



Emmanuel News Notes

February, 2010

Pastor Lookingbill ponders. Lent

Life is a series of temptations! We are tempted by our friends and family to do all sorts of things, some of them very bad for us, but many good. We are tempted actually to study and read instead of watching “reality” television! We can also be tempted to eat more than is healthy, and actually eat what is unhealthy for us, and that can be what we learn at home! We are tempted to dream about our future in ways that are unfamiliar to our heritage – and we just might realize those dreams. I am the only Pastor in my family and my parents’ friends all thought I would end up in the 5 & 10 cent store!

Lent is a story of the life of Jesus and it begins with his great Temptation. The First Sunday in Lent brings us the Luke account of Jesus in the wilderness around the Jordan. It’s unfamiliar territory, since he was raised as a boy in the Galilee. The desert is a place of quiet and unsettling experiences. You can get “lost” in the desert with only the hand of God to guide you there, the angels to protect you, and the Spirit to strengthen you.

When we are tempted to do something we’re not sure about, we rely on our basic values, those that we’ve been exposed to by our families, friends and perhaps the Church. If someone urges us to try a new kind of food, we’re likely to ask about it, the nutrition, the taste and the experience of the person who offered the idea. Then we’re likely to think if our family ever tried it? Did they think it was good, or not? Then we’re likely to consider the person who is “tempting” us with this new idea. What kind of person is this? Is this a friend we trust, or someone who is trying to make us a “spectacle?” I guess I’m thinking about that horseradish in the Seder meal with the confirmation class?

Jesus is out in the desert with the Devil, and he ate nothing in that place during those 40 days (a long fast). The fact that he’s with the Devil must have made him alert to the dangers of what was happening there. This is one of the “fallen angels,” aware of the power of God, but ready to confront that power with an alternate view of the world: You’re hungry, so use your power from God selfishly! You’re aware of the power in the world, so trust me to show you how to worship that power! You’re quite a specimen of human and divine nature; create a sensation by jumping off the highest point in the Temple! Test God! See if God will actually keep you alive when nature says your body will be destroyed. Do it now, and show me (the Devil) how clever you are!

It’s right out of the Book of Life, this story of Jesus in the wilderness—Temptation. We’re all tempted to think and reach and react out of our selfish needs, out of our quest for control and power, out of our self doubts and insecurities. “Just do it!” Swish! It sounds like a modern marketing challenge/temptation. And it might be right for us to accept some of that challenge, but the greatest challenge that Jesus and we face each day is to live according to the faith that truly sustains us.

Yes, we live by faith, as the Lutheran motto reminds us, as Martin Luther teaches us. For Martin Luther, it is “faith alone,” the single aspect of our life in Christ that gives us purpose, meaning and life direction. It’s not that everyone has to do the same things, be the same professionally in daily work. It’s that we are all given gifts to build up the community of faith, the family and our friends. We are alive in faith to support one another, whether it’s with a tragedy in Haiti or a friend who is sad and hurt. Jesus wasn’t in those deserted places being tempted by the Devil to show his personal strength. He was recognized in that experience as a true prophet, a true guide for others in their times of testing in life. Jesus is a moral compass, full of compassion and strength for those in doubt of the direction in life. Praised by everyone after he returned to Galilee with the power of the Spirit, Jesus taught and healed and brought hope to his companions.

It’s that Hope that our world still needs today. During this Lenten period in 2010, will you be willing to bring Hope to those who are wavering in their faith, wondering where God is and what to do about all the stress and disappointment in life? If you are willing to endure the temptations in your life, set a straight path and bring courage to those who wait, then know that you are standing on firm ground, you are being yourself and more than yourself: You are being one of the faithful followers of the Way that Jesus our Lord has set before us. It is a Way that leads to an eternal and blessed Home. Our Lord has loved us that much, and more.

