



March 2020

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Caring For Our Community Through Christ

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Dear Christian Friends,

There is a lot of talk right now in our synodical district about vision casting. As a matter of fact, our district has given their blessing to a team of pastors and laity to go around to churches who desire to cast a vision of where the church believes God is leading them. And there is a lot of work that goes into vision casting. It takes a lot of prayer, a lot of buy in (i.e. support from the congregation and her leaders), a lot of time, and even money. Even asking this district team to come and lead a seminar on vision casting has its own financial cost.

Is vision casting beneficial? Yes, there are benefits. It helps churches to focus inwardly on its current mission and to examine if that is still applicable in their current context. Vision casting also brings into line the all the ministries of the church so that every ministry is working toward the same vision. And, to go through the process of casting a vision helps with leadership of the church. It brings leaders to the table, under direction (hopefully) of Scripture and the pastor, to have a real honest conversation so that by time the vision is established and cast, that those who are chosen to lead the church understand the vision and can lead the church towards it.

But, there are some pitfalls of vision casting as well. When a church goes through the process of vision casting, especially if they have hired outside help to do so, there is a tendency to focus the vision of the church on where it is that the church believes is the direction they should be going based upon things like attendance, mission effectiveness, etc. Then, if the church hires a team to come in and help with vision casting, there are times when there is an underlying agenda by the team to do it a certain way that is perhaps biased toward their own personal beliefs or motives. This process usually finds itself bogged down in the quagmire of self and not on God's vision for the church. So, even though there may be a vision for the church, usually the end result is to be right back where you started.

Another pitfall of vision casting is that it has the tendency to focus inwardly instead of outwardly. What I mean is that sometimes when casting the vision, the focus tends to float toward personal



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IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod

Caring For Our Community Through Christ

REV. DAVID CASEY-MOTLEY, PASTOR

PASTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

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Email pastordavid.immanuel@gmail.com

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and by appointment

BUSINESS OFFICE HOURS

The office is normally open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Please remember that the administrative assistant may be
away from the office running errands during this time.

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CHURCH OFFICERS — 2020

President..... Ruth Thomas
Secretary..... Lynn Short
Financial Secretary Dee Lambert
Treasurer..... Carol Frase
Evangelism Chair Marsha Kenton & Shelly Kapitan
Trustee Chair Dale Kenton
Stewardship Chair..... Lynn Faulstick
Board of Education Chair Rene Langwost
Elders Chair Richard Wheatley

things that are indeed beneficial for the church but excludes things like outreach and evangelism. For example, if a church's vision entails, in part, re-structuring of the way Sunday school is done in hopes of it growing but it fails to include the spiritual growth and training of its leaders as well as evangelism and outreach, then chances are that even after all the time and energy put into re-structuring Sunday school, it will inevitably stay right where it already is.

Another pitfall of vision casting is the difficulty of getting the entire congregation to buy into it, which is really what it would need to have happen for it to be effective. Sure, the leaders could be on board, but if it feels like the congregation has no ownership in it, then it can lead to confusion, frustration, and hurt.

Understand, I am not against the church casting a vision. But if they choose to do so, my encouragement is that the vision is cast from a different perspective, and that is simply this: with Jesus at the center of the vision. As a matter of fact, the Bible gives us a glimpse into God's vision for His church. Matthew 28 shows us part of that glimpse into God's vision for the church: "make disciples of all nations". Meaning that the church, especially her pastor and leaders, are to ensure that all believers are disciples first and foremost. How does that happen? Through the teaching and preaching of God's Word, the Confessions, and the right administering of the Sacraments. When that is done in accordance to the word of the Lord, then believers are growing in their faith as disciples and can then go into their homes, schools, jobs, etc. and tell others of Jesus and what He has done for them.

Matthew's text continues, "baptizing them...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." God's vision for the church is that they not only baptize others but that they both live out their baptisms in their everyday life and that they come, by faith, to understand and accept God's gift of baptism as a means of grace for them. It's nearly impossible to baptize others without believing that baptism saves. That's what the Bible says. That's Jesus at the center of baptism.

