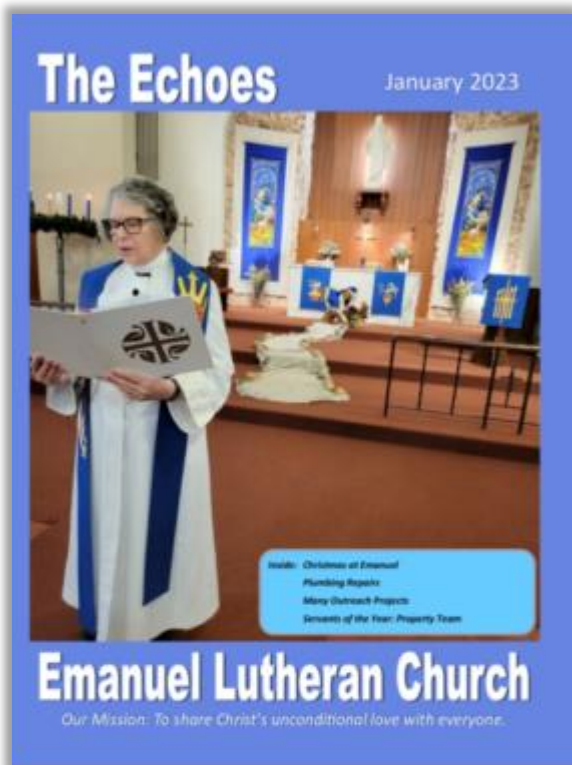




The Year in Review

January 1 - December 31, 2023

Prepare the Way



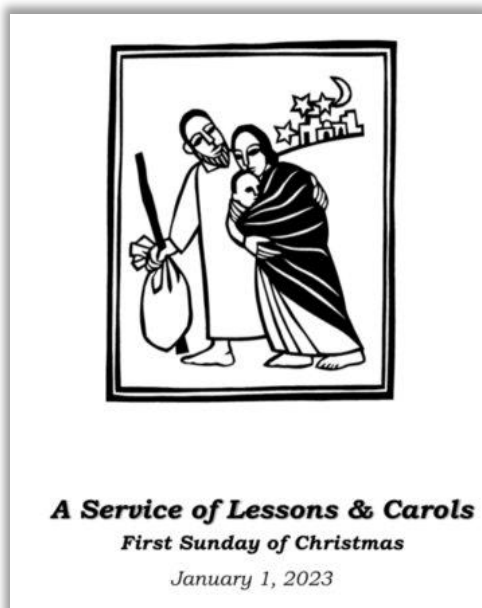
January

The January Echoes recaps the Advent season, and the Christmas Eve and Christmas day services.

There is also an article about the Piecemakers giving a quilt to Barbara, our oldest member who will celebrate her 100th birthday this year.



Servants of the Month for January are Dick, Dennis and Arie for all the work they did to fix the plumbing and roof leaks.



Pastor Lyn has taken this Sunday off. She asked Barbara to be the presiding minister and the text study group to do the readings. It will be a service of Bible readings and carols. Suzanne gets a call at 7:00 AM from Barbara that she is flooded in and will not be able to go to church. Suzanne assures her that this is no problem.



Usually, when Suzanne welcomes everyone, she is not Pastor Lyn. Today she is not Barbara. She explains Barbara's situation to the congregation. Suzanne will lead the first half of the service, and Kathleen will lead the second half. Everyone else will do what they had planned to do.

Suzanne invites Dennis to come give an update on the plumbing situation. Dennis says that it is certainly a happy new year because the plumbing has been redone, all of the dry wall patching and replacing is done, and the leak in the roof that was recently discovered has been fixed, too. The congregation gives Dennis and the property committee applause in appreciation for all their hard work.

Barbara plays the opening hymn. Suzanne leads the Christmas dialog with the congregation responding. They pray the opening prayer together.



Suzanne reads the first lesson from Isaiah. Then the congregation sings "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming."



Pat reads Psalm 98. Then the congregation sings "O Little Town of Bethlehem."



Kathleen reads the third lesson from Hebrews. Then the congregation sings "The First Noel."



Lois reads the fourth lesson from John. Then the congregation sings "It Came upon a Midnight Clear."



Chris reads the fifth lesson from Luke. Then the congregation sings "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice." Suzanne has already advised the congregation that the sermon today will be reflections from the congregation on this hymn and to listen carefully to the words.

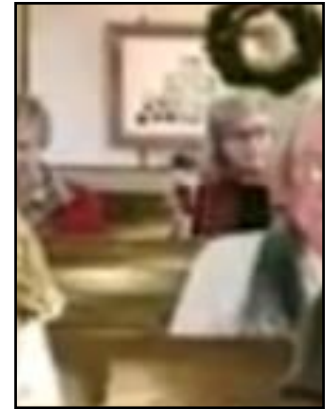
*Suzanne says that it's only fair that she go first because Pastor Lyn had told the text study group that this was going to happen. She says that at first it seemed a "no-brainer" that we would rejoice, but then she remembered some times when she didn't really feel like rejoicing. Then she thought of the Bible verse that says to "rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances." She says that she decided that at least she could rejoice that no matter how bad the situation, she knew that God was with her. Then she heard the line from the carol that says: *Now we need not fear the grave.* This, she says, is what it's all about to be a Christian.*





Pat shared that she spent two days in the hospital this past week. When she was too weak to get out of her chair, Jack called the ambulance. She said that she was really scared but the EMTs told her not to worry. She rejoices that she is okay now.

Kristine says for her the song's special verse is also: Now we do not fear the grave. Her family has had deaths at Christmas that have been very sad, but she knows all's well at the end.



Chris says that she rejoices because the Emanuel congregation is her family and friends.

Yvonne says that she was doing so well, and then she got COVID. She says she felt like God was saying, "It is what it is. Deal with it." She also says that she read a passage from The Message that said not to worry. God would send his angel to tap you on the shoulder and lead you where you are supposed to go, so there is no need to worry.





Elaine remarks on the love and peace that she feels in this room today. She says it just has to be a wonderful year.



Dan says that he is amazed at what a small planet we live on, and how insignificant humans are in the great universe, and yet God cares about us. He also rejoices that we are a community that is both family and friends.



Kathy and Chris take the offering. Then we share the peace.

Kathleen takes over. She prays the prayers of intercession. She explains that we will be using the communion packets that were consecrated by Pastor Lyn last Sunday. She leads us in saying the Lord's Prayer.





Dan invites everyone to come forward for all are welcome. After all have communed, Kathleen says the final blessing, and Dan extinguishes the candles. Then he leads the recessional, and the service ends with "Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior."

Lois and Janice have prepared breakfast casseroles for the fellowship time. What a nice way to welcome in the new year.

Thank you, everyone who participated in this service.



Baptism of Our Lord

January 8, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is January 8, the Baptism of our Lord. Pastor greets us warmly and thanks everyone for the service last week. She enjoyed watching it on line. She especially thanks Suzanne and Kathleen for filling in at the last moment.





We sing the opening hymn, confess our sins and sing the Kyrie. We pray together the prayer of the day.

Dan is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from Isaiah. God's servant is endowed with God's spirit in order to bring justice to the nations. The servant will not exercise authority boisterously or with violence, nor will weariness ever prevent the fulfilling of the servant's task. God's old promises have been fulfilled; the servant's new assignment is to bring light to the nations.

Psalm 29 is read responsively. It speaks of the power of God's voice.

The second reading is from Acts. In this passage, Peter crosses the sharp religious boundary separating Jews from Gentiles and proclaims the good news of God's inclusive forgiveness in Jesus's name to Cornelius, a Roman centurion. As a result of Peter's preaching, Cornelius and his family become the first Gentiles to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Pastor reads from the Gospel according to Matthew. Before Jesus begins his ministry, he is baptized by John, touched by the Spirit, and identified as God's child.



Pastor begins her sermon by asking us, "What was your last epiphany?" In other words, what have we learned lately?

She says that the star must have had deep meaning to the Magi. This story shows that non-believers are part of God's salvation plan. They were warned in a dream to go home by a different way. Pastor believes they became followers of the Way.



The Advent baptism that we heard about was to prepare the way. The Epiphany baptism is for the identification of Jesus as God's son. This baptism fulfilled all righteousness, to show that the prophets were right, and to obey the Torah.

Pastor asks if we hear what God wants or only what we want to hear? All who were present at that baptism heard God's voice saying, "This is my son." God did not say, "You are my son." He was not just speaking to Jesus, but he spoke to everyone, so that all would know that.

The church exists to do what God requires. This is a struggle that never ends. God listens; we listen. Then an epiphany happens.



Lois is the assisting minister for today. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. Then she prays the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace.



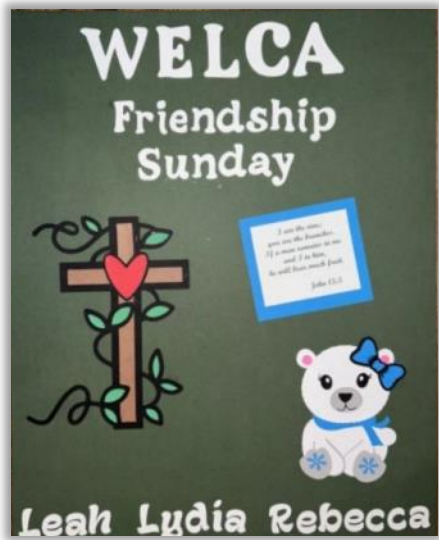
Marsha and Barbara take the offering. Then Pastor begins the communion liturgy, so that she can consecrate the bread and wine.



We are invited to come to the table to share the body and blood of our Savior.



We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We are told to go in peace and to follow the way of Jesus.

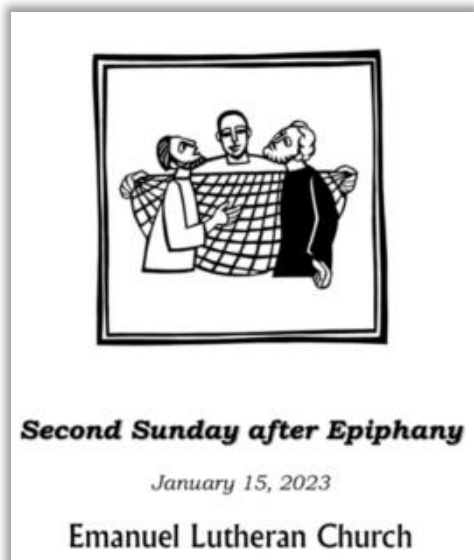


This is the first Friendship Sunday of the year. This year the theme for WELCA will be to bear fruit. This quarter our verse is John 15:5. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.

Our hostess this Sunday is Leah Circle.



The Circles will be lead by Marsha (Lydia), Mary Lou (Rebecca), and Suzanne (Leah) this year. Each Circle will host an event.



It is the second Sunday after Epiphany. It is also birthday Sunday. The chancel is adorned with the green paraments and banners.



Pastor greets us warmly and welcomes visitors. She says it's nice to have a little respite from the rain. She makes a few announcements, including the document The Year in Review is now ready for purchase.



We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We are forgiven in the name of Christ our Savior.

We sing the Kyrie and pray the prayer of the church.



Barbara is the reader. The first lesson is from Isaiah. Here the servant, identified as Israel, speaks for herself and describes her honored mission. Called before her birth like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, the servant is not only to restore Israel, but the servant's ultimate assignment is to bring news of God's victory to the ends of the earth. God, in faithfulness, has chosen Israel for this task.

Psalm 40 is read responsively from The Message. This passage speaks of God's rescuing the writer who in turn tells everyone about God.

The second lesson is from 1 Corinthians. Though God's church in Corinth is a fractious congregation, beset with many conflicts, Paul opens this letter by spotlighting the multiple ways God has enriched and sustained its life as part of the divine call into the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor reads from the Gospel according to John. John the Baptist's witness to Jesus initiates a chain of testimonies as his disciples begin to share with others what they have found.



Pastor begins her sermon by indicating that the season of Epiphany focuses on light. We are called to be light and to invite others to come along and see. Pastor says she has encountered a great amount of sadness, grief, depression, disillusionment, pride, arrogance, greed and a lot of bad behavior, and not just on TV.



She follows this by saying that these encounters have been followed by a great amount of compassion, love, grace, mercy, forgiveness and generally, a lot of good behavior.

She asks if Epiphany matters. She says that Epiphany are those moments when we see God, and that does matter. They are the moments when we let our light shine, and it does matter.

Pastor tells us that the gospel directs us to the Messiah which directs us to God. The story of Jesus is really the story of God. John the Baptist is a witness to bear witness. She says that we can't be a witness unless we have a story. We are part of each other's stories.

Isaiah told the people who were in exile that God would send a Messiah. Pastor says that challenges often make it impossible to go back to the way it was. God has a plan, bigger things in mind. He has given us to be a light to the world. We can't keep God a secret. We have to tell everyone. God will give us the words. Even our deepest sadness can be a light to the nations.

Pastor asks us if we are willing to be a light even if we don't feel like it, or if it's socially difficult.



Dan is the assisting minister today. He leads us in the confession of our faith according to the Apostle's creed. Then he prays the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Pastor consecrates the bread and the wine. Then all are invited to the table to receive the body and blood of our Savior.



It is birthday Sunday, and Pastor invites all who celebrate their birthday in January to stand up. We pray together the birthday blessing.

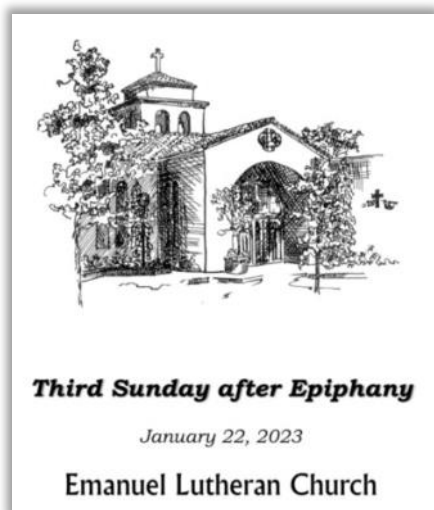


Then we receive the final blessing, and Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.

We proceed to Luther Hall where we enjoy fellowship and birthday cake. Happy birthday Mary Lou and Fanney.



It is January 22, the third Sunday after Epiphany. Pastor greets us warmly and makes several announcements.



One important announcement is that this Tuesday, January 24, is our 88th anniversary. Pastor tells us to start thinking about two years from now. She says that year will be one long party.



We confess our sins and receive forgiveness. We sing the Kyrie and pray the prayer of the day. Then we have the reading of the lessons.

Rebeca reads from Isaiah. In this passage, the northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experience the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.

Then Rebeca leads us in reading Psalm 27 responsively. This psalm rejoices that God gives us shelter in times of trouble and lifts us up above our enemies.





Matthew reads from 1 Corinthians. Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God's salvation.

Pastor reads the Gospel according to Matthew. Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.



Pastor begins her sermon by saying the version of the Bible that we used today said, "Change your life." The usual version that we use says, "Repent." The main topic based on this gospel is usually fishing for people or evangelism. Today we say outreach, but it's really the same thing.



Pastor wonders what it means "to go fishing" in a culture that doesn't go fishing. Today's gospel begins after Jesus's stay in the desert. He learns that John the Baptist has been put in prison. Jesus moves to Capernaum. Maybe he wanted to get away, or be where there were more people or resources, and to fulfill prophecy. Jesus begins his preaching, like John, with "Repent" or "Change your ways."

Pastor reminds us that we cannot change our ways by ourselves. This can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were open to change. They knew who Jesus was. He had been preaching and healing in that area. They did not have to go very far from home to follow Jesus, but now God came first. Paul, in his letter, reminds us that God's call is not about us.

Pastor gives us a little background on fishing in those days. It was controlled and taxed by the government. By leaving that behind, they were breaking away from the powers that be. They began to help people follow the way of Jesus.

Pastor tells us that faith comes from hearing the word. Our task is to share our faith in a way that is exciting to hear.

She mentions a commentary that she has recently read that says there are seven important words to remember: turn, learn, pray, worship, bless, go, and rest.

Turn toward the Son. Learn some new scripture. Pray intentionally in real time. Worship with others often. Bless others by showing how you have been blessed. Go share love with your neighbor. Rest your soul when it is weary.



Kathleen is the assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. She also prays the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace and the offering is taken by Chris and Barbara.



Pastor blesses the bread and wine, so that we may receive the body and blood of the Savior.






We commune. Then we receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



We go out to enjoy fellowship together over coffee and goodies.



It is the fourth Sunday after Epiphany. It is also the annual congregational meeting which will take place right after the service.



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
 January 29, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

Pastor greets us warmly and makes several announcements. She reminds us to stay for the meeting after the service. Then we will have fellowship. We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We receive forgiveness.



Lois is our reader today. The first lesson is from Micah, With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has “wearied” Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want nor expects lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

We read Psalm 15 responsively. This passage speaks of how a person lives rightly with God.

The second lesson is from 1 Corinthians. According to the world’s standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

Pastor reads from the Gospel according Matthew. Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

Pastor begins her sermon by quoting a commentary that she has read, “Now that we know, we have to do something about it.” She say that sometimes this takes time.



The passage from Micah requires action. "Do justice." "Love kindness." "Walk humbly with God." Pastor says that love and justice are on the same side of the coin. Too often doing justice ends up in violence. Micah was an ordinary man. He was not a citizen of Jerusalem. He lived about 700 years before Christ. God often uses ordinary people to exclaim extraordinary things. Hear and heed. Listen and do. God is weary of people not listening to him and doing things on their own.

In the Gospel lesson, Jesus teaches his disciples what they can expect in a life of service. Before this passage happens, Jesus has been baptized, chosen four disciples, preached and healed the sick. Pastor says that the beatitudes are complex. The first four tell who benefits from God's rule. When God rules, all things are set right.

Pastor asks us if we are willing to do justice by God's standards. Sometimes, we are called to acted individually. We are called to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly. We may be persecuted, but we will be blessed.



Kathleen is the assisting minister, and she leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. She also prays the prayers of intercession. Then we share the peace and the offering is taken.





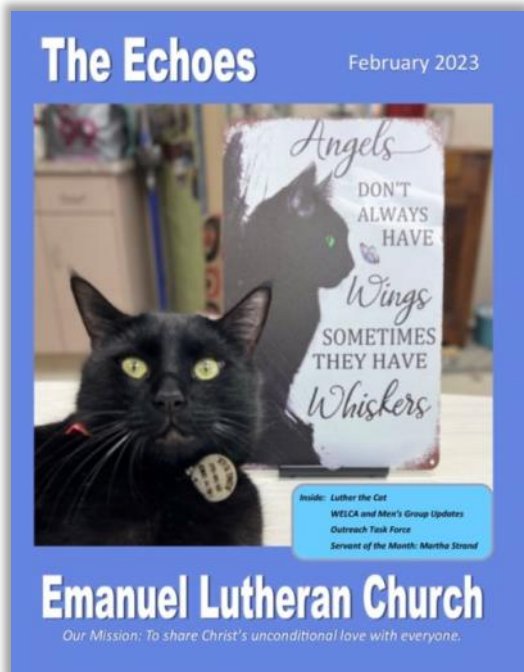
Pastor blesses the bread and wine, so that we may partake of the body and blood of Christ. We come forward to the table where all are welcome.



We receive the final blessing, sing the sending hymn, and Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We remain in our seats for the annual meeting. The budget is passed. Dennis and Marty are selected to be our voting representatives to the Synod Assembly which will be held in September.



The work of the annual meeting being completed, we adjourn to Luther Hall for fellowship.



February

The February Echoes features Luther, the church cat. He seems to have adopted us. Pastor has taken him to the vet, and he is healthy and safe to be around children. He is very sweet and friendly.



The Echoes also reports that the torn awning has been replaced. That should stop the rain leaking into the building.

The men's ministry group meets for breakfast and Bible study.



Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 5, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, and the first Sunday in February. It is Food for Faith Sunday. Jeri is the Trunkmaster this month. Elaine adds her contribution to the trunk.



Pastor greets us warmly and makes a few announcements. We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins, so that we may be ready to commune. We sing the Kyrie.



Chris reads the lessons from the back of the room. The first lesson is from Isaiah. Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and clothing the naked.

We read Psalm 112 responsively. This psalm reminds us that we are blessed when we follow God's commandments and help one another.

The second lesson is from 1 Corinthians. Though people such as the Corinthians are enamored with human philosophy and wisdom, Paul continuously presents God's hidden wisdom which is Jesus Christ crucified. True spiritual maturity involves judging ourselves and others in light of God's revelation in the cross.

Pastor reads the Gospel according to Matthew. It is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount. In this section, Jesus encourages his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, doing good works and keeping God's commandments.

Pastor begins her sermon by indicating the people who are the "salt of the earth" have many good qualities. Likewise, people who are the "light of the world" are compassionate and happy. These two qualities are communal and are deeper than just the surface stuff.

Pastor reminds us that we are not meant to be the "lone ranger." We are meant to be together and work together. The word "you" can be both individual and communal.

Sometimes we ask, "Where is God in all the misery that's in the world. In Isaiah, the people obeyed the letter of the law, but not the spirit of the law. God is only impressed with what we do for others, not what we do to make ourselves look good. We are to be mirrors of God's actions. We are to work toward unity not divisiveness.

The Corinthians were impressed with themselves. Pastor tells us that there are three parts to spiritual maturity.

- 1. We are saints in this together.*
- 2. No spiritual gift is missed. We all work together.*



3. God is faithful.

We are to use our gifts together to prepare the world for Christ's return. Pastor says that she read an article that said, "If God is absent in the world, it's because we are absent."

Salt is only good with other things. No one wants a lot of salt. Light is needed where there is darkness. We need to let the God that is in us be more evident. Jesus was a reformer. He said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul, and your neighbor as yourself. Our good works belong to the community.

Our mission statement is to share Christ's unconditional love with everyone. Pastor challenges us to live our mission statement.



Suzanne is the assisting minister today. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. This is followed by the sharing of the peace. Chris and Barbara take the offering.

Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to commune, being assured that all are welcome.





Kathi helps with communion.

“This is the body of our Lord, broken and given to you.”

“This is the blood of our Lord, shed for you.”



We receive the final blessing, and Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We are told to go in peace and follow the way of Jesus. We go into Luther Hall to enjoy a time of fellowship, coffee and goodies.

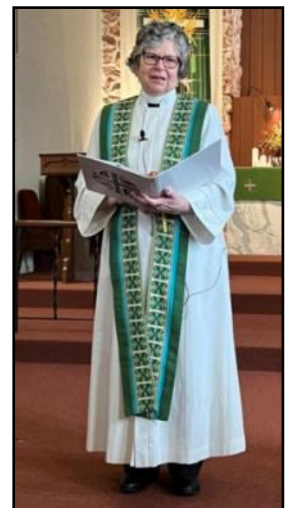


On Saturday, Valentine cookies are decorated and will be handed out to the congregation on Sunday.



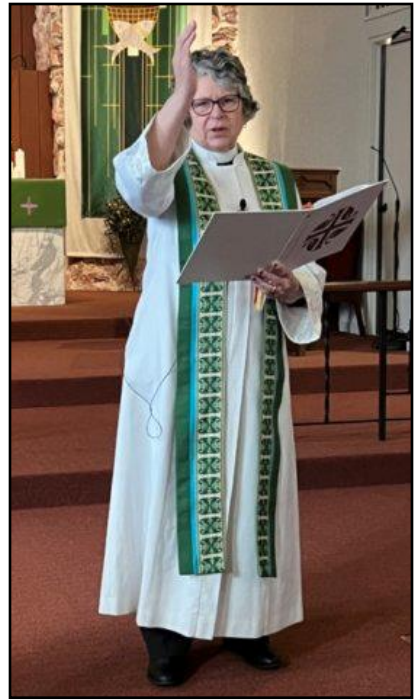
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
 February 12, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is February 12, the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany. Pastor welcomes us to the service and indicates the announcements of importance.



We sing the opening hymn, confess our sins, and receive forgiveness in the name of Christ our Savior.

We sing the Kyrie and pray the prayer of the day. Lois reads the lessons. The first lesson is from Deuteronomy. The Lord sets before the people of God a clear choice. Life and prosperity will come to the faithful; loss of the land will be the consequence of disobedience. Choosing life entails loving and holding fast to the Lord. Life in God's presence presupposes the promise made to the ancestors.



We read responsively from Psalm 119. This psalm tells us that those who follow the teachings and commandments of God are happy.

The second lesson is from 1 Corinthians. Human leaders in the church are not the ones who control ministry. Rather they are coworkers who belong to God, the One who truly controls and continuously empowers the ministry of the church.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. By telling us not to retaliate, Jesus keeps us from taking the law into our own hands. By loving and praying for our enemies, we can overcome evil with good. Trusting in the Holy Spirit to help us — we can show love to those for whom we may not feel love.

Pastor begins her sermon quoting Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk. He said that it is our job to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. Pastor reminds us that showing love when there is no sentiment expressed is not authentic. But, she says, when we love as God commands, it follows that love is genuine.





The passage that was read from Matthew is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount. This deals with dilemmas that last a lifetime. Jesus directs his words to three groups:

- Disciples: There will be a change in priorities. Don't get proud. Face your hardships.*
- Leaders: There is a challenge to their love of power, money and authority.*
- Crowd: There are tough topics that we face in everyday life: anger, murder, ego, lust, divorce, and revenge, to name a few.*

Some of this can feel overwhelming. We need each other. We

need to worship together. We need more of God in our lives. We are unfinished.

The scripture tells us to choose life. That means to follow the commandments and to choose love. We need to show a Christ-centered love. Pastor says she has noticed that when catastrophe strikes, it often brings out the good in people. She believes that human need should take precedence over ideology. She is saddened that while Turkey has received so much help, Syria has not received any outside help.

Pastor reminds us that our trials and troubles are significant and that we are worthy of love. She says that we may not ever achieve perfect love for others, but we can keep trying.



Barbara is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace.





Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to come to the table where all are welcome.



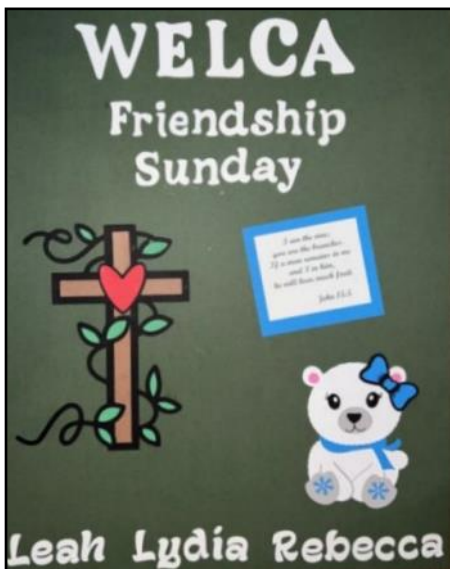
We receive the final blessing where we ask God to renew our strength to do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with him.

Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We are told to go in peace and to follow the way of Jesus.

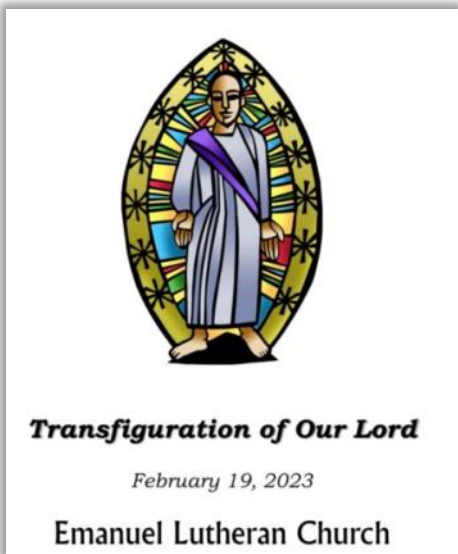




As we leave, Matthew and Rebeca hand out the Valentine cookies that were made on Saturday.



We join in fellowship and enjoy the goodies provided for us by Lydia Circle.



It is the Transfiguration of Our Lord. The chancel features the white paraments. This Sunday marks the transition between the Season of Epiphany and the Season of Lent which begins this coming Wednesday.



Pastor greets us warmly and reminds us to look at the announcements in the bulletin. She does indicate a few important ones. She also reminds us that tomorrow the office will be closed due to the holiday.

We sing the opening hymn, confess our sins and are assured of forgiveness in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

Today's liturgy includes singing "This Is the Feast." We pray together the prayer of the day.



Kathleen is our reader this morning. The first lesson is from Exodus. At Mount Sinai, Moses experienced the presence of God for forty days and forty nights. The "glory of the Lord" settled on the mountain, and on the seventh day God called out to Moses. On the mountain God gave Moses the stone tablets inscribed with the ten commandments.

We read Psalm 99 responsively. This scripture tells of God's speaking to the people.

The second lesson is from 2 Peter. Peter speaks of being a witness at the transfiguration where God's voice was heard, declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son. By the activity of the Holy Spirit, God's voice continues to be heard through the word of scripture.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Shortly before he enters Jerusalem, where he will be crucified, Jesus is revealed to Peter, James, and John in a mountaintop experience of divine glory called the transfiguration.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that listening is an art form. She says that most of us develop selective hearing at a very early age. This is the kind of hearing most of us have toward God.

God told his followers to listen to Jesus. He said this twice. Once was at his baptism. The second was at his transfiguration.

Pastor wonders what would happen if she told us to take the next 10 minutes in complete silence and listen to God. She thinks maybe we would figure she didn't have a sermon.



Pastor says it's easier to be silent when we are out in nature, on a mountaintop. Even though there would be sounds of nature, these don't seem to distract us. These sounds are the music of nature.

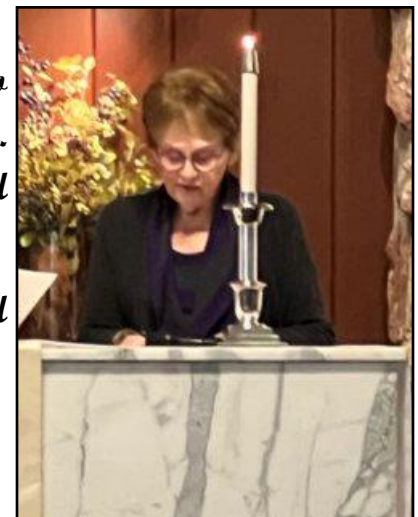
Pastor speaks about the Old Testament lesson for today. When Moses met with God up on Mt. Sinai to receive the 10 Commandments, there was fire and there was noise. Everyone one below was a witness to this.

Peter was a witness to the transfiguration. Prior to this story, Peter realized who Jesus was, "You are the Christ," but he didn't understand what that meant. Again, when he was a witness to the conversation that Jesus had with Moses and Elijah, he didn't understand the significance of this. Peter had human things on his mind.

Pastor says that sometimes we forget to listen in order to comprehend. Mountains and silence are good for our soul. When we listen, our minds need to be on God, not our problems. God's voice and message terrified the disciples. When the human Jesus touched them, they were transformed.

Our job is to listen, hear and speak God's transforming love to others. The more we listen to God, the better we get at acting on it. We are to look for the divine and act on what we have heard and seen.

We sing the hymn of the day. Lois is the assisting minister, and she leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

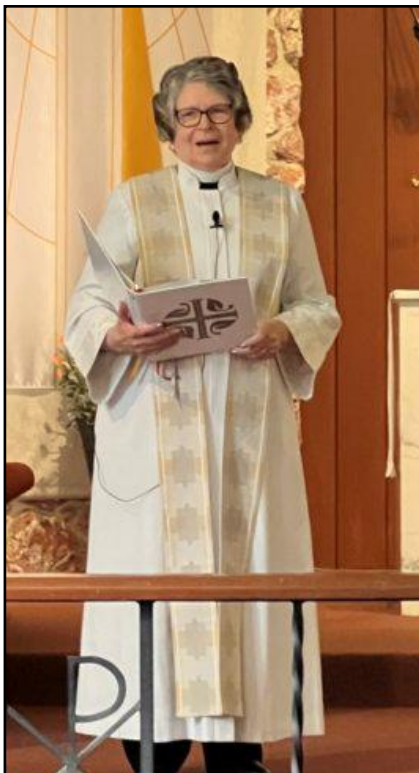




We share the peace. The offering is taken while the choir sings the anthem.



We begin the Great Thanksgiving, and Pastor blesses the bread and wine, so that we may commune. Everyone is invited to the table for all are welcome.



It is Birthday Sunday. Pastor leads us in a special blessing for those who celebrate their birthdays in February. She invites everyone to stay for fellowship and enjoy a piece of birthday cake.



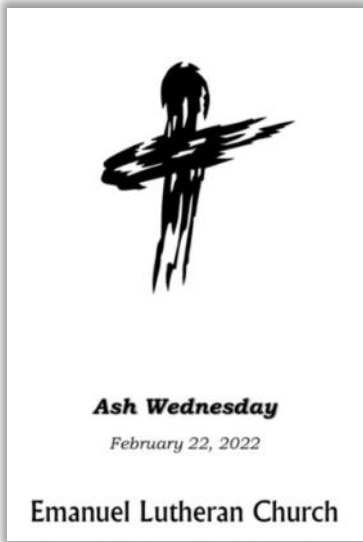
Pastor prays that God will bless, strengthen, and uphold us, today and always. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional while we sing the sending hymn.



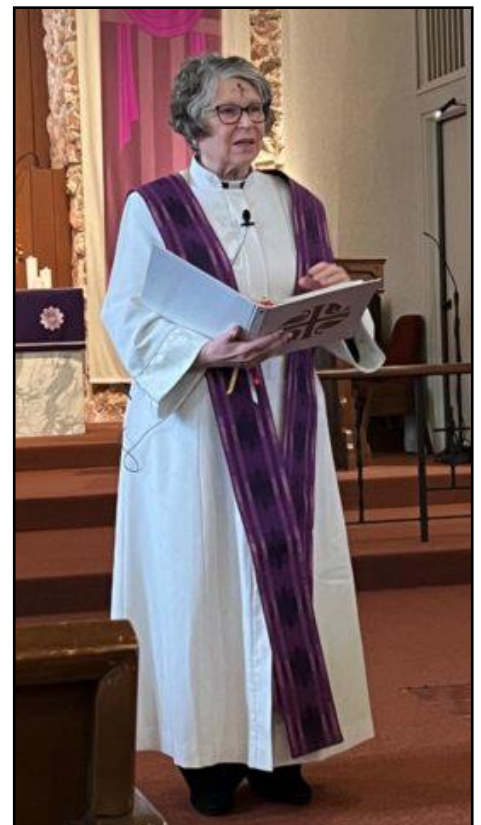
Lois tells us to go in peace and follow the way of Jesus. We leave to enjoy a time of fellowship and birthday cake.

Happy Birthday, Kathleen, Barbara, Chris and Suzanne.





It is February 22, Ash Wednesday, the most solemn day of the church year. Pastor greets us warmly and tells us that the theme for Lent this year is Mosaics. She says that a mosaic is made up of broken pieces with jagged edges that are put together to form something whole and beautiful. This is what God does with our lives. She mentions that there is a poster in Luther Hall that features the R words for this season: rebellion, restlessness, regret, rejection, responsibilities, resources, repentance, resistance and relationships.

