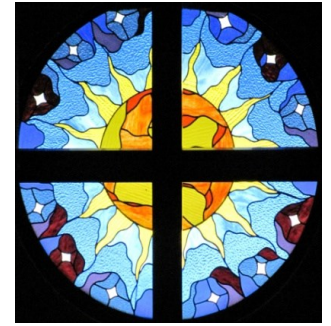


Immanuel Lutheran Church

Hear Love. Eat Love. Share Christ's Love.

December 2021 Newsletter



Weekly Services and Communion

*Sunday services
9 am*

- * In-Person
- * Live Streaming
- * Conference Call

*Wednesday
services 6 pm*

- In-Person

*Christmas Eve
December 24th
6:30 pm*

Car Hop Communion

*Sunday,
December 12th
10:30 - 11 am*

Office Hours

*Kelly in office
Tuesdays and
Thursdays
9 am - 1 pm*

“The LORD, Your God, Is In Your Midst”
by Peter J. Weller

The Old Testament lesson for the third Sunday in Advent comes from the book of Zephaniah at the end of the third chapter: “Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgement against you, he has turned away your enemies.

“The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

“I will remove disaster from you; so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.” (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

Zephaniah prophesied early in the 7th century BCE, about 50 years after Isaiah and before Jeremiah during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 BCE), before the Babylonian exile. Dr. Melinda Quivik, Liturgical and Homiletical Scholar from St. Paul, Minnesota, wrote in Working Preacher, “The rulers previous to Zephaniah’s time had generated unjust social and political policies, leaving Judah in great need of a prophet who would call the people to make changes.” Dr. Quivik continues, “Zephaniah blares out judgment against worship of false gods, rulers who act like foreigners, violence, fraud, complacency, and the faithless assumption that [God] is powerless. Image after image builds up a portrait of the destruction that will come on the Day of the Lord: ‘the people. . . shall walk like the blind. . . their blood shall be poured out like dust. . . the whole earth shall be consumed. . . .’ ” (1:17-18).

Continued to page 5

Find us on Facebook at Immanuel Lutheran Washington Iowa and online at luthwash.org

YouTube- [luthwash](https://www.youtube.com/luthwash) * Email us at luthwash@hotmail.com

Come visit us at 1226 East Washington Street, Washington, Iowa 52353

Church ~ 319.653.3950

Monthly Updates (Month to date)

Account balances as of 11-23-21

General Fund ~ \$2,597.35

Building/Visions ~ \$4,094.47

Endowment ~ \$3,305.73

Community Assistance ~ \$3,770.44

Mortgage ~ \$61,735.55

Christian Sympathy

We extend our deepest Christian sympathy to the families of

+Marilyn Patience (Kelsey Striegel's Grandma)

+Jim Ives (Sherry's brother-in-law)

May their families find comfort and peace in the promise of the resurrection of Christ.

Attendance

Wednesday, November 3
6 pm ~ 7

Sunday, November 7
9 am ~ 65 Views ~ 196

Wednesday, November 10
6 pm ~ 6

Sunday, November 14
9 am ~ 30 Views ~ 212
Kinnick ~ 22
Car Hop ~ 5

Wednesday, November 17
6 pm ~ 8

Sunday, November 21
9 am ~ 38 Views ~ 114
Kinnick ~ 24

Christmas Eve Worship

Join us for Christmas Eve, Candlelight Worship, Friday, December 24th. The **Christmas Eve, Candlelight service** will be in person, live on Immanuel's Facebook page at **6:30 p.m.** also available on conference call. Let us come together, in a most unique and different way, to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The Christmas Eve sermon will be Pastor Howard's farewell sermon.



Service of Lessons and Carols

Join us as we continue to celebrate the Christmas season with a service of Lessons and Carols adapted from the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols that has been celebrated annually at King's College, Cambridge, for almost a century. The Scripture lessons are those traditionally used at the festival, while the carols that accompany each passage have been selected from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book. Join us as we worship together, on Sunday, December 26th, 9 a.m. to hear and sing the promises of Christ's birth.



