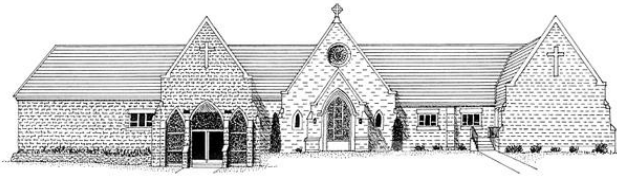


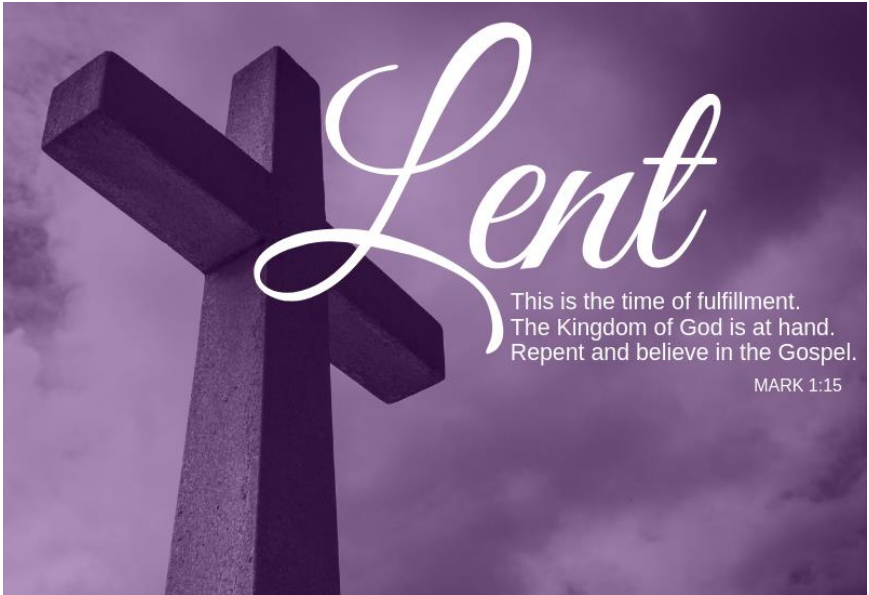
THE MESSENGER



Monthly news for Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Menominee,
Michigan

MARCH

2021



FROM THE PASTOR

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last week Pete and Jeannie Anderson shared a picture on Facebook that showed a few little green shoots making a February appearance – something that we certainly don't get to experience too often in the UP! While more snow and cold will undoubtedly make the struggle to live a little more difficult during these coming months, I find these plants' persistence and tenacity an admirable spirit that I want to indwell in me at the present time.

I say this because the exhaustion of the COVID-19 pandemic has settled on my bones, and I know that I'm not the only one. A news story I saw last week about how families with small children are handling the pandemic really brought this to light. A mother being interviewed stated that she had walked into the living room and found her six-year old son lying on his back on the floor and just looking vacantly away....very much unlike typical six-year old behavior. When she asked him what was wrong, he just started to cry because he just didn't know. As well, a parishioner came into the office last week and stated that, even though he's in good physical health, he just doesn't feel up to par. The times are wearing on us. It was frustrating when it was just our patience. Now, it's our mental health, our physical health, and, for many, our spiritual health.

So, as we long to be filled with energy and hopefulness once again, maybe this time of Lent can be used to do just that. Right before Moses died and the Israelites, who had been wandering in the desert for 40 years, entered the promised land, God made a covenant with the Israelites, in which part of it (Deuteronomy 30:1-5), God promises restoration. The verses read: "When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the

peoples among whom the LORD your God has scattered you. Even if you are exiled to the ends of the world, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you back. The LORD your God will bring you into the land that your ancestors possessed, and you will possess it; he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.”

While these verses speak directly to Israel’s restoration of land, in our contemporary days, these verses very much reflect our desire to be restored to pre-pandemic times. In either case, though, God is very clear that God will go to the ends of the earth to bring us back and to restore us to our former glory. Our simple, and only, response to this beckon, is to turn toward the LORD. Lent is defined as a six-week window to return to the LORD by engaging in scripture, fasting, and good works.

I truly believe that is the answer to how many of us may be feeling right now. By engaging regularly in scripture, being fed by the Spirit, and actively participating in being Jesus’ hands in our world, it not only fills us, but pushes out the sickness that currently envelops us. Pushing through the cold and reaching for the sun (Son), much like Pete and Jeannie’s plants, keeps us drawing upward and onward until we finally overcome the blustery season of winter and we can flourish and be people grounded in promise, people who reflect the glory of God’s goodness.

COVID-19 is wearing on all of us, but a time is coming when we will be restored to resuming our lives in a manner that is safe and joyful. Let us not simply twiddle our thumbs as we await that time. Let us live lives that reflect God’s love and let us be joyful in doing it, remembering that this is God’s time, a time which we return to the LORD, for that is never off-limits for any of us.