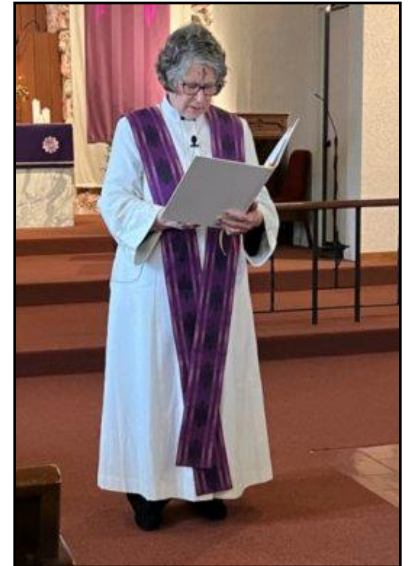


The service begins with the opening hymn, followed by Psalm 51, read responsively. We pray together the prayer of the day.

Kathleen reads from the Book of Joel. Because of the coming day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

Pastor begins her message by mentioning jagged edges. She says that mosaics are made with pieces with jagged edges, but they are put together in such a way that the finished mosaic is beautiful. She says that our lives are like this, all pieces with jagged edges, but that God can put us together so that in the end we are beautiful.

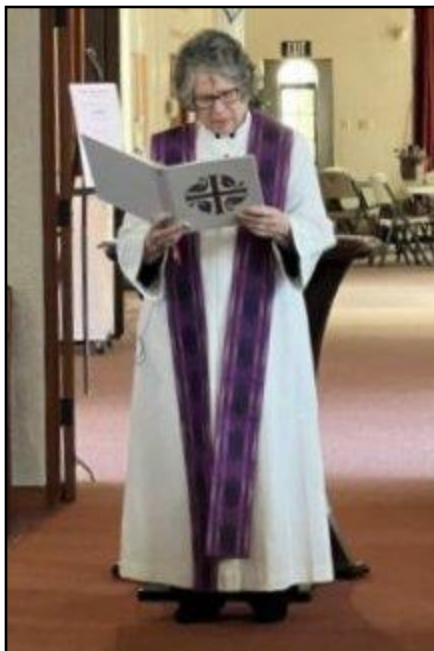


Our word for today is Rebellion. She says that we are all guilty of rebellion against God. Often we rebel against God's forgiveness. She says that now is the time for self-reflections and repentance. She reminds us that to repent is to change directions. We think we have all the time in the world to get around to repenting, but Pastor says that we never know when it will be too late.

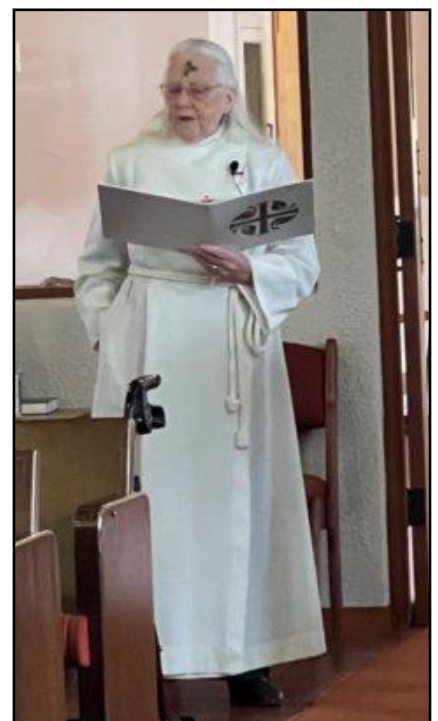
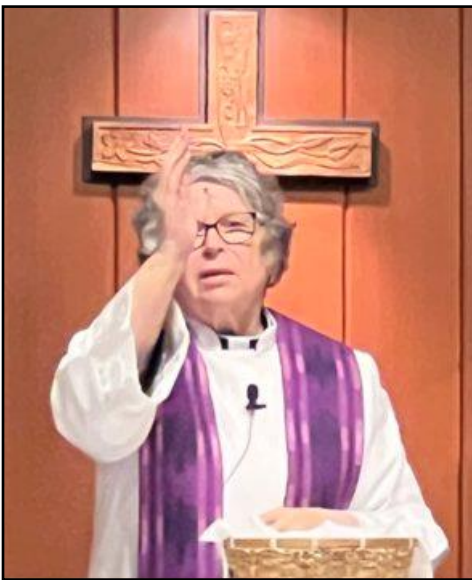
Pastor tells us that Jesus knows our motives. We need to be careful that we don't flaunt our spirituality. We should not be giving alms, praying and fasting to show everyone how religious we are. We are to do these things in secret.

Pastor asks us what can we let go of this Lenten season. She assures us that God will take all our jagged pieces and put them together is a beautiful mosaic.

Pastor moves to the back of the sanctuary to the baptismal font. It is here that we will experience the imposition of ashes. Pastor reminds us that we are dust and to dust we will return. It is fitting that this takes place at the font to remind us of our baptism.

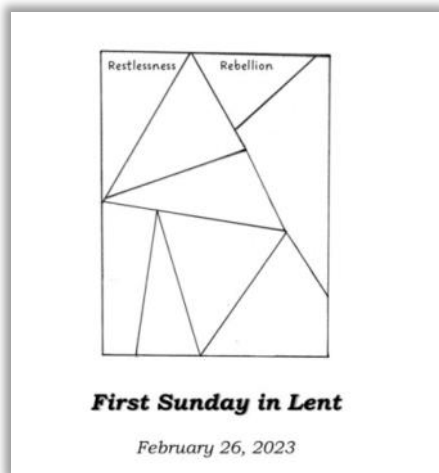


Kathleen leads us in the prayers of intercession. Then we begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to come to the table where all are welcome.



Pastor blesses us in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Kathleen tells us to go forth into the world to love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.



It is February 26, the first Sunday of Lent. Pastor greets us and calls attention to a few announcements. We confess our sins and are forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We sing the Kyrie and pray the prayer of the day.



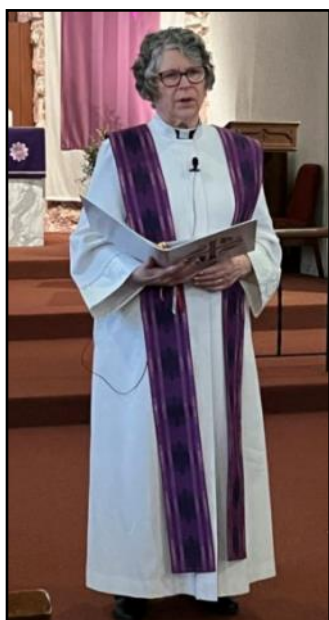
Marsha is our reader today. The first lesson is from Genesis. Human beings were formed with great care, to be in a relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

We read Psalm 32 responsively. The psalmist speaks of the pain of sinning and the joy of being forgiven.

The second lesson is from Romans, as written in The Message. Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

Pastor reads from the Gospel according to Matthew. Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

Pastor begins her sermon by welcoming us to Lent, a 40-day period of time for taking stock and facing our shortcomings. The theme for Lent this year is Mosaic. This is to remind us that God takes all our discordant pieces and puts them all together, forming something beautiful. Pastor says that Jesus knows all about us. Nothing surprises him.



Our Mosaic word for today is Restlessness. We are more susceptible to temptation when we are restless. Adam and Eve had access to everything in the garden except for one tree. They wanted to have it all. Their act of rebellion, born of restlessness, didn't make them wise. It made them ashamed.

Evil spoke with conviction. Evil knows scripture, Evil is not stupid. It uses all the tricks to trap us into thinking it is good. Humanity is capable of good and evil. The language about evil can cause harm, but we can't ignore it.



God doesn't cause bad things to test us. His test is for us to realize how deep our faith is. God's purpose is to strengthen our faith. The word Satan comes from the Hebrew word for adversary. It referred to other people who used manipulation to tempt others.

Pastor tells us that evil cannot coerce behavior. The Tempter entices people to do something they wouldn't normally do. We know the difference between right and wrong.

When Satan takes Jesus to the temple, he is trying to get Jesus to question whether or not God is with him. God wants us to be close to him, but he will not force us.

Jesus's power is greater than the tempter's tricks. He knows how hard it can be for us to resist temptation. After his ordeal, the angels take care of Jesus. This is an act of service. Jesus can take our restlessness and turn it into service.



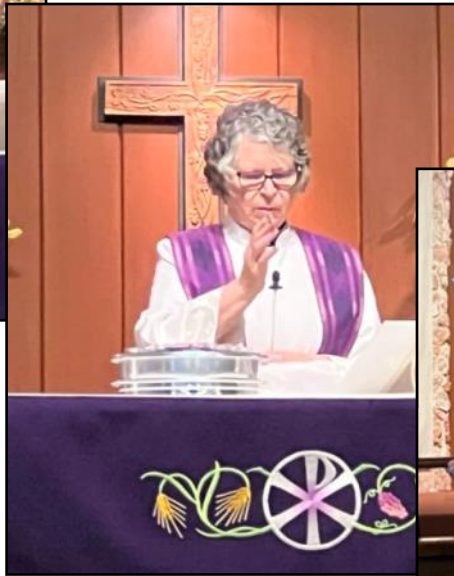
Dan is the assisting minister. He leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

The offering is taken and we share the peace.

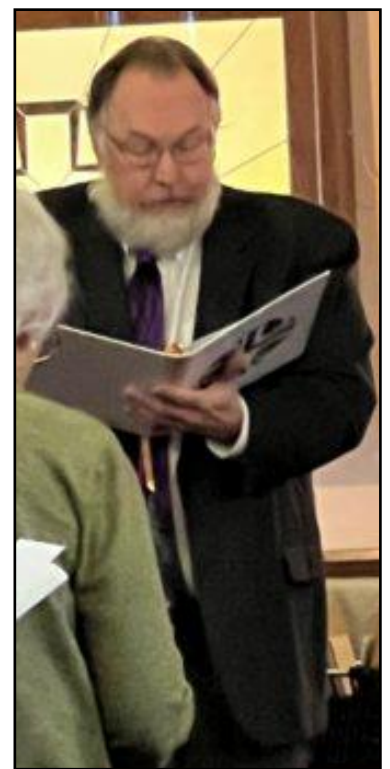


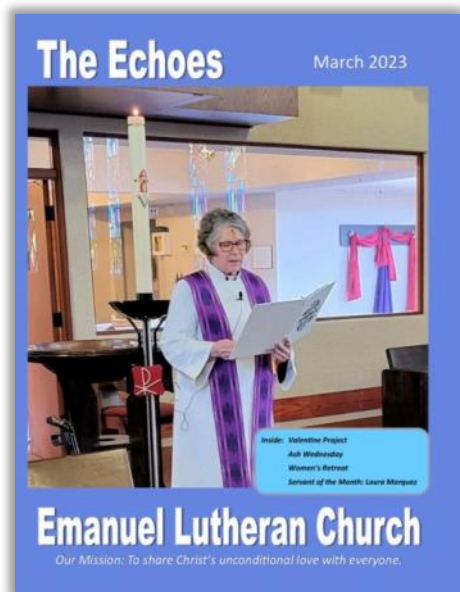


We begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to come to the table where all are welcome.



We receive the final blessing for our Lenten journey. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn. Then Dan tells us to go in peace and serve in love. We join in fellowship in Luther Hall.



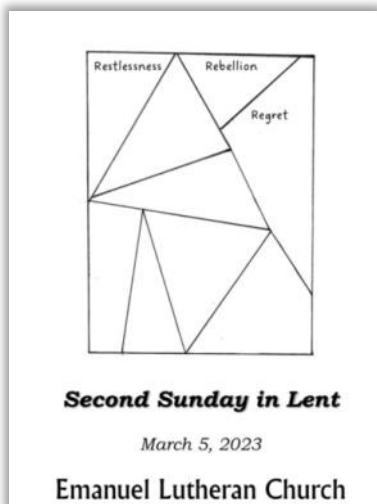


March

It is March and the Echoes features news about the events from the last month.



Our Servant of the Month is Laura, our Day Care director. She is also active on the Outreach Ministry committee in addition to all her duties as director. Her latest ministry is to care for Luther, our church cat. Thank you, Laura.

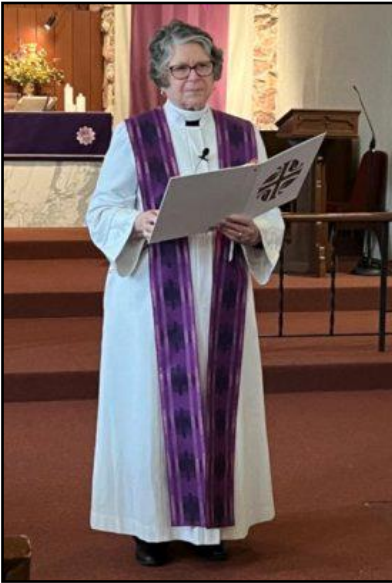


It is March 5, the second Sunday in Lent, and the first Sunday of the month.

Lois is our Trunkmaster this month. Her car is ready to receive our Food for Faith items. Rue puts her donation in the trunk.

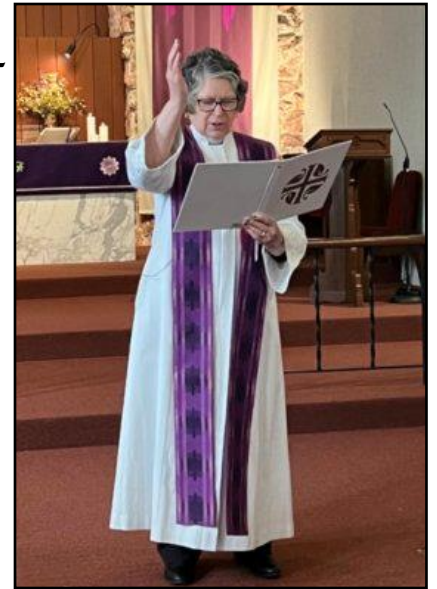
Inside the sanctuary, the crane mobile is back.





Pastor greets us warmly and makes a few announcements. We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. Pastor assures us that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that we might receive life.

We sing the Kyrie and pray together the prayer of the day.



Pat is our reader. The first lesson is from Genesis. God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose — that through them, all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

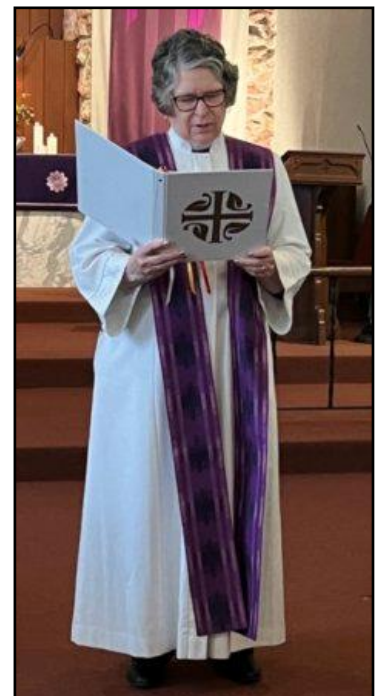
We read Psalm 121 responsively. This psalm assures us that God will always be there to help and protect us.

The second lesson is from Galatians. Paul writes that Abraham was alive to God in his life, and that aliveness was his faith.



The heroic response Abraham made to God has thrown his image across all of history as an example of what it means to have faith. But Abraham shows us something else, namely that faith isn't a simple question of response, it's more a matter of where that response will be focused. Abraham lived long enough and listened carefully enough to hear God's voice speak a new word, and Abraham responded to that in trust.

Pastor reads the Gospel according to John. A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.





Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us of the prayer for confessing our sins. We say, "Forgive us for sins, known and unknown, for things done and left undone.."

*Our word for today is *Regret*. Regret can eat away at our souls. Regret can steal our joy and potential. Unresolved regret can damage our purpose in life.*

Abraham certainly had regrets. He passed his wife Sarah off as his sister twice to save his own life. But Abraham grew in faith. He may have had regrets, but it is his faith that he is known for.

Nicodemus is mentioned three times in the New Testament, all in John. Pastor begins with the third time: he helps to bury Jesus. The second time he offers a subtle defense at Jesus's trial. And the first time is when he comes in the night to ask Jesus questions. He comes in the dark and finds the light of the world. Pastor says that Nicodemus represents humanity.

Nicodemus was probably a member of the Sanhedrin. He was not a disciple, but he helped other believers. It was risky to seek out Jesus. Pastor says that sometimes we do risky things that we regret, or we do nothing and regret that. Nicodemus may have regretted not doing more with or for Jesus.

Jesus said that no one can know God unless born from above. This is God's action, not ours. This is a serious action that God does everyday. It happens when we remember our baptism. Every day is a "do-over" day. God accompanies us through risk taking and regret.

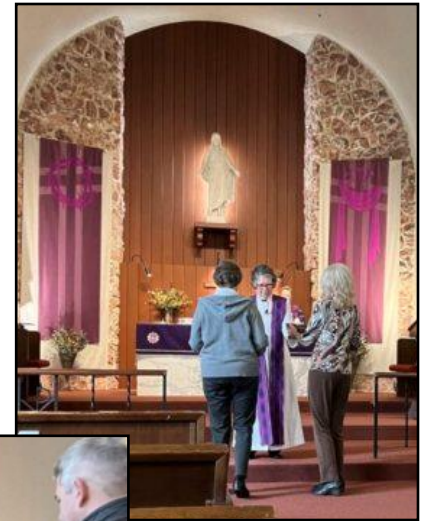
Nicodemus says, "We know..." We are meant to hear this. Humanity seeks hope: light in the darkness. God takes our regrets and offers a way of hope and salvation. For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, that whoever believes in him will have eternal life. No amount of darkness will ever overcome the light that is Jesus. "Born from above/So loved..." express the magnitude of God's love.

Our challenge: soothe regret, show love, point the way to Jesus.

We sing the hymn of the day. Melissa is our assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.



We share the peace. Chris and Barbara take the offering. Then we begin the Great Thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to come forward to commune.



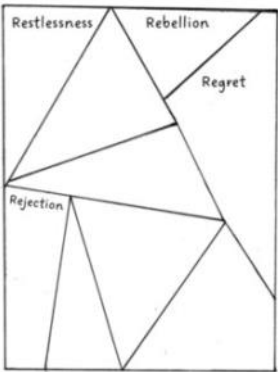
We receive the final blessing. Pastor asks God, the giver of love, Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth to bless us in this Lenten journey.



Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn.

Melissa tells us to go in peace and serve in love.

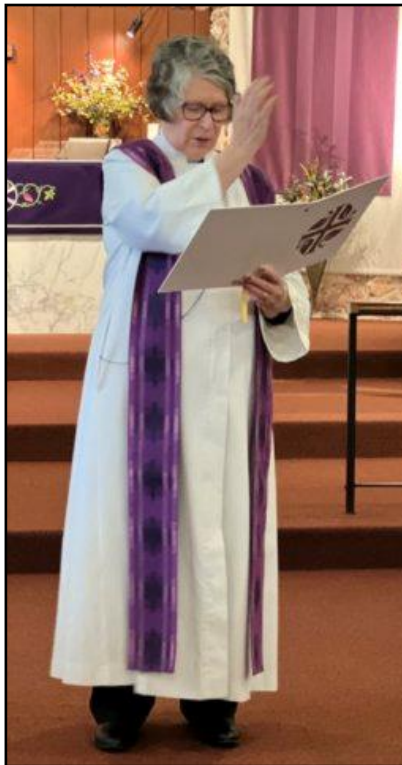
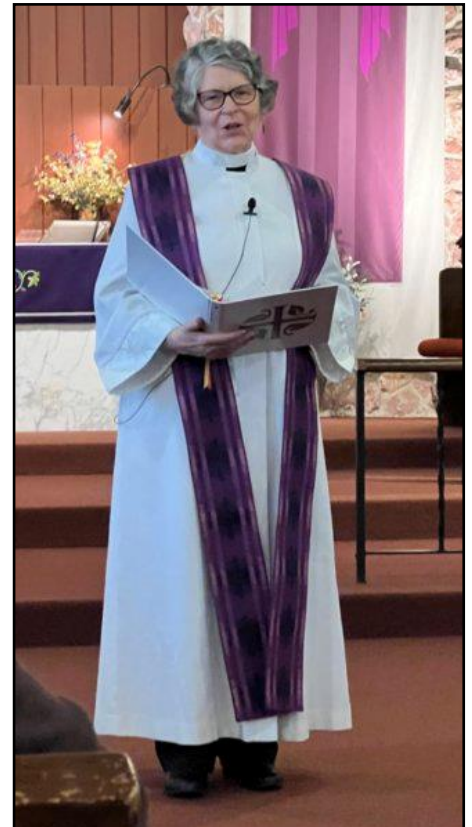
We enjoy fellowship in Luther Hall.



Third Sunday in Lent
 March 12, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is March 12, the third Sunday of Lent. Pastor welcomes us warmly and makes a few announcements.

Then she greets us in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We are forgiven by God who embraces us with divine mercy, forgives us in Christ's name and revives us in the Spirit's power.

We sing the Kyrie and pray the prayer of the day.

Melissa is our reader. The first lesson is from Exodus. Because the thirsty Israelites quarreled with Moses and put God to the test, Moses cried out in desperation to God. God told Moses to strike the rock to provide water for the people. The doubt-filled question — “Is the Lord among us or not?” — received a very positive answer.

We read Psalm 95 responsively. The first part is a praise psalm. The second part is an angry response from God for putting him to the test in the wilderness.



The second lesson is from Romans. Though we often hear that God helps those who help themselves, here Paul tells us that through Jesus's death, God helps utterly helpless sinners. Since we, who had been enemies, are reconciled to God in the cross, we now live in hope for our final salvation.



Pastor reads the gospel lesson from John. Jesus defies convention to engage a Samaritan woman in conversation. Her testimony, in turn, leads many others to faith.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that we all have things we have to do. Although we don't usually put ourselves in dangerous situations, we sometimes have to do risky things.

John says that Jesus had to go to Samaria. This was a risky thing to do, but Jesus was on a divine mission. He never did anything by accident. He went to Samaria on purpose. God's plan was for this woman and her community to come to God.

Pastor says that the Jews and Samaritans had great disdain for each other. Both thought that they were the true religion.

Jesus was tired. The woman that he met at the well had been branded by her community as "bad." She was a victim of rejection. Rejection is our Mosaic word for today. Jesus defied convention by talking to her. The disciples also risked rejection by going into town to buy food.

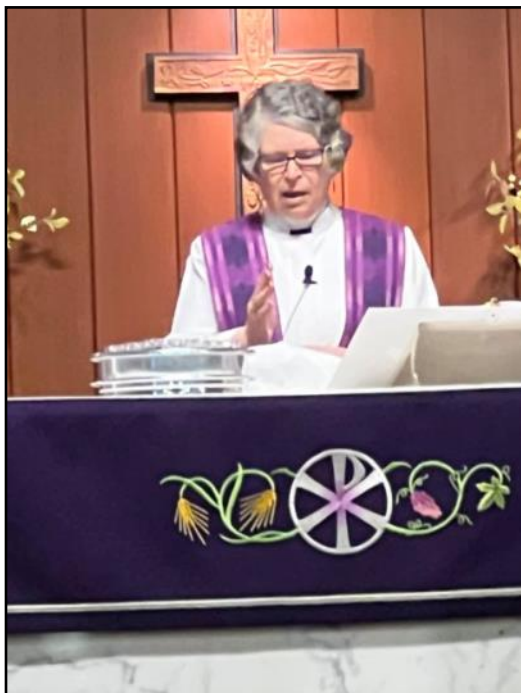
Jesus did not reject her or condemn her. He was there to teach her about "living water." By this, he meant to drink in the Holy Spirit. He invited her to ask for living water — to name her need. She goes to tell everyone who he was. She had to do this.

Jesus know our needs, but he wants us to ask. We also need to tell everyone about Jesus.

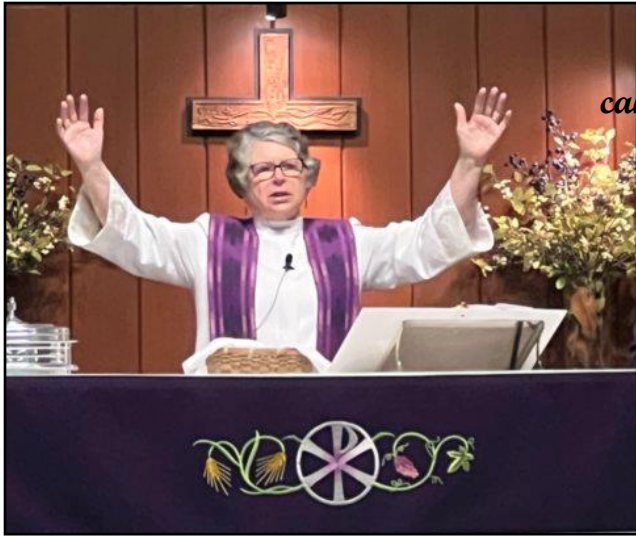




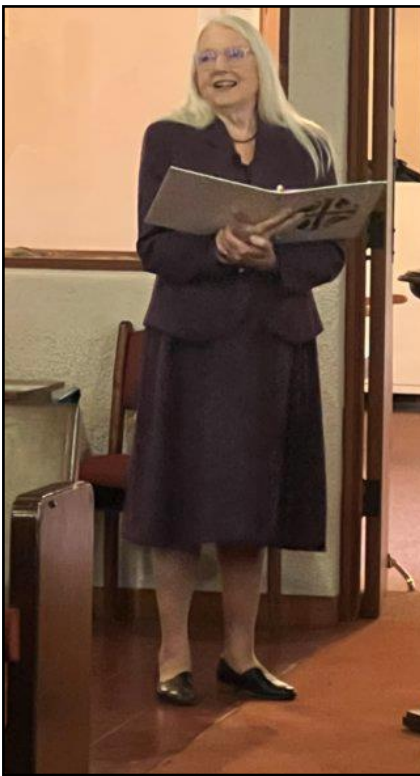
We sing the hymn of the day. Kathleen is our assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace. The choir sings while Chris and Kathy take the offering.



*We begin the Great Thanksgiving.
Pastor blesses the bread and wine, and we commune.*



We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



Kathleen tells us to go in peace and serve in love. We leave to enjoy goodies and fellowship in Luther Hall.

Bunco

It's Saturday, March 18. We gather for a baked potato bar dinner and bunco. This is a fundraiser for the Day Care. There is also a raffle table filled with wonderful things to win.



The kitchen crew almost has dinner ready.





After dinner, we begin to play bunco. We begin with rolling ones. We play until the head table reaches a score of 21. When the bell rings, the “losers” move on and the “winners” stay, but you switch partners. We end the first round when we have played through the sixes. Then we break for dessert. We play a second round. Then it’s time for the raffle drawings and the prizes.



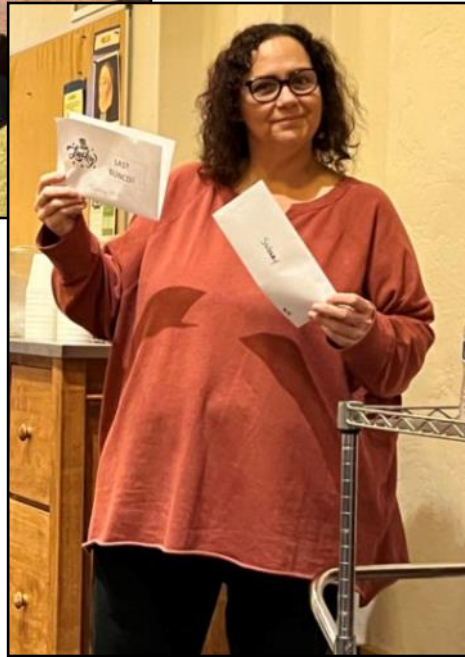
Linda coordinates the drawings. We carefully check our tickets.



Kristine wins for being a 'loser.'

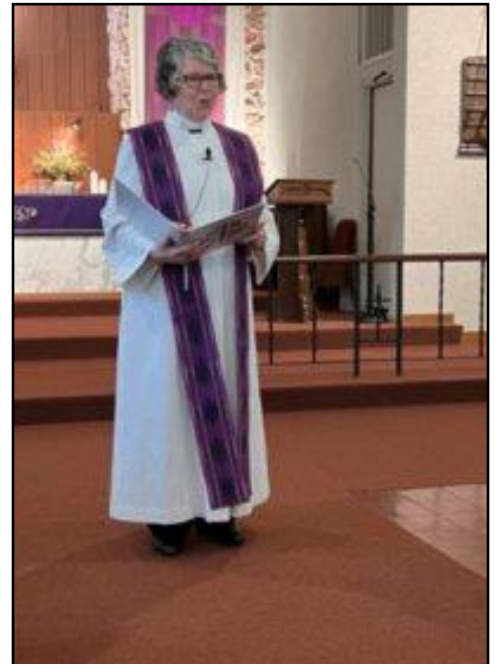


Janice has the most wins: 10 out of 12 games! Matthew has the most buncos: 9, but Laura got the last bunco. Win or lose, we all had a wonderful time, and the Day Care benefitted.



Fourth Sunday in Lent
 March 19, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

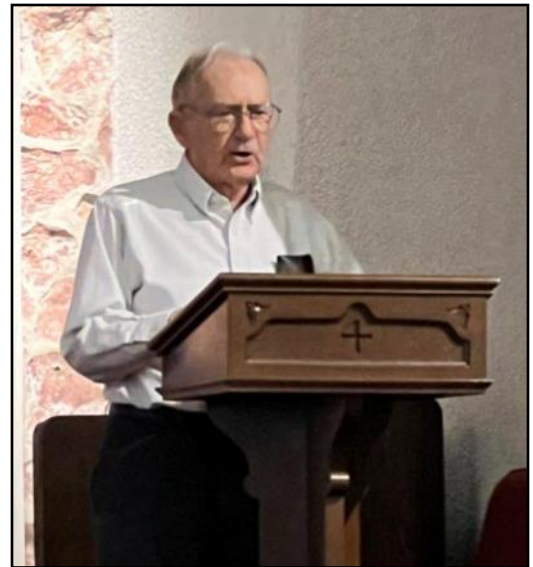
It is March 19, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, and it is Birthday Sunday. Pastor welcomes everyone and makes a few announcements.





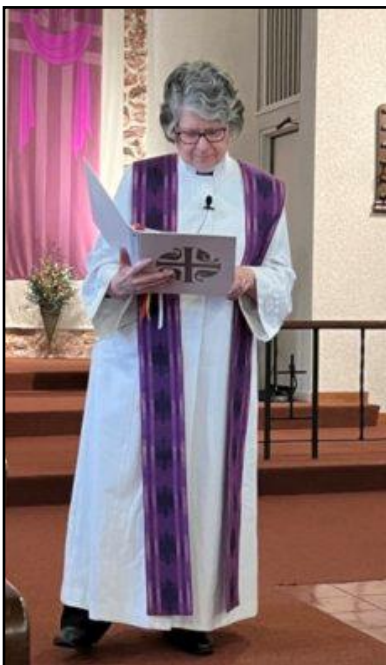
We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. Pastor assures us that we are forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We sing the Kyrie and pray the prayer of the day.

Chuck is our reader. The first lesson is from Samuel. Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the Lord, designating David as the Lord's chosen successor to Saul.



We read Psalm 23 responsively. This beloved psalm compares God to a shepherd who always takes care of his sheep.

The second lesson is from Ephesians. Because we now live in the divine light of Christ, we conduct ourselves in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that God uses all our pieces, broken and jagged, to form us. She says that it used to be that you gave up something for Lent. Then adding something extra became popular. She says a new option is to seek out what is pleasing to God.

*Pastor tells us that *Responsibility* is the Mosaic word for this week. She says that searching out, responsibility, anointing and light are all themes in this week's lessons.*

The Old Testament lesson is about David. King Saul was rejected by God. Samuel is sent by God to anoint the new king chosen by God. He goes to the family of Jesse. He is sure God wants the oldest son who is tall and handsome, but God chooses David, the youngest, because God does not judge by outward appearances. The undervalued is anointed and blessed. God recognized that he had leadership skills. David is called to be light. Pastor reminds us that we, too, are called at our baptism. With anointing of oil and water, we are called to search out what is pleasing to the Lord.

In the Gospel story, Jesus says again that he is the light of the world. There are reactions to this statement. The first is surprise and skepticism from the neighbors. The second is disbelief and prejudice from the Pharisees. The third is fear of excommunication from the parents. The fourth is consistent, growing faith from the healed man. Pastor asks what category we would be in.

God never left David his whole life long. He anointed his head. David never forgot that he was anointed, even when he was doing bad things.

Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man. This man never forgot this act either. Jesus made (kneaded) mud. This was to irk the Pharisees because he acted on the Sabbath. For this reason, he is accused of being a sinner. They don't see the good act of healing, but only the act of profaning the Sabbath.

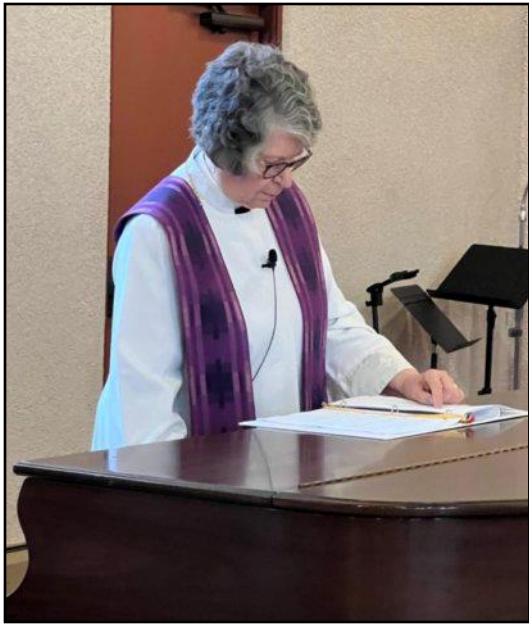
Pastor tells us that true sin is resisting the love of God. The Pharisees thought they knew everything about God. They were not open to learning anything else.

Pastor says if we want to find God, we should seek out sinners and listen to them. She reminds us that we don't have far to go to find sinners.

Pastor asks how we search for what is pleasing to God. She says there are four parts. The first is to find a place that is the center of our universe. Then we need to connect with people., to find out what is their center. Then we need to welcome others into a public and private place. Finally, we need to be honest with one another. This makes the others feel safe.

It is our responsibility to tell our stories, to live as children of the light. Living water and light cannot be kept to ourselves. We must share what we know about God.





When we go to sing the hymn of the day, Barbara announces that the organ will not play, so Pastor goes to the piano and plays the melody of "Amazing Grace." Who knew how talented she is?



Suzanne is the assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace and the offering is taken. Pastor blesses the bread and wine.



"This is the body of Christ, broken for you."

"This is the blood of Christ, shed for you."



We come forward to commune.



