

The Echoes

April 2020

Pastor Lyn Crase
Emanuel Lutheran Church
Sermon for March 15, 2020



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Emanuel Lutheran Church

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

From Pastor Lyn

Sisters & Brothers,

Are you losing track of the days/weeks? We are in week 4 (I think) of self-isolation and it's becoming somewhat of a new normal, at least for the foreseeable future. I can't say I'm getting used to it, but I am resisting the urge to disobey the order to stay home better than when this began.

I also admit to having the television on more than usual. Typically, when I do watch, the mute button is on as I find the movement on the screen enough "company." A few evenings ago I watched a DIY program with the volume unmuted. This program was about a married couple, realtors, with two small children. In this episode, they were moving to a new home. The father was explaining to his 3-year-old daughter the concept of moving to a different city. "Did you like the new school we visited?" he asked. "Yes" she replied. "You will have fun in your new school every day" said the father. She replied "when we visit New York?" Dad said "no, every day. That is what happens when people move to a new city and new house." She wondered about their old house in California and he told her another family wanted to live in that one and they were moving to New York so she could see her grandparents more often. The little girl replied "Oh, is that what people do?" The innocence and curiosity of children. It made me think that her question reflects something of the current anxiety among people.

Her question "is that what people do?" seems poignantly significant for people all over the world as we have been asked to move from what is familiar to something we've never had to experience before. What do people do when things are changing so rapidly that to miss one news update puts one in the metaphorical dark. What do people do?

I've seen or heard what people do – you have too. We've witnessed researchers, scientists, doctors, all manner of specialist rise to the occasion. We've been watching as multitudes of people respond to calls for help even as we figure out how to personally respond to community



Emanuel is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Sunday Worship: 9:30 am

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Monday through Thursday:
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OUR VISION

Emanuel's vision is to be loving, supportive, and welcoming, as we reach out in service and in witness to our neighborhood and the city beyond.

We share a passion to nurture people in all stages and circumstances of life.

We, as disciples of Christ, minister to our changing community in challenging cultural times.

God is calling us to joyfully follow the Holy Spirit in ministry to others.

Pastor Lyn, continued

needs. For people used to making independent decisions that affect only oneself or the immediate family, this is indeed, a new way of being. But, that's what people do. People respond, people adjust, people get active in new ways. Somewhere in there some soul searching begins to happen — that's what people do.

Reading our Bibles, studying those readings with others, and personal meditation are but a few ways we can get through isolation, confusion and soul-searching. Something I do is the practice of Lectio Divina as meditation exercise. This practice prepares one to be "sanctuary" (as in "Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary..."). As part of Lectio, I have walked labyrinths at abbeys and in forests, traced pictures in books or used a small desk labyrinth I have at home. There's one accompanying this article. But, you don't need anything special to meditate; sit by a window with your Bible. Let the sun and the Son warm and heal you. Often it's the smallest practices that work the biggest wonders and truly prepare us for operating in the world.



We are having to think outside of the box when it comes to "doing church." We've been talking about how the church is going to look in the future and suddenly, the future seems to have arrived. Some of you have been "doing church" with family, friends/neighbors online or listening to services on radio or TV. We may not be able to have church at the church on Easter but on the first Easter there wasn't a church full of people either! The church that formed initially was a house church – we can worship in our homes and then share experiences by Zoom or Facetime, etc.

"Is that what people do?" The little girl's question has given me plenty to ponder. What will we do – beloved people of God when we begin to worship in the same space again? Beyond the celebration of being together, what then? I hope we do not abandon the simple practices we are using during this crisis simply because the church will be open. We are Resurrection people with news too good not to share! This year, that truth is clearer than ever in the life of the church and for you and me. We must do what we are called to do.

Meditation recommendation: C.S. Lewis called Psalm 18 "the greatest psalm in the Psalter, the greatest lyrics in the world." This psalm begins by creation verifying God's existence, it goes on to describe who God is and what God wills for the created closing with "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Find peace and hope in God's word.

In Christ,

Pastor Lyn

Baptism

Photos by Sue Wilke

Things began normally enough with a joyous baptism on March 1. Lorenzo Quinn Lopez was brought to us by his parents and sponsors. He was not thrilled by his “dousing”, but we were thrilled to bring him into our family.



