

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
5955 South Elm Avenue
Fresno, California 93706

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Vice President: Kristi Hollenbeck
Council Secretary: Stacy Avedisian
Financial Secretary: Sharon Reynolds
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Deacons: Alex Gardner, John Jensen
Diane Laub, & Allyson Nielsen
Women's Ministry President:
Marcia Hollenbeck

Return Service Requested



The Immanuel Chimes April 2024

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
A Mission of the North American Lutheran Church

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Fresno (Easton), CA 93706
Church Telephone (559) 237-7909
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WORSHIP SCHEDULE SUNDAYS

9:30AM Sunday School for all ages in Grace Hall
10:30AM Worship & Communion in the Sanctuary

Service recorded live through Facebook
at Immanuel Lutheran Church Easton



Pastor's Page

The Mission of Stewardship

When Adam first opened his eyes in Eden, he didn't have a fig leaf to his name. Yet God had given him a voice, fingers, toes, and a smile fashioned after God's own grin. In the first days, the Lord invited Adam into a mission to take these gifts and use them to "work and keep" creation alongside God in the garden. We know Adam offered his voice, naming the beasts of the field and birds of heaven. We can imagine that he stooped to bury seeds in soft black dirt with bare hands. Maybe he saw his face reflected in a stream and recognized that he belonged to God—how could he not when their images were the same—and so did the water shining back at him, and the trees above him, and the deer beside him. If Adam realized in some small moment before the fall that all that he was and all he was surrounded with belonged to God, and if he set out with enthusiasm to care for it alongside our God, then Adam grasped the profound call of stewardship.

Many of us have more than fig leaves to our name. Even after we fell into sin, God never stopped being generous, taking time to stitch Adam and Eve clothes of fur to cover their shame before he sent them from the garden, and God has likewise blessed us. We are called to take stock of every part of our life and story, recognizing that God has given us all that we have and all that we are with love and with purpose. Our minds, bodies, voices, bank accounts, cars, homes, families, are gifts from God to be folded into his story. Our voices may be lifted in praise, our homes and hearts may be opened to those in need, and our resources may be dedicated to the building up of his kingdom.

To even be included in this mission is a mark of God's grace. What Adam realized too late is that its greatest barrier to this invitation is greed. He and Eve took the forbidden fruit in the garden because they wanted to use what was set aside for God alone for themselves instead. Sin entered into this world because in greed, Adam wrapped his hands tightly around what belonged to God. How often do we find ourselves wrapping our hands around what belongs to God and refusing to let go? That crafty old serpent still whispers that we should live for ourselves, keep what is in our possession or take what isn't ours. We don't have time for that. We don't want to give that up. We have already done enough or should want more.

Spring Ummata

Hello Immanuel,

We just finished our 2024 Spring Ummata and we had a blast! We had a delicious lunch, followed by a meaningful speaker, and then we worked on our blessings for the community. We packed food boxes for local families who are struggling, made cards to brighten up people's days, tied blankets for the local animal shelter, and made freezer meals to deliver to those in our life who are having a tough time.

I would like to give a special thanks to all those who helped make it a great event.

Cooks

Mike Moser
Laura Nielsen

Leaders

Mike Nielsen
Margaret Fletcher
Jackie Caglia
Marcia Hollenbeck

Speaker

Mike Nielsen

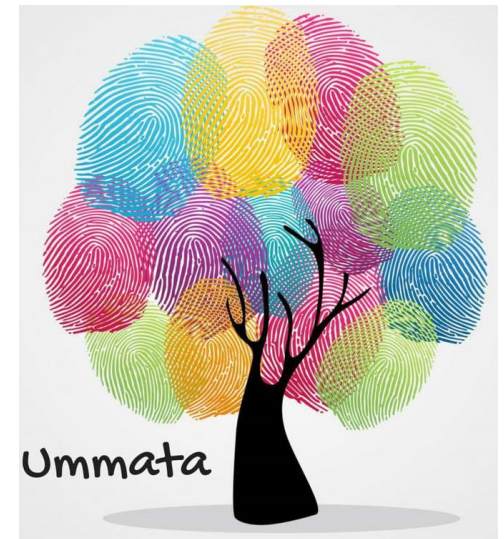
Ummata Committee

Kristi Hollenbeck
Marcia Hollenbeck
Jackie Caglia
Betty Moore
Mike Nielsen

All of you who attended

Thank you all for a great afternoon! Keep your eyes out for more information about our next Ummata event in the fall.

