****We have now been at Immanuel for a little over a year and as we roll into 2019, we are seeing how things are beginning to change. Yet, we also recognize how many things stay the same.

The biggest changes we have seen in the past year are on our staff. Pr. Carl’s addition to our team has been tremendous. Adding his 50+ years of experience is an incredible gift. Pr. Carl led the charge to bring Dr. Rollie Martinson to Immanuel in November and we can see now that our Elders are Rising!

Things have begun to shift with our staff as well. Tyler Leech has been an incredible leader of our Little Sprouts Day Care. We have recently moved the JFK before and after school program into Little Sprouts Day Care. This has shown many advantages for the families who utilize this important service. We are confident that Tyler is ready for this challenge and the transition has actually gone quite well. It has also provided us at Immanuel with some really great advantages in our children’s and youth ministry.

Sarah Beauregard, Holly Bromeland, and Kelly Gerlitz will be the primary leaders for our children’s and youth ministry. They will handle the main ministry load as we grow with our children from birth through college. We (Pr. Paul and Pr. Sara) will continue to be involved with children, confirmation and high school youth ministry. We honestly can’t think of any other place to be on Wednesday nights but we will be able to share that responsibility with this incredibly capable team. If you missed Ignite Sunday and the Children’s Christmas Pageant, there are several upcoming events where you can see for yourself how dynamic the children’s and youth ministry of Immanuel is becoming - *(See February Family Nights for children and an awesome Winter Retreat for Middle and High School)*!

We had a staff strategy day in mid-January. We are so grateful for the incredibly gifted people we have leading our congregation. We are amazed at the progress we have made together in the past 15 months. We have already tackled some tremendous challenges and made some significant changes. And the incredible thing is that WE’RE STILL FIGURING THINGS OUT. We’re still getting our legs under us. These changes have already made a huge impact and we are likely to continue to keep refining some of these things as we go forward.

The main thing about Immanuel that has NOT changed is its heart. When we first arrived at Immanuel, we were humbled and overjoyed to have received such a warm welcome. We have had a blast getting to know so many of you at Immanuel and we find even more people each week who are so much fun to be around. This past month some guests reported to us that they were amazed by the friendly reception they had experienced on their first visit. What will never change at Immanuel is the love of Jesus that is so strongly rooted into our core.

 We will continue to strive to love like Jesus. As our staff and leadership continue to put the pieces into place, we do so with the understanding that more and more people will want to be a part of our community. People are drawn to love, hope, and joy! These are the fruits of the Spirit that seem to be growing in abundance at our church. We strive to put our staff and volunteers in a position to succeed, so that the love of God is shared in every area of our church’s ministry. Continue to pray for Immanuel as we prepare for our annual meeting and as we look into the exciting future that God has for us.