

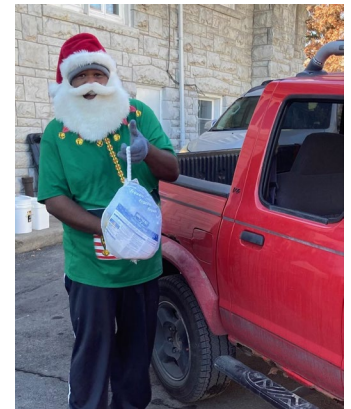


## Immanuel Community Outreach Association (ICOA) 2024 Year in Review

Thank you! If you're reading this then you probably played a part in the growth and development of ICOA over the last year. ICOA has shared Jesus, while meeting the needs of our neighbors in the Argentine community of Kansas City, Kansas. Take a glimpse at what has happened over the last year and how God has blessed ICOA.

### **Food Pantry**

The food pantry continues to serve approximately 300 families per week. Sometimes access to food has been scarce but we continue to look for options and count on God to provide the resources needed to feed our neighbors. ICOA continues to be a Harvesters partner pantry. We provide those in need with non-perishable items, fresh produce, and frozen meat. We were able to partner with Immanuel Bilingual Church to hand out turkeys to families in the neighborhood.  
*Right - Santa's helper gave out turkeys in December.*



### **New Truck**

ICOA embarked on a special initiative at the end of 2024 to purchase a refrigerated box truck and install a lift gate on the back. The addition of the new truck allowed us to become part of Harvester's pilot program, where we pick up directly from Sam's Club on Friday mornings. We are still assessing how the new truck impacts the pantry. So far, it has allowed us to have more food available for our neighbors. When we are not able to hold fresh food over until the next pantry day, we set items on the edge of our parking lot. The pictures below were taken on a Friday in December. The picture on the left was taken at 11:30 am and the picture on the right at 1:30 pm.



## **English & U.S. Citizenship Classes**

English and U.S. Citizenship classes continued throughout the year. Sue Larson from Trinity, Mission/Shawnee, continues to lead the English classes with the help of a few small group leaders. They average 20-30 students per week. Regularly new students come to class and those who have learned what they need move on. Susan Parrish from Bethany, Overland Park, continues to lead the U.S. Citizenship classes and averages two to three students per week. It has been exciting to have approximately five students become citizens over the last year.

## **Prayer Ministry**

When families sign up in the pantry line to receive food they are also asked if they have a prayer request. Many people began by asking for prayers for blessings, health, and safety for their children. Now they have started asking for more specific needs such as family members with drug addictions, upcoming surgeries, and work issues. We share these prayer requests with a dedicated group of prayer warriors. Talking with neighbors and offering prayers has allowed us to build relationships and get to know our community better.

*Meet Marina. I've been getting to know her over the past few months at the food pantry. When she comes through the food line, I've had a chance to talk with her and receive her prayer requests. One week she asked us to pray for her grandson who was sick. A cold was hanging on and he was having trouble fighting it. I told her we would pray.*

*The next time she was at the pantry, I asked about her grandson. With a huge smile on her face, she said he was better. But I could tell by her response that it wasn't just that his body finally fought off the germs or the medicine finally worked. She knew and believed the power of prayer was what made the difference.*

*Since then, she's asked for prayers for her son's work, for her boyfriend's health, and for her own*



*health. Every time I tell her we will pray. And she believes. She is expectant that God will answer and that those prayers will make a difference.*

*When I see her now, she has a big smile on her face. We talk about how she's doing and what's happening in her life. Then she thanks me for what we're doing in supporting the*

*community--both the food and the prayers. And she says it in a way that lets me know both the food--and the prayers--have made a positive difference in her life.*

*Written by Deb Harte, Managing Director at ICOA*

## **Bebés Felices**

Bebés Felices means "Happy Babies" and it began three years ago to support families with young children in the community. It started with playdates for kids and discussion groups for moms, then special events during holiday times giving out bilingual children's Bibles (in English and Spanish), and now offers a daytime English class with babysitting. The moms who participate enjoy the support for themselves and for their children. Of course, the biggest part of Bebés Felices is our HappyBottoms partnership that provides diapers monthly for children ages 0-4. In 2024, over 330 children were supplied with more than 102,000 diapers valued at approximately \$33,600. The families are grateful for this partnership and so are we. In 2025 we plan to offer a brand-new unique parenting class in



partnership with local social service agencies. *Left - bags of diapers are being delivered by a HappyBottoms truck. Approximately 90 bags of diapers are delivered each month.*



### **Immanuel Lutheran Church—Bilingual Worship**

What a joy it is to once again have bilingual worship in Spanish and English happening in Immanuel's sanctuary! The weekly worship is led by Pastor Daniel Jordan and his wife, Yinoy, with the support of Pastor Juan Zamora at Jesus el Buen Pastor Lutheran Church in Kansas City, Missouri. Worship started in August and the leadership and worship development continues to grow. With the help of Heather England from England-Designs, the church now has a new logo. The logo shows Christ as the focus and includes the colors green and blue to remind us of growth and baptism, as we are held in the hand of God.

