



# IMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

1 Hovey Street • Oxford, MI 48371

[www.icucc.org](http://www.icucc.org) • 248-628-1610

January 11, 2026 • 11:00 a.m.



**Welcome to worship at Immanuel United Church of Christ!**

**God is Still Speaking,**

**Immanuel Open and Affirming Statement:**

We welcome and affirm all people in celebrating diversity. We welcome to our faith family people of every race, age, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability and those who have doubts or questions.

**Thank You for taking the time to turn off your cell phone during the worship service.**

Prelude

\*Bringing in the Light of Christ

(\* denotes those who are able may stand.)

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome

Jeff Erno

Choir Anthem "God is Calling Us"

Immanuel Choir

**\*Call to Worship**

Marsha Chapman, Liturgist

One: You who created the heaves and stretched them out above us, You who spread out the earth beneath our feet and summoned sprouts and shoots,

**Many: Breathe life into us, God who creates!**

One: You who came to the river, You who sought the Baptizer and the Jordan waters,

**Many: Welcome us to the waters of life, Jesus the Christ!**

One: You who soared through the heavens, You who hovered and rested upon Jesus,

**Many: Alight upon us today, Spirit of God, Heaven's Dove.**

Invocation

Jeff Erno

You Who call us, we come before You in answer to Your call in our life. You created the heavens and the earth and placed us here for life and hope. We know Your dream for a world that is righteous and just, a world you promise will come to pass. Breathe Your Spirit upon us again and again, and bring to life our passion for Your bold vision. Make us lights to those who sit in darkness! In the name of Jesus Who descended into the waters of baptism to show us the way to righteousness, and of the Soaring Sprit, Who alights upon those who arise from these life-giving waters.

**\*Hymn: "Softly and Tenderly"**

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Words of Assurance

Jeff Erno

Isaiah assures us that our weakness and limitation do not stand in the way of God's plans for the world or God's pleasure in us. We are God's beloved children, God's partners in the work of world-renewing. We are God's chose in whom the Creator delights.

## Softly and Tenderly

Will L. Thompson, 1880; alt.

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing. call - ing for  
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead-ing. plead-ing for  
 3 Time is now fleet - ing, the mo - ments are pass - ing, pass - ing from  
 4 O for the won - der - ful love Je - sus prom-ised, prom-ised for

you and for me; See at the por - tals Christ wait - ing and  
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not God's  
 you and from me; Shad - ows are gath - er - ing, death-beds are  
 you and for me; Though we have sinned Je - sus of - fers us

watch-ing, watch-ing for you and for me. Come home, come  
 mer - cies, mer - cies for you and for me? Come home,  
 com - ing, com - ing for you and for me. Come home,  
 par - don, par - don for you and for me.

Refrain

home, All who are wea-ry, come home;  
 come home,

Ear-nest-ly, ten-der-ly Je-sus is call-ing— call-ing, "O sin-ner, come home!"

Will Thompson established publishing firms in Chicago and East Liverpool, Ohio, the community to which he left a legacy of song. Dwight L. Moody once remarked that he would rather have written "Softly and Tenderly" than anything he had ever done.

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Tune: SOFTLY AND TENDERLY  
 11.7.11.7. with refrain  
 Will L. Thompson, 1880

The Congregation Prays

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

**Congregational Response: "Lord hear our prayers."** (Response after each Prayer request)

Silent Meditation

Janet Caporale, Liturgist

Pastoral Prayer

Jeff Erno

**The Lord's Prayer:** (use words most comfortable for you)

Marsha Chapman, Liturgist

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 42:1-9

Marsha Chapman, Liturgist

Matthew 3:13-17

Pages 670 & 671 Old Testament

Acts 10:34-43

Page 3 New Testament

Pages 129 & 130 New Testament

Sermon: "When God Calls, Will We Consent?"

Jeff Erno

**\*Hymn: "Jesus Calls Us, o'er the Tumult"**

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## STATEMENT FAITH

Stewardship Message

back of red hymnal

Announcements

*(Be sure to read about up-coming events in the back of the bulletin.)*

Offering:

Offertory

**\*Doxology:** (The tune is found on page 356 of your red hymnal.)

**PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW...**

**PRAISE GOD, ALL CREATURES HERE BELOW...**

**PRAISE GOD, ABOVE, YOU HEAVENLY HOST...**

**CREATOR, CHRIST AND HOLY GHOST...AMEN.**

Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self

Jeff Erno

God of bold visions for our world, You love all peoples and nations, seeking a world where everyone flourishes in just and righteous lives. Use us and our gifts for the newness You declare possible. Make this newness spring forth in and through us. Amen.

