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IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Fresno, California 93706 5955 South Elm Avenue

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THE IMMANUEL **CHIMES** FEBRUARY 2024



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Mission of the North American Lutheran Church 5955 South Elm Avenue Fresno (Easton), California 93706 Church Telephone (559) 237-7909

Email: office@immanueleaston.com

Pastor: ptmarie96@gmail.com

WORSHIP SCHEDULE SUNDAYS

9:30AM **Sunday School for Everyone** 10:30AM Worship & Communion

Ash Wednesday Service on the 14th at 7:00PM





ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP BEGINS AT 7:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY FEBRUARY 14TH 2024

Read more about this event inside.

13, 2024

From Our Pastor

Are you my neighbor?

"I really only love God as much as the person I love the least."

This is the sticker I keep plastered on the water bottle I tote everywhere with me. It's a quote from journalist, activist, and Roman Catholic theologian Dorothy Day, and I've received various responses to my sticker over the past year. A dear friend who's a former Catholic priest and current Lutheran pastor smiled and told me he liked it in his soft British accent. A dear friend who's a current Lutheran pastor and less charitable rolled his eyes and called me a hippie in his less obvious southern accent. A dear friend who's not a pastor at all, but is perhaps the most honest of us all, read it and shook her head and said, "Oh, I don't like that."

Me neither. That's why I keep the sticker on my water bottle.

We've heard it said that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves, but I know that there are times that I find myself asking, like the young scholar in Luke 10, "And who is my neighbor?" Who is it that I'm obligated to love? Who can I fence off from this love and relationship because of their behavior or just the realities that we don't get along?

When this young scholar asked Jesus the question, "Who is my neighbor?", Jesus responded with one of the most beloved parables. The parable of the Good Samaritan. A man is robbed and left for dead, and then a priest and a Levite, both fail to offer him meaningful help. The Samaritan man is ultimately the one who offers him salvation, and he goes above and beyond—offering his time, his money, even his reputation for the sake of this stranger. When Jesus asks the young scholar who behaved as a neighbor, the young man can't even bring himself to say the word Samaritan out loud, so he settles for just naming what the man has done instead of who he is. "The one who showed him mercy."

As pastors, we often use this parable to encourage people to examine which groups they may be holding biases against. We explain that the Samaritans and Jews had been feuding for centuries and that Jesus is challenging this man's preconceived notions about the world. The Good Samaritan becomes the Good Jew, the Good Palestinian, the Good Black Man, the Good Immigrant, the Good Homeless Man. That's a worthy use of our time. We should always be willing to hold up that

Frayer Focus For The Week

Week of 2-5-2024. Focus on God's love for us. John 3:16 NIV. For God do loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believed in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Week of 2-12-2024. Focus on what love is. 1 Corinthians 13:4 NIV. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

Week of 2-19-2024. Focus on why we love. 1 John 4:19 NIV. We love because he first loved us.

Week of 2-26-2024. Focus on how we love. 1 John 3:18 NIV. Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Frayers for Our Thurch

For Christ's Church: Eternal God, we thank You for Your Church through which the gospel of Jesus Christ has been manifest in every age.

Members and their families serving in the military: Erica Botello, Canaan Campbell, Joey Brewer, Henry Clark, Ryan Freitas, Michael Hansen, Leah Linger, Connor Mannix, & Matthew Tigchelaar.

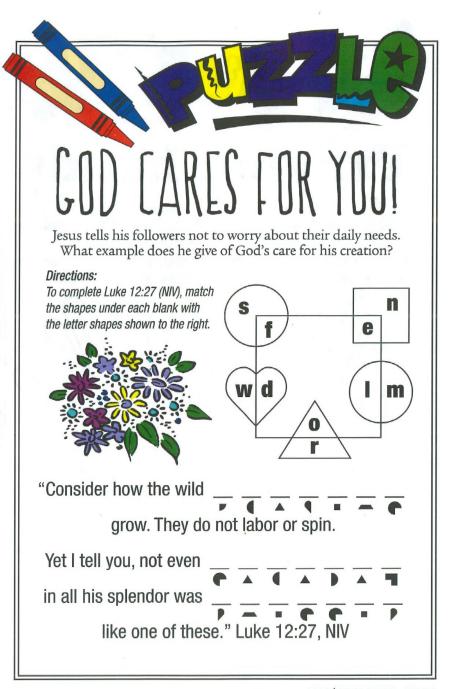
Those unable to travel about: Gail Hansen, Paul Pedersen, & Kenneth Selzer, Bonnie Terkelsen.

