

# Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**March 2020**

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

## The Great Exchange

This year in our monthly articles we are considering favorite verses from the Bible.

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Isaiah 53:5**

***"He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."***

Life is filled with exchanges. Employees exchange forty hours for a paycheck. Fans exchange forty dollars for a seat at the game (and then exchange another ten dollars for a hotdog and drink)! Every day we exchange time, money, effort, and emotion for what we hope brings us joy, peace, and satisfaction.

The Bible speaks about exchanges, too. It says that God does not want us to have any sin. In fact, he says that if we do sin, we cannot live with him because he is a sinless, holy God. Sin is so serious to God that he pronounces the death penalty for anyone who sins. He says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and "The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:20). So, who can ever hope to stand in God's presence and enjoy his favor? For try as we might, we are not perfect. Sinful thoughts, words, and acts clutter our lives.

There is good news, however. In love for us, God made an exchange. Instead of holding us under his judgment for all our wrongdoing, he placed his Son under judgment instead of us. The Bible is speaking about Jesus when it says, "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

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**God made him who had  
no sin to be sin for us,  
so that in him  
we might become the  
righteousness of God.**

**- 2 Corinthians 5:21**

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That is a great exchange! Jesus came and exchanged his life for ours. Our transgressions (times when we fail to live according to God's holy will) were taken away when Jesus was pierced on the cross. Our iniquities (all the things we think or do that don't measure up to God's perfect will) were taken away when Jesus was crushed in death. Our punishment was paid for by Jesus.

Through Jesus you have peace with God. Through his wounds you are given life with God. Through Jesus you are forgiven and loved by God. Yes, you! God chose to make that exchange for you.



## Midweek Lenten Worship

The theme for our midweek services this year is: The Son of God Goes Forth to War. Each service focuses on a distinct manner in which Jesus goes about earning our salvation.

- ✠ March 4 - Know Your Enemy
- ✠ March 11 - Rejected by Many Followers
- ✠ March 18 - Skirmishes
- ✠ March 25 - Hidden Warrior
- ✠ April 1 - Facing Satan's Ally, the World

## Soup Suppers

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 Excelsis and "Alleluias" from our services. On the Festival of the Transfiguration we said farewell to Alleluia 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.

- ✠ March 1 - Jesus Defeated the Devil in Your Place
- ✠ March 8 - God's Righteousness Comes by Faith
- ✠ March 15 - Jesus Is the Light of the Word
- ✠ March 22 - Jesus Calls to Selfless Service
- ✠ March 29 - Jesus Brings Life from Death

## Sunday School Children

All of the Sunday school children will sing on Sunday, March 22nd.

## WELS International Youth Rally - Vision 2020

The June 23-26 (we would potentially depart on June 21 and return June 27) at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. All confirmed youth from Immanuel are invited to attend. Registration fee will be paid for by Youth Group funds. For more information go to [wels.net/youthrally](http://wels.net/youthrally). PARENTS & YOUTH - we need to know by **March 13th** if you plan on attending so we can plan accordingly and get registered. Contact Virginia Fabrizio or Pat Lesteberg if you plan to attend.



## Missions Update

At our mission festival in January, we heard about unprecedented work being carried out in Vietnam. The following article from the WELS mission website ( ) shares some more information about our synod's efforts.

Sixty leaders and pastors of the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) of Vietnam met in Hanoi, Vietnam, January 6-21, 2020, to study homiletics (preaching), doctrine of the Word, and the Gospel of John. All who gathered, both the instructors and students, were blessed to learn new things from God's Word, to be strengthened in faith, and to be equipped for ministry to others.

In addition to the three courses, this training session was marked by two special events:

## Gospel Partnership Celebration

The leaders and students of the Hmong Fellowship Church requested that there be a special worship service to thank the Lord for seven

years of partnership in the gospel. Bounkeo Lor came to Vietnam to meet with the Hmong Fellowship Church for the first time in 2013. During the past seven years, the relationship between their church and the WELS has grown and a full pastoral training program has been developed. Soon, Lord willing, ground will be broken for the construction of a training center which will enable the training of the many more pastors who are eager to learn. The special worship service focused on the blessings of the Triune God poured upon us. "From the fullness of his grace, he has blessed us with grace upon grace" (John 1:16). We gave thanks to the Lord for all his blessings, including the ways in which he has equipped and used Bounkeo Lor in this work. We sang songs of praise to the LORD and rededicated ourselves to faithful service to him and his people.

## Teaching Assistants

The second group of 60 pastors will begin their training this year. Nine pastors from the first group have been chosen to serve as teaching assistants. They will assist with course preparation, classroom instruction, and assessment. The best way to learn is to teach. We are confident that these newly appointed assistants will serve well and learn much.

Students expressed their thanks once again to the people of WELS for supporting their ongoing theological training. They asked that WELS would continue to remember them in their prayers, asking especially that the Kingdom of God would continue to come to them and to many others through them.



We have received the disappointing news that we did not receive a candidate to serve at our Bible and Music academy this summer. While this wasn't what we planned or wanted, we look forward to holding these lessons next summer.



# Church Council Meeting Minutes

## January 12, 2020

Pastor Engel opened our meeting with a devotion from Colossians 1:13-23.

Rollie Nissan called our meeting to order and the agenda was approved with one addition under the Elder's report.

