

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

1816 5th Street SW, Willmar, MN 56201
Office: (320) 235-5996 • Parsonage: (320) 235-6728
Office Hours: 9:00am - 4:30pm, Tuesday - Thursday
Website: www.willmarwels.net



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Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

I Need More...GOOD NEWS

Indeed, we live in frazzled and frustrated times. Just turn on the nightly news. So frequently we are given reports of events that have devastated property and lives; are told about individuals that have deviated from law and order; and hear of other stories that dampen our spirits. On a regular basis, most of the news is not good news, and a depressed sigh first finds solace in the silence of a turned-off television.

Turns out, though, that we don't have to turn on a TV to know that. We don't even need to be near it. As our consciences rerun the past, we see where our own deviations have had a devastating impact. As a direct result, our spirits are dampened and depressed. Even life-long Christians feel the sting of past sins as their consciences cry a guilty testimony. That's the "news" we know by nature. That's God's Law on sinful hearts, and that's why stricken hearts crave more good news.

The calm to the craving is not attained by turning off; we get it by tuning in. The answer is not in blocking out God's Word or dulling our consciences by making poor excuses. The solution is still found in what God's good news says to every individual-even to you. The calm, promise, and solution remains the message of the gospel! Hearts are calmed at the message of Christ for us! And it's in that message the apostle Paul, a very real sinner, would have sinners still take comfort and confidence. As he lifted Timothy's eyes and heart to the grace of the cross, so he lifts ours: "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Craving more good news? Forgiven sinner, tune in to the Savior who carried your every sin! See him in his Word! Redeemed believer, tune in to the gospel-God's good news that quiets sin's accusations! Hear that saving message! Beloved child of God, tune in to the trustworthy message of the Bible and let your heart sigh with thanksgiving. Jesus came to save sinners. Jesus came to save you! That's the good news! Crave it. Enjoy it. And stay tuned in!

*You know the message
God sent to the people of
Israel, telling the good
news of peace through
Jesus Christ, who is Lord
of all.*

-Acts 10:36



CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Lent Begins

The penitential and preparatory season of Lent starts on March 6th. The season of Lent leads the Church on a forty-day journey of repentance and prayer, of remembrance and renewal of our baptisms. 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. Lent ultimately leads us to Easter, not just Good Friday. Worship begins at 7:00 P.M. 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

- ◆ 3/6 - Three Words of Truth: Is It I?
- ◆ 3/13 - Three Words of Truth: Take Him Away!
- ◆ 3/20 - Three Words of Truth: What Is Truth?
- ◆ 3/27 - Three Words of Truth: Love One Another
- ◆ 4/3 - Three Words of Truth: Watch and Pray
- ◆ 4/10 - Three Words of Truth: I Am He

Chili and Soup Suppers

A chili supper will precede Ash Wednesday Divine Service. Soup suppers will precede our midweek Vespers in Lent. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

March Worship Themes

The Church's Lenten worship is muted and quiet. For centuries, the Church has omitted her most jubilant songs of praise during this season of repentance. We, too, follow this ancient custom and omit the Gloria

in Excelcis and "Alleluias" from our services. On the Festival of the Transfiguration we bid Alleluia farewell in song and in symbol. We do this to fast before we feast at Easter. Note that the Sundays in the Lenten season are designated Sundays in Lent not Sundays of Lent. The Sundays themselves are not considered part of the forty days of Lent but instead are islands of refreshment as we make our way to Jerusalem. As noted above, during Lent, especially in the Gospel lessons, we hear our Lord's perfect obedience in his words and in his works, all in our place.

- 3/3 - Jesus Is Revealed As The Lord Of Glory
- 3/10 - Christ Victoriously Battled Temptation For You
- 3/17 - Jesus Unfailingly Embraced Rejection For You
- 3/24 - There Is Still Time! Turn From Sin And Be Delivered
- 3/31 - Repentant Sinners Are Welcomed Into The Father's Arms



A Devotion For Lent: Up to Jerusalem

Mark 10:32 - They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

So it begins: the solemn and holy season of Lent. And look at how it begins. Only One is eager for it to start. Only One has his heart set on all that will happen in Lent. Only One leads the way.

