



God's Hands

Make me an instrument of your peace

The Newsletter of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church
616 Lake Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201

“God’s Hands” is about God’s gifts to us – not only the gift of life itself, as depicted in the hand of God touching Adam’s hand, from Michelangelo’s artwork in the Sistine Chapel, but also our gifts of time and talent. How we respond to these gifts with our own hands – hands that build, fix, give, greet, share, comfort, do – is what our newsletter is all about.

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Elizabeth Magill, Cantor
Sally Lufkin, Parish Administrator

Highlights of the Month

Joys We Share This Month

- March 7 – The Joy of Hospitality: Café Immanuel™
- March 14 – The Joy of Music
- March 21 – The Joy of Learning: Liz Hanson speaks about Flannery O’Connor
- March 28 – The Joy of Worship: Pastor Senn gives an overview of Holy Week

Observance of Lent and Holy Week

- Lenten Vespers on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. with readings from and commentary on the Book of Exodus
- March 28 – Palm Sunday Liturgy — procession with palms, Passion reading
- April 1 – Maundy Thursday Liturgy at 8 p.m. — foot washing, stripping of the altar
- April 2 – Good Friday Liturgy at 8 p.m. — Passion reading; veneration of the cross
- April 3 – Easter Vigil at 8 p.m. — 12 readings; renewal of baptism; break-the-Lenten-fast party after the Vigil



From the Pastor

More than twenty years ago, when I was pastoring in Lincolnshire, I was invited to participate in an inter-faith discussion on fasting in the Islamic Community Center in Libertyville. It was the month of Ramadan; it was also Lent. So, on a Friday night after prayer and a simple shared meal with the Muslims, a panel composed of an imam, a Jewish rabbi, a Serbian Orthodox priest, a Roman Catholic priest, and myself discussed practices of fasting in our traditions. As a representative of mainline Protestantism, I didn't have much to say. There are no requirements of fasting among Lutherans or Protestants. We don't have rules about such things.

The problem with Protestantism is that it was born of protest. To sustain the protest, what you are protesting must be in place. Medieval Catholicism is no longer in place. Yet Protestants, and Lutherans in particular, have defined themselves by what they are not — we are not Catholics. So any practice observed by Catholics (we mean *Roman* Catholics, of course, as if they're the only ones entitled to use the term "Catholic") must be rejected. I learned over the years that it doesn't help to point out that other religions observe some "Catholic" practice too — like fasting. For that matter, don't confuse us by pointing out what even Lutherans do elsewhere. Like you won't find a Lutheran church building in Europe without a crucifix on the altar or by the pulpit ("we preach Christ crucified"). But for many American Lutherans, it's "too Catholic." We transferred our devotion to the crucified Christ from objects of art to hymns. We don't look at the crucified One, but we sing about his passion.

In the 19th century the concept of evangelical catholicity developed in Germany, especially in the Prussian Church Union. The realignment of Churches after the Napoleonic Era required a reconsideration of church history. Church historians and theologians used a dialectical logic that comes from the philosopher Hegel: thesis – antithesis – synthesis. For every historical development there is a reaction which, in time, settles into a new reality. Thus, the thesis of medieval Catholicism produced the antithesis of the Protestant Reformation which, in the 19th century, was moving into the synthesis of evangelical catholicity. The theologian Paul Tillich came out of the Prussian Church Union and brought to the U.S. the dialectic between Catholic substance and Protestant principle. Proclaiming "the end of the Protestant era" he looked for a new form of church life to develop that avoided Roman legalism on the one hand and Protestant reductionism on the other.

The young Jaroslav Pelikan picked up this idea and showed it already working out in Luther's career in his book *Obedient Rebel: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (1964). Luther reacted to medieval legalism with a radical freedom but then reacted again to the excesses of the radical Reformation. He found gospel-centered reasons to retain Catholic practices--- or to reject them. To apply this dialectic to one area: historical forms of worship were codified by the Catholic Church in medieval canon law. The Protestant reformers rejected medieval legalism and held that the forms of worship can have nothing to do with salvation. But then Luther renewed the traditional forms because they were pastorally useful in forming faith and in reaching out to culture. So, in this line of thinking, fasting was rejected as a legal requirement, but valued as a time-honored practice because of its spiritual benefits.