In Christ’s Service,

Jan P. Lookingbill, Pastor

DATES OF NOTE

- Feb 7 Souper Bowl Sunday (page 4)
- Feb 11 Interfaith study at Emmanuel (page 2)
- Feb 12-13 Midnight Run (page 4)
- Feb 16 Shrove Tues. pancake supper (page 8)
- Feb 21 Parents of youth meeting (page 8)
- Feb 21 Skating (page 8)
- Feb 22 Fun Bunch Lunch (page 8)
- Feb 28 Chili Cook Off etc (pages 5 and 8)

WORSHIP

Sunday 8:30 & 11:00
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

INTERFAITH STUDY AT EMMANUEL 11 FEBRUARY AT 7 P.M.

Our first three sessions of the Interfaith Study this year brought 23 people together each evening to study the intriguing Book of Deuteronomy. I am delighted to be a part of such an exciting and unique program as we have with Rabbi Emeritus Leonard Cahan and Har Shalom congregation and we will continue our joint study on 11 February at Emmanuel.

This year's study began with an overview of the Book of Deuteronomy as a "unique" testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures. Since it was "discovered" by Josiah's priests in 621 B.C. and formed the basis of the sweeping reforms of his kingship, it can possibly be viewed as a "reformation" within the Hebrew community? We continued our study of the significance for Deuteronomy with an in depth look at the "Shema," the ancient call to worship and basic "identifying" creed of the Jewish community. Jesus uses and some theologians say he "expands" the impact of the Shema in his teaching in the New Testament. We are continuing our study with the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy and its influence on Jewish theology and the Christian Church.

Join Rabbi Cahan and Pr. Lookingbill for the next Thursday evening meeting of this study and bring along a friend or two to share in our "unique" study of Christian/Jewish thought. If you need transportation to the evening programs, please let the Church office or Pr. Lookingbill know.

THE WEDNESDAY MORNING WINTER BIBLE ENCOUNTER

Pr. Lookingbill will conclude the winter study of the Book of James on 3 February. James is the one book of the New Testament that Martin Luther would have liked excluded because he thought it conflicted with his strong emphasis on "justification by faith alone!" Among our experiences with the Book of James this winter has come the realization that James, Paul and Luther were not too far apart in their theology that faith can be seen in the "works" that the faithful share. Applying that principle in the different times of these three men of the Church alerts us to the need to interpret the Gospel good news in every generation.

On 10 February we will start a new study of 2 Corinthians, building on our fall study of the First Letter to the Corinthians. St. Paul continues his dialogue with the Christians in Corinth to "build up" the Church and educate the young Christians there to know the love of Christ and the unity of the whole Church. Join us on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. for the study and stay for lunch together at noon.

THE WINTER WEDNESDAY EVENING STUDY

Pr. Lookingbill will conclude the Wednesday evening study of Karen Armstrong's newest book, "The Case for God" on 10 February. The very animated group has been invigorated by Karen Armstrong's intellectual study of where God has been in our history and in our current society. Her emphasis has been on the "practice" of religion as a means to glimpse the divine, which some call "God." The tension between science and religion has been one of the main aspects of the study. It's not too late to join the group as we summarize and conclude our study together.

On 24 February the Wednesday evening study group will begin a Lenten Study of Roy Enquist's new book, *The Courage to Believe: How human life may flourish*. This is a 2009 publication from Dr. Enquist, a professor Emeritus of Gettysburg Seminary and the former Canon Ecumenist at the Washington National Cathedral. There is a strong possibility that Dr. Enquist will join the group for part of our study this winter. Dr. Enquist says the intent of the book is to "reconnect power to moral responsibility." It's clear that moral life is the next great debate among all Christians. If you would like a book, please let the Church office know.

We meet for supper in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 and then move to study in the Christian Education room beginning at 7:30. You need not have supper with us to engage in the study. Please let the Church office and the Pastor know you are planning to

Parish Meets Budget —by the skin of its teeth

	Budgeted	Actual
Income 2009		
Offering	\$ 500,000	\$ 493,087
Other	<u>130,400</u>	<u>137,496</u>
Total	630,400	630,583
Expenditures 2009		
Expected	640,042	629,426
Surplus (deficit)	(9,642)	1,157

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From the Council President:

Greetings

By the time you read this, the congregation will have approved a 2010 budget.

These are not good times for non-profits. The Metro DC Synod of the ELCA was compelled to make adjustments to its budget and to lay off staff.