Sign up for Altar flowers,
there are several weeks that our altar is empty.
The sign up sheet is on the hall table.





Birthdays for December

11- Addison Six
14- Lyle Moen
14- Sandy Weller
18- Bill Zywiec
29- Pastor Howard



Anniversaries for December

31- Jim & Kathleen Almelen



LUTHER LEAGUE (Youth Group) 6th – 12th Graders

When: Sunday, December 19th
Where: Wal-Mart and Pizza Ranch
Why: Shop for Children's Winter Clothes (HACAP)
Who: 6th – 12th Graders (friends are WELCOME!)
Time: 4 p.m. Shopping at Wal-Mart
5:15 p.m. (ish) Supper at Pizza Ranch
Cost: \$5 for supper (LL will cover the rest)
Leadership: Pastor Howard and Steve Vetter



Car Hop Communion: Sunday, December 12th

Pastor Howard will be serving Holy Communion on **Sunday, December 12th, 10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.** under the portico in the church's parking lot. 5 people were nourished with the presence of Christ at the Car Hop Communion on Sunday, November 14th.

Communion is served under the portico in the church's parking lot, regardless of the weather.

HACAP

Your dollar buys more when HACAP orders food, consider sending a few dollars to:

HACAP
2175 Lexington Blvd # 1
Washington, Iowa 52353

Help your local families during this difficult time.
Thank you, DeAnn

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Education: Tuesday, November 30th at 3:45 pm

Finance: Thursday, December 2nd at 6:30 pm

Council: Sunday, December 5th at 5:30 pm

²⁰⁻²¹ God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Ephesians 3:20-21

The Message

Thank you to those who volunteered for Meals on Wheels delivery: **Clyde and Fran, Stan and Sharol, Naomi, Bev Bailey, and Bev Crandall.**

Thank you to those who called, sent cards and gave best wishes for my birthday.
DeAnn Hakert

I would like to thank the following people who helped the Immanuel children and me get ready and videotaped our Christmas program "The Greatest Gift" on Nov 7 : **Chrissy Middle, Angela Taylor, Jason Taylor, Bev Bailey, DeAnn Hakert, Kelsey Striegel, Rob Taylor, Ron Brown , Ben Striegel, Kelly Smith, Brian Lueck, Mike Jewell, Pastor Howard, and Claire Wubben.**

All your hard work was very much appreciated by the children and me . Our program will be shown during the service on Dec.12.

Again, thank you ,
Linda Brown, director

THANK YOU to **Brian Lueck** for ringing the handbell during All Saints' worship services on November 7th and 10th. The ringing of the bell, during the reading of the names of the Saints who have died, is such a solemn and holy time.

THANK YOU to confirmands **Issac Giesmann, Thomas Lueck, Emma Taylor, and Brayden Zywiec** for Keeping the chancel wall current with the liturgical celebration. Your climbing skills sure do help!

THANK YOU to **Angela and Jason Taylor** for hosting Luther League at their farm. We had a marvelous time eating hot dog and s'mores, exploring the barn and animals, and then have a fierce game of Family Feud. The wind kept us from having a bonfire, but that didn't keep us from having fun. We are grateful for your wonderful hospitality!

Thank you to the **HS Class members** who sent me the lovely note. It was sweet of you all and very appreciated. And yes, Emma, Caitlin , Taylor, Ajay, Avery,& Aden, you are indeed my former "Little Lambs"!

Blessings to you,
Linda Brown, your FF preschool teacher.

Thank you to our friends at Immanuel for the cards, texts, phone calls, in person greetings, and the newspaper articles for our 50th wedding anniversary . We appreciated it all and you !
Blessings ,
Ron and Linda Brown

THANK YOU to **John Harris** for playing the trumpet during worship on Reformation Sunday, October 31st. Sharing of your talent makes Reformation Sunday special and meaningful through the lens of music. Thank you for blessing us.