During Lent I always find myself recommending Catholic practices, not because they are Catholic but because they are spiritually beneficial. We join with practically all other world religions in discovering anew the value of fasting. We learn anew that, as Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy to the devil, “Man does not live by bread alone.” But some people need basic daily bread, and so practices of fasting in world religions have always been tied to alms giving. What you are not spending on yourself you give away to those in need. That used to be the theory behind those Lenten coin folders so many of us grew up with. The alms in the alms basin at Immanuel will be given to homeless ministries of Interfaith Action of Evanston and to our People-in-Need Fund.

I would note that Eastern Orthodoxy seems to take fasting in stride better than Western Christianity. Truth be told, many Roman Catholics approach fasting (now limited to Fridays of Lent) as a legal requirement to be put up with. Most Protestants don’t observe any fast at all. But Orthodox Christians do not approach fasting just as a legal requirement but as a way of life. In fact, fasting is so much a regular part of church life that women’s groups in Orthodox parishes even exchange recipes for Lenten meals.

So what are you “giving up” for Lent? That’s really the wrong question. Taking a cue from Eastern Orthodoxy, the right question is, “what changes are you making during Lent?” What changes do you make in your diet? What new recipes do you try? How does this remind us that many areas in our lives need to change. (To repent is to change.) The tradition about food is pretty straightforward. You don’t eat meat products. That includes dairy products. But common sense has always trumped fasting laws. Babies need milk. Feeble people needed protein, such as eggs. Fish doesn’t count as meat; meat is “flesh.” Northern countries that didn’t have oils to cook with needed to use butter. OK, if you have to use butter, give extra alms. A whole tower in the Rouen Cathedral in France is called “the butter tower” because it was paid for by alms given in lieu of fasting from butter. Now there’s an idea for paying down the mortgage on our accessibility/renovation project!

But, of course, the basic idea of Christian fasting is to identify with the suffering of Christ. That’s why Christians were fasting on Fridays already by the end of the first century. And, yes, Sundays are never fast days because they are the day of resurrection, the day of the Eucharist. And the whole Fifty Days of Easter are not fast days; they are feast days. But let’s not be legalistic. You’re not forced to eat just because it’s a feast day.

I wish you a blessed Lent, a profound Holy Week, and a glorious Easter.

– Pastor Senn



Table of Contents

Council: Highlights from the February Meeting

Standing Committees and Groups

Education – Sunday School News

Evangelism – Membership Invitation Dinner

Fellowship – Coffee Hours

Social Ministry – Snacks for Hospitality Center; letter from Mary Crane Center

Worship and Music – Sanctus Bells; Organ Scholar for 2010

Youth Activities – Meet the Youth

Other News of the Church: Let's Have Some Fun! – new young adult group;
Celebrating 20 years of Pastor Senn at Immanuel
Dates for 2010 church photo directory

News of the Wider Church: Lutheran CORE proposes formation of North American
Lutheran Church

News of Individuals: Pastor Senn: He's Off Again; Jared & Elizabeth Magill travel to Europe
Immanuel's Vision Keepers Honored

Calendars

Readings for March

Birthdays for March

Events: Church Calendar for March



Council

The role of the Council is to hear the reports of committees, groups, and individuals within the church and make decisions for the church. Council meets on the third Thursday of each month, at the church.

The Council President is Melisa Larson. To contact the Council, place a note in the Council mailbox, which is outside the church office, by the Lake St door, or see Melisa at church.

February 2010 Council Highlights

The council officers for 2010 are Melisa Larson, president; Steve Warner, secretary; Mary Ann Kearns, financial secretary; Joan Geuss, treasurer. Linnea Balder serves as assistant financial secretary and the council appointed Joe Simchak as assistant treasurer.

The main business of the February council meeting was reviewing the standing committees. The membership of the various committees was reviewed on the basis of the Time & Talent Survey and those who have been serving. It is up to the committees to elect a chair as early into the new year as possible. A liaison is appointed between each committee and the council, especially where no members of a committee are serving on the council. As the roster of the standing committees is finalized, it will be posted on the bulletin board. Chairpersons are indicated in issues of *God's Hands*. It was noted that we do not have a functioning Christian Education Committee or Fellowship Committee. We need a chair or co-chairs for the Stewardship Committee.

