

VOICE OF EMMANUEL

SEEDS OF HOPE!

Never Alone

Why? WHY? Anyone with a toddler knows how this question echoes—or anyone who practices science, philosophy, theology, politics, or just relationships in general.

Why implies purpose, cause and effect, and meaning. When people don't have answers, as you know, they make things up, sometimes with sincerely good intentions and sometimes to manipulate advantage. We can't ignore "Why?"

Theologically, the *why* question is the great dilemma of Christian faith itself, addressed in the book of Job, Paul's letter to the Romans, and Dostoevsky's epic novel, *The Brothers Karamozov*. We call it *theodicy*. It goes like this:

1. God is all-powerful, sovereign.
2. God is all-benevolent and loving.
3. Bad things, tragic things, unthinkable things, happen.

Philosophically, either God loves us infinitely but can't do anything to stop #3, or God is not all-loving and caring. God **could** change the situation, but God doesn't.

We think we must know. Why? It's why well-meaning people say frankly ridiculous and offensive things at the death of a child in defense of the God who ultimately has to make sense: "Everything happens for a reason." Or "God needed another little flower in the heavenly garden." Excuse me, but I have no use for such a God. And that's **not** the God revealed to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The fact is, siblings, that the deeper a crisis gets—even as our default at tragedy is always "Why?"—the less we need answers and the more we need presence. P-R-E-S-E-N-C-E. The less we need why and how and the more we need *Who*.

When a child cries out in the night with a terrible nightmare, a parent rushes in and pulls the child close. They don't launch into an explanation of why the dream isn't real. It **is** the child's reality in that moment. The parent doesn't explain **why** God for some larger purpose might have sent such a horrific dream. No, the loving parent simply and lovingly holds the child close, enters their trauma, rocks them, and says "It's okay, baby, Momma's here. Daddy's here. I am with you."

Our funeral liturgy has a beautifully honest prayer petition, "Help us in the midst of things we cannot understand, still to believe and trust in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." While answers are helpful in many contexts, they are **not** foundational to human meaning. That was the serpent's lie in the Garden. The forbidden tree was the tree of knowledge of all good and evil. Satan lied, "You'll know everything and then be like God."

Continued page 2



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**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!

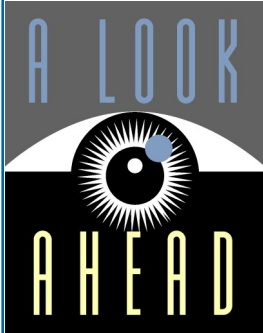
**Information
submitted for
publication must
be received by
Tuesday of Each
week.**

**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!*



September 10

Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.

God is clear, if not kind, with Job's eventual demand to know why suffering, with the underlying assumption that knowledge is ultimate power and control. God gets downright sarcastic. "Hey, Mr. Job, before I tell you, remind me...where were you when I scattered the stars and filled the oceans and raised up the mountains and set the universe in motion since you demand to know why?" In other words, it's mystery. Or as Isaiah puts it, "God's ways are higher than my ways."

While knowledge is a noble and necessary pursuit, it is not primary. Relationships are. Biblically and experientially speaking, I think we know down in our souls that relationships aren't just primary. They're everything. With God, with one another.

And Jesus comes to us not so much as the one with answers but to be for us, with us, God with skin on, to walk with us through the greatest joy and the deepest suffering, promising us that suffering will not, does not, have the last word. The worst thing is never the last thing. Our cruciform Jesus brings us a faith that hangs on to death and resurrection amid mystery, frustration, anger, emptiness, questions that receive at best a hollow echo in the void of answers as we see through a mirror dimly and yet echoes just as surely, "Nothing will separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Presence. "I am with you, until the end of the age." Never alone.

Even in the deepest darkness and emptiness and hopelessness, the God who in Christ enters fully into our deepest suffering in order both fully to know it and fully to overcome it comes to us with skin on, if not with all the answers, surely in presence. Pulls us close, rocks us, comforts us, reminding us, "It's okay. Daddy's here. Momma's with you. Nothing can separate us." Amen.

Walking with you,

Tim

This reflection is an adaptation of a devotion I was asked to lead at the Lenoir-Rhyne University Board of Trustees meeting two weeks ago in response to the unexpected death that week of one of our relatively young trustees, the vigil of our new LTSS (Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary) rector and dean with his wife at that time in the last stages of her 11-year journey with cancer, and last week's shooting and death of a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Bible Riddles:

What do we have that Adam never had? Ancestors

What do they call Pastors in Germany? German Shepherds

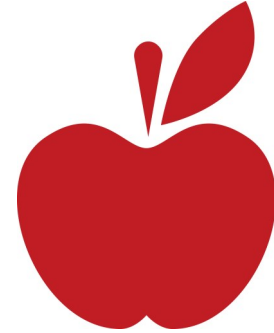
How long did Cain hate his brother? As long as he was Abel.