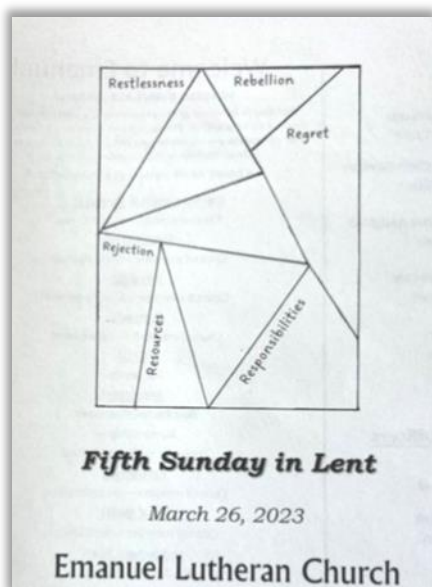


It is Birthday Sunday. Pastor leads us in the birthday blessing prayer. David, Marilyn and Pedro celebrate their birthdays in March.

We sing the closing hymn. Then we gather together for fellowship and birthday cake!



On Saturday, March 25, Radiant Covenant hosts a Tea. Several of our ladies attend. Yvonne, Janice, Rue, Suzanne and Donna have a wonderful time. The food is delicious and the program inspir-



It is March 26, the Fifth Sunday in Lent. Pastor greets us and laughs because the church is very lopsided in the way we are sitting in the pews. She reminds us that next Sunday is Palm Sunday and Food for Faith Sunday.





We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We are forgiven in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We sing the Kyrie and pray together the prayer of the day.

Suzanne is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Ezekiel. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the Lord."

We read Psalm 130 responsively. This psalm assures us that God hears us when we cry out to him and that with God there is forgiveness of our sins.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.



Pastor begins her sermon by telling us that the story of Lazarus is a story about endings and beginnings, about death and life.

Pastor tells us that Lazarus means God helps. We don't really know much about Lazarus, only that Jesus considered him a dear friend, so much so that he wept at his death.

Jesus uses the Lazarus story as teaching points for the disciples, the friends, the crowd. Jesus delayed two days after hearing that Lazarus was dying. He used the situation to bring glory to God.

Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus arrived. The Jews believed that the soul left after three days. Jesus found the family and friends in deep grief. They must have wondered if he really were a good friend. They were disappointed in Jesus.

Pastor says that the phrase "Listening to grace" means listening to God. Grace brings our

ending to a new beginning.

Jesus called Lazarus, but he didn't force him to respond. Lazarus had a choice: to stay dead or live again.

Pastor asks us if we are struggling with something. She says that grace speaks to us, but that we always have a choice.

Jesus wept, perhaps because they were so slow to understand. Perhaps it was because of his upcoming death.

When Jesus speaks to us in pure love, why would we refuse his love? God pursues us until we say yes to him.

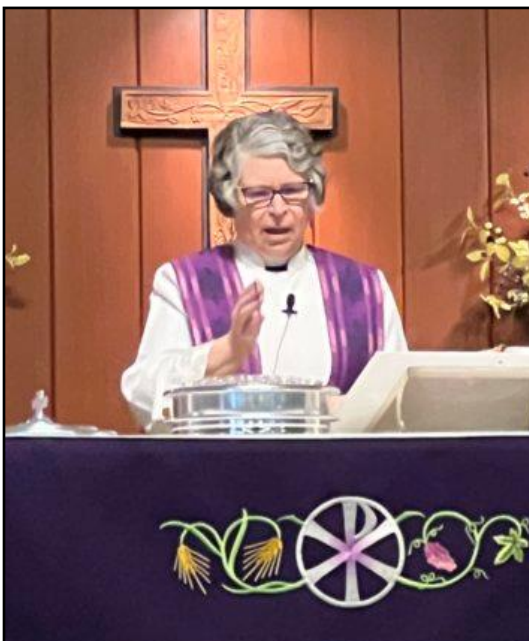
In the gospel story Jesus used human senses as resources. He smelled the body. God heard. The people saw. He touched Lazarus. Later, they ate dinner together.

Grace is a gift. Jesus wants us to be filled with grace. Jesus wants to take what is dead/ended in us and give us life/a new beginning. Today is a day to listen to grace.

We sing the hymn of the day. Lois is our assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.



We share the peace and the offering is taken. Then we begin the great thanksgiv-



Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to come to the table to partake of the body and blood of our Savior.



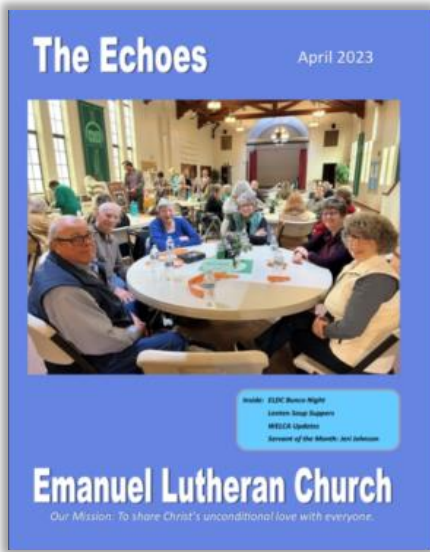
We receive the final blessing and sing the sending hymn. Suzanne extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We are told to go in peace and serve in love.



During fellowship time, Suzanne and Pat discover that they were the only one to get the memo about the dress style for the day.

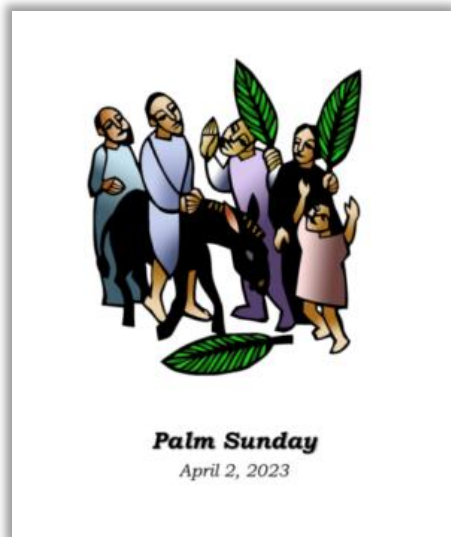


For the last five Wednesdays, we have enjoyed soup suppers. Afterwards, we have used the Holden Evening Prayer for our worship service.



April

Our Servant of the Month is Jeri. Jeri is active in the Outreach Ministry. She is active in the Out-reach Ministry. She was a regular volunteer when we had Katie's Kitchen. She is also active in the community.



It is April 2, Palm Sunday. It is also Food for Faith Sunday. Bruce puts his donation in Elaine's car. She will deliver the groceries this week.

The service begins at the font. Pastor reads the Gospel according to Mark. This is the familiar passage that tells of Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We sing the opening hymn, waving our palm fronds high.





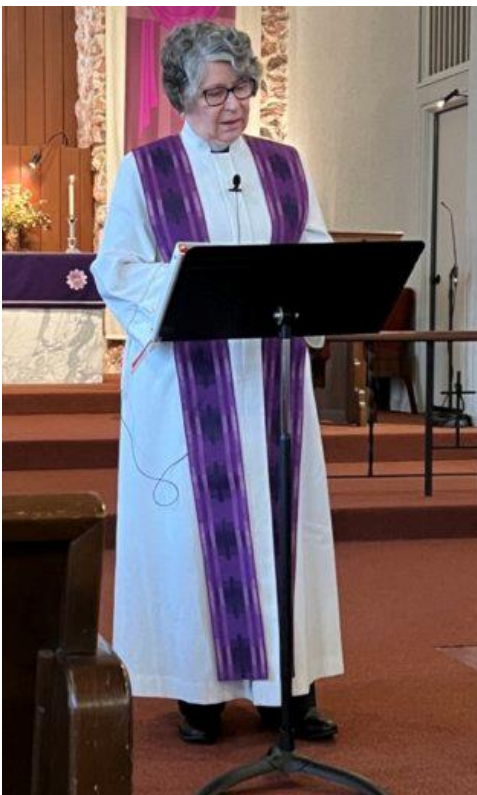
Pastor welcomes us and explains that there will be some different things happening in this morning's worship service.

Dan is our reader. The first lesson is from Isaiah. The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. The characteristics of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.



We read together Psalm 31. This psalm is a plea for help from God when the psalmist has troubles.

The second lesson is from Philippians. Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus's obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.



Pastor's sermon is listed today as a Meditation because the children will be offering a Holy Week play. She begins with saying that this gospel lesson is filled with paradoxes. Jesus is both king and servant. Jesus rides in on a donkey rather than a white stallion. The people hail him with palm branches, and then cry for his death. They celebrated a warrior messiah with hosanna. Then they quickly change to "Crucify him!"

Pastor challenges us to read half of John 12 on Monday, then to read John 12 — 19 on Tuesday through Friday. Saturday should be a quiet day.

Our Mosaic word this week is Repentance.

Pastor reminds us that Mark says that Jesus, when he was in the temple, looked around. She wonders what was going through his mind. What did he notice? We are told it was already late in the day. Pastor wonders if Jesus knew it was late in his life. She wonders what he didn't see. She reminds us that Jesus is still looking around — in our heads and in our hearts. She also reminds us to reflect on our humility.

At this time, the Sunday school children present the play, Holy Week. Rebeca is the narrator; Matthew, Noah, Sierra and Autumn are the other actors. As Rebeca reads the story of Holy Week, the children act out the emotions or actions of the people.



Here they high five each other because they are happy Jesus has come to Jerusalem.



They wave palm branches and shout, "Hosanna!"



Jesus and his disciples eat the Passover meal together. Here they rub their stomachs to show how good it was.



Here they bow their heads as they remember the love of Jesus.



During the Passover meal, Jesus washes their feet. Here they point to their feet.

Later that night, Jesus is arrested and put on trial. This is very sad. Here they make sad faces.





Here they stretch their arms wide to show how much Jesus loves us.

The people check their watches while they wait to see what will happen next.



After Jesus is buried, there are a couple of quiet days.



When they find the tomb empty, they are surprised. Here they show us their surprise faces.



After three days, they walk to the tomb.

The people are confused at first. Here they scratch their heads to show their confusion.



Jesus is not dead. He is risen. Now they see Jesus. They point to Jesus. They are so excited they jump up and down.



*They go off to tell everyone.
"He is risen!"*

We sing the hymn of the day. Barbara is our assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. Then we share the peace.

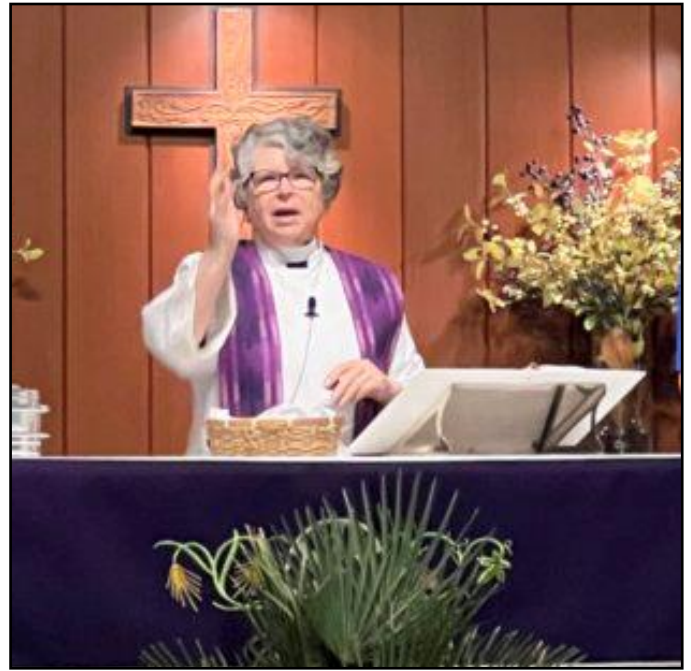


The choir sings while the offering is taken.



Pastor blesses the bread and wine and we are invited to come to the table.





We receive the final blessing in the name of God, the giver of love, Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth.



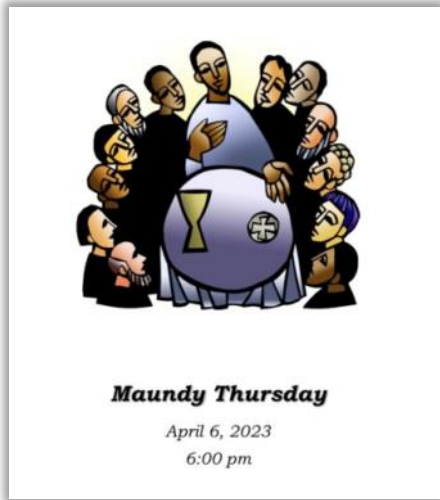
Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



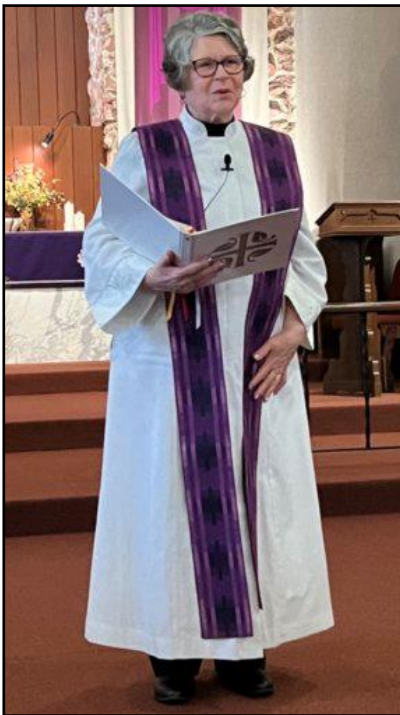
Barbara tell us to go in peace and serve in love.

On Tuesday, the Text Study group celebrate Marsha's 80th birthday.





It is April 6, Maundy Thursday. At the beginning of the service, the altar is still in Lenten purple. At the end of the service, it will be stripped and bare until Easter morning.

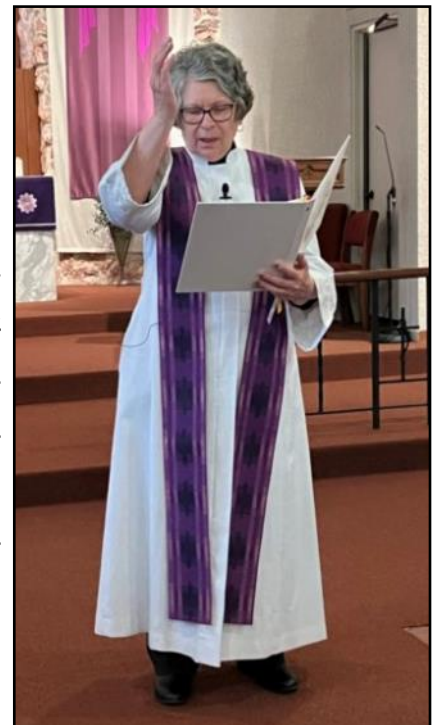


Pastor greets us and warmly welcomes everyone to the beginning of the Three Days of Jesus's death and resurrection.. She tells us that at nightfall, Lent will end. She say that at the heart of Maundy Thursday liturgy is Jesus's commandment to love one another. As Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we are called to humbly care for one another, especially the poor and unloved. At the Lord's table, we remember Jesus's sacrifice of his life, even as we are called to offer ourselves in love for the life of the world.

We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. Pastor assures us that we are forgiven.



Pastor reads the Gospel according to John. In this gospel, the story of the last supper recalls a remarkable event not mentioned elsewhere: Jesus performs the duty of a slave, washing the feet of his disciples and urging them to do the same for one another.



As Pastor begins the meditation for this evening, she reminds us that we are beginning the Three Day Celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. His commandment to us is to love one another as he has loved us.

We are called to give love through service to one another and to the stranger. In the story, Jesus said to do to others as he had done. Pastor tells us that foot washing is powerful and holy. It represents all acts of service. All service, done in love, is holy. Our minds will be on Jesus as we do service. Our actions and words show Christ's love. Tonight, our focus is on our hands. Pastor will anoint and bless them during communion.

Our Mosaic word for tonight is Resistance. Peter resisted Jesus's washing his feet. He also denied knowing Jesus. He resisted out of fear.

God's love is free and unconditional. John wrote for Jewish believers. His objective was to remind believers to love one another as Jesus loved. When God says, "Love your enemies," he means it. Our acts of love join us to God through Jesus. We are to do as he has done and keep on doing it.



Barbara is the assisting minister tonight. She leads us the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and then Pastor blesses the bread and wine for communion. She explains that while Barbara and Kathleen distribute communion, she will be blessing our hands.



We receive the blessing after communion. Kathleen chants the words of Psalm 22 while Barbara and Kathy strip the altar.



The service has ended. We leave in silence.



Good Friday

April 7, 2023
6:00 pm

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is April 7, Good Friday. The service begins at the back of the church. We pray together the prayer of the church and sing the opening hymn.



Our readers are Suzanne and Lois. They read from the Gospel of John. This passage tells about Jesus's arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter's denial of knowing Jesus, the trial before Pilate, the crucifixion of Jesus, his death, and his burial in the tomb.



Pastor begins her message by saying that life and death are side by side. Jesus may not seem like the winner, but he was always in control.

She reminds us of the seven last words or sentences spoken from the cross:

- 1. Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*
- 2. Today you will be with me in paradise.*

3. *Woman behold your son; behold your mother.*
4. *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*
5. *I thirst.*
6. *It is finished.*
7. *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*

Pastor says she is going to concentrate on the last three. When Jesus says, "I thirst," it represents a human need, but could it also mean a divine thirst for God for those watching and for those invited to drink from the water of life?

When Jesus says, "It is finished," he does not mean that he was done. The incarnation had ended. His earthly ministry was completed.

When Jesus says, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," he hands his body and soul to God. His divine suffering and love insure forgiveness for us.

Pastor asks if we are ready to give ourselves to God.



Pastor and Suzanne do the bidding prayers. Then Dan carries the cross for the recessional. Pastor stops several times and asks, "Oh my church, oh my people, what more could I have done for you?"

We respond, Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. We leave in silence.





It is April 9, Easter Sunday. There is so much going on! Outside, the cross is being decorated with flowers from our gardens. In the courtyard, tables are being set up and decorated for the brunch after the service. In the kitchen, the food is being organized

**Resurrection of Our Lord:
Easter Sunday**

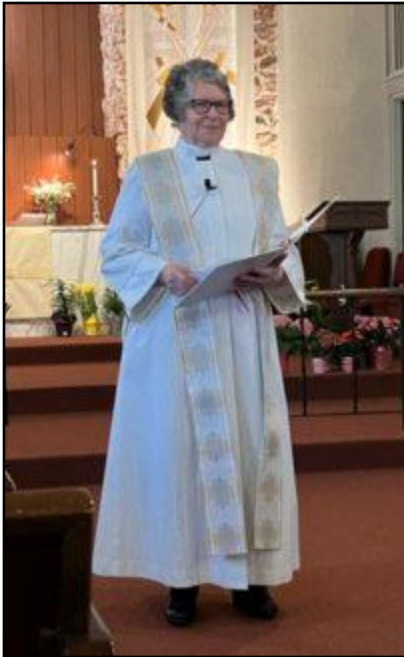
April 9, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church



Inside the church, the chancel is resplendent with the white paraments and more flowers. Pastor greets us with, "Alleluia! Christ is risen!"

We respond, "Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!"



We do the Easter liturgy and pray together the prayer of the day.

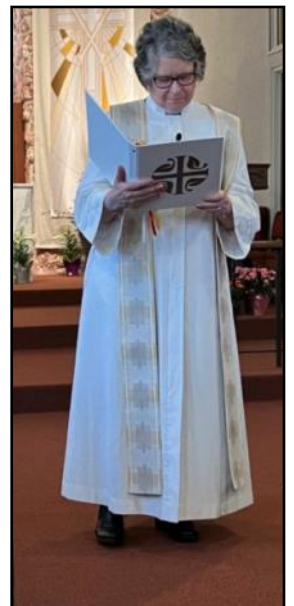
Rebeca and Matthew are our readers. The first lesson is from Acts. Peter crosses the immense religious and social boundary that separates Jews from Gentiles in order to proclaim the good news of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, so that God's forgiveness in Jesus's name would reach out to all people.



We read Psalm 118 responsively. This psalm rejoices that God's love and mercy are forever.

The second lesson is from Colossians. Easter means new life for us as it first meant new life for Christ. His resurrection reshapes the entire focus and motivation for our lives since we are now hidden with the risen Christ in God.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. This morning began with confusion: the stone was moved and the tomb was empty. Disciples arrive, then angels, and finally Jesus himself. Out of the confusion, hope emerges, and a weeping woman becomes the first to confess her faith in the risen Lord.



Pastor begins her sermon by again declaring, "He is risen! Alleluia!" She tells us that this is Christianity's most holy day of the year, the most important day of the year. Do we need chocolate rabbits, peeps, food? No, the empty tomb is enough.

The first Easter was filled with grief, danger, intrigue, joy and confusion. In the Gospel of John, the disciples see the empty tomb and go home, but Mary Magdalene has a wonderful encounter with Jesus. Later Jesus appears in a locked room. Jesus is the one doing the most action. God through Jesus is on the loose! God's power is greater than anything. Jesus now tells his disciples: "Go and tell everyone!"



The disciples had to learn to manage their fear. Fear saturates our world today. Fear is real, infectious, contagious. Mary Magdalene was fearful. The empty tomb caused fear and confusion.

Death is our greatest fear, but Easter pushes fear away. Jesus defeated death. He defeated any bad news. Nothing can defeat us. God is not done with us. He has more for us to do.

The disciples were soon filled with joy. Easter joy can displace any fear. Joy is also infectious, contagious. This is our job! Spread it around!



Dan is the assisting minister. He leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.





We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine.. We are invited to the table to share the body and blood of our risen Savior.



We receive the final blessing, and Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We are told to go in peace and serve the risen Lord. Then we leave to share an Easter brunch with the members of Radiant Covenant.

*Alleluia!
He is risen!*





Radiant Covenant has supplied the hot dishes, and Emanuel has supplied the muffins, fruit and beverages. It has been a fun joint effort, enjoyed by all.

Meanwhile, back at the cross, our members enjoy a photo op.

Suzanne, Rue, Joyce, Jeri and Donna are lovely in their Easter bonnets.



Ron and Karen



Alice and Mark

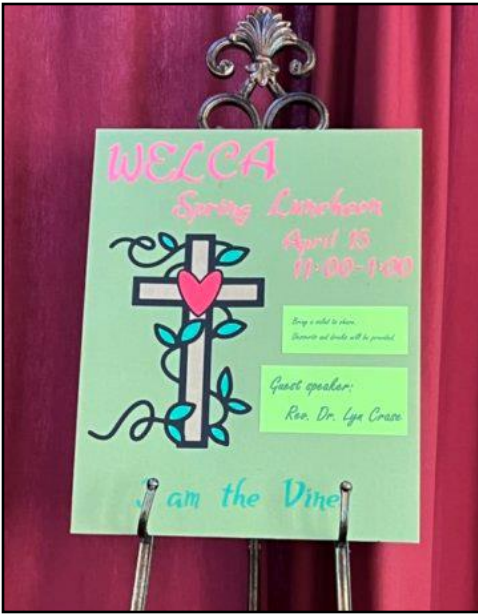


Bruce and Donna



*Ruben, Mercy, Molly, Jeremy,
Evan and Emeryn.*

*Happy Easter!
He is risen!
Alleluia!*

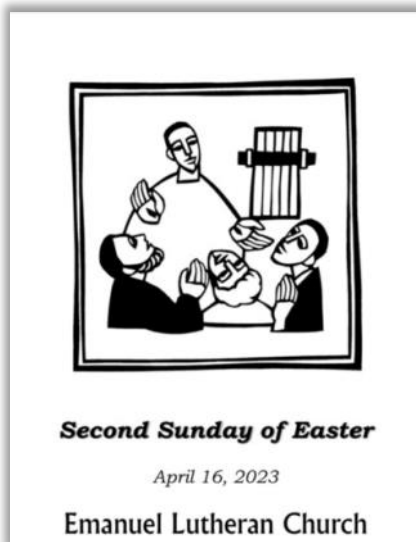


On April 15, Rebecca Circle hosts the WELCA luncheon, "I am the Vine." We open with the hymn, "For the Beauty of the Earth." Pastor Lynn is the guest speaker. She gives a short Bible study based on the verse: I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. We sing "For the Fruit of All Creation. Marsha gives a short talk about WELCA. We conclude the program with the hymn, "Bind Us Together." Thank you, Suzanne, for playing the piano.

Following the program, we enjoy a delicious salad lunch.



Thank you, Marty, for the beautiful table decorations.



It is April 16, the second Sunday of Easter. Pastor welcomes us. She gives us the sad news that Pastor Roger Lee, a former member and interim pastor of Emanuel, has passed away. His twin brother, Bob, died five days before him.





We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast liturgy.

Pat is our reader. The first lesson is from Acts. After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God's plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.

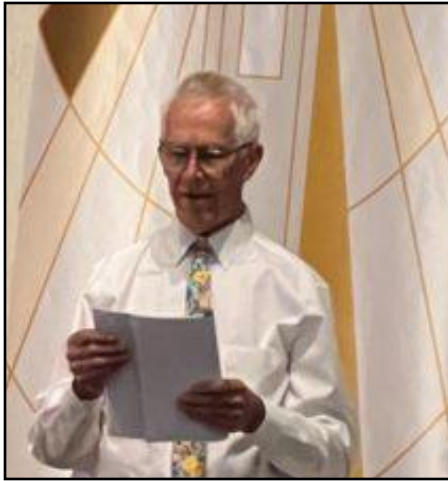
We read Psalm 16 responsively. This is a psalm of praise to a God who does not abandon us.

The second lesson is from 1 Peter. This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord.



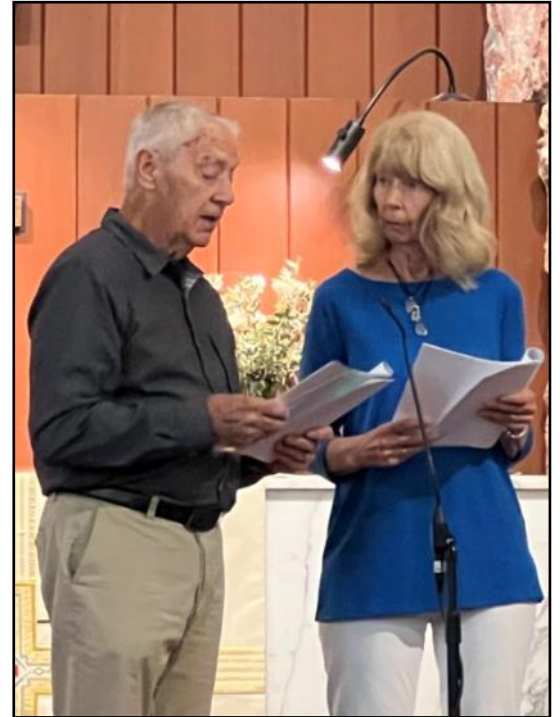
In place of the sermon, this week we are presenting a radio play, written by one of our members, Mike Clarke. Pastor introduces the scene.



David is the announcer, and Suzanne is the host. She interviews several witnesses to events of Easter.

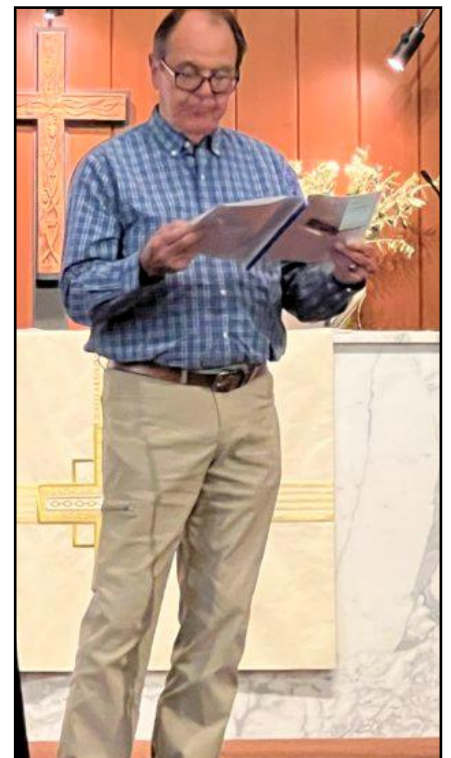


Rebeca portrays a young girl who tells about the time Jesus used her lunch of 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed 5000 people.



Dick and Barbara portray a couple who share their adventure with a stranger on the road to Emmaus.

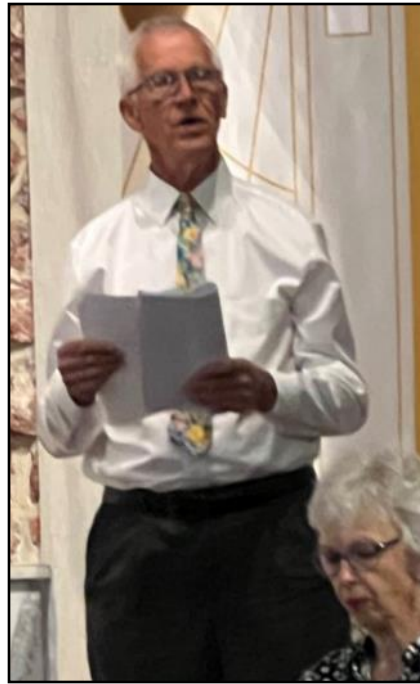
Marsha portrays Mary Magdalene who was healed by Jesus and became one of his best friends. She is the first to see him alive.



Tom portrays Simon Peter, who in spite of denying Jesus three times, is forgiven and told to go and preach the gospel.



Dan portrays Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator, who can't for the life of him remember a Jewish seditious named Jesus, whom he ordered crucified. He is sure that history will only remember Pilate himself, not some obscure rabble rouser.



David, the announcer, thanks the listening audience for tuning in this week. He reminds us that we were there to witness this time in history.



Pastor thanks the cast for being a part of this drama. We hope Mike is watching from home. We thank him for sharing his talent with his Emanuel family.



Rebeca is our assisting minister this morning. It is the first time she has served in this capacity. She does a wonderful job leading us in the Apostle's creed and the intercessory prayers.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Pastor blesses the bread and wine so that we may commune. We come forward to share the body and blood of our Lord.

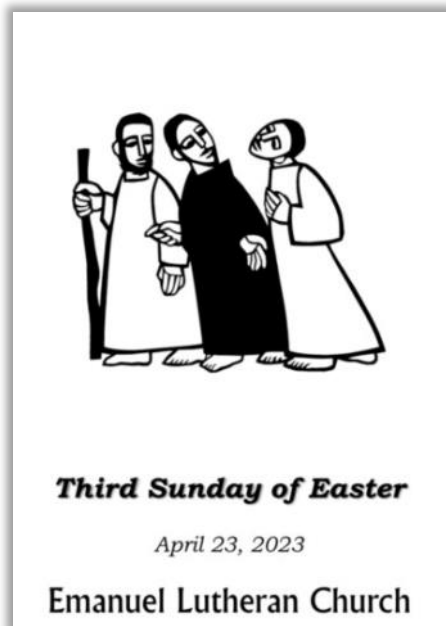
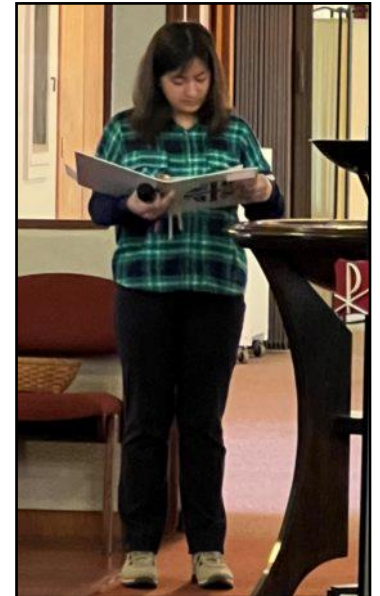




It is Birthday Sunday, and Pastor asks all those celebrating a birthday in April to stand up. Marsha seems to be the only one here this morning. She gets the first piece of cake!

The service ends with the final blessing. Dan leads the recessional, and Rebeca tells us to go in peace and serve the Risen One.

We enjoy a piece of birthday cake and fellowship.



It is the third Sunday of Easter. Pastor is taking a much deserved vacation. Dan has graciously agreed to be the pastor for today. He greets us warmly. We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins.

We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast. Then we pray together the prayer of the day.





Chris is our reader today. The first lesson is from Acts. This passage is the conclusion of Peter's sermon preached following the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The center of his preaching is the bold declaration that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ.

We read Psalm 116 responsively. This psalm celebrates that God always responds when we call upon his name.

The second reading is from 1 Peter. The imagery of exile is used to help the readers of this letter understand that they are strangers in a strange land. Christians no longer belong to this age. Through the death of Christ we belong to God, so that our focus, faith, and hope are no longer on such things as silver or



Dan reads from the Gospel of Luke. The colorful story of Jesus's appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus answers the question of how Jesus is to be recognized among us. Here, he is revealed through the scriptures and in the breaking of bread.

Dan begins his sermon with a poem by Michael Sparough that recaps the road to Emmaus story. Dan wonders what was going through their minds.

Then Jesus shows up. He listens to them and asks them questions about what has happened. Then he chides them. He asks, "Wasn't it necessary that this happen?" Then he proceeds to teach them about God's consistency and love. He goes back through the prophets pointing all the scripture that talks about who Jesus is. Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophets.

The two travelers invite him in. Hospitality was a mandate of the Law. Jesus wished to be invited in. He still does! When he broke the bread, they finally got it.



Melissa is the assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Dan begins the communion liturgy. The bread and wine were consecrated last week by Pastor Lyn. We are invited to the table to share the body and blood of our Savior.



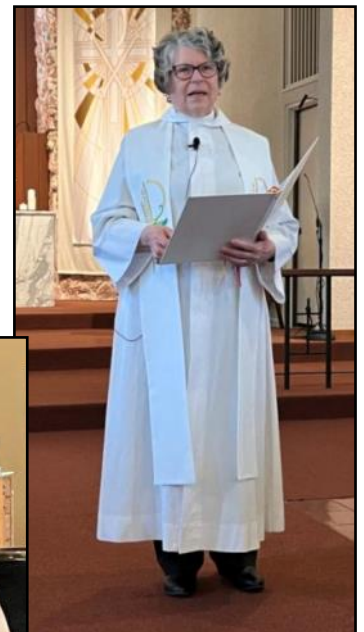


We receive the final blessing. Dan also takes the role of acolyte and extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Melissa tells us to go in peace and serve the Risen One.



Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 30, 2023
Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday. Pastor welcomes us and makes a few announcements. It is also the Baptism of Elliot.