Continued on Page 3

When it comes to vision casting, teaching is more than just gathering together and presenting a vision in hopes that people will buy into it. What teaching here means is that the church is to teach God's Word in all they do. Every thought, word, and deed that comes from the mouth of believers should be that which points others to Christ and Him crucified. That is why, in part, that your pastor cares about what is being taught in Sunday school, Bible studies, confirmation, Vacation Bible School, and the like. We are the church and what we teach is a testament about who we believe God to be. So, if we believe what our words say, then our actions must show that as well. For, as St. Paul wrote to St. Timothy, "All Scripture is breathed out by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

There is more I could say about God's vision for the church but I, for the sake of space, will defer that for another time. Please know this: my vision for our church is grounded in Scripture alone. I believe that Jesus should be, and rightfully so, at the center of all that we do. And, I believe He must for it is by and through Him alone that we baptize, teach, reproof, correct, train, preach, administer the Sacraments, and Go into our world (home, school, work, neighborhoods, and world) in His name. Jesus at the center. Jesus always. Amen.

With a shepherd's heart,

Pastor David



From the President's Pen



The Voter's Assembly met in on February 9th. Some updates are mentioned below:

- Katie Northam's transfer to Immanuel was approved.
- The new Heating/Air Conditioning units are now installed in the Choir Loft, Narthex and Cry Room. The insurance claim for the old unit in the Choir Loft was approved, so over \$5,000 will be received soon.
- While we did not meet our 2019 Budget in full, the bills got paid and we ended the year with only a slightly lower bank balance than we had on Jan 1st, 2019. For that, we are very grateful. In 2020, we have fewer pledges committed, but for a higher total. Again, Praise God and thanks to everyone! I am confident our members will give generously in 2020 to keep up with our Budget needs.
- A new Special Fund was setup to collect funds for a matching grant for Pastor's student loans. Pastor was successful in 2019 in receiving some funds through the South-eastern District, so we want to assist him in applying for this opportunity again this year. To allow him to apply, we need to pledge some funds from the church. If you are able to contribute to this fund, just mail in a gift or use one of the special envelopes in the pews and mark it for the Student Loan Fund.
- Dale Kenton reported that 32 new lights were re-lamped in Geiger Hall with new LED lamps. This should reduce our electric bill substantially. Also, a Motion was passed to purchase new LED lights for the church sanctuary. The current bulbs are no longer available, so this needs to be done.
- Shortly after the Voter's meeting, Gail Crampton let me know that she will have to resign as the Recording Secretary on the Council due to a teaching commitment. Lynn Short has agreed to complete Gail's term. Many thanks to Lynn!

We look forward to seeing you during Lent and for the special Easter services.

Ruth

Baptisms

Right: Members of the Smith Family were baptized on Sunday, December 29, 2019. Robin Marie Bowman-Smith, Kayleigh Elizabeth Bowman-Pinder, and Katherine Marie Bowman-Pinder were baptized at Immanuel during the Sunday worship service. In the picture at right, (front) Kayleigh, Coltyn Bryan Smith, Katherine, and (back) Robin and Charlee Smith.



Below: Baby Ella Mae Cannon was baptized at Immanuel by Pastor David Casey-Motley on Sunday, February 23, 2020. She is the daughter of Tyler and Raechl Cannon, and the granddaughter of Craig and Rene Langwost. She has three older siblings, Gracie, Tucker and Hunter. In the picture below, Pastor David is baptizing Ella Mae while her family looks on. (l-r front: Tucker, Hunter, cousin Charlie Cannon, and Gracie; back Raechl and Tyler).



JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

1 THESS 5:16-18

REJOICE / PRAY / GIVE THANKS

Joy is a gift

God gives joy. Like all good things, joy is a gift. Lutherans are people who trust that all good things are given to us as gifts from our loving heavenly Father (James 1:17). God's primary gift is His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God reconciled the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:21). This is God's gift, by grace, to a fallen creation (Eph. 2:8-9). We respond to God's good gifts with joy. Find out more at joyfullylutheran.org.

Thank
You!



Our family wanted to take a moment and thank everyone for all of their thoughts and prayers during a difficult time for our family. We are so thankful that Joey is doing well and will be ok. We wouldn't have been able to get through this difficult time without our friend

family, and church family. Thank you so much for everyone's help.

