



Immanuel Messenger

Immanuel Lutheran Church
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May 2020

A Word from Pastor Gregory Fryer

St. Paul

Our Monday Evening Bible Class

6:30 PM, starting Monday, May 18

Via Zoom, for a while

Pastor Carol and I just do not know exactly when we all can start gathering again in our church. We sure miss you, and we miss the Holy Communion. But things are unsettled now about opening things up again. At the start of COVID-19, we stayed open one Sunday longer than did the Roman Catholic churches of our city, but then we followed their example. We will probably start up again following the example of other churches.

Meanwhile, let's resume our Monday Evening Bible Class.

At the heart of St. Paul's preaching is the Easter proclamation: "He is risen! He is risen indeed!" That is what he lifts up as he introduces himself to the Romans in the First Chapter of his Epistle (though with a few more words):

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness *by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord*, (Romans 1:1-4, RSV)

St. Paul did not invent this emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, it was the primitive apostolic proclamation. It was what the apostles ran around the Mediterranean world proclaiming. They would grab people by the shirt collars and joyfully exclaiming. "Have you heard? Jesus is risen!" Folks knew of Jesus. It was pretty exciting to hear that he is risen from the dead. If Hitler were risen, that would not be good news. But that *Jesus is risen is good news indeed!*

So, St. Paul joined Mary Magdalene, the Twelve, and others in the earliest Christian preaching: Jesus is risen!

But the thing about St. Paul is that he pressed this joyous early proclamation in every direction. For example,

scholars say that his earliest letter was First Thessalonians. In that letter he teaches and comforts early Christians who worry about believers who have died before the Lord returns again. The apostle assures them that Easter means that those who have died will not miss out in being with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Likewise, in his great letters to the Galatians and to the Romans, St. Paul thinks out what the resurrection of Jesus means for our *salvation*. In his letters to the Corinthians, he teaches *Christian morality* in light of Christ's resurrection. In Ephesians he considers the meaning of the resurrection for *the Church*. In Colossians he even speaks of the meaning of Easter for *the whole cosmos*.

I feel that it is time to start up our Monday Evening Bible Study again. It is not as much fun to do Bible Study by Zoom as it is to be gathered together in our Martin Luther Room, with our Bibles before us and talking with one another. But for now, let's plan on meeting by Zoom. We can be grateful for the technology. I mean to send out the link in my week parish email. (If you do not get these emails, please send me a note: gpfryer@gmail.com).

Our most recent Bible Study was the story of King David in First and Second Samuel and a little bit of First Kings. I think we enjoyed that study.

In the past, we have worked our way through all 150 Psalms. It took us years to do so, but they were good years.

Now I propose that we start another long Bible study: "The Letters of St. Paul in Chronological Order." I am

hoping to trace the *development* of St. Paul's thinking, from one letter to the next.

It is not obvious that we should do any such thing. We believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible. This means, first off, that the Spirit used the Bible's prophets and apostles and evangelists to speak His Word. But the crafting of the Bible by the Holy Spirit includes other important matters too, including the *order* of the books. Judging by the canonical text actually lying before us, the Holy Spirit would have us read Romans *before* reading 1Thessalonians. I imagine that the Spirit wants us to bear in mind the magnificent teachings of Romans as we approach the following letters. But I am proposing that we jumble up the canonical order. It is not obvious that we should do so.

My rationale is that I believe that modern historical/critical knowledge of the Bible can be put to good use in illumining the canonical text. And so I hope that our chronological reading of St. Paul's letters will open our eyes to see our dear Bible better — the Bible the Holy Spirit has actually given us. So, when we are done, we should go back and read St. Paul's letters all over again, beginning with Romans. Then, maybe we will see things we might have missed before. I do not imagine that *our class* will read the letters a second time, beginning with Romans, but rather, that when any of us read or hear the Pauline letters, we will read or hear with new appreciation. That is what I am hoping.

Let's begin soon, Monday, May 18, starting at 6:30 PM. These slower days at home give me a chance to prepare

my introductory sessions. I would have to enter another profession to read all the scholarly books on St. Paul. I do not have time for that, but I am enjoying getting ready for our classes. The classes go for about an hour. You can jump in at any point, as you are able. We will probably be doing this Bible Study for a good, long time to come.

It is our chance to immerse ourselves in St. Paul's fundamental conviction that "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"

In Christ,



Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

Our Worship Services

Thanks from Pastors Carol and Gregory Fryer

Many thanks go to Music Director Gwendolyn Toth, musician Dongsok Shin, Choir Member Michael Celentano, and Parish Secretary Sean Curnyn for our Sunday morning worship services. Zoom and digital recordings are not as nice as real live people sitting next to us in the pews, but we still find the services put together by Gwen, Dongsok, Michael, and Sean to be moving. Sean makes them available on our church website:

<https://www.immanuelnyc.org/>. If you have internet and have not yet done so, try joining worship via these digital worship services.