The Evangelism Committee is sponsoring a dinner for prospective members on Sunday, March 7, and Pastor Senn will be devoting whatever time and energy it takes to bring in new members on Easter.

In other business the council elected Steve Warner and Kit McCarthy as synod delegates, set up an ad hoc committee to work on a celebration of Pastor Senn's 20th anniversary as pastor of Immanuel in September, and agreed to produce a new pictorial directory with dates for the photo shoots on Friday-Saturday, August 6-7.



Education

The Christian Education Committee, in association with the pastor, oversees the conduct and promotion of schools and education within the congregation.

The Sunday School Superintendent is Laura McDaniel. To contact her, place a note in the Education mailbox, which is outside the church office, by the Lake St door, or see Laura at church.

During Lent the Sunday School students will focus their attention on the events leading to Easter. Last week, they stood during their snack of matzo and juice to begin the conversation about Passover. In the weeks to come they will talk in depth about Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter.

All this will serve as a backdrop for the play they'll present on April 18th, "Resurrection Surprise." Children from Pre-K through 6th grade are welcome in Sunday School. We begin with songs in the choir room at 9:15. Invite a friend to join the fun!



Evangelism

The Evangelism Committee leads the congregation in efforts to reach out to others with the gospel and invite persons to join the fellowship of the gospel in our church.

Membership Invitation Dinner

Would you like to become a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Evanston? Since the days of the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul, the practice of the Christian faith has always been a communal endeavor. Members of Immanuel have ownership of the good things that happen in our church. They can directly influence the work and direction of the church. They are more in communication with others who worship here and as such are more likely to receive ministry when needed and to be in a position to minister to others.

We are having a membership invitation dinner on March 7, at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. In addition to having dinner with us prepared by our fantastic Café Immanuel™ crew, you will have a chance to make new friends among our membership, receive information about membership, and be able to ask any questions you have. We hope to bring a group of new members into the church on Easter Sunday, April 4. You won't be asked to decide on the spot. If you decide to become a member at Easter this year, contact Pastor Senn after this event.

Please reserve your place at this membership invitation dinner by contacting the church office by email (parish-admin@ilcevanston.org) or by phone (847-864-4464) during church office hours, which are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. until noon. The deadline for reservations is Friday, March 5. Be sure to let Sally Lufkin, our Parish Administrator, know if you have dietary restrictions.

We hope to see you on March 7. You will learn more about the good things going on at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Evanston and how you can be a part of those good things.





Fellowship

The Fellowship Committee provides occasions for the members of the congregation to interact socially with one another, such as at picnics, dinners, or other social events. The committee oversees the Sunday coffee hour.

The Chair of the Fellowship Committee is Kit McCarthy. To contact the Fellowship Committee, place a note in the Fellowship mailbox, or see Kit at church.

Coffee Hours

Having coffee hours after worship has been a long tradition at Immanuel. It is a sit-down affair with celebrations and announcements. Anne Heider has been coordinating the coffee hours. The sign-up poster for hosting a coffee hour is on the bulletin board in the hallway. Since the coffee is brewed at Café Immanuel™ or for the one “Joy” sessions, those who serve the coffee hour don’t have to make the coffee. There are many Sundays left when you can help.



Social Ministry

The Social Ministry Committee guides the congregation in extending Christian compassion and assistance to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the homeless, the hungry, and others who have material or spiritual needs.

The Co-Chairs of the Social Ministry Committee are Bert Mount and Marge Wold. To contact the Social Ministry Committee, leave a note in the Social Ministry mailbox. Marge and Bert check the mailbox whenever they are at church.

We delivered a bunch of snacks to the Hospitality Center on February 8. Thanks to everyone who brought food or gave cash. The cash was converted to juice and bananas.

Also we got a thank you note from Lavetter A. Terry, the Executive Director of Mary Crane Center, for the gifts we sent them in December. Here's an excerpt: "Thank you for your recent gift of 50 hand made mittens and hats, decorated pine cones, ornaments and gift bags for the children at our Lake and Pulaski site. Your support promotes Mary Crane Center's efforts to ensure that children get the best start they can in life."



Worship and Music

The Worship and Music Committee assists the pastor and the Church Council in planning and conducting public worship.