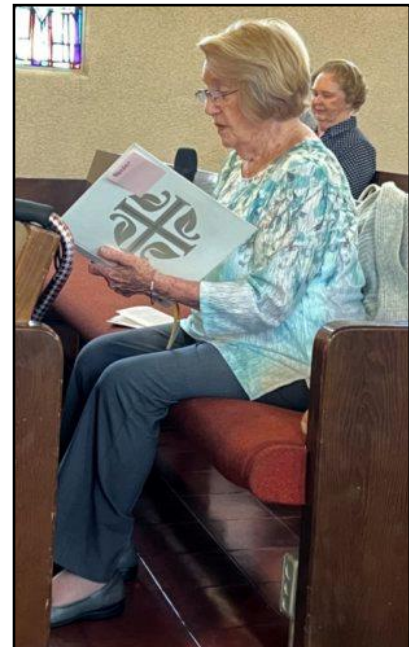
Let your light so shine before others that God is glorified.

We do the opening liturgy and pray together the prayer of the day.

Yvonne is our reader. The first lesson is from Acts. It is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

We read Psalm 23 responsively. It is the beloved psalm that compares God to a shepherd who takes care of his sheep.

The second lesson is from 1 Peter. Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.



Pastor reads the Gospel from John. Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

Pastor begins her sermon by asking how many times we've heard someone say, "Just trust me." She says she has a hard time trusting anyone except her mother.

She tells us that the sheep learned to recognize the shepherd's voice. They knew that good things were associated with it.

We are bombarded with noise and the clamor of voices. Listening for God's voice is difficult, but we long for it. We need to

remember who has authority over us.

Jesus said, "I know my sheep, and they know me." God calls our name. He will call us home. That's his promise. We are God's children forever.



Listening involves active hearing and responding and then reacting. The more we listen to God's voice, the more we respond and act. We need to get to know Jesus, alone and in fellowship. We want to follow his lead, not the lead sheep who might take us over a cliff.



Kathleen is our assisting minister. She leads us in the prayers of intercession. Then we share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Pastor blesses the bread and wine that we may commune. We receive the final blessing and sing the sending hymn. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



Pat, Mary Lou, Suzanne and Donna got the memo for the color scheme today.

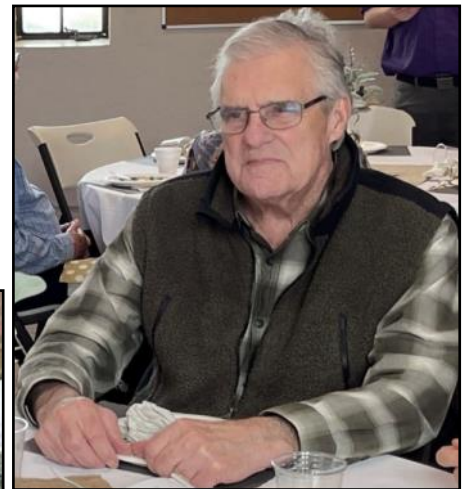


May

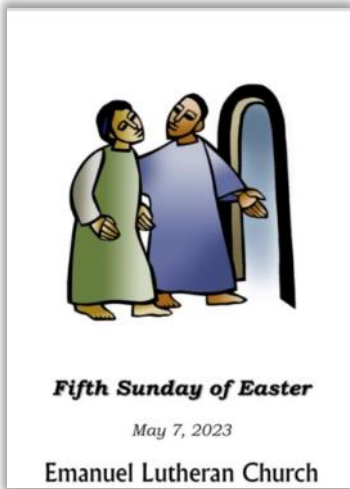
It is already the month of May. The Echoes recaps the activities of Holy Week and Easter.

The Servant of the Month is Bob. He has been our treasurer for many years. His skill and expertise has guided us through some very difficult times.

Emanuel also participates in the Earth Day activities at Graceada Park. First they met to pot plants to give away. At the park they raffled off two quilts made by the Piecemakers and gave away 200 bottles of water.



Mary Lou, Jeri and Laura manned the booth at Graceada Park. Thank you Outreach for your work.



It is May 7, the Fifth Sunday of Easter. It is Food for Faith Sunday, and Donna is the Trunkmaster. Rue and Kaete show their contributions before adding them to the other donations.



Pastor greets us warmly and makes a few announcements. We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We continue with liturgy, singing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast. We pray together the prayer of the day.

Kathleen is our reader. The first lesson is from Acts. Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word. Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

We read Psalm 31 responsively. This psalm cries out for deliverance from one's enemies, and for strength to face hard times.

The second reading is from 1 Peter. Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.





Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

Pastor begins her sermon by asking if we ever gaze into the sky. She thinks that's a good idea. It's the next frontier: the sky, space, the universe. She says that humanity has longed to know the mystery of things above. Perhaps, she says, the solution is to gaze at the face of Jesus. She says to focus on what matters, to gaze on the eyes of Jesus.

The Gospel lesson today is the last discourse of Jesus. It helped to prepare the disciples for what was to come. Even Jesus had a troubled spirit. If he could be troubled, so can we be. People were afraid of death. It held power over them. Jesus has destroyed the power of death.

We are told to love one another. It will make a difference. Sometimes we don't want to calm down, but Jesus has everything covered. Hope is found in Jesus. She says quantum science has confirmed that consciousness goes on after death.



Suzanne is the assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's and the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace and the offering is taken. We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine, and we commune.





We receive the final blessing and sing the sending hymn. Suzanne extinguishes the candles. We do not have a recessional this morning because we need to review evacuation procedures in case we ever have an emergency.

We all got the memo that the color for today is blue!



On Saturday, May 13, we celebrate the lives of twin brothers, Robert Lee and Pastor Roger Lee. They died only five days apart.





Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is May 14, the Sixth Sunday of Easter. Pastor greets us and makes a few announcements. We sing the opening hymn. Then we confess our sins and receive assurance that they are forgiven in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast. We pray the prayer of the day together.



Suzanne is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from Acts. In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

We read Psalm 66 responsively. This psalm praises God for always being there even when pushing us to our limits.

The second lesson is from 1 Peter. This epistle encourages Christians to remain faithful even in the face of defamation and persecution. In baptism we are made clean to act in accordance with what is right.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.

Pastor begins her sermon by noting that long-term relationships are difficult. We lose touch. Relationships can be renewed and be like they were never apart, but they don't grow.

An important question for us is how do we have a relationship with Jesus



now that he is gone from the earth? Knowledge of God comes through Jesus, what we learn and what we share. Pastor gives us five key words:

1. *Love: If you love me... Many are dealing with tough situations. Love is an ongoing action.*
2. *Keep: Keep my commandments.*
3. *Another: Love one another. Speak and act like Jesus. Choose to obey.*
4. *Advocate: I will send you an advocate.*

5. *Truth: The Holy Spirit communicates truth. We are all sinners, but Jesus saves sinners. He knows us. There is no penalty to pay. Sins are forgiven and forgotten.*

We need to remember we have an advocate. We are not alone.



Rebeca is the assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.





The choir sings while the offering is taken. Then we begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine so that we may commune.



All are welcome at the table.

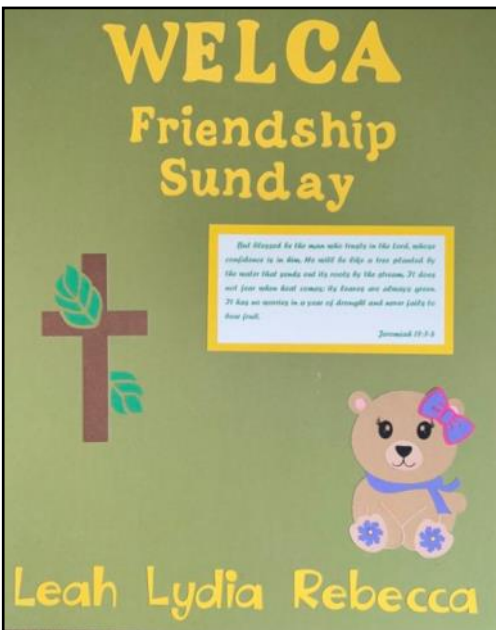


We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. We sing the sending hymn, and Rebeca tells us to go in peace and serve the Risen One.





Several of us gather to help bless a quilt that the Piecemakers have made for Elaine who has been ill. Sadly, Elaine passes away that very evening. We will miss her. She has been a vital part of the Outreach Ministry.



It is Friendship Sunday. Rebecca Circle has provided the goodies for today.



Did you get the memo? It said wear pink for Mother's Day.



Ascension of Our Lord

May 21, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is May 21, and we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord. Kathleen greets us warmly and explains that Pastor is taking a much deserved vacation. We sing the opening hymn and say the Thanksgiving for Baptism liturgy. We sing the Kyrie and the This Is the Feast.



Pat is our reader this morning. The first lesson is from Acts. Before he is lifted into heaven, Jesus promises that the missionary work of the disciples will spread out from Jerusalem to all the world. His words provide an outline of the book of Acts.



Psalm 47 is read responsively. This psalm praises God and rejoices that he is highly exalted.

The second lesson is from Ephesians. The risen and exalted Christ reigns over the entire universe. The author of Ephesians prays that we are given the wisdom to know the power of the risen Christ and the empowering hope that the knowledge of this inheritance provides.



Kathleen reads from the Gospel of Luke. On the day of ascension, Jesus leaves his disciples with a commission, a blessing and a promise of the Holy Spirit.

Kathleen begins her sermon by saying that she thinks of herself as fairly bright, but at times she has been completely wrong. She is sure she won't ever make the same mistake again, but she does. She gets exasperated with herself when this happens. She expects God gets exasperated with us when we get it wrong over and over again.

Kathleen notes that the apostles have been with Jesus throughout his ministry. They still didn't get it. They just didn't get that he had to die. We see three examples of this:

At the Transfiguration, they want to honor the place.



At the Crucifixion, they were there but were amazed at the Resurrection. At the Ascension, they were filled with joy and then asked if he was going to restore the Kingdom of Israel.

They just didn't get it! We, too, don't get it. Someday we will know fully about God's kingdom. The angels had to chastise them for standing around and looking up.

Our job is to tell everyone about Jesus.

Barbara is our assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and in the prayers of intercession. We share the peace and the offering is taken.

Kathleen reminds us that Pastor Lyn consecrated the bread and wine last week so that we may commune.

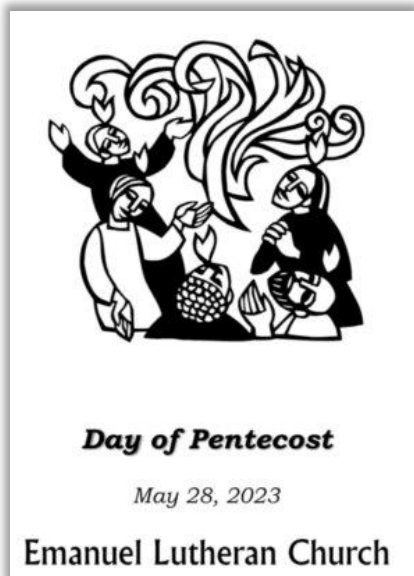


Savannah rides up on Pat's walker to receive her blessing.



It is Birthday Sunday, Kathleen leads us in a special blessing for those who celebrate their birthday in May.

After the candles are extinguished and the service is ended, we join together for fellowship and birthday cake.



It is May 28, the Day of Pentecost. The chancel is beautiful in red. So is the congregation.



Pastor greets us and welcomes everyone warmly. She makes a few announcements, and we sing the opening hymn.



We confess our sins, and sing the liturgy. Melissa is our reader for today.

The first lesson is from Acts. Pentecost was a Jewish harvest festival that marked the fiftieth day after Passover. Luke portrays the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the disciples before the astonished people assembled in Jerusalem. Filled with the Spirit, the disciples were able to witness to the power of Christ's resurrection.



We read Psalm 104 responsively. This psalm praises God for all the things he has created.

The second lesson is from 1 Corinthians. Paul is helping the Corinthians understand the relationship between our God-given unity and Spirit-created diversity. The Spirit creates the unity of faith and gives all Christians diverse gifts for the common benefit of all. We need one another's diverse spiritual gifts because the same Spirit has given them to each person for the common good.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that today is the birthday of the church. Originally, this was the Jewish Festival of Weeks. It occurred 50 days after Passover. It was a harvest festival.

Now we look at Pentecost as a time to gather a harvest of people. Its purpose is to get us moving, to spur us into action. Jesus, always in action, leaves with instructions to his followers:

“Continue my work!”

The Holy Spirit came with wind and flame. It meant to propel us to active service. The Holy Spirit is the living breath of God. We first receive the Holy Spirit at our baptism. The living water quenches our thirst for God.

We must respond to the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are called to be sent. We are called to love one another.

Pastor asks Matthew and Rebeca to help her demonstrate. One is given a pinwheel, the other a balloon.





They are instructed to keep blowing. When they stop, she tells us that the pinwheel stops whirling and the balloon deflates. We always have the Holy Spirit with us, but we need to be refilled every day. This happens through worship, Bible study, and fellowship. Faith is a group activity.

As he is about to ascend, Jesus tells the disciples. "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, I send you." Then he breathed in them the Holy Spirit.

This is called "the great commission." We are called to love one another.

Lois is the assisting minister. Since she is part of the choir, she leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession from the choir loft.

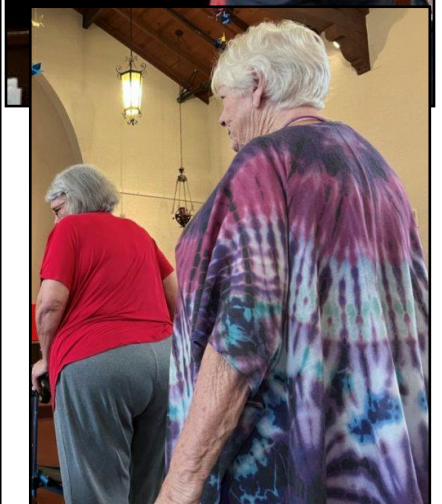
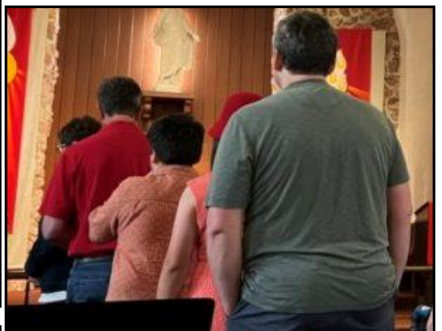
We share the peace, and the offering is taken. The choir sings during the offering.



We begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine so that all may receive the body and blood of our Savior.



We come to the table where all are welcome.





We receive the final blessing. As we sing the sending hymn, Kathy extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.

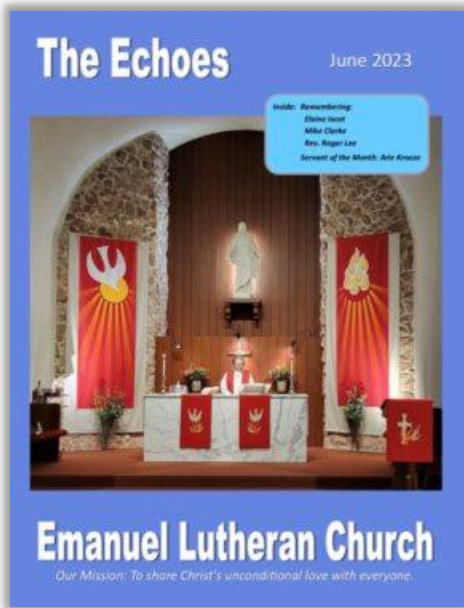


We are told to go in peace and serve the Risen One.



These ladies really felt the Spirit move them to wear red hats. Matthew, not wanting to be left out of a photo op, borrowed his sister's hat.

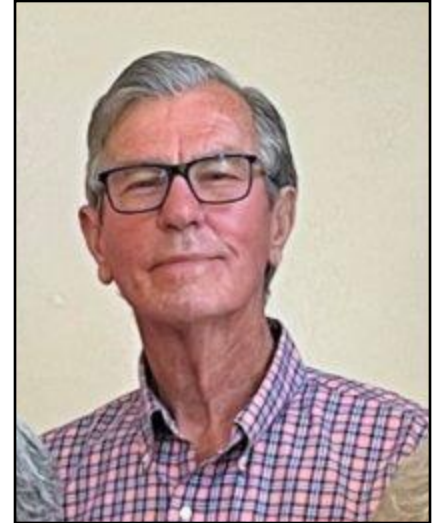




June

The June Echoes features the chancel for Pentecost Sunday.

The Servant of the Month is Arie. He serves on the Property Ministry Committee. Arie is always willing to help when something on the campus goes wrong. Thank you, Arie.



There are also tributes to Pastor Roger, to Elaine and to Mike, all of whom have recently passed.



Pastor Roger was a son of Emanuel. After he retired, he served as an interim pastor before we called Pastor JoAnn. He also often helped with the service when we were in the call process for Pastor Lyn.



Here is Pastor Roger during the Seder meal at a Holy Land Retreat, at a farewell reception before he and Karen moved to Washington and with great grandson Xander.



We lost Elaine suddenly and unexpectedly. Elaine served on Council as the head of the Outreach Ministry. Under her guidance, we established the Care Cupboard and Katie's Kitchen. She was also instrumental in helping many other community projects, especially Food for Faith which secured donations for FIGS (Food Initiative for Greater Stanislaus County). Finally, she spearheaded the disbursement of quilts to the community.



Elaine often served as Trunkmaster, loading her PT Cruiser with food donations for FIGS.



Elaine won this coat at the Oktoberfest Raffle.



Elaine and the Piecemakers donate quilts to the Modesto Police Dept. so that they can give a frightened child something to comfort them.

After a long illness, we lost Mike. He was famous for being Martin Luther at the Oktoberfests. He also wrote several radio plays that were presented at Emanuel.





The Holy Trinity

June 4, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is June 4, Holy Trinity Sunday. It is also Food for Faith Sunday. Chris is our Trunkmaster. Sue and Rue add their donations to her trunk. This month's donations are given in memory of Elaine who started this ministry.

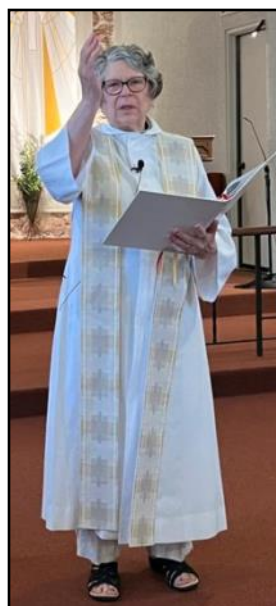


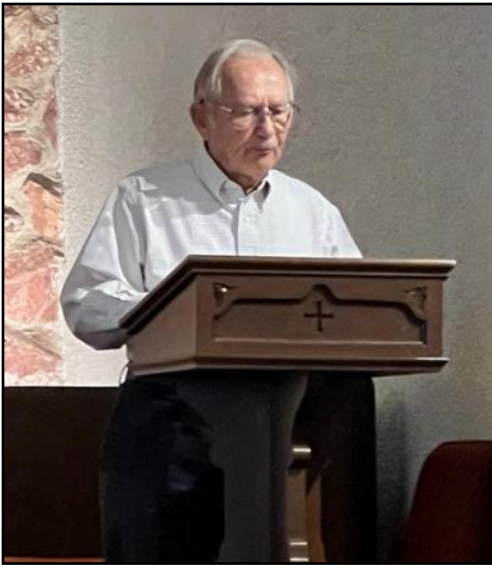
The chancel is in white because it is a festival Sunday.



Pastor greets us warmly. She tells us that we are starting the summer worship format. Things will be a little more casual, more piano, less organ. We will also be learning how the five senses can be part of our spiritual life. The first two weeks will be about touch.

We confess our sins and are assured of forgiveness. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.





Chuck is our reader. The first lesson is from Genesis. At the beginning of time, God the Creator, God the powerful Word, and God the life-giving Spirit form the earth and all its inhabitants. God sees that all this created work is good and then rests on the seventh day.

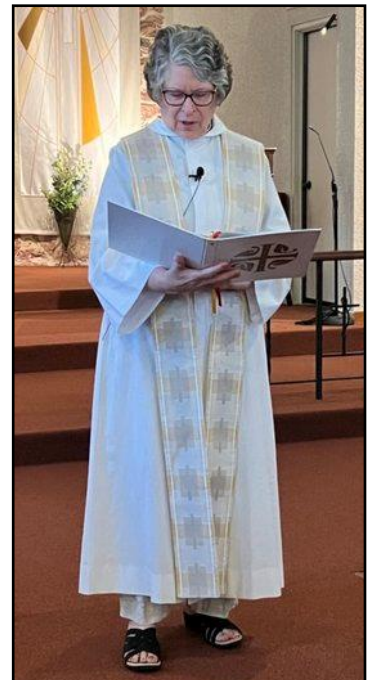
We read Psalm 8 responsively. This psalm praises God for all his creation.

The second lesson is from 2 Corinthians. Paul closes a challenging letter to the Corinthians with an appeal to Christian fellowship grounded in the triune harmony of Christ's grace, God's love, and the Spirit's partnership.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. After his resurrection, Jesus summons his remaining disciples and commissions them to baptize and teach all nations in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Pastor begins her sermon by telling us that Holy Trinity Sunday is the only Sunday that is about doctrine. It is not explained in scripture. God relates to creation in different ways. Yet there is only one God, but different relations. No one has any good explanation of the trinity; we just believe it. We cannot touch God, but sometimes we feel that touch when we touch others.

Our summer focus is intercessory prayer. It can be active and passive. It benefits those prayed for and those who are praying.



"Pray for your enemies," Jesus said. Prayer creates a stronger bond between those who pray and those who are prayed for. Pastor wants us to have a prayer partner. She suggests that we keep a journal. Praying for others is part of our discipleship.

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us. God knows what it's like to suffer. He prays for us all the time because we don't know how to pray all the time. The Spirit was present at creation and touches us today. Pastor believes God petted all the animals he made. Where there's love, there's touch. In Baptism, we are touched.

Jesus sent his disciples to speak their hearts to the minds and hearts of others. In the gospel lesson today, we learn that some doubted. We all doubt at times. God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, still accompanies us. Pastor says she has learned a new word: allophelia. It means showing kindness towards those we do not currently love, but with whom we share a neighborhood or country.

Pastor tells us to remember that Jesus assures us he is always with us. We should pray and reach out and touch God.



Dan is our assisting minister. He leads us in confessing our faith with the words of the Apostle's creed and in the intercessory prayers.

We share the peace and the offering is taken.



We begin the communion liturgy with the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine



This is my body, broken for you.



This is my blood, shed for you.





We are all invited to come to the table where everyone is welcome.



On the first Sunday of June, we always recognize and honor our graduates, This year we honor the following: Rebeca, Dylan, Harriet, Ava, Dalila, and Caleb. There is a cake for the fellowship hour for these graduates. We are all invited to stay.

We receive the final blessing. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Dan tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.



Rebeca is the only graduate who is able to be here this morning. She is graduating from Prescott Junior High. Congratulations, Rebeca! We wish you the very best as you begin high school this fall.



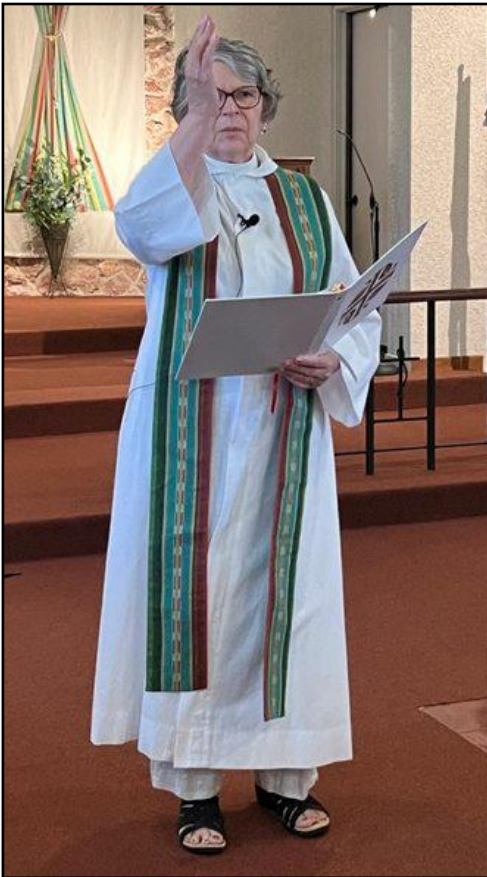
It is July 11, the second Sunday after Pentecost, and the beginning of the Season of Ordinary Time. The chancel banners and paraments are primarily green, but the other colors reflect California's unique blessings (gold), sky and water (blue), and adobe clay (red). The serape stripe was chosen to highlight our cultural diversity and the mission style architecture of our campus.

2nd Sunday after Pentecost
 June 11, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

Pastor greets us warmly, and we sing the opening hymn. Barbara will be playing the piano more during the relaxed season of summer.



We are still looking at intercessory prayer through the sense of touch.



We confess our sins and receive forgiveness in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We sing the Glory.

Suzanne is our reader today.



The first lesson is from Hosea. The people appealed to God's grace, but their loyalty was fickle, like fog or dew that is burnt away by the sun. God desires loyalty rather than words or meaningless deeds.

We read Psalm 50 responsively. This psalm shows God's displeasure with the wrong kind of sacrifice.

The second lesson is from Romans. Paul presents Abraham as a model of right relationships. For Abraham and for us, a right relationship with God involves trusting that God's promises will be fulfilled because God makes the dead alive and calls into existence what otherwise does not exist.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus demonstrates God's mercy and power, accepting the unacceptable and curing the incurable. Even the dead receive new life.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying if you want something done, ask someone busy. Jesus was busy. He touched a lot of people. People longed for his touch. Our prayers touch a lot of people.

We begin a long season between Pentecost and Advent. This is a time to grow in a relationship with God. Green represents growth.

Jesus went looking for people, especially sinners. Sinners are more fun. Martin Luther said to sin boldly, but let your faith in Jesus be stronger. No sin can separate us from Christ.



Pastor says that Hosea spoke the truth about mercy. The people were fickle. They sacrificed burnt offerings but were not loyal to God. God wants love and mercy

Prayer changes us. Abraham was a model of faith. He was made right with God by faith. Faith is a gift. The more we pray, the deeper our faith becomes.

Jesus recruited busy people. Matthew was recruited to do more important things.

We are recruited to touch others. The prayer chain at Emanuel is very powerful. In the gospel, the father was convinced in the power of the touch of Jesus. The woman only needed to touch Jesus's robe.

What can Jesus do for us?

Melissa is the assisting minister today. She leads us in the confession of our faith using the Apostle's creed and prays the prayers of intercession. We share the peace and the offering is taken.



We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites us to the table.





We receive the body and blood of our Savior. We sing the sending hymn. We receive the final blessing, and Dan leads the recessional.



We are told to go in peace and to serve the Lord.



3rd Sunday after Pentecost
 June 18, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

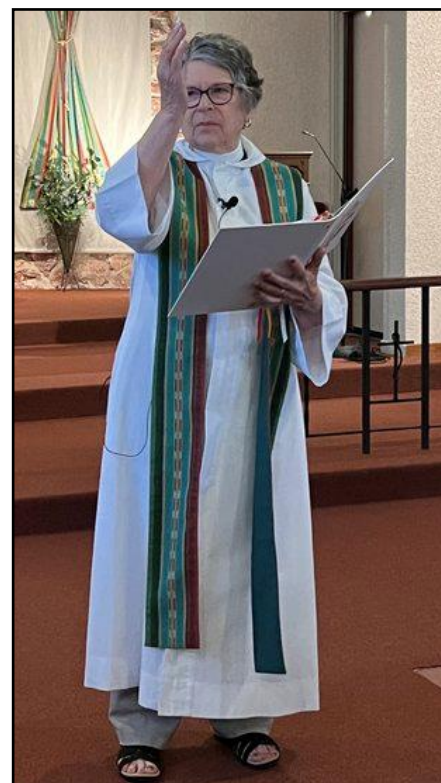


It is June 18, the Third Sunday after Pentecost. It is also Father's Day. The next two Sundays, we will focus on Sight.

Pastor welcomes us, and we sing the opening hymn.

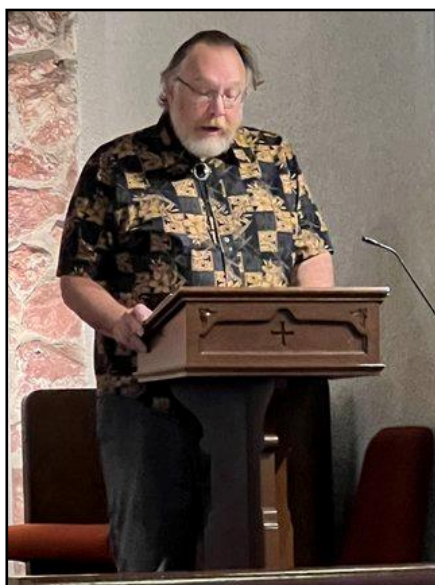


We begin this morning with the baptism of Jack.



We confess our sins, and Pastor assures us that we are forgiven. We sing the Gloria.

Dan is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from Exodus. At Sinai God assures the Israelites that they will be his treasured possession and commissioned them to serve as mediating priests for the nations. The people commit themselves completely to God's will.

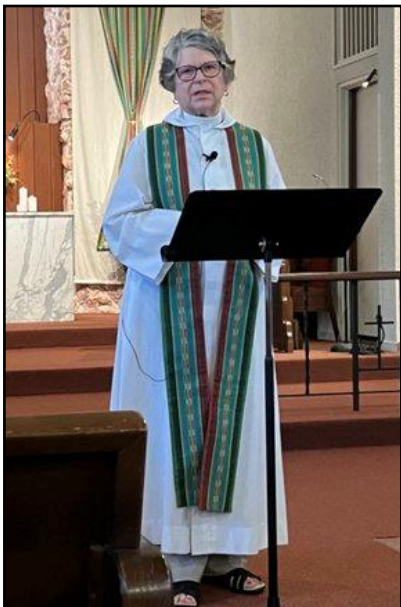


We read Psalm 100 responsively. This is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving.

The second lesson is from Romans. We are no longer God's enemies but have peace with God because we were brought into a right relationship with God through Christ's death.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. The disciples were wondering who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus used his self-centered disciples to make his point. We are not to be childish, arguing over petty issues, but we are to be child-like, humble and with sincere hearts for service.



Pastor begins her sermon by relating today's sense, sight, to Jack's baptism. She says that all the lessons today celebrate the gift of sight.

Pastor says that she changed from the original gospel in the lectionary. It was about laborers and would have been appropriate because Jack is a new worker.

Children are great at evangelism. The church continues to exist even if they no longer have a building. They can still serve the community. What they see, moves them to action.

We are asked to look for projects that others might not see.

Children are good at this. Sometimes, adults are good at sensing when help is needed. We also have to watch out for things that get in the way of our own good.

In Bible times, children were property and burdens. The mortality rate was 60%. The children that Jesus called to him were not clean, sweet innocents. They were probably dirty or sick. Parents thought Jesus's touch would protect their children from the "evil eye."

We sometimes make promises we can't fulfill. Paul says we are complete, yet still growing. Faith and grace keep us going. We will never be alone. We have hope and hope does not disappoint. Pray for insight, and all that it will bring.

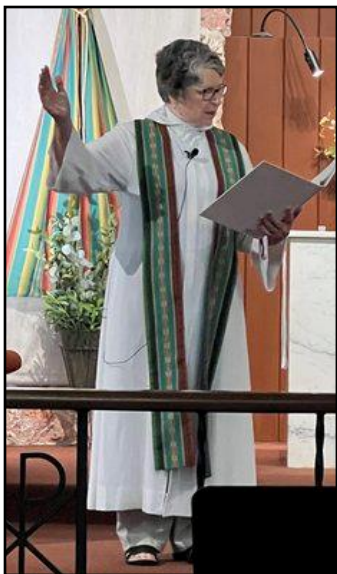


Rebeca is our assisting minister this morning. She leads us in the intercessory prayers. We have already confess our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed at the time of the baptism.

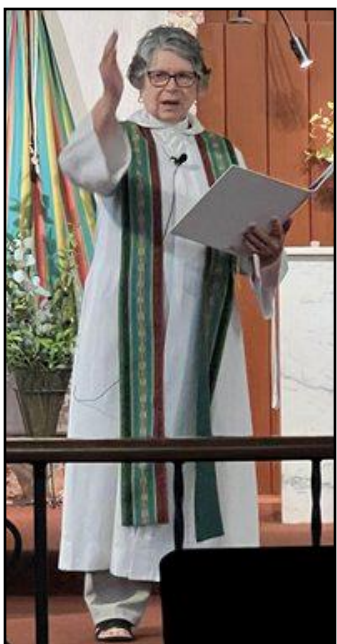
We share the peace, and the offering is taken. We begin the communion liturgy, and Pastor blesses the bread and wine. Then we commune.



It is Birthday Sunday. Pastor asks those who are celebrating their birthday this month to stand. We pray together the birthday blessing and then receive the final blessing.



*Happy Birthday,
Kaete, Pat and Jeri.*



After the final blessing, Dan leads the recessional. Rebeca tells us to go in peace and to share the harvest. Then we gather for fellowship and birthday cake. Jack gets his own special baptismal cupcakes.





*Apparently, it's also Orange Sunday.
Orange you glad you got the memo?*

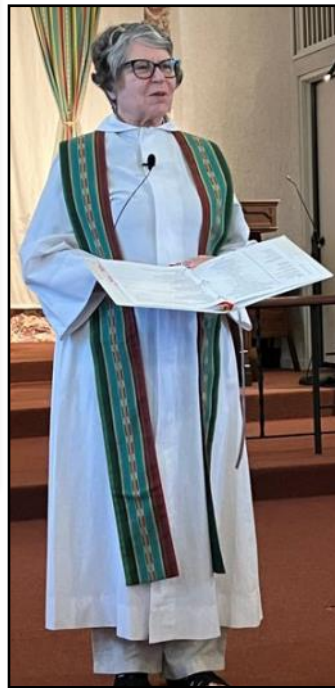




4th Sunday after Pentecost

June 25, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church



It is June 25, the 4th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor welcomes everyone. We confess our sins and are told to claim God's mercy. We are freed and forgiven.

We sing the Gloria and pray together the prayer of the day.

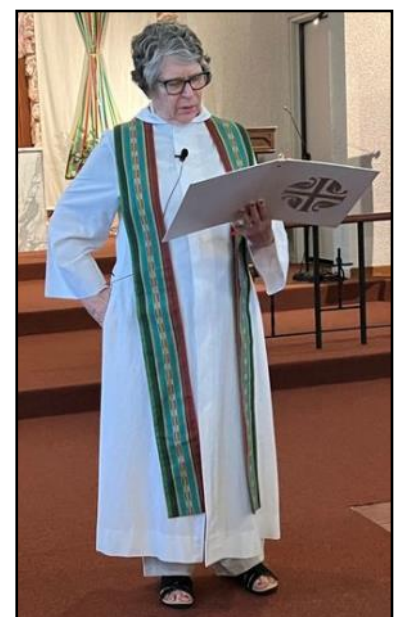


Barbara is our reader. The first lesson is from Jeremiah. Jeremiah accuses God of forcing him into a ministry that brings him only contempt and persecution. Yet Jeremiah is confident that God will be a strong protector against his enemies and commits his life into God's hands.

