

# Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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## God's Encouraging Word ...when I am lonely

Shortly after they were married, a young couple planned a trip to Spain. In order to take advantage of some frequent-flyer miles, the young husband decided to travel there a few days early by himself. Being young and naïve, he figured he could learn enough Spanish on the plane to get by and then find a place to stay when he got there. The flight was pleasant and the plane landed safely. However, by the time he got his luggage and figured out how to take the Metro into central Madrid, it was already getting late. After several hours of wandering around the city, he began to realize that 1) his Spanish was unintelligible, 2) he was not in the safest part of town, 3) it was very difficult to find anyone who spoke English, and 4) he needed a place to sleep. Finally, at around one o'clock in the morning he found a hotel manager who spoke enough English to get him a room that was about the size of a closet.

Over the course of the next several days, he had never felt more alone. He could not carry on a conversation with anyone and struggled to even do simple things like order food. Because of the language and cultural barrier, he was a stranger in a strange place.

But it doesn't take traveling to a foreign country to feel alone. Sometimes we feel alone because we miss loved ones and just want to share one more conversation or one more memory with them. Sometimes we feel alone because we just don't feel like there is anyone who understands our pain or our problems. At times we can feel all alone, even when surrounded by people, because it just seems like no one really cares about us.

It goes without saying that no one likes to feel lonely. The only thing worse than feeling lonely, is feeling lonely with the burden of shame or guilt. Thankfully, Jesus came to be with us. The truth is that each one of us deserved to be left alone, because each one of us has separated ourselves from a holy God by our sins. But instead of leaving us alone, God himself drew near to us. So near, that he took all of our sin and guilt and shame upon himself. He gave his life on the cross to take it all away, so that we would never have to be alone.

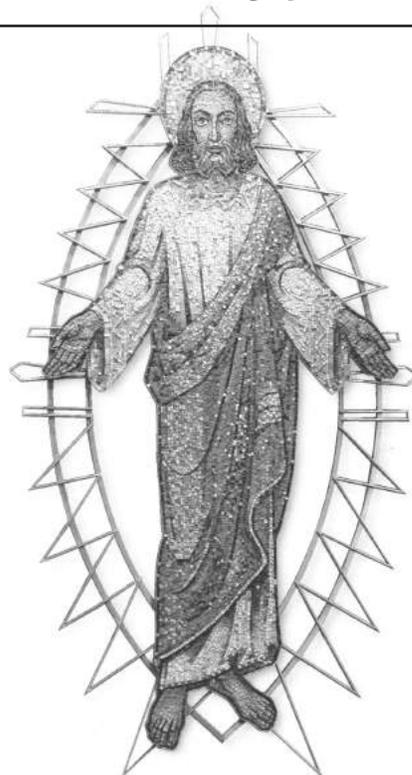
Yes, there will be times that we feel all alone here on earth. But we don't have to. Our Savior who died and rose from the dead promises, "Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." He gave his life to make it happen and his Word to guarantee it forever. ☒

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*God has said,  
"Never will I leave you;  
never will I forsake you."*

**Heb 13:5**

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CHURCH NEWSLETTER



### Epiphany Worship Notes

In the beginning of the month, we continue to hear how by word and deed, Jesus revealed himself as the Son of God who came to be Savior for the whole world. Each of the Sundays in Epiphany stress this truth in a different way. The final Sunday of Epiphany is called Transfiguration, the day on which Jesus revealed his glory as true God to Peter, James and John on the mountain. Here are the themes for the Sundays in February:

- Jesus' Glory Is Revealed In Apparent Weakness
- Jesus' Glory Is Revealed Before His Passion

### Marriage Retreat

Our annual marriage retreat will be held at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd on March 10-12. If you have questions, please speak with pastor. The "official" deadline to register has passed, however, if there are still rooms available you may still attend. You may register online at: [https://craguns.formstack.com/forms/wels\\_march\\_2018](https://craguns.formstack.com/forms/wels_march_2018).

### Summer Music and Bible Academy Update

We have made initial plans to hold the music and Bible academy like we did last summer. Watch the bulletin and newsletter for more information.

**← BE STRONG**

*and*

**→ COURAGEOUS →**

*Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,  
for the Lord your God  
will be with you wherever  
you go*

Isaiah 41



### LENT BEGINS

The penitential and preparatory season of Lent starts on February 14th. Ash Wednesday begins this season of the church year as we prepare ourselves to go up to Jerusalem and ponder again all that Christ suffered to win our salvation. Worship begins at 7:00 pm on each of the Wednesdays in Lent. One of the highlights of the midweek vespers service is that we hear the passion history of our Lord read. This is the only time of the year that the whole passion history of our Lord is read in worship. On the Sundays in Lent, the focus of our worship stresses the Savior's perfect obedience and work in our place. We see this especially in the appointed Gospels.