The Chair of the Worship and Music Committee is Lisa Larson. To contact the Worship and Music Committee, leave a note in the Worship and Music mailbox, or see Lisa at church.

Sanctus bells

Immanuel has acquired a set of “Sanctus bells” that are rung at the Eucharist during the singing of the Sanctus. They call attention to the consecration. But bells are also musical instruments. They heighten our exuberance at this moment and will be rung at festive celebrations.

Organ Scholar for 2010

The Immanuel Church Music Outreach Endowment committee auditioned and interviewed students who applied to be Immanuel's 2010 organ scholar. The award this year goes to Justin Knabach, a sophomore at Concordia University Chicago from St. Louis. He will receive a gold medallion, a \$2,000 scholarship, and a concert for which Immanuel provides the publicity, program, and reception. Justin's concert will be in May — date to be announced.



Youth Activities

From time to time there are special activities for Youth, which are announced here.

Meet the Youth

It's fun to learn new things about people! The youth in our congregation are so vibrant! To better acquaint ourselves with one another, here are some fun facts about three youth group members. More introductions will follow in the coming months.

Ben is a freshman at Northside College Prep in Chicago. During the last week of January, he participated in the All City Freshman/Sophomore Wrestling Tournament. He placed 5th in his weight class! Isn't that cool? Now that the wrestling season is over, he's moving to track where he will toss the shot put. Ben loves logic puzzles and is a real math whiz!

Luke is a 7th grader at Wilmette Junior High. He is on the Yearbook Club as a photographer and enjoyed Broadcast Club. He has also participated in community service projects in Evanston this year. Luke has an affinity for computers and knows Apple products inside and out. If you have a question, he can probably answer it!

Spencer is a freshman at New Trier High School. Quite the athlete, she just completed a season on the Frosh A basketball team. Last weekend they won their tournament in Palatine. She plays violin in the Freshman Chamber Orchestra and studies German. In March, she will try out for lacrosse at school and she continues to play for Northwestern's Club Lacrosse team.



Other News of the Church

Let's Have Some Fun!

Are you new to Immanuel? Are you a long time member but have been wanting to get to know more people? Come out for some fun with the Immanuel Young Adult Group! This is a new group that is starting based on a high level of interest from visitors and members. If you are age 21-40 come out and have some fun with other Immanuel young adults. The first outing will take place on Saturday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. We will meet at Immanuel and then head out to downtown Evanston for some light food, drinks, and great fellowship. If possible, please RSVP to Elizabeth or Jared Magill so that an approximate reservation may be made. Contact them at viossoon@gmail.com, 847.361.8419 or talk to them in church. The reservation will allow for a few extras, so please come on out and join us either way on March 6!

Other News of the Church continued

Celebrating 20 Years

It's hard to believe, but Pastor Senn has been at Immanuel nearly 20 years. The Church Council is forming an ad hoc committee to explore ways to celebrate Pastor's 20 years, as well as the accomplishments of Immanuel Lutheran Church in that time. September marks the 20 year point and we want to begin preparing now. All who are interested in being on the ad hoc committee, please contact Kit McCarthy at (847) 491-0183, kit.mccarthy@comcast.net, or talk to her at church.

Mark your calendars now for the 2010 **Pictorial directory photo shoots** on Friday-Saturday, August 6-7. We will try to be diligent in taking pictures of church events so that we will have photos ready for activity pages to spice up our new directory.



News of the Wider Church

Lutheran CORE is proposing to form a **North American Lutheran Church** as an option for congregations that vote to leave the ELCA and need a church body to join in order to retain their property. The NALC would have a more "hierarchical" structure with a bishop and deans in contrast to the congregationalist Lutheran Church in Mission for Christ (LCMC), which some congregations have been joining. Lutheran CORE itself is still styling itself an inter-Lutheran association or a free standing synod with an emphasis on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

The ELCA Office of the Secretary reported that 220 congregations have taken initial votes to terminate their relationship with the ELCA. Sixty-four of those congregations failed to achieve the required two-thirds vote to continue in the process. Through Feb. 4, 28 congregations had taken a second vote. The Office of the Secretary confirmed that seven congregations have officially left the ELCA.

