

Immanuel Messenger

Immanuel Lutheran Church
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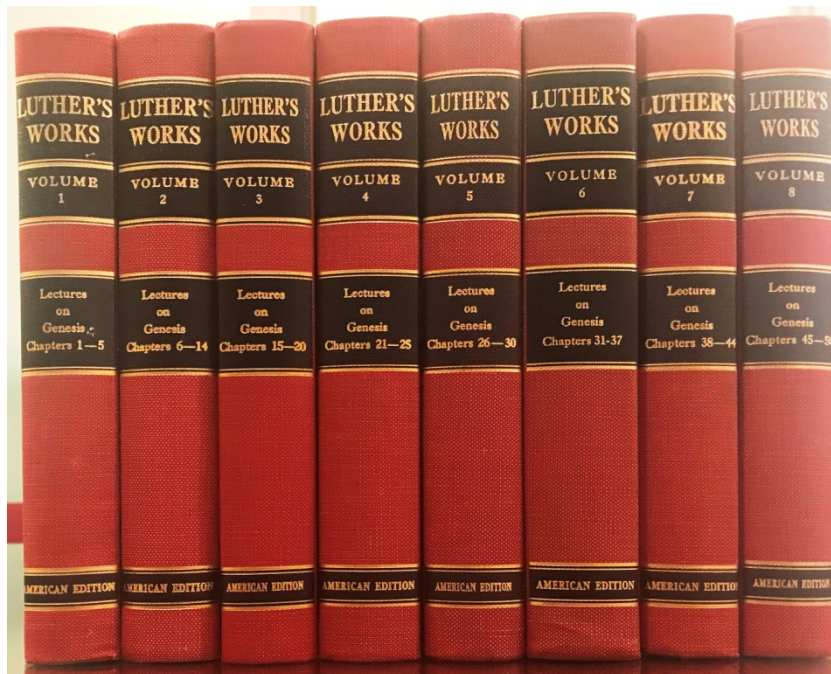
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January 2024

A Word from Pastor Gregory Paul Fryer

Genesis



Dear Members and Friends of Immanuel Lutheran Church,
In our church library in the Martin Luther Room, so far we have

sixty-one volumes of *Luther's Works*. This is but the English-language portion of the larger German standard edition — the *Weimar edition of Martin Luther's Works*. Luther was a prolific scholar.

At first glance, you would think that Luther's beginning writings were on *Genesis*. After all, the first eight volumes of his many works are on that book. But the truth is that Luther's lectures on *Genesis* were the brilliant work of his old age. He spent his final years lecturing on the first book of the Bible. In his opening words to his students, Luther agrees with the stance of the Jewish rabbis that no one under thirty should be permitted to read or to expound for others the first chapter of *Genesis*.

It was not a deliberate policy on my part, but looking back I would say that for most of my ministry, I was moved by the instinct that I was not yet ready to lead a discussion of *Genesis*... that teaching that book required a kind of wisdom and learning that I did not yet have. Well, I still do not have that wisdom and learning. But it has dawned on me recently that if I am going to teach *Genesis*, I had better start now while there is still some time left.

Genesis is about us! It is about us humans before we became fragmented into races and clans. Its stories are old — older than the Church, older than Israel. They are old stories of creation, of divine blessing ruined by temptation, of having to earn our living by the sweat of our brow, of murder — even murder by one brother of another. And it is the story of the beginning ages of faith — the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The rest of the Bible hardly makes sense unless we know the stories of *Genesis*.

So, I mean to devote our Thursday Evening Bible Study to *Genesis*. If you have taken Bible classes with me over the years, you know that I am not a great teacher. Pastor Lara is much better than I am. What I basically do is read the text aloud, comment on it as I go along, and invite the thoughts of anyone else in the class. The one virtue I hope I have is that I love the Bible. I love to try to enter into the world of the Bible and to see the dealings of our Maker and us human beings.