We read Psalm 20 responsively. This song laments the way serving God has made the writer's friends and family treat him. Yet it praises God for his compassion and mercy.

The second lesson is from Romans. In baptism we were incorporated into the reality of Christ's death and resurrection. We have been made new in Christ through his death and resurrection to live freed from sin.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus warns his disciples that their ministry in his name will meet with opposition. However, he assures them that they need not fear for the truth will come to light. Life is found in Christ.

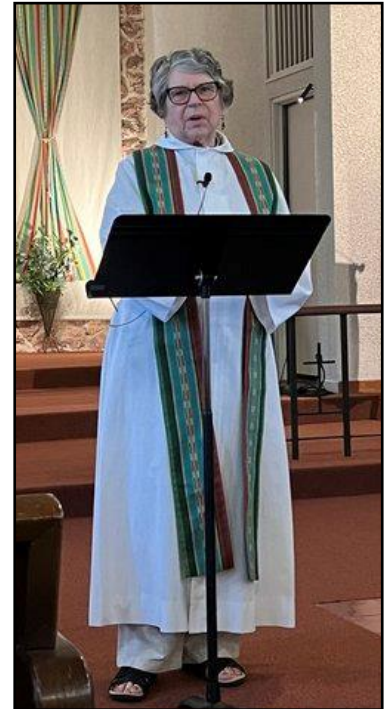




Pastor begins her sermon by noting that today's scripture can be frightening. It is not always easy to follow Jesus. If it is easy, there must be something wrong. We can easily ignore problems/needs that we see. Jesus asks us to open our eyes and get involved. He'll do the heavy lifting.

Last week, Jesus saw people how they were. Jesus tells the disciples the perils of following him. He does not force us to go where we don't want to go, but we need to be aware.

Jesus doesn't twist arms, but it seems God does. Jeremiah is called the "whining" prophet. Jeremiah tells it like it is. God deceived him, and he was persuaded. There were consequences and persecution. By world standards, he was a failure. By God's, he was one of the greatest prophets. Even though he is angry, he knows God is his only help.



Pastor asks us what is our prophetic role. Do we need to talk to God about it? Everybody complains. Do we end up praising God? Good will come out of evil.

Following Jesus will include lament and praise. There's always something. What helps us get through it? "Fear not." Discipleship can be risky. Fear can motivate us to move and pay the consequences. Love of Jesus can motivate us more. Life is going to be tough, but Jesus is tougher.

Pastor tells us this week to pray for those God puts in our path, those we would not normally see.

Kathleen is our assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and in the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and, the offering is taken.

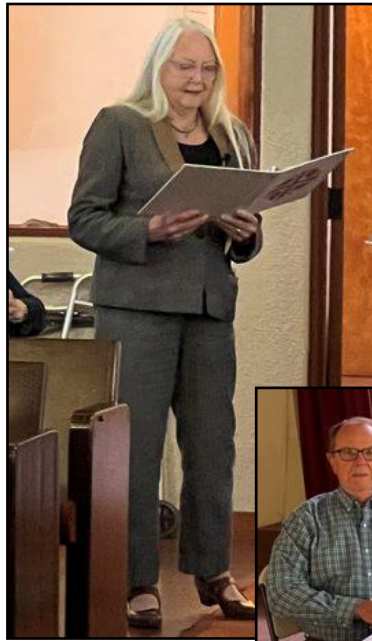
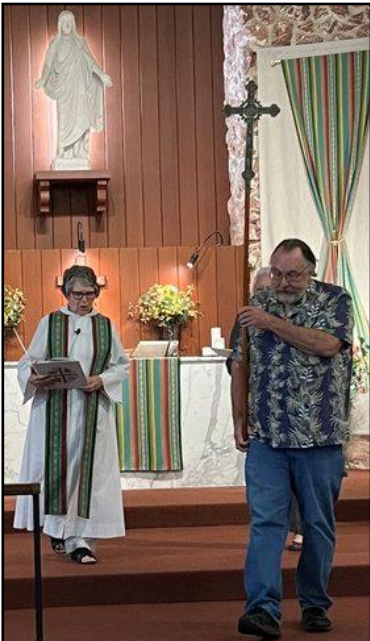




Pastor blesses the bread and wine, and we are invited to commune.



We receive the final blessing.



Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn. Then Kathleen tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.



Fellowship is enjoyed by all.



Apparently, these people got the memo that said to wear blue.



That evening we gather at Suzanne's house for our first The Wired Word Bible study of the summer. We enjoy a potluck meal. Then Kathleen leads the Bible study. It is a time of fellowship and sharing the faith.



The Echoes

July 2023



Inside: Women's Retreat Registration
Liturgical Singers
Habitat Donation
Servant of the Month: Chris Paulsen

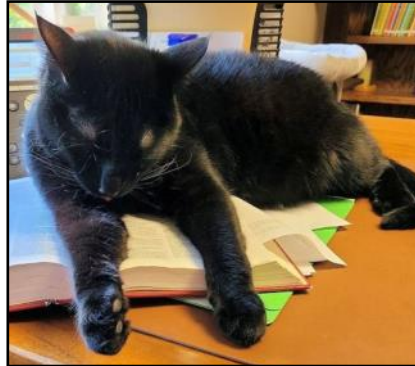
Emanuel Lutheran Church

Our Mission: To share Christ's unconditional love with everyone.

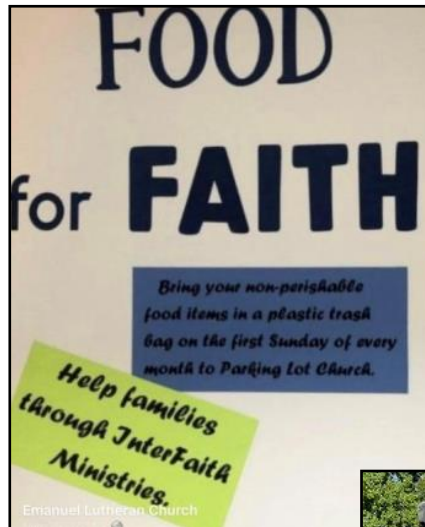
July

It is July, and the Echoes highlights the events of the past month.

Pastor's message updates us on the importance of Luther, out church cat.



Chris is our Servant of the Month. She has been the Sunday School superintendent, and she serves on Council. She recently took over the Outreach Ministry after Elaine passed away. Thank you, Chris, for all you do.



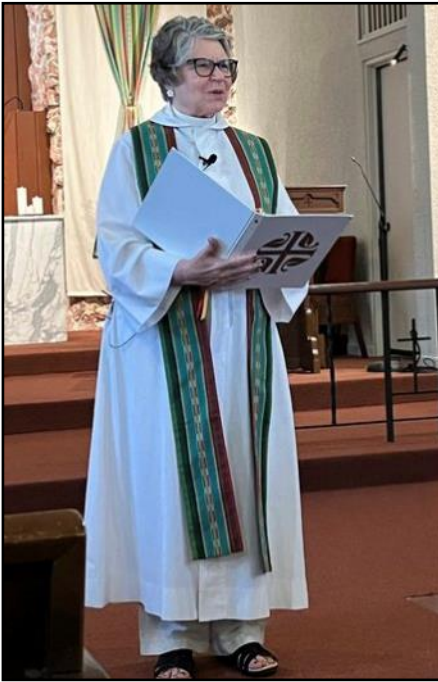
It is July 2, the 5th Sunday after Pentecost. It is also Food for Faith Sunday. Paula is our Trunkmaster. She will deliver our donations to F.I.G.S. this week.



5th Sunday after Pentecost

July 2, 2023

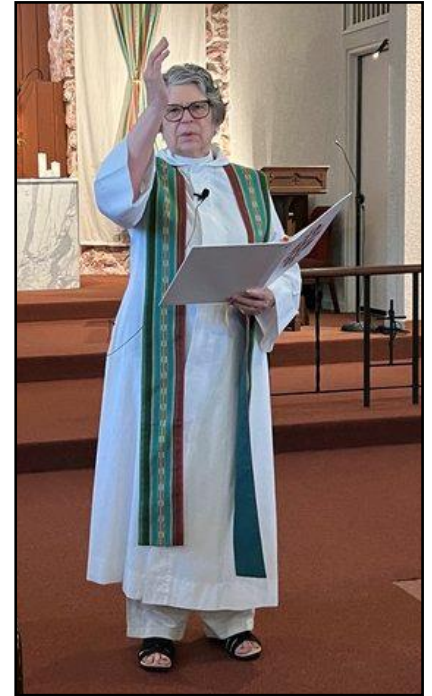
Emanuel Lutheran Church



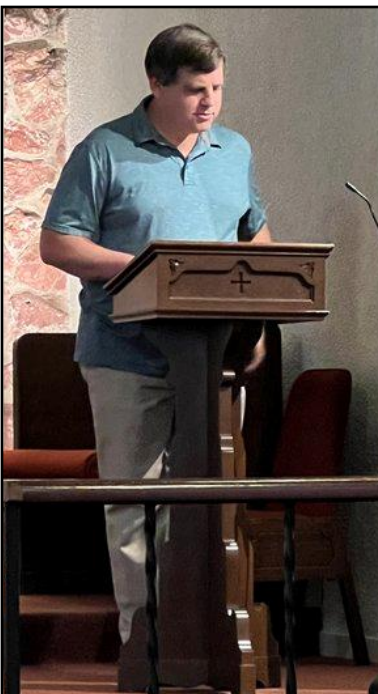
As always, Pastor welcomes us all warmly. She makes a few important announcements. Then we sing our opening hymn.

We confess our sins and receive forgiveness in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We sing the Gloria and pray the Prayer of the Day.



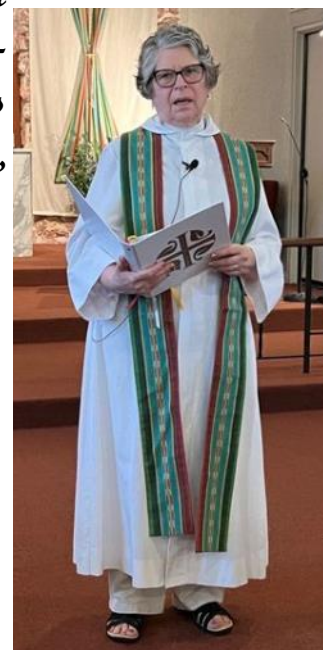
Brett is our reader. The first lesson is from Jeremiah. Earlier, the prophet Hananiah came up with a prophecy everyone liked. His deceitful words brought false hope to the people. Hananiah's words were not from God and were not true. What Jeremiah said was true but unpopular. He encouraged the people to move ahead with their lives. God, who knows the future, provided for the people and gave them true hope.



We read Psalm 89 responsively. This psalm rejoices in God's faithfulness and strength in protecting his own.

The second lesson is from Romans. Sin is an enslaving power which motivates us to live self-serving lives. Living a Christ-centered life gives us the confidence of knowing that we are, through the power of God's grace, "enough."

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. When Jesus sends his disciples out as missionaries, he warns them of persecution and hardships they will face. He also promises satisfying benefits for any who aid his followers and support their ministry.





Pastor begins her sermon by saying, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Taste is our sense for today. She says that this poster was designed and made by our Day Care.

The lessons today are about insecurities. Jeremiah speaks to people invaded three times. They wanted to hear a word of hope. Hananiah is a false prophet because he says what the people wanted to hear. Jeremiah speaks the truth. In our world we have to be careful of what we hear. Self-deception becomes a bitter taste. Our prayer should be for wisdom to know what is true.

We worry about being good enough. We are free to make our own decisions about what is true.

Offer yourself to God and freedom never quits, Paul writes. We should pray for the ability to distinguish true freedom from false freedom.

Feeling unwelcome makes us insecure. We should practice radical hospitality. We welcome one — we welcome all. Pastor tells us to pray for the wisdom to practice radical hospitality. Jesus said to start small, just a cup of cold water.

We are intimately linked in the harvest work. We don't have to be afraid.

Pray to know who speaks falsely and who speaks truly. Then we should taste and see that the Lord is good.



Dan is the assisting minister. He leads us in confessing our faith with the words of the Apostle's creed. He also prays the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.





We begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and the wine. We are invited to come to the table. All are welcome.



The body and blood of Christ, broken and shed for you.



We receive the final blessing. We join in the words of "America, the Beautiful" since it is almost the 4th of July.



Chris leads the recessional. We join together for fellowship. It's fun to see how many wore red, white and blue today.



A few of our patriotic members.



*Red, white and blue
at Emanuel!*

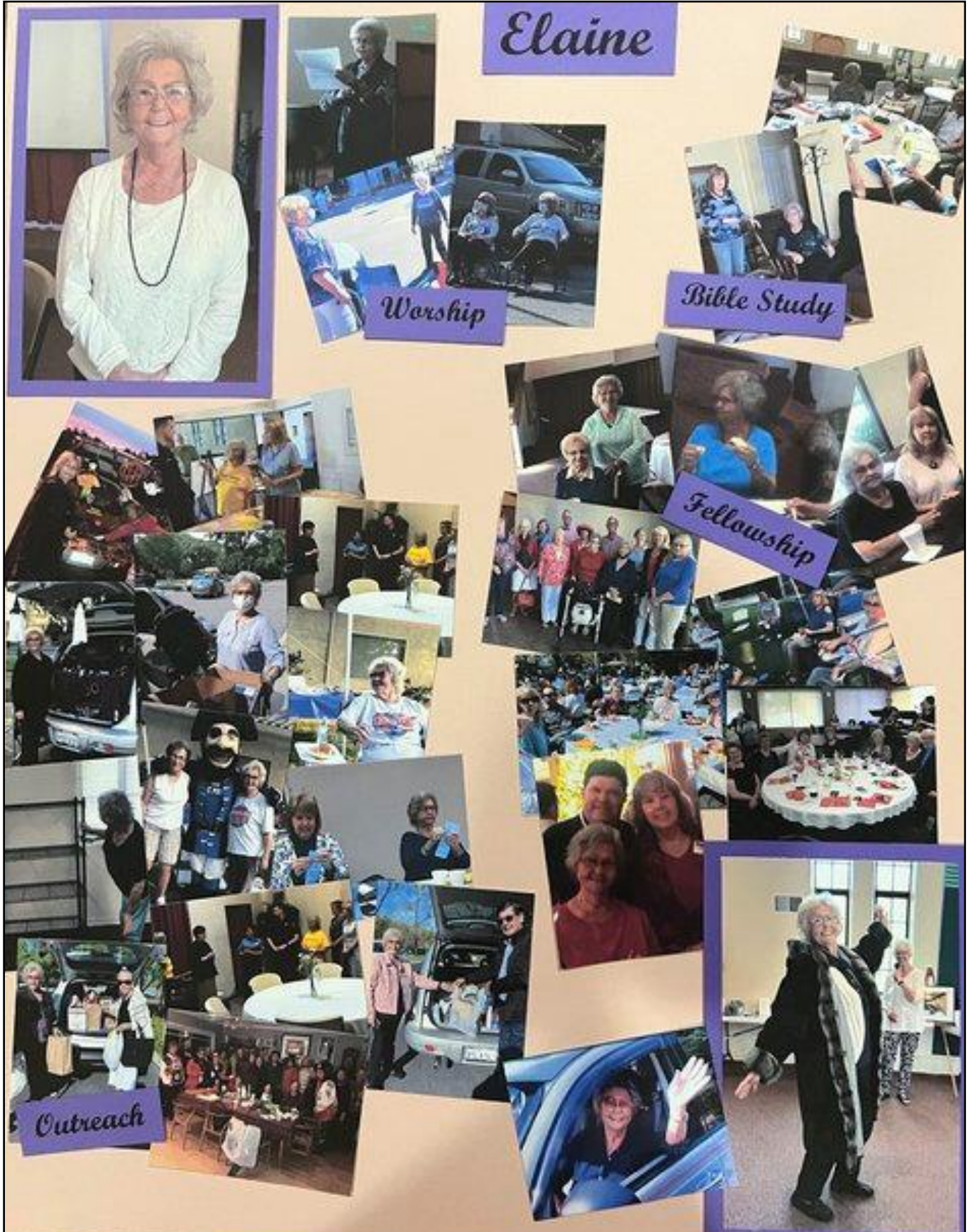


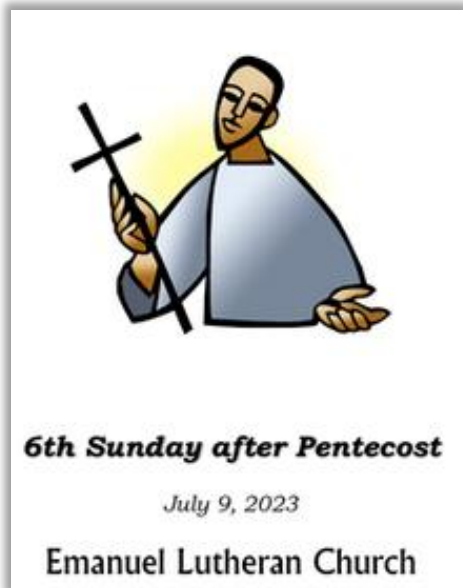
*Happy Birthday,
Connie!*



*Connie's family
surprises her with a
birthday cake. We get
to help her celebrate.*

We recently lost a dear member of the congregation who was our Outreach Chairperson. Today, July 8, we hold a celebration of life in her memory. We will miss you, Elaine.





It is July 9, the 6th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor greets us and tells everyone they are welcome. We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. We are assured that our sins are forgiven and forgotten. We pray together the prayer of the day.



Lois is our reader this morning. The first lesson is from Zechariah. The prophecy of a triumphant Messiah riding into Jerusalem, predicted 500 years earlier in Zechariah, was fulfilled when Jesus came to earth, so the prophecies of the second coming are just as true and provide hope for the future.

We read Psalm 145 responsively. This psalm praises God for his compassion and power.

The second lesson is from Romans. Life, captive to sin, is a catch-22 existence in which we know good but do not do it and do things we know to be wrong. Through Jesus Christ, God has set us free from such a futile existence.

Pastor reads from the Gospel according to Matthew. Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.



Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary, and I will give you rest." Then she asks us to take a few moments for silent prayer.



Pastor tells us that humble service was witnessed yesterday at the Celebration of Life luncheon for Elaine. It's how we live out our faith. We don't usually worry about physical burdens but emotional ones. From personal to world-wide catastrophes — all weary us.

Our need to control makes giving up our burdens difficult. "Is there no one who can do anything for me?" we might ask. Only God. We know what we should do, but we do the opposite. The real burden is trying to keep control. Jesus said, "Take my yoke." If we join with Jesus, the burden becomes lighter. The burden always becomes lighter when we work together. Jesus's way is better.



Barbara is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. She she prays the prayers of intercession.

We pass the peace and the offering is taken.



We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to the table to share in the body and blood of our Savior. All are welcome.



We taste and see that the Lord is good!



WE receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn.



The memo for today said to wear flowers.



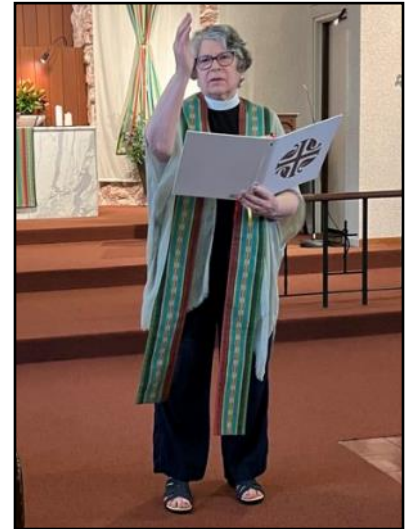
7th Sunday after Pentecost

July 16, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
324 College Avenue, Modesto, California 95350
(209) 523-4531 • www.emanuelutheran.org

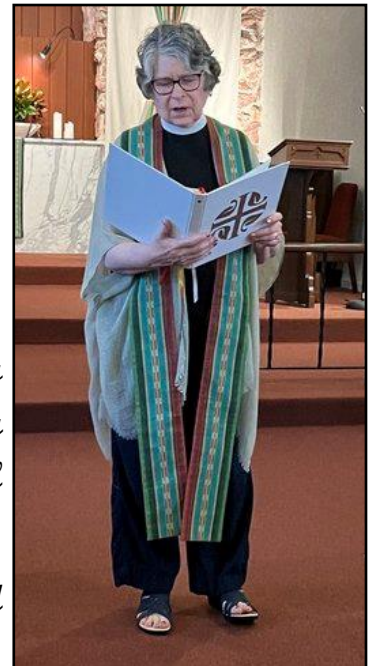
It is July 16, the 7th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor welcomes us, and we sing the opening hymn. We ask forgiveness for our sins, and Pastor tells us that we are forgiven. Then we pray together the prayer of the day



Chris is our reader. The first lesson is from Isaiah. God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.

We read Psalm 65 responsively. This psalm speaks of the power of God and the joy experienced by those who come to him.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. In this gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.

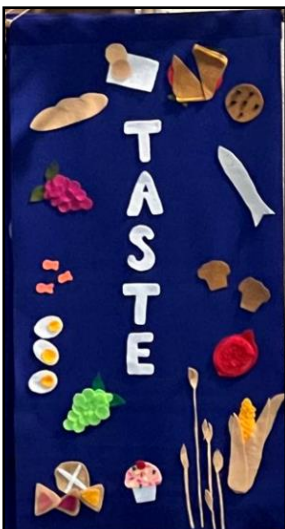


Pastor begins her sermon by saying that today finishes the Taste category. Our valley produces a lot of food. Jesus talks about sowing "seeds of faith."

Our job is to plant good seeds and bear good fruit. Seed sowing is not always successful.

Seed sowing/fruit bearing is risky but fun. There seem to be so many "rules" involved.

It is difficult to change hearts. Opposition to Jesus was beginning to grow.





Jesus didn't care. Jesus went out of the house and sat in a boat because of the crowds. Jesus took risks even knowing the cost.

We want to be careful "sowing seeds." We shouldn't hesitate to help anyone. Seeds sprout in different ways. God will make something out of our seed sowing.

It's never the fault of the seed. If seeds are equated with ministry, sowing seeds may seem wasted. We need to cast seeds abundantly. We can't worry how it will turn out.

Communion here is open. So is baptism. Jesus wants us to take

the risk of being wasteful when it comes to spreading God's word. We need to be willing to make mistakes. We spread seeds by how we live our faith. Communion nourishes us.

Go throw some seeds around!

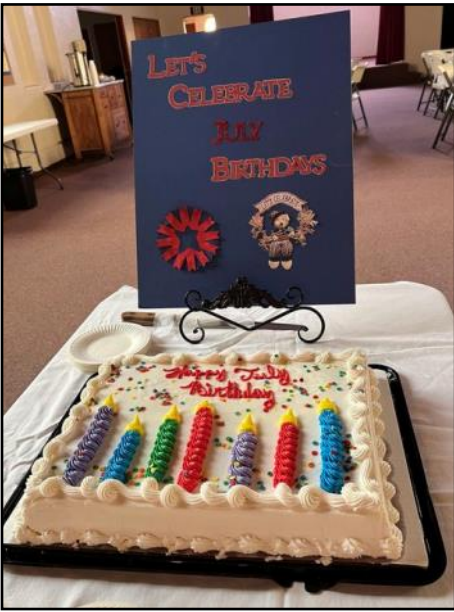
Lois is the assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to come to the table where all are welcome.



It is Birthday Sunday. We pray for a special blessing on those who celebrate their birthday in July. Then we receive the final blessing. We join together in Luther Hall for fellowship and cake.



It's not only Birthday Sunday, but apparently, it's Red Sunday, too.

This afternoon, we come together again in Luther Hall to celebrate Barbara's 100th birthday. Several people shared favorite stories. Happy Birthday, Barbara!





8th Sunday after Pentecost

July 23, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church



Barbara is still recovering from her broken wrist. For the next few weeks, Samantha will be our musician. She is from Oakdale and a former student of Suzanne's and Chris's.



Pastor welcomes us, introduces Samantha and makes a few announcements.

We confess our sins and receive forgiveness.

We pray together the prayer of the day.

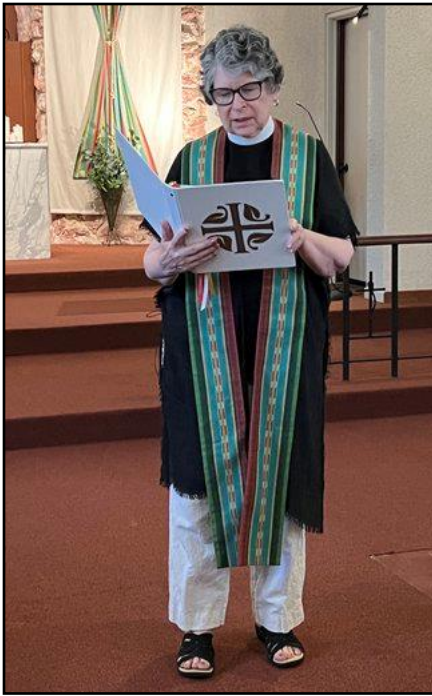


Yvonne is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from Isaiah. There are no other gods besides God: the word of the Lord does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel — and we — are redeemed.

We read Psalm 44 responsively. This psalm thanks God for all he has done.

The second lesson is from Romans. For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.





Pastor reads from the Gospel according to Matthew. Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world.

Our sense this week is Smell. Pastor begins her sermon by quoting the familiar line: There's something rotten in the state of Denmark. She says we know when something is wrong. We smell spiritual wrong with our hearts.

We need to pay attention to our situations and other's, too.

We can smell the farms around here. We don't want to find weeds in our wheat. In the parable that Jesus told, the word enemy really translates as slanderer. We can be both weed and wheat.

It's been said that God's worst enemies are God's best friends. The greatest cause of atheism is the Christian church.. It can be judgmental.

Sometimes we think we can impress God with our good deeds. God loves us anyway. Grace means that God loves us — wheat or weed. Only God should be the judge. Grace erases the fear of judgment. If we stopped judging others and lived as God wants us to, a lot of problems would be solved.

God wants us to listen. We are called to spend time in prayer and reflection. We should pray for each other and forgive ourselves.

Suzanne is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.



We share the peace.



The offering is taken.

We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor consecrates the bread and wine, and we commune.

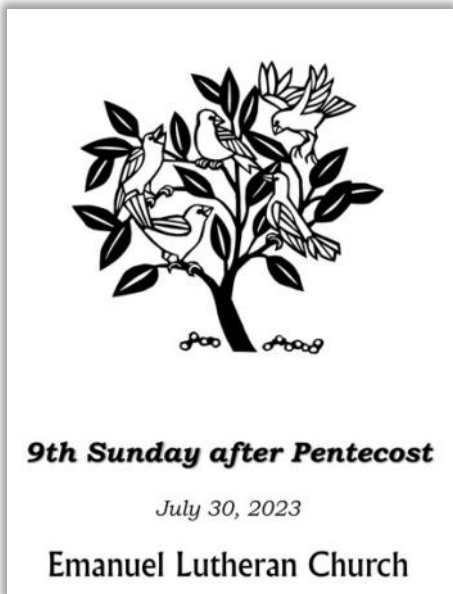


We receive the final blessing. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.

Suzanne tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.

We join together in fellowship and enjoy coffee and goodies. Apparently, the memo said to wear green.





It is July 30, the 9th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor welcomes us and makes a few announcements. Then we confess our sins and receive assurance of forgiveness.



We pray the prayer of the day together.

Kathleen is our reader. The first lesson is from 1 Kings. Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.



We read Psalm 119 responsively. This psalm talks about the joy of following God's teachings.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Throughout this gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that next Saturday, August 5, is National Mustard Day. She even read where you could win a bag of mustard-flavored Skittles. She says if she wins, she will share them with us.



Pastor continues by telling us that Jesus tells five rapid-fire parables, beginning: "The kingdom is heaven is like..." Jesus used common, ordinary things to show what is holy.

Many of the elements in these stories are hidden. These things cause change. The treasure is concealed; the man buys the field. The pearl is of great value; the man sells everything to obtain it. In the parable about the fish, the good and bad are mixed up together.

The kingdom of heaven finds us. God and we are both seekers and finders. God is sovereign. It is the church's responsibility to transform us. Then we are to go out into the world. We should focus on what is good. We have lots of resources. A little bit can do a lot. We have work to do. We can find the kingdom of heaven in ordinary things. Solomon admitted to God that he didn't know enough. He asked for discernment to do the job.

Pastor challenges us to go out with the faith of a mustard seed.



Melissa is the assisting minister today. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and in the prayers of intercession.

We pass the peace and the offering is taken.



Pastor consecrates the bread and wine. We are invited to the table and are assured that everyone is welcome.





We receive the final blessing. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



Melissa tells us to go in peace and to share the harvest.



We are reminded today that the animal world is also precious to God.

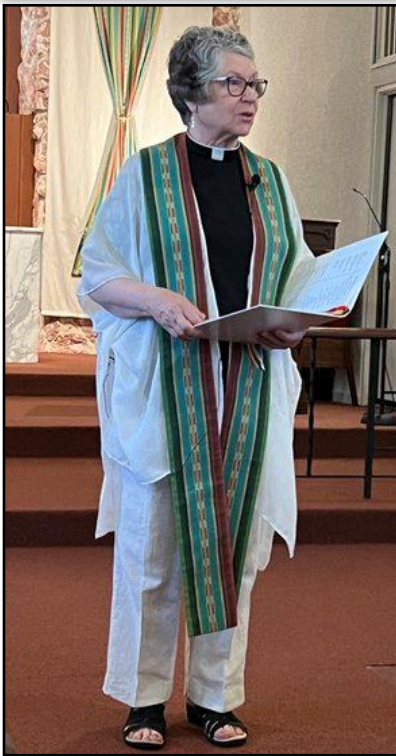


10th Sunday after Pentecost

August 6, 2023

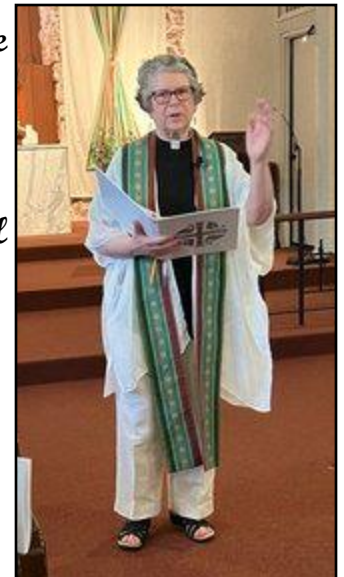
Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is August 6, the 10th Sunday after Pentecost, and it is Food for Faith Sunday. Pedro and Silvia are our Trunkmasters. We have been asked to bring extra if we can to help out F.I.G.S.



It is also Pastor Lyn's 8th anniversary at Emanuel. She mentions in her welcome how happy she is to be here in our shared ministry. We feel the same way.

We confess our sins and are assured of



Marsha is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Isaiah. God invites Israel to a great feast at which both food and drink are free. God also promises to make an everlasting covenant with all peoples, with promises that previously had been limited to Israel. As David was a witness to the nations, these nations shall now acknowledge the ways in which God has glorified Israel.

We read Psalm 145 responsively. This psalm speaks of the goodness of God for his love and care for his people.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that the smell of bread brings back fond memories of her childhood. Smell is our sense for today.



Pastor says there are several miracle bread stories in the Bible: manna for the Israelites in the wilderness, Elijah's feeding 100 men with 20 loaves, and Jesus's feeding 5000 men, plus women and children, with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus has the ability to provide for our physical and spiritual needs.

John the Baptist was killed so Herod could save face. Jesus grieved for John, but he helped the people. Jesus's theology of abundance includes plenty of everything:

- 1. Where there is plenty of God, there is plenty of everything.*
- 2. We need each other.*
- 3. We can be part of the miracle.*
- 4. All resources belong to God — never underestimate the power of a kind act.*
- 5. We should bring our resources to Jesus.*

Kathleen is the assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.





We begin the communion liturgy with the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and the wine. We proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. All is now ready, and we are invited to come to the table where all are welcome.

The service concludes with our receiving the final blessing. Pastor reminds everyone that there is an event immediately after the service, and all are invited to participate.





Jeri and Donna welcome everyone to the Teddy Bear Picnic and 8th Anniversary party for Pastor Lyn, hosted by Leah Circle.

The tables are set and beautifully decorated.



Pastor is thrilled with her cake. There are croissant sandwiches, potato salad, watermelon and chips for lunch.

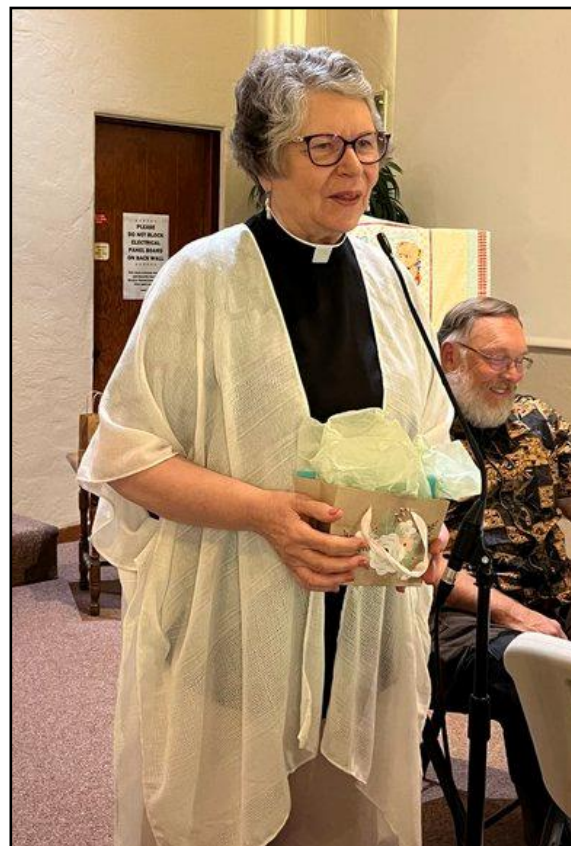
Everyone receives one raffle ticket for coming, and more are available to buy at the door. Thank you, Donna, for making the quilt and Suzanne for making the teddy bear.



We sing the song, "The Teddy Bear's Picnic," and we play Bear Trivia. Did you know that a collector of teddy bears is an arctophile. Suzanne confesses to having 160 bears and bear related items! All three Circles and Council give tributes to Pastor Lyn. The program ends with a PowerPoint presentation entitled: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Teddy Bears, but Were Afraid to Ask.



Pastor receives a gift card for Amazon, a pair of coffee cups, one for home and one for the office and a monetary gift from Council. We only make her give one speech. She again assures us that she loves us and is so happy to be our pastor.