**\*Hymn: "Take My Life, God, Let It Be"**

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\*The Light of Christ goes into the world

# Jesus Calls Us, o'er the Tumult

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*Cecil F. Alexander, 1852; alt.*

*Mat. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 21:15*



1 Je-sus calls us, o'er the tu-mult of our life's wild, rest-less sea;  
2 As of old, Saint An-drew heard it by the Gal-i-le-an lake,  
3 Je-sus calls us from the wor-ship of the trea-sures we a-dore,  
4 In our joys and in our sor-rows, days of toil and hours of ease,  
5 Je-sus calls us! By your mer-cies, Sav-ior, may we hear your call,



Day by day that voice still calls us, say-ing, "Chris-tian, fol-low me."  
Turned from home and toil and kin-dred, leav-ing all for Je-sus' sake.  
From each i-dol that would keep us, say-ing, "Chris-tian, love me more."  
Je-sus calls, in cares and plea-sures, "Chris-tian, love me more than these."  
Give our hearts to your o-be-dience, serve and love you best of all.



*Cecil Alexander, who in Ireland wrote sacred verse to teach children the meaning of the catechism and liturgy, designated this poem for St. Andrew's Day. Many years later Galilee was composed for this text by an English organist, William Jude.*

Tune: **GALILEE** 8.7.8.7.

*William H. Jude, 1887*

*Alternate setting: ST. ANDREW*

# Take My Life, God, Let It Be

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Frances R. Havergal, 1874; alt.

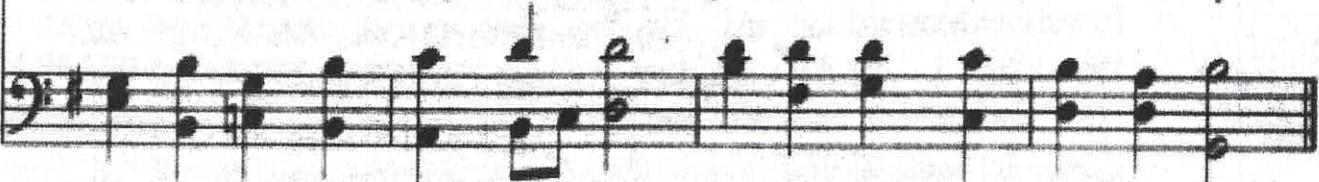
Rom. 12:1



1 Take my life, God, let it be consecrated faithfully.  
2 Take my spirit, let it move at the impulse of your love.  
3 Take my will; your will be done! Make your will and mine be one.  
4 Take my love and help it grow; let my loving overflow.



Take my moments and my days, let them flow in cease-less praise.  
Take my in - tel - lect and use all its pow - ers as you choose.  
Take my heart, and by your grace make of it your dwell-ing place.  
Take me now, and help me be part of Christ's com - mu - ni - ty.



Frances R. Havergal wrote her hymn following a visit to Areley House in Worcestershire, England. Among the ten persons at the house were "some unconverted . . . some converted but not rejoicing." Before she left, "everyone had got a blessing."

Tune: VIENNA 7.7.7.7.

Justin H. Knecht, 1797

Alternate tune: HENDON

\*Benediction:

Jeff Erno

One: A surprised John asked Jesus,

**Many: "And do you come to me?"**

One: Jesus came to him with a surprising request.

**Many: Jesus comes to each of us, inviting us to bold and hopeful action.**

One: **So when God calls, When Jesus arrives,**

**Many: We will answer the call and step forward.**

One: We will bring hope to those suffering injustice.

**Many: And light to those in darkness.**

One: Through the power of the Spirit,

**Many: We go to live our lives to the fullest.**

**ALL: AMEN**

**Please wait to exit unit after the recessional.**

Grace for fellowship hour

Jeff Erno

\*Postlude

*We scatter to serve\*\*\*\*\**

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### **Join together for refreshments in Fellowship**

