

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
5955 South Elm Avenue
Fresno, California 93706

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**SPRING FORWARD
ONE HOUR FOR
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
ON MARCH 12TH**

Ministry Staff

Pastor: Rev. Taylor Stempniak
Office Secretary/Chimes Editor: Victoria Salwasser
Organist: Laurel Jacobsen

Immanuel's Church Council

President: Mark Salwasser
Vice President: Kristi Hollenbeck
Council Secretary: Allyson Kahn
Financial Secretary: Sharon Reynolds
Treasurer: Pat Griffin
Trustees: Daniel Hartwig, Mike Moser
Deacons: Carol Bennetts, Gina Cogan,
John Jensen & Allyson Nielsen,

Return Service Requested

The Immanuel Chimes

March Edition 2023



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Mission of the North American Lutheran Church

5955 South Elm Avenue

Fresno (Easton), California 93706

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Visit our Website at: ImmanuelEaston.com

Daylight Saving Time Begins March 12h.

Spring Forward one Hour

Sunday Schedule

9:30AM Sunday School

for Everyone in Grace Hall

10:30AM Worship and Communion

For Everyone in Sanctuary

Lenten Services Every Wednesday in March

6:30PM in Social Hall for Soup Supper

7:00PM in Sanctuary for Lenten Worship

Fellowship Lunch-March 23rd...see page 6-7

**March 26th All Church Gathering after
church for lunch, fellowship & fun...see page 14**

From our Pastor

I'm giving up pessimism for Lent

When I was in middle school, my pastor preached a sermon around the season of Lent where he spoke about the power of habits. "It takes forty days to form strong habits," he declared. "So I encourage you to select a spiritual practice for the season of Lent, and embrace it for the full forty days. That way, you'll begin Easter with a new healthy habit to carry you throughout the year." For my spiritual practice that year, I decided to do one hundred crunches every night before bed. I may have slightly misunderstood what a spiritual practice was, but I did maintain the habit until I graduated high school and went to college with a rather impressive set of abdominal muscles.

Now that I've grown older and read much more, I know that the science of my well-meaning pastor's declaration is a little shaky. Psychologists argue over whether habits form in sixty days or well over two-hundred days, but they're all united on these facts: Forming and breaking habits takes a lot of time and effort and habits impact our day to day health. This is true for our physical health in really apparent ways. Flossing, exercise, healthy eating, one hundred crunches before bed, all of these are habits that have physical impacts that we can observe. It is often harder for us to observe the impact of our mental habits, but the words we say, think, and consume have a profound impact on our behavior and, yes, our health.

Unfortunately for me, I was not as intentional about forming healthy thought patterns as I was about my bedside exercise routine. I formed a habit of allowing myself to speak negatively about myself, not only in jokes but in my day-to-day life. What may have started off as sarcasm had quietly become facts. The things I do don't matter. I am not making a difference. My quirks and shortcomings are bigger than my gifts. Things will not get better. I was saying all these things about a beloved child of God. I was saying these things about his church. I was saying these

Danish American Historical Society Frickedelle Dinner

March 4th at 6:00pm in the
Immanuel Lutheran Social Hall

Tickets: \$30.00 For Reservations: Call Laurel Jacobsen today!
Guest Speaker is Carl Jensen about what it was like growing up
in Easton as the son of Danish Immigrants.

American Union 4-H Club Is Hosting their Annual Pancake Breakfast

On Sunday, March 19th
at the Washington Union Cafeteria

8:00 - 11:00AM

Tickets are \$10.00

Call Liz Capozzi at 559-246-8062 or contact any 4-H member
Tickets can also be purchased at the door!

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is hosting their Annual Danish Aebleskiver Breakfast

On Sunday March 26th
8:00-10:00AM at the church

13441 S. Quince on the corner of Quince & Erie in Caruthers
Join them for Aebleskiver, Baked Ham, Orange Juice & Coffee
The Free-will offering at the door will go for many worthy needs
not only in their community, but far beyond.

Lenten Soup Suppers

Soup Suppers begin on **March 1st**, and we're so excited to invite everyone to participate in Soup Suppers, with Holden Evening prayer to follow in the sanctuary. Every Wednesday in Lent, starting on the 1st, we'll gather for a warm bowl of soup at 6:30. If you're interested in bringing soup, please sign up on the church bulletin board for the Wednesday you'd like to contribute. We've also assigned Wednesdays for dessert according to your birthday: March 1st: January-March, March 8th: April-June, March 15th: July—September, March 22: October–December; March 29th: Immanuel Church Council.

All Church Potluck & Silver Polish Day

March 26th after Worship!

Everyone is Invited-Needed

to come help polish and clean the

Altar ware to prepare for

Communion again at the Altar.

It's been a tradition at Immanuel to kneel at the altar for communion on the first Sunday of the month. Since the shut-down in March 2020, we have not gathered at the altar for communion. Our Immanuel children have asked for that to return. The Caglia Family and Barbara Petersen have volunteered to wash communion cups on April 2nd following communion at the rail on Palm Sunday!

It's time for the church to polish and clean their altar ware so we will do it before we start to use it again. Please join us for a many-hands-make-light-work day after church on the 26th of March. Your Council President will make Pull Pork Sandwiches for lunch. Please bring side dishes to share! We will enjoy food, fellowship, and fun preparing for a new beginning!

things about God's promise of restoration, resurrection, and righteousness. They had just become such common place thoughts in my day-to-day life, that it wasn't until recently that I realized the impact they were having on my mind. My husband jokingly calls me "Eeyore" around the house. He says it with love because he knows there's a lot of very good, very legitimate reasons for this pessimism: chronic pain, trauma, anxiety, mental illness, the general state of the world. I imagine that for a lot of my fellow "Eeyore"s, there's legitimate reasons for your pain or sadness too. As a pastor, it would be dishonest and unfaithful for me to ever suggest that we should swallow that pain up and ignore it. We have a whole book of lamentations in the Bible! It's good to give voice to our fear, doubt, and hurt, but we cannot allow our hurt to be the primary compass for our life or we will find ourselves dismissing or ignoring the very real blessings around us and within us.

So this year, I'm challenging myself in Lent. I am setting aside self-deprecating humor and a habit of embracing hopelessness, and I am replacing my pessimism with the promise of the Gospel. When I find myself slipping into despair, I will honor the feelings of my heart, but I will not allow sorrow or doubt to have the last word. Instead, I will pray. I will pray for myself, I will pray for my church, and I will pray for the world around me. If I believe that I trust the Lord, then my words and actions should reflect that, and if I believe that the promise of the Gospel is true, then I believe that none of the doubt, suffering, or pain that I experience here and now will have the final word. I believe that God can, has, and will intrude on the mundane and significant suffering of our daily lives, which means that there is always reason and cause for hope. So in this season of Lent, when we are reminded of our deep need for our God's mercy and Grace, let us set aside our grumbling in favor of prayer. Let us not speak of ourselves, our church, or our world as if they are lost causes without hope, but instead turn to the source of all hope and consolation. Let's try a little optimism for forty days and see where it gets us.

Blessings,
Pastor Taylor



Journey

So this month I thought I would revisit some things that I've talked about over the years. That is partly because there is always new people joining the club - those who grieve. Partly because I've had many conversations with those who are in the midst of learning how to do life while grieving. And mostly because I need to check in on myself from time to time to assess, reflect and remind myself that I am, indeed, a griever.