Those in need of pain relief & healing: Bobbie Beshears, Fred Bologna, Sandy Britter, Ed Bordin, Emily, Gaye Cissel, Irene Day, Steve Fletcher, Amanda Garcia, Kristen Gibson, Ed Gomez, Jim Hansen, Jan Kersgaard, Paul Jones, Donna Kennedy, Carol Martin, Marcus Miranda, Joann Ortega, Gloria Payne, Larry Pickens, Patti Price, Bob Reynolds, Pastor Amy Schifren, Rebecca Stempniak, & Keitt Wilson.

For people dealing with loneliness and depression. For those battling the illness and the health care.

Sympathy Love and Prayers...

For the family of Pam Kjar who passed away peacefully in her Fresno home on January 8th, 2024 at the age of 76. Pam attended Immanuel Lutheran Church when years ago. She is survived by her husband of 56 years, Stan and their children and grandchildren. Graveside services were held at Washington Colony Cemetery on January 26th.



these." Luke 12:27, NIV

Answer: "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of

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mirror to our hearts and our world, but today, I want to go smaller. Our neighbor is the one who's name we don't want to say out loud. Our neighbor is the one who hurt us. Honestly, sometimes our neighbor is the one who just gets on our nerves. Our neighbor is the one we see coming and turn and walk the other way.

I am not an expert in loving these people, but I know Jesus has called each of us to try, and we can't pretend that love is ignoring them or avoiding them or punishing them in the petty ways our heart desires. This past year, I made a commitment to myself to be more intentional about loving my neighbor, and I've found that nothing is quite as transformative as prayer. It started in a meeting. During intercessory prayer, someone I've never particularly meshed well with went to pray. For whatever reason, the assembly didn't hear and they got interrupted. It was just awkward. So afterwards, I pulled them aside to ask what it was they needed prayer for. I've prayed for this small thing every day for them since, and what I've found is that the irritation I felt toward them slowly died away. At the end of the day, they belong to the same God as me. At the end of the day, I need the same God as them. What are we always fighting about?

You won't always get to know the tragic back story of the person you don't agree with and you won't always find your enemy to be sympathetic, but you will always find prayer worth it. It started with a man I found irritable in a meeting, but there are grudges much deeper, much easier to nurture that have been mended in prayer. As we head into this season of Lent, I'd like to encourage you to fast from hard-heartedness for the next forty days and pray earnestly for your enemy, for that neighbor who's name you do not want to say. Pray with the knowledge that when we attempt to crucify one another for the sins Christ died for, we only drive the spear further in the side of our savior. Pray with the knowledge that our God has seen the way that this world, the sins of our neighbors, and the sins of ourselves, have robbed us and left us for dead. Pray with the knowledge that our God has not left us in the death of that pain. The one that the world—the one

that we—crucified for being an outsider will not let sin, death, or our own hardened hearts have the last word. The pierced hands of the Good Samaritan have already reached into the grave and the ditch and pulled you up into new life, so you may spend eternity alongside him and your neighbor.

February Blessings, Pastor Taylor



Journey

Last month I suggested that I'd like to go back to the beginning and revisit some of the things we've talked about over the last years. What I wanted you to know last month is that, yes, this is a unique journey for you to be on. Only you will feel the exact feelings that you are feeling. That's because every relationship is a true one off of relationships. Maybe you had a relationship that was one of constant togetherness. You never spent a day apart. If you or your partner went to the grocery store, the other went along. Every vacation was planned and spent together. You worked in the yard together, went to sporting events together, went to church together or to the opera together. I know couples like that and I'm sure you do too. Maybe your relationship was one of saying goodbye in the morning, having most dinners together and then saying goodnight at the end of the day. I know people like that and maybe you do too. Understand, I'm not judging either one. As long as it worked for both of you, it's okay. I'm going to guess for most of us it was probably somewhere in between those two extremes. Maybe sliding back and forth on that scale. Wherever you were on that scale, your life has now been transitioned. The totality of the divisions of the chores are now assumed by you. That can be a rude awakening, very rude, indeed. You've never put gas in the car, or plugged it into the charger. You've never done laundry. Never balanced the checkbook. Never grocery shopped. Never bought birthday or Christmas presents for the kids, or wrapped them. Never picked out which clothes to wear. Never been out to dinner by yourself. These can be very foreign things. Haven't been on a date in 40 or 50 years. It's a whole new world. Not always an easy one to navigate.

