

Immanuel Newsletter - April 2020



From Pastor Scott

Before my dad became a pastor, he was an art teacher at a high school in a suburb of Minneapolis while I was a high school student. Even though he was color blind, he loved to paint pictures. I remember our family's summer trip to Washington, DC in 1973 when we got to see the Smithsonian Institute and my dad walked with me through the rooms where paintings by the great masters were displayed. I can't recall the painting that we were standing in front of when he explained to me that many paintings have a foreground and a background. Like this painting of the Mona Lisa, the foreground shows the subject and what is important at the time – the woman who seems to be smiling. The background helps to put her in place and not make it look like she's just floating in the air.

I think about the foreground and the background because they help me remember how we, as Christians, are called to respond in times like this when we hear of COVID-19, the economy, and the uncertainty ahead. Jesus gives us a reminder of the foreground and background of life in Matthew 6:25-34. The foreground of life is the things we're facing right in front of us. They can feel like they're on top of us. The background of life is the invisible unseen spiritual realities that are behind us and hold us in place. These two things aren't divided into the "sacred" and the "secular". They are united, just like Jesus was full man and full God.

In our life now, we may feel that COVID-19, the economy, and our uncertain future are all that we see right in front of us. It is easy to focus on our immediate problems and lose sight of God's divine eternal background that can help us put everything in perspective. We need to remember that it's only the foreground.

In such a time as this, God reminds us that He's not dismissing our concerns but he wants us to keep them in perspective. In light of God's background, Jesus teaches us two things: first to avoid something and second to pursue something. Jesus tells us to not be anxious and then he says, "Seek first the kingdom of God".

What's the reason for our peace? If you look at the first word of Matthew 6:25, you see the word "therefore". Whenever I see that word in the Bible I like to ask myself, "What is it there for?" because it's pointing to something before that Bible verse that tells my why I should do something or why it is true. The reason for our peace in an anxious time? Because God sees, He hears, He knows. God cares and he supplies our needs.?

Our problem gets to be that we only look at the foreground of life and ask the wrong things. We ask things like "What if I don't get...? What if this happens...? What if my needs...?" So, what does Jesus do? In Matthew 6:26, Jesus brings the background of life into our view. He says, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?". Jesus gets us to see the background of life – that if God provides for the birds, he'll do even more for us as His children.

You may be asking today, “Where is God?”. That’s why I like the name of our church family – Immanuel... “God with us”. God is in both the foreground and the background of our lives today – He’s in ALL places.

The question that brings peace, hope and strength is “Who is my God? Who is our God? What do we believe as Christians?”. I believe in God the Father Almighty... that’s the background of our lives and our faith.

Then, Jesus says, “Seek first the kingdom”. In Matthew 6:32, Jesus connects our anxiety with our seeking. He says, “The pagans (that’s those who don’t believe in God) run after these things: health, wealth, and material possessions – the physical things of life that we can touch. That’s all that unbelievers want and that’s all they talk about. That’s why they’re anxious about losing it.

See what Jesus is saying here? Our anxieties – our worries – show what is important to us in our life. We get anxious about the things we put our hope in. That’s why, earlier in Matthew 6, Jesus says that where your treasure is your heart will be also. In other words, whatever you’re hoping in - what you investing your time, talent and treasure in – is going to have a tight grip on your heart.

So, it’s almost like Jesus is telling us, “If you want to be anxious about something, let it be the kingdom of God.” Jesus is saying to not put our ultimate hope in this life but put into the life we will have after our physical death. So, seeking the kingdom of God involves two things: remembering our hope of heaven and showing that love of Jesus in our world here and now. Christians 2,000 years ago took Jesus’ words to heart and changed the world. God is giving us a chance as His people to do it again.

Now, we’re not going to be able to share God’s love with other people perfectly, but we know the One (Jesus) who has. In Jesus’ life he had an attitude of peace and sacrificial actions of love. Even when he hung on the cross, he asked God to forgive those who crucified him. The things that God requires of us, Jesus has already fulfilled for us – for all of those who put their faith in him. We not saved by our peace and love for others. We’re saved by Jesus’ love for us and trusting in that love as we share it with others.

My friends and faith family of Immanuel, as people who call themselves Christians, we are called to be a witness to the kingdom of God in this uncertain time. In the coming weeks and months ahead, may God lead us in how to do that in creative and helpful ways with our family, neighbors, community and our world.

God’s peace be with you,
Pastor Scott





OUR NEW WAY OF CONNECTING WITH IMMANUEL'S FAITH FAMILY

USING 'VIRTUAL' CONNECTING

It's been a fast adjustment for all of us to get used to using the Internet to connect with our faith family of Immanuel. Some churches have been using "Facebook Live" but Immanuel's use of Zoom lets us see and talk with each other at the same time. It's a great way for the children of Immanuel to share their thoughts with Pastor Scott during the children's message in worship, for all of us to connect through during our "virtual coffee time" after worship, have a discussion during our Adult Sunday School class, and have "virtual" meetings together.