My grieving started six and a half years ago with the passing of my wife, Cindy. I paid attention as best I could to my feelings and state of mind. I've always had an interest in psychology; it fascinates me. I was just never smart enough to formally study the subject. It's always intrigued me why people say and do and react to the pressures of life. I had a great case study and example in Cindy. She had literally been through it all. Her father was abusive in that he paid little attention to her growing up. All of his attention was directed to and lavished on her brother. There were years when they didn't even bother to get her a birthday cake or have a party. Her father died when she was eleven. Her mother fell into the wrong crowd. Alcoholism flourished and led to a rape of Cindy when she was twelve. The rape resulted in an HPV. HPV led to cancer. Watching her deal with life after all of that and more was extraordinarily interesting. I was able to see the patterns in her life. I started seeing those patterns in others. I had an opportunity to step back and see how people reacted and what led to those reactions.

It's the same with people in grieving. It's interesting to see how people deal with death and work on their grieving. Some are just down right devastated and can no longer function. The other end of that spectrum are those who push their feeling down and move on quickly. It seems to me those are the extremes and that the vast majority of us are somewhere in between. I believe somewhere in between is the right place. I've come to believe that grieving never ends and that we need to make adjustments to our new reality –the reality that a certain someone is gone. I believe that the healthy reaction is to honor that departed one with memories that don't consume us, but enable us to face each new day. Some days those memories are stronger than others, usually around birthdays or anniversaries or the anniversary of their passing. Some days those memories are just a passing thought in the midst of the usual business of the day. Where ever you find yourself, I want you to know that it's okay. If you have a day where you are stuck and can't move, embrace it. It's okay. If you have a day that passes without much thought,

Immanuel Women's Ministry!

Immanuel women met on Saturday, February 11 for a tea party and discussion time to reflect on the future of ministry for women of Immanuel.

The events discussed were both past events and ideas for future events. Women of the church in the past have taken the responsibility of communion ware. We washed cups once per month and changed paraments as needed according to the church year calendar. Currently, the office staff takes care of the paraments and volunteers from the congregation, both men and women, have been asked to help wash communion cups once per month as we begin kneeling at the altar again for communion on April 2nd, Palm Sunday. Other past events were Tea Parties in the Social Hall, Bunco Night, Field Trips, and Epiphany events. The Fund Raising idea discussed was forming a committee within the congregation to host a big yard sale this spring. Service ministry ideas were a possible a shut-in visitation ministry. This could be taking them meals or simple craft projects to do with them. Bible Study has started monthly and a Christian Book Discussion group meets weekly. More participants would be wonderful for each of these groups for more women. These are just a few of the many wonderful ideas proposed but volunteers and participants are needed to make these projects happen and grow.

After reading the paragraph above, does something spark your interest? Would you like to take an share a simple craft project to a dear member of our church who can't come to church due to mobility issues? Would you like to work with a team to organize a yard sale to raise funds for the Social Hall Remodel Project? Would you like to join a book discussion prayer group? Would you like to dig into scripture and discuss it once a month? Opportunities arise when we all put our interests out there and say "that sounds like fun and I can make that work" and maybe someone else might like to do that too. If you have an idea for sharing your gifts try it. Start small and build as big as it needs to be.

The tea party concluded with the election of a new board beginning their first terms: President: Marcia Hollenbeck, Vice President and Council Representative: Jackie Caglia, Secretary: Betty Moore, Treasurer: Kristi Hollenbeck. The members at large are open to the whole congregation of women who would like to be share and serve. The women voted to move the women's ministry funds into the Church-designated fund account. Expenses and payments will be directed through the women's ministry treasurer and paid through the church account treasurer.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped with the tea party. It was a beautiful event! We look forward to continuing to serve God in new and traditional ways.

Victoria Salwasser, Outgoing President

News Notes for March

Happy Birthday to Gaye Cissel on her 76th birthday on March 30th!

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME - SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR to "SPRING AHEAD!" Daylight Saving Time will begin at 2 a.m. on **Sunday, March 12.**

FISH & CHIPS FRIDAYS AT ST. JUDE CATHOLIC CHURCH! DRIVE THROUGH OR DINE IN. The Knights of Columbus will host their annual fish & chips dinners every Friday night during Lent from **5:00PM-6:30PM** at the St. Jude Catholic Church at 208 West Jefferson Avenue in Easton, CA. Invite your friends. No dinners served on Good Friday.