THANK YOU to **Rich Baker** for playing the guitar during worship on Sunday, November 14th. Sharing of your talent brings an extra joy to worship and gives God glory. Thank you for blessing us.

THANK YOU to everyone who wished me condolences on the death of my sister. Though we had been estranged for many years, her death came as a shock and deep loss. I am grateful for your compassion.

~ Pastor Howard

So very
THANKFUL

December 2021, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story Merry Christmas from LSI!

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” — John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! This year has been another difficult time for all of us, and we are grateful for the Iowans who have stepped up just for the sake of giving and helping the people LSI is privileged to serve. Thank you for bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these important services! At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of foster care, who fear they will never have a forever family. The holidays can be an especially difficult time for our neighbors who are so often overlooked in our society. In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. LSI's annual matching gift campaign is currently active, and those making a new or increased financial gift can double their impact through the end of the year. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at 563.676.2065 or Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org. LSI is also available to provide a customized virtual shared ministry opportunity for your congregation. If you would like to share the message of LSI with your community, please visit LSIowa.org/church-relations or contact our Waverly office at 319.352.2630 to get started. Two years ago, Kayla knew it was time for a change in her life. She had struggled with substance use for years. When she was pregnant with her youngest son, Rafe, she was determined to build a brighter future for him. She entered treatment to become sober and create a healthy home for her baby. While in treatment, Kayla enrolled in the HOPES program through LSI Early Childhood Services, which provides in-home parenting education and guidance for parents of young children. Kellie, Kayla's LSI worker, met with her every week to ensure she had all the resources and support she needed to raise Rafe in her home. They kept track of all his important developmental milestones, sharing smiles and laughs along the way. Whether it was supplying diapers or being a listening ear, Kellie was always there for Kayla. Kayla is now two years sober, has a job as a chef, and feels empowered and confident that she has everything she needs to help her family thrive. “I just feel overwhelmed and overjoyed. I never thought I could do all this, so I'm proud of myself,” she says. “There are people at LSI that care about you. They are there to support you and they are willing to help.”

Continued from page 1

And yet, at the end of the last chapter, Zephaniah concludes with the verses cited above. These verses might have been written at the end of the Babylonian exile. No more talk of God's wrath and punishment and destruction. Instead, the people are encouraged to sing and shout and praise, and God, himself, will also join in the singing and sing loudly as at a festival. What would it sound like to hear God singing? Surely, it must be magnificent and majestic. In these verses, God, in a great burst of love and magnanimity and forgiveness, promises to the people of Israel that he has taken away the judgement against them, that he is with them and among them, that he will protect them and gather them and heal them and restore their fortunes.

In these verses, God announces, “The LORD, your God, is in your midst.” He is saying, “I am right here with you, right now.” Kathryn M. Schifferdecker, Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota wrote in *Working Preacher*, “Such joy [by God] is not subdued; it is not quiet or dignified. The Hebrew words used in verse 17 are used elsewhere in the Bible to describe great jubilation. The LORD rejoices over his beloved, over Judah and Jerusalem, as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride (Isaiah 62:5). As David danced in front of the Ark of the Covenant, in exultation, so God rejoices over God's people (2 Samuel 6). As the morning stars sang at the creation of the world, so God sings with elation over God's beloved (Job 38:7). “We are accustomed to images of God as judge. (Indeed, much of Zephaniah uses such imagery.) We are accustomed to images of God as shepherd, gathering the flock into the fold. But how often do we imagine God as one who rejoices? One who sings? Yet here, in our text, God and God's people alike are caught up in a joy that overflows into song, a joy that springs from love renewed, relationship restored.

This joy is not one-sided. It is not simply God's people who rejoice because God has forgiven and restored them. That is an altogether understandable reaction to God's redemption. It is not simply God's people who rejoice. God, too, sings and shouts with joy over this love restored. The divine heart overflows with jubilation!”

