

Return and be Renewed

from WELS Transformed Teen Devotions

“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. (Joel 2:12-14)

One time, there was a wasp nest in the upper corner of the swing set. I found a rock, aimed, and fired. The rock sailed just over the nest and cracked the glass window behind it. Terrified of the punishment, I ran away.

Remember the last time you ran and hid? Was it because of something you looked at online—something you know God doesn't want you looking at? Was it a substance you know you aren't old enough to imbibe, but you did anyway? What are you hiding out of the sight of others because you know it's forbidden by God?

We hide because we are afraid. We are afraid that God could never forgive “someone like me.” We think, “If I was a true Christian, then I shouldn't keep falling into these sins.” We promise never to do it again. But then we do. Guilt and fear of punishment haunt our hearts and minds. No wonder we run.

Joel was an Old Testament prophet in troubled times to troubled people—tired of trying to crawl back into God's good graces. They knew from the big-time disasters (like COVID-19) to the daily, little life irritations, they had only themselves to blame.

Joel's message to them was, “Tear your hearts, not your garments.” Tearing your robe was an ancient sign of mourning and repentance. But what good is an outward show if it lacks real sorrow? Don't just go the motions of saying sorry, but not be sorry enough to change your actions. Try standing before God on Judgment Day with torn clothes but untorn hearts.

In the moment the devil tempts you to give up and give in, run. RUN ... not away from God, but run to God. Why? “He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.” God put compassion and justice together, demanding punishment for our

sins, but graciously sending his Son to serve our sentence as our substitute. The cross is the way back. There is no punishment for your sin. There you will find forgiveness.

If the COVID-19 virus and its destructive power is forcing you to think more of God and pray ... GOOD! Use this time as a call to repentance. But remember how God has chosen to use his divine power: not to destroy you, but to save you. He loves you!

In perilous times, stop running away. Run to your gracious God. Run to the cross.

Prayer: *Lord, you are overflowing with love for me. Give me the strength to stop sinning. Give me courage in this perilous time and your strength when I am weak. May I daily find forgiveness in you. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*

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From Our Pastor

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted on the earth.” (Psalm 46:10)

Dear Members of Immanuel,

To say that we live in some unsettling days is certainly an understatement. We may well at times wonder what tomorrow’s news will bring to us. How many more will be diagnosed with this COVID-19 virus? How many deaths are being reported in other countries and right here in our own land? What are the latest recommendations for the general population to try to remain safe and unaffected? Will there be a cure or a vaccine available?

For many of us, the situation and what we are dealing with is nothing with which we are familiar. But, such things have occurred in the past. An unusual virus reached our country in 2009 and took the lives of many people. During my very early childhood, in the early 1950’s, the polio epidemic took the lives of many people and left many others with crippled limbs and bodies. In the years surrounding 1918, the Spanish Flu took the lives of millions of people worldwide and claimed the lives

of more US soldiers than did the combat in WWI. Our earthly life can be and is often filled with uncertainty, trials, troubles, and evils.

In all these things, it is important for us to never ever forget who is the one in charge of all things—the Lord, our God. The above verse from Psalm 46 well serves to remind us of our God and the power that is His. The Lord's prophet in the Old Testament, Isaiah, was inspired by the Lord to write these words to the people of Israel during a difficult time in the nation's history: "Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be overwhelmed, for I am your God" (Isaiah 41:10). The Lord comforts us with His words, "Be still...Do not fear." He is telling us to be at peace and to not be afraid, because He is the one who is over all things. He will never leave you or forsake you. That is His promise to you.

We do not know what tomorrow will bring as far as earthly trials might be concerned. We do not know, and fortunately so, what trials might come our way tomorrow. But of this we can be certain, the Lord our God is with us and, as we ask of Him in the Lord's Prayer, His will will always be done for our good and blessing.

So in all things, my brothers and sisters in Christ, take heart because your Lord is with you to watch over you and to keep you in His eternal care and blessing.

Yours in Christ's service,

Pastor Charles Learman

Call Update

At the call meeting on March 5, the voters of our congregation, moved by the Holy Spirit, unanimously agreed to extend a call to Pastor Mark Westra. Pastor Westra currently serves at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Fairport, NY. Please keep him, his family, and congregation in your prayers. Our members are encouraged to reach out to Pastor Westra with words of encouragement, his email is pastor.mark.westra@gmail.com and his phone # is 585-397-4540.

Church Calendar for April

While there are government restrictions in place on gatherings of more than 10 people, all worship services, meetings, studies, etc. have been suspended. For this reason, there is not a calendar along with this newsletter. Please check the church website often for updates.

Worship Services Options

Our tech team and staff have been putting in overtime to get videos of new worship services onto our website. It is our goal to have videos of our Sunday regular services, Midweek Lent services, and all Holy Week services available for everyone to view. Please go to the Immanuel website and click on the blue button that says "Worship Videos" to access new and past services. For now the family of Immanuel can worship together in spirit, if not in body!

Special Note on Offerings

Many of you have already reached out to the church office asking how you can get your offerings to the church while services are suspended. Thank you so much for making the support of God's work a priority in your life! The congregation of Immanuel must continue to meet our financial obligations. Physical (check) offerings can be mailed to the church address or brought to the office on Mondays between 7:30 am and 12:00 pm. If you have been thinking about electronic giving, now is the perfect time to sign up. Contact Carla in the church office and she can paper mail or email the form to you. Thank you!



