

# VOICE OF EMMANUEL SEEDS OF HOPE!



North Carolina Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## God First

“This Is My Song” (ELW 887), a poem by Lloyd Stone set to the tune *Finlandia* by Sibelius, was one of my dad’s favorite hymns. In this time of emerging Christian nationalism and resurging American exceptionalism, it’s quickly becoming one of mine. The tune itself is beautiful, but the words beckon us to remember that while patriotism, love of country, is a good and noble thing, it also can become quite idolatrous. ([Listen here.](#)) As we give thanks this 4th of July week as Americans for the freedoms so hard-won and constantly challenged, we as Christians must come to terms with the truth that “America First” is a breach of the first commandment. God is first—and not just any God. We’re talking about the God most fully revealed to us in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The children’s song got it right. “Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world.”

So-called “Christian” Nationalism carries with it a certain set of assumptions as to what and who are God’s chosen favorites. It also thus requires clearly defining what and who are not. Its weapons are blame and hate and a thorough, drink-the-Kool-Aid conviction that God is on the side of people like me (in the dominant culture). I unknowingly visited a restaurant recently in our synod whose window treatments touted “Trump and Jesus 2024.” It would have been no more acceptable to me had it said “Biden and Jesus.” The same establishment handed out fake dollar bills as souvenirs with the head of Jesus in place of George Washington. And they sold Confederate flags. While all of this is within the right of the proprietor, the whole scene was more than disturbing to me when I considered the religious fervor with which the proprietor and presumably many customers pedaled their politics.

It’s been ingrained in people my age for a lifetime that Christianity somehow goes arm in arm with white American culture’s version of patriotism, from American flags right next to the altar to scouts receiving their “God and Country” awards, implying that the two are equal and inseparable. From Manifest Destiny and a shining city on a hill to making America great again, systemically thwarting the rights of women, minorities, refugees and immigrants, and more, Christian Nationalism always finds God on my side, rather than the other way around. It creates God in my image, rather than the other way around, and it seems always aimed at preserving privilege and status quo.

Continued page 2



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JULY 5, 2023

**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!

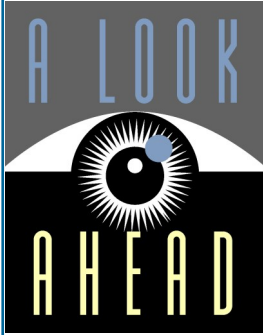
**Information  
submitted for  
publication must  
be received by  
Tuesday of Each  
week.**

**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!*



July 9

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

Someone said to me recently, "So you're saying I should be ashamed of being white and American and male?" "No," I replied. "At the same time, those traits do not make you better than, more favored than or superior to anyone else."

In biblical times, Jews hated the Samaritans and wanted to blame them for everything. Jesus used the Samaritan as the hero in the story. He reached out to and lifted up women, foreigners, lepers, the unclean, and not only included but embraced them. I have lived overseas. I am grateful and proud to be American. But from the very beginning, even in the covenant with Abraham, God promised that Israel would be blessed for one reason: to be a blessing to the nations. Perhaps America is called to be great. The biblical definition of greatness—the Jesus definition—is not lording over, privilege, and superiority. It is serving and loving. To be first is to be last. All people in all their wonderful nationality and diversity are precious children of God. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together. Or as in the vision of Revelation 7, at the end of all things, people of all nations gather around the lamb.

I love my country. And since God loves all the nations (John 3:16, *kosmos*), then so must we.

**Walking with you in freedom,**

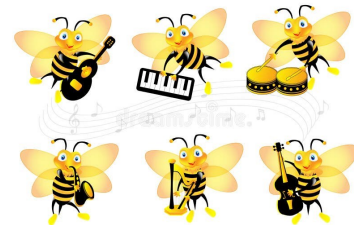
**NC Synod Bishop**



The music director became peeved when a buzzing insect distracted the choir members during practice. When it landed, he promptly squashed it.

"What is it?" a choir member asked.

The director grinned: "A bee-flat!"



### ?? ? Bible Quiz ? ??

St. Paul traveled to many cities in his missionary journeys. Which of the following cities did he NOT visit?

- a. Corinth
- b. Rome
- c. Athens
- d. Sparta
- e. Ephesus



Answer: d



We have re-scheduled the Homebound Training Class for

***Sunday, July 23 at 9 AM*** in the Chapel

If you would like to take communion to anyone who is not able to attend church, please join us for this informative group.

## Ministry in Action - July

	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
Greeters	Milton Rice Linda Rice	Heather Lackey Jan Huitt	Kenneth Pales Nancy Pales	Jim Williams Betsy Williams
Lector	Chuck Yoder	David Bynum	Jennifer Huskey	Ben Robinson
Crucifer	Matthew Heavner	Available	Nayshaun Holiday	Matthew Heavner
Acolyte	Quinlyn Cornwell	Hannah Brooks	Mary Ellen Bridges	Jennifer Little
Communion Asst	Cathy Lounsbury	John Cromer	Randy Zimtbbaum	Ruth Murphy
Altar Flowers	Available	Available	Available	John Lineberger

### Monthly Duties July 2023

Councilperson	Cathy Lounsbury			
Altar Guild	Susan Boyd	Cathy Lounsbury		
Ushers	Stephen Lounsbury (Captain)	Ben Robinson Jody Rhyne	Randy Zimtbbaum Keith Saine	

### Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

*Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.*

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] <sup>16</sup>“To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

<sup>17</sup>“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;  
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

<sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup>the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

## Faith5 Corner by Bob Lake

### Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

**Share:** Share your highs and lows



**Read:** Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

**Talk:** Slowly reflect on the reading. *In the text just before this text, Jesus had chided people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. Is Jesus implying that his message is meant for everybody? That God wants everybody to understand and believe? Paul made this point in Galatians 3:28 - "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." and in Colossians 3:11 - "In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" Were the common people the ones who were weary and carried heavy burdens? Is that true today? Was Jesus' message easier to follow than ancient Jewish law or Roman law? Does that continue to be true today?*

**Pray:** Thank you God for giving us Jesus who is gentle and humble. Thank you for a Savior in whom we can believe. Thank you for a message that we can understand and follow and in so doing will please You.

**Bless:** "\_\_\_\_\_, Jesus has given you rest for your soul."



Come to me,  
all who labor and  
are heavy laden,  
and I will  
give you rest.  
Matthew 11:28



Every night in every home



highs and lows



a Bible verse or story



about how the Bible  
reading might relate to  
your highs and lows



for one another's highs  
and lows



one another

[www.faith5.org](http://www.faith5.org)







Shirley Barnes, Polly Bryant, Kathy Cromer, Laura Cromer, Max Edwards, James Gantt, Suzette James, Betty King, Nancy McCoy, Gary and Susan McConnell, Trudy Perkins, Jim Sain, Paula Turner, Joan Warren, Pat Wilburn, Rick Norine and family (cousin of Barbara O'Neill), Evelyn Cochrane (neighbor of Susan McConnell), Barbara Stillwell (sister-in-law of Rusty Rhyne), Tommy London (father of Tonya Lawson), Sherri Beam (friend of Julie Leonhardt), Drew Milholland (Pastor Mike), Jane Smith (mother of Kathy Cromer), Larry Clark (John Lawson), Wayne Dodson (Rusty Rhyne's son David's father-in-law), Anna Lineberger (John Lineberger), Judy Bullard (John Lineberger's grandmother) April Wellman (Susan Boyd), Rosa Guerra (Susan Boyd), Rob Gregor (Susan Boyd), Anita Cable (Ashley Peaslee), Charles Ferguson (son-in-law Judy Blanc)

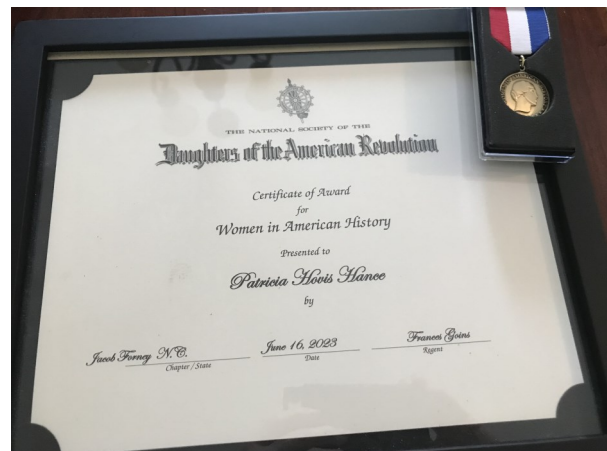
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Congratulations to Pat Hance!

She has received the "Women in American History" Award from the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This Award is only presented after being approved by State and National.





**\*\*\*\*Food pantry needs plastic bags\*\*\*\***

**SOUP KITCHEN COVERAGE IS NEEDED...**

It's a new year and we have a **calendar to fill**.

Please look at the open dates and call Mitzi at the ministry for details.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES IS ASKING FOR:**

- Women's summer clothes
- Blankets
- Men's shoes sizes 11 to 13
- Men's pants, jeans in waist size 32, length from 30, 32, 34. A majority of our homeless men wear these sizes. We currently have 0 in our closet. This is an ongoing need.
- Volunteer help in clothes closet

**A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR...**

Member Churches, we really need your help, especially on your churches packing dates. If you need to see the schedule, it is on our website <https://christianministryoflincolncounty.org/>

If you want to volunteer in the pantry, soup kitchen, clothing rooms, you do not have to wait for your church date, just come on down



EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
216 S Aspen St Lincolnton, NC 28092

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Randy Zimtbaum	7/06
Donnie Robinson	7/08
Todd Heavner	7/14
Jim Sain	7/14
Johnnie Gonzalez	7/16
Susan McConnell	7/16
Christopher Hoffman	7/18
Mary Rhodes	7/18
Zachary Zagorski	7/18
Andy Deal	7/19
Nayshaun Holiday	7/20
Joe Scronce	7/21
Rhonda Harrill	7/22
Robert Doehling	7/23
Denise Yoder	7/23
Williams O'Dell	7/25
Ashlyn Rhyne	7/25
Ashely Peaslee	7/27
Martin Eaddy	7/29
John Lineberger	7/29
Elizabeth Stone	7/31



Seeds of Hope

A PUBLICATION OF  
EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PHONE: 704-735-9033



*Newsletter Content  
Contributors  
Bob Lake  
Ben Robinson  
WELCA  
North Carolina Synod*

Sunday worship, study and  
fellowship opportunities

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.