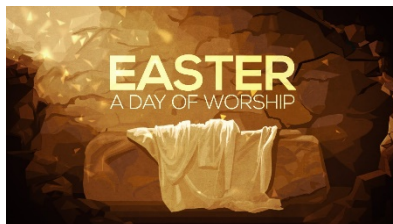
Please note on the April calendar of this newsletter that there is a Zoom.com meeting number after each activity for our church. If you wish to join in that activity, please log onto Zoom with your laptop and enter the meeting number. If you have a smartphone or other electronic device that connects with the Internet, please put the following in your browser to join: <https://zoom.us/j/> then enter the meeting number without any dashes in it.

If you have any questions about how to use Zoom, please contact Pastor Scott (402.499.4444) and he can help you get connected.



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES

We will be having our Holy Week and Easter worship services online through Zoom.com



Please note that the Zoom.com "meeting" numbers are listed beneath each worship service on this newsletter's April 2020 calendar. On your laptop computer, just log go to Zoom.com and enter the meeting number for that worship service and you're in. If you have a smartphone or iPad, please enter <https://zoom.us/j/> and then the meeting number without the dashes in it in your device's browser to join in.

On Easter Sunday morning, we will be having a "virtual Easter breakfast" at 8 a.m. on Sunday, April 12th. Feel free to join our Immanuel breakfast in your pajamas at your breakfast table if you wish. This will be a fun time for all of us to connect with each other over the Internet. Pastor Scott has the ability through Zoom to have some of us in different "chat rooms" if anyone wishes to spend a little time in a smaller group that morning, besides being in one large group.

Our Easter "special offering" will be going to support the Ceresco Public Library. Please use your **LIGHT BLUE** Easter offering envelope for April 12th to direct your gift to the Ceresco Public Library. All offerings given in the regular **WHITE** Easter envelope will go toward Immanuel's mission and support.



With the recent changes happening because of COVID-19, we're excited to share that we've launched online giving at Immanuel through Tithe.ly, a safe and secure giving platform that allows you to give your offering as a one-time or recurring gift.

You can get started by using one of the options below:

1. Log into Tithe.ly on your laptop:

Since this is your first time giving with [Tithe.ly](#) you will be prompted to create an account that you can use for all future gifts. When selecting which church to give to, be sure to type "**Immanuel Lutheran Church**" and then scroll down the menu until you find our church in **Ceresco, Nebraska** and click on it. That way your gift will be directed to **our** church and not another Immanuel.

- The first time you will also need to add your credit/debit card or ACH/banking info.
- Once your account has been created you won't need to enter your personal or payment information. Just enter your PIN and give!
- A reminder you have the ability to set your gift up as recurring.

2. Giving App:

Download the Tithe.ly App from the [App Store](#) (iPhone) or [Google Play Store](#) (Android). Once you've downloaded the app select your church and follow the same steps as above.

Since this is your first time giving with [Tithe.ly](#) you will be prompted to create an account that you can use for all future gifts. When selecting which church to give to, be sure to type "**Immanuel Lutheran Church**" and then scroll down the menu until you find our church in **Ceresco, Nebraska** and click on it. That way your gift will be directed to **our** church and not another Immanuel.

- The first time you will also need to add your credit/debit card or ACH/banking info.
- Once your account has been created you won't need to enter your personal or payment information. Just enter your PIN and give!
- A reminder you have the ability to set your gift up as recurring.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Immanuel's church treasurer, Aaron Haake at 402.301.8210 and he'll be happy to assist you further.

Thank you for your generosity and partnering with us to build God's kingdom. See you online this Sunday at 10:15 a.m. for "virtual" worship together!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PLANNING MEETING
Monday, April 20th 7 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting on Zoom.com
If “social distancing” has ended, we’ll meet at Immanuel.

Join us on Zoom.com for our April 20th planning meeting at 7 p.m. If the need to do “social distancing” has ended by then, we’ll be meeting at Immanuel. If you’re on a laptop computer, you can log in by going to www.zoom.com and entering meeting number 582-086-706. If you’re joining by smartphone or iPad please enter <https://zoom.us/j/582086706>.

VBS will be the evenings of Monday, July 20th through Thursday, July 23rd with the closing program on Thursday evening. Last year’s closing on Immanuel’s church lawn was a great hit and we’d like to plan something like it again for this summer.

We’re collecting large cardboard tubes to make palm trees. If you have paper towel tubes and toilet paper tubes, please leave them at Immanuel for one of our VBS crafts.

We’d LOVE to have you join in the planning and excitement. Please invite your friends to join us for VBS planning from the community, too.



