

# The Royal Messenger

From the desk of Pastor Olsen:

## Unrest

There is a lot of talk these days about the unrest in our nation. For those of you who are older, you know this is nothing new in our 250-year history. Or as the Royal Philosopher declares in Ecclesiastes, *<sup>8</sup> All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. <sup>9</sup> What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.* (Ecc 1:8-9 ESV)

Sadly, there is unrest within our church body, the Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod. But this as well is not new news. Social media posts fly by the second, blog posts are written and YouTube videos are watched that keep that narrative thriving. There is not only unrest in our Synod and nation but within the world as well. Spending too much time watching the news can truly tell you this, but it can also cloud your perspective on the life we have been given.



All this is not to mention the unrest that abounds within our own personal lives. As you read this, you know what I am talking about. Is it marriage issues? Is it work related issues or that you don't have a job? Is it mental health struggles or physical issues that you wake up each day? Is it the stress of children, of lack of children or children who have grown up? Maybe you have lost a loved one recently, or not so recently, and you just can't seem to find the rest you used to have. Truly I could go on and on with any number of personal attacks that you face mentally, socially, and physically.

**But we cannot forget to mention the deadliest of all attacks, all unrest — spiritual.** The devil works daily to tempt you to sin. Your own heart, sinful, that it cannot be trusted. Your desires that pour forth from the old Adam seek that which is pleasing to the eye and not pleasing to the Lord. The world consistently is on the attack against you. Some people have often said, "The only thing that doesn't change is change." Or this old one, "The only thing you can count on is death and taxes." We have all heard these and we may have even said these to others. But there is one I would like to add: *you can always count on unrest.*

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Since our first parents in the Garden of Eden, unrest has spread its vile, poisonous chaos throughout individuals, families, nations and even churches throughout history. Count on it! Not a very uplifting message, is it? This is the reality that we live in each day and to say otherwise would be a lie. Theologians of the Cross say what a thing is, and the unrest that sin has brought cannot be thought away, medicated away, wished away, nor can it just be ignored.

There is only one way to battle against this unrest, only one way to defeat this insurmountable beast that cannot be tamed by mankind nor any machinations he can devise. **Unrest can only be defeated by rest! Rest can only be found in Christ, where His Word is proclaimed and Sacraments are administered for that very rest.** Unrest has met its match in the Gospel! We shall find no rest in the Law, for the law convicts us, shows us our sin, but it does drive us to repentance so that we may receive the rest that we need in the Gospel, the atoning work of Christ, His blood poured out for forgiveness and where there is forgiveness there is life and salvation. Might I also add that there is also rest.

Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 11, <sup>*"28*</sup> **Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** <sup>*"29*</sup> **Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** <sup>*"30*</sup> **For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**" (Mat 11:28-30 ESV)

He will give rest. He does give rest. As our Lutheran Confessions so wonderfully state in the Large Catechism about this rest in Christ, given for you, in His true body and blood, "Here He offers to us the entire treasure that He has brought for us from heaven." (LC V, 66) This is for your rest. This is treasure Christ has brought down to you. You need not reach up to Him as some church bodies sadly and wrongly teach, preach, and confess. **No, He comes to us, giving of Himself for you in Word and Sacrament.**

Luther goes on to say regarding this blessed gift of Christ's body and blood given for you, "They should regard and use the Sacrament just like a precious antidote against the poison that they have in them. Here in the Sacrament, you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sin. It contains and brings with it God's grace and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune." (LC V, 70) This is the rest you so desperately need from the unrest.



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**It is a perfect rest from Him, but in your weak, sinful flesh it is a rest, a refreshment that you constantly need.** You constantly need to come back to repentance so that you may receive the refreshing rest of forgiveness. You constantly need to have the Word preached so that you may be comforted in the sure and certain promises of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You constantly need to receive the very body and blood of Christ that you may have His rest.

Consider for a moment all the times in the Divine Service that you receive His rest! **This is precisely the point of the Divine Service, that Christ comes to serve you and give you the rest that you need.** You come to "church" to receive His rest first and foremost and then in that rest He provides, through His promises, and the gift of faith, you can bring His rest to your neighbor, your family, friends, co-workers, etc. During this Lenten season we have even more opportunity to receive His gifts during the midweek services.

**We pray for that day when Christ returns, and unrest will be removed forever!** It is not here now, but yet it is! We live in that baptismal promise every day. It is a gift given to you that you can return to when the unrest around you fills your eyes and ears. This promise of eternal rest in Christ when He returns to raise the dead is your promise given to you!

So, turn off that news program. Turn off your phone and stop the noise of unrest. Close your laptop or iPad and rest from the videos and social media. Open your Bible. Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the rest that Christ gives to you. Pray and ask for His rest that He freely gives. Ask it for your family, for our Synod, for our nation and for the world.