It's going to take some time. Some things you'll be able to conquer. Some may still be in process. And some things you may just decide to give up. I don't ever see myself going out to a sit down dinner by myself. I'd feel like everyone was watching me and I wouldn't enjoy that. I don't vacation by myself, I tried and it just wasn't enjoyable. I have conquered some things. I do laundry. I cook meals, at least that's my interpretation of what I'm doing. I clean the house good enough to satisfy myself. For you it may be other things. Keeping the car maintained, buying a new refrigerator, or babysitting the grandkids. Maybe you weren't the one who communicated in the family, I'm now calling and texting people. Buying birthday and Christmas gifts for little girls. Things that I wouldn't have been involved with before.

Now it's advice time: there are things that you are just going to have to try and do. You are going to find that a lot of things you, most certainly, are going to be able to do and maybe even get good at. Ask people

Danish American Historical Society Hosts their annual Frikadella Dinner In Immanuel's Social Hall

Date: Saturday, March 3rd
Time: 5:00 p.m. is Social Hour
6:00 p.m. is Dinner
Cost: \$32.00 adults \$12 children under 12

Reservations are to be made by February 27.
You can pay at the door, but reservations are needed.
Please notify Laurel Jacobsen
by e-mail (lolli707@comcast.net) or phone (559 240 8818)
or simply tell her at church

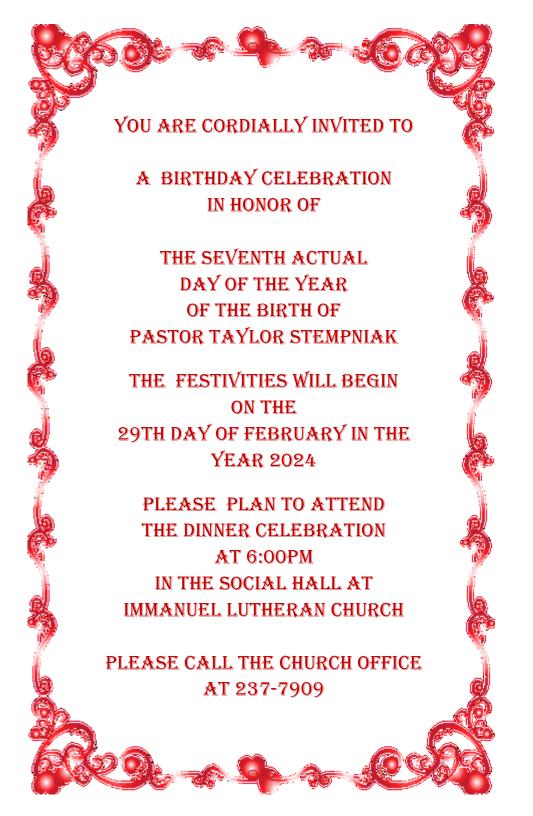
American Union 4-H Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction

Sunday, March 17th 8:00-11:00AM Washington Union High School Cafeteria

Tickets are \$10.00 and include delicious pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee, juice, and milk.

Everyone is invited! It's plenty of time for breakfast before church!

For tickets contact our church office or see the flier on the Gold bulletin board



you trust how they do things. They'll be happy to help. There are people around you who know how to do things. Now, a word to the wise: BE CAREFUL, of what you agree to. There are people out there who would love to take advantage of your naivety. They will tell you that you need things that you do not need. They prey on you. You know the old adage; if it's too good to be true, it's probably too good to be true. Not meaning to sound sexist, but they target the widows with a chilling lack of feelings for what they are doing. That's precisely why we need this community of grievers. Ask about things that are being suggested to you that just don't seem to be right.

When you are ready and not before, stick your toe in the water. Try things, try new things. Try things that your spouse maybe didn't care for but you thought sounded intriguing. Maybe you'll like going to dinner by yourself or taking that ride to the mountains or coast. Just let someone know if you are going off by yourself. Make sure your phone is charged and your transportation is up to the travel.

You're going to be alright. Whether it takes two months or ten years. You're going to be alright. Hang in there. Reconnect with old friends, your church or other group. Don't shut out the world, embrace it. The world has some negatives but it also has many positives. An old preacher once said, you can't walk on water if you don't get out of the boat.

You're going to be alright. Allow yourself, in your time to be alright. It's no disrespect for your spouse if you can be alright. I think they would want it that way.

The club, those of us who mourn with you, await your opening up to us.

God bless you. My light is always on for you, try me. John

Sunday Worship Service

If you would like to lend a helping hand and share your time and talents on Sunday mornings please check out the gold bulletin board in the church entryway.