Kristi Hollenbeck



In Celebration of Our Members'

Birthdays

- 3-Linda Demant
- 5-Wayne Orum
- 7-Audra Salwasser
- 15-Judy Hooper
- 19-Bonnie Terkelsen
Bruce McElhoe
- 22-Carter Hollenbeck
- 23-Marilyn Nielsen
-Kay Pucheu
- 27-Kendall Anderson
Luke Stempniak
- 28-Cindy Tews
-Beverly Hansen

April
2024



Wedding Anniversaries

- 06-Ellen & Chris Harding (5)
- 13-Mike & Elaine Mehrten (28)
- 15-John & Sharon Reynolds (35)
- 25-Karl & Allyson Nielsen (9)
- 25-Christian & Karen Jensen (4)



Baptismal Birthdays

- 1-Karl Nielsen
- 3-Joan Ascencio
- 11-Sandy Britter
- 16-Kaylee Hollenbeck
- 19-John Jensen
- 27-Johni Phillips
-Judy Hooper

My
Baptism
day

But God has always been more generous than that. In the waters of baptism, he takes away the power of that old serpent and restores us to his mission. We are invited to work and keep all that belongs to God, walking alongside him as he cares for his creation, his children, and his church, just as our brother Adam first walked alongside him in the garden. Just as Adam first dedicated everything he had to the task, we are invited to do the same. God wants all of us to be a part of the story of stewardship—from the smallest infant whose baptism becomes a testimony to God's grace, to the widow whose two coins ensure that the church is able to buy Bibles for the next generation, to the man willing to blow leaves off the sidewalk on Sunday morning. Because God has trusted us with this, how can we not trust him with much more?

In this season of Easter, we are left standing beside our brother Adam, one of God's first stewards, who went about the task imperfectly, and though he was cast out of the garden we know he was never cast out of the mission. He cared for the land the Lord gave him all his life. We are left standing beside our sister Mary Magdalene, one of God's first disciples, who went about the task imperfectly, and though on this Easter morning the Gospel of Mark leaves us with the image of Mary's knees still shaking in fear we know she did not allow her own fear to have that last word. She declared the resurrection to her brothers in the upper room. We are called into this mission alongside the redeemed saints that have gone before us. We are those who are called to abandon greed that whispers that our desires for the gifts, and dedicate ourselves to the building up his Kingdom. We are those called to silence fear that whispers we are unworthy or unappreciated, too young or too old, and commit ourselves to the declaration of his Holy Gospel.

We walk into this mission with bold faith in our Lord. Because he has been generous with what he has given us and the mission he has entrusted to us, he will be generous with what he will do with us too. Being a disciple is being unafraid to dedicate all that we are and all that we have to working and taking care of God's world because we know how this ends. It ends with mountains breaking into song. It ends with the hungry filled with good things. It ends with the dead being raised to new life. It ends where it began-- where we began-- in the hands of our God.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Taylor



Benevolence Highlight of the Month

The NALC

Why do we give to our parent church? Often times congregations view giving to their church body as an optional membership fee, and it's one of the first benevolence line items that's cut, but many church bodies do important work with the benevolence they receive from the congregations that form them. The NALC is no different. The donations they receive are dedicated to the four core values of the church: Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded, and Congregationally Focused.

Part of our benevolence ensures that congregations of all sizes have access to local and national leaders who can offer them support no matter where they are in the life of the church—whether they're looking for a pastor, dealing with conflict, or seeking to revitalize the life of the church. All they have to do is ask. In addition, by supporting our church body, we continue to support missions like NALC Disaster Relief, Pastor Brad Hales' training, Teresa Peterson's training for Youth and Family's ministry, congregational renewal workshop, and the work of foreign and domestic missionaries. There are grants made available for mission plants and the growth of smaller congregations. Our church body offers training regularly to clergy and lay people—such as intentional interim training, suicide prevention training, and continuing education in Biblical studies. I'm continually grateful for the ways the NALC creates, shares, and invests its resources back into congregations, and I encourage you to explore the NALC's website to discover resources you may benefit from as well.

February 2024

Dear Immanuel Lutheran Church,

Peace and greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Paul wrote these words long ago, and they still apply to our lives today: "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us." (2 Cor 9:10-11)

Young Life Information Meeting

These are notes compiled from the March 17th meeting with Young Life Director, Spencer Boelter by Janet Flores, a member of Easton Presbyterian church. The meeting was encouraging and exciting. Check you April Bulletins for the next meeting about the possibility of bringing Young Life to the Easton community and how we can help.

Many of today's teens don't know even the most basic stories of our faith. Young Life is giving this generation *the choice* to know Jesus. Like a 3 legged stool which can't stand without all 3 upholding it, 3 legs are needed for Young Life to function:

1. The Start Up Team- 6 to 10 trained people comprise the Governing Board. They can be any age, working or retired, but they all care about kids. The start up Team meets every few weeks; approximately a 5 hour a month commitment. The Team decides how much money they need to raise and how they will raise funds. Some Young Life groups are lead by volunteers; church members & teachers. In that case, the funding needs are for sending kids to camp. Some groups have full time staff and an intern; that arrangement requires approximately \$75,000 year

2. Leaders- 3 to 8 people. These are the people who go on campus and have relationships with kids. They are the people present at meetings and events and would be the folks going to where the kids are; football games etc. Leaders are from 20 years old to 90. They also go to camp. Young Life doesn't *send* kids to camp, they *take* kids to camp.

3. Red Hot Vision Carrier- the person who says "I'm going to make this happen" This is the local team leader volunteer who might eventually be on staff or who might hand it off to a YL staff leader at the right time.



The goal is meeting kids where they are at, caring, loving and being a friend. A necessary part in order to reach our demographic, is for St. Jude's to be involved with us in Young Life. Pope Francis supports and has encouraged participation. Young Life is an ecumenical mission that seeks to inspire kids to become involved in their own church.

The promise of Young Life is not a church full of kids but young people following Jesus. Eventually, youth will come to church with the leaders. The greater effects might be seen years later.

God responds to us showing up with the heart of Christ.

Sponsor Needed for Ukrainian Couple

Many of you have met Anatolii and Kate Yureskul who arrived from Odessa, Ukraine, on February 5. They were able to come here through a program called 'Uniting4Ukraine' which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Immigration and offers qualified Ukrainians Humanitarian Parole in America. Qualified Ukrainians need a U.S. citizen to fill out an online application to be a sponsor and a sponsor is required for participation in the program. It does not cost money to become a sponsor.

Kate's brother, Dmitry, and his wife, Anna pictured in the photos, would like to participate in this program. Anna is currently in Odessa where there has been bombing and shelling daily since March 2 with many deaths, including children. They would like to come to California where Anatolii and Kate will help them. Dmitry (a mechanic) and Anna will have money with them to get settled in our area and they will be qualified (and eager) to work just a few weeks after arriving. All that is needed is a sponsor. If you feel God would lead you to help in this way, please contact me at 559-240-8818. Thanks!



Laurel Jacobsen



We praise God for you and your faithful support of the work and ministry of the North American Lutheran Church. Your generosity and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, the NALC, continues to ensure the strength of our denomination in the future.

Here are some of the exciting things to which your generosity helped support in 2023:

We are now 495 congregations strong with new parishes joining each month.

We celebrated eight ordinations and three more scheduled for 2024 already, including the very first ordination of a deacon, Rev. Deacon James Clapper.

The 2023 Mission Convocation in Oklahoma City, OK in August was a great success. Members of the Global Forum came from around the world to be with us that week, and Bishop Selbo was reelected as our bishop for four more years.

We engaged in mission workshops which energized delegates who were in attendance. A Youth and Family Faith Formation Festival was also held and attended by more than 100 participants.

Enrollment at our North American Lutheran Seminary continues to increase each semester which is a direct result of the work of our Director of Vocation and Discernment, Rev. Jeff Morlock.

Rev. Brad Hales led more than 15 workshops of renewal and aging around the church, including multiple workshops done for Mission Districts.

These are just a few highlights of all that has been happening in the NALC over the past year. So much more could be added about disaster response, mission starts, the 2020 Vision Initiative, the new continental office, and more, but the point is that the NALC is growing and thriving. Our churches are outposts for discipleship and they are digging deeper into the big questions of "How do we do excellent ministry in our context?" and "Who needs to hear about Jesus?"

Our prayer is that God will continue to bless you in every way in 2024, and that you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will be strengthened and renewed in the service to which HE has called you!



In the Love of Jesus Christ,
Mike Johnson
NALC Treasurer

Journey

The subtitle: Abelskivers for the Soul, because you know I don't like soup, including chicken.

One of my granddaughters got the nickname Baby Girl early on in her life. I love all of my grandkids totally. But, Baby Girl and I have a special bond. Again no disrespect to the other grandkids. They are all very special in their own way. Baby Girl's gift to me is her joy of life. A good ninety-five percent of the time she is happy to the point of just pure joy. She's human, and as such does have a moment here and there where that joy is perhaps a little less evident. She can spontaneously break into a dance; in the old days we'd call it a jig. She hops around flaying her arms about. It's a free form expression of the happiness she feels inside. It's uninhibited and free for all to join in her happiness. When she senses that you are maybe a little less than jubilant, she comes over and babbles something and laughs and grins from ear to ear waiting for you to lift out of whatever funk you may be in. Again, I love all of my grandkids, but Baby Girl has the gift of joy. Why do I tell you that here? Because her bestefa (grandfather) knows that that joy has a source, our God Almighty. I hope that life doesn't grind the edge off of that joy.

I believe we were created to be joy filled. Created by God's own hand to live in Eden. Eden was filled with everything that we could possibly want, including joy. But then along came Satan. His goal was to knock that joy right out of us. I don't like Satan at all! He does mean things to take our joy away. When we as mother and father, husband and wife, son and daughters just as a human, put our self-interests above anyone else, especially a child or spouse or parent then Satan smiles. He really smiles when we lessen the joy of someone else.

To be able to have that Baby Girl joy would just be amazing. To be able to dance no matter who is looking. When we say, I love Jesus, and then wonder who may have heard us. To be able to do things for others and not worry someone else may think we are goody two shoes. To lift our hands in worship and not feel self-conscious. To sing loud even if it's out of key. That's the joy we were created to exude. To allow ourselves to feel happy even in grief.

Look there's plenty of things in this world that need our sober attention; making health decisions, making financial decisions, making living decisions. There are just things that need serious thought. Don't let those things get in the way of experiencing joy, Baby Girl joy, when the time is right.

Immanuel's Church Library

Our church library is decorated for the eight Sundays in Easter! That's right the church celebrates Easter for 8 Sundays. Hop on into Immanuel's library and choose a great book, fiction or non-fiction, or books to help improve your health and books to help improve your soul. If you would like to take a break from scrolling this Spring, find a book in our church library. Thank you, Carol Bennetts for keeping the library, organized and decorated cute for every season. Thank you Carol, for showcasing different books each season. There are books for all ages. Save your online spending and borrow a book to read! Simply sign your name on the clipboard when you take it out and cross your name off when you bring it back.

Russ Dunbar Memorial Blood Drives in 2024

9:00AM-12:00PM

May 19th

October 13th,

August 11th,

December 8th

**Thank you to the seven donors on
Palm Sunday, March 24th! Twenty-one people will be helped with much needed blood!**

Family Camp 2024

Sign up now for Family Camp **June 7th-**

14th. Immanuel has reserved Logger's Flat Group Campground near Hume Lake, the perfect destination vacation. Our reservation starts Friday, June 7th at 2:00pm through Friday, June 14th at noon. The whole week gives you opportunities to come when you can and leave when you must. Bring your whole family! It's perfectly fine to invite your friends too!

It's a great way to introduce friends to Immanuel. Each group of campers provides their own food and shelter. Usually, dinners are enjoyed together with a side dish potluck and each person/family brings their own table setting, drinks and main dish. Check your calendars and plan your vacation!



Prayers for our Church Family & Friends

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, Caanan Campbell, Joey Brewer, Henry Clark, Ryan Freitas, Michael Hansen, Leah Linger, & Matthew Tigchelaar.

Those unable to travel about: Gail Hansen, Paul Pedersen, Christie Pettitt & Bonnie Terkelsen.