And yes, you can and certainly should ask for it for yourself. It is not selfish to ask for His rest for He will give it as He does through His promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation, of which there is endless supply through Word and Sacrament.

<sup>28</sup> **Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** <sup>29</sup> **Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** <sup>30</sup> **For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**" (Mat 11:28-30 ESV)

He is your rest in the midst of the unrest. **AMEN!**

Blessings in Christ!



Pastor Olsen

## Lenten Series—For Us

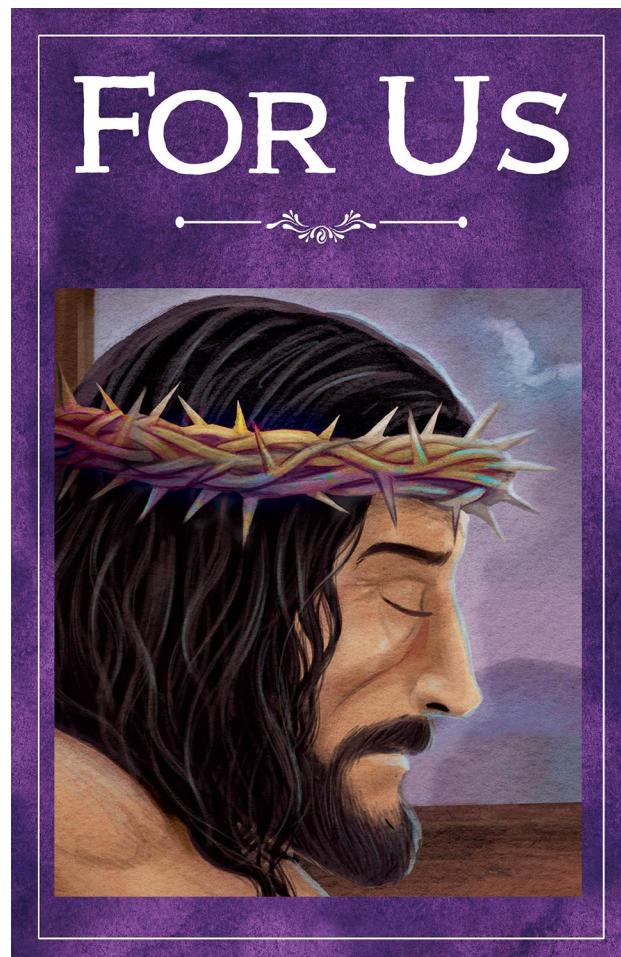
“For us” is not simply a pithy line to use because it is easy to repeat. It is a confession of who God is and what He brings in giving us His Son. It helps us understand *why* God would send His Son to die for us.

The phrase “for us” also captures much of the Reformation’s theological emphasis—and Luther’s understanding of Scripture in particular. Luther went from searching for a righteous God and finding only stern rebuke to seeing God in the form of a little baby and as the one who became one of us *for us* so that we might become like Him.

Our Lenten preaching series hymn “O Love, How Deep” (LSB 544) was originally a twenty-three-stanza poem written in the fifteenth century by an unknown author. In the nineteenth century, an Anglican cleric named Benjamin Webb translated the hymn into English and then chose six stanzas for use in English hymnody. The doxological stanza was added later.

Some hymns tell a story, others teach, and still others create pictures in our minds of the great works of God. Some hymns do all three, weaving together a tapestry that is beautiful yet simple, wondrous yet easy to understand. “O Love, How Deep” is that kind of hymn.

Although it does not appear in the first stanza, the most pointed and beautiful language in the hymn is expressed in the phrase “for us.” The phrase is reminiscent of the language of the Nicene Creed: “Who *for us men* and for our salvation came down from heaven.”



## Board of Finance Update

I am happy to report that six months into the current fiscal year that both income and expenses are on track with the budget approved by Emmaus voters. In addition, our tithing has increased by 15% over last year! If you would like more detail on our financials, please attend the monthly Finance Town Hall meeting.

And again, we would like to thank everyone for all that you do to support Emmaus' mission to "Courageously Confess Christ"

Thank you!  
Gregg Kiess, Treasurer

P.S. Watch News & Notes for the time and date of our next Finance Town Hall!



## Upcoming Dates

### **Ash Wednesday**

7 pm Divine Service  
February 18

### **Midweek Lent Services**

7 pm Vespers  
February 25 and  
March 4, 11, 18, 25



# MIDWEEK LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Join us Wednesday nights for  
45-minute teachings prior to  
the service focused on the “For  
Us” theme for that evening.



