



# Immanuel Messenger

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March 2012  
*A Word from the Pastor*

Lent Series 2012

## Stunning Sins and Vast Forgivenesses



*For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. (Psalm 86:5, KJV)*

DATE	BIBLE STORY	TEXT
February 29	The Fall of Adam and Eve	Genesis 3:1-24
March 7	Cain and Abel	Genesis 4:1-16
March 14	Jacob Deceives His Poor Old Father	Genesis 27:1-41
March 21	Joseph and His Brothers	Genesis 37:1-35
March 28	David and Bathsheba	2 Samuel 11:1-27
April 4 (Holy Wednesday)	Peter Denies Our Lord	Luke 22:54-62

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Originally I had planned a Lent Series for this year on “David: Shepherd, King, Poet, Sinner.” But I think I will file that idea till next year or maybe some year after that. I was led to this shift by a Vespers Bible reading at this winter’s recent “St. Gregory of Nazianzus Retreat.” Year by year, Carol and I try to go to that retreat with old-time friends from our seminary days. This particular reading was about Jacob’s deceit of his elderly, blind father, Isaac. The poor, old man! The deceit was initiated by Isaac’s wife, Rebekah. I knew the story, but this reading aloud during Vespers strongly affected me. “What an appalling story this is,” I thought to myself. But, then, even appalling sins can be forgiven by our God and used as building blocks for his coming Kingdom.

Sin is a setback for humanity. Each time we yield to sin, we work against God and his good intentions for the world. That does not mean the Lord cannot forgive sin and get things back on track. Still, sin is a setback for us. All sin is bad, and yet some sins seem outrageous. They are extraordinary and deep. This Lent Series explores some of them. No all. There are other Biblical sins awaiting to be considered, including the sin of Potiphar’s wife against Joseph, Herod’s massacre of the innocents, the woman caught in adultery, Judas’s betrayal of our Lord, and Pilate’s unjust execution of Jesus. Maybe next year I should do Part II of “Stunning Sins and Vast Forgivenesses.” These stories of sin are human, passionate, and in the end, encouraging revelations of the goodness of the Lord.

It is a good old-fashioned Lenten discipline to try to increase worship during this holy season. Please count these 6:30 p.m. Wednesday liturgies among your Lent opportunities.

In Christ,  
*Gregory Fryer*  
Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

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## Update on Our Church Roof Fund

### Three-year Campaign Goal: \$350,000

Our Roof Fund campaign began April 25, 2010, and so we are approaching the end of our second year, with still a couple months to go. Counting the \$50,000 initial gift that launched our campaign, our current receipts are \$276,328 (as of 2/29/2012). That is about 79% of our goal, which is good considering that we are not yet two-thirds of our way through the campaign.

On a lovely, clear day this mid-February, roof specialists conducted a survey of our roof, gutters, and steeple. It was a productive day, and our Roof Committee is eager to study the results of the survey. God willing, we will begin construction this summer, 2012.

# Daylight Saving Time – Fall back; Spring ahead!

Saturday, March 10, 2012

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Alas, we lose an hour of sleep that Sunday morning, so let's prepare ourselves to dash off to church then.

## An Elevator Speech

Some Thoughts from Pastor Fryer

Recently an interesting question was asked by one of our members: If we had to give an “elevator speech” on our congregation’s mission, what would it be? That is, if we had the chance to speak a few brief words about our mission -- say, while we are in an elevator talking to a neighbor -- what could we say?

For me, that little speech would speak of God’s Word. As far as I can figure, we do not really have an option here. Our mission is specified by dominical command:

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20, RSV)

Furthermore, our Lutheran Confessions teach us that the very heart of the church is the pure proclamation of God’s Word and Sacraments:

It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)

As for me, I very much like the way our little group discussing the elevator speech put it:

**Immanuel Lutheran Church will proclaim the Word of God, Biblically and confessionally, creating and sustaining faith on Earth.**

One of the glorious things about Immanuel Lutheran Church is that the centrality of God's Word is not just an idea here, but is in fact the principle that makes sense of us. That is what we are about: teaching, proclaiming, baptizing, singing, praying, encouraging one another, doing what we can to keep faith alive on earth and in our city. There are many good things that need to be done in the world, including medical, social, literary, and artistic goods, along with the goods connected with peace and security for the people. But this is *our* good: to create and sustain faith on earth. This is our heart, our compass heading, our shepherd, our rod and our staff to organize and guide all we do here at Immanuel: we want to create and sustain faith on earth through God's Word. And I think we are doing a good job at it. I pray it will ever be so with us.

In Christ,  
Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

## Midtown Concerts

The March schedule for Midtown Concerts follows. Concerts will continue each Wednesday through the end of May. As always, the concerts are completely free and last approximately 35 minutes. Please tell your friends! Information on Midtown Concerts online is available at [www.midtownconcerts.org](http://www.midtownconcerts.org).

### MARCH 7

Amy Bartram/Ekko Jennings Duo  
Songs from 17<sup>th</sup>-century England by  
Lanier, Lawes and Wilson

### MARCH 14

Matthew Hall, harpsichord  
English Suite No. 3 in G minor and  
Toccata in D major by J. S. Bach

### MARCH 21

Barbara Hollinshead/Howard Bass Duo  
Airs de Cours – Continuing from last  
season, more early French songs of  
love and loss

### MARCH 28

Waits Trio: Music by Marin Marais and  
Antoine Forqueray

## ARTEK Chamber Music Concert in April

ARTEK will present one more Thursday evening chamber music concert at Immanuel Lutheran Church this season. The next concert will also feature Director Gwendolyn Toth's newly restored antique fortepiano from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Thursday, April 19, 2012, at 8 p.m. Gwendolyn Toth (fortepiano), Enrico Gatti (violin, Italy) and Laura Heimes (soprano) play Mozart and Haydn sonatas and songs.

Although tickets for these concerts normally cost \$25, ARTEK has set aside 100 free tickets for members of Immanuel Lutheran Church. These tickets are available right now from Parish Secretary Karen Rombey in the church office for pickup by members, or directly from Music Director Gwendolyn Toth after services on Sundays.

## Some scenes from Our Recent Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



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