In that context we should be very pleased with how 2009 ended. Last month, I wrote that we could realistically expect to make our offering budget, but that offering budget would still leave us \$18,000 short due to a budgeted deficit and unexpected expenses in 2009.

We ended the year with a very small surplus – a very small surplus. But still, a surplus. And for that I thank you.

Especially encouraging is that we did that even though we lost the fourth Sunday in Advent to a blizzard. Equally encouraging was the report by Wayne Hunley that several people brought in their envelopes for that fourth Sunday in Advent before Christmas.

Our budget for 2010 includes an increase in offerings and increases in property use income. But those are completely offset by increases in the property budget. Some of that is to make up for spending supported by the Endowment Fund and some is the property tax on the Parsonage that is now included in the budget.

The result is that there is no money for compensation increases. This is not an easy decision.

Over the past five years, congregational giving has remained very flat, while church attendance has declined slowly but steadily. That means that we all have been digging a little deeper to support our church.

But we need to find ways to reach out to the community to invite more worshippers to Emmanuel and to participate in this congregational life that we all value so much.

At the end of 2010 we will be entering our Jubilee year. 2011 will mark fifty years in the life of this congregation.

Let's us all use 2010 to reinvent Emmanuel as a vibrant part of the Christian life of this corner of Montgomery county.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions throughout the year.

Peace and Joy

Jim McGee

1920Jimmy@gmail.com

Christian Education Notes

Sundays

Children and Youth Sunday School - 10 a.m. in the Atrium and Classrooms

All classes in February will be regular classes with short opening for pre-K to sixth graders.

Adult Forum - 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

The Adult Forum is an opportunity to have a Christian discussion on the issues of the day. All are invited.

Adult Bible Study - 10 a.m. in the Parlor

The Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study invites you to join them in the Parlor at 10:00 a.m. They will study prayer in the Bible by looking at ten different prayers that are taught in the Bible. They will use the *Daring to Draw Near: Prayers that Help Us Know Who God Is* (by John White) as a study guide. Bring your Bibles, or pick one up from the shelves in the Parlor and come join in. Ginger Boone will lead the group. Further information may be obtained by calling the church office at 301-365-5733.

Wednesdays

Wednesday Morning Bible Encounter with Pastor

Lookingbill 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and enjoy a lively discussion on the letter of James and later on the second letter of Paul to the church at Corinth.

Confirmation

During February we will begin exploring our faith and the church.

February 1 – Regular Class

February 8 – Regular Class

February 15 – No Class due to Presidents' Day

February 22 – Regular Class

February 28 – Confirmation Led Worship and an Afternoon Retreat

Vacation Bible School

The Christian Education Committee is pleased to announce that we will have a full day (8:30 – 4:30 p.m.) Vacation Bible School during the week of June 21 -25, 2010. We are also planning to offer aftercare until 6 p.m. during that week. Staff from the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry facility, Mar-Lu-Ridge, will be running the program with support from Emmanuel's volunteers.

Details are still being worked on, but we wanted to let everyone know so you can mark your calendars for that week.

FROM THE PARISH NURSE: February is American Heart Month

Coronary heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the United States. Stroke is the No. 3 cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of serious disability. That's why it's so important to reduce your risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly and properly if warning signs occur.

Choose to be heart-healthy!!

Daily physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease by improving blood circulation throughout the body, keeps weight under control, improves blood cholesterol levels, prevents and manages high blood pressure

Establishes good heart-healthy habits in children and counters the conditions (obesity, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol levels, poor lifestyle habits, etc.) that lead to heart attack and stroke later in life

All children age 2 and older should participate in at least 30 minutes of enjoyable, moderate-intensity physical activities every day that are developmentally appropriate and varied

In older people, helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and maintains quality of life and independence longer

Some dietary recommendations-Eat a variety of nutritious foods from all the food groups, choose lean meats, low-fat dairy products, reduce trans fat in your diet. Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol.

Also, don't smoke tobacco — and stay away from tobacco smoke

Important risk factors for heart disease that you can do something about are:

- High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Being overweight
- Being physically inactive
- Having a family history of early heart disease

A crucial step in determining your risk is to see your doctor for a thorough checkup. Your doctor can be an important partner in helping you set and reach goals for heart health.