For now, we are fasting from the Lord's Supper. It all puts Carol and me in mind of Mary Magdalene at the Easter tomb. When she realizes that Jesus is standing before her, she wants to spring forward. To hug him would be natural. I bet that is how it will be for us when we can gather in the church again and celebrate the Holy Communion. We will be glad to hasten forward to be with our risen Savior again.

Meanwhile, we are grateful to Gwen, Dongsok, Michael, and Sean for helping us to meet Jesus in the Word proclaimed in these Sunday morning services.

Our Tithes and Offerings

Some Reflections from Pastor Gregory Fryer

My little sister, Carol, down on the Eastern Shore of Maryland put the point well and simply, bless her: It should not matter about COVID-19. A tithe is a tithe. It might go up or might go down, depending on how life is going, but the church should be able to count on people giving their tithes and offerings, even in times of pandemic.

That is true in our household here at the parsonage because of the particular way Carol and I give to the church. Our bank offers the option of paying bills via bank checks. So, we have arranged with our bank to send our contributions to Immanuel once a month. Rain or shine or vacation or whatever, our check comes to the church. Each year we pray and consider about what that

monthly contribution should be, but once we have decided, the bank sends the checks like clockwork. It is free.

But Carol and I are also mindful that *we* continue to be employed and to receive paychecks. Some of you are missing your paychecks. Or you might start missing them down the road. We support you in being careful and cautious with your money during these uncertain days. But also we ask you to remember our church. Balance in your soul these two thoughts as best you can: A tithe is a tithe. *And*, the Lord wants you to manage your household as best you can. Try not to shortchange either thought. Churches are vulnerable during these days when we cannot even gather, cannot pass around the offering baskets, and cannot give “with joy and thanksgiving, our selves, our time, and our possessions.”

Let me briefly review various ways to give to our church:

- ❖ You can give by check, made out to Immanuel Lutheran Church, and mailed to: 122 East 88th Street, New York, NY 10128.
- ❖ You can go to our website, and click on the blue “Donate” button.
<https://www.immanuelnyc.org/ways-to-give>
- ❖ If you prefer using an app on your phone, then you can download the “GivePlus” app from the Apple Store or from Google Play. Use Immanuel’s zip code, 10128, to quickly find our church, and follow the instructions to set up your donations.

- ❖ You can give by text message. Just text an amount you would like to give to this dedicated number: 917-563-4047, and follow the instructions that are sent back to you. In each case you can donate either by credit card or by a debit to your bank account (this latter method has the advantage of avoiding credit card processing fees).
- ❖ Also, we have a QR code for giving to our church. If you have a smart phone, you can point your camera to this code and it should lead you to our online giving page:



Immanuel's expenses are pretty much the same even without holding services: we still must pay our regular bills including payroll, insurance, etc. Immanuel is committed to paying our full and part-time employees, most of whom are still working their regular hours throughout this crisis.

Congregations are like individual Christians: We live by faith. In our case, we live by the conviction that something good and important and pleasing to God is going on at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Thank you.

In Christ,
Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

Phone Church

11 AM, starting Sunday May 17

Nowadays Carol and I usually record the Sunday liturgies on Friday or Saturday. Parish Secretary Sean Curnyn sees to the digital video recording, processes the recording, and makes it available for you to see on Sunday morning.

So, Carol and I record the liturgies on Friday or Saturday. But we could just as well do the liturgy all over again on Sunday morning at the usual time, 11 AM. We are thinking that we could do the Sunday liturgy by phone. We like Sean's *video* recordings, but we worry that not all of our people have internet. For them, we bet it would help to offer a phone Sunday service.

We have tried preaching and praying with some of you over the phone. Let's expand that to include a group gathering for worship on Sunday mornings. We can use "Free Conference Call" for this. Here is the dial-in number and so on:

Dial-in Number (515) 606-5187

Access code 725495

PIN 5217#

So, let's give it a try starting Sunday, May 17, phoning in around 10:55 AM and beginning at 11 AM. Carol and I can read aloud the same Bible Readings and preach the same sermon as available on our website.

None of this is perfect. It will be better when we gather in church again. Meanwhile, we use modern technology with gratitude, trying to keep faith alive on earth.

In Christ,
Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

Pentecost Sunday

May 31, 2020



A Note from Pastor Gregory Fryer

I imagine it will be the same with Pentecost Sunday as it was with all of Holy Week: We will be unable to gather in church at Immanuel. This is something we never imagined. Pentecost Sunday is a major church festival. It celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on earth. It means that something of Jesus – his Spirit – can be ours too, if we be willing. And this world needs more of the Spirit of Jesus!

