



Immanuel Lutheran
of Evanston

God's Hands - March 2023 Newsletter



Some Food for Thought from the Pastor

I recall a past Bishop of mine telling me once that the opposite of faith wasn't doubt. He said that the opposite of faith was fear. The theme of our midweek Lenten worship this year will be "Perfect Love Casts Out Fear." We'll reflect on an assortment of Scripture passages that engage this theme. If perfect love casts out fear, and, if faith is the opposite of fear, then there must be a strong faith-love connection. Faith opens us up to God's love for us and at the same time quells all fears that inhibit our loving others. The kind of love that God desires to flow through us into the world is much more than a sentimental emotion. It's a passion for justice, and a heart ready to serve. Love is an emotion in motion. Love is a verb, all actions that make our world a better place. One of the disciplines of Lent is to practice an active kind of love. We're assisted in our loving, through the other practices of Lent, fasting, prayer, self-examination, and repentance. As our invitation to Lent on Ash Wednesday states: we are strengthened in this Lenten journey by the gifts of word and sacrament. These disciplines recenter our lives on God, our creator, lover, and provider. God's perfect love casts out the fears that can get in the way of our living out our baptismal heritage of being God's beloved children.

Lent is short for "lengthen." Someone somewhere noticed that (at least in this hemisphere) the season of Lent was accompanied by the lengthening of the days. Lent does not mean "40 days of beating yourself up." It does not mean "40 days of God beating you up and reminding you of what kind of a person you really are." Lent means spring, and the bursting forth of new life as flowers begin to bloom and trees put forth new leaves. Lent is a time for new life to occur within us as well. It's a time for us to be so changed that we blossom with a renewed passion for justice and ways of making God's love known throughout our world. As the light lengthens each day in this Lenten season, may it lengthen within us as well.

Deep Blessings,

Pastor Mark Sloss

[Click to for the Immanuel Calendar](#)

Stay Up-To-Date on Church Happenings

Click the button to go to the Immanuel calendar on our website. The latest events are always posted on this calendar.

Special Meeting

Social Justice Ministry will briefly meet after Coffee Hour on Sunday, March 5. We will be discussing our plans for the Emergency Overnight Shelter starting April 9, Please join us if you can.

--Nicolai Schousboe

March Music Update

Lent consumes all of March for us in 2023, but the choir has some beautiful and exciting offerings for even such a penitent season. We began Lent with our Sunday offering of Frank Ferko's "Adam Lay Ybounden." We begin March with Heinrich Schütz's setting of John 3:16 "Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt."

We then turn toward the Old Testament lesson and offer in worship John W. Work's arrangement of the spiritual "Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Lan'." This is followed by a lovely setting of "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" by Paul Manz.

We close March with a rousing arrangement by Livingston Gearhart of "Dry Bones" with percussion instruments and jazzy piano.

--Jimmy Morehead

Feeding Our Faith - March Gatherings

Sunday mornings at 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Gatherings include viewing short videos and lively discussions. You can participate either in-person or via Zoom. Check the website Welcome Page for Zoom links.

3/5/23 – Deanna Van Buren – What a World Without Prisons Could Look Like

Deanna Van Buren designs restorative justice centers that, instead of taking the punitive approach used by a system focused on mass incarceration, treat crime as a breach of relationships and justice as a process where all stakeholders come together to repair that breach. With help and ideas from incarcerated men and women, Van Buren is creating dynamic spaces that provide safe venues for dialogue and reconciliation; employment and job training; and social services to help keep people from entering the justice system in the first place. "Imagine a world without prisons," Van Buren says. "And join me in creating all the things that we could build instead."

3/12/23 – Dr. Gary Mason – Jesus and Religious Ethnic Nationalism

In this moving talk, Dr. Mason walks his listeners through a history of what he calls "toxic religion and toxic politics" and then proposes a way to reframe our understanding of religious violence by looking to the eternal kingdom of Jesus. Gary Mason, is a Methodist Minister, and holds a PhD from the school of Psychology at the University of Ulster. He was also awarded an honorary Doctorate in Divinity for his role in peace building in Ireland, from Florida Southern College. He completed his theological studies at Queens University and holds a Bachelor's in Business Studies from the University of Ulster.

3/19/23 – Dr. Kristen Du Mez – Confronting Our Histories

Dr. Du Mez describes her process of studying the history of White evangelicalism for her

best-selling book, “Jesus and John Wayne,” and challenges her listeners to dig deeper into and be honest about our own religious histories. Kristin Kobes Du Mez is a New York Times bestselling author and Professor of History and Gender Studies at Calvin University. She holds a PhD from the University of Notre Dame and her research focuses on the intersection of gender, religion, and politics.