Adapted from www.americanheart.org

Midnight Run Retreat to Help the Homeless

February 12 - 13, Friday to Saturday

The high school youth will join a small group of people from the Coalition for the Homeless and from Luther Place to hand out food and clothing to homeless people living on the street. This is an organized event that has been successfully, and safely, done with youth groups in downtown Washington, D.C. for years.

In order to help out our neighbors in need living in the street, we need your help. No later than January 31st, we will have a box in the narthex to collect items which we will give out to those living on the streets. Below is a list of items we need:

Food and Bottled-Water: Granola Bars, cheese & crackers, peanut butter & crackers, apples, bananas and other packaged foods that do not need to be cooked.

Clothing: New Socks, New or Like New gloves or mittens, stocking caps

Toiletries: Soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, lotion

Other Items: Backpacks and small duffle bags, blankets

NOTE: We cannot accept coats this year.

February 7, Sunday

Souper Bowl Sunday

Our youth will hold soup-pots at the church doors on Souper Bowl Sunday again this year. They will join more than 15,000 youth groups in churches across the country collecting money to help feed and house the needy. In the last three years we have raised \$1,430 to go toward help those in need. This year we will be collecting to help with the cost of sending youth and adults to the Chi Rho Work Camp in Neon, Kentucky. Just like last year, you will also have a chance to cheer on one of the teams in the Super Bowl by placing your donation in the collection pot for that team. You can also choose to donate to the "I don't watch football" pot.

In 2009, Emmanuel's youth joined 13,778 other youth groups to raise \$10,244,799 to help those in need. On Super Bowl Sunday, we will report the amount raised to the Souper Bowl of Caring Headquarters so they can announce the total amount raised during the radio broadcast of the game (we are still hoping that they will announce it during the TV broadcast). Since Souper Bowl of Caring became a national grassroots event in 1993, more that \$61 million has gone to help those in need.

Please support the youth of Emmanuel in this effort to love our neighbors by dropping a few dollars into the soup-pots on Souper Bowl Sunday.



LEADERCAST

BE THE ONE 05.07.2010

Be a part of our efforts to attract new members to our Emmanuel community, on May 7, Emmanuel's Fellowship Hall when we will receive a direct satellite feed and host a one day inspiring Leadercast event! Members of our congregation should purchase tickets as well as invite and host others they interact with on a daily basis. Many of these acquaintances would not set foot in a church were it not for a compelling reason...and these speakers and their messages will inspire them. The 2010 speakers will be:

Jim Collins, Author of *Good to Great*, *How the Mighty Fall*, and co-author of *Built to Last*

Tony Dungy, Retired head coach for the Indianapolis Colts

Steve Uzzell, Award-winning photographer and former staff member of *National Geographic*

John C. Maxwell, Leadership expert, best-selling author

Connie Podesta, Expert in the psychology of human behavior and leadership development

Jim Goodnight, CEO of SAS Institute, Inc.

Ed Bastian, President of Delta Air Lines

Ben Carson, Neurosurgeon and Professor of Pediatric Neuro surgery at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom

Mark Sanborn, Best-selling author, *The Fred Factor*

Chip Heath, Author of *Made to Stick*, Columnist for *Fast Company*, and Stanford Professor

Each speaker will illuminate practical principles and leadership insights which will help attendees advance their leadership capabilities at **all levels, positions and stages**. **You will learn:** The keys to connecting with others · **How to** set yourself apart from the competition and influence others · **New ideas** for creative problem solving · **Best practices** for leading in challenging circumstances · **How to** create strong team cultures · **How to** avoid, detect and reverse decline

Because we know that leadership is more than just learning. It's more than just growing. It's more than status or even experience. Real leadership is about service. It's about sacrifice. It's about having the will to take action. It's about positively influencing the lives of those we lead. Authentic leadership is about being the one.

We are limited to 50 tickets and prices for this day long event offered at \$99 per person which includes a continental breakfast, catered lunch and Leadercast workbook. The fee for those individuals or organizations purchasing 5 or more tickets will be \$79 per ticket. **All proceeds from the event will go to Emmanuel Lutheran Church.** Please contact the church office or Kurt Einwaechter to purchase tickets. Visit www.leadercast.com for more info and reserve a spot for yourself and a friend today!