I figure that Pastor Carol and I will do as we did during Holy Week: We will try to share something of the character of the particular festival with you. At least we can change the paraments to Pentecost red and include

the traditional Pentecost Sunday opening acclamations and Solemn Benediction. We hope you will tune in for that important festival.

Same thing with the following Sunday: Trinity Sunday, June 7. We believe in “one God in three persons.” Three divine persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — think of us all the time and each One is working to save us and sanctify us. Trinity Sunday is our annual chance to rejoice in this happy teaching.

Theology and Culture

May 28, 2020

A Note from Pastor Carol Fryer

The Theology and Culture group has been meeting via Zoom and we will do so again later this month. Since we can no longer share a meal together at this time, we will meet only for one hour from 7:00 – 8:00 PM on Thursday, May 28.

Our member Lara Bhasin has suggested that we read and discuss a short book written by James K. A. Smith. [You Are What You Love; The Spiritual Power of Habit](#), published by Brazos Press, can be found in Kindle edition as well as hardcover and audio. However, it is not necessary to have read the book to participate in the discussion.

A Zoom link will be sent out to those who are interested in participating. Please let Pastor Carol know by sending her an email at ceafryer@gmail.com.

Sunday School Continues!

Some notes from Pastor Carol

Even though the children of Immanuel cannot meet together for Sunday School, they are meeting via Zoom every Sunday, thanks to teachers Karen Bazik and Barbara Chomko. At 10 AM each Sunday morning the class gathers to learn about Jesus and explore Bible stories. Activity pages are sent out in advance so that they can be printed and used during the class.

Here are some photos of the children sharing their Sunday School work.

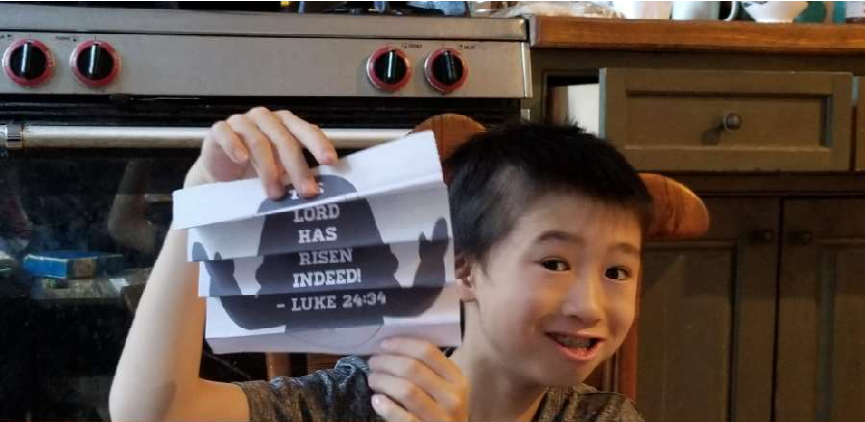


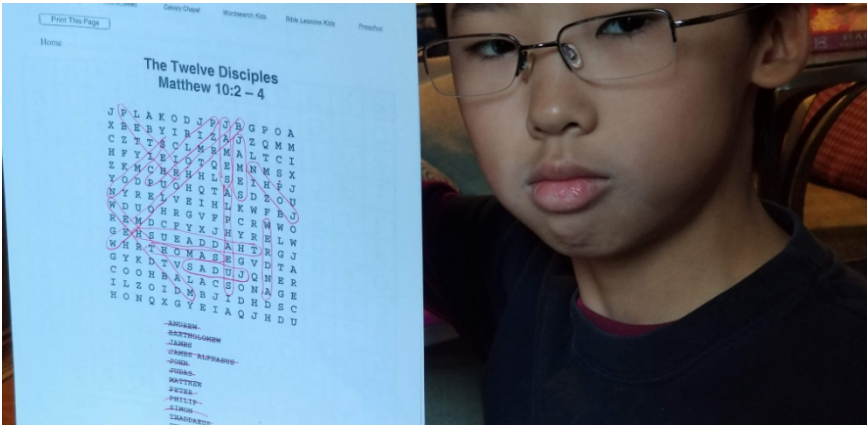


Making pretzels during Lent.



Palm Sunday crosses.






Many thanks to Karen and Barbara for a fantastic job keeping Sunday school going and also to Lara Bhasin who has provided the Zoom host for Sunday School.

This Newsletter's Color

A Note from Pastor Gregory Fryer

ur last month's newsletter had purple titles. That's because it was Lent. Now we are in the Easter Season. The natural colors for this season would be white or gold, but they do not show up well as titles. So I chose orange, thinking of it as the dawning sun of Easter morning. That's my theory! Next month will probably be red for Pentecost Sunday, or perhaps green for the Season after Pentecost.