It is a long process to leave the ELCA, requiring two-thirds votes at two specially called congregation meetings. Consultation with the synod bishop is required. Not all congregations that take votes to leave will achieve the two-thirds majority needed to initiate the process or to finally leave. That does not diminish but rather augments the tension in these congregations, with some members leaving on their own.



News of Individuals

Pastor Senn Off Again

He will do a Saturday workshop and preach at weekend services at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hernando, FL on February 27-28. This church was built by Mark Kearns' father. After spending Sunday night in The Villages, a retirement community of 80,000, he will give presentations at the Florida Chapter STS Retreat at the San Pedro Franciscan Retreat Center in Orlando on March 1-2 and return to Chicago on Tuesday night.

Jared and Elizabeth Magill will be traveling to Europe in March. Elizabeth, the Orchestra Director at Buffalo Grove High School, has been planning this trip for over a year with members of the music department at her school. Elizabeth, Jared, and over 200 high school students and parent chaperones will be traveling and performing throughout Europe from March 16-28. They will be visiting Prague, Czech Republic; Vienna, Kitzbuhel, and Salzburg, Austria; Venice, Italy; and Munich, Germany. The Magills are looking forward to this trip and are hoping they are not overly jet-lagged for Holy Week!

Immanuel's Vision Keepers

Bill and Ellen Pullin received their recognition as Vision Keepers at an awards banquet at the Orrington Hotel on February 21. These awards are a wonderful source of fundraising for the Interfaith Action of Evanston ministries to the homeless.



Calendar of Readings

Readings for March

March 7 – Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

March 14 – Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

March 21 – Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

March 28 – Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 22:14-23:56



Calendar of Birthdays

March Birthdays

Sara Mauk (3); Christine Kraemer (8); Carol Klein, Mark Kraemer (7); Luther Grafe, Monica McCarthy (9); Mia Cudecki, Anne Heider, Jason Kearns (10); Doris Strom, Adam Sunderland (11); Brandon Hummel (12); Teresa Hummel, Charly Yarnoff (13); Matthew Pullin (16); Kevin McDaniel (17); Daniel McCarthy (21); Bertha Mount (26)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>March 2010</h1>						
	1 7:30 pm Bible Study	2 1:00 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group	3 7:30 pm Vespers followed by Adult Choir Practice	4 10 am Daytime Sewing Group 1:30 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group 6:00 pm NCC musicians	5 9 am – 3:00 pm Home School Co-Op 3:00 – 4:30 pm Acting Class	6 7:00 pm Young Adult Outing
7 9–10 am Café Immanuel™ 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion 1 pm NCC Worship 5 pm Confirmation Class 6 pm Membership Invitation Dinner	8 7:30 pm Bible Study	9 1:00 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group	10 7:30 pm Vespers followed by Adult Choir Practice	11 1 pm Women's Discussion Group 1:30 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group 6:00 pm NCC musicians	12 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Home School Co-Op	13
14 Daylight Savings Time Begins 9:15 am Joy of Music and Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion Refreshments 1 pm NCC Worship 5 pm Confirmation Class 8:30 pm Compline	15 7:30 pm Bible Study	16 1:00 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group	17 7:30 pm Vespers followed by Adult Choir Practice	18 1:30 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group 6:00 pm NCC musicians 7:30 pm Church Council	19 3:00 – 4:30 pm Acting Class	20
21 9:15 am Joy of Learning and Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion Refreshments 1 pm NCC Worship 5 pm Confirmation Class 8:30 pm Compline	22 9 am Deadline for <i>Gods' Hands</i> articles 7:30 pm Bible Study	23 1:00 – 3:00 pm Home School Drama Group	24 7:30 pm Vespers followed by Adult Choir Practice	25 9 am Newsletter assembly, mailing, and posting 6:00 pm NCC musicians	26 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Home School Co-Op 7:00 pm Evening Quilters	27
8 Palm Sunday 9:15 am Joy of Worship and Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion Refreshments 1 pm NCC Worship 5 pm Confirmation Class 8:30 pm Compline	29	30	31	This month's Joys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 7 – <i>Joy of Hospitality</i> – Café Immanuel™ ● 14 – <i>Joy of Music</i> ● 21 – <i>Joy of Learning</i> – Liz Hanson on Flannery O'Connor ● 28 – <i>Joy of Worship</i> – Overview of Holy Week 		

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