### Midweek Lenten Worship

The theme for our midweek services this year is: Jesus Christ Is Our Great High Priest.

- 2/14 – Jesus Is Our Great High Priest
- 2/21 – Jesus Is Our Self-Sacrificing High Priest
- 2/28 – Jesus Our Great High Priest Makes Us Priest
- 3/7 – Jesus Our Great High Priest Serves at a Great Altar
- 3/14 – Jesus Is Our Perfect High Priest
- 3/21 – Jesus Is Our Compassionate High Priest



### Chili and Soup Suppers

These suppers will precede our midweek services in Lent. Sign-up sheets will be placed in the Narthex. Watch the bulletin for more information.

### Annual Meeting

The voters met on January 21st. Our annual mission subscription was set at \$26,000. Immanuel will send a delegate to the 2019 synod convention. The following were elected by the voters: Jon Heller (Board of Ed), Todd Marxhausen (Elder), Norm Riediger (Treasurer), Scott Schultz (Trustee). We thank those who have completed their terms of service: Ron Lesteberg, Jay Remmele, Scott Schultz and Aaron Jaspersen.



### "What Do I Have?"

What do I have, Lord, that you would need me as a servant?

Eyes, he said,  
to see the beauty in all that I've made —  
and my children as they travel life's highway.

Hands, he said,  
to reach out and touch hurting souls,  
to give a hug or encouraging pat on the back.

Feet, he said,  
to lead my children through this world of strife  
and to help them run from sin and follow me.

Mouth, he said,  
to lift up your voice and sing praises to me  
so others may hear the joy in your heart.

Ears, he said,  
to listen to my still, small voice of love  
and to hear my children when they cry for help.

Heart, he said,  
so you may know the full love of my Spirit  
and love my children as I have loved you.

—Thomas Butler

## The Season of Lent and Repentance

Lent is a time for self-examination, repentance and faith. The following resource was written by Dr. Kenneth Korby as a tool to help self-examination according to the 10 Commandments. Here is an opportunity to read through the points of examination for each commandment and use that for your personal reflection and mediation. If you would like to receive the thoughts in a single booklet that you can keep in your Bible, please speak to pastor and ask him.

### Self-Examination and Reflection

The Ten Commandments preach repentance; that is, by them God shows us our sin and how much we need a Savior.

#### You shall have no other gods.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

- My God is that which I love, trust and fear most in my life. I expect my comfort, good and delight from my God.
- Do I look to God my heavenly Father, for all love, good and joy? Is everything measured for me by what pleases me?
- In all things am I self-centered and selfish?
- Do I see my worry and fretting as sin against trusting God?
- Do I complain about the troubles, people, work and suffering God lays on me?
- Do I love the things God gives me more than I love him? And do I cling to what God takes away, even though he gives me himself?

#### You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name to curse, swear, lie or deceive, or use witchcraft, but call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

- Do I curse? Have I cursed?
- Do I use God's name cheaply for oaths that are frivolous or false?
- Do I stand up and swear by God's name when it is for the truth of the Gospel or for the benefit of my neighbor in need?
- Do I pray with fervor in times of trouble? Am I bored and indifferent in prayer?
- Is it so that I cannot speak about God truly because I am bored with God's Word, neglect the study of the Catechism, doctrine and God's Word?
- Is my heart and life in the praise of God in worship? Am I mouthing things while my heart is far away?
- Is my life, marked with the name of God in Baptism, characterized by thanksgiving and praise?

#### Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy, and gladly hear and learn it.

- Do I strive to make the day of rest holy? Do I care about holy living?
- Do I use the Word of God and prayer to make my time, work, study and life holy day by day?
- Am I lazy and bored with the Word of God? Have I any fear of God over this neglect?
- Do I honor the Word of God highly by studying it gladly, learning it by heart, and living it? Do I despise the Word of

God by neglect, paying no attention to it when it is read or preached?

- Do I love my fellow Christians by being present with them in worship to sustain them? Am I quick to make excuses for neglecting worship because of what someone else has said or done, or to do other things I like more?
- Do I spend time complaining about the worship, the pastor or other people?
- Do I learn the Word gladly so that I may teach others?

#### Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.

- Has the fear and love of God shaped my honor and obedience to parents and others in authority?
- Have I trusted God to bless me and make my life good when I submit to the authority of parents and those over me, or have I been angry with them, rebelling, fighting against them because I was afraid I was not getting what I had a right to get?
- Have I been insolent, sullen and disrespectful to my parents, teachers, employers or other authorities over me?
- Have I been on good behavior when they are present and mocking them when they are absent?
- Have I given honor and respect to the pastoral office?
- Have I helped those who carry responsibilities in governing? Do I pray for parents, leaders of the nations, schools and church? Do I grumble about work given me to do?
- Have I helped make it easier for those who carry responsibilities for governing?