In Christ,

Pastor Mark

MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Church office hours are Monday – Thursday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. If you need to conduct church business outside of these times, please contact Pastor Mark at (906) 424-0003.
- **Sundays in-person/Facebook Live Worship will continue through March: We will offer only one service, at 9:00 am on March 7th, 14th, and 21st.** If you are planning on attending in-person, please be in compliance with all in-person practices, so that we can honor the health of all who gather here.
- **Safe Distancing Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, March 7th and Sunday, March 21st** during the 9:00 worship service. Drive-through Safe Distancing Communion will then be available for those who wish to receive it from 10:00 am – 10:30 am at the 14th Street building entrance.
- Midweek Lent services, CROSS WORDS, will be broadcast **virtually only** on Wednesdays, March 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th. Please see the Lenten Worship Schedule for information.
- On Sunday, **March 28th, Palm Sunday**, we will have two services at 8:00 and 10:00.

Easter Sunday – No in-person worship

While many of us have been able, and have been comfortable, to be able to worship in-person on Sundays during Lent, it has been determined that, with the potential of significantly larger crowds, that we will not worship in-person on Easter Sunday, April 4th. We are still in a pandemic and it is important that we honor and respect the health of all of our members. Instead of meeting in-person on Easter Sunday, we will Facebook Livestream a Resurrection celebration worship service at 9:00 am.



You are invited to walk with us through the season of Lent as we consider "Reflections on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ" under the theme of CROSS WORDS.

Words are important and we all know that there are many CROSS WORDS that are heard in our interactions with others in our world.

But not all of the words connected with the crucifixion of Jesus are negative and hostile. Many are positive and helpful to us as we make our journey together through life.

We will not meet in person for these midweek services, but they will be available on Facebook Live each Wednesday of Lent, broadcasting live at 10:00 am, and being available on our Facebook Page and website following.

Lenten Worship Services

In our time together, we'll consider the following CROSS WORDS:

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| ANGER | February 24 th | Pastor Scott Ehle, | Anger | | |
| HOPE | March 3 rd | Pastor Mark Laatsch | Hope | Joy | Peace |
| JOY | March 10 th | Pastor Ken Michaelis | | G | |
| | | | | R | |
| PEACE | March 17 th | Pastor Nick Johannes | | A | |
| | | | | C | |
| GRACE | March 24 th | Pastor Doug Schoen | | E | |



**Called to their promised
eternal home**

Sue Jones passed away on February 3. Many of you certainly remember Sue as Emmanuel's Organist for many years. Sue also directed the Good Life Singers and the church choir. Our sympathy to her son, Jeremy and Naomi Jones and their son Greyson as they mourn her death. May they all be filled with the peace of Christ.

Emmanuel mourns with the family of Francis and Nancy Camps at the sudden death of their son, **Tony**, on Sunday, February 21st, due to a snowmobile accident. A private funeral was held for Tony on Thursday, February 25th. May Francis, Nancy, Stacy Reisz, Mara Hendrickson and Kory Brown, and all who mourn be filled with the presence and hope of the Holy Spirit at this difficult time.

May all who mourn the death of a loved one be filled with the hope and promise of being reunited in the resurrection to eternal life.



Griffin Christopher Blohm, son of Tyler & Olivia Blohm was claimed in the waters of baptism on February 7. Griffin's sponsors were Kyle Anderson and Sara Blohm.

A monumental **"Thank You"** to Bruce and Marcia Peters for their donation of the screen support riser. Bruce created and constructed the riser and Jim Fawcett stained and varnished it to match our sanctuary woodwork. We are indeed blessed as we are able to enrich our worship and learning opportunities with this generous gift!

Faith at Home Sunday School

The New Testament

Learn about the life of Jesus and the many parables Jesus used to teach.



Lesson video links and handouts will be emailed to parents. Videos will also be available on our church website and our YouTube channel at: Emmanuel Lutheran Church—Menominee, MI

EMMANUEL BUDGET NEWS

As of January 31, 2020

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| *Your Contributions to the General Fund | \$17,453.82 |
| *Your Approved Budget Amount | \$17,704.72 |

Thank you to everyone for you incredible and generous contributions during a unique and trying time in our history. We are blessed and empowered to celebrate God's love and God's presence in 2021 because of your commitment!

LENT: Time to go the second mile

“If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them.” - Leviticus 25:35a

Thanks to vaccines, we can expect an end to the pandemic this year, but the economic recovery will linger much longer. Our government reports that half the families in our nation lost income in 2020, with many of them forced into desperate poverty. Billions of dollars in federal assistance and a moratorium on evictions have helped ease the pain, but many are suffering. The pandemic’s economic victims may include you, your family members, and people in your community or congregation. Lent has begun, but it’s not too late to adopt a discipline that may simultaneously help bring you closer to God, increase your faith and help your neighbor. Pray for guidance on how best to respond to the need.