There are several opportunities to help out on Sunday mornings. For more information about how you can help please call the church office, 237-7909.



FAT TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH 5955 S ELM AVE, EASTON CA 93706 6:30PM FEBRUARY 13, 2024 Dear Central Pacific Mission District,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to you for awarding me your mission district scholarship. I was thrilled to learn of my selection for this honor, and I am deeply appreciative of your support.

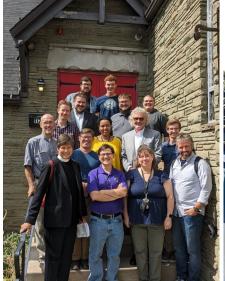
I am a full time pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Landis, NC. I am a full time seminary student at Trinity School for Ministry and currently in the "Ordination Under Special Circumstances" program through the NALC for ordination. I have been married for 20 years and have a 16 year old son and a 12 year old son. You can imagine my life is very busy and pursuing my calling and dream has put a financial strain on our family. The financial assistance you provided will be of great help to me in paying my educational expenses, and it will allow me to concentrate more of my time on studying.

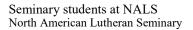
Thank you again for your generosity and support. I promise you I will work very hard and give back to others, both as a pastor and possibly a scholarship to future seminary students like myself.

In Christ, Candice Carter

If you'd like to contribute to the Central Pacific Mission District Scholarship, you can send a check payable to: St. Timethy's Lutheren Church

St. Timothy's Lutheran Church 5100 Camden Street San Jose, CA 95124 ***Please note on the memo line: CPMD SCHOLARSHIP FUND







Candace Carter and her family on Easter Sunday in front of their church.

Benevolence in January

Benevolence sent for the month of January Central Pacific Mission District Seminary Scholarship

The church needs faithful pastors to serve God's people, and we give thanks that God continues to call men and women of all ages and backgrounds to proclaim the good news of the Gospel and preside over the sacraments in the church. In order to ensure that pastors are being trained to behave and preach with integrity the Lutheran church has always required that our clergy receive further education in biblical studies, theology, and pastoral care by attending seminary. We want to make sure that seminary is accessible to people who do not come from wealthy backgrounds, who may already have families and careers, and who may feel called to serve in small parishes and will not receive significant salaries as pastors. It's a holy thing to care for our churches and our future pastors.

The NALC has committed to providing significant financial aid for its seminarians, with the goal that our future pastors will be free to serve without the burden of grad school debt. Mission Districts, individual congregations, and our parent church, provide scholarships to seminarians to help offset the financial costs associated with school. We require two things from applicants: a heart felt commitment to the study of God's word and that they are in the NALC's candidacy process. This ensures that they've been through the psych eval, background checks, and vetting process of our church body and made a commitment to serve within our church. Every year, our Mission District awards a scholarship to up to two students who applied, prioritizing students from our own Mission District, but blessing students from across the nation as we are able. Our congregation's support of this scholarship, alongside the support of our neighbors here in the Central Pacific region, has allowed seminarians throughout our church to grow and develop into pastors who are faithfully proclaiming God's word. I have been stopped by previous recipients, like Ramiel Shamwel, who received the scholarship in 2021 to hear heartfelt thanks. I have rejoiced to see pastors like Joe Hill, who serves at St. Timothy's in San Jose, and received the scholarship in 2020 serve the church faithfully. This is a ministry bearing good fruit.

You can hear from our seminary scholarship recipient for the Fall 2023 semester below. Candice is an ordination under special circumstances student, meaning she's not only attending seminary, but also serving a congregation in a special circumstance that would be unable to pay the salary of a full time pastor. I am so grateful for Candice's commitment to her studies, her faithful service to the church, and her love of Jesus.

Ummata on March 3rd

For those of you new to this idea, Ummata is an Oromo word from Ethiopia that means community which when spoken sounds like "you matter." Ummata seeks to foster community at our church with a special emphasis on intergenerational relationships. We want people to not only have friends their age but also those of other age groups.

The Ummata team conducted a survey to make sure that we were still offering Ummata in a form that is best for Immanuel. Taking that information into account we are looking at a spring and fall event this year.

Save the date March 3rd following worship. It will be a day all about service projects! We will have lunch after church and guided service projects to work on together for an hour or two. This year we will be selling Ummata T-shirts for \$15.00 each but no more than \$50.00 per household so your whole family can have one! They are a new style and design this year too! Since we are ordering T-shirts and want them here in time for our event we must have sign ups in by February 11th! Please sign up on the bulletin board in the church entryway this Sunday!