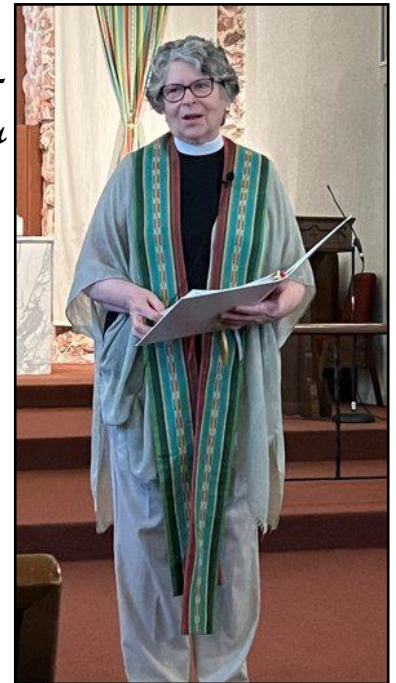
11th Sunday after Pentecost

August 13, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is August 13, the 11th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor welcomes us and tells us how much she enjoyed her anniversary party last week. She reminds us that she missed her party last year because she had COVID.

We confess our sins and receive forgiveness. Then we pray together the prayer of the day.

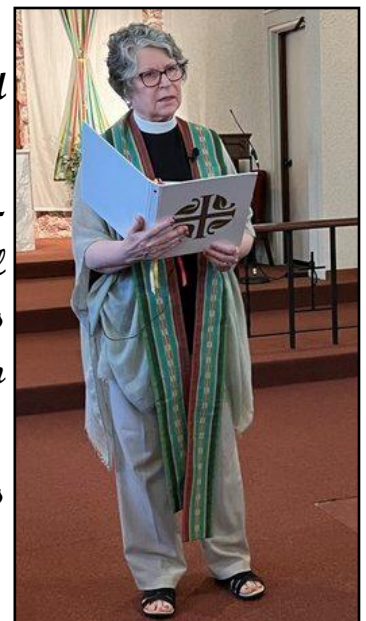


Pat is our reader. The first lesson is from 1 Kings. Unlike on Mt. Horeb, where Moses experienced God with typical signs — wind and fire — Elijah now experiences God in “sheer silence.” God assured Elijah that he is not the only faithful believer. Seven thousand Israelites are still loyal. God instructed Elijah to anoint two men as kings and to anoint Elisha as his own successor.

We read Psalm 85 responsively. This psalm talks about the good things that will come to faithful people.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew’s gospel typically portrays Jesus’s disciples as people of “little faith,” who fail despite their best intentions. In this story, Matthew shows how Jesus comes to the disciples when they are in trouble and sustains them in their time of fear and doubt.

Pastor begins her sermon with a reference to how traumatic fires driven by winds can be. She uses the fires in Maui as an example.





Wind is in the scriptures today. It is often a sign of chaos. You didn't want to be out on the sea when the wind blew. This was true in Bible times as it's true now.

The church can be our boat. We are sitting in the nave which means boat. We aren't meant to just sit in the boat. Often chaos creeps in — doubt.

Doubt and faith are both part of our experience. We go back and forth between belief and doubt as did those in the lessons.

Elijah was sought after by Jezebel. He traveled to Horeb to get away and to seek our God.

God asks Elijah, "What are you doing here?" He rants to God about all his problems. God doesn't fix things. Instead, he sends Elijah back to do what he told him to do. Pastor asks us to reflect: Are we where God wants us to be?

Pastor wonders why Jesus made the disciples get in the boat to go to the other side of the lake. Were there people in need? Jesus wanted them to "move their boat." He knew they were capable of doing more than they knew.

If we forget that Jesus is always with us, that's when trouble, chaos and doubt arise. Jesus says, "Do not be afraid." Faith is daring to believe that God is in the boat with us even if the evidence is to the contrary.

Elijah heard in silence. Peter heard amidst the storm. Pastor says, "Listen and don't be afraid."



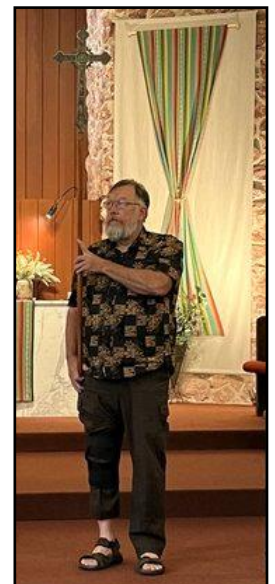
Rebeca is our assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace.



The offering is taken, and then we begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine so that we may commune.



We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional while we sing the sending hymn.






Rebeca tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.

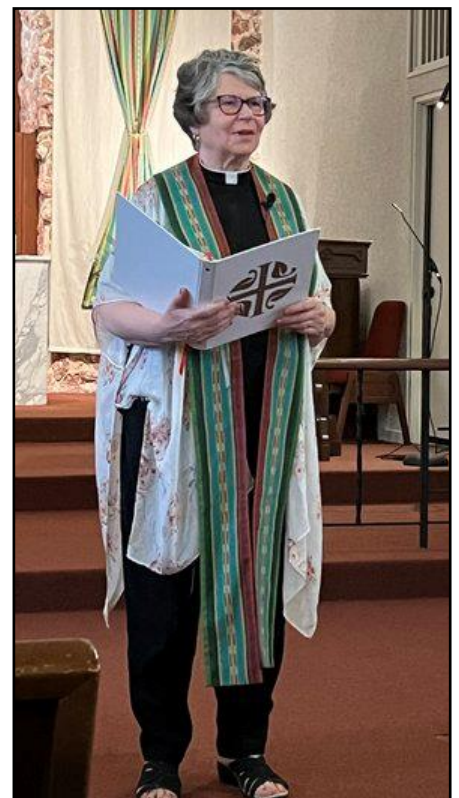


Lydia Circle is our host for today's fellowship time. Thank you, Barbara, Kathy and Marsha.



12th Sunday after Pentecost
August 20, 2023
Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is August 20, the 12th Sunday after Pentecost. And it's Birthday Sunday. Pastor welcomes everyone and makes a few announcements. We sing the opening hymn.

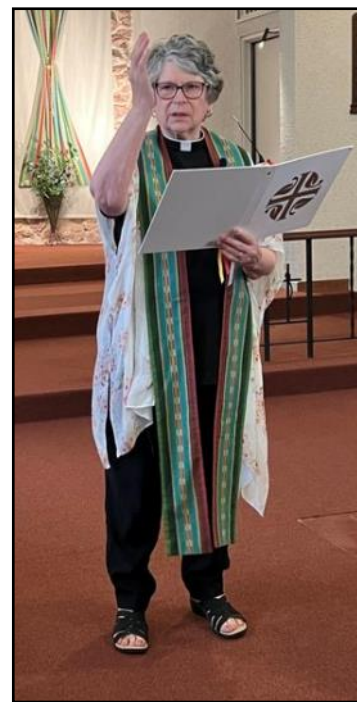


We confess our sins and receive forgiveness. Then we pray together the prayer of the day.

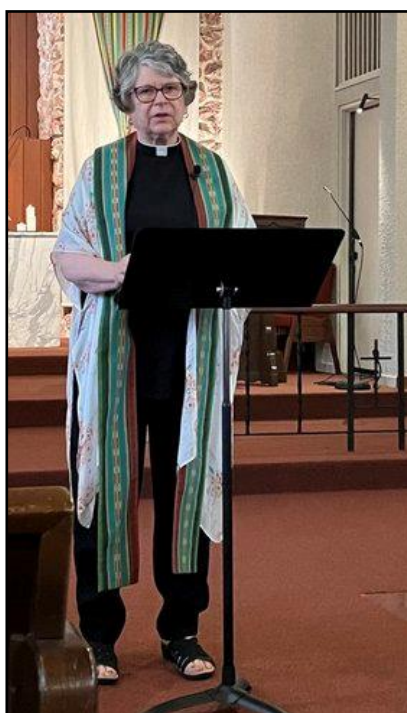
Melissa is our reader. The first lesson is from Isaiah. The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community — not race, nationality, or any other category.



We read Psalm 67 responsively. This psalm asks for God's mercy and calls for the nations to sing for joy.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.



Pastor begins her sermon by asking if we have ever experienced a time when everything seemed to be going right, and we felt we were just where we were meant to be. She says that today's gospel tells the moment when Jesus learned exactly what he was supposed to do and be.

Pastor says that today's story is difficult to preach on. Jesus sounds mean, but he was following tradition. He was in Phoenicia, a pagan area. The Canaanites were enemies. Jesus treated her the way all Jews would.

Jesus was having a hard time. He had been dissed by his hometown. John the Baptist had been murdered. He'd fed 5000 plus, experienced a big storm, and gotten in trouble with the Pharisees for saying you were only defiled by what came out of your mouth. He was at the end of his rope.

Now he is approached by a woman who gets his attention by calling him "Lord." Even his disciples didn't do that. He was tired of the stubbornness of the Jews. Now this woman was being stubborn. Her response to being told that he wasn't going to give the bread meant for the children of Israel to a dog was, "Even the dogs get to eat the crumbs that fall from the Master's table." Jesus was changed forever. It commends her faith, but it is not so much faith as it is trust. She trusted him. Now Jesus knows his mission is to the whole world.

He learns he is Savior for the whole world. He needed all five of his senses to realize his job. There is enough of him to go around.

The Canaanite woman was a light bearer. Our lives are the most evangelical tool we have.

Suzanne is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites everyone to the table to share in the body and blood of our Savior.



It is Birthday Sunday. Pastor asks those who celebrate the day of their birth in August to stand, and we pray together a birthday blessing prayer.

Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn. Suzanne tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.



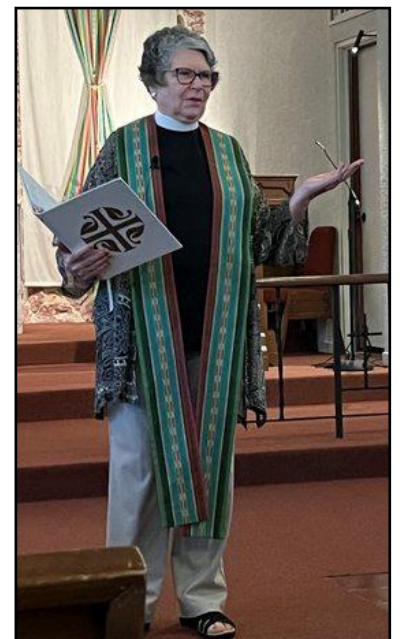
Then we receive the final blessing.



Then we go into Luther Hall for fellowship and birthday cake.

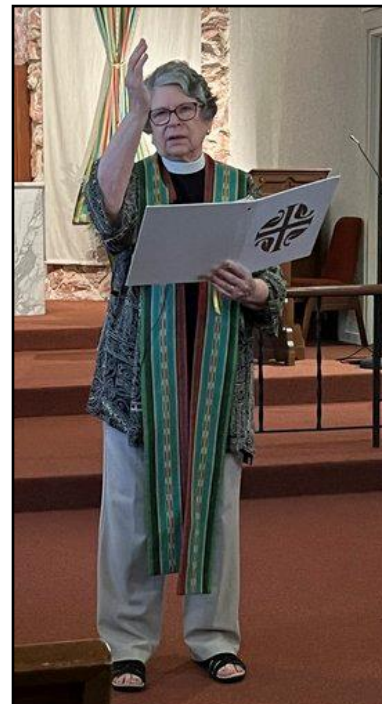


It is August 27, the 13th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor welcomes everyone to the service. She tells us that Barbara will be back next week and thanks Samantha for the beautiful music she has provided. We all applaud.



We sing the opening hymn, and then we confess our sins. Pastor assures us that our sins are forgiven and forgotten. We pray together the prayer of the day.

Chuck is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Isaiah. Just as God had called Abraham and Sarah and given them many descendants, so now God offers comfort to Zion. God's deliverance will come soon and will never end.



We read Psalm 51 responsively. This psalm gives thanks and praise to God because he cares for his people.

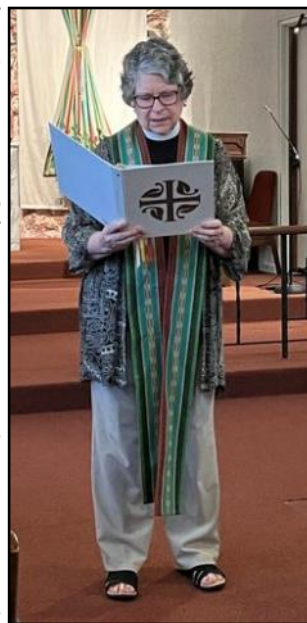


Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. At a climactic point in Jesus's ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying it is almost the end of summer and the season of using our five senses. She encourages us to keep meeting with our prayer partner. She says these prayers have made a difference.

In the gospel, Jesus asks what people say about him. She tells a story about a parishioner from a former church who was working in the courtyard, taking care of the flowers. A passerby, pointing to the church building, asked, "What do you do in there?" The woman confessed to not knowing what to say, and the passerby just walked on. Pastor asks if we could answer that question.

It was easy to identify who Jesus was, but the disciples did not know what he was supposed to do. In Jesus's time, it was important to know where you were from. They didn't care about feelings, but only about how others saw them. This is why Jesus asked, "Who do others say that I am?" Pastor asks, "What do others say about Emanuel?"



Jesus had recently been rejected by hometown and family, fed 5000 people, and healed the



Canaanite woman's daughter. He was now in Caesarea Philippi. This was a Roman resort city. He gives the disciples a pop quiz. Pastor says she always hated pop quizzes. He asks who people say he is and who the disciples say he is. Peter represents humanity. He got the answer right, but he had no idea what it meant. Did God give him the answer? Yes, so that gives us hope because we will still fail,

but we should keep trying.

Jesus names Simon, "Rock," and says he will build his church on him. He is blessed because he listened to God and was willing to take a risk.

If someone asks us what we believe or what we do in church, Pastor encourages us to give it a shot. We might be wrong, but we might just say what they need to hear. The important thing is that we try.

Barbara is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We pass the peace, and the offering is taken.



Then we begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to commune.





We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Barbara tells us to go in peace and share the harvest. Thank you, Yvonne for helping with the music while Barbara has been gone.



The Echoes September 2023

Inside: Teddy Bear Picnic
Joyce Bachman Birthdays
Bishop Candidates
Servant of the Month: Sylvia Tahmole

Emanuel Lutheran Church
Our Mission: To share Christ's unconditional love with everyone.

September

Our servant of the month is Silvia. Silvia is a member of the Outreach Ministry Committee and a member of the task force.



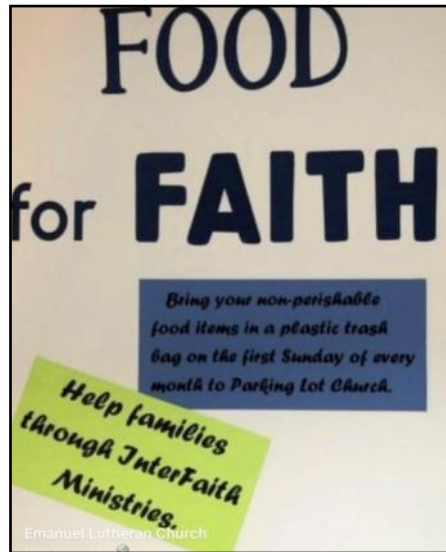


14th Sunday after Pentecost

September 3, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is September 3, the 14th Sunday after Pentecost. It is also Food for Faith Sunday. Jeri is our Trunkmaster.



We are happy to have Barbara back after her surgery. Pastor is on vacation, so Kathleen is the presiding minister. She welcomes us and makes a few announcements. She also leads us in the confession of our sins.



Suzanne is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Jeremiah. Jeremiah's delight in the word of the Lord is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. He is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."



We read Psalm 26 responsively. The psalmist declares his faith in the Lord and his joy at being in God's house.

Dan reads the Gospel according to Matthew. After Peter confesses that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of "ministry." These words prove hard, even for Peter, the "rock."





Dan begins his sermon by saying that Peter goes from being the Rock to Satan, a rock to a stumbling stone. Peter thought Jesus was going about it all wrong — antagonizing the authorities. Peter didn't understand what "Messiah" meant.

Peter's lack of understanding angered Jesus. Jesus tells the others what they must do to be his disciples. They must have been confused. They have to follow him to the cross?

Following our own interests has led to violence and hate. We miss the mark when we do this. Christ's word is our greatest security.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Following Christ puts us out of step with cultural things, but it fosters life and healing."

Jesus calls us to a relationship with him, to grace, to obedience. It frees us to be children of God. It makes faith possible and will cause it to grow. God works at the margins. Dan talked about times he's been "called." Even failure can make your faith grow.



Lois is the assisting minister. She leads us in the confession of our faith through the words of the Apostle's creed. She also prays the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace and the offering is taken.

The bread and wine were blessed last week when Pastor was here. We are invited to commune.





We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recession. Lois tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.



*God's Work,
Our Hands*

On Friday, September 8, we meet at church to set up for God's Work, Our Hands. Our project this year is socks, shoes, and gift bags for the children at James Marshall Park. The congregation will assemble these on Sunday. In two weeks we will join Grace Is the Key to hand these things out.



15th Sunday after Pentecost

September 10, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is September 10, the 15th Sunday after Pentecost, and God's Work, Our Hands Sunday. Pastor is back, and she welcomes us warmly.



We sing the opening hymn, and Pastor leads us in confessing our sins. Pastor assures us that we are forgiven in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



Dan is the reader and the assisting minister this morning. The first lesson is from Ezekiel. God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God — who is about to attack Jerusalem — gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

We read Psalm 33 responsively. This psalm tells of the psalmist's longing for God's guidance and commandments.



Pastor reads the Gospel according to Matthew. Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals — and the church as a whole — should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.

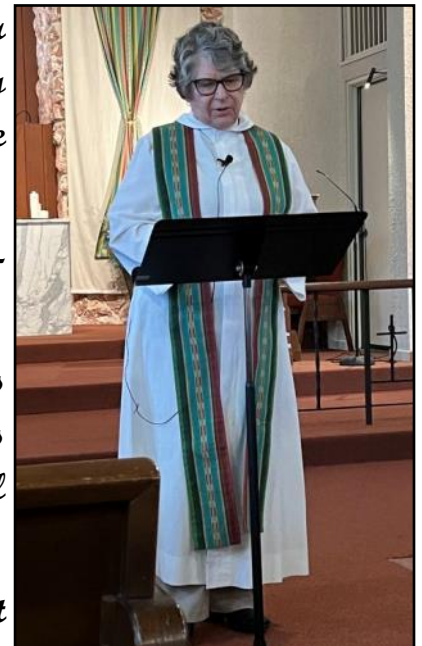
She begins her sermon by reminding us that whenever two or three are gathered, Jesus is present, but there is more potential for conflict. The gospel gives a way to find a solution, but Pastor wonders if it's practical today.

Conflict and conflict management are complex things. There are lots of “magic” answers out there. The church is a breeding ground for conflict. Some are better at dealing with it. Others are better at hiding it.

Conflict is an issue today everywhere. Pastor is reminded of our Synod. Our Synod has a conflict problem. The members attending have been required to sign a “behavioral” contract. This is because there was an assault at the last one.

The church today is part of the problem. We need each other. Diversity of opinion is good.

In Ezekiel, there is restored holiness. We are caretakers of God's holiness. The church needs to be aware of its shortcomings. God longs to give and restore, not to punish. Justice brings God's kingdom to all life.



Grace is costly. Come to Christ and die. The first step is repentance. In the end, we become all God wants us to be.

Dan leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. He also prays the prayers of intercession.

We pass the peace and the offering is taken. Then we begin the communion liturgy.





Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to the table to partake of Christ's body and blood. Pastor assures us that all are welcome. Autumn gets a ride on Pat's walker.

We receive the final blessing. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Dan tells us to go in peace and share the harvest.



We go into Luther Hall for fellowship and to do the projects for God's Work, Our Hands.



*Did you get the memo? Today is is lines and shapes.
Anything geometric!*



The congregation works to assemble goodie bags that we will hand out to the children at James Marshall Park. We also have socks and shoes. This is our God's Work, Our Hands project for this year.

*MoPride at Graceada Park
Saturday, September 16*





16th Sunday after Pentecost

September 17, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is September 17, the 16th Sunday after Pentecost. It is also birthday Sunday. Pastor Lyn, Dennis, Marty, Lois and Kathleen are at Synod.

Barbara is our presiding minister. She welcomes us warmly.



Barbara leads us in confessing our sins and the prayer of the day.

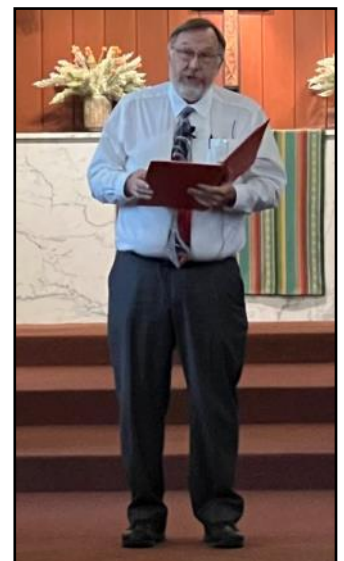


Melissa is our reader and our assisting minister. The first lesson is from Genesis. After Jacob's death, the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. "You intended to do me harm," Joseph said, "but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives."

We read Psalm 103 responsively. The psalmist blesses God for all the wonderful things God does for us.

Dan is the preacher for today. He reads from the Gospel of Matthew. When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

Dan begins his sermon by saying that he loves Peter. He wonders if the other disciples put him up to the questions he asks. He remembers how he used to go fishing with about eight other guys. He said by two weeks they were all at each other's throats.



Dan remembers a “discussion” about hockey he had with one of them. Later he found out he was also a Christian, and they forgave each other. Jesus didn’t approve of “pay back.” He wants us to forgive each other.

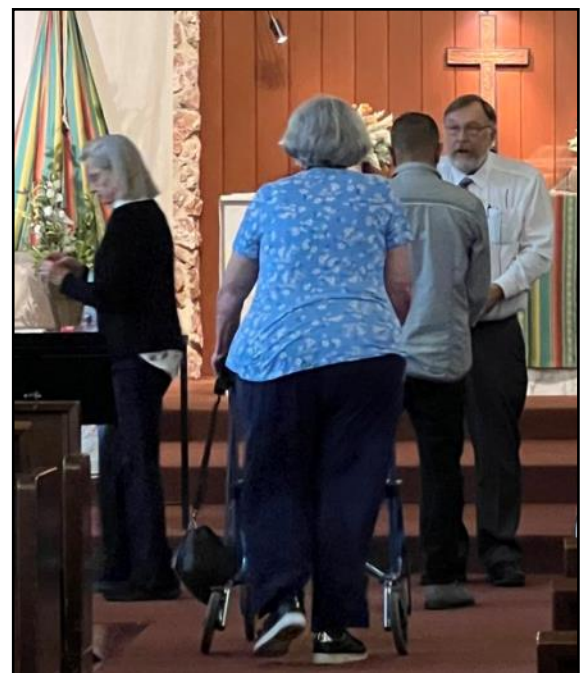
The parables mention large sums of money, but this is nothing compared to what Jesus gave. Forgiveness is important to our well-being and happiness.

We build walls to protect ourselves, but that blocks beauty. God does not want us to live in the hell of hate. Prayer quiets our minds and calms our hearts. Forgiveness brings a feeling of peace. You can’t always get what you want, but you might get what you need. Forgiveness has to be from the heart.



Melissa, our assisting minister, leads us in the words of the Apostle’s creed. She also prays the prayers of intercession. Then we share the peace.

The Eucharist was blessed last week by Pastor. We are invited to come forward to commune.



The ladies of the Piecemakers come forward as the quilts are blessed. They will go to shut-ins.



Barbara leads us in the birthday blessing prayer. Chuck and Donna are celebrating birthdays this month.



Chris extinguishes the candles. Dan leads the recessional. And we all enjoy birthday cake and fellowship in Luther Hall. We learn, via the internet, that Jeff Johnson has been elected our new bishop. We look forward to hearing a report on the Synod Assembly next week. Those of us that got the memo are wearing flowers.

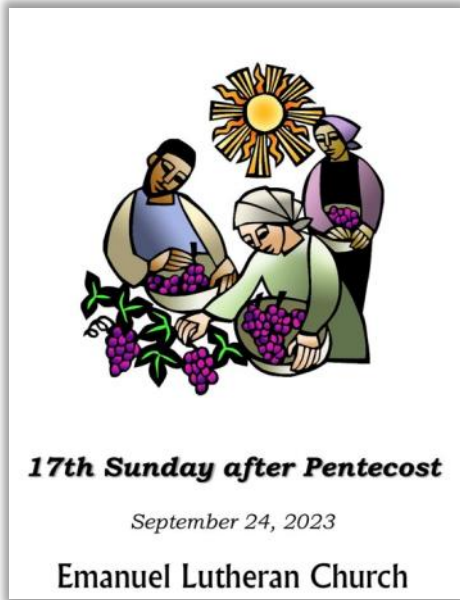


On Wednesday, September 20, we gather in James Marshall Park with Grace Is the Key to distribute our donations from God's Work, Our Hands. It is a wonderful way to meet the people we are helping. Kaete is modeling the T-shirts from GJK.



We have shoes, socks for all ages and goodie bags for the children. There is also pizza for the park people and for us, too.





It is September 24, the 17th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor is back and welcomes us warmly. Dennis and Marty, our Synod representatives, give a report on Synod. They said that the

Assembly was Spirit led and joyfully optimistic. Among the highlights was the apology to Pastor Nelson Rabel and the reinstatement of his church, La Iglesia Santa Maria Peregrina. A new bishop, Jeff Johnson, was also elected.



We confess our sins and receive forgiveness in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We sing the "Kyrie" and "This Is the Feast."

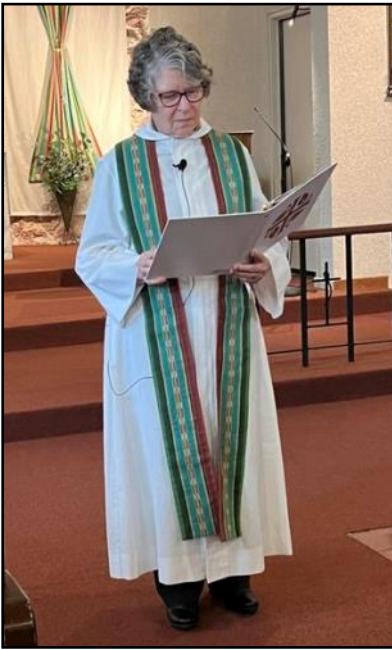
Rebeca and Matthew are our readers today. The first lesson is from Jonah. After Jonah's short sermon, the Ninevites all repented, and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to



destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive.

We read Psalm 145 responsively. This psalm tells of the importance of praising God for all his marvelous works and his compassion.

The second lesson is from Philipians. Paul writes from prison that he is uncertain about the outcome, but he is committed to his ministry.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying she loves the story of Jonah. She says the name Jonah can mean "dove" or "pigeon." Jonah behaves less like a prophet than any of the others. He is angered by God's generosity.

In the Gospel lesson, fairness is turned upside down. The stories are really about God's invitation to do his work.

The early risers are hired to work for the day for a day's wage. Throughout the day, others are hired for a "fair" wage. This is a reciprocal relationship. Each does what he agreed to do. A day's wage was a denarius. This could feed a family for three days. The "idle" men were not lazy. They simply had not been invited to work.

Pastor mentions definitions of "fairness." In the USA, the ongoing strikes have to do with fairness. Jesus turns fairness to a deeper act, not based on who we are or what we've done. God's way of doing "business" is different from the world's.

Pastor indicates that invitation is very important in today's world, too. This is what will bring the non-churched back. Pastor says that God's justice has more to do with blessedness than merit. God chooses to bestow grace, justice and mercy on everyone. We need to connect with where we are while we serve. This is collaboration. We need to invite others to come back.



Rebeca is also the assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.





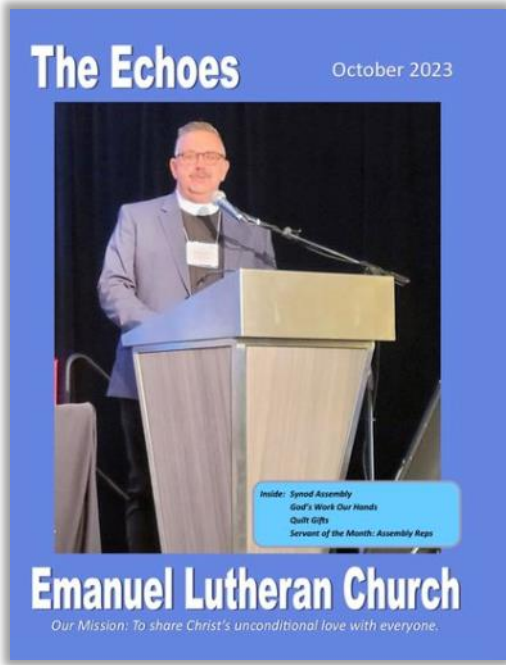
The communion liturgy begins with the blessing of the bread and wine. Then we are invited to come to the table. All are welcome.



The service ends with the final blessing. Chris extinguishes the candle and leads the recessional. We join in fellowship in Luther Hall.



Bunco Night is a fundraiser for our Day Care. We start with a taco bar. There is also a raffle table with lots of wonderful donations. Everyone has a great time. We're not sure that Justin is excited about winning a prize for being the Big Loser.



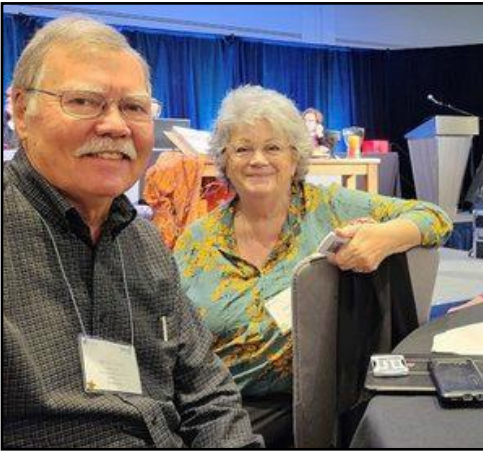
October

The October Echoes recaps the events of September.

There is also an article about the Piecemakers. They recently brought quilts to several of our shut-ins.

Jack, Tom and Barbara are recipients of these quilts.



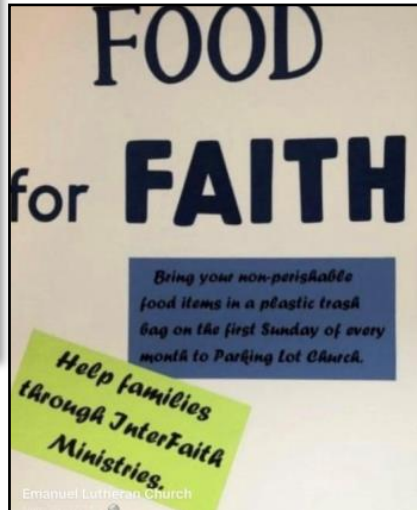


Dennis and Marty are our Servants of the Month. Dennis is Council President, and Marty is the Council representative for the Worship Ministry. Marty also is part of the Sanctuary Arts Team and is often responsible for the beautiful flower decorations in the sanctuary and Luther Hall. Both served as our voting reps to the Synod Assembly. Thank you, Dennis and Marty for all that you do.



18th Sunday after Pentecost
 October 1, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is October 1, the 18th Sunday after Pentecost. It is also Food for Faith Sunday. Lisa puts her donation into the open trunk.



Inside the narthex and the Sanctuary, we see beautiful symbols of the changing of the seasons.





As always, we are warmly welcomed to the service. The service begins with a temple talk from one of our Council members. Pat introduces the stewardship campaign for this year. Pat reminds us how important it is to support our church.



We sing the opening hymn and then confess our sins. Pastor assures us that we are forgiven for God is merciful.

We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast



Lois is our reader this morning. The first lesson is from Ezekiel. Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

We read Psalm 25 responsively. The psalmist sings praises to the Lord in whom he trusts. He calls upon the mercy of God and asks that God forgive and forget his sins.

The second lesson is from Philipians. As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.





Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. After driving the money changers out of the temple, Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that we get to know God by doing his work. Today's lessons are about an invitation.

She recalls when her son was young his saying, "You're not the boss of me!" None of us like to be told what to do, but obedience means survival. She asks if we are obedient enough to accept God's will, or do we do what we want and call it God's will?

The problem with authority goes back to creation. Ezekiel, the prophet, was exiled to Babylon. He was the watchman of the walls of the city.

Obedying God starts with attitude. God knows us and has an interest in us. God is in control and loves us. He desires us to know him.

God wants us to fulfill his purpose in us. He will help us do this. God's mercy is bigger than his anger. It gives us hope and a reason to change our ways.

Human authority equals power. Divine authority equals finding the truth. The church leaders were not willing to change.

"Yes" people go along with anything. The son who said, "Yes," brought honor to the father in the eye of the public. The son who said, "No," brought dishonor. Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God. Only if knowing about God causes us to change, is it important.





Kathleen is the assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. She invites us to sit or kneel for the prayers of intercession. We share the peace and the offering is taken.



We begin the great thanksgiving. Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites us to receive the body and blood of our Savior. All are welcome to come to the table.

We receive the final blessing and sing the sending hymn.



Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Kathleen tells us to go in peace, that God is at work in us. Then we gather for fellowship and goodies in Luther Hall.

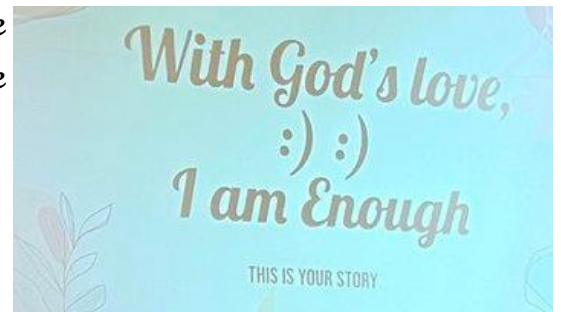


Women's Retreat
With God's Love, I Am Enough

Event Facilitator: Tami Giordan
 Worship Service: Rev. Dr. Lynn Gross
 Registration: \$40
 Breakfast & Lunch
 Activities & Crafts

October 7, 8:00-5:00

*On October 7, the women of Emanuel gather for a day-long retreat. We start with breakfast at 8:00. Donna is the coordinator, Tami is the facilitator, and Pastor Lynn is the spiritual leader. Our theme is *With God's love, I am enough*. Our Community Project is to provide beanies and socks for Grace Is the Key.*



Two of the recipients of the beanies.



We make journals, work on crafts, have thoughtful discussions about our story: past, present, and future, and sang songs. At the end of the day, we have a short worship service. Pastor blesses our journals and soul collages and the beanies and socks that we donated.