In the words of Zephaniah, we see a side of God not often portrayed in the Bible, a jubilant and rejoicing and singing God, overflowing in love for his people. These are very fitting verses for the Advent season, and they remind us of how much God loves us, and why he sent his son into the world to save us, and why the seasons of Advent and Christmas are so important.



FILL THE SNOW BOOT!

Luther League is raising money to shop for winter clothes for children of Washington County. Luther League youth will do the shopping and the purchases will be distributed through HACAP. Last year the congregation's generous donations of \$708.60!!!! (way surpassing 2019's donations of \$333), the \$250 Thrivent Visa Card, and Luther League added money from their Luther League account to be able to spend **\$1699.35!!!!** We're filling the boot again this year! Kathy Vetter has secured a \$250 Thrivent Visa Card to assist with the purchases of clothes. If you mail your donation in, checks are to be made out to "Immanuel Lutheran" and "Luther League winter clothes" written in the memo. Thank you in advance for your generous support of the Luther League's effort to keep the children of Washington County warm this winter. The boots are out and the Luther League youth will go shopping December 19th.



Immanuel to Ring Salvation Army Bell; December 4th

We are ringing the Salvation Army Bell again this year. Immanuel will be ringing the bell at **Fareway on Saturday, December 4th, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.** Money placed in Washington County Salvation Army Kettles serve Washington County residents in need. Thank you to those who have signed up to ring and/or generously gave to this Kettle campaign.

The spending of the money collected in the Washington Kettles is overseen by Pr. Darryl Carr (First Baptist) and Pr. Dave Watson (Assembly of God) of the Washington Area Ministerial Association. We are already using 2021 Kettle money to assist Washington County residents in need.

For your hour timeslot, sign up on the hallway table and take a reminder bell.

Washington County Toys for Tots

Assisting families in need with children ages newborn to 15 years with new toys for Christmas. **2021 Registrations are ONLINE:** <https://iowa-city-ia.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites-toys.aspx>

The last day to register is Friday, December 4, 2020.

The following is required to register:

- Photo ID for Head of Household (Adult registering children must be adult to pick up toys)
- Proof of Date of Birth for each child (Birth certificate from any country or medical record)
- Proof of Washington County Residency (Valid address on photo ID, lease, utility bill, mail from government agency)

Pick up of toys: • Washington County will be at **Immanuel Lutheran Church @ 1226 E. Washington St.** in Washington on December 20th, 21st, and 22nd.

For questions or additional information: email usc.hrt.iowa.city@usc.salvationarmy.org or call The Salvation Army at 319-337-3725 or HACAP at 319-653-7275.

Immanuel Volunteers: Toys will be arriving at Immanuel on December 14th or 15th. Volunteers will be needed to prepare the gift wish list for families as Immanuel did last year. It was a lot of fun filling Christmas gift requests by the children. **Immanuel volunteers will be "Santa's Elves" on Thursday, December 16th and Friday, December 17th.** More details to follow.





First Communion Retreat

All children in the 2nd grade or older youth not yet receiving Holy Communion, along with their parent(s)/guardian(s), will have a first Communion retreat. This retreat will be held on **Sunday, December 5th** (1 p.m. – 3 p.m.). The children will receive their First Communion following the retreat.

Please let Pastor Howard know you and your child(ren) plan on attending.

Hear Love, Eat Love, Share Christ's Love with pictures from Immanuel's history.

The Funding Forward committee is requesting copies of any pictures you have from Immanuel's history, specifically of the old Sanctuary (East Wing). These images will be compiled and shared in a collage and a photo album. You can share copies (not original photos) of your pictures by emailing them to luthwashphotos@gmail.com, texting them to Chrissy Middle, 319-331-6254, or placing them in a box in the Fellowship Hall. Include as much information as you can with your photos: date, people in the photos, etc. Thank you for sharing your photos and making the project memorable.



Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer with Deacon Fran Victor will be

Saturday, December 4th and Saturday, December 18th 8:30 am- 9:30 am

Please plan on joining, no experience needed. See you then!! PLEASE NOTE CHANGE



All children are invited to Jesus' Birthday Party on Sunday, December 12th during the Faith Formation Hour! We will be watching a movie, having snacks, and of course singing to Jesus!!! Every child will receive their snack "Goodie Bag", a DVD of our Christmas program and a picture of the cast. Put on your calendar and don't miss our excitement as we celebrate our Savior's birth !!

Faith Formation will not hold classes on Sunday, December 19th so that all the children may attend the reception for Pastor Maureen and Mike as we say farewell to them. As a special treat the children will be singing one of the favorite songs. Please everyone plan to attend! Children will be practicing their song for the next couple of Sundays during FF music time. Please bring a can for HACAP.

Our last day for individual Faith Formation classes for 2021 will be Sunday, December 5th from 10:15 am - 11 am. Sunday, December 12th and Sunday, December 19th will be special events during the FF hour that the children will be participating in. Regular classes will resume on Sunday, January 9th, 2022. Faith Formation will be from 10:15 am- 11:15 am starting on Sunday, January 9th, 2022. Please note change of time!!

Education team members will be having several sessions for safety training for all adults who are with children or wish to drive our youth to activities. Everyone who took the training before are now up for renewal. Our first training will be Sunday, January 16th 2022 at 11:15 am. Look for more information as the time becomes closer.

Ministry Opportunity: Be a Confirmation Mentor!

Emma Taylor and Brayden Zywiec are preparing for their Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation). One of their requirements is to choose a mentor who will walk with them during the spring of '22. A mentor is a person of the same sex as the confirmand, may not be a family member, be a faithful worshiper, and a person the confirmand has prayerfully considered. **The confirmands will ask their potential mentor, between January 1st and January 18th. Please, prayerfully consider this great ministry opportunity.** If you DO NOT feel called to this important mentoring ministry, please let Kelsey Striegel, Education Committee Chair, know prior to January 1st. If Kelsey does not hear from you, the confirmation students will consider you a potential mentor.



ELCA Good Gifts Advent Tree

Beginning Sunday, November 28th Advent Tree Ornaments will be available for you to purchase (Sheep, \$125; Vaccinations for a Child, \$30; School Fees and Uniform for a Girl, \$40; Water Jugs, \$12; Chicks, \$10 ~ just to name of few ornament options). You will: chose your ornament(s) from the wide selection; on an envelope provided write your: name, ornament selected, and ornament cost; hang your ornament on the Advent Tree; then on Christmas Eve and following take your ornament(s) home as a reminder of your generosity. These make wonderful Christmas gifts for those who have everything. Let's fill the Advent Tree with ornaments!

Annual Meeting Highlights

2022 Budget: Approved

Council Members Elected: 1 year term DeAnn Hakert; 3-year terms Julie Giesmann, Clyde Pearce, Ryan Woline

2022 Synod Assembly Voting Members (May 20-21, 2022, Coralville)
Elected: Lee Buchholz and DeAnn Hakert

2022 Nominating Committee Elected: Mike Jewell (outgoing Council member), Peg Harris, Naomi Erikson, and Ben Striegel



Silent Auction Donations

Washington Middle School is holding a Silent Auction for students to use their "Be Bucks". WMS is in need of donations of items, Some ideas of items we have receive in the past include gift cards or monetary donations to purchase items. If you are interested, we would request the items to be at the Washington Middle School by Friday, December 10th, so that we can advertise the items to the students and make purchases from monetary donations.

Please contact us if you are willing to donate at: 319.653.5414 or
cwenger@washington.k12.ia.us.