Love,

The Durham's

Easter Eggs

WINGS is always grateful for the help given to accomplish our fund raiser, homemade Easter eggs. This year we will be mixing, shaping, dipping, trimming, labeling and packing our eggs on Friday, March 20th. Any amount of time that you can spare would be so appreciated. If you've never helped before, this would be a great time to get involved. You'll have fun, work hard, meet great people and get lunch for free! We start at 9:00 a.m., and will finish around mid to late afternoon. So join us if you can!

Proceeds from the egg sales will go to benefit Immanuel's Youth Group, Choices Pregnancy Center in Easton and Talbot Interfaith Shelter.

The Compassion Place at the Lutheran Mission Society

Spring is just around the corner! The folks at The Compassion Place at the Lutheran Mission Society in Cambridge, MD are looking forward to more sunshine, warm days and flowers!! There is much to be thankful for. We are always grateful for donations of food, housewares and clothing that come to us from Immanuel in Preston.

Our food bank is running a little low on canned fruit, one pound jars of peanut butter, jelly, and boxed macaroni and cheese. If you are able to donate any of these items, please leave them in the designated basket in the narthex. If you have clothing or housewares donations they can be deposited in the hallway of Geiger Hall. If you have questions or need help getting your donations in, please call Irene Wheatley at 410-310-2571. Thank you for your support.

SPECIAL FUNDS

Memorial Fund

(In Memory of Joanne Fuchs)
Vic & Vera Rieck

(In Memory of Pastor Floyd Duff)
Timothy Duff

In Listening To Sermons

by Roy S. Askins

“**D**id I get everything lined up for closing on my house next week? That color purple for the paraments is odd. Are the children going to remain quiet during the sermon this week?”

These were just a few of the thoughts swirling around my head as I settled in for the sermon one Sunday morning. Regardless of occupation or vocation, we all struggle at times to rein in our sinful flesh, which tempts us to worry about life instead of listening to God's Word. Add to this our world of digital devices and insatiable appetites for excitement, and 15 to 20 minutes of intense concentration on a sermon seems to be an insurmountable task.

On top of your internal struggle, the pastor may not be an exciting preacher. Maybe his outline does not make sense every time, or maybe he is not the best orator. Maybe he stutters and stumbles too much for your taste.

And yet, Sunday morning — when God's called servants stand before us and preach His Word — is one of the most important ways God speaks His Word to us.

To help us focus, we can prepare to hear a sermon. Our preparation does not make God's Word more effective, since God promises that His Word will not return to Him empty (Is. 55:11).

Rather, our preparation is the fruit of faith. Christians desire to know God's Word better. We pray with King David, “With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Ps. 119:10-11). As children of God, we seek to know and do His will. He desires to bring us more deeply into His Word, to hear the Law that accuses us of our sin and the Gospel that forgives and heals us of our transgressions.

Here are some tools you might use to prepare for a Sunday morning sermon.

Start before Sunday

Spend the week before the sermon preparing to listen. In most cases, your pastor will preach from a lectionary, a set of annual assigned readings. You can find the lectionary in your hymnal or online. Throughout the week, select a morning or evening devotional time to read through the chosen texts for the upcoming Sunday.

Meditate in terms of Law and Gospel

Lutheran preachers are taught to preach Law and Gospel sermons. The pastor may use many different outlines and themes, but he should always proclaim the Law, which shows us our sin, and the Gospel, which pronounces the forgiveness Jesus won for us. As you read these texts throughout the week, note the Law and Gospel in the passages. If you have children, discuss the texts with them.

Look for themes

Take some time before the service to look for the theme for that Sunday. Some congregations print the theme in the bulletin, post it online or share it on the signboard outside. Your pastor, cantor or music director selected hymns that reflect the theme. The theme of the Collect or prayer of the day often reappears in the sermon. Your pastor used all of these texts as he prepared to preach. Before the service, spend a few minutes looking for connecting themes between the hymns, the Collect and the readings.

Listen to the readings on Sunday

Your pastor was trained to read the Bible orally. When he reads the texts on Sunday morning, he will emphasize important words and phrases that might reappear in the sermon. Try listening to the readings one Sunday instead of reading along from the bulletin.

