

Immanuel Lutheran Church

March 2022

Messenger



Immanuel Lutheran Church
Called, Empowered, and Sent by God to Live, Love, and Learn God's Word
Nuestra Declaración De Misión
Somos llamados, autorizados, y enviados por Dios para vivir, amar, y aprender la Palabra de Dios
Pastor Leslie Mahraun
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Pastor Leslie's Message

On Sunday, February 27, Dan and I attended the retirement reception for Pastor Tim Whiteman from Central Lutheran Church in Bellingham. It was a surprise party for Pastor Tim and he was completely surprised, to say the least. Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee and Pastor Andy Yee from our synod were there to help with the celebration and to offer special prayers and blessings to Pastor Tim, along with several of the Whatcom County Cluster. The pastors from the cluster surrounded Pastor Tim with love and support as he made this monumental step from years of service to a time of retirement. One of the best parts of the party was when Bishop Shelley spoke. She asked the gathering to raise their hands if Pastor Tim had baptized them or their children and nearly every hand in the room was raised. I was brought to tears at the very thought of it. A room of more than 60 people receiving the Sacrament of Holy Baptism at the hand of one person, it was amazing. I have never been to a retirement party for a pastor. My experience is that of ordinations and installations, but retirements are new to me. It was very special to hear Pastor Tim talk about what his life might hold now that he doesn't have an active call to ministry. Let us hold Pastor Tim in our prayers as he moves through the next part of his life in the tender embrace of God, and for the people of Central Lutheran Church as they prepare for their next pastor.

Immanuel has the opportunity to dream big, to think about what God is calling us to do and to be in the coming year. I invite you to prayerfully consider the ways you are called to serve God and community in the coming months. As we gather to consider what God is calling us to be and to do, it is my prayer that you will let your imaginations run wild! God doesn't limit us in our endeavors; we are only limited by our fears and hesitations, so dream big! Our round table conversation on Saturday, March 26 at 2:30 will bring great ideas and opportunities to serve God and community. I look forward to seeing you there!

Stewardship is an important part of our life at Immanuel, and I hope you take part in the many opportunities to express your love for God through Stewardship that our Council President, Pam Andrews will be introducing this month and in the coming months. Giving of our heart, our time and our possessions, signs of God's gracious love, keep us close to the will of God and to one another. May you be inspired by this new campaign of stewardship. Articles are in this month's newsletter. Thank you, Pam, for your creative and prayer-inspired look at stewardship.

The Wednesday Lenten Zoom gatherings at 5:00 p.m. will be a wonderful way to reunite with those who have not been able to return to in-person worship. I look forward to our time of fellowship and conversation as well as the study of the week's Psalm. I hope you find these meetings meaningful as we journey through the season of Lent.

God is with us as we celebrate, dream, give and gather. Let us be mindful of the ways God calls, gathers and enlightens us these next days of Lent. May you be blessed.

Thank you!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all who came to share prayer and to the choir who sang a blessing with the Ukrainian Evangelical Church on Sunday, February 27th following Adult Forum. It was so heartwarming to see the chancel full of Immanuel Lutheran Church members who came to be with the Ukrainian church. The congregation appreciated our well wishes and heartfelt prayers so much and you could tell by their faces that they were deeply touched by our presence with them. War is never acceptable and the violence that has invaded Ukraine is certainly no exception. It brings it closer to home for us now that our siblings in Christ worship in our sanctuary and we can only imagine their heart ache and grief as they worry about their home country, their relatives and friends and all the nation as war tears through their homeland. It was very touching to come to the beginning of their worship to share our love, thoughts and prayers with them and I thank you for coming to do this special outreach. May the peace of Christ surround us all as we watch and pray for the people of Ukraine. - *Pastor Leslie*

Adult Forum: Schedule, Scriptures & Study

March 6 -

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17—4:1

Luke 13:31-35

March 13 -

Council, no Adult Forum

March 20, 27 and April 3, 10 -

Dialogues on Race - This Lenten Season we will revisit our study on race. We will again use the book “Dialogue on Race” by Sparkhouse publications. When we did this study in 2020 we did it over Zoom, which did not allow us to successfully break into small groups for discussion. Several of you have expressed an interest in revisiting this series so that we can delve deeper into the topic of race. If you do not have the book, or if you can no longer find your copy, please let me know by March 10 so I can order you a copy. The cost of the book is \$10.00.

This study will:

- Create a trusted environment for small groups
- Lessons include facilitator tips, communication skills, and perspectives from thought leaders challenging the legacy of racism within the American church
- Build lasting relationships
- Allow groups to express thoughts and ideas about today’s issues. As a result, groups grow closer to one another and the community.
- Engage in conversation about local and worldwide issues
- Start a conversation in small groups around today’s issues, such as race, and learn how to respectfully converse with peers.
- Turn conflict into community
- Create a space for people to have difficult conversations—allowing their opinions to be heard and respected, ultimately turning conflict into community.

I look forward to revisiting this excellent resource and hope to see you in Adult Forum for Lent. *—Pastor Leslie*

March and Beyond at Immanuel:

New Lawnmower:

The Church needs a new lawnmower. Ron Bruland will research machines before making a suggestion to the Council to bring before the congregation for approval. A lawnmower will need to be purchased this spring and so a brief congregational meeting will be called when Council has a recommendation. Please prayerfully consider making donations toward this purchase. Thank you!



Wednesday Nights in Lent:

The Worship and Music Committee is excited to present **Zoom Meetings on Wednesday nights at 5:00 p.m. during Lent.** We will gather for dinner together by Zoom and have time to visit and eat together. Each one of you is invited to prepare your evening meal and we will eat together on Wednesday nights like we used to do in person. Many of us miss this chance to eat and have fellowship together, so let's give this a try!

It was a successful program last Lent for many congregations in our Synod and I look forward to including this special event for us at Immanuel.

We will gather at 5:00, have a dinner prayer, and have conversation and fellowship together while we eat. If you would like to continue the tradition of soup and bread for your Wednesday night Lenten Meal, you are welcome to do so, but you can make and eat whatever you like, or if you prefer not to eat together but just want to come for the fellowship, please know you are welcome. **Following our meal/conversation, we will study the appointed Psalm.** These Wednesday night meals and conversations will be one hour in length. **There will be a Zoom Link on the church's website** to connect you; it will be the same week to week. **See you on Zoom Wednesday Nights (March 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6).**

Lenten Devotionals

Henri J.M. Nouwen, one of the most beloved spiritual thinkers of the 20th century, wrote poetically about drawing closer to the cross of Christ in a way that has touched the hearts of readers the world over. Excerpts from Nouwen's inspiring insights are paired with original reflections and prayers in this booklet for each day of Lent, as we come to understand more deeply the meaning of the cross in terms of humility, service and sacrifice. Copies of the booklet are a gift from the Immanuel Worship and Music Committee and will be available at the Ash **Wednesday service, Wednesday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m.** and at the Fellowship Hall table while supplies last.



Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00 p.m. on March 2, 2022

After two years of not being able to have Ash Wednesday worship in person, this year we will be able to gather together at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. This practice is the historic focus of Ash Wednesday observance and gave the day its name. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will also be a part of this deeply meaningful beginning of the Lenten Season.

Stewardship 2022: Your year for generosity

Don't cringe when you see the title "Stewardship". We will see this word many times during 2022 at Immanuel.

"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity!" -2 Corinthians 9:11

As you make resolutions and set goals for the New Year, be sure to include this one: "I will be more generous in 2022." It will bless you – and your community and neighbor!

The Bible makes clear that generosity leads to a more abundant life. Generous people experience one of those paradoxes of the Kingdom of God, where the last are first, the greatest is servant to all, and whoever loses her life for Christ will gain it.

The paradox? Generous people get back far more they give.

First, a clarification: The paradox is NOT a financial strategy to maximize return on investment. That would be missing the point. Besides, there are more important things to give than money, such as time, service, kindness, forgiveness, compassion, love, and joy. And what we get back may not be quantifiable. How do you measure wellbeing and happiness?

Generosity's real "payback" is what and who we become when we cultivate a habit of giving. Giving transforms us into generous-hearted people, and generous-hearted people tend to experience a real abundance of joy, peace, love, and security.

The old saying is most certainly true: The open palm holds more than the closed fist.

For 2022, set a goal to be more generous. Start by increasing your charitable giving above last year's offering, but also aim to give away your time, to serve your neighbor, to be lavish in compassion, extravagant in love.

Pray that God will guide you and help you experience the paradox: Givers get back more than they give away.

--Rob Blezard

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March 2022 – Stewardship

During the rest of 2022, on the first Sunday of each month, we will focus on some aspect of Stewardship. You will be given some visual aid that will help you during the month to grow in your stewardship. For March, you will be given a pack of post-it-notes and a pen.

Let me explain: (*borrowed from The Archdiocese of St Louis writing on Stewardship*)

What Is Stewardship?

It's difficult to teach or practice stewardship, unless we have a clear understanding of exactly what stewardship is. If we wish to embrace stewardship, we must gradually learn to embrace every definition or aspect of stewardship. . . . Definition one –

Spending Time with God Stewardship involves spending time with God. Recognizing that every day is a gift from God, we strive to spend some of each day with God, through prayer, worship, scripture reading, quiet, meditation and other spiritual activities. During this time we ask God how He wants us to use the gifts He has given to us.

With your post-it-notes and pen, write a word or phrase that reminds you to spend time with God. You can post your note on the bathroom mirror, next to your morning coffee/tea or wherever you will see it and be reminded of a way or ways you intentionally plan to spend time with God. Make this about You and God – you can write a different thought each day of the month, focus on the same thought all month or anything in between.

This is not intended to be homework. I do not want you to feel like "I need to get this task taken care of", and then move on. Improvise to make this your own and how you choose to spend time with God. It could be 30 seconds, 20 minutes – whatever you feel fits you at that moment. There are 24 hours in a day. Pick the time that fits; it may change daily. - Pam Andrews, Immanuel President



From the Bishop:

I'd like to intertwine two thoughts below. Bear with me as I lay out some rather disparate thoughts.

One) I don't know my family history very well. Looking in the mirror, I assume that at some point my ancestors came from northern Europe. I do know that the famous frontiersman Daniel Boone is my 13th great-uncle (his sister, Sarah Boone, was my 13th great grandmother). The story is that Grandma Sarah ran off with a peddler and the Boone family disowned her. I have been tempted to take one of those DNA tests just to narrow down the areas in Europe where my ancestors historically lived but I haven't done it yet.

Two) I am intrigued with the new field that sociologists, therapists, and scientists are exploring: epigenetics. This scientific field postulates that just as physical characteristics are passed down, so are times of trauma and loss. A growing body of research suggests that trauma (like starvation, war, a pandemic, etc.) can be passed from one generation to the next. (This is much more complex than I can write about here and it is not a definitive thing. Some scientists dispute these findings or think more research needs to be done. It is, however, intriguing.)

As I reflect on these two thoughts, I am caught with the idea that we all come from something, from somewhere, from someone. We all carry the DNA of our ancestors. We see this when we look at one another – the differences in height or hair color or the length of one's second toe all show differences in DNA. But it is more than that. We also carry the cultures of our ancestors – the ways that we see the world, the ways we celebrate, the ways we grieve, the ways we worship, and so much more. And, perhaps, if we follow recent science, we are all also carrying the trauma that are foremothers and forefathers lived through. It is a part of us – perhaps more deeply embedded than we can understand.

Now, I am not a sociologist or a scientist or a therapist or a doctor. What I am is a pastor. And so, I will speak from that perspective. First, I am amazed how God formed each of us for resiliency and for community. All of us – a jumble of cells, a jumble of our ancestors' DNA – all of us beloved children of God, uniquely and carefully made. Second, I am struck that we are broken. We are carrying scars – individually, historically, and as community. We desperately need healing. We desperately need each other. We desperately need Jesus.

In other words, we are both saint and sinner – individually and collectively. So, how do we move forward? How do we, individually and as community, heal?

Fundamentally, we need to acknowledge our own brokenness. Healing comes when we acknowledge our own pain and our own complicity in the pain of others. Healing comes when we see each other's pain. Healing comes when we admit that we have – knowingly or unknowingly – added to someone else's pain. Healing comes when together we confess our sin, receive forgiveness, and step forward into new life in God's Spirit together.

While it might seem easier, we cannot expect that this healing will take place immediately. And perhaps this is a good thing. For healing and growth go hand in hand. As therapist and author Resmaa Menakem writes, "In today's America, we tend to think of healing as something binary: either we're broken, or we're healed from that brokenness. But that's not how healing operates, and it's almost never how human growth works. More often, healing and growth take place on a continuum, with innumerable points between utter brokenness and total health." *My Grandmother's Hands: Radicalized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*.

During this Lenten time, may we all enter into a time of reflection, contemplation, confession, and ultimately, healing. May we live into God's Spirit of true peace.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee
bishop@lutheransnw.org



From the VEEP

I've been thinking about words and language again – an occupational hazard for an English teacher, I guess. My current ponderings revolve around the words *bless* and *blessing*. Despite having a pretty good idea about the definitions of those words, when reading scripture, I often feel that God is telling me that they don't actually mean what I think they mean. Merriam-Webster defines *bless* as “to confer prosperity or happiness upon,” and *blessing* as “a thing conducive to happiness or welfare,” and yet in Luke 6:22-23 we are told, “Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me.” (The Message) That doesn't sound like something conducive to happiness! And I think of Mary, told by the angel Gabriel that she has found favor with God (Luke 1:30) and who sings that from now on all generations will call her blessed. How blessed did she appear to her contemporaries – a young, unwed mother who gave birth in a stable, had to flee into exile, and whose son consorted with the lowest members of society and was put to death on a cross. That doesn't look too prosperous or happy. It seems that blessings by human standards might sometimes look different than blessings by God's.

I was strongly reminded of that recently upon the death of a young friend of mine. He was, in so many ways, blessed in the conventional sense of the word. Intellectually gifted, a talented musician, a poet, a generous spirit. Blessed, as well, with family and friends who loved and supported him. He had just completed medical school and was embarking on his residency when he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer – in the middle of a pandemic. Immediately after this diagnosis, it became clear that he, at least, did not see this as the curse so many of the rest of us did. In an early statement on his CaringBridge site, he noted, “The cancer will certainly be life-limiting; however, I ultimately hope to complete my training as a resident physician. Even in these few weeks, the lessons I've learned about death, disease, and illness are unlike anything I could have ever hoped to learn during my medical education. I hope to have the chance to share that in a meaningful way.” He began to keep a blog to record his experiences and learnings and his medical team now wants to use what he learned as part of a study to find better treatments for those suffering from this form of cancer. Truly, he was wise beyond his twenty-seven years and blessed, even with cancer, to be a blessing to others. Although raised in the church, Dylan considered himself spiritual rather than religious. I don't know what he'd think of my sharing his story in this way, but I hope it inspires you, as it has me, to try not to limit blessings to those things that seem good from a human standpoint, but to be open to the ways in which even painful, hard, and sad things can enrich our lives. I end with one of the final entries from his blog:

“By almost every emotional or spiritual measure, cancer has enriched my life at only the cost of a relatively unknown future. To be cured would be a miracle, but I would change nothing that has happened.” - Dylan, 12/5/2021

Here are a few things I or the Synod Council have been up to:

- Executive Committee met on February 10. We had a presentation regarding the LiVE program, approved roster actions, and received reports. I would encourage any congregation looking for learning opportunities for their lay leaders to consider joining the LiVE Project.
- Synod Council members serve as synod representatives at a variety of congregational events throughout the synod – call meetings, installations, ordinations among others. I recently attended a call meeting via Zoom at Gloria Dei, Lynwood.

Kay Edgerton, Vice President, NW Washington Synod/ELCA veep@lutheransnw.org

UPCOMING EVENTS and IMPORTANT DATES AT IMMANUEL:

- **Sunday Worship**
- 9:30 a.m. followed by Adult Forum (except March 13).
- **Ash Wednesday Service March 3 at 7:00 p.m.** at Immanuel (in person!).
- **Wednesday meetings during Lent- March 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6 at 5:00 on Zoom**
- **Work Party at the Cemetery on Saturday, March 5, at 10:00 a.m.** Bring lawn rakes, pruning tools, weed eater, blower, and anything else you can think of.
- **March 26 Round Table discussion on the future of Immanuel at 2:30 in the Parish hall.**



HOLY WEEK

April 14 - Maundy Thursday

April 15 - Good Friday

April 17 - Easter

March Birthdays

3/5 Darlene Bayer
3/6 Aaron Workman Smith
3/6 Rebecca Andrews
3/7 Dave Wagner
3/14 Charley Short
3/20 Karen Harkness
3/21 Belia Estrada
3/21 Sheila Gassman
3/22 BobENZler
3/24 Liza Okan
3/25 Leah Young
3/27 Monica Bruland
3/31 Linda Anderson

March Anniversaries

3/18 Steve & Irene Higbee



March Scripture Readings

March 5 - 1 Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

March 13 - 2 Lent

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35

March 20 - 3 Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

March 27 - 4 Lent

Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament gives witness to God's handiwork"

- Psalm 19:1

Women of Immanuel News

WOI's first Walk & Talk will be held on **Monday March 7th** at the Cordata Park Trail at **10 am**. The trail's address is **4510 Cordata Pkwy** (across from the Peace Health Cordata Clinic). **This flat trail can accommodate all skill levels.** After walking we'll visit at the park's pavilion where you can bring something to eat and drink if you want. All Walk & Talk's will meet on the **first Monday of the month, March through October at 10 a.m.** at various trails that will be posted. Poor weather will cancel and you'll be notified by **9 a.m.** the morning of by an e-mail from Sue Ohlswager. Please come and enjoy the outdoors!

Do You Wonder...

About the future of Immanuel?

Are you interested in discussing ideas of ways we can move forward after two and a half COVID years? Yes? Then you may want to join a “round table” discussion on **Saturday, March 26 at 2:30** in the parish hall. Pam Andrews and Nancy Workman will facilitate this first session and the group will decide how to proceed. We are looking forward to gathering together to listen to the Holy Spirit as we think about and make suggestions regarding Immanuel’s future.



Mark your calendar for **Sunday, Sept. 11**, when congregations of the ELCA will join together for “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday, our annual day of service.

Over the past two years, we have been inspired by the ways congregations continued their participation in “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday with physically distanced, at-home and outdoor service projects. We have witnessed the outpouring of love and concern that God’s people show for one another by maintaining feeding ministries, serving communities that are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 infection, and assisting people who are financially burdened by the economic downturn. **Thank you for supporting your communities!**

We are a church energized by lively engagement in faith and life. As we continue our tradition of service to our neighbor, we remember the words of Martin Luther: “**Our faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing.**” With our hands, we do God’s work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus

Christ’s name.

Be sure to save the date and visit ELCA.org/DayofService for updates to resources. **You work every day to make your community a better place.** We look forward to working together on “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday.

March Worship Assistants

March 5, 2022 9:30 a.m.

Ass’t. Min: Laura Hookham

Greeter/Ushers: Brulands

Readers: Ron Bruland/Salvador Estrada

March 13

Ass’t Min: Ben Workman Smith

Greeter/Ushers: Hunters

Readers: Joyce Hawkes/Salvador Estrada

March 20

Ass’t. Min: Bob Jacobson

Greeters/Ushers: Brewers

Readers: Judy Nelson/Salvador Estrada

March 27

Ass’t Min. Kelsey Mordecai

Greeters/Ushers: Brulands

Readers: Dawn Durand/Salvador Estrada

If you are unable to serve on your assigned Sunday, please call someone that you can either switch an assigned Sunday with or sub for you.

A big thank-you to all the helpers; you are greatly appreciated and needed!

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