Jesus is the center of Lent. Who doesn't know that? But we are not absent from it. Quite the contrary is the case. As far as we are concerned, Lent is all about Jesus. But as far as Jesus is concerned, Lent is all about us.

See how it all begins: Jesus is on his last journey to Jerusalem. It is perhaps

just a day before Palm Sunday. The procession of pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover has by this time grown to crowds of thousands. Everyone knows where Jesus is in that procession. Everyone knows that opposition to him has reached a fever pitch. It is no secret that the leaders of the Jews want to be rid of him. They have done everything they could to discredit him with the people, and they have failed. They have done everything they could to trick him into saying something that was either heretical or that could brand him a traitor to the Roman government, and they have failed. But no one is under any illusion that they have given up. In all of their efforts Jesus has shown them to be hypocrites and sinners. They will have none of that—there is certainly no repentance, no fleeing to Jesus for mercy. No, instead their hatred is only further enflamed.

Jesus knew it full well that day, as the procession drew near to Jerusalem. And he knew how it would end. In the verses immediately following he took the Twelve aside and spelled it all out for them again as he had before. He spelled it out in all its gruesome and ultimately glorious detail: betrayal, condemnation, mockery, spitting, flogging, and then execution and—three days later—resurrection!

See how it begins: Jesus is determined. Jesus leads the procession. Jesus can scarcely wait for it to begin and end. For to him it is all about us. He has no need to suffer for crimes. He committed none—no, not one. But for this hour he has come down from heaven so that he might suffer the torments of hell, for us, for us, for us. And he does it all so willingly. The sinners in desperate need of his saving work do not drive him on, do not push and shove him and

(Continued on page 5.)

Church Council Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2019

Members Present: Jim Buffington, Norm Riediger, Justin Kannas, Martin Fabrizio, Pastor Engel

Pastor opened with a reading from Ephesians 6:1-9 and the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman ProTem Pastor Engel at 11:32 am.

Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted with one add under New Business – Audit Committee.

Secretary's Report: Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the December 9, 2018 council meeting minutes with one correction – New Bus. 1st item – Parsonage Allowance to match exact wording from the agenda.

Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the December 16, 2018 minutes as submitted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Elders Report:

- Motion was made, seconded and passed to transfer in Scott and Vicky Drayer from Cross of Glory Ev. Lutheran Church, Washington Township, MI.
- Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept by profession of faith Dayna Remmele.
- Motion was made, seconded and passed to release from membership Holly Hoffman, Eleanor and Elise.

Trustees Report:

- Nothing specific was reported.

Financial Secretary's Report: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the report for December 2018 and the Annual Report for 2018.

Treasurer's Report: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the report.

Pastor's Report: Mission Festival will be January 27, 2019 with a Christian Education focus. We reviewed the upcoming Lent schedule. The 1st round of letters went out this week to members who have missed the past 6 weeks per recent policy. Pastor noted a particular situation in which the member followed up to Pastor with a phone call thanking Pastor and the Elders for sending the letter reminding the member of the importance and benefits of regular worship.

OLD BUSINESS

AV Committee – No report. Committee needs to meet.

Church Sign – No report. Committee needs to meet.

Budget – Motion was made, seconded and passed to present the proposed budget to the Voters at the Annual Meeting as submitted with one amendment on line 5030 was changed to \$5,000.

Nominating committee – The committee has found 1 candidate per open position. These candidates will be presented to the Voters at the Annual Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Project List – The list was updated by the Trustees last month and was briefly reviewed during the meeting. The Council will revisit the list again this summer and every year thereafter during the summer.

Audit Committee – Motion was made, seconded and passed to appoint Martin Fabrizio and Jay Remmele to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee will also audit the Women of Immanuel books. Pastor will talk to the youth group about auditing the Youth Group and Jesus Cares books.

Upcoming meeting dates were reviewed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:25. Pastor closed with the Blessing.