ECUMENICAL SERVICE FEATURED IN WEEK OF PRAYER FOR UNITY

On January 20, Emmanuel was privileged to be the host of the annual Worship Service during the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church and Emmanuel have alternated for the past several years with worship for our two congregations. The services and fellowship each year have brought us closer together as we share our Christian heritage and prayers for mutual affirmation of our Christian faith.

This year we were honored to have Fr. Avelino A. Gonzalez, the Associate Ecumenical Officer of the Diocese of Washington, D.C. as our preacher. Fr. Gonzalez lives in Gaithersburg and regularly meets with the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue group in their ongoing study of our historical and contemporary relationships.

New Art Exhibition

Emmanuel is pleased to have local artist, **Nancy Heindl**, displaying her artwork in the fellowship hall during February and March. Take some time after church to enjoy her oils and pastels of places around the area.

Ms Heindl lives on Victory Lane in Potomac and often paints plein air landscapes locally. She has won many awards for her artwork. She is a member of the Frederick County Art Association, the Delaplaine Visual Arts and Education Center, the Rockville Art League, the Montgomery County Plein Air Artists, and the Frederick Plein Air Painters.

Youth Challenge the Church Council to a Wii Rematch

February 28, 5:30 p.m.

The youth are issuing an official challenge to a Wii Rematch against the Church Council to take place during the Chili Cook-off on February 28, 2010. Several Wii games will be set up again this year and there will be some sports different from last year.

All are invited to come out and cheer for a favorite youth or church council member. Also remember to buy your ticket(s) for the Chili Cook-Off that will be going on at the same time.

Parish Vital Records

Births

Paul Matthew Thorn, born 31 December 2009, son of Paul and Kerri Thorn

Deaths

Ann L. Sandberg, Ph.D., 31 December 2009 while in hospice care in Livingston, Montana

Marilyn Sullivan, 11 January 2010, friend of Marla Davis

Dean Thrush, 11 January 2010, son-in-law of Paul and Virginia Wright



ELCA International Disaster Response for Haiti, Thrivent will match donations

Financial gifts are urgently needed to bring immediate relief and continued hope for our brothers and sisters in Haiti. About 3 million lives, one-third of Haiti's population, are affected by this earthquake. Your gifts to ELCA International Disaster Response, designated for Haiti Earthquake Relief, will be used entirely (100 percent) for immediate relief and ongoing recovery in Haiti. Thrivent Financial is matching \$1 for every \$2 donated.

Make your check payable to Emmanuel Lutheran Church and designate "Haiti Earthquake Relief."



The Transfiguration of Our Lord

The last Sunday before the beginning of Lent (this year it is February 15), is usually celebrated by Lutherans as the feast of the Transfiguration. Jesus and three of his disciples go on a mount where Jesus is transfigured before them, becoming wrapped in glory and accompanied by Moses and Elijah. It is an impressive story of Jesus' life and one which causes much puzzlement—what is one to make of such an event?

Peter, James, and John were not too sure what they'd seen and heard. Jesus told them to keep the story to themselves until after "the Son of Man" had risen from the dead. That didn't make it any easier for them to understand. Peter had wanted to honor Jesus and the two visitors with celebratory booths, but Jesus prevented it. So we puzzle about the glorification of Jesus prior to His crucifixion, not that Jesus was glorified, but that ordinary mortals were allowed to witness the event.

Why keep it a secret? Is this somehow meant for our edification as well as that of Peter, James, and John? Certainly, it is testimony to the fact that God had plans for Jesus and that Jesus was fully aware that something special was about to happen. Can we hear of this Transfiguration and not be in awe of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus knew was about to be his? Perhaps being in awe is the proper way to hear this story.

Attention College and Graduate School Students

Work Camp
June 6 - June 12, 2010

Young Adult Mission Trip (Chi Rho Style)

Pastor Lewis is looking for college students for a mission trip/work camp in Neon, Kentucky where we will help in one of the poorest counties in the United States. For those who have gone to Chi Rho in high school, this is the same place. We go expecting to do anything and come away gaining what we did not expect.

