, may our anticipation for the birth of Christ challenge us to anticipate the future God is building in our midst now. May we be challenged as we step into the new year to dream of what could be and not be held back by what is or was. May we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to live with a spirit of abundance and be moved to generosity in the pursuit of a future worth looking forward to.

Dig in with me that we might all root ourselves deeply into building something stable, inclusive, and beyond our wildest imaginations!

At the end of our conversation, Vanessa asked, “What would happen if you shared these heartfelt desires and concerns with your congregation?”

At which point, I responded...

WE WILL

★ BUILD IT ★

TOGETHER

Pastor Emily



Immanuel
BAPTIST CHURCH
Frankfort, KY

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(502) 223-7601
www.ibcfrankfort.com

Opportunities at Immanuel

Sunday, December 7

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
6:00 pm Security Team Meeting

Monday, December 8

6:00 pm Boy Scouts

Tuesday, December 9

6:00 pm Deacon and Staff Dinner

Wednesday, December 10

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, December 11

1:00 pm Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall

Friday, December 12

3:00 pm Crafting

Saturday, December 13

9:00 am Crafting

Sunday, December 14

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship

Monday, December 15

6:00 pm Boy Scouts

Wednesday, December 17

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, December 18

1:00 pm Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 21

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship

Wednesday, December 24 Church Office Closed

6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, December 25 Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 28

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship - Service of Lessons and Carols

Wednesday, December 31 Church Office Closed

Thursday, January 1 Church Office Closed

Sunday, January 4

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
11:45 am Church Council Meeting

Monday, January 5

6:00 pm Boy Scouts
6:00 pm Baptist Mission Women

Tuesday, January 6

6:00 pm PAL Meeting

Wednesday, January 7

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, January 8

1:00 pm Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall

Friday, January 9

3:00 pm Crafting

Saturday, January 10

9:00 am Crafting

Sunday, January 11

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship

Monday, January 12

6:00 pm Boy Scouts
6:00 pm Deacons' Meeting

Tuesday, January 13

6:00 pm PAL Meeting

Wednesday, January 14

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, January 15

1:00 pm Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, January 18

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
6:00 pm MLK Day Celebration Service at First Christian

Monday, January 19

MLK Day - Church Office Closed

Tuesday, January 20

6:00 pm PAL Meeting

Wednesday, January 21

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, January 22

1:00 pm Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall
6:00 pm PAL Meeting

Sunday, January 25

9:30 am Bible Study
10:30 am Worship

Monday, January 26

6:00 pm Boy Scouts

Tuesday, January 27

6:00 pm PAL Meeting

Wednesday, January 28

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, January 29

1:00 pm Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall