

VOICE OF EMMANUEL

SEEDS OF HOPE!



Reflections from Sabbatical

I'm a processor. Perhaps to a fault. While I can and do make some decisions that call for quick decisions, I much prefer to ponder, pray, simmer all possible perspectives in the pot—especially those not my own, getting in touch with feelings, and praying that God would help me and guide me to see and respond to the situation in the most Christlike way possible. I'm also an overachiever, which can default me to works righteousness even while knowing its futility. The dilemma is the clash between the simultaneous need to process yet pressing ahead to achieve. Which brings me to the why of sabbatical, for me.

You've lived and are living—with me—many of the challenges of it the past few years, what with pandemic, economic woes, racial and gender and orientation and reproductive rights oppression, deep political division, wars, refugees and migrants, and climate change, not to mention church culture decline and unsettledness. In my role as bishop, I'm reminded of what Agent K tells Agent J in the original *Men in Black* movie about not discharging his weapon in public. K says sharply, "The only reason these people go along with their happy little lives is because they Do. Not. Know. About it." Some of what I know and have seen within the church has been not only concerning but sometimes heartbreaking. Especially when someone like me presses on to the next crisis without processing.

I know our congregations and clergy have struggled in ways we hadn't seen even five years ago. The relativization of truth, and poor behavior by and toward clergy precipitated by anxiety. How can we be motivated and lead by Gospel love rather than fear? How can there even BE a *we* (or a synod), when the order of the day *my* opinion, *my* perspective, *my* affiliation based on what *I* want to hear, which might be formed at its core by political parties and platforms and personal advantage with a Gospel veneer rather than a Gospel foundation with a zeal for justice that flows from it for ALL people?

I am immensely grateful to our synod staff and synod council who, at last fall's council meeting, urged me to take the sabbatical that I missed entirely in 2015 because I was elected bishop and then missed again in 2020 because of the pandemic. I'm even more of an advocate for a sabbatical for clergy in particular because of how clarifying and renewing the gift of these past three months has been for me. I hope your congregation will consider it for your clergy, and our office may be able to help if you'd like to talk about the possibility—even of a mini-sabbatical of six weeks. Let me share a bit of what mine was like:

1. *Rested and visited with family, including grandbabies, but also some cousins I rarely see. (75%)*
2. *Processed/pondered back-burner grief with a counselor/therapist. Several sessions. So glad I could and did. It was a blessing to take time to process with someone from outside the system.*
3. *Represented ELCA Region 9 in the Border Immersion with bishops from the other regions. (5 days) We spent the time with Border Servant Corps in Texas and New Mexico. We met with a wide array of folks about the immigration and border challenges, and obviously there are no easy answers. One thing the wide variety of perspectives agreed on was getting work permits for those who cross the border legally seeking asylum. It can take years before their asylum cases are heard in immigration court, and it benefits everyone if they can legally go to work sooner than the average time of 11 months it's been taking to get such permits. Not only does it provide those families with sustenance and income, but it also provides much-needed labor for which there frankly are not enough citizens currently to fulfill, particularly in agriculture.*

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Volume 5, Issue 11
MARCH 13, 2024

Voice of Emmanuel Seeds of Hope!

ELC Seeds of Hope

is published weekly to
keep members and
friends together during
there time of physical
distancing!

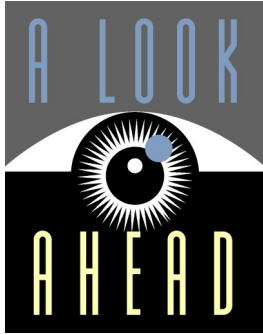
**Information
submitted for
publication must
be received by
Tuesday of Each
week.**

**e-mail to
lifewithemmanuel
@gmail.com**

Mission Statement:

As the body of Christ,
fed and nourished
through worship, we
are called to serve all
people, through the use
of our gifts to proclaim
God's justice, mercy
and love.

*Our Vision: Striving to
Thrive with Vitality!*



March 17

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

4. *Started midway through sabbatical on a 9-week, 5-hour/week course toward an Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising. I hope to help the synod and agencies/institutions with this both in my remaining time as bishop and perhaps in my retirement in some way.*
5. *Went with Wendy to Berlin, Myrtle Beach, and Charleston for relaxing and fun.*

I returned to work when I flew to ELCA Conference of Bishops on February 27 and, with Monday, March 4, as my day off (which I’m going to do a better job of honoring moving forward), my first day back in the office will be March 5, the day you receive this e-news. Again, I am grateful for the time away. I can personally attest that it can mean the difference between either limping along/bad attitude/quitting and returning energized, renewed, and committed! For now, I’m grateful to be your bishop and ready to hit the ground running. I’ve got lots of catching up to do, so I beg your patience if I don’t get back to you right away this month.

Walking with you,

Jim

NC Synod Bishop



Shirley Barnes, Polly Bryant, Peggy Buckner, Kathy Cromer, Laura Cromer, Cecelia Driscoll, James Gantt, Pat Hance, Tonya Lawson, Suzette James, Glenn Mosteller, Trudy Perkins, Jim Sain, Paula Turner, Joan Warren, Rick Norine and family (cousin of Barbara O’Neill), Evelyn Cochrane (neighbor of Susan McConnell), Drew Milholland (Pastor Mike), Jane Smith (mother of Kathy Cromer), the Family of April Wellman (Susan Boyd), Rosa Guerra (Susan Boyd), Rob Gregor (Susan Boyd), Anita Cable (mother in law Ashley Peaslee), Charles Ferguson (son-in-law Judy Blanc), Bill Gibbs Jr. (Amy Brown), Ken Smith (brother of Kathy Cromer), J.L. Morris (Susan Boyd), Jay Puckett (Carol Wise), Lenard McIlveen (brother of Marianne Doehling), Vinnie Viscarello (son-in-law Dot Swart), Quaid Mincey (Jennifer Huskey), Robert ‘Chip’ Jackson (Linda Goodson), Bill Lewis (father of Pastor Judy), Roger Ballard (Doris Little), Pastor Mark Redding (Kirk Herbertson), John and Alice Ferguson (Larry Blanc)



After examining the miserly tips left by a church group, the waitress was not pleased.

Looking toward my table, she grumbled, "These people come in with the Ten Commandments and a ten-dollar bill, and they don't break any of them!"



?? ? Bible Quiz ? ? ?

Which of the following hymns were written by Thomas A. Dorsey

1. Old Rugged Cross
2. There is a Balm in Gilead
3. There Will Be Peace in the Valley
4. Were You There
5. Just a Closer Walk with Thee



Answer: 3.



Battlegrounds clothes closet needs....

Lots of Hangers

Plastic bins

Hanging racks (several they have are broken) Plastic drawers and /or crates

They actually have plenty of clothes, coats, zip jackets, pull overs, hats/gloves, socks/underwear, and jeans.

They really just need help with available hanging racks, bins, and hangers to be able to put these items out.

If you have any of the above items you would like to donate, please either take by the church office or contact me Julie Leonhardt or Susan McConnell and we will get them from you.

Thank you for your help and support!!!

Ministry in Action - *March*

	March 17	March 24 Palm Sunday	March 28 Maundy Thursday	March 29 Good Friday
Greeters	Heather Lackey Jan Huitt	Julie Leonhardt Suzanne Rhyne	Shannon Mitchem Makenzie Mitchem	Jody Rhyne Ann Rhyne
Lector	David Bynum	Ben Robinson	Stephen Lounsbury	Randy Zimtbaum
Communion Asst.	Jennifer Huskey	Jennifer Little	Ben Robinson	John Cromer
Acolyte	Hannah Brooks	Mary Ellen Bridges	Julie Leonhardt	Jennifer Huskey
Crucifer	Lent	Matthew Heavner	Lent	Lent
Altar Flowers	Lent	Palm Sunday	Lent	Lent

Monthly Duties *March 2024*

Councilperson	Emily Robinson			
Altar Guild	Linda Rice	Sue Zimtbaum		
Ushers	Leon Harmon (Captain)	Stephen Lounsbury Dan James	Ben Robinson Rudy Rudisill	

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Faith5 Corner by Bob Lake

Fourth Sunday in Lent



Share: Share your highs and lows

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Talk: Slowly reflect on the reading. Jeremiah is an important Old Testament prophet for Christians. Why do you think that this Old Testament text is part of the readings for Lent? Jeremiah's message was both about punishing people for their disobedience to God and about what God will do in the future to restore the people to him. What do you think about Jeremiah's foretelling of a new covenant? Do you think this puzzled his listeners? Are we blessed because we know all about Jesus Christ and God's New Covenant with us? Are we blessed because Jesus taught us the new law? Are we blessed that we have in our hearts the new law?