**The Secretary's report** from our December, 2019 meeting was read and approved.

### REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

**The Chairman:** had no report.

#### The Elders:

- Reported that they continue to contact delinquent members.
- They also reported that the issue of using a projection TV and screen for our worship services was discussed and it was determined again that a projector and screen would not be used for our worship services. The printed service bulletin is working very well and large print copies continue to be made available.
- Jim B. offered transportation to a friend of Jim K. that has need of an urgent ride to the Cities.

#### The Trustees:

- Reported that the furnace for the Narthex has been repaired and filters changed.
- The trustees have gotten an estimate for some carpet replacement in the education building.
- Snow removal has been getting done.

**The Board of Education:** had no report.

**Financial Secretary's Report:** The reports for the month of December and the last quarter of 2019 were approved by motion.

**Treasurer's Report:** Report was approved by motion.

**Planned Giving Committee Report:** No report.

#### Pastor's Report:

- Mission Festival is scheduled for January 26, 2020.
- There will be a focus on world missions. A presentation will be made during Bible class and a catered meal will follow.
- Lent begins February 26, 2020.
- Unfortunately, there is no student available for the music academy this coming summer. There were requests to MLC for seven teachers and there were only three available.
- Pastor will be attending a meeting of the MLS Governing Board in Saginaw, MI February 13-14, 2020.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### AV Committee

They are set to deliver a final report with a description of duties.

#### Budget Committee

- We discussed and approved a proposed budget for 2020 of \$180,000.
- The proposal was modified to place the monies proposed for the music teacher into the repair and maintenance category to help pay for carpet replacement.
- Also, any additional funds for the Church's sign will be held in the checking account until the landscaping portion is completed. Any funds then remaining will be returned to the trust fund.

#### Equipping Christian Witnesses

We expect to hear more about recruitment, financial aid and facility improvement at MLC.

#### Nominating Committee

Finding volunteers willing to serve on our church's council has been very challenging. Please keep this matter in your prayers. They are in search of a Financial Secretary, Elder, Trustee, and a Board of Education member.

#### Auditing Committee

Justin Kannas and Aaron Butenhoff were appointed.

### NEW BUSINESS

- The date of the April Council meeting was changed to April 5, 2020
- The Elders recommend a \$.50/hour raise for our church's secretary retroactive to Jan. 1, 2020. She will also continue to have 3(three) paid days off per year.
- There was also discussion about looking into the possibility of setting up a mechanism to allow for e-giving.

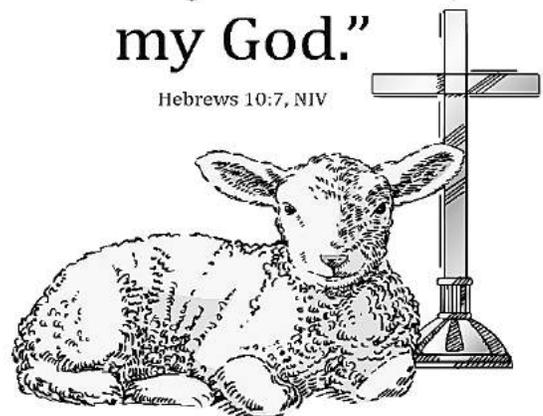
#### Upcoming meetings:

- January 19, 2020 after a meal
- February 9, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.
- March 8, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Buffington, Secretary pro tem

"I have come  
to do your will,  
my God."

Hebrews 10:7, NIV



## Worship and Winter Weather

Our practice is that we will hold services for whomever is able to attend. On the one hand, please use your sanctified common sense about traveling to and from church. On the other hand, don't allow Satan to use the weather to keep you away from the gifts of Christ in the Divine Service and from the gift of fellowship with your fellow believers. We do publish the lessons and hymns for the following Sunday in every bulletin and on our website so if you are stuck at home, you can join those who are able to attend with hearing the Word and raising your voices in hymns and prayers.



## Bible Readings for 2020

One year of a three year plan to read through the Bible is available in the Narthex. The schedule is worked so that you don't have to start with year one. The Spirit will bless your time in the Word!

## Prayers

Please remember our shut-ins in your prayers: Lolla Schiffman, Kathy Gould, Ricky Westby and Richard Thimijan.



## Lenten Meditation

Consider using Paul Gerhardt's sublime Lenten hymn as an aid for your Lenten meditation this year.

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth, Our guilt and evil bearing  
And, laden with the sins of earth, None else the burden sharing.  
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint, To slaughter led without complaint,  
That spotless life to offer, Bears shame and stripes and wounds and death,  
Anguish and mockery and says, "Willing all this I suffer."

This Lamb is Christ, the soul's great friend, The Lamb of God, our Savior;  
Him God the Father chose to send To gain for us his favor.  
"Go forth, my Son," the Father said, "And free my children from their  
dread  
Of guilt and condemnation. The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,  
But by your passion they will share The fruit of your salvation."

"Yes, Father, yes, most willingly I'll bear what you command me.  
My will conforms to your decree; I'll do what you have asked me."  
O wondrous Love, what have you done! The Father offers up his Son,  
Desiring our salvation. O Love, how strong you are to save!  
You make his bed within the grave Who built the earth's foundation.

From morn till eve, in all I do, I'll praise you, Christ, my treasure.  
To sacrifice myself for you Shall be my aim and pleasure.  
My stream of life shall ever be A current flowing ceaselessly,  
Your constant praise outpouring. I'll treasure in my memory,  
O Lord, all you have done for me, Your gracious love adoring.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*For while  
we were  
still weak,  
at the  
right time*

**Christ  
died**

*for the ungodly.*

**ROMANS 5:6**