This trip is open to all college and grad school students. Please contact Pastor Lewis for an application or more information.

Pastor Lewis considers..... some amphibians

It's February and that means we will begin Lent soon. Some of you may remember that in the past as Lent approaches I talk with the children about F.R.O.G. (Fully Rely On God). I did not come up with that idea, but I think it is an important thing to focus on during Lent. Many of you have also seen my "Peace Frog" stole that Linda Guild created for me. Besides appreciating the symbol of the peace frog, I also like and support Peace Frog's herpetology research which uses the fact that frogs are an indicator species that helps scientists measure the health of a biosystem.

Therefore, sticking with the frog theme of this letter, I want to share a quick story. "There was once a scientist who wanted to learn more about frogs' leaping ability. He would place a frog on the table, get behind it and yell, 'JUMP!'" The frog would jump and the scientist would record this data. Next he decides to surgically remove one of the frog's hind legs and the repeat the experiment. Once again when he yelled, 'JUMP!'" The frog would jump, albeit with a little more difficulty than before. Again the scientist operated on the frog and removed its second hind leg. This time when he shouted, 'JUMP!' the frog just sat there. After looking at the data the scientist concluded that frogs without legs cannot hear." Apparently this scientist thought it was enough that a frog have a head and a torso for it to be able to jump.

As silly as this idea may be, many people in the church make an equally silly conclusion. Allow me to continue with the imagery as I explain. Think of the body of the frog as the body of the Church (Church meaning both the Universal Church to which all Christians belong, down to the local congregation and everything in between). The head is the church leadership and the torso is the publicly gathered and visible community (this includes worship). Often times the Church seems to miss the point that it needs legs to move around and impact the larger community around it. The church frog needs church legs.

The Church is trying to leap into twenty-first century ministry without legs to propel it. If the gospel of Christ is to be believed and passed on to the next and future generations, then the whole Church needs to be intact (St. Paul made the same conclusion in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Today, a particular part of the Church's body needs attention, support, and encouragement – the part of the church that lives day in and day out in the homes, schools, and workplaces of the faithful.

Martin Luther taught us, among other things, that the Church is made up of a partnership between our faith life in the congregation as well as in the home. The basic building block for healthy congregational life begins in the home, school and workplace. One hour of worship and one hour of Christian education on a Sunday is not enough. We need to bring legs to the body by embracing and acting on our faith outside the walls of the church building. This means supporting church programs that take place other than

on Sunday mornings, bringing daily prayer into the home, taking time to focus on our faith-based values and morals when we are in the secular world, and being truly involved with Church life throughout the week. Remember, God was at work six days of the week creating our world – and in response we should be at work for God all week as well, taking time to rest, recharge and reconnect on Sunday.

The image of the church frog does convey a very encouraging sign as well. The Church is actually healthier than we imagine. The Church does have legs, but often lacks or fails in ways to exercise them. The Church tends to focus on the frog's head and torso much more than the legs. Too often attendance figures and budgets are used to measure church health and effectiveness, but that does not look at the Church's true ministry because that is an immeasurable quality of the Holy Spirit's work.

In other words it is all about faith and how we respond to it. While Martin Luther preached against the idea that good works will get us in heaven, he did not say that we should not do good works. We should show God our love through loving our neighbor, through doing God's work with our hands. Faith is more than coming to church on Sunday Morning (which is still a strong element of faith) it is also how we take that faith into the world and give it legs.

So, how do we form that faith? There are five basic principles that come out of the Center for Youth Ministries at Wartburg Seminary.

1. Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships in our homes and congregations.
2. The Church is a living partnership between the ministry of the congregation and the ministry of the home.
3. Where Christ is present in faith, there Church is also.
4. Faith is caught much more often than taught.
5. If we want Christian children and youth, we need Christian adults to be examples of what it means to live in faith.

Here at Emmanuel, the Youth and Family Ministries Team, as well as other ministry committees, are dedicated to helping with these five principles. For those of you who are already involved, we invite you to become more deeply involved. For those who have not been involved, or have been away for a while, we invite you to become involved with the ministries of our congregation. Help us to help you bring about better functioning Church legs.