I'm not saying you should never read along with your bulletin insert. These inserts help in any number of ways even beyond the readings on Sunday morning. At the same time, simply try listening to the readings every now and then. As you listen, ask yourself some questions: Why did the pastor emphasize that phrase or that word? Why did he pause at that point in the reading? What can you learn about the text based on how the pastor read it?

Pastors spend a lot of time preparing sermons.

Your pastor will delight to hear your questions and delve deeper into the text with you.

Pray before the sermon

Your pastor prays before he preaches; you can too. Most hardcover editions of *Lutheran Service Book* include prayers for before and after the sermon. Pray them or use them as your guide.

Make notes during the sermon

If I'm not taking notes during the sermon, I find it difficult to focus. I carry a small notebook at all times, and on Sunday I jot down my sermon notes in it. During my confirmation classes as a youth, we took notes on the Law and Gospel portions of the sermon. We also wrote down one new thing we learned.

I now keep more detailed notes with outlines and Bible references. Perhaps you keep mental notes, creating a sermon outline in your head. Regardless of the method, keeping notes will engage your mind and help you avoid distractions. I rarely refer back to my sermon notes; that's not the point. The very act of making notes forces me to retain my focus.

Ask questions

As you take notes, write down some questions. When your pastor says something you do not understand, ask him about it. Most pastors relish the opportunity to talk more about the sermon with you. Pastors spend a lot of time preparing sermons. As a general guideline, pastors spend one hour writing the sermon for every minute of preaching. With that much time invested in preparation, your pastor will delight to hear your questions and delve deeper into the text with you. I guarantee it.

Repent and return

The disciples followed Jesus and heard Him preach and teach for three years. And then, on that most holy night when He was betrayed into the hands of sinners, they could not even sit up with Him and pray. You will at times fail to pay attention to God's Word during the sermon; you will at times despise preaching and the Word. Repent and return to the Lord your God, for He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He gladly forgives and continues to proclaim His Word of forgiveness to you. **LW**

The Rev. Roy S. Askins is the managing editor of *The Lutheran Witness*.



Source: THE LUTHERAN WITNESS



Doris Joanne Fuchs

Doris Joanne (Jones) Fuchs, of Preston, Maryland, passed away on Monday, December 16, 2019 at Lifecare at Loftland Park in Seaford, Delaware. She was 84.

She was born on July 9, 1935 in Kent Island, Maryland, the daughter of the late Wedge Jones and Hazel Ione (Smith) Jones.

She was a longtime member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Preston, MD, where she took part in the Ladies Aide, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and sang in the Senior Choir. She enjoyed cooking, baking, tending her flowers and vegetable garden. She loved seeing and being with her grandchildren and always made time for them whether it was reading books, playing games and making her famous grilled cheese sandwiches or making snickerdoodles. Most of all she enjoyed spending time with her family and friends and cherished times when everyone was together.

She is survived by her children, Donnie Fuchs and his wife Tana from Preston, MD. Cathy Fuchs Fauble and her husband Jon from Lewes, DE and Nancy Marshall and her husband Billy-Ray from Houston, TX. Grandchildren, Stephanie Fuchs, Jordan Fuchs, Shelby Lankford, Laney Marshall, and Briah Marshall, and a beloved sister, Karaleen Councill from Cordova, MD.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Edward Fuchs, her son, Dale Fuchs, and sister, Lorraine Pierson.

A funeral service was held on Saturday, December 28, 2019 at 2:00pm at Framptom Funeral Home in Federalsburg, MD with Reverend Billy Thomas officiating. Interment was held at Junior Order Cemetery in Preston, MD. A reception followed in Immanuel Lutheran Church's fellowship hall.