**FEBRUARY 25  
MARCH 4, 11, 18, 25**



**6:00 PM**



**GRADE 6  
ROOM**



## Letter from the Principal

Dear Emmaus Lutheran Church Family,

We are excited to celebrate **National Lutheran Schools Week** and give thanks for the many blessings of our school community! This week also includes the joyful celebration of our 100th Day of School, a fun milestone for our students that highlights growth, learning, and God's faithfulness throughout the year.

Each day, our amazing teachers and staff share Christ's love with our students through faith-filled learning, care, and encouragement.

**Enrollment is now open!** If you know friends, family members, or neighbors who are looking for a Christ-centered education, we would love for you to help spread the word about Emmaus Lutheran School.

**Game Night hosted by PTL.** Thank you to those of you who joined us for a fun-filled evening of fellowship and laughter at the game night sponsored by our Parent Teacher League. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect as a school family.

**Fabulous Lunches!** A special thank-you to Mr. Terrell for the delicious lunches he prepares for our students and staff—we are truly blessed by his talents and generosity.

**Save the Date:** School Gala is April 17 and we'll be celebrating 125 Years of Emmaus Lutheran School. Funds raised will help purchase new music equipment, including choir chairs for Mr. LaCroix, supporting our growing music program and student musicians. If you have a good or service you would be willing to donate—such as gift cards, experiences, professional services, or even access to a vacation property that could be rented or stayed in—we would be incredibly grateful for your support.

**Thank you** for your continued prayers, support, and partnership in the mission to provide Christ-centered education. We are grateful to walk this journey together in faith.

**In Christ,**  
Esther Spanos  
Principal



## Women's Guild Update

First, a very big **THANK YOU** to all our wonderful bakers who made our Cookie Fair a great success. And, much gratitude to our "shoppers" who come each year and buy the delicious treats. Our sale raised **\$2,425.00** and will enable us to continue our funding in 2026!

Our January meeting for **Allocations** was a very productive one. We are able to continue paying the recurring expenses including: Portals of Prayer, Fort Wayne Lutheran newspaper; Hope-Full Living devotion; Altar Guild supplies; Communion/Baptism/Confirmation needs; bulletin print license; church clip art; Member Caller minutes; Pulpit supplies; and adult choir and bell choir supplies. We also funded these one-time purchases:

1. **Church** - \$225.00 for a new computer monitor and \$260.00 for a digital version of the *Complete Works of Martin Luther*.
2. **Preschool** - \$100.00 for new toy replacements.
3. **School** - \$240.00 for school choir music books and \$500.00 to help with the 2026 Gala fundraiser for new music room chairs.

We are thankful for all of our Emmaus family for supporting our several efforts with fundraising. Be on the lookout for our next "venture" - Pizza Hut discount cards!

Our next Guild meeting is **Wednesday, February 11** when we will do final preparations for the **Ash Wednesday Soup Supper on Feb. 18 at 5:30 pm**. Hope to see you then.

**Once again, thank you for your support!**

Barb Kanning, Secretary



**Spring Ahead  
March 8**

## Preschool News

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It may be cold outside but our Preschoolers are still enjoying coming to school and staying warm by exercising their minds and bodies. We get outside on our new playground when it is warm enough and enjoy our indoor toys in the gym when it is cold and snowy out! **A huge thanks to Margie Crabtree for our new inside stepping stones obstacle course and to Larry Lunz for always fixing our bikes when the pedals fall off after "crashes"!**

We are looking forward to singing in Church on Sunday, February 1. This is a great opportunity to welcome our families and make a connection with them so they feel comfortable returning on another Sunday.

**Thank you to Woman's Guild for gifting us with some new toys for our Before and After Care Cart.** We are looking forward to some new things to play with while we wait for our parents!

**Registration for new families will start on Monday, February 2.**

If you know of a family that is interested in our Preschool please connect me with them or I can give you an information packet for you to share with them.

As always we thank you for all of your prayers and support for the Preschool and our Preschool Staff. **For many children this is the only place that they learn about their Savior!** We are blessed to have a congregation who supports us as we teach them about Jesus!

**In Christ,**  
Joann Olsen  
Preschool Director



## Easter Breakfast

**Volunteers needed!** As you know, we enjoy a hot breakfast between services. If you would like to help, please reach out to someone on Women's Guild or see Sherry Colbert. Many hands make light work!



## News from LWML

**March is Mites Month!** We take baggies, any containers, and mite boxes with coins, big bills, and small bills! More info on the mission grants these Mites fund!