PAX,

Pastor Robert Lewis +

Youth and Family Calendar

February 7, Sunday

Souper Bowl Sunday

Our youth will hold soup-pots at the church doors on "Souper Bowl" Sunday again this year to collect funds to help those in need. Please see the write-up on page 4 in this issue for more information.

February 12 - 13, Friday to Saturday

Midnight Run Retreat to Help the Homeless

The high school youth will join a small group of people from the Coalition for the Homeless and Luther Place to hand out food and clothing to homeless people living on the street. This is an organized event that has been successfully, and safely, done with youth groups in downtown Washington, D.C. for years. Please see page 4 in this issue for more information.

February 21, Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Youth Parents' Meeting

All Parents of youth are encouraged to attend this important meeting. During this meeting, information will be given about the Spring and Summer programs, Work Camp, a new Dads' Program and Ministry, plus the sexual ethics course that we would like to put into place this Spring. So, grab a cup of coffee and come up to the Christian Education Room after fellowship for this short meeting.

February 21, Sunday, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Family and Youth Ice Skating at Cabin John Rink

Everyone, Children, Parents, Youth and Adults are invited to come out for an afternoon of fun on the ice. Skating is \$6.25 each and if you need to rent skates, they have them there for \$3.25. Come have fun skating and watching Pastor Lewis attempt a triple-triple (three times around the rink without falling x 3). The Ice rink is located in Cabin John Park located at **10610 Westlake Drive** near the Montgomery Mall.

February 22, Monday

Fun Bunch Lunch

Come join us for a catered lunch as well as some fellowship and enjoy the rescheduled presentation on famous (or nearly famous) Stained glass Windows.

February 28, Sunday

Confirmation Led Worship and Retreat Day

The confirmation classes will lead worship at both services and then have an afternoon retreat with the two pastors. All confirmands should be at both services and the retreat.

February 28, Sunday, 5:30 p.m.

5th Annual Chili Cook-Off

Come on out to taste some Chili (including a vegetarian chili), have some dessert, and enjoy great fellowship. We will also have some other food fare for those who prefer something other than chili. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 3- 12, with a \$25 cap for families.

Also during the Chili Cook-Off we will have our *Second Annual Wii Challenge*. The Youth have issued a challenge to the Church Council to play Wii Sports against them. Last year it was a tie between the youth and the church council. Proceeds go toward the 2009 Youth Gathering. See write-up on pages 5 and 10 for more information.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

March 19 – 21 – Shekinah Confirmation Retreat

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Mardi Gras Style

Tuesday, February 16, 6 - 8 p.m.

Come join us as we celebrate the end of the Epiphany season and prepare for Lent with our Mardi Gras-style Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. This year we will continue the tradition of "Are You Smarter than a Sunday School Student," as well as the "Useless Talent Contest" as well as provide some entertainment. So come on out for a good time and good food. This is also a great time to bring a friend.

Tickets are \$7 a person or a family ticket for \$30. Tickets can be purchased either in advance on Sundays, or at the door. Proceeds will go toward the 2012 Youth Gathering.



Chili Cookoff

Sunday, February 28, 5:30 p.m.

Come on out to taste some Chili (including a vegetarian chili), have some dessert, and enjoy great fellowship. We will also have some other food fare for those who prefer something besides chili.

Last year we had fourteen (14) entries and it would be great if we could add a few more this year. Contact Pastor Lewis about your entry into the cook-off.

Tickets will be on sale in the Narthex two weeks before, but you can always get tickets at the door. You can also contact Pastor Lewis in the church office for tickets during the week. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 3- 12 with a \$25 maximum cap for families. Proceeds benefit youth programs. Bring the whole family. Bring a friend (or two).



Did you know . . .

American Composer John Cage wrote a work in 1952 titled 4' 33", the three movements of which are performed without a single note being played?

The content of the composition is meant to be perceived as the sounds of the environment that listeners hear while it is performed, as opposed to just four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence.

Just to put you at ease, there are no plans to offer that particular composition to the Emmanuel family – at least not anytime soon! (From my perch at the rear, I see you squirm enough during moments of silence).