THRIVENT MEMBERS: Remember to renew your Choice Dollars to Immanuel Lutheran Church or other non-profit before March 26th.

PHIL TEWS AND CINDY TEWS WIN THE NATIONL BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE MARKETER AWARD! Fresno Livestock Commission is owned and operated by father-daughter pair Phil and Cindy Tews since 1990. Fresno Livestock Commission caters to the small, everyday grower selling 10 or fewer calves per year. With a passion for advocacy, Cindy and Phil take a hands-on approach to implement Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) at Fresno Livestock. Located within a county that has 1 million people, Fresno Livestock Commission also has the notable opportunity to educate and engage with a diverse population. The staff spends untold hours visiting with buyers and sellers alike. They help facilitate relationships with veterinarians, haulers and even provide a BQA-certified crew for hire during branding, vaccinating, shipping and other activities. All employees at Fresno Livestock Commission have been BQA certified which they incorporate through safe handling and routine care of all the livestock that enters and exists their facility. Cindy traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana on February 3, 2023 and received the award on behalf of Fresno Livestock Commission. Congratulations and thank you to Phil and Cindy for taking care of the animals that pass through your sale yard.

Portions of this article are reprinted from the Fresno County Farm Bureau Ag Wire, February 22, 2023

that's okay too. That's grace from God. Your feelings are your feelings and God has given them to you to help you cope with all the other stuff going on. I'll even put some feelings on Jesus. I'll bet there were days when he really missed his cousin, John the Baptizer. I don't think he would have pushed those feelings away, but maybe used them to carry on.

That's where I think we need to be too. People have been put in our lives to teach us, inspire us, mentor us and to encourage us. God blesses us with them to give us a common ground to reach out to others. We have been blessed to be a blessing. Again, some days are going to be worse than others and that's okay. Just be honest with yourself. If you are blessed and encouraged by these words, then I am blessed and encouraged also.

One last thing and that is what I want you to hear over the rest of it. We are here TOGETHER. We have all lost someone. Be a grief sharer. If you ever need to lay your grief on me, I am here for you. We'll figure it out together. Seriously, what you do most for me is to allow me to write to you once a month. Thank you. Wherever you are in your grief adjustment is where you are. You're okay. We're okay because God, in his love, sent his son to die for us and experience what we experience and now gives us his spirit. They understand where we are!

Love, John.

Prayer Focus for the Weeks in March

Week of 3-6-2023. Focus on praying. Psalm 141:2 NIV. May my prayer be set before you like incense; May the lifting up of my hands be like evening sacrifice.

Week of 3-13-2023. Focus on God's teaching. Psalm 143:10 NIV. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your good spirit lead me on level ground.

Week of 3-20-2023. Focus on God's love. Psalm 145:8 NIV. The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Week of 3-27-2023. Focus on what God wants of us. Micah 6:8 NIV. He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Fellowship Luncheon

The Fourth Thursday

12:00PM in The Chimes

Join us for lunch! Celebrate!



In Celebration of our Members in March 2023

Birthdays

3-Alexandra Gardner
7-Jared Allred
11-Karl Nielsen
12-Cody Caglia
15-Kristi Hollenbeck
19-Lillianna Perez
20-John Jensen
-Pat Griffin
24-Scott Hollenbeck
- Colby Hartwig
26-Dan Stiltz
30-Gaye Cissel
- Logan Harding
31-Bill Pucheu



Wedding Anniversaries

8-Daniel & Jennifer Hartwig (15)
13-Bobby & Andrea Bell (19)
26-Scott & Marcia Hollenbeck (35)



Baptismal Birthdays

2 Susie Tews
3 Dale Ewing
5 Jacob Caglia
8 Brooke Hartwig
10 Eve Allred
16 Brittney Gardner
19 Ed Vike
19 Michelle Hollenbeck
21 Stephanie Hollenbeck
25 Liberty Auer
Kaylee Bennetts
Mckenzie Bennetts
Micah Bennetts
26 Ellen Vike
27 Nicolas Orozco
28 David Terrones

If you don't see your birthday, baptismal birthday or wedding anniversary in The Chimes, please let us know! See Victoria in the church office about a Household Data Form so we're sure to have all of your information!