THOSE SERVING IMMANUEL MARCH 2020

Date	Usher	Lay Reader	Greeter	Assisting Elder	Kids Worship	Acolytes	Head Tellers
March 1	David Schmidt Jack Collins	Arlene Stevens	Myrna Roth	Mark Frase	TBD	Catie Casey-Motley	Janice Isenberg, Shelly Kapitan & John Crampton
March 8	David Schmidt Jack Collins	Earleen Lozen	Earleen Lozen	Glen Plutschak	TBD	Hayden Plutschak	Karen Lyons & Janice Isenberg
March 15	David Schmidt Jack Collins	Glen Plutschak	Windsor & Peggy Meyer	Rex Rosebrock	TBD	Kalei Durando	Dee Lambert, Glen & Mary Lou Plutschak
March 22	David Schmidt Jack Collins	Lynn Short	Rene Langwost	Dale Kenton	TBD	Veronica Phillips	David & Kathy Schmidt
March 29	David Schmidt Jack Collins	John Crampton	Shelly Kapitan	Richard Wheatley	TBD	Catie Casey-Motley	Carol Frase Paul Nichols Gina McConnell




Garrett Johansen	3/1	Paul Mitchell	3/16	Christopher Schanken	3/27
Jamie Johansen	3/2	Viola Schmick	3/19	Vera Worm	3/27
William Frase, Jr.	3/3	Phyllis Wilson	3/20	Dale Thomas	3/28
Jeffrey Frase	3/3	Katie Parmer	3/21	David Schmidt	3/30
Janellen Lewis	3/5	Lindsie James	3/23	Jessica Wittemen	3/30
Karen Lyons	3/5	Michael Jantz, Jr.	3/23	Olga MacDonald	3/31

Jackie Nichols	3/7	Jessica Collins	3/24
Deborah Clendaniel	3/8	William Greenage, Jr.	3/24
Darlana Butler	3/10	Danny Mitchell, Jr.	3/24
Kelsey Hochmuth	3/10	Jeffery Rosebrock	3/24
Jill Ostermann	3/11	Donna Collins	3/25
Gail Whealton	3/12	Hayden Plutschak	3/25
James Harris	3/14	Joshua Ayers	3/26
Charles Smith	3/14	Joanna Durando	3/26
Janice Isenberg	3/15	Molly Plutschak	3/27



Windsor & Peggy Meyer, Sr.	3/9
Corliss & Gary Wright	3/12
Warren & Mary Ann Frase	3/22

March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15am Sunday School 10:00am Breakfast 10:30am Divine Service with Holy Communion	2 8:45am Nursery School 6:30pm Elder's Meeting	3 8:45am Nursery School Evangelism 7:00 pm	4 8:45am Nursery School 9:00 am School Open House 9:00 am Lenten Bible Study 6:00 pm Confirmation 6:45 pm Bells 7:00 pm Al-Anon	5 8:45am Nursery School 8:55am Thursday Connections	6 7:00 pm. A.A.	7 7:00 pm. A.A.
8 9:15am Sunday School 10:00am Breakfast 10:30am Worship Daylight Savings Time	9 8:45am Nursery School 7:00pm Church Council	10 8:45am Nursery School	11 8:45am Nursery School 9:00 am Lenten Bible Study 6:00 pm Confirmation 6:45 pm Bells 7:00 pm Al-Anon	12 8:45am Nursery School 8:55am Thursday Connections 7:00 pm WINGS	13 7:00 pm. A.A.	14 7:00 pm. A.A.
15 9:15am Sunday School 10:00am Breakfast 10:30am Divine Service with Holy Communion	16 Nursery School Closed 7:00pm Board of Ed Meeting	17 8:45am Nursery School 	18 8:45am Nursery School 9:00 am Lenten Bible Study 6:00 pm Confirmation 6:45 pm Bells 7:00 pm Al-Anon	19 8:45am Nursery School 8:55am Thursday Connections	20 Easter Egg Making 9:00 am—?? 7:00 pm. A.A.	21 Easter Egg Packing 9:00 am—?? 7:00 pm. A.A.
22 9:15am Sunday School 10:00am Breakfast 10:30am Worship	23 8:45am Nursery School	24 8:45am Nursery School	25 8:45am Nursery School 9:00 am Lenten Bible Study 6:00 pm Confirmation 6:45 pm Bells 7:00 pm Al-Anon	26 8:45am Nursery School 8:55am Thursday Connections 6:30 pm Nursery School	27 7:00 pm. A.A.	28 7:00 pm. A.A.
29 9:15am Sunday School 10:00am Breakfast 10:30am Worship ~Mission Sunday	30 8:45am Nursery School	31 8:45am Nursery School				

Lent: A Time for Giving Up or Taking Up?