Please remember Immanuel’s homebound members in your prayers:

Barb Basel (please note Barb’s new address change as of January 31st)

Hooper Care Center – 400 E. Birchwood Dr., Hooper NE 68031
402.654.3362 (Care Center) 402.480.2582 (Cell)

John Christiansen

1509 County Rd. B – Ceresco, NE 68017
402.429.6475

Marie Johnson

2425 Folkways Blvd, #336 – Lincoln NE 68521
402.438.5618 (home) 402.417.9537 (cell)

Rose Nelson

Saunders Medical Center Long Term Care, Room 114
1760 County Road J – Wahoo NE 68066

Dale Rexilius

c/o Tabitha GracePointe
4620 Randolph St, #203 – Lincoln NE 68510 402.484.9318

April 2020 Immanuel Calendar

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tues</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thurs</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
5 9am – Adult Sunday School Zoom.com # 358-836-112 10:15 am Worship Zoom.com # 449-017-119 Virtual coffeetime after worship (stay online)	6	7	8	9 7pm- Maundy Thursday online worship Zoom.com # 581-103-597	10 7pm – Good Friday online worship Zoom.com # 741-877-560	11
12 8:00 am Virtual Easter Breakfast in our homes Zoom.com # 453-663-810 9:30 am Easter Worship Zoom.com # 453-663-810 Virtual coffeetime after worship (stay online)	13 7:00pm Church Council meeting Zoom.com # 644-728-279	14	15	16	17	18
19 9am – Adult Sunday School Zoom.com # 583-077-963 10:15 am Worship Zoom.com # 885-781-493 Virtual coffeetime after worship (stay online)	20 7:00pm Vacation Bible School planning meeting Zoom.com # 582-086-706	21	22	23	24	25
26 9am – Adult Sunday School Zoom.com # 316-727-355 10:15 am Worship Zoom.com # 603-502-346 Virtual coffeetime after worship (stay online)	27	28	29	30	May 1	May 2

**NO
FEAR**

Immanuel's Youth "No Fear" Lock-in is postponed until "social distancing" for COVID-19 is no longer needed. Youth will receive information from Pastor Scott when a new date is set for the lock-in at Immanuel.



Parenting is hard. Parenting in today's world is hard. There's no shortage of options that claim to help, but fall short of adding the right value to your child's life and to your family. You want your child to feel the joy of childhood but also gain the life skills needed to live as productive, happy adults. Faith is oh-so-important... encouraging new activities builds their confidence... friendships - old and new - give them support. These things seem so simple, yet become such a challenge as we seek ways to get it right.

Choosing a summer camp experience is more than just filling your child's schedule and keeping them busy. You want safe, affordable options that support your values and help your children to grow in character, faith and friendships. Plus, it **MUST** be fun!

We support the local Lutheran Bible camp named Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland. Be sure to check out the camping programs offered this summer by going to www.caroljoyholling.org and registering your child(ren) for a week they will remember. Please contact Pastor Scott if you need financial assistance for your child(ren) to attend.



Prayer List

Christie Bevington (Health - Member)

Barb Basel (Broke hip – member)

Justin Badberg (Surgery on knee – member)

Sharon Kaiser (Health – member)

Dean Johnson (Health – member)

Jon Bible (surgery - member)

Andrea Christensen (Health – J Christensen)

Richard Benes (Terminal cancer – Fredrickson)

Rob Bonow (Health)

Heather Lucht (Health – Hanson)

Ron Weltruski (Bone cancer -Hedges)

Karen Hagood (Health – Newell)

Amanda Sykes (Health – Sykes)

Kim Pearson (Health – L Pearson)

Kelly Hamilton (Health – Bevington)

Briggs Gushard (Health – Rudeen)

Lora Robinson (Health – Freeman)

Dawn Buss (Health – Freeman)

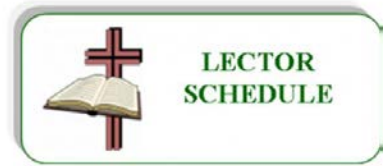
David Sinn (cancer – Larson)

Kaitlyn Hosier (Health – Drahota)

Shelly Hanneman

Mary Tvrdy (Health – Otto)

Sydney Kenning (Strength & comfort for Sydney's family)



April 5- Ray & Jane Otto
April 9 - John & Janis Bible
April 10 - Fran Freeman
April 12 - Doug & Shawn Rudeen
April 19 - Christie Bevington
April 26 - Scott & Shannon Black

April 5- Jane Otto
April 9 - Janis Bible
April 10 - Fran Freeman
April 12 - Shawn Rudeen
April 19 - Hailey Drahota
April 26 - Scott Black



April 5 Kory Ball
April 10 Joe Weaver
April 12 Hunter Sykes
April 19 Kyle Peterson
April 26 Reid Otto



April Food Pantry
Canned Veggies
Corn, Beans, Peas