We are now in that post-Christmas into Epiphany season alluded to in last month's column. The music from the Adult Choir has reflected these times. By the time this publication reaches you we will be only a breath or two away from Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent. Not being raised as a Lutheran (my father was a Seventh-Day Adventist minister), I still find it very difficult to refrain from saying "Alleluia" when it is personally warranted. But, as dictated by this denomination, I will hold my tongue -- and hopefully keep my hands in check as well!

Due to the events of early December at which time I took a fairly significant fall, the injuries that resulted from it are going to keep me off the organ bench for what I hope will be only a short time. Surgery to repair a severely torn rotator cuff is the reason for my leave. Not being in a position to play should have only a limited effect on fulfilling my duties, however. During that period several highly qualified organists and pianists, will offer musical leadership. Some will be old friends to this congregation.

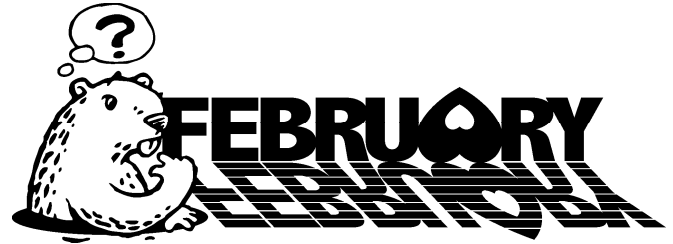
The choir and bell ringers are already in preparation mode for the Lent and Easter seasons. I am pleased to announce that the Adult Choir and I unanimously chose to reprise one of the first cantatas for this season presented under my directorship, "Walk Worthy of the Lord." The composer is the sensitive American composer, Joseph Martin. He is very skillful and has an uncanny ability to weave his original compositions with clever settings of recognizable "standards" of the season. It will be presented at the eleven o'clock service on Palm Sunday, March 28.

As is usually the case for the cantata presentations, we are expecting several additional singers, not regular members of the choir, to join us. I invite you, and individuals you may know who enjoy singing, to come and join us as well. I urge you to spread the word about this event to everyone you know. It's a painless way to reach out and become evangelists – bringing others into our church family and sharing this worship experience.

Several have asked about the annual Treasures of Emmanuel program which traditionally takes place in early January. Last month I indicated that it would be delayed. Now, given the circumstances, it is like that this Funderful Evening of Music and Frolic will be deferred until sometime in May at the earliest. More information will be forthcoming.

Until next time, I am
Faithfully yours,

Dingwall Fleary
dingwallfleary@verizon.net



If the groundhog sees his shadow we'll have six more weeks of winter, if he doesn't, winter will end on March 21. In these days of worry about global warming, the idea that winter might end sooner than scheduled has some appeal, especially after some of the icy winds and snows of this season. Have you counted the days until the beginning of spring? The groundhog couldn't possibly be wrong.



And then there is the matter of preparations for Lent. It seems that at one time, giving up fats and meat was a discipline practiced fairly widely. So, if you had fat or meat in the house, you felt the need to eat it up and if you couldn't do it in the usual course of events you had a party. Thus, we're told, began the season of "carnival" [more or less Latin for farewell to meat] or "Mardi gras" [fat Tuesday]. On Tuesday before the beginning of lent, it was the practice to go to confession to be ready for the proper observance of Lenten fasting. This shriving gives rise to the name "Shrove Tuesday" and we celebrate it by eating up the last of our fat in pancakes.



Is fasting required during Lent? No. Is it encouraged? Sure. There are few of us who would not benefit from fewer calories in our diet. But fasting is more than reducing our intake. It is knowingly reducing it with the idea that it focuses our minds on a sense of sacrifice. Giving up whale steak might be a genuine sacrifice, if that's your only source of meat. Giving up chocolates is somewhat different. If chocolate is your comfort food, giving it up for Lent might well engender a sense of sacrifice. Giving up french fries with your sandwich or a soft drink with your meal might seem like a sacrifice, too. But a sacrifice should cause you to suffer a bit and if you can direct the idea of that suffering towards spiritual growth, then maybe the sacrifice has merit. If you can't, give up giving up for Lent.

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