Commentary from The Rev. Dr. Mark A. Wood

The Reporter February 2016

What are you giving up for Lent? Are you sure that's a good idea?

Giving up things for Lent is a long-standing tradition in the Western Church. Doing so is generally understood to help us prepare for observing and celebrating Easter through experience some kind of suffering through deprivation. While there is nothing wrong with giving up things for Lent and in some ways it can be a valuable spiritual discipline, for many people the practice has devolved into a work of personal suffering through which they expect to better understand the sufferings of Christ.

How silly of us to think that denying ourselves chocolate for forty days or going without our morning boost of caffeine for a season even begins to approach the least of Jesus' sufferings for us. We've moved far away from the purpose and substance of Lent by the insignificant things we're willing to give up.

While no one is certain about how the practice of giving up things for Lent began or what the motives were of those who first observed Lent in this way, we can certainly see how giving up things for Lent has come to be practiced in our culture.

Far from being a time of solemn reflection and repentance, the beginning of Lent has turned into another excuse for people to engage in excess. Now, without the disciplines of fasting, self-denial, and prayer that followed, people revel in consuming all the things that were once prohibited during Lent — and much, much more. Mardi Gras (and its various regional adaptations) has become a celebrated cultural event that shows more of what the American character has become than our half-hearted observances of Lent.

By giving up things for Lent in the ways that we do, we've made this holy season into one more instance of our self-absorption. Like the New Year's Resolutions that we made just a few weeks ago, our commitment to observing Lent sacrificially is momentary and fleeting. We have a sense of what is good for us and what we must do in order to improve ourselves or our circumstances, but we lack the resolve to see our way through the self-denial that it takes to make the needed change an effective part of our lives. What we give up for Lent is often as petty and insignificant as what we resolve for

New Year's — and ends up just as broken and meaningless.

Isn't it time for us to put an end to our empty observances of Lent? Are we ready for a serious go at journeying through Lent in a way that brings us to a deeper understanding and appreciation of Christ's atoning work? If so, perhaps we should stop giving up things for Lent and use this sacred time to take up things instead.

The things that we should aim to take up during Lent are those things that we've let fall by the wayside as we've lived our lives at the breakneck speed of our culture. It might include taking up a daily devotion or taking up the practice of meditative prayer. If we've been away from the gathering of God's people in worship, we could take up participating in the Divine Service on Sundays as well as the mid-week Lenten services.

What a difference Lent could be for us and make in us if we would take up reading God's Word daily, intentionally speaking the Gospel to one person a week, showing the love of Christ to the poor and needy through acts of mercy, or listening to recorded sermons or Bible studies.

Whatever we might take up for Lent, we should remember that, above all, taking up things for Lent in a meaningful way inevitably results in hearing the clear call of Jesus to take up our crosses daily. Taking up our crosses involves looking beyond our self-interests, desires, and pious actions (including giving up things for Lent) and finding joy, peace, security, and purpose — those things that are so glaringly absent in our culture — in the realization of what Jesus gave up and took up for us.

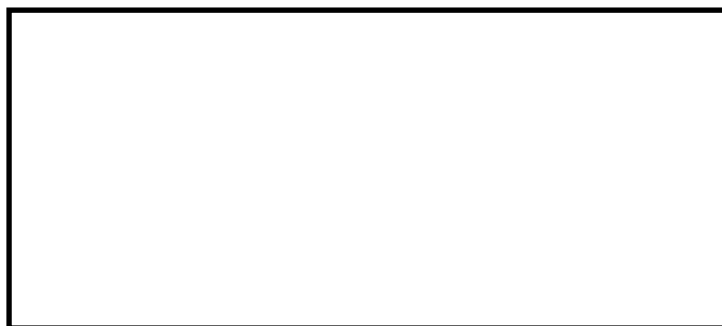
Take up something edifying for Lent and discover joy that giving up earthly things for a few weeks can never approach.

Questions to consider:

- *What might I take up for Lent that would help me grow in faith and love?*
- *How can either taking up something for Lent or giving up something for Lent open doors for me to share God's Word with people in my life? How might it get in the way of it?*
- *In what ways can I use the season of Lent to be a witness of Christ to people who are caught up in the excesses of our culture?*



Immanuel Lutheran Church
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The Grapevine
March 2020

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