Sunday (Home)School

Sunday School parents, please go over the lessons with your children, they may be even more meaningful when studied together as a family. Students should have their lesson folder at home, if not, please contact the church office for lesson resources. The lessons for April are:

April 5th – The Gentile Woman's Faith (Spring lesson #7)

April 12th – Jesus' Burial & Resurrection (Spring lesson #12)

April 19th – Parable of the Lost Son (Spring lesson #8)

April 26th – Jesus Ascends into Heaven (Spring lesson #13)

Church Communication

During this time when information and regulations are changing very quickly, electronic communication is the fastest way to notify our members of changes. Please check your emails from the church or the church website to stay up to date and view worship service videos. If you have not received emails from church, please send your email address to immanuelinfarmington@gmail.com. We have asked those with internet service to keep their friends and family who do not have this service in the loop, this has been working very well, please keep it up!

Helping our Family & Community

At Immanuel we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. During tough times families stick together and help each other out. If you or someone you know needs help, please reach out to any of our council members or the church office. This is also a wonderful opportunity to show the love of Jesus to our neighbors! Delivering groceries, medications, or prepared meals, are just a few of the things we can help with. Shut in visits have also been suspended, but we can call and send cards and letters to these members of Immanuel. If you would like to be a volunteer helper, please let the church office or Pastor Learman know by phone or email.

Spring Cleaning

Spring Cleaning inside and out of our church building and parsonage is *tentatively* scheduled for **May 2** from 9-11:30 this year. Please consider helping us beautify the place God lets us worship him together and prepare the parsonage for a new family.

New Tuition Assistance Policy

In March an informational letter and copy of Immanuel's updated Tuition Assistance Policy was mailed out to all households with children who will be in grades 5K through 8 for the 2020/2021 school year. We want to make sure all families of Immanuel are aware that financial assistance is available to help send your children to an area Lutheran Elementary School (LES). We also want to inform families with children currently attending an LES that they will be required to submit an application for tuition assistance every year that their children are enrolled at an LES.

WELS International Youth Rally 2020

Early sign up is now open to attend the WELS International Youth Rally to be held at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, **June 23-26** (rally dates). The rally is open to all WELS teens who have been confirmed (8th grade-12th grade completed). If you have not yet received information on the rally or have any questions, please contact Pastor Learman.

JC Mission Team

At the first JC Mission Team meeting Pastor Paul Schupmann and two other members of our District Mission Board attended and assisted in forming some tasks to gather information that will help shape Immanuel's future ministry in our community. If you would like to be a part of this team, please see the task list below, along with the contact person heading it up. Please help us reach the lost!

- Assessment of Current Facilities: Larry Morris-Robinson; 262-370-7984; larryboy827@gmail.com
- Second Site options: Greg Buxa; 701-509-1833; glbuxa@mac.com
- Mission Emphasis: Mark Snyder; 920-253-9364; marksuke@charter.net
- Ministry Options: Andrea Davis; 920-650-7676; madavis1998@gmail.com
- Assessment of Current Ministry: Jim Buege; 608-566-6218; jrbuege@llhs.org

OWLS

The April meeting of our OWLS chapter has been cancelled. Plans are to resume meetings on May 19 if gathering restrictions have been lifted.

Twice is Nice Retail Store News

To protect the health of our volunteers and customers, beginning Wednesday, March 18, 2020, our store will be closed until further notice. Please stay tuned for our re-opening on twiceisniceresaleshop.com or Facebook/TiNresale and thank you so much for your understanding.

Registration for Camp Wyalusing

Registration is now open for Camp Wyalusing. Camp Wyalusing is a week-long Lutheran camp for students who have completed grades 2-8, and is staffed by dedicated WELS volunteers. Our camp seeks to offer a week of fun indoor and outdoor activities, Bible study, worship, and fellowship in a friendly Christian atmosphere. It is located at Wyalusing State Park near Prairie du Chien, WI, and will run **July 12-17, 2020**. Cost of the camp is \$125 per camper. For more information or to register for camp, visit our brand new website at campwyalusing.com.

Vacancy Pastor

Our vacancy pastor is retired Pastor Charles Learman. Pastor Learman and his wife Kristine live in Watertown. He asks that we do not hesitate to contact him if needed for home or hospital visits, or any emergency. His cell number is 715-938-4494 and email is clearman@gmail.com.

Offerings vs. Budget as of 2/29/2020

Offerings: \$50,626.24 Budget: \$57,336.67 Difference: -\$6,710.43



Roxanne Sukow, 4/1

Laurie Schroeder, 4/3

Dennis Fenner, 4/4

Lillian Kamenick, 4/5

Jakob Peterson, 4/6

Alyssa Toczyski, 4/6

Mark Guenterberg, 4/7

Kimberly Trimborn, 4/8

Jackie Frey, 4/10

Alvin Miller, 4/10

Connor Dobson, 4/11

Faye Nora, 4/12

Jesse Perschke, 4/12

Charles Melcher, 4/13

Karen Christian, 4/14

Laura Knaack, 4/14

Scott Tetzlaff, 4/16

Ellen Milbrath, 4/17

Kenneth Pfeifer, 4/17

Sue Andersen, 4/20

Rodney Lemke, 4/20

LuAnn Erdmann, 4/21

Ronald Gaulke, 4/21

Robert Buss, 4/23

Dugg Hartwig, 4/23

David Schultz, 4/23

Adam Sherry, 4/24

Evelyn Tinberg, 4/24

Ruth Guenterberg, 4/25

Sharon Radloff, 4/25

Nancy Wrench, 4/29

Caleb Lamp, 4/30



Couple	Years	Date
Albert & Darlene Schmidt	63	4/6
Edward & Susan Stoltenburg	41	4/28
Tom & Pam Olszewski	40	4/19
Allen & Darcy Draeger	38	4/24
Timothy & Amy Dettmann	18	4/26



WELS

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Vacancy Pastor Charles Learman

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