We meet in the Martin Luther Room and via Zoom. The class starts at 6:30 p.m. and goes for only forty-five minutes. Then we head off in our various directions for supper. Here is the Zoom information:

Topic: Thursday Evening Bible Study

Time: 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada), every week on Thursday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81016887158?pwd=pKnpzCDABnHiyHDYjAMuV6AURobbbc.1>

Meeting ID: 810 1688 7158

Passcode: 017897

Dial by your location

- +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 810 1688 7158

Passcode: 017897

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kcspKxSToV>

Please join us whenever you can.

In Christ,

Gregory Fryer

Pastor Gregory P. Fryer



Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn...
They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim
the praise of the Lord. (Isaiah 60)

The Epiphany and Baptism of Our Lord

11 a.m. Sunday, January 7, 2024

And the Three Kings Party afterwards in the undercroft

This Sunday combines two of the major festivals of the Church Year: the Epiphany and the Baptism of our Lord. Children lead us in the entrance procession by bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to our Christmas crèche. The three wise men arrive there too. They have been making progress toward the Christ Child, moving forward windowsill by windowsill. It is a great service! We hope you can attend.

Thank you!

We had a great Advent and Christmas Season here at Immanuel thanks to the donations and labors of many people. Thank you for your donations to the Seafarers, the Toy Drive and the Mitten Tree.

Also thank you, everyone, for your donations of items and time to the Christmas Bazaar.

And last but not least, thank you, everyone, for helping with the Hanging of the Greens and the St. Nicholas Party (both time and food).

Life-to-Life Discipleship

Now is the time!

A Note from Pastor Lara Bhasin and Pastor Carol Fryer

Pastor Carol and Pastor Lara would like to invite you to join the *Life-to-Life Discipleship* experience. *Life-to-Life* is a NALC initiative designed to help Christians be more intentional in living out the Great Commission by focusing on following Jesus who calls us to be his disciples.

Our first session will be **Wednesday, January 31, from 7:30 – 8:30 PM**, following the midweek liturgy. You are welcome to come in person or join us on Zoom.

This first meeting will be an informational meeting to help you discern whether to commit to this discipleship experience. The pattern for our sessions will include reading scripture, reflecting on it, and prayer, encouraging in each of us a daily practice of the same.

Those who decide to commit to the discipleship experience will continue to meet every other Wednesday evening for fifteen hour-long sessions as we work our way through the *Life-to-Life Discipleship* manual.

Both of us have been through the experience ourselves and found it rewarding. It gives participants a chance to strengthen faith and learn how our baptismal vocation applies to every aspect of life. I (Lara) enjoyed it because it is concrete and practical and helped me develop some lasting spiritual friendships.

If you are interested in participating, please email us: ceafryer@gmail.com and lara.bhasin@tsm.edu and let us know if you need the Zoom link.

The Bible: The Big Picture – A Class for All Ages

A Note from Pastor Lara Bhasin

From time to time, during Coffee Hour in the Martin Luther Room

Next class: Sunday, January 7, 2024

The topic: Job and the Problem of Suffering

And the next class: Sunday, January 28

The topic: Joshua and Hard Passages of the Bible

We have begun our year-long tour through the Bible. This is a class designed to give us a big picture view of the Scriptures, its main themes, key ideas, and most important stories. Each class will feature one book or set of writings from the Bible, with many visuals, maps, timelines and other aides to help us get a sense of the whole. We will also learn about how the Bible was translated and the canon of Scripture was formed. Each class will feature a PowerPoint presentation with lots of pictures of Biblical art, artifacts, and other charts and diagrams.

This class is designed for all ages, from middle school to adult. I hope it will be a chance for every participant to share what they know, learn something new, and forge new friendships across generations. Each class will be a complete unit on a new topic, so please join whenever you can.

Our Winter Voters' Assembly:

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Our regular winter Voters' Assembly is the third Sunday of January. This year that is Sunday, January 21. This the meeting at which we hear year-end reports and elect our leaders for this year of our Lord 2024. Let's meet up in the church nave starting at 1 p.m.