Gold Refining

Submitted by Skip Hoover

Dear friends in Christ, in many places the Bible likens suffering to the refining of gold. Peter says to us:

"... Now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

(1Peter 1:6-7, NIV)

On Sunday, March 8, we sang together in church:

"The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

The purpose of this message is not to be about suffering (though please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you if that is the case), but my main purpose is to share with you something that a Bible study partner of mine shared with me last night about the refining process. He asked me if I knew how a goldsmith knows when the refining process is complete, and he proceeded to tell me that the goldsmith knows that the gold has been fully refined when he can look into the pool of gold and see his own reflection.



Do You Have Time on your Hands?

Submitted by Sue Wilke

During this time of self-quarantine, you may find that you have time on your hands. How about using that time to write your Emanuel Story? We are trying to put a book together with all of our stories. It doesn't matter if it covers 60 years or 6 years. What does being part of the Emanuel family mean to you? How did you come to be at Emanuel?

Now is a perfect time to write that down. You can send me your stories, including pictures if you want. If you don't think you can write this yourself, call me and tell me your story. I'll write it for you. I have two stories already. I'd like to have 50 or 60 more.

Thanks.

Suzanne Wilke



Lenten Soup Supper and Evening Prayer

Photos by Sue Wilke

We began the Lenten Wednesday evening series as planned on March 4. As you see the evening included a quilt workshop.



Lockdown

Discovered by Chris Schmidt

Yes there is fear.
 Yes there is isolation.
 Yes there is panic buying.
 Yes there is sickness.
 Yes there is even death.

But,
 They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
 You can hear the birds again.
 They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
 The sky is no longer thick with fumes
 But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
 People are singing to each other
 across the empty squares,
 keeping their windows open
 so that those who are alone
 may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
 Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know
 is busy spreading fliers with her number
 through the neighborhood
 So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
 are preparing to welcome
 and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
 All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
 All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way
 All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
 To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.
 To what really matters.
 To Love.

So we pray and we remember that
 Yes there is fear.
 But there does not have to be hate.
 Yes there is isolation.
 But there does not have to be loneliness.
 Yes there is panic buying.
 But there does not have to be meanness.
 Yes there is sickness.
 But there does not have to be disease of the soul
 Yes there is even death.
 But there can always be a rebirth of love.

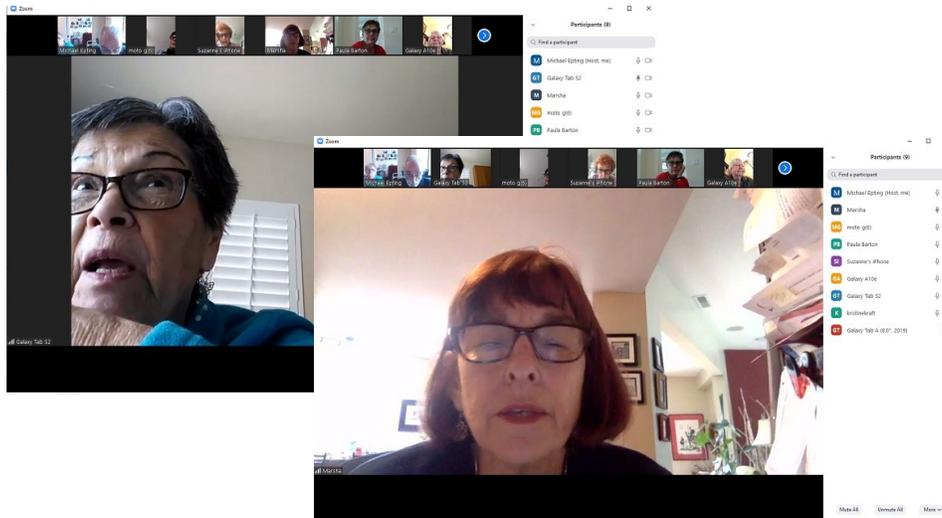
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
 Today, breathe.
 Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
 The birds are singing again
 The sky is clearing,
 Spring is coming,
 And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul
 And though you may not be able
 to touch across the empty square,
 Sing.

By Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan living in Ireland, March 13th 2020

Online Church

The cover photo is from the first online sermon after the difficult decision to stop physically gathering together for worship. Many of you have watched the sermons, which Pastor Lyn has since expanded into short Morning Prayer services. Starting on March 24, we have been meeting together online in a discussion forum using a meeting tool called Zoom. After a successful first try, we expanded this idea and a group of us met on Sunday, March 29 to discuss the sermon. On both occasions we also spent some time just catching up and socializing. Pastor plans to host a Thursday Bible study similarly. If you feel you lack the computer skills to join, I strongly encourage you to look for assistance from kids or grandkids or neighbors or friends. We would like to reach everyone.