Thank you, Immanuel...

Dear Immanuel,

Thank you all for the prayers, calls, cards, emails and texts during my recovery from knee replacement surgery. I truly appreciate it and my recovery is going well.

Sharon Reynolds

Dear Immanuel,

Thank you so much for increasing your financial support for this upcoming year to \$333.00 monthly. I've recently lost a bit of support due to a few of my dear ministry partners passing away in the last few months. Your generous commitment is a timely blessing that will allow me not to worry about my staff account while I reach out to new partners to help further bridge the gap. Your gifts are an investment to reach people through Gospel-centered digital sources and strategies as well as through various conferences that CRU puts on all over the world. Again, thank you so much for your prayers and partnership. I'm looking forward to telling you about what God has done through your support.

Blessings to you all,
Ellen Nielsen

Dear Immanuel,

Thank you very much for your retired missionary support. I appreciate and am very grateful for your support. I am retired and at the age of 74 I am no longer teaching nursing classes. I'm waiting for an appointment with a neurologist as I am having trouble with my speech. My mind is clear, but my speech is slurred at times. My traveling days back to work a little in Tank have come to an end. The region continues to battle with the unrest but the hospital is working through it. I appreciate your prayers for my an appointment with a neurologist and a treatment plan to heal my speech. I continue to drive and spend time with friends. Thank you, Immanuel, for your support. I hope to visit in the fall.

Blessings to you,
Jan Kersgaard

ons Have Resumed day of every Month he Social Hall || 237-7909 to RSVP





March 202



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Children's Sunday School Classes are starting a new 6 week session about Jesus! The sessions: His Birth, Teaching at the Temple, Recruiting Disciples to be fishers of men, the Baptism of Jesus, and Loaves & Fish. Children gather in Grace Hall for Music, Crafts, and Bible Stories every Sunday at 9:30am.			1	2	3 12:00PM Easton Food Distribution	4 Danish-American Historical Society Fricadelle Dinner In Social Hall 5:00pm social hour 6:00pm dinner
5 9:30 Sunday School in Social Hall 10:30 Worship & Communion 11:45 Fellowship 12:00 JH & SH Youth Meet in social hall for lunch	6	7 10:00AM Women's Book Study in library 7:00PM Women of Hope Bible Study in Grace Hall	8 6:30PM Soup Supper 7:00PM Lenten Service	9 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in Social Hall	10	11
12 Daylight Saving Time Spring forward 1 hour 9:30 Sunday School in Social Hall 10:30 Worship & Communion 11:45 Fellowship	13	14 10:00AM Women's Book Study in library	15 6:30PM Soup Supper 7:00PM Lenten Service	16 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in Social Hall	17 St. Patrick's Day	18
19 9:30 Sunday School in Social Hall 10:30 Worship & Communion 11:45 Fellowship	20	21 10:00AM Women's Book Study in library	22 Chimes Deadline 6:30PM Soup Supper 7:00PM Lenten Service	23 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in Social Hall 12:00PM Fellowship Lunch	24	25
26 9:30 Sunday School in Social Hall 10:30 Worship & Communion 11:45 All Church Potluck and Silver Polish Day!	27	28 10:00AM Women's Book Study in library	29 6:30PM Soup Supper 7:00PM Lenten Service	30 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in Social Hall Grace & Social Halls Reserved WUHS	31 Grace & Social Halls Reserved WUHS	