Immanuel Book Club:

The Screwtape Letters

By C.S. Lewis

Once a month. Next class: 8 p.m. Wednesday, January 17, 2024
In the Martin Luther Room and via Zoom

Please join Pastor Lara for the class discussion at 8 p.m. in the Martin Luther Room, or sign in via Zoom. We mean to pick up with Chapter 8, but there is no need to read ahead. We will read it together in class.

Here is the Zoom information:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81940413904?pwd=PyJZ56im1YnRyRCVq3ur1OEDwCCR9Z.1>

Meeting ID: 819 4041 3904

Passcode: 535156

Dial by your location using the same Meeting ID and Passcode: +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81940413904?pwd=PyJZ56im1YnRyRCVq3ur1OEDwCCR9Z.1>

Midweek Evening Liturgy

6:30 p.m. Wednesday Evenings

A Note from Pastor Lara Bhasin: Why I love the midweek liturgy

I love the energy on Sundays at Immanuel. I love hearing the organ and the cantors. I love the full liturgy and the longer sermon. I love the bustle and the conversations at coffee hour. But there is something different about our Wednesday evening spoken service. It is quieter, humbler. I find I can spend more time in prayer. It is easier for me to concentrate on worship. And I enjoy the fact that people sometimes wander in off the street simply because they saw our front doors opened welcomingly. I often get to meet new people this way and talk with them and pray with them in a way that cannot happen so easily on a Sunday, when so much is going on.

It would be wonderful to share a time of midweek worship with you. We are preaching our way through the Gospel of Matthew, which is a very different sort of preaching than the kind that is guided by the lectionary.

Pastor Greg does most of the preaching, and he takes each passage and unpacks its meaning and application to our lives in a straightforward way that reminds me of the Church Fathers or the old Puritan divines.

Wednesday is a fine opportunity to connect with the Lord in the middle of a busy week and simply step back and rejoice with one another in His love and peace. I would be delighted to see you there.

Immanuel webmaster Sean Curnyn has created a link on our church's website for the Wednesday Evening sermons. You can find recent sermons on Matthew at this location: <https://www.immanuelnyc.org/midweek-sermons-matthew>

Coffee Hours

If you can host Coffee Hour or contribute a dish to Coffee Hour, that would be great! It would be most welcome. Please let Kathy Jolowicz know: Kaj133@aol.com. Letting Kathy know will help with our planning. Also, the Board of Deacons would greatly appreciate donations of soda, iced tea or juice. We have coffee and tea, but some people (and the kids!) like to have cold beverages.

In Our Prayers

IN OUR PRAYERS IN RECENT TIMES: Timna Rosenheimer (friend of David Kiehl), Melodee Kelly (friend of Thomas Wicks), Susan McIntosh (Richard McIntosh's sister), Celia Cabrera, Minfang Cheng (friend of Louisa Laverde), Stephen and Jean Fischer, Davida Goldman, Sister Angela (friend of Pastor Carol, David Kiehl, and Maria Barbera), LyAsia Beltre and her mother, Carol Dittbrenner, Pastor Gregory Fryer, Ann Wareham, Carlos Opio, Sally Gaudons, Jean Fischer, Luz Ortiz, Jonathan Lochrichio (nephew of Luz Ortiz), Jennifer Loughrey, Marcia Rudat (Jeff's mother), Richard Shuta (Jeff Rudat's uncle), Naomi Kinley (Jeff Rudat's friend), Karl Fritsch (Louise Laverde's brother-in-law), Alan Brook (Matt O'Donnell's father), Cayle Powell and Raymond Hernandez (Florida family members of Eric and Ester Neubacher), Tracy Leung (Priscilla's cousin), Robert Huckfeldt (David Kiehl's brother-in-law), Patricia Sanders, David Kiehl

(End)