How do Angels greet each other? Halo, halo, halo.

Who was the first tennis player in the bible? Joseph, because he served in Pharaoh's court.

Did Eve ever have a date with Adam? Nope, just an apple.

Who was the greatest comedian in the bible? Samson, he brought the house down.



?? ? Bible Quiz ? ??

The Book of Revelation, Chapter, verse 9 states that it was written by John at Patmos. Where is Patmos?

1. A city in Asia Minor very near Ephesus
2. A mountain near Jerusalem
3. A Greek island in the Aegean Sea
4. A port city in Egypt
5. An island near Corinth



Answer: 3

Tuesday, September 12th



Meet us at lunch at Court Street Grill at noon next Tuesday after Quilting.

We will have good food and good fun. We have no agenda.

All are welcome! The men's table will be in the front and Pastor Bolick will be there.

Ministry in Action - September

	September 10	September 17	September 24	October 1
Greeters	James Gantt Margaret Christopher	Ben Robinson Emily Robinson	Rudy Rudisill Paulette Rudisill	Leon Harmon Elaine Harmon
Lector	Chuck Yoder	Jennifer Huskey	David Bynum	Ben Robinson
Crucifer	Mary Ellen Bridges	Jennifer Little	Jennifer Huskey	Jennifer Little
Acolyte	Hannah Brooks	Hannah Brooks	Mary Ellen Bridges	Quinlyn Cornwell
Communion Asst	David Bynum	Ben Robinson	John Cromer	Randy Zimtbaum
Altar Flowers	Available	Available	Steve & Cathy Lounsbury	Available

Monthly Duties September 2023

Councilperson	Shannon Mitchem			
Altar Guild	Cathy Lounsbury	Rhonda Thompson		
Ushers	Steve Lounsbury (Captain)	Rudy Rudisill Jody Rhyne	Randy Zimtbaum Ben Robinson	

Romans 13:8-14

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Faith5 Corner by Bob Lake

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Share: Share your highs and lows

Read: Romans 13:8-14

Talk: Slowly reflect on the reading. Paul sums up everything in life by quoting Jesus “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31) Think about everyday life as you know it. Do you find Paul naïve? Do you find Paul impractical? Do you think that the other people in the world keep this from happening? Think about the phrase “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” How do you interpret that phrase? How does a person do that? Finally, how do you feel when someone gives you neighborly love? I sometimes feel awkward when others tell me that they care for me. Do you feel that way sometimes? And if so, why?

Pray: Thank you Jesus for teaching us the law. Help us love God with all our heart. Help us love our neighbors as ourselves. You know that this is difficult for us at times. Give us the strength to do Your will.

Bless: “_____, Jesus has taught you the way to please God.



Come join us this ***Sunday, September 10th***

We will have a fellowship time before service
from 8:45 am until 9:45 am.

We have breakfast finger foods and
refreshments



Every night in every home



www.faith5.org





Shirley Barnes, Susan Boyd, Polly Bryant, Kathy Cromer, Laura Cromer, Max Edwards, James Gantt, Suzette James, Betty King, Nancy McCoy, 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), 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), Doug Norwood (Dara Jarrett), Bill Gibbs Jr. (Amy Brown), Bobbie Robinson (Kirk Herbertson), Ken Smith (brother of Kathy Cromer)



Carolyn Robinson
2/11/1938 - 9/01/2023

Services will be held Tuesday, September 19 at Calvary Baptist Church. Receiving is from 2 to 2:45. Services begin at 3 pm. Burial will follow at Hollybrook Cemetary.



Saturday, September 23

Pastor and Rita will provide hotdogs, buns, mustard, ketchup and paper products.

A sign up sheet is in the North Wing. Please let us know what you would be able to bring. Just suggestions, slaw, onions, chili, relish, drinks, ice, baked beans, chips, potato and macaroni salad, covered dish, deserts, etc.

Please RSV so we will have a good head count. If you sign up to bring something, you are on the list. Otherwise, please let the church office know by September 21. You may call at 704-735-9033 or e-mail at lifewithemmanuel@gmail.com

Pastor is located about 3 miles south just one mile of 321.

4393 Bolick Road, Lenoir, NC 28645



EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
216 S Aspen St Lincoln, NC 28092

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Adam Long	8/01
Tonya Lawson	8/11
David Wise	8/13
Heather Lackey	8/15
Colleen Lounsbury	8/15
Betty King	8/18
Jim Williams	8/18
Emerie Stinson	8/19
Larry Blanc	8/20
Allison Brown	8/25
Mindy Denton	8/25
Jennifer Little	8/26
Hayden Doehling	8/28
Wayne Little	8/29
Michael Hance	8/31



Seeds of Hope

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



Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Training

On **September 10th** we will have training for the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for those who were not able to attend the training on August 14. It will be conducted by a couple of our members. This will be immediately after worship and will last approximately 30 minutes.

The training is for Hands-Only CPR (CPR without breaths)



*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.