Here are some ideas:

- Pray. Set aside time each day to talk and listen to God.
- If you can afford to make a financial contribution, give sacrificially to a ministry that’s helping people get by; a food pantry, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, clothing closet. Can you make a weekly donation through Lent, and beyond?
- If you cannot afford to make a financial contribution, can you volunteer? Are there special talents – writing, online communications, organizing, fund-raising, etc. – that you might be able to donate?
- In your congregation, start or expand a helping ministry. Alternatively, lead your church to become a ministry that’s already doing a good job.
- Learn about the needs in your congregation and community, and then educate others.
- Advocate on issues of poverty and economic justice.

The pandemic’s bruising effects will take years to heal. As God’s people, we can help by praying, serving and supporting those in need.

–Rob Blezard Copyright © 2021, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD.

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,



The other day, right in the middle of a phone conversation, my office phone suddenly stopped working. I was incredibly irritated, and I yelled into my empty office how I felt about that phone. Several days

later, I was snowshoeing, and my extendable walking pole contracted unexpectedly to about 14 inches, making it useless. Again, I found myself hurling verbal insults at an inanimate object. The snowy and peaceful silence of the wooded trail was shattered as I called my pole “stupid” and tried to forcibly manipulate it back to its appropriate length. But no matter how much I pulled and twisted and complained, it wouldn’t budge. Stupid thing.

With a vaccine being slowly rolled out, it feels like we should be in the homestretch of the pandemic. But the finish line seems to recede the closer we get. If you feel weary and irritable, with no patience for even the smallest inconvenience, you are not alone. We brace ourselves for the big things – loss and death, ongoing challenges to returning to what we miss, the need to be supportive to loved ones, but the little things...they can send us over the edge. Perhaps you too have experienced an adult temper tantrum over something that, pre-pandemic, would have been more manageable. These days, our skin is thinner and our emotions nearer the surface. Criticism that would have bounced off the armor of personal confidence now cuts deep. We have no reserve, no wherewithal, no room in a psyche already full to overflowing to cope rationally with one more thing.

In a presentation about what it takes to be resilient, I learned the number one thing was being realistic. So, let’s be realistic. This is hard. We want to be done. We want to hug and sing and gather around the family table

with loved ones we haven’t had supper with in over a year.

All in good time. The day will come. We just need to wait a ...little...bit...longer. Some months at least.

So, we wait. We wait for our well to be filled, our strength to be renewed, our spirits to be refreshed. I have found that laughter helps...and play. But most of all, I have found that acknowledging the feelings of weariness, naming that I am tired of waiting, and then extending grace to myself and others, goes a long way to getting past it.

The prophet Isaiah has something to say about waiting.

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

*they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.*

~Isaiah 40:31

Wait with me. Wait for the Lord. Wait for new life, for forward movement, for a fainting spirit to rise up on wings. God is with you, and God is at work; creating vaccines, supporting health care workers, helping leaders think through the details, and offering all of us the promise that with God’s help, our weariness will give way to new strength.

And in the meantime, find joy, in even the little things. It took two pliers, my husband, and a jar opener to get my pole back to its proper length. I’m ready for another snowshoe. If you hear someone yelling “stupid” in the woods, just ignore it.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan



Easter Memorials

As you prayerfully consider your *Easter Memorial* contributions, please know that all of your gifts are appreciated and used to further various ministries of our congregation and wider church.

Youth Mission Fund:

The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately brought our various youth endeavors to a stop, but once it is safe to do so again, we will be coordinating mission trips, gatherings, and other opportunities. This fund enables us to have seed money for whatever mission opportunity or service project we are able to participate in.

Emmanuel Maintenance Fund:

As our church campus grows older, the maintenance needs become a bit more pronounced. This fund has been established to be responsive to the ongoing physical maintenance of the church building and property.

ELCA World Hunger:

Your designations to the ELCA World Hunger appeal go directly toward the church's call to justice in response to those who do not have food through the ELCA's Good Gifts program. The money is used to provide farm animals, garden plants, and to dig wells for those who do not have the resources to do this on their own.



All Easter memorials must be received by

Sunday, March 21st

*to be included in the Easter Memorial booklet.
Your gifts are greatly appreciated.*

I would like to:

\$_____ Place an Easter Lily in the chancel (\$12.00 each)

\$_____ Youth Mission Fund

\$_____ Emmanuel Maintenance Fund

\$_____ ELCA – World Hunger Appeal

Given _____ In memory of _____

_____ In honor of _____

_____ In thanks to God _____

By _____

Envelope Number _____

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT EMMANUEL

Worship 9:00 a.m.

Livestreamed on our Facebook page

CONTACT US:

Phone: (906) 863-3431 Fax: 906-863-4193

Email: mail@e-mmanuel.com

Council President, Rhonda Pedersen

Email: elcpresident@e-mmanuel.com

or

Visit us on the Web at www.e-mmanuel.com



Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at
Emmanuel Lutheran Church Menominee Michigan ELCA

STAFF:

Pastor

The Rev. Mark Laatsch - Cell Phone: 906-424-0003

Email: pastor2901@e-mmanuel.com

Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Mrs. Patti Treptow

Church Secretary

Mrs. Judy Raygo

Custodian- inside Mrs. Carol Parrish

Custodian - outside Mr. Lee Parrish



We are a congregation of the Northern Great Lakes Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America