Respectfully Submitted,
Justin Kannas, Secretary



Sunday School Children Sing

The children will sing on Sunday, March 10th. Looking ahead, the children will also sing and participate in the procession of palms on Palm Sunday, April 14th.

Summer Music and Bible Academy Update

We have made initial plans to hold the music and Bible academy like we have the last two summers and in 2015. Watch the bulletin and newsletter for more information.

SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



Carol and Elroy Laumer moved to Willmar in about 1969. They transferred from Olivia. Elroy served the Lord, ushering and various positions on the church council. He passed away on July 20, 1914. They raised three daughters here. Carol taught Sunday School, VBS, served as Sunday School superintendent, and coordinated girl pioneers. She now does flowers.

Carol worked many years as a nurse, then as manager of Home Medical from where she retired. She enjoys her children and grandchildren, travel, and church work. She now plans to serve the Lord with mission trips, Christian Leadership workshops and opportunities to serve through the OWLS.



A Devotion For Lent: Up to Jerusalem

(Continued from page 2.)

insist, "Hurry up Lord! Get it all done for us! We can do none of it ourselves! So go, go quickly and accomplish the work of our salvation!"

No, the disciples are astonished that he is marching with such determination into that first Holy Week. And the rest of those following behind—they are afraid of what will happen. Just what is it that they are afraid of? No doubt some were afraid out of love for Jesus. But there were no doubt also many who were afraid of what would happen to them. Would there be a roundup of any and all who had anything to do with Jesus? After all, the authorities had already issued the order that anyone connected with Jesus or following him should be excommunicated from the synagogue (John 9:22). Or would there be some sort of riot, an uprising that perhaps Jesus or his disciples might lead (so little did many understand him!)? That would end in a blood-

bath at the edge of Roman swords; for they were ever ready to end the least disturbance with a sword.

And so Lent begins for us. As we relive with the disciples and the crowds that first Lent, we too are astonished. How can it be that God is so eager for our salvation? How can it be that the Father does not spare his only begotten Son in whom he was always well pleased? How can it be that the Son does not balk when he considers the cost in the agony of his soul and the torment for his body? How can it be that the Holy Spirit is in full agreement with the love of the Father and the eagerness of the Son for our salvation, so eager that the Spirit will preserve the message and instill in it faith-creating power?

So as Lent begins—these dread and most blessed 40 days—we fix our eyes on Jesus, astonished every step of the way up to the cross. And our hearts are divided; our souls are ripped in two, like the curtain in the temple. A part cries out in love to Jesus: "Don't do it! I can't bear it to see you thus tormented. A glance at the cross pierces my heart and tears at my soul. Don't do it!" And then the other part of heart and soul cries out in like anguish: "Go, Lord Jesus! Go into suffering unequalled. Endure the shame, the spitting, the mockery, the false judgment, the hatred, the abuse, yes, the torments of the cross, even the unspeakable agony of being abandoned by your Father! Go, go quickly, and accomplish everything that I need for my salvation. For if you shrink from it, if you are unwilling to do it, then I am lost, lost forever. If you leave even the smallest shred of the work for me to do, then hell is my future and my present life a cruel wasted time in hell's waiting room. So then go, Lord Jesus, into Lent. Do it for me, even for me."

And so the soul is torn in two (Matthew 27:51) like the curtain in the temple that separated God and man. Separated they were and separated they would forever remain if Jesus would not go (and go willingly) to do for us all what none of us could do in the least for himself; and certainly we would not do anything even close to what he accomplished during Lent for someone else, even if we could. With the curtain torn and the soul ripped in two, we go through Lent. We await his anguished cries from the cross. And we long for its end in . . . resurrection! For there the torn soul at last will find its peace and rest. For there the victory of Christ for us will be confirmed. For there the soul is healed at last by the assurance that because he lives, we too shall live and live most blessedly forever with him in the heaven his cross has won for us.

Behold, he goes up to Jerusalem where all will be fulfilled. Behold, we follow with deepening anguish at what we caused and at the sight of what we should suffer. Behold, we will not leave him until he relieves us by the cry, "It is finished!" and the assurance that his resurrection gives, the assurance that what was all about him is all about us.

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