3/26/23 – The Right Rev. Robert Wright – The Leadership that Love Demands

Bishop Wright challenges his listeners to think of leadership as a “delivery system for love” and provides insights into how to develop the leadership skills necessary to best love our neighbors. The Right Rev. Robert Christopher Wright was elected June 2, 2012 as the 10th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta.

Midweek Lenten Worship Services Wednesday Evenings in March, 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Perfect Love Casts Out Fear is the theme of our Midweek Lenten Worship, **held both in-person and virtually** from 7-7:30 PM during Wednesdays of March.

We will be using "Joyous Light Evening Prayer", a beautiful sung liturgy, with two Scripture readings each week. We'll include some time to reflect on how God's great love for us calms our fears and empowers us to reach out to our neighbors with justice and love.

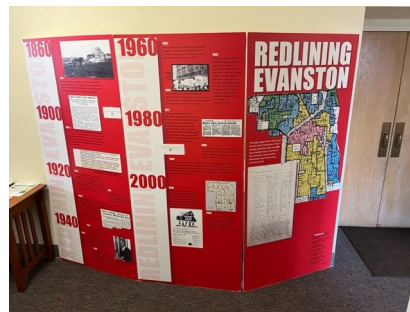
Join us at 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall for a Soup Supper prior to worship.

[Click to Join the Lenten Service via Zoom](#)

[Click for the Lenten Service Bulletin](#)

Supporting Our Confirmands and Feeding their Faith

Elora and Parker Kloster have been participating in our joint confirmation program with Grace and St. John Lutheran congregations. This year's theme has been Introduction to the Bible. The final six-week unit begins April 23, and is on Jesus and the Early Church. We'll meet at St. John, Wilmette, and it is Immanuel's turn to provide lunch each week for 20-24 people. Lunch runs from 12:30 – 1 PM and providers are encouraged to eat with the group, and stay for the class too, if so inclined. [Go to this Google Doc to sign-up.](#)



Redlining Exhibit

Perhaps you've noticed that we now have a Redlining Exhibit in our upstairs hallway. It was created by Dino Robinson of Shorefront Legacy Center. It has been making the rounds of faith communities that are supporting Evanston Reparations. If you haven't already checked out this educational piece, I invite you to read through the timeline. It is

eye opening. I found it to also be a good conversation starter at the last Indoor Winter Farmers Market we hosted.

--Pastor Mark

Opportunities to serve

2023 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly

The 2023 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly will be held on June 2, 2023. The theme for this year is "In Jesus' Name: Make Disciples." Immanuel has been allocated 2 lay voting members for the assembly. If you are interested in attending this year, please let Pastor or Dana know. The Council would like to elect our delegates at the March meeting.

Sunday School

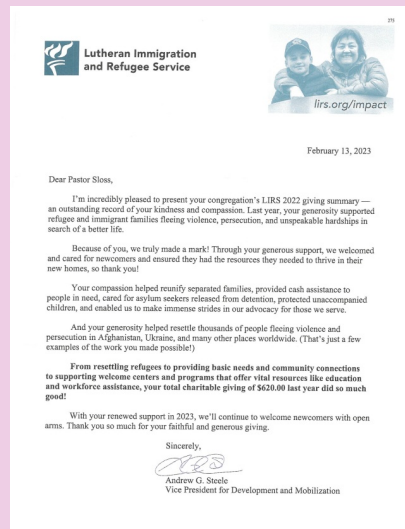
We are so grateful to our Sunday School teachers for the past year, Laurie Stivers and Tyler Heyl. Tyler will be moving after this school year, and we are looking for a second person(s) to help in the faith formation of our youngest members. The class meets every other Sunday morning before worship. Please reach out to Laurie if you are interested.

Stark Mission Fund Committee

We are looking for several new members of the Stark Fund Committee. This committee manages the investment of the Stark Mission Fund and makes recommendations concerning disbursements from the Fund to the Congregation Council. Committee member terms are for three years. Please let us know if you are interested in helping decide what missions Immanuel supports.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Sara Mauk 3/3
Amy Shearer 3/8
Anne Heider 3/10
Terri Hummel 3/13
Charly Yarnoff 3/13
Kevin McDaniel 3/17
Dan McCarthy 3/21
Bert Mount 3/26



Click to read a letter of thanks from Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

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