**Fort Wayne 3 Zone Rally :** April 11 at St. Michael on Getz Road. More info to come!

**Jail Donations:** Thank you to all who donated items for the Allen County Jail! These Items will be given to the Chaplain to be distributed. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

### Thank you!

Lisa Kanning  
LWML Rep



## Thrivent Reminder

If you have not done so already, please contact Thrivent for your 2025 Choice Dollars. Be sure to designate **Emmaus Fort Wayne**, as there are two other Indiana congregations that share our name!

If you have an online account, contact [thrive.com/tthrivechoice](http://thrive.com/tthrivechoice). If you do not, call 1-800-847-4836 and say, "Thrivent Choice" at the phone prompt. A representative will direct your earned dollars. Remember, the product(s) you own earn you this money, so don't let it go to waste!

### Thank you!

Barb Kanning  
Congregational Advocate  
Questions? 260-432-5228

**thrive**nt

## A WINTER WONDERMAZE

Find your way through the snowy maze.



### BIBLE TRIVIA

Q. Who fought a lion on a snowy day?  
A. Benaiah (2 Samuel 23:20)

## Just for KIDS

Look around and you will see lots of different colors. Many Bible verses have colors in them.

Find each verse. Write the color found there in the boxes.

From top-to-bottom the darker boxes will tell you what all of these colors together make!

Psalms 92:14

Psalms 52:8

Isaiah 1:18

Daniel 7:9

Luke 16:19

Isaiah 63:2

Isaiah 1:18

Exodus 28:31

Judges 8:26

### Answers:

Colors together make - God's World  
Psalms 92:14 green; Psalms 52:8 olive; Isaiah 63:2 red; Isaiah 1:18 crimson; Luke 7:9 white;  
Isaiah 16:19 purple; Exodus 28:31 blue; Judges 8:26 gold. All these

## 2025-2026 Officers, Board Chairmen & Head Elders of Emmaus Lutheran Church

**President:**

*Paul Stockinger*

**Vice President:**

*Bill Bradley*

**Secretary:**

*Dr. David Reichwage*

**Treasurer:**

*Gregg Kiess*

**Board of Outreach:**

*Members of Emmaus*

**Board of Christian Service:**

*Stacey Durlacher*

**Board of Elders:**

*Stan Veit, Chairman*

**Board of Christian Education:**

*Jessica Barkdull*

**Board of Finance:**

*Gregg Kiess*

**Board of Parish Publicity & Promotion:**

*Member-led*

**Board of Properties:**

*{Vacant}*

**Emmaus School Board:**

*Paul Stockinger, Acting Chairman*

**Emmaus Lutheran Church**

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



# February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> <b>9:00am</b> Divine Service - Holy Communion <b>10:20am</b> Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	<b>2</b> 8:20am School Chapel	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 10:45am Thirsty Thursday Bible Class 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Adult Choir	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6:00 pm Emmaus Down Under Party
<b>8</b> <b>9:00am</b> Divine Service - Holy Communion <b>10:20am</b> Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	<b>9</b> 8:20am School Chapel	<b>10</b> 4:30pm Christian Svc 6:00pm School Board 6:00pm Christian Ed. 7:00pm Council Mtg	<b>11</b> 9:00am Women's Guild	<b>12</b> 10:45am Thirsty Thursday Bible Class 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Adult Choir	<b>13</b> Teacher Professional Development Day <b>NO School</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <b>9:00am</b> Divine Service - Holy Communion <b>10:20am</b> Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	<b>16</b> Presidents' Day	<b>17</b> Church Office Closed NO School	<b>18</b> <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>19</b> 10:45 Confessions @ Zion 5:30 pm Soup Dinner 7:00 pm Divine Service	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> <b>9:00am</b> Divine Service - Holy Communion <b>10:20am</b> Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	<b>23</b> 8:20am School Chapel	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 10:45am Thirsty Thursday Bible Class 7:00 pm Lent Vespers	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Adult Choir

# March 2026

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<b>22</b> <b>9:00am</b> Divine Service - Holy Communion <b>10:20am</b> Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	<b>23</b> 8:20am School Chapel <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:00pm Lent Vespers	<b>26</b> 10:45am Thirsty Thursday Bible Class 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Adult Choir	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 PALM SUNDAY</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>9:00am</b> Divine Service - Holy Communion <b>10:20am</b> Sunday School & Adult Bible Class						<b>SPRING BREAK—NO SCHOOL</b>

# February 2026

# March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 John Stockinger	5	6	7 Philip & Jessica LaBrash
8	9	10	11 Jack & Amber Durnell David & Joan Kendall Steven & Emily Peck	12 Jessica Barkdull Megan Rossburn	13	14
15	16 Kimberly Smith	17 David and Laura Bruns	18 Shawn Bradburn	19	20	21
22	23	24 Steve Lee	25	26 Edith LaBrash Christian Schmidt	27	28
29	30 Charles Reavis Marley Rose	31				