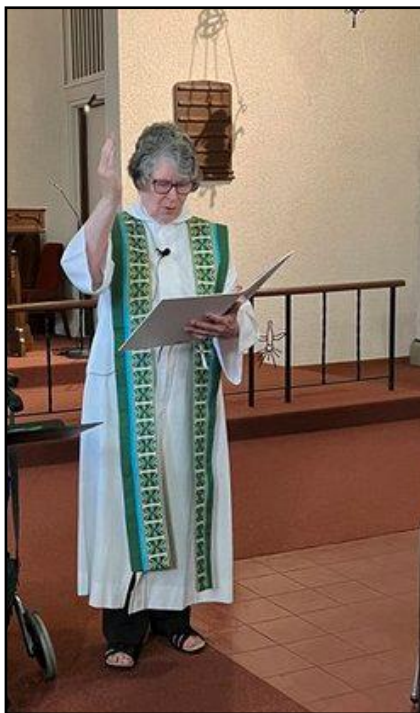


19th Sunday after Pentecost

October 8, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is October 8, the 19th Sunday after Pentecost. It is Pastor Appreciation Sunday. There will be special goodies after church. Pastor welcomes us. Chris gives the Stewardship Temple Talk this morning.



We confess our sins, and Pastor assures us that God's compassion is beyond compare and that we are already forgiven.

We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.

Chris is the reader for this morning. The first lesson is from Isaiah. The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song, Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard, that is Israel, has brought forth "wild grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.



We read Psalm 80 responsively. This psalm laments that God has allowed his vineyard to be ravaged by passers-by and wild animals.

The second lesson is from Philipians. Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that our stewardship campaign this year is entitled Fertile Fields: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. She says that California is beautiful with its vineyards. Vineyards, in the Bible, were symbolic of wealth. They represented Israel. It's still a metaphor for today. Good grapes have deep roots and send tendrils out into the world.

Pastor says that the parable that Jesus tells today in the scripture lesson used to be called the Parable of the Wicked Tenants. That word "wicked" has now been dropped.

Today's parable follows the "authority" parables. Doing the word of God is more important. Jesus invited all to work, and all got the same reward.

Today's parable looks at how the workers take care of the vineyard. The people of Jesus's time would have been familiar with Isaiah. The caretakers are to blame for the grapes. God provides, but we don't always see that.



Matthew's lesson is about honesty and integrity. We owe God good fruit, but not for salvation. That is by grace. Sin is not doing what we should do for God. Sin is the attitude that God isn't needed for little things, only big ones.

The problem today is that knowledge about God has taken over from actually knowing God. We need to recognize where the "fruit of our labor" comes from.

What is the church doing to produce good fruit? Baptism and confirmation are two ways. The cure for selfishness is to be good stewards of God's world. Pastor challenges us to be a church that bears fruit. Let's move forward.

Suzanne is the assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and prays the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace. The offering is taken. Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites everyone to come to the table.

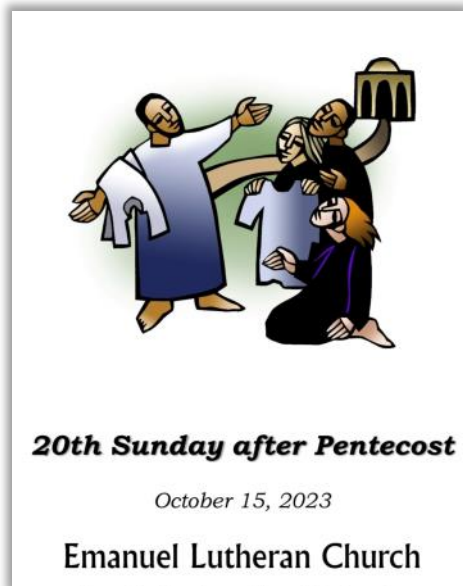


*This is the body and blood of our Savior,
broken and shed for you.*



We receive the final blessing. Matthew extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn. Suzanne tells us to go in peace and that God is at work in us.





It is October 15, the 20th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor welcomes us. She invites our treasurer, Bob, to give the temple talk this morning. Bob explains the importance of pledging to help the Council set a realistic budget.



We confess our sins and receive forgiveness in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.

Yvonne is the reader. The first lesson is from Isaiah. After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death — which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone — will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

We read Psalm 23 responsively. This beloved psalm depicts our Lord as a shepherd who continually cares for us and urges us forward.



The second lesson is from Philipians. Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philipians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

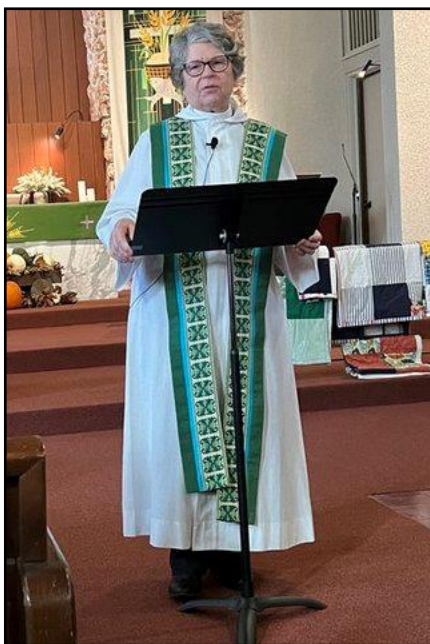
Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

Pastor begins her sermon by indicating that the gospel lessons from the past few weeks have been about invitation. All are invited by God, but not everyone accepts.

Pastor acknowledges that the world is in a bad place, filled with violent and uncertain circumstances. We must rest, take a break from chaos, and look for the good and beauty in the world. We need to remember that God's invitation is extended to all.

Pastor says that the parables have been difficult. They are not literal teachable moments. Invitation means doing God's will. God's graciousness comes with hard words for those who do not repent or accept Jesus. Pastor says that this can cause problems. Pastor admits that she omitted some of the harsh language because some people use these words to justify bad actions. They exaggerate and abuse.

Pastor says we should acknowledge violence in the Bible. We should also acknowledge grace. Grace always wins.



Invitation is like shining a light in the darkness. We should call out what stands in the way of invitation. Pastor says that the way Isaiah said God's name was really more like breathing it.

Having peace and shelter does not remove violence. She wonders if those in war can endure. Only hindsight will tell.

God has a divine plan: to swallow death and wipe away all tears. Where do we go for solace? John 3:16? Isaiah? Psalm 23? This is our journey, good or bad. We are people of good news. Pastor tells us to stand firm; keep our eyes on Christ. Pastor says that gentleness is really controlled strength. Sometimes Jesus wants us to be uncomfortable. We must keep going.



Barbara is our assisting minister. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We pass the peace, and the offering is taken. We begin the communion liturgy.



Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites all to come to the table to receive the body and blood of our Savior.



Pastor announces that we are having a quilt blessing. She invites all of the ladies who have worked on these quilts to come forward and place their hands on them.



It is also Birthday Sunday. Pastor leads a special blessing prayer. Happy birthday, Matthew, Tony, Lois, Linda and Bob.



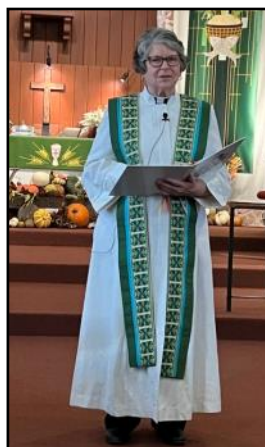
Pastor gives the final blessing. Tom extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional as we sing the sending hymn.

Barbara tells us to go in peace and that God is at work in us. We leave for Sunday school, fellowship and birthday cake.



It is October 22, the 21st Sunday after Pentecost.

21st Sunday after Pentecost
 October 22, 2023
 Emanuel Lutheran Church



Pastor greets us and asks us to read all the announcements in the bulletin. Then she invites Dennis and Marty to give the temple talk.

Dennis reminds us that the stewardship theme for this year is Fertile Fields: Past, Present and Future. He tells us that the founders of Emanuel had fertile hearts, faith and good stewardship. We are called to continue good stewardship. We are all able to do this and to share the good news in years to come.



After singing the opening hymn, we confess our sins and receive forgiveness. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.

Kathleen is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from Isaiah. The prophet announces that Cyrus, the Persian emperor, is the one the Lord has anointed to end Israel's exile. The Lord makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this Lord as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the Lord claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

We read Psalm 96 responsively. This psalm declares the majesty of God over all other gods.

The second lesson is from 1 Thessalonians. Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.





Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

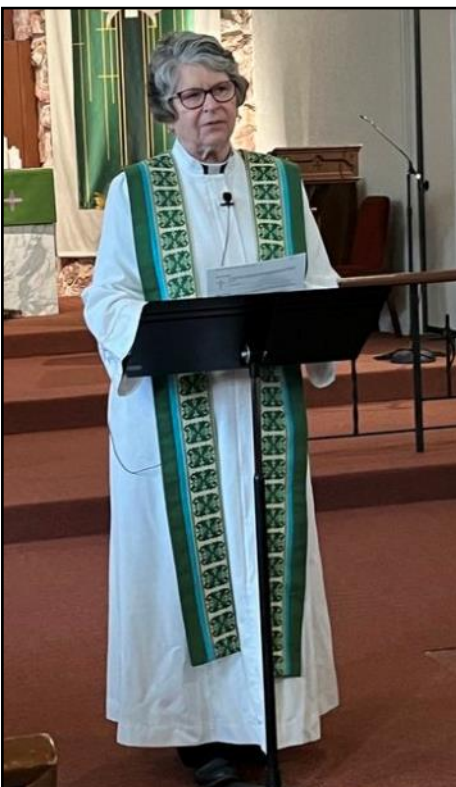
Pastor begins her sermon by saying that it might seem as if stewardship is very low key this year, but it is very important. She tells us that the Council is working very hard. The whole Council is the stewardship team. Thanks to our treasurer, Bob, we've been relatively stable. Pastor thanks everyone who pledges or gives regularly.

Emanuel has a future. Pastor is glad we are done with the Gospel of Matthew. She relates that every year seems to go faster.

In the gospel lesson today, the Pharisees are plotting to get rid of Jesus. They are helped by the Herodians, backers of King Herod. These two groups were not usually friends, but they are united in their hatred of Jesus.

In the Old Testament lesson, God chooses Cyrus, the king of Persia, to liberate the Jews from Babylonian exile. This is the only time in scripture that a gentile is anointed.

History, culture, and religion are united in these lessons. In Isaiah, we learn that God's rule is absolute. He is the sole creator. Evil cannot win.



Paul's letter to the Thessalonian is probably the oldest writing in the New Testament. Paul reminds us that we have hope so we can be an example. We receive power from the Holy Spirit. We receive this in baptism. We are called.

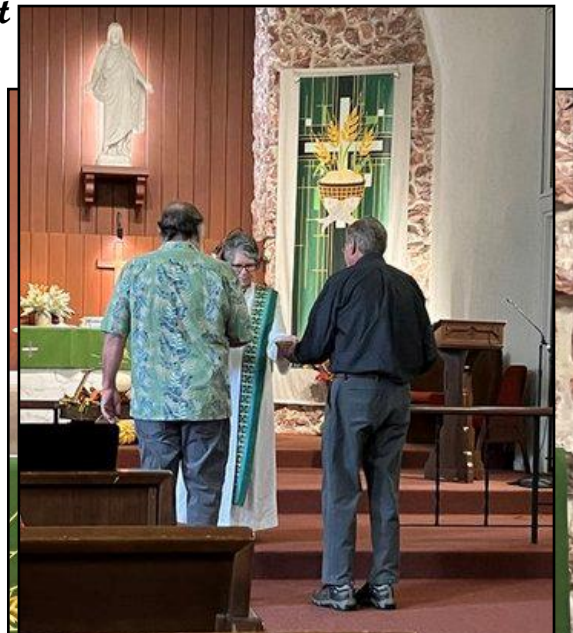
In Jesus's time, there was a flat rate for the tax. The coin used, a denarius, was the equivalent of a day's wage. For men, it was 14 denarii and for women, 12. The tax could only be paid with coins minted by the Romans for this purpose. It was stamped with Caesar's image. Jesus knew how hard taxes were. He tells the Pharisees that what is Caesar's should be given to Caesar, but everything else belonged to God.

Violence and evil are very real right now. Jesus was and is motivated by love. He knows all our situations. He calls us to live in God's world, to bear fruit, to stand up for our beliefs.

Every part of us belongs to God. He wants us to bring light to the world. Pastor tells us to spread joy! Sing! Joy is the power of the Holy Spirit in us!

Lois is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are invited to the table.



The body and blood of our Savior, broken and shed for you.

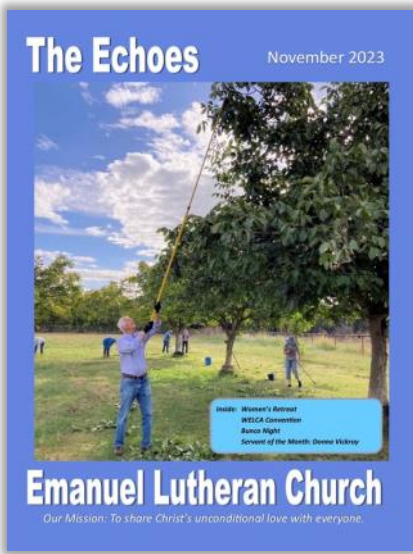


We receive the final blessing. Dan extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Lois tells us to go in peace because God is at work in us.

On Saturday, October 28, Donna hosts a thank-you luncheon for her Retreat team. The table is beautifully set. Donna and Bruce have made a delicious pumpkin soup, and apple cake. Everyone has a wonderful time. We each receive a thank-you pumpkin.



Thank you!



November

It is November and The Echoes reflects on the events of the past month. The cover shows the harvesting of walnuts out at Dave's and Kristine's.

Donna is the Servant of the Month. In addition to facilitating the recent Retreat, she is also active on the Outreach Ministry committee and is a member of the Piecemakers. She and Bruce also serve as ushers.



Marsha, Mary Lou, Bruce, Pastor Lyn, Barbara, Chris, David and Donna work hard to harvest the walnuts. Kristine and Dave donate the proceeds to the Outreach Ministry.



Kristine, Barbara, Marsha and Chris attend the Sierra Pacific WELCA convention. They have a wonderful time.



William is this month's recipient of a quilt from the Piecemakers.



**Reformation Sunday
Confirmation Day**

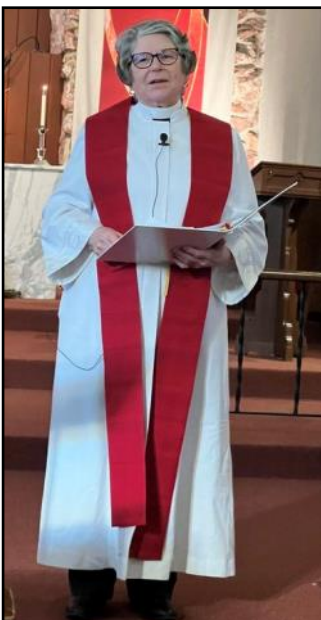
October 29, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is October 29, Reformation Sunday. It doesn't take long to see that the Emanuel congregation has "nailed it" when it comes to wearing red. Some enthusiasts have even donned red hats.



The chancel is resplendent in red, too. Pastor greets us warmly. She tells that this Sunday remembers the day Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, hoping to spark an interest in debating some things that were going on in the Catholic Church.



Pastor also tells us that we will celebrate Rebeca's confirmation today. She will read her statement of faith later on in the service.

We begin with confessing our sins and receiving forgiveness.

We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.



Marsha is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Jeremiah. The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant, it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the Lord means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy. The renewed covenant is possible only because the Lord will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

We read Psalm 46 responsively, but with a slightly different format. There is one line that has a different reader.

The second lesson is from Romans. Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

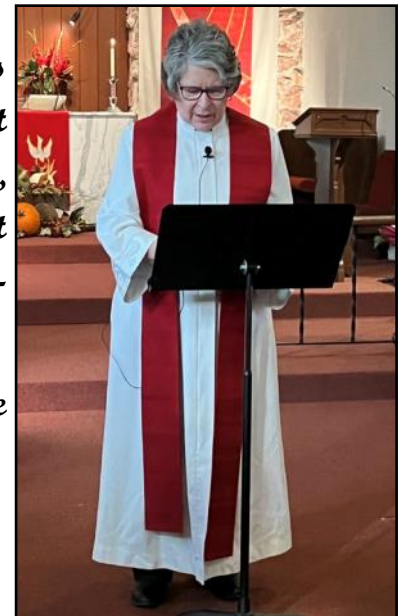


Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that today we celebrate an event that happened on October 31, 1517. It was on this date that Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door. He only wanted to reform the church. He felt that buying indulgences was wrong. He didn't think families could buy their loved ones out of purgatory. This began the Protestant Reformation. Pastor tells us that we are still a reforming church.

Scripture changes us over time. Jesus is "truth revealed." We are free from all that would keep us down. In Jesus, we are made true and right with God, through faith, which is a gift from God. We are created to do good. It begins with baptism. This is followed by confirmation. Now the confirmand is responsible to continue growing in faith.

Pastor tells us that now Rebeca will read her faith statement. She will then be confirmed after the hymn.





Rebeca begins by telling us that she has selected John 13:34-35 for her Bible verse.

A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Loving others makes her love herself, and makes her nicer. The example she gives is when her dad was angry with a neighbor but remained nice and worked it out.

Jesus died for us. We should love ourselves and accept ourselves.

Nurturing relationships with friends makes us feel loved. Showing compassion enriches the lives of others and our life. Rebeca says she is trying to follow the example of Jesus.

Rebeca's family gathers around her as Pastor reads the confirmation liturgy. Rebeca confirms her faith and takes responsibility for her continued participation in the life of the church.



The congregation promises to support her.



The ceremony ends with the laying on of hands. Rebeca is now an adult in the eyes of the church.

Kathleen continues with the prayers of intercession.

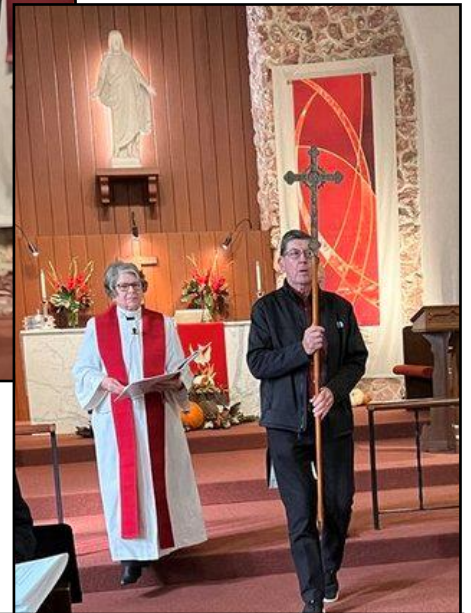


We share the peace, and the offering is taken. Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine.



We are invited to come to the table to share in receiving the body and blood of our Savior for the forgiveness of sins.

We receive the final blessing. Bruce extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



Rebeca!



There is a cake honoring Rebeca. Her family is so proud of her.



Joyce, our oldest member, greets Rebeca. Rue, Donna and Suzanne have a special gift for her. They give her a prayer journal, colored pens to write in it, and, since she is now accepted as an adult, her own apron so that she can help in the kitchen.

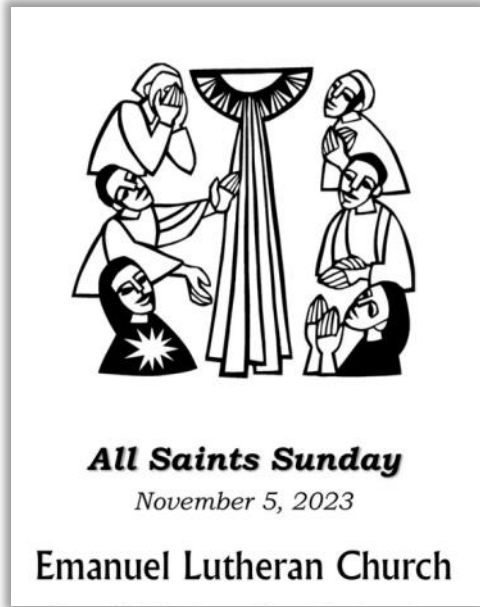
We all rejoice with Rebeca and enjoy eating the delicious cake.



Day Care Director Laura gets into the spirit of Halloween. The children have all come in their pajamas. They get to trick or treat in the office.



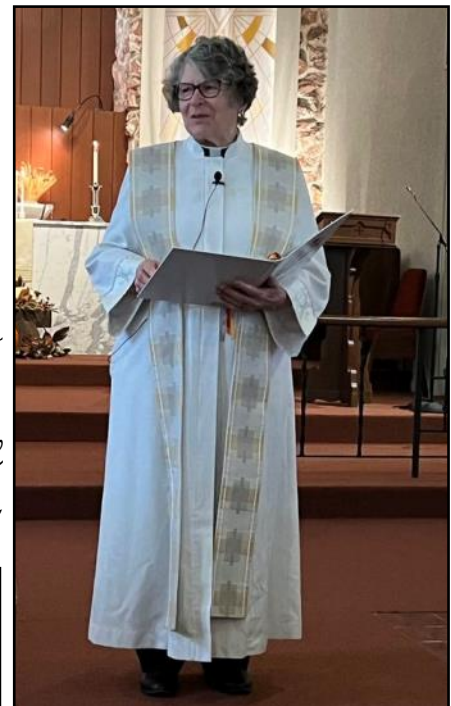
It is November 5, All Saints Sunday. Today is the day that we remember all our loved ones who have passed on.



Pastor greets us warmly. She makes a few important announcements. She explains that after we have communed, we will have the opportunity to light a candle for a loved one who has passed. She says it doesn't matter whether it was this year or 50 years ago.

Before we start the service, however, she invites Drew to come forward and explain about his Eagle Scout project.

Drew tells us that he plans to landscape another area of the front with drought resistant plants. He invites us to contribute to this project.





We sing the opening hymn. Then we confess our sins. Pastor assures us that we are forgiven.

Pat is the reader. The first lesson is from Revelation. The book of Revelation is written to serve churches in western Asia Minor during a time of great oppression. Today's reading is a response to the question asked in 6:17: "Who is able to stand?" The writer gives the faithful assurance of God's protection and a vision of victory.



We read Psalm 34 in two sections with the lectern side reading Section 1 and the pulpit side reading Section 2.

The second lesson is from 1 John. A saint is one who has been set apart by God for God's purposes. God, out of divine love set us apart to be the children of God. Our holy hope is that we see God as God really is.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. In the Beatitudes, Jesus provides a unique description of those who are blessed with God's favor. His teaching is surprising and shocking to those who seek wealth, fame, and control over others.

Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that this is All Saints Sunday. She tells us that Stephen was the first saint. She says that Halloween actually means the eve before the holy day. November 1 is actually All Saints Day, and November 2, is All Souls Day. This is the day dedicated to remembering those who have passed.

We are encouraged to light a candle later in the service for those in our hearts. She tells us that they surround us this day. She asks us, "Whom are you thinking about?"

Pastor remembers, as a child, hearing about a veil that separates this world from the next. She says that the distance between the two worlds is a very fine line. She says sometimes those worlds seem to overlap.

She gives us a couple of examples from the Bible. Moses's encounter with the burning bush is one time. She says anytime Jesus is present would be another example.

This is the time when we think of those who have gone on.

The word saint refers to anyone who is set apart for God's purpose. We believe this happens in baptism. We try to live like Jesus. This should be a daily thing. We are meant to be in community. Even when we are separated by death, we are together.

Pastor tells us to celebrate all who are present. We do not need to worry about declining numbers. She says the church is a place of reality where the alienated are accepted, where the rebellious can find resolution, where the lonely can find companionship, the outcast, a safe place, where the poor in spirit can find peace for their soul, and where the needs of the hungry and thirsty are satisfied.

Pastor says that saints and beatitudes go together. She says that "blest" means "honorable" in this passage. She tells us a story told by an old rabbi who says only the lowly see God.

She says that all who anticipate God's reign are saints. The universal church gathers today as one body of Christ. We will not be the only ones in heaven.

John, in his letter, wanted the churches to know salvation came from God, not earthly powers. We should believe and know that we are God's children. We need to remind each other that we are saints, but not forget that we are also sinners.

One day we will pass on and know the glory of God.



Melissa is the assisting minister.. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



There are six candles on the altar. They represent the six members that we lost this year:

Barbara Bauman, Michael Clarke, Elaine Ixcot, Robert Lee, Rev. Roger Lee, and Norma Christensen. A bell chimes as Pastor reads each name.

We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to the table where all are welcome. After we commune, we are able to light a candle on the side altar.





Mary Lou helps Pat to light a candle. There are many loved being remembered today.



We receive the final blessing. Connie extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Melissa tells us to go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.



We gather together in Luther Hall for fellowship and goodies.



24th Sunday after Pentecost

November 12, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is November 12, the 24th Sunday after Pentecost. Pastor greets us warmly. She mentions what a beautiful memorial service was held yesterday for our oldest member, Barbara. She also reminds us that this is WELCA Sunday. She thanks all the women in the church for all they do. There will be a time later in the service for their thankoffering to be brought forward.



After singing the opening hymn, we confess our sins and receive assurance of forgiveness. Ours is a God who forgives and forgets.



We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.

Melissa is our reader this morning. The first lesson is from Amos. In those days, the people thought that the day of the Lord would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The Lord demands justice and righteousness in the community.



We read Psalm 70 responsively. This psalm asks for deliverance from one's enemies.

The second reading is from 1 Thessalonians. Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living and dead, will be raised into everlasting life.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying we are fast approaching the end of the church year. End times is a popular topic with some churches. Many are sure they will be the only ones going with Jesus to heaven. Pastor wonders if they really understand. She says the apocalyptic books are a literary method to offer hope. You may suffer now, but you will be rewarded.

Religious persecution is not new. Many want revenge against their persecutors. Amos was the earliest prophet to write about the “day of the Lord.”

The Northern and Southern Kingdoms were both sure the other would be punished. Amos wanted them to reconcile. Pastor reminds us that what we proclaim in church should be what we do outside.

Paul’s letter, 1 Thessalonians, is the oldest book in the New Testament. It was a communally written letter from Paul, Sylvanus and Timothy. The Thessalonians were “baby” Christians. Paul wanted to assure them that there is life after death. They didn’t need to worry. God has a plan.

Paul wanted to encourage them and give them hope. Jesus’s resurrection meant all would be saved and raised, even the dead. Pastor says the simple truth is that there is life beyond this life, and it will be beautiful.

Pastor indicates that there is much destruction throughout the world. We blame it on everything except the evil inside us.

We are used to the absence of Jesus. The question is, “What shall we do while we wait?” “What is enough oil? Faith? Good works?” Faith comes from hearing the word, understanding comes through the work of the Holy Spirit.

We trust that God is just. We act on the hope that Jesus will return. We’re ready when we hear God’s word, participate in baptism and communion, participate in the congregation, when we help the poor and needy, when we work for justice, and we’re ready when we love our neighbors as ourselves.



We sing the hymn of the day. Then Dan, our assisting minister, leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and Suzanne and Jeri take the offering.



We begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine, and we are invited to the table where all are welcome.



We receive the final blessing. Suzanne extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Dan tells us to go in peace and love and serve the Lord.



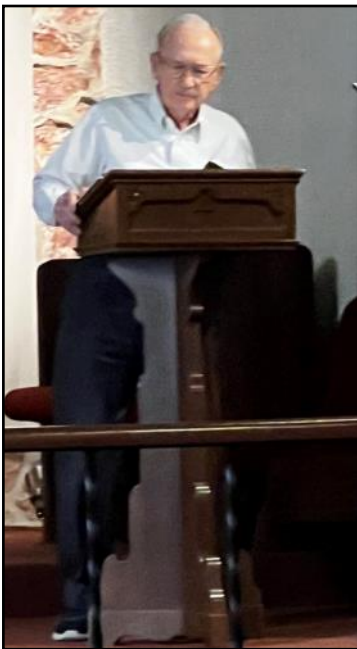


25th Sunday after Pentecost

November 19, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

Chuck is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Zephaniah. He presents the day of the Lord as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the Lord.

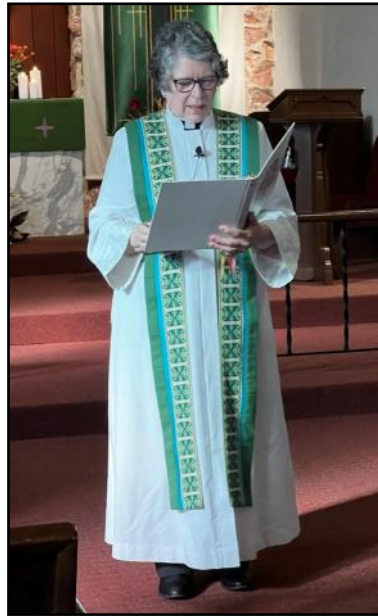


We read the Psalm 90 in sections. Section 1 is the lectern side of the church. Section 2 is the pulpit side of the church. This psalm speaks of the power of God and what will happen in the last days when we are judged.

The second reading is from 1 Thessalonians. Though we cannot know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts God has provided them.

It is November 19, the 25th Sunday after Pentecost. And it is Birthday Sunday. Pastor welcomes us warmly. She makes some announcements, but tells us to read our bulletins carefully. We confess our sins, and we receive the assurance that we are forgiven. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.



Pastor begins her sermon by indicating the weeks leading up to Advent are about end times. She suggests that this means we should nurture our faith, keep a sense of gratitude, and not hide our light under a bushel.

The parable of the talent is the most misinterpreted and abused parable in the gospels. It is often used to mean "Give more money!" Pastor says this parable is not about money. It's about how we use our gifts from God to spread the gospel. Everything we do should be done to the best of our abilities.



How do we nurture our faith and our abilities? How do we take care of God's investment in us. How we use that investment depends on how we see God.

Zephaniah worried about complacency. We can't depend on our gifts to bring us happiness.

1 Thessalonians is the oldest book in the New Testament. There is a new way of thinking about time. Now it is a direct line to the return of Jesus.

The foolish servant in the gospel is afraid to act. He blamed the Master.

Pastor asks if we live joyously, even recklessly, or do we live in fear? Do we bury every indication to serve? We can't just sit on our hands and wait.

We live in the kingdom already come while we wait for the kingdom to come.

We sing the hymn of the day. Kathleen is the assisting minister. She leads us in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace and the offering is taken.





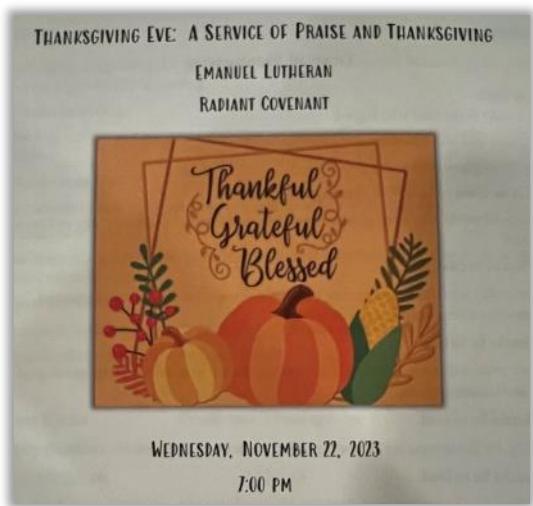
Pastor blesses the bread and the wine, and we are invited to commune.

It is Birthday Sunday. We pray a special blessing on all those who celebrate their birthday in November.

We receive the final blessing. Dennis extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Kathleen tells us to go in peace and to serve the Lord.

We leave to enjoy fellowship and birthday cake.





On Wednesday, November 22, we gather for the Thanksgiving Eve service. It is a joint service with Radiant Covenant. Pastor Zack of Radiant welcomes us and leads the Litany of Thanksgiving.

We sing the opening hymn. Pastor Lyn reads Psalm 65. This psalm begins in silence and ends in shouting and singing.



Radiant leads us in singing the next hymn.





Pastor gives the homily. She begins by telling us of seeing a post on Facebook, saying Santa has been reading our posts!

Pastor says the world needs a little reorientation. She remembers things we learned from our parents: good manners, who we are, how to be thankful. Psalm 65 is a psalm of thanksgiving that begins with silence and ends with shouting and singing.

God is in the chaos as well as in the peace. It would be wonderful if chaos slipped into the past.

*Pastor says that as she sat at her desk preparing this homily, the book Keeping Silent literally fell off a shelf at her feet. She says the word, *am*, used in Psalm 65 for *silent* really means a sit down, shut up, sit still kind of silence. Meditation can be helpful. We need to turn our eyes upon Jesus.*

We need to sit in silence and be thankful. Nothing can get in our way of joining God. Someone said that Thanksgiving is more about loving than liking. We live in a disorienting time, but if we invite others to come and see, it might help.

After she finishes, she invites the members of the congregation to share why they are thankful. Then we have another song led by Radiant. Pastor Zack leads us in the closing prayer and gives the final blessing. We sing one more song, and then we go into Luther Hall for fellowship and pie.

*Give
thanks!*



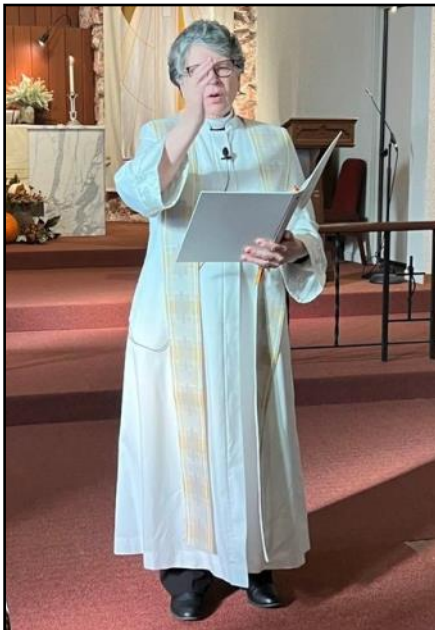


Christ the King Sunday

November 26, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is the last Sunday of the church year, Christ the King Sunday. Pastor welcomes us. We sing the opening hymn. Then we confess our sins and receive forgiveness.



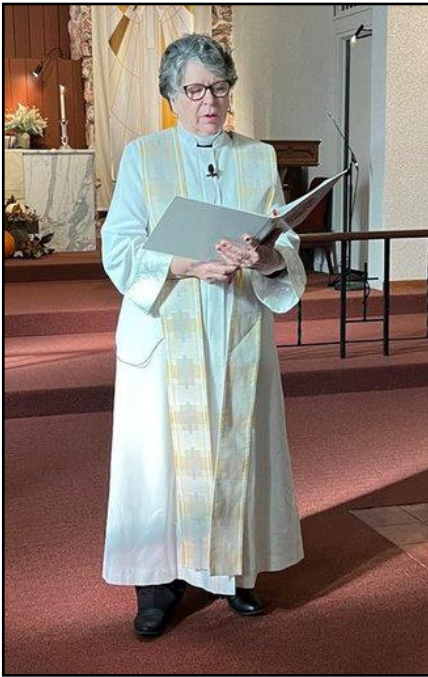
We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast. Then we pray the prayer of the day together.



Suzanne is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from Ezekiel. Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the Lord will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The Lord will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

We read Psalm 95 responsively. This is a psalm of thanksgiving, acknowledging the greatness of God.