Pray: Thank you, God for restoring your people to you. Thank you for the new covenant that you have made with us. Thank you, Jesus for teaching us the new law that we can keep in our hearts.

Bless: "_____, for you have witnessed to the new covenant that God has given us."



I WILL BE
THEIR GOD,
 AND THEY SHALL BE
MY PEOPLE



JEREMIAH 31:33



Every night in every home



www.faitH5.org





**Emmanuel
Lutheran Church**
Worshipping. Loving. Serving.

*In the heart of fear and pain, God plants the seed of our joy.
Join us on Wednesdays throughout Lent for Holden Evening prayer
and a devotional led by Pastor Judy.
Worship begins at 6:30pm each week in Lent in the chapel.*

*March 13
March 20*

*Transformative Joy
Vocational Joy*

2024 Community Lenten Services FUMC Fellowship Hall
12:00 pm – lunch (cost of meal: \$6.00) Worship 12:30 – 1:00 pm

SPEAKER SCHEDULE:

March 13 Rev. Elizabeth Tester – St. Luke's Episcopal Church

March 20 Rev. Judy Drysdale – Emmanuel Lutheran Church

We hope you will join us for this time of reflection and devotion during the Season of Lent.

***Decorating for Easter
Saturday, March 30th at 10 AM***



We need anyone with ivy to please bring it to the church that morning so we can decorate the cross in the Nave where the congregation brings flowers from home to put in it on Easter morning.

Any questions, please contact Cathy Lounsbury at 704-530-4009.



Emmanuel Scholarships

Again this year a scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school student who is a member of Emmanuel regardless of the high school from which they are graduating

This year two scholarships will be awarded. One Harry Costner/Emmanuel Scholarship for a graduating senior at Lincolnton High School. This is open to both members and non-members of Emmanuel. The second scholarship is the Emmanuel Scholarship and open only to graduating seniors who are member of Emmanuel regardless of the high school they attend.

The total value of each scholarship is \$4,000.00. It is paid out at \$500.00 each semester that the student is enrolled in an institution of higher education for eight semesters or four years.

Applications for the Emmanuel Scholarship can be picked up in the church office and must be returned to church office on or before **April 1, 2024.** Applications for the Harry Costner/Emmanuel Scholarship are available in the Guidance Counselor's office at Lincolnton High School.

These scholarships are funded by the Scholarship Fund within Emmanuel's Mission Endowment.



Easter OFFERING

The Special Easter Offering has been designated to go to The Good Neighbor Shop. Donations can be made using the Special Easter Envelope or by using an envelope in the pew and writing The Good Neighbor Shop Special Easter offering on it.

The Good Neighbor Shop serves the Lincolnton Community with compassion and affordability. It provides affordable clothing, household items and more to individuals and families facing financial challenges. Proceeds from sales support local charities and programs.

***Church Clean Up Day will be on
Saturday, March 23 for Holy Week.***

Meet at North Wing at 10 AM.

*Lend a
helping
hand*



This should not take long, many hands make light work.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Polly Bryant	3/01
Billy Mitchem	3/02
Nancy Cable	3/03
Pam Huskey	3/05
Jody Rhyne	3/05
Dot Wise	3/07
Caleb Link	3/08
Todd Lanier	3/11
Les Cloninger	3/13
Quinlyn Rader	3/14
Rudy Rudisill	3/20
Barbara Carpenter	3/21
Madison Lanier	3/23
Laurie Heavner	3/25
Sue Zimtbaum	3/25
Glenn Mosteller	3/26
Trudy Perkins	3/26
Emily Lawson	3/28
John Cromer	3/29
Luke Deal	3/29
Jason Harpe	3/31
Jadon Rhyne	3/31



Seeds of Hope

A PUBLICATION OF
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*Newsletter Content
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WELCA
North Carolina Synod*

Sunday worship, study and
fellowship opportunities

Sunday School 9 AM Parlor
Traditional Worship Service
10:00 am in the Sanctuary

Service is live streamed on
Facebook at 10 am each Sunday
and will be posted to YouTube.