Ummata is a great day to invite your friends to church! We get a nice lunch and enjoy working together on fun projects to help others. Start your inviting now so you can be sure to get a t-shirt for them. Ummata is always fun way to meet new friends and the time spent is very rewarding.

Some of the projects that we will be making are: blankets for animal shelters, cooking meals to freeze to give out as needed to folks having hard times. There will be more projects but the plans have not solidified yet.

Also, the intergenerational team is always looking for people to help us build connections among our members, so please reach out to me if you would like more information.

Kristi Hollenbeck

What is Fat Tuesday?

The quickest answer to this question is, "One of Pastor's favorite days in the church year." I love any excuse to eat breakfast for dinner. Fat Tuesday, or Shrove Tuesday as it's also called, is the last day before the season of Lent begins. The season of Lent is a season of fasting, where many Christians choose to refrain from rich, decadent foods (That's right! Not everyone gives up their least favorite veggie every year for Lent!), Fat Tuesday is an opportunity for Christians to use up the last of the fat before Lent so it doesn't go to waste. All of the butter, flour, milk, and fatty meats were cooked up and a last feast was had to fill bellies and empty cupboards. For centuries, Christians were making cakes to use up the fatty goods, and over years, that's transformed into pancake suppers. A night with good pancakes, rich syrup, and some yummy sausage. This year, we invite everyone to join us in the Social Hall on February 21st at 6:30 pm for a traditional Fat Tuesday supper. There's no cost but we welcome donations so we can do it again next year! Can't wait to see you there!

Pastor Taylor

Ash Wednesday is February 14th

Ash Wednesday is February 14th. We will have an Ash Wednesday service at 7:00PM in our sanctuary.

Soup or Salad Suppers This Year



Lent begins in February, and we're so excited to invite everyone to participate in Soup or Salad Suppers at 6:30M in the Social Hall and the Lenten Service to follow at 7:00PM in the Sanctuary. Last year we saw more and more delicious salads arriving at the potluck. Last year we saw more and more deli-They proved very popular especially as the weather warmed up. We decided to

add salad to the name of the event since some folks do not care to eat soup and may like to come and bring a salad to share this year.

The dinners are supposed to be light so we keep it a simple soup or salad potluck style every Wednesday in Lent, starting on February 21st. We will gather for a warm bowl of soup or a crisp bowl of salad at 6:30PM in the Social Hall. If you're interested in bringing soup or salad,

13-Melissa Tarlton

14-Tomas Perez

20-Elijah Terrones

22-Ellen Vike

27-Rich Kahn

28-John Reynolds

29- Pastor Taylor Stempniak

Wedding Anniversaries

13-Betty Moore & Bruce McElhoe (14)

22-Brad & Ericka Gardner (27)

6-Tommy William Tarlton, Jr **In Telebration**

Members

Baptismal Birthdays

4-Mike Nielsen

9-Robert Hollenbeck

10-Dan Lindsev

11-Margaret Raven

14-Marie Salwasser

18- Peter Gutierrez

19- Ellen Nielsen

26-Jon Marthedal

News Notes

Milestone Birthdays this month, Ellen Vike turns 85 on the 22nd and John Reynolds turns 80 on the 28th! Our very special Pastor Taylor has a very special 7th Birthdate this year! She was born on February 29th! This is leap year, it's her 7th actual birthdate! Join us for a great celebration on Thursday, February 29th in the social hall for a dinner featuring some of her favorite foods! Ribs, Mac and Cheese and more!

Music Notes

It's time to prepare special music for Lent and Easter. Please watch the bulletin for dates regarding practice for Easter Sunday. It would also be nice to have special music for Lent during worship. Let me know if you would like to be apart of that, also.

Singing His Praises, Fran Hansen

Thank You Notes

Dear Immanuel Thanks to all of you at Immanuel for the generous gift I recently received. I am ok. I am not walking anymore. I still do my own transfers to and from my power wheelchair. I have help with shower transfers. I am not talking any more because no one can understand me. But I use a white board and app on my phone to communicate. God is faithful and he is good.

Thank you again all of you for your prayers and support. Jan Kersgaard

Thank You Immanuel Council

Immanuel Lutheran Church would like to thank our outgoing council members for their service: Carol Bennetts, Gina Cogan and Allys Kahn. Thank you for sharing your time and talents serving on the Church Council for two terms.