The congregation held a Thanksgiving worship in conjunction with ICOA's turkey give away. They also provided Back-to-School blessings to students in conjunction with a school supply give away. *Right - Students from Trinity, Mission/Shawnee helped serve in the food pantry one Sunday morning and then attended bilingual worship. Here they are pictured with Pastor Daniel.*



### **Summer Interns**



Five college students lived at the Immanuel Church building over the summer to help support ministry in the Argentine community. Partnering with The Hub Argentine and YouthFront Neighborhood, the interns made sure food pantries had extra help, children and youth made meaningful connections with group leaders, and summer servant trips were prepped and ready to make a difference. At ICOA, interns helped Spanish-speakers with their English and with the help of Roxanne Reimer from Bethany, Overland Park, they led a soccer camp during one of the hottest weeks of the summer.

### **Building Restoration**

To maintain a working facility and develop it for current use, ICOA has continued to restore the century-old house and the church facilities that make up the Immanuel Church building. We continue to have issues with our plumbing, mostly due to tree roots. We have received some special grants this year to help with the plumbing and with roof leaks.

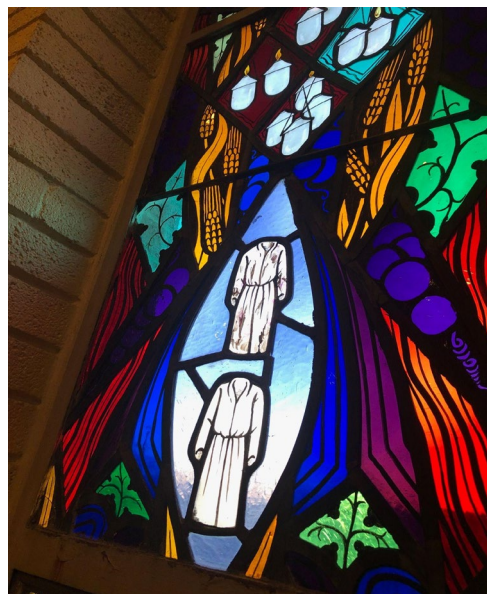
The third-floor remodel has gone well although it still has a few items to check off the to-do list. The Personal Retreat Space can house one or two people for study, rest, re-creation, and overnight stay. Its comfortable space has windows on three sides that let in lots of natural light. The conference room is just down the hall and is set up for electronic presentations and zoom meetings. One wall overlooks downtown KCMO as well as the historical Argentine mural and has padded kneelers so it can be used as prayer stations. The new conference table will be the focal point of the room, and we hope that the wood and an epoxy work of art will be created in Spring 2025.





Bunk rooms were created at the beginning of the year to house overnight groups. Three college groups stayed at ICOA over spring break, one high school group at the end of May, the summer interns lived in the building during June and July, and two overnight women's retreats took place in the Fall.

We are also in the process of repairing some of the beautiful stained-glass panels in the sanctuary. Many are showing wear after their 68-year lifespan. Our plan is to restore them so their beauty lasts another 68+ years.



### **Servant Events**

Besides the summer interns, servant event groups from around the Kansas City metro area came to serve, as well as youth and college groups from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Oklahoma. Groups helped with the food pantry, painted in the building, moved furniture, prepared for upcoming events, took care of light cleaning, and helped put together the Personal Retreat Space. *Left - a group of students enjoying cleaning up the kitchen!*



Our regular group of volunteers who run the Tuesday morning food pantry includes approximately 20 people from the Kansas City and Lawrence areas. They are a dedicated group who enjoy serving God

and the community and being together. Volunteers from Harvesters also join in from time to time. *Right - a college student speaking Spanish as he signs up neighbors in the food pantry line.*



### **Building Use**

Our building is also a resource for community groups and families. An Al-Alon group of Spanish speakers, Quinceañeras, and other celebrations were held in our building during 2024.

It has been a great year, and we look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in 2025. Thank you for being a part of making a difference in the community. See you soon!

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