For Palm Sunday and Easter, we have been able to add some music to the service videos. Here is a little hint at what you might see if you tune in to on Palm Sunday's video on Facebook or YouTube:



A Long and Winding Road

Submitted by Kathleen Reuter

Of late I have felt as if I am traveling on a steep, narrow mountain road, one with thick brush and huge trees closing in on all sides, one with sharp turns and obscured views. I cannot see beyond the next bend and night is falling. I have no choice but to trust in God; my destiny is unknown.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...

There was the day I realized Bob and I would soon be out of eggs, a menu mainstay at our house. And if not eggs, then we would have cold cereal, but I was out of milk. Our trip to the grocery on Monday yielded neither – the shelves were bare. I tried again on Tuesday, and I called a couple of stores to see when I might find those items restocked. No luck. What happens if we run out? Bob needed to stop by the church office on Wednesday, so he tried again to see if the grocery store had been restocked. That was the morning that I read the Psalm for the coming Sunday – the 23rd Psalm. And that was the morning Bob came home with milk and eggs for us and my 93-year-old mother. All is well.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me...

There was a time some years back when my life was in turmoil. I knew that change was coming, that change was needed, and I was impatient for change. One morning I was out for a long three-mile jog through the countryside, meditating on my plight. That road was flat and wide, through an open stretch of rolling prairie. I could see all around, and ahead the road home took a long, wide bend from west to north. As I neared the home stretch, I was growing tired, wondering when I would make that change in direction; when would I make it home? But I was so focused on the struggle for the next step, the next breath, that I only saw a few feet ahead until at last I stopped for breath. I looked back and to my amazement, I saw I had already been through the slow, wide bend – it was behind me! Just as my hope was fading, I found I had already changed direction, I was nearly home.

We are in a strange and fearsome time. A time that seems to have no end, no certain outcome. We yearn for a return to normal, but it is possible that normal itself will be changed. Still, in this as in all previous times of trouble, I know that our God has not, and will not, forsake us. He is with us and we shall dwell with him forever. Thanks be to God!



March Council Notes



Council met on March 8 at 11 am and discussed “Imagining the Future of the Church”. Much of the meeting involved planning activities that have now been overcome by events. For example, Bishop Mark was to conduct a “Chrism Mass” on March 19 and be available afterwards for appointments. Bob Reuter reported that our brokerage funds, despite suffering severe paper losses, continue to pay dividends at the expected level. As with most investments, the paper losses would become real losses only if we were to sell the securities. The paperwork has been submitted for the parking lot loan. If work goes per plan, our monthly payment will be reduced starting in May. A workshop on automatic giving was planned for March 15. Needed property repairs were reviewed.

	February Income	February Expenses	February Gain/Loss
General Fund	15,811	(20,346)	(4,535)
Building Fund	5,262	(6,929)	(1,667)
Day Care	37,091	(31,306)	5,785
TOTALS	58,164	(58,581)	(417)

Bunco Night yielded \$1300 for Katie’s Kitchen. A human trafficking seminar was tentatively scheduled for May 16. A student group at MJC offered to help with Katie’s Kitchen and Care Cupboard.

Servant of the Month

Kathy Obermeyer faithfully and quietly serves Emanuel as a member of our altar care group. Her special service to us, which is highly visible once you know about it, is polishing the chalices and other silver items in our communion set. The next time the cup is brought to you, think of Kathy and the work she does for us. Kathy’s grandfather, F.J. Ellman was the organizing pastor of Emanuel Lutheran and her parents, Paul and June Ellman, were long-time members. Kathy, of course, has been a lifelong member and her children and grandchildren are also members. Kathy played on the Doves, our slow pitch softball team that was coached by Sherm Petersen. Joyce Bachman praises Kathy for faithfully checking in on her. Thanks, Kathy, for doing so much for us!



April Birthdays

Birthday Blessing Sunday is April 19

All those celebrating their births during the month of April will receive a Birthday Blessing Prayer from their Emanuel Family. Don't miss out!