Fellowship Lunch in January!

The Immanuel Fellowship Luncheon was great fun on January 28th, The crowd enjoyed a magnificent feast! The crew hopes to make the Old Fashion Danish Smorgasbord an annual event in January. Everyone enjoyed Danish Sausage, meatballs, and all the trimmings, including homemade Danish cookies and Rod Grod. We were sorry to miss a few



who truly wanted to come. Please mark your calendars for the 4th Thursday of each month for lunch at the church in the Social Hall at noon. Please invite your friends.

Join the Fellowship crew on February 22nd for lunch and bring your friends. All you have to do is sign up so we know to expect you and your friends. Since February will be during lent, we will serve a bit lighter fare but it will be delicious and the company will be wonderful. The most important way you can help is to invite your friends and sign up to come. We do this because we love you! Sign up on the gold bulletin board. Talk to Gina Cogan or Ericka Gardner after church on Sundays if you would like to help with this ministry.



please sign up on the church bulletin board for which Wednesday you'd like to contribute. There is also a dessert column, if you would like to bring a dessert to share sign up there too. Please bring your food portion sized to serve at least 10 so we know how much food to expect. We want to have enough for 60 people each week.

Remember the old Work Circles? We use to divide the church up and have groups of folks work together to set up and clean up before and after events. Each work circle would have one night during Lent to commit to set up and clean up. The other weeks they were free to just come. Well, we abandoned those work circles after the pandemic shut down. We have had a request to bring back the Circles since it was so much fun to get to know different folks from church while you were setting up and cleaning up after the events. This also helps keep the same people from helping all the time. I love the verse from Proverbs 11:25 it says: *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed*.

This year why don't we give the circles another try? Each group is labeled Circle A B C D or E. Each circle will be a group of randomly selected folks to work together to set up and clean up for church events. Each event that the church has will be assigned on a rotating basis. When you receive your 2024 directory check the back pages and find your name under one of the Circles. Then check the bulletin for your circle's turn to set up and clean up at the church event.

Work circles are not asked specifically to bring food. There are sign up sheets for that. The circles are just for set up and clean up this year. The food will continue as a potluck and sign ups are nice so we don't have 10 pots of the same soup or salad. For setting up you will be asked to arrive at 6:00PM, wipe down about 5 round tables and the buffet table, set out the bowls, cups, spoons and napkins. When folks are seated, deliver water pitchers to the tables. At the end of worship, the assigned circle will gather back in the social hall and clear tables and wash dishes.

Ah, this will never work you say, I don't drive at night and can't come to night events. That's okay, if you can't find a friend who does drive at night to bring you, please don't worry. We will be sure the set up and clean up gets done. There are always those who just love to clean. Please try to come. You would be surprised how many people would love to come to church if they were asked to bring you, they might love to help too. It is so much fun to gather together in the name of the Lord and share the opportunity to help others. It's fun, brings joy, and The "Holden Evening Prayer" is a beautiful song to sing, we sing it as round during the Lenten services each Wednesday night during Lent.

Easter is coming.







Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
New Church Directories will be printed for Immanuel early this month. If your contact information has changed, please call or email the church office as soon as possible! Thank you Blood Donors! The next Russ Dunbar Memorial Blood Drive will be on Palm Sunday, March 24th!				1 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in So- cial Hall	2 12:00PM Easton Food Distribution	3 9:30AM Central Pacific Mission District Annual Meeting in San Jose
4 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	5 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	6 9:00AM Women's Bible Study on Exodus in Library	7 FCA Lunch	8 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in Social Hall	9	10
11 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion congregational prayer Last day to sign up for Ummata! 11:30AM Fellowship	12 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	13 9:00AM Women's Bible Study on Exodus in Library 6:30PM Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner	7:00PM Ash Wednesday Service FCA Lunch Valentines Day	15 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in So- cial Hall	16	17
18 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	19 President's Day 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	20 9:00AM Women's Bible Study on Exodus in Library 6:30PM Council Meeting Retreat	21 FCA Lunch March Chimes Articles Due 6:30PM Dinner 7:00PM Worship	22 6:00AM Men's Bible Study in Social Hall 12:00PM Fellowship Lunch	23	24
25 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	26 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	27 9:00AM Women's Bible Study on Exodus in Library	28 FCA Lunch 6:30PM Dinner 7:00PM Worship	29 6:0 0PM Pastor Taylor's Birthday Dinner!	March 1 12:00PM Easton Food Distribution	2 Social Hall Reserved Danish American Historical Society