In Our Prayers

Those who are sick or recovering from illness or injury: Audrey Kiehl (the wife of David's nephew) and her baby, Stephen Bazik (Karen's father), Isaak Ross (godson of the Pastors Fryer), Gwendolyn Toth, Dongsok Shin, Mark Devine (friend of Michele Michaelis), Faith Stoudt, Carlos Opio, Ivan Sanchez (Luz Ortiz's brother), Caroline Magnotta (Ruth Wendland's granddaughter), Bishop Paull Spring, Marcia Rudat (Jeff's mother), Nathan Linman (son of Rev. Jonathan Linman), Pastor Carol Fryer, Andre Nessen and Arno van Laar (friends of Kathy Jolowicz), Constance Dumas-Coleman (Denise Du'Maine's cousin), Manuel Damon (Maria van der Merwe's brother-in-law), Sally Graudons, Marion Molno, Helene Lund, Pastor Paul Lorentzen (of Transfiguration Church, Staten Island), June Dittbrenner (Carol's mother), John Vaccaro (Denise's

brother), Ruth Kiehl Growcock (David Kiehl's aunt), Emma Kaefer, James Maffucci (friend of Davida Goldman), Haruko Koseki (mother of a friend of the Ichikawa family), Christopher Henderson, Sarah Linder (Carol Dittbrenner's mother-in-law), Erick Balce (colleague of Jazo Ichikawa), Veenda Louiseh Shivute (Helga Kuverua's sister), Mark Schaffel (friend of Denise and Sean Curnyn), Terry Pierce (trombonist), Parimala Rao, Carol McKeon (friend of Edna Szmodis), Simoney Aguilar-Roatcap (friend of the Kiehl family), Ann Haimburger (Emma Kaefer's sister-in-law), Knox Chadwick (friend of Kieran O'Carroll), Gregory Ortiz (Luz's son), Ofc. Christopher Helms (friend of Kathy Jolowicz), Lyonel Laverde, Christine Maldonado (friend of Ester and Eric Neubacher), Maria van der Merwe, Diana Montesdeoca, Patricia

Sanders, Dorothy Schussel, Joan and Dan Westlake (Denise Vaccaro's sister and brother-in-law), Carol Davis (Sally Graudon's friend), Lena Adams (friend of Maria van der Merwe), Crystal Richardson, Manuel Pamulo (Michael's brother), Eniel Zamora (friend of Maria van der Merwe), Elfriede Sachno, Hope Forrest (mother of Priscilla O'Carroll's friend), Larry Oglesby (Laurin Smith's father), John Bazik (Karen's brother), Vincent Marino (nephew of Irene Juhasz' friend), Barbara Beck (Carol Dittbrenner's friend), Hannah Smith (Denise Vaccaro's friend), Jeanne Plekon (friend of the Fryers), Stephen Fischer, Clifford Rose, Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky (theologian and friend of the Fryers), Steven Quirong (Vi's son), Asta Kibler (Hans' and Kirsten's grandmother), Taylor Cochrane (David Hahn's daughter), Ernest Lund Jr., Kathy Jolowicz, Elizabeth Dorovich (Michele Michaelis' aunt), Denise

Du'Maine, Barbara Lewis, Edna Szmodis, Mary Masna (Wayne Masna's wife), Father Daniel Vitz (friend of Jim and Victoria O'Donnell), Justin Brown (Pastor Fryer's nephew), Samuel Goldman (Davida's brother), Valerie Kirchmann, Frank Zerbi (Denise Du'Maine's friend), Kenneth Held (Jeff Rudat's friend's brother), Buck Briggs (Joel Bussert's friend), Julia Galindo Marquez (Monica Marquez's mother-in-law), Lorraine Scharfenberg (Marion Molno's niece), Everett Stallworth and Ray Smith (Denise DuMaine's cousin's father and husband), Tristan Ramos, Molly Sullivan and Jeff Sullivan (former members), Robin Conway (Nancy Tepper's cousin), Dorothy Leung (Priscilla O'Carroll's aunt), Lyonel Laverde (Louise's husband), Emma Meyer (Deborah Meyer's mother), Linda Schulze, Rich Shedrick (Kim's husband), Tripp Stratton, Georgia Lind, Voldo Lundre (President, Estonian

congregation), Dorian Kuverua, Bonnie Cebry (Diana Robertson's sister), Julie Marable (Susan Singer's friend), Alicia Wood and family, David Young (Richard Schreiber's friend's father), Virginia Fay (Mary Nettleton's friend), Inga McConnico, Joan Walter. Pray for your brothers and sisters when they are ill and give thanks when they are well.

Our deepest sympathy to Parimala Rao and her husband Jay on the death of

Parimala's brother, Sagar Ganta, who died on March 25th, 2020, at the age of 50. Our sympathy also to Sagar's nephew Charles and niece Ivana.

Our deepest sympathy to Cynthia McCollum on the death of her husband, Thomas Uzzo, who died on April 27th, 2020, at the age of 64.

May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.