Thank you for considering this request,

Washington Middle School Ci3T Team

The Meaning of Christmas

In our commercialized society, during November and December, we are bombarded with jolly Santas, reindeer, happy snowpeople, and buy, buy, buy. Yet, there are hints and whispers that “Jesus is the reason for the season.” Yes, Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. But exactly why is that fact so significant? For an answer, we need to look at the accounts of the birth of Jesus as recorded by Matthew and Luke. At the heart of these nativity narratives is a simple fact: amid the struggle of a people, who had longed for God to act in the world in new ways, God came to be with them in a way that totally identifies Himself with us as human beings. Amid the most unlikely of circumstances, to the most unlikely of people, God became a human being for the salvation of all people. Christmas is about possibility. It is not the kind of possibility that comes from a confidence in our own abilities. It is possibility that comes solely from the fact that God is God. Our God comes into our own human existence to reveal Himself and call us to Himself. Jesus is Immanuel – God with us. This fact brings the possibility of change for the world and all humanity who accept Jesus as their Savior. God has promised to be with the church and with us, His chosen people, as we live as His people in the world. It is this God, this possibility, which we celebrate at Christmas.

Chrismons

The sanctuary Christmas trees are decorated with fragile, handmade, stained glass Chrismons. A Chrismon is one of several Christian symbols representing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (his life, ministry, Divinity) and the church year. The term “Chrismon” comes from the Latin phrase “Christi Monogramma,” meaning “monogram of Christ.”

The monogram of Christ ~ the Greek letter X (“chi”) superimposed upon the Greek letter P (“rho”)

Other Chrismons are:

Alpha and Omega ~ God is the beginning and end

Shield ~ Jesus is our defender

Bible ~ Holy Scripture is God’s living Word

Star of David ~ Jesus is the descendant of David

Bethlehem Star ~ Jesus is the Savior of the world

Descending Dove ~ Holy Spirit

Fish ~ Jesus Christ is the Son of God; Greek ιχθύς ichthus, meaning “fish”: Jesus (I), Christ (X), God (Θ), Son (Ú), Savior (ς)

Candle ~ Jesus is the light of the world

Lamp ~ Jesus is the lamp of God’s light

Anchor ~ Jesus is our hope

Butterfly ~ Through Jesus we have everlasting life

Crown ~ Jesus is the King of Kings

Bread and Chalice ~ Body and Blood of Jesus

Crosses ~ Power of God

Decorating for Christmas

After the 9 a.m. service on Sunday, November 28th we will gather and decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. Following the conclusion of decorating we will enjoy a simple brunch (bring a favorite to share). Helpers of all ages are welcome and needed. Join us as we prepare for the birth of Jesus through decorating our holy space with symbols of Advent, Jesus, and Christmas.



Pastor Howard Leaving Immanuel Lutheran

November 7, 2021

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Mike and I have been living apart for the past two years. Mike has a job in Ames with the National Veterinary Services Laboratory which he loves. He commutes between Ames and Washington on the weekends. Though we have made this work, Mike and I long to live together.

The financial grounding of Immanuel Lutheran Church is thinning. On several occasions at Annual Meetings, it's been stated I make too much money. The past couple of years, I have accepted an extra week of vacation in lieu of a raise. To save money in 2022, Council has approved the removal of Mike and Mariah from my health insurance (giving a coverage stipend instead). As Jesus says in Matthew (6:21) and Luke (12:34), "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." We financially support that which we value.

It is through this letter I am informing you that I have accepted another call. I will be the pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, in Iowa Falls.

As approved by Immanuel's Executive Council my last day, as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, will be Sunday, December 26, 2021. My farewell sermon will be Christmas Eve.

After December 26th I will not be available to conduct or even participate in such events as funerals, weddings, hospital calls, emergency calls, Camp EWALU, the 2022 National Youth Gathering, or any other functions normally carried out by a pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church.

As we say our goodbyes may you know I love you deeply and will miss you. The 9 ½ years I have served you as pastor, I pray you have witnessed Christ through my words and actions. The Holy Spirit will guide you to a new pastor who will continue to proclaim with you that Jesus is the saving and transforming Son of God. May we depart in Christ's peace.

Your sister in Christ,

Pastor Maureen Howard

*Blessed is she
who has believed
that the Lord
would fulfill His
promises to her!*

*Luke 1:45
beyondblessedblog.com*