The second lesson is from Ephesians. In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.



Pastor reads from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.

Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that this is the last Sunday of the church year. She suggests that it is time to make some resolutions. Christ the King Sunday is when local acts of faith are rooted in cosmic authority. Christ has all power.

Matthew is an expert in apocalyptic literature. He compares humans with animals. Jesus's farewell discourse is really a parable of judgment. It addresses tension between obedience and disobedience.

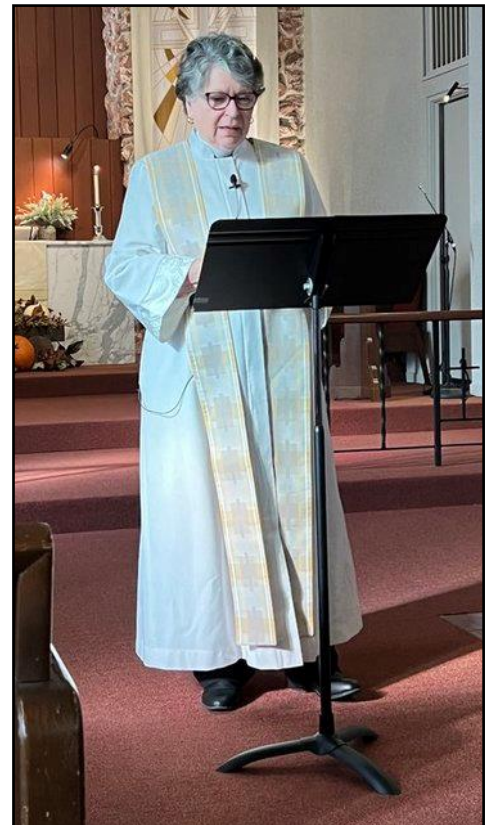
The parable today is a shift to those who are not disciples. It's more about mercy. As we learn about outsiders, mercy becomes more important. Grace overcomes judgment. The righteous didn't even realize they had behaved righteously. The unrighteous never thought they were unrighteous. We are called to do good, but we are not to keep score. What we do is how we live out our baptism. God is always outside the boundaries that we draw.

Judgment sets things right. How do we treat others? How do others treat us? When we feed, clothe, care for the least, Jesus is already come.

We are called to watch over the vulnerable, but God will take care of any mistakes we make.

What would the world be like if we judged others by what they do rather than what they believe? Jesus defeated earthly power and death.

Goats and sheep who practice mercy will be just fine.





Barbara is the assisting minister. She leads us in the words of the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession. We share the peace and the offering is taken.

Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine, and we are invited to the table where all are welcome.

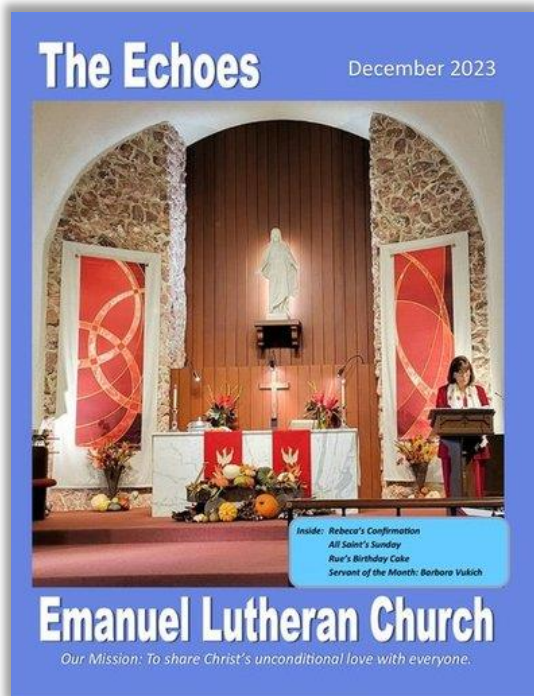


This is the body of Christ broken for you. This is the blood of Christ shed for you. All are forgiven as we receive the body and blood of our Savior.

We receive the final blessing. Chris extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



*Barbara tells us to go in peace and keep awake.
We gather in Luther Hall for fellowship and goodies.*



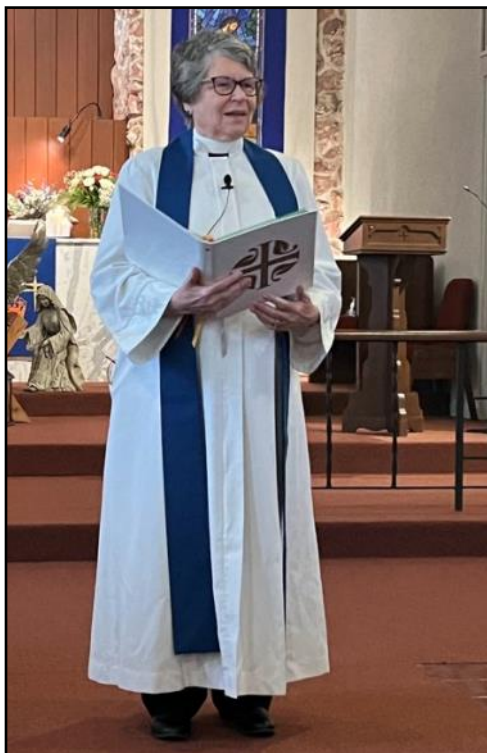
December

It is December. The Echoes recaps the events of the church for the past month.



Barbara, our wonderful organist for the past 36 years is the Servant of the Month. She is retiring at the end of the year. We will miss her, and the beautiful music she has provided.

It is December 3, the First Sunday of Advent, and the first Sunday of the new year according to the church calendar. The blue Advent banners are hung in the chancel. The blue paraments are on the altar. The empty manger sits in front of the altar.



Pastor welcomes us all warmly and makes a few announcements. She reminds us that there will be a soup luncheon after the service where all are welcome. It will begin after Sunday school.



The service begins with the lighting of the first Advent candle. Matthew reads the scripture and then lights the candle of hope as the congregation sings the first verse of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”



We confess our sins and receive forgiveness. We sing the “Kyrie” and “This Is the Feast.” Then we pray together the prayer of the day.

Dan is the reader for this morning. The first lesson is from Isaiah. This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God have

not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account — to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

Psalm 80 is read by Dan with the congregation supplying a plea to God to let his face shine upon them, so that they may be saved.

The second lesson is from 1 Corinthians. As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts until the coming day of the Lord.





Pastor reads from the Gospel of Mark. Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

Pastor begins her sermon by reminding us that the new church year starts today. Advent is a time of waiting. We should recenter ourselves. It is hard to do that this time of year. We are preparing for the return of the grown-up Jesus.

The Light of Grace is the theme for Advent this year. It is based

on the hymn "Amazing Grace." This hymn is good for both sad and joyful times.

The lesson from Isaiah is a prayer of lament. It is a call for God to come down and to show us his light. They wanted God and heaven to be closer. Jesus is the answer to this prayer.

Mark wrote to be bold and pray. Jesus says to stir up power and come. Mark wrote this because many bad things were going on. The disciples wanted to know why.

We, too, need to be aware of what distracts us from God. The fig tree is used as an example to explain that the temple-based order was coming to an end. A new way was coming. Jesus said to be alert and ready. Difficult texts can help us understand Jesus.

When we are part of a faith community, we are ready. We are in charge of Jesus's ministry on earth. We need to do all as a community. When we work together, sharing our gifts, doing our jobs, we are ready.

Jesus will bring freedom for the believer. End times should not be scary. The sweet by and by meets the nasty now. Jesus's return is a gift. It's our job to spread this news.

Lois is the assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith with the Apostle's creed and in the prayers of intercession.

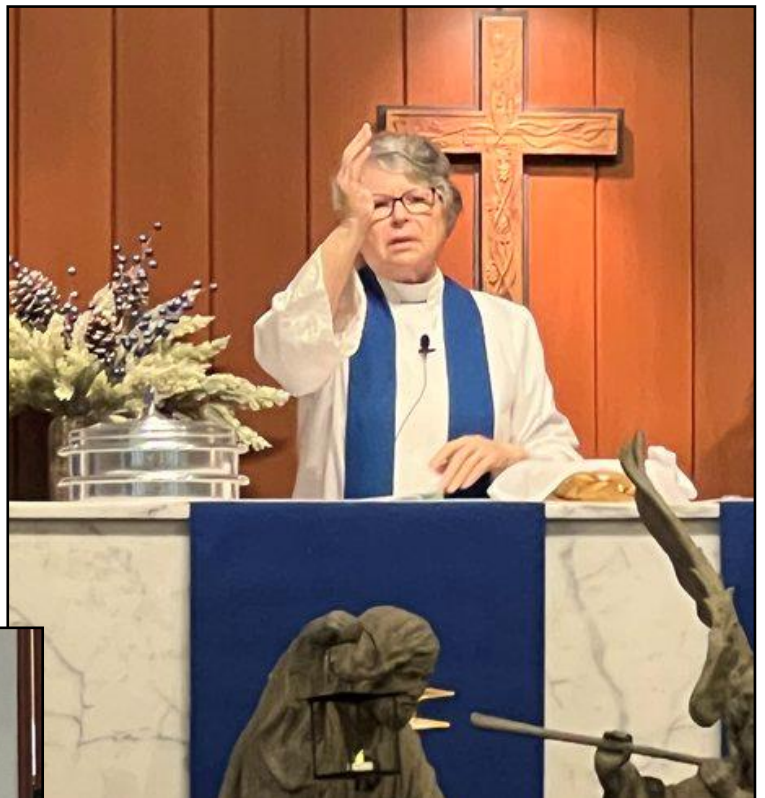




We share the peace, and the offering is taken. Then Pastor blesses the bread and wine and we are invited to commune at the table where all are welcome.



We receive the final blessing. Matthew extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Lois tells us to go in peace and keep awake.



We gather in Luther Hall, where, after Sunday school, there will be a wonderful tribute to Pastor to celebrate the 20th anniversary of her ordination.

Mike is set up to record the proceedings. Pastor has no idea what is about to happen, even though she has been consulted about how she wants the celebration to be conducted.



Suzanne is our emcee for the program. She and Donna were delegated by Dennis to be in charge of the event. Suzanne explains how they got the idea from Dennis's report on the Synod Assembly where he learned that Pastor would be celebrating 20 years since she was ordained. At that same time, Pastor remarked on what Bishop Claire had worn to the banquet and mentioned that East Coast clergy knew how to celebrate. Apparently, Bishop Claire had worn a rhinestone clerical collar to the banquet.

Pastor Lyn said she would need to get one for our upcoming 90th anniversary year in 2025. Suzanne and Donna had met with Pastor to find out how to order one, because the only thing they could find online were dog collars. They learned that the bishop had probably just glued rhinestones on her collar.

Not to be outdone by East Coast clergy, Suzanne obtained a collar from Pastor Lyn and enlisted Emily, her jewelry-designer daughter-in-law, to make one for Pastor Lyn. Donna then wrote new words to the tune "Rhinestone Cowboy" to talk about a pastor with a rhinestone collar who would become a rhinestone pastor. All was done in fun, and Pastor was thrilled with her gift.





“WOW!”

was Pastor's response.

She immediately donned the collar.

Suzanne invited the Emanuel Singers to come forward to sing our song.



With a rhinestone collar,

Reading texts and scriptures from a pulpit that I really know.

I'll be a rhinestone Pastor,

Getting cards and letters from a people who just love me

so.

I know I'm never alone.



It's Saturday, December 9. Today is the annual Cookie Exchange, and this year, we have added a Craft Boutique. Lydia Circle is in charge of the Cookie Exchange. Leah Circle has put the Boutique together.



Donna and Suzanne arrange some of the crafts.



Marty has brought in some crafts made by her cousin.





They have decided to raffle off the quilts. The drawing will be tomorrow.



Many of our craft items were lovingly made under the watchful eye of our Quality Control Supervisor.



As usual, Luci, the Cat, has been very helpful in her role as Quality Control Supervisor.

Meanwhile, the cookie Exchange is going on in Luther Hall. Samantha and David lead the singing of carols.



The Circles take advantage of the beautiful stage that the Day Care has done for a photo op.



Rebecca Circle



Leah Circle



Our hostesses, Lydia Circle



Pastor Lyn and Day Care Director Laura



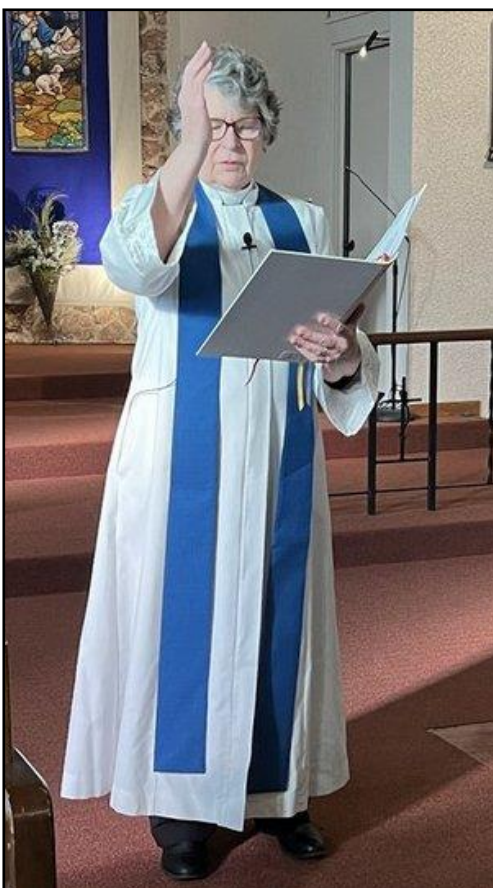
Everyone has a wonderful time. There are lots of cookies left over for the bake sale tomorrow. Also, the craft items that haven't sold will be available tomorrow. Both have been very successful events.

Second Sunday of Advent
December 10, 2023
Emanuel Lutheran Church



It is December 10, the Second Sunday of Advent. Pastor welcomes us warmly. She makes a few important announcements.

Rebeca reads the scripture that goes with the Peace Candle, and then she lights two candles, while we sing two verses of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."



We sing the opening hymn, and then confess our sins. Pastor gives us the assurance of forgiveness. Then we sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.



Barbara is the reader for today. The first lesson is from Isaiah. In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

We read Psalm 85 responsively. This song speaks of the good things God has done for his people.

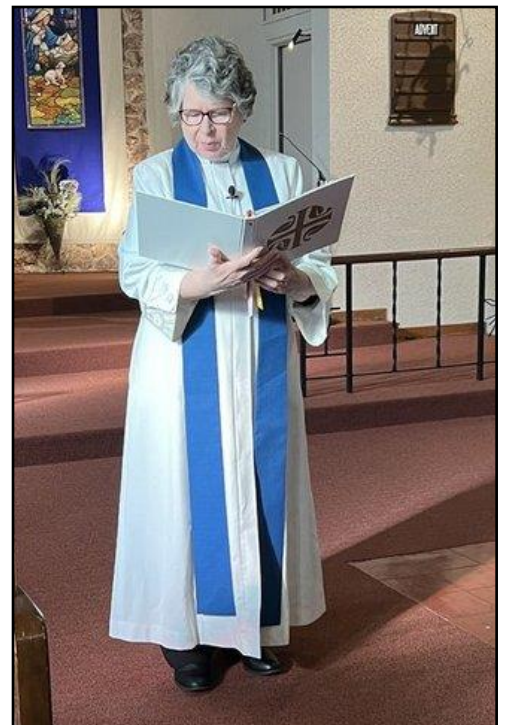
The second lesson is from 2 Peter. This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

Pastor reads from the Gospel of Mark. This gospel does not begin with the story of Jesus's birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that John the Baptist is a favorite of hers. People were called to him. He was born to be the forerunner of Christ. He was the first to be aware of grace, even while still in his mother's womb. Our theme for Advent this year is "the Light of Grace." John is certainly an example of this to our world.

On this second Sunday of Advent, we light the Peace candle. Peace is not easy, but it can be found in hardship sometimes. Real peace is knowing who is in charge of the universe.

Comfort can mean repent or mourn in Hebrew. It is a reversal from fear to hope. Comforting is God's work, but we are invited to help. We collaborate with God in comforting. It needs to happen every day.





Prepare a highway really means to prepare our hearts. Mark's gospel is fast paced. It starts: "In the beginning..." It began at creation and continues today. Mark begins with a grown-up Jesus. He doesn't end with the end; it's still being written.

We are invited to be a "voice crying in the wilderness." The wilderness is any place where we feel abandoned. Jesus also spent time in the wilderness, in dry, lonely, unpredictable places. He emerged whole.

We need to acknowledge "wilderness" times and talk about them to be an example of survival.

God's grace allows us to walk together. Righteousness (obedience) and peace (well-being) come together. An honest expression of our feelings helps our relationship with God. We, though broken, have endured through the light of grace.

Suzanne is the assisting minister this morning. She leads us in the Apostle's creed and prayers of intercession.



We pass the peace and the offering is taken.



Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites us to the table where all are welcome.



We receive the final blessing. Tom extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Suzanne tells us to go in peace and to keep awake.



We gather in Luther Hall for fellowship and Advent soup lunch.

Lydia Circle offers the left over cookies for sale and Leah Circle still has crafts for sale.

We did very well this year and plan to have a much bigger Boutique next year.




We have the drawing for the two raffle quilts. Linda wins the red truck, and Chris wins the green and gray one.

Kaete is stylin' today!

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Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 13
6:00 PM
at
David Holtz's house
926 Mt. Vernon
Soup supper



On Wednesday, December 13, we gather at David's house for a soup supper followed by Christmas caroling in his neighborhood.

Our host, David, has made three different soups. All are delicious. After dinner we bundle up and go out into the neighborhood. We are well received. Such a fun evening!



At several of the houses we are treated to a cookie or a piece of candy. Of course, when we return to David's, there are also cookies to eat.

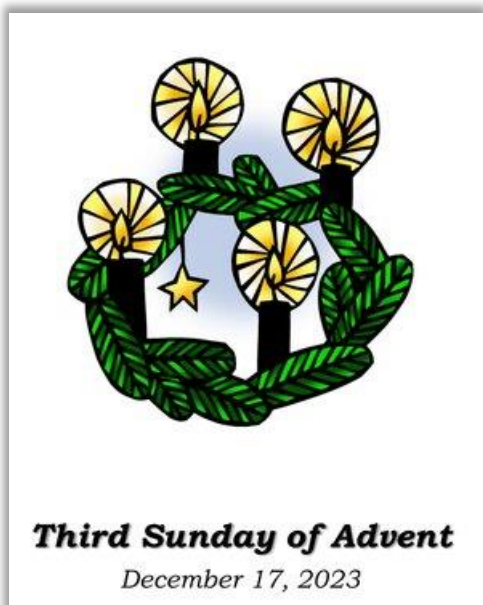


We wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!





Merry Christmas!



It is December 17, the Third Sunday of Advent. Pastor welcomes us warmly and makes a few announcements.





Matthew reads the explanation of the Joy candle and the appropriate scripture. We sing three verses of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” while he lights three candles on the Advent wreath.



We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. Pastor assures us of forgiveness. Then we sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.

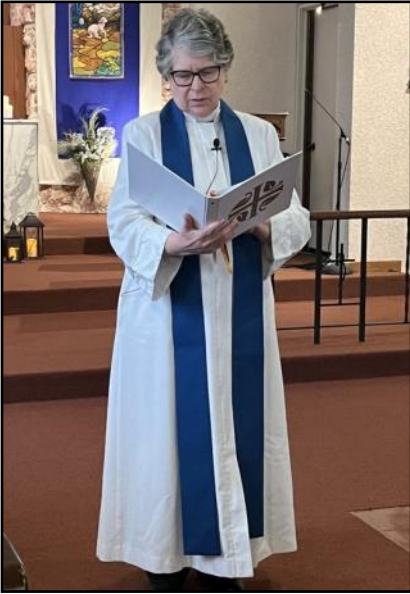
Rebeca and Matthew are our readers. The first lesson is from Isaiah. Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

We read the Magnificat from the Gospel of Luke responsively. This is Mary’s response to the Angel Gabriel.



The third lesson is from 1 Thessalonians. Paul encourages the Thessalonians to live lives of continual joy, prayer and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ’s coming.





Pastor reads from the Gospel of John. This gospel describes Jesus as the “light of the world.” John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

Pastor begins her sermon by telling us that this is Joy Sunday. We should rejoice and praise God.

Isaiah rejoiced because they had reason for hope. (The first candle of Advent represents hope.) Peace, the second candle, only comes from God. Joy, the third candle, reminds us to rejoice always. The fourth candle will be Love which causes hope, peace and joy to exist.

Pastor says that the Wednesday Bible study has been using a book entitled Light of Grace. She asks, “What has been the most joyful event in your life?”

Pastor says there are many joy robbers in the world. True joy comes from Jesus.

Mary’s song is a radical protest song. It had been sung by those enslaved. It cannot really describe what happened to Mary. Her baby would shake the entire universe. Mary sang powerful words. She knew other songs from scripture that focused on deliverance and praise, that focused on God’s actions.

Mary is convinced her child will be for the whole world. She believed he would defeat the powers that keep people down.

We face these issues today. They are mostly based on relationships. We are called to resist oppression. We are called to reform. We are called to stare down the darkness and turn to the light. We are called to keep away from evil.

Pastor ends her sermon with a tribute to Barbara, our organist for the last 36 years, who is retiring at the end of December. She is presented with a plaque and a monetary gift. There will be a reception following the service and an open mic for anyone who wants to speak.





Melissa is the assisting minister. She leads us in a confession of faith in the words of the Apostle's creed. She also leads the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and the offering is taken.



Then we begin the communion liturgy. Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites us to come to the table where all are welcome.



*This is the body of Christ,
broken for you.*

*This is the blood of Christ,
shed for you.*



It is Birthday Sunday. Pastor leads us in the birthday blessing prayer. Happy birthday, Dick and Pastor Lyn. There will be cake during the fellowship time, followed by the Advent soup luncheon.



Chris extinguishes the candles, and Melissa tells us to go in peace and to keep awake.





In addition to birthday cake, Barbara gets her own cake. Her two daughters and a grandson are here to help celebrate. There are many nice tributes given by the congregation.

Thank you, Barbara. We will miss you.

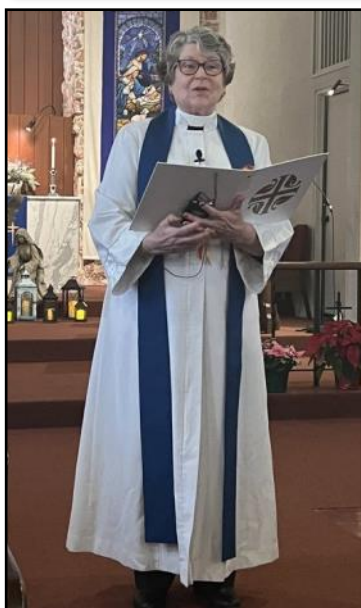


Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is December 24, the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Each Sunday of Advent more lanterns have been added to the Nativity scene in the chancel.



Pastor greets us warmly and makes a few announcements.





Then Rebeca gives an explanation of the Love candle. She lights all four candles while we sing four verses of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”



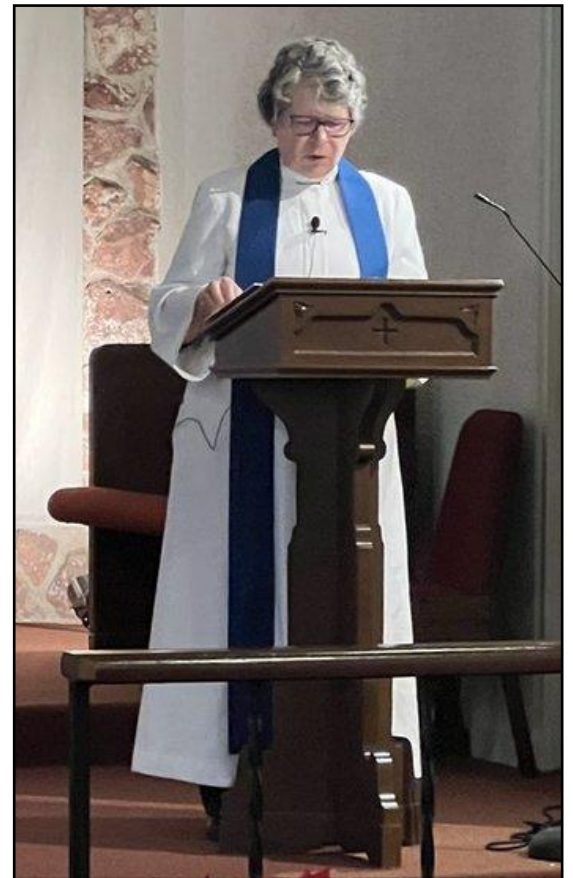
We sing the opening hymn and confess our sins. Once again, we are assured of forgiveness. We sing the Kyrie and This Is the Feast.

Lois is the reader this morning. The first lesson is from 2 Samuel. Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.



We read Psalm 89 responsively. In this passage we are assured of God's love for us. Once again the promise to David is stated.

The second lesson is from Romans. Paul closes his letter by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.



Because we are having a problem with the sound system this morning, Pastor reads the gospel and preaches her sermon from the lectern. The gospel lesson is from Luke. In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

Pastor begins her sermon by saying that she likes the way Luke starts his gospel. She says there are lots of scriptures that point toward a Messiah. Gabriel's announcement increases the excitement of the coming Messiah.

What caught Pastor's attention was the sense of calmness in this passage. There must have been lots of energy in the room. Mary is troubled at first, but Gabriel caused the calmness. The proof that he offers is the announcement that even Elizabeth is pregnant. Mary will not be alone. This will be a shared experience. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth. Being in this life together is part of God's plan. Mary knows God will not make her go through it alone. Even though it's not the norm, they knew they were together.

We can often accompany each other even if we have nothing in common. We are expected to offer accompaniment outside our comfort zone.

King David worried that God had no “house.” Pastor says that this word can also mean “people.” God’s house equals unconditional belonging. Our hearts are restless until we find our home in Christ, according to St. Augustine.

Mary must have faced challenges. Joseph also had an angel visit. This baby was for all people. Mary’s song reflects understanding. God always walks with us, and others will, too.

Kathleen is the assisting minister. She leads us in confessing our faith in the words of the Apostle’s creed. She also prays the prayers of intercession. We share the peace, and the offering is taken.




Pastor blesses the bread and wine and invites everyone to come share in these blessings, for all are welcome.





The candles are extinguished, and Bruce leads the recessional. We join in fellowship before leaving. We will return tonight at 5:00 for the Candlelight service.

The paraments are changed from blue to white. We gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior. It's nice to see visitors who have come home to see family and friends.



**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service**

December 24, 2023
5:00 pm



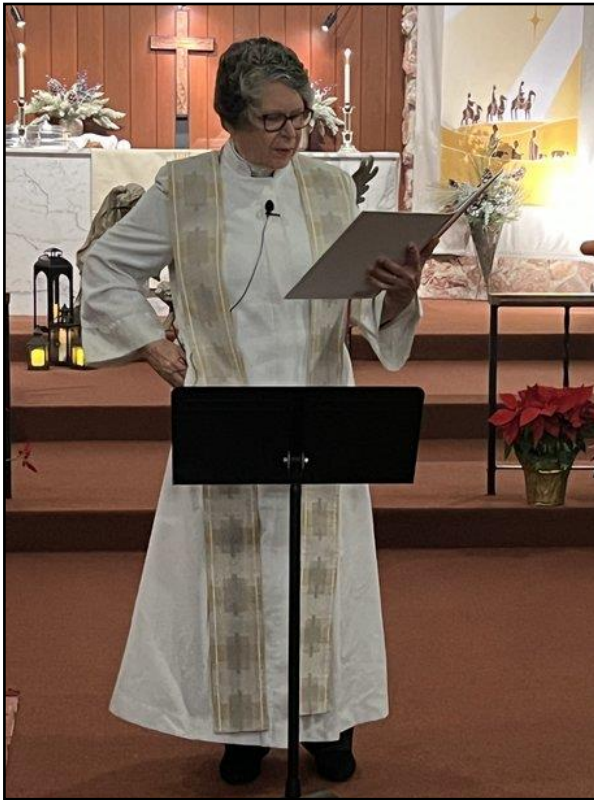


Pastor greets us, and we sing the opening hymn. Then we confess our sins. Pastor assures us of forgiveness.



Chris is our reader. The first lesson is from Isaiah. This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

The second reading is from Titus. The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.



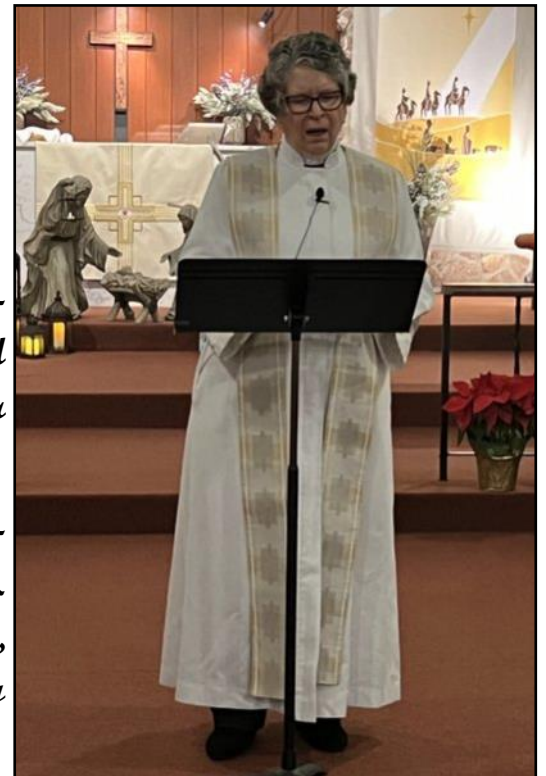
Pastor reads from the Gospel of Luke. God's greatest gift comes in the form of a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

Pastor begins her sermon by stating that the Light of the world is born tonight. This Light of grace is a gift. Jesus said he was this light.

We are now in darkness, but the light will return. The world is a dark place and a fragile place, especially tonight.

Isaiah describes Judah as a place of darkness. The people were prisoners in their own land. The way forward would come through a child. The people blamed God for their problems.

The promised one will walk with us through our problems, not solve them. Peace on earth may seem impossible. Christ brings love. A life of faith may be filled with strife, but it is never without unconditional love. This is the beauty of Christianity. God is love. Period! Jesus is the proof.



God so loved the world. God sent love to all people. We are called to be light.



Dan is the assisting minister. He leads us in the Apostle's creed and the prayers of intercession.

We share the peace, and while the offering is being taken, the choir sings "A Christmas Lullaby."



Pastor blesses the bread and wine. We are invited to the table to receive the body and blood of our Savior for forgiveness of our sins.



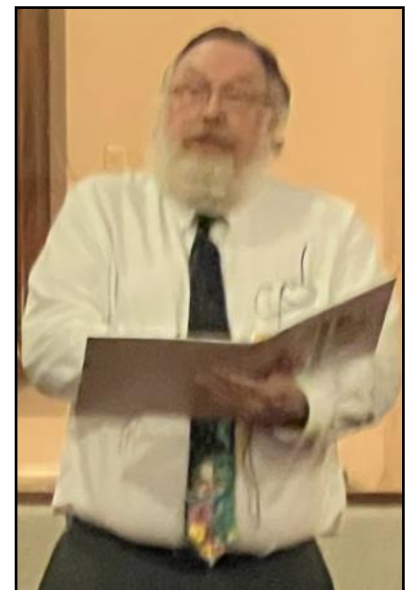


Pastor lights her candle from the altar candle. Our ushers, Donna and Bruce, come forward. Their candles are lit from Pastor's candle. Then, row by row, all our candles are lit. The lights are extinguished, and we sing "Silent Night." Such a beautiful way to end the service.





We receive the final blessing. Bruce extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional. Dan tells us that Christ the Savior is born and to go in peace and proclaim the good news.



Merry Christmas!



A Service of Lessons & Carols
First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church

It is December 31, the First Sunday of Christmas. Pastor greets us in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. She makes several important announcements.



Then she tells us to notice that she is wearing her “rhinestone” collar. She felt that she really needed an accessory to go with it. We roar with laughter as she dons a white cowboy hat. She does tell us her boots are in Colorado.



We sing the opening hymn. Then Pastor leads us in the Christmas dialog. Today’s service is one of lessons and carols.

Suzanne reads the first lesson, a passage from Isaiah that talks about God comforting his people. Then we sing “What Child Is This?”



Pat reads the second lesson, Psalm 98. This passage talks about making joyful music to God. Then we sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”



Lois reads the third lesson, a passage from Hebrews that explains who Jesus is. Then we sing "The First Noel."

Donna reads the fourth lesson, a passage from John. The writer of this gospel states that Jesus was always with God and that grace comes through him. Then we sing "It Came upon the Midnight"



Chris reads the fifth lesson from the Gospel of Luke. This passage tells of the shepherds going to Bethlehem to find the baby Jesus as directed by the angels. Then we sing "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice."



We share the peace and the offering is taken.

Barbara, our assisting minister, prays the prayers of intercession.





Pastor takes the bread and the wine and blesses them. Then we are invited to come forward to commune.



This is the body of Christ, broken for you. This is the blood of Christ shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.

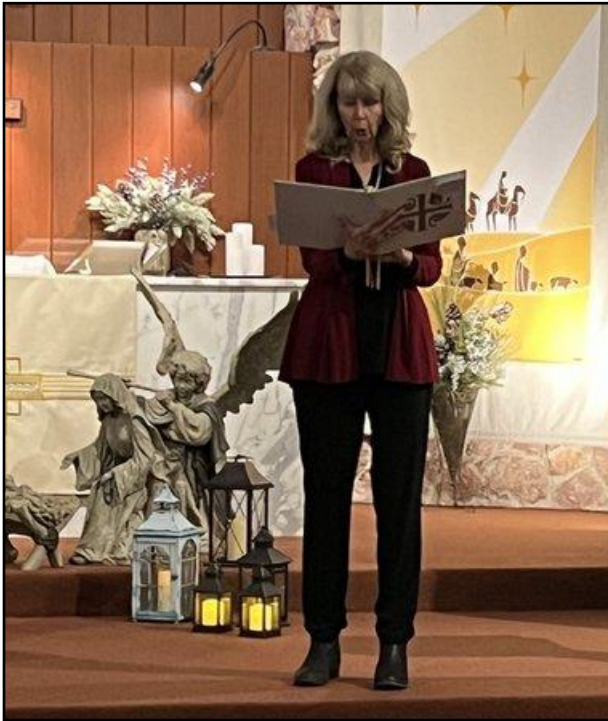


We receive the final blessing of this year.

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Barbara tells us to go in peace and rejoice in Christ our Savior

We sing the sending hymn while Connie extinguishes the candles and leads the recessional.



Happy New Year!

I want to thank my editor, Luci, who spent countless hours tirelessly going over every word that I wrote. Nothing got by her.