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|-----|------------------|------|-----------------|------|------------------|
| 4/1 | Peter Van Diepen | 4/7 | Ethan Hollinger | | |
| 4/2 | Larry Decker | 4/8 | C. Rick Delvin | | |
| 4/2 | Ernest Deutsch | 4/9 | Paul Owen | 4/15 | Matthew Rokaitis |
| 4/2 | Marsha Waggoner | 4/13 | Ashlee Knoll | 4/21 | Jim Rokaitis |



Epilogue

(You may safely skip this...)

by Mike Epting, Echoes Editor

March has been the strangest of months. For Rose and me, it has been filled with good fortune and God's blessings. With blissful ignorance, we timed everything we did with consummate perfection. Rose had hip surgery scheduled and then postponed because of confusion about medications. Rescheduling gave us time for a lightning trip to Colorado to see our new great-granddaughter. (She is a delight!) We came home on a less-than-full airplane because of the first stages of uneasiness over the virus.

After we returned, Rose got a new hip installed. She went into the hospital at 5:45 a.m. and was brought to the car at 2:45 p.m. After the 1-minute drive home, I helped her out of the car at the lobby and she walked herself, using an ancient second-hand walker (she refused to buy a new one because this is just temporary...), into the building. After being greeted with astonishment, she walked about 100 yards to our apartment.

She has made a remarkable recovery. After 2 days, she walked to breakfast and was greeted with applause from everyone here when she entered the dining room.

Oh, yes, and we sold our house. That was also a whirlwind; we signed the papers after we returned from CO, the day before the surgery. I picked up the check and took it to Schwab 3 days after Rose's return. I did not "invest" the money...

Rose had a couple of in-home therapy visits and was then supposed to go to Kaiser to continue. By then they had locked down the hospital and offered a visit by telephone. After she finished laughing, Rose messaged the surgeon, who immediately arranged for continued in-home visits. Medical people are among the very few who are being allowed past the lobby here. Now we learn that Kaiser has decided to continue these as long as needed, at no cost to us.

Look at the set of standing dominoes here: had we not decided to sell the house for another week, had Rose's surgery not been postponed, had we not visited our new prize great-grandbaby on that specific weekend...

As I said last month, I wonder why everyone isn't so blessed, but I have plenty of reason to thank God today. Despite the lockdown, the streets are crowded with orange vehicles. And the hand of God is visible, too, everywhere I look. (In case



you have forgotten, you think there are no orange cars and you think God is not present, but once you begin looking...)

Meanwhile, believe me when I tell you that our pastor has been stretched to her limit (but not beyond) by the need to do things differently than they have ever been done before. She wrote 4 sermons/services in a week, while making a million decisions. I was honored to be part of the process of making videos available. I hope we are still able to worship together by Easter, but as that grows increasingly unlikely, I'm glad that most of you will be able to see and hear what Pastor, Barbara, and I have been able to put together for that day. I plan to participate in the drive-through communion, too.

We've started using technology to gather, beginning with Text Study. Marsha Waggoner said in an email: "Thanks Mike. Glad this health crisis has happened when technology can help people to stay connected. Not sure if you saw the FB post about Noah being "socially isolated for 40 days". We will get through this!!"

Emanuel Calendar of Events

April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00 am Breakfast in Katie's Kitchen	2 9:30 am Adult Bible Study - Online	3	4 10:00 am Organ practice
5 Palm Sunday - Online/ Pray for Emanuel's Staff and Council	6 4:30 pm MSYC Rehearsal	7 10:30 am Outreach Committee Mtg. 12:00 pm Text Study via Zoom	8 12:00 pm Multi-Faith Leadership Meeting (M-Link) via Zoom	9 9:30 am Adult Bible Study - Online 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday - Online	10 3:00 pm Good Friday Service - Online 4:00 pm Prayer Vigil	11 10:00 am Organ practice
12 RESURRECTION SUNDAY - Online/ Pray for Emanuel Lutheran Day Care Staff 11:00 am Council Mtg. via Zoom	13 4:30 pm NO-MSYC Rehearsal - Spring Break	14 12:00 pm Text Study via Zoom	15	16 9:30 am Adult Bible Study - Online	17	18 10:00 am Organ practice
19 Pray for birthdays & prayers for healing	20 4:30 pm MSYC Rehearsal	21 12:00 pm Text Study via Zoom	22	23 9:30 am Adult Bible Study - Online	24	25 10:00 am Organ practice
26 Pray for Community Social Service Agencies	27 4:30 pm Echoes Deadline MSYC Rehearsal	28 12:00 pm Text Study via Zoom	29	30		