#### You shall not murder.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

- Have I treated my neighbor's body and life as gifts of God to him?
- Have I injured my neighbor with violent actions, hitting and beating on my neighbor, spoken debasing and insulting words, using foul or dirty words to describe the neighbor, or murdered him with thoughts of anger, contempt, and hatred?
- Have I injured my neighbor by ridicule, by neglecting to feed or clothe him, withholding compassion and comfort from him?
- Have I avoided giving help to my neighbor, avoiding involvement with him in his difficulty?
- Do I abuse my own body with neglect of health, care, excess use of food, drink, tobacco, or drugs?

#### You shall not commit adultery.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

- Have I used for my own pleasure my ears to hear stories or my eyes to incite cravings for the body of one who is not my spouse, or my mouth to speak such words and stories?
- Have I indulged my eyes with longing for my sexual satisfaction from a man or woman who is not my spouse?

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- Have I dishonored marriage by ridicule, divorce, or neglecting to encourage others to be faithful to their spouses in the fear of God?
- Have I had intercourse with a man or woman who is not my spouse?
- Have I dishonored my spouse by neglecting to care for the body, mind, feeling, needs of the other, withdrawing faithfulness from the spouse?
- Have I failed to trust God to bless us in our marriage, even in times of trouble? Have I neglected to pray for my spouse, to worship together, and to live in the fear and love of God in times of sexual temptations?
- Have I practiced thoughts, words, or deeds, or given support of homosexual activity?

### **You shall not steal.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.

- Have I been lazy at work, doing poor work in school or at the job, or working hard only when the teacher or boss is around?
- Have I been stingy in paying my workers?
- Have I been greedy, demanding best pay for poor work?
- Have I worked for myself rather than for Christ and for the benefit of my neighbor?
- Have I cared for the property in the neighborhood, school, or church, so that it was improved?
- Have I stolen from the office, school, or the church, or stood silently by while others took what was not theirs?
- Have I stolen information from another's work?
- Have I wasted time and food and money or caused others to waste time, food and money by my neglect?
- Have I been stingy when it comes to giving the Lord a generous portion as thank-offering for what he has given me?
- Have I stolen from my neighbor by not helping him in time of need?

### **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

- Have I told the truth in court or in school before authorities or before my parents when I knew the truth? Have I been afraid to bear witness when I knew the truth and it was necessary to speak up against a wrong-doer or to speak for a victim?
- Have I gossiped, delighted to tell others about the faults or mistakes of another, excusing myself especially by saying that I spoke only the truth?
- Have I gone to others to make peace if I wronged them or they me, or to correct them if I knew of their wrong?
- Have I flattered others, or put on a front to make them think of me differently from what is true?
- Have I slanted stories to my benefit or deceived others by withholding some evidence of the story?
- Have I found ways gladly and willingly to explain, in the best possible way, those words or actions of others that hurt me?
- Have I defended my neighbor when things said about my neighbor have made others think badly about him or her?

- Have I learned to hear with the weaknesses and faults of others, covering their shame?
- Have I been faithful in keeping the secrets of another's heart entrusted to me in confidence?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

- Have I longed for the honor, wealth, happy life, or what seemed the ease of the lives of others? Has my life been full of craving for these things?
- Have I been stingy and self-indulgent with my money, trying to keep up with what others had?
- Have I tried, by claims of various rights, to make the property of others my own, saying they do not really deserve it and I do?
- Do I have to keep wishing for and dreaming about things I do not have before I can work with a diligent and glad heart?
- Have I lived in grudging discontent with whatever God has given me, restless about what I do not have and neglectful of thankful generosity with what I do have?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

- Have I wanted my neighbor's spouse, his workers, or his property to be mine?
- Have I tried to win the affections and loyalties of my neighbor's spouse or children or friends away from the neighbor to me?
- Have I urged friends and spouses and workers to go back to their calling, holding their marriages, friendships, families, and work together?
- Have I fostered discontent with the congregation, its pastor or leaders, and failed to urge members to stay and do their duty in worship, praying, giving and serving?

### **What does God say about all these commandments?**

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

*What does this mean?*

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear his anger and not disobey what he commands. But he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore we should love and trust in him, and gladly obey what he commands.

God demands our hearts and minds, not merely our outward actions. Therefore, examine the heart as well as the life, connecting the fear and love of God with each commandment. Let the broken heart fear him. God loves, and does not despise, the sacrifices of the broken heart. Rather, he joins the broken heart to his mercy for forgiveness and healing, for peace and purity.

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