#### **In Worship and Service Today**

**Sermon:** Jeff Erno

**Liturgist:** Marsha Chapman & Janet Caporale

**Children's Message:** Pastor Liz Wilson

**Choir Director:** Ken Martin

**Accompanist:** Ann McKinley

**Our Tech team:** Tammy & Ken Martin

**Floral Arrangements:** A gift created by Amy Wilson

**Ministers:** All the Immanuel Church faith community

**Sunday School:** Amy Wilson, Liz Wilson, Susanne Waldrep

#### **Church Officers & Staff**

**Moderator:** Ken Martin

**Vice Moderator:** John Wiechert

**Treasurer:** Art Nagasaki

**Council Secretary:** Janet Caporale

**Clerk:** Susanne Waldrep

**Church Secretary:** Sue Molczyk

**Building & Grounds Team Leader:** Art Nagasaki

## Calendar at a Glance

### **Weekly Events**

**11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship & Fellowship**

**5:30 p.m. Community Meal every Tuesday**

**5:00 p.m. Wednesday Free Meals**

**7:00 p.m. Wednesday Choir practice**

**6:00 p.m. Thursday Prayer Meeting**

**Thursday, January 15**

**6:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting**

**Sunday, January 18**

**ANNUAL MEETING, After service**

## **Birthdays and Anniversaries for the month of January:**

### **Birthdays**

January 3: Sue Lee

January 10: Emma Sellers

January 21: Peggy McCatty

January 23: Danielle Willcock

January 29: Seth Hanft

January 31: Joseph Willcock

**Please be sure to visit Immanuel's website at [www.icucc.org](http://www.icucc.org)**

**REMINDER to bring in old socks & flexible plastic Kroger packaging for recycling. Call Peggy with questions.**

### **Treasurer's Note:**

Our offerings for January 4 TBA next week. We need to collect \$1,675 each week to fund our approved budget. **Remember to honor your pledge commitments and tithes, especially when you miss any Sundays!** Art Nagasaki, Treasurer

**Please join us for Sunday Service via Virtual Worship. Go to:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/oxfordimmanuelucc>**

**You do not have to join facebook, it will ask if you want to join. If not click no and it will still get you to the service.**

**Please continue to collect and donate your pop can tabs. There's a container in Fellowship Hall. Pop can tabs help support the Ronald McDonald Houses where parents can stay when their child is hospitalized. Tammy will be sending our donation later in May to the Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor.**

**Knitters, crocheters and crafters: If you need yarn for projects, we have a wide variety of colors and types in our craft room downstairs. Just let Tammy or Ken know.**

**STARTING JANUARY 8, 2026 THERE WILL BE A PRAYER MEETING EVERY THURSDAY AT IMMANUEL AT 6:00 P.M.**

January 11, 2026

Mathew 3: 13-17

## Possibilities Unfolding The Baptism of Christ

The sacrament of baptism is still so shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding. In conversations with families, I often discover the desire to have their child baptized is rooted in an expectation to carry on a tradition.

Baptism, though, is a rite not a tradition. It's a moment where a child is claimed as Christ's own. It's a moment where family — both blood and spiritual — make a commitment, promising to raise the child in the faith. And in that moment that I hold the child in my arms, there is a holy, fleeting second where I realize only God knows the future. It is only God that holds the possibilities born at the font that will keep unfolding for the child till the day their last breath is taken.

Yet after the water is sprinkled on a child's forehead, the excitement of these God possibilities is pushed aside for a slice of the celebratory cake and photo ops with the newly baptized.

What does it take for us to remember our baptismal identities as Christ's own? How would that identify then shape our lives?

Thomas Merton, a 20th-century Catholic monk, addressed unfolding possibilities in a letter he wrote to a young mission worker who had become cynical and jaded. First, Merton urged the mission worker to stop relying on a job for fulfillment and to shape one's identity. This is only the world's way of trying to fend off a despairing sense of "nothingness."

Rather Merton advised that, "All the good that you will do will come not from you but the fact that you have allowed yourself, in obedience to faith, to be used by God's love."

Once we truly allow God to use our lives, the need to prove our worth disappears. We are set free to be our authentic selves, allowing God's power to work through us.

"The big results are not in your hands, but they suddenly happen. There is no point in building our lives on personal satisfaction," said Merton.

Through the waters of baptism, we are claimed as Christ's own. But the question remains to be answered: Do our lives reflect who we belong to? Are the possibilities unfolding before us truly God possibilities?

*God, we know Your plans for us are higher and better than we could ever imagine. We want to die to self and live for You. We want to claim our identities as Christ's own. Give us the strength to do so. Help us to let go of our tight group on who we think we are or who we wish to be. May we surrender completely to Your will, so that all Your beautiful possibilities might be revealed. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)