Those in need of pain relief & healing: Bobbie Beshears, Sandy Britter, Ed Bordin, Emily, Gaye Cissel, Janice Cox, Steve Fletcher, Kristen Gibson, Ken Goff, Liz Harrison, Jan Kersgaard, Paul Jones, Donna Kennedy, Carol Martin, Randy McFarland, Marcus Miranda, Velia Miranda, Joann Ortega, Gloria Payne, John Pectorich, Larry Pickens, Patti Price, David Stidham, Pastor Amy Schifren, Rebecca Stempniak, & Keitt Wilson.

For people dealing with loneliness and depression. For those battling the illness and the health care providers tending to those in need.

News Notes

Birthday greetings to **WAYNE ORUM** on his 77th April 5th; to **JUDY HOOPER** on her 92nd birthday April 15th; to **BONNIE TERKELSEN** on her 97th birthday April 19th; to **BRUCE MCELHOE** on his 88th birthday April 20th, **MARILYN NIELSEN** on her 86th birthday on the 23rd.

It's our turn! Immanuel is serving FCA lunch on Wednesdays through April 24th. Chocolate Chip cookies and volunteers are needed to help each Wednesday. Check you bulletin for updates.

Fellowship Luncheons continue on the 4th Thursday of every month. If you would like to attend please sign up on the Gold Bulletin Board for each month. These are great opportunities to invite your friends for fellowship time. This is a ministry provided by those who can take time to serve those who could use a little break in the monotony. If you need one of those breaks, use this time to invite a friend or two that would love companionship and friendship and a place to go to get out of the house for a bit. Invite them over to meet new friends, enjoy a meal and hear a little bit about Jesus.

We had a festive St. Patrick's Day after church. Green treats all! John Reynolds wore his favorite kilt. Thank you to the Bennetts and Reynolds Families for the special fellowship time on St. Patrick's Day!



So here is what I suggest. Like any behavior it takes time to develop it. It took time to repress that joy, it'll take time to free it again. Let's work on it together. Smile when you can. Laugh when something strikes you funny. Hug someone for no good reason at all. Dance when you are the only one who can hear the music. Have Baby Girl moments.

I see a Jesus who enjoyed life, first with his parents and siblings and then with his disciples. I'll bet Jesus and the apostles had some inside jokes that they shared. I'll bet Jesus danced at the wedding in Cana. I see laughter and singing and smiles in heaven. Otherwise, why would we want to go there. Being with Jesus should make us filled to overflowing with joy. Thank you Baby Girl for bring unabashed joy into my life.

Keep on dancing!
Love you guys, John.

We don't know exactly where it came from but it's been around a long, long time.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, then your life will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you sang the lyrics and didn't just read them, raise your hand.

Prayer Focus for the Week

Week of 4-1-2024. Focus on the joys of struggles. James 1:2,3 NIV. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Week of 4-8-2024. Focus on seeking the fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 5: 22,23 NIV. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such there is no law.

Week of 4-15-2024. Focus on the joy that is within us. John 15: 11 NIV. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Week of 4-22-2024. Focus on prayers. Romans 12:12 NIV. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	2	3 12:25PM Immanuel Serves FCA Lunch	4 6:00AM Men's Bible Study Breakfast in Social Hall	5 12:00PM Easton Food Distribution	6 Social Hall Reserved
7 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	5 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	9 9:00AM Women's Bible Study in church Library	10 12:25PM Immanuel Serves FCA Lunch	11 6:00AM Men's Bible Study Breakfast in Social Hall	12	13 Social Hall Reserved
14 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	15 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	16 9:00AM Women's Bible Study in church Library 6:30PM Church Council Meeting	17 12:25PM Immanuel Serves FCA Lunch	18 6:00AM Men's Bible Study Breakfast in Social Hall	19	20 Social Hall Reserved
21 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	22 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	23 9:00AM Women's Bible Study in church Library	24 12:25PM Immanuel Serves FCA Lunch	25 6:00AM Men's Bible Study Breakfast in Social Hall 12:00PM Fellowship Lunch in Social Hall	26	27
28 9:30AM Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship	29 7:00PM NA in Grace Hall	30 9:00AM Women's Bible Study in church Library	May 1 12:25PM FCA Lunch	2 6:00AM Men's Bible Study Breakfast in Social Hall	3 9 12:00PM Easton Food Distribution	4