



Emmanuel Lutheran Church

1229 Jefferson Heights Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

eastmontelc@hotmail.com

www.emmanuelutheraneastmont.org

412-824-4525 (office); 412-401-5742 (Pastor's cell)

Office Hours: Monday 9-1, Wednesday 11-3, Thursday 9-1

March 6, 2024

Don't forget to Spring Forward! Set your clocks ahead by one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 9, to make sure you're on time for your Sunday plans. Daylight Saving Time is also a great reminder to check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors!

The Historical Jesus: The Challenge of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant



Sundays after worship through March 24



Community Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, March 30, 2 pm.

This is one of Emmanuel's most important community events. Please consider volunteering, contributing dyed Easter Eggs, and invite, invite, invite everyone you know with children.

Stewardship Corner by Helen Williams

When you mention the word "stewardship" to anyone, the next word they say is "money."



For too many years, we of the church have likened the word "stewardship" to fundraising. Stewardship is our faith in God. It is using our time, talents, and monetary abilities to give back to God. He has given us so much. He gave us life, gave His Son for our sins, gave us the ability to take care of our environment, family, ourselves. In a small way, our ability to give to God in various ways enables us to thank Him for all His blessings. Giving back to God to the best of my abilities makes my soul happy. Thanks be to God for all His blessings.



Have you prayed about how you can support Lutherlyn and Agape? Both camps invite us to come and see. And both camps need summer staff. Do you know someone who might be available?

Last week a pledge form for the Lutherlyn capital campaign was provided. Please respond generously as you are able. There is the option to make a one-time contribution or a pledge payable over three years. (Please call Pastor Dennis at 412-824-5945 if you need assistance in filling out the form.) All contributions are to be mailed to: Lutherlyn, P.O. Box 355, Prospect, PA 16052. The Emmanuel Campaign Task Force set a goal of \$2,500; \$400 has already been given through Cellular Tower Benevolence. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to work in our midst to meet our goal before you make your commitment.



Thurs., March 7, 11 am – The Cross and the Lynching Tree
Sun., March 10, 11:15 am – Lenten Study
Thurs., March 14, 11 am – The Cross and the Lynching Tree
Sat., March 16, 10 am-3 pm – Camp Agape Maple Syrup Festival
Sun., March 17, 11:15 am – Lenten Study
Wed., March 20, 11 am – The Cross and the Lynching Tree

Thurs., March 21, 7 pm - Maundy Thursday worship

Sun., March 24, 11:15 am – Lenten Study

Fri., March 29, 7 pm - Good Friday worship

Sat., March 30, 2 pm - Easter Egg Hunt

Sun., March 31, 10 am – Easter Worship

The Cross and the Lynching Tree

The Thursday discussions of *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* continue. The discussions are held on Thursdays at 11 am in person and on zoom. (The last session will be on Wednesday, March 20, at 11 am.) Contact Pastor Dennis to learn more. 412-804-1673. For zoom use the Emmanuel Class meeting ID 897 6086 7900, or use the following link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89760867900>

The theologian James H. Cone explores these emotionally charged symbols. This unique book opens up the legacy of slavery and racism and helps Christians of all colors embrace one another as brothers and sisters in Christ today.



Camp Agape's 2024 Maple Syrup Festival **Saturday, March 16th** **From 10 am – 3pm**

See the production of Maple Syrup at Camp Agape.
Enjoy the hills and vistas.
Eat pancakes with real maple syrup.

You are invited to the Stewardship Study based on the book "***Giving to God***" by Mark A. Powell. These sessions are held on the first Monday of the month. The next session is Monday, April 8, at 2:00 p.m. at Bob Evans in Irwin. Call Pastor Dennis at 412-804-1673 if you're interested in joining.

To order **altar flowers** for our weekly worship services, contact Judy Mayhood (412-760-0986), call the church office, or sign up on the Flower Chart in the entry way. The cost is \$50, or \$25 per vase. You can pay for flowers online or by check.

PRAYER REQUESTS: Call Pastor Theophilus for yourself or others to be included in prayer. Contact Marsha Kennedy also; she sends cards to let people know that we are praying for them. You can reach Marsha at 412-824-4966 or Marsha_Kennedy@verizon.net or 415 Kingston Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS GIVING.

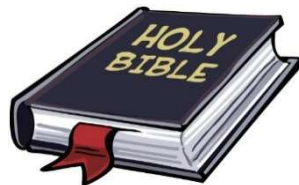
You may give in person, send a contribution in the mail or donate online.

New this year: there is a link on our website to make giving even easier. Go to <https://www.emmanuelutheraneastmont.org/> and you'll see the link.

Or use the QR code for easy connection on your smart phone.

Thank you for giving your offerings regularly!! Many of you have been very generous and faithful. We are grateful for every contribution that comes in the mail, and through our online and mobile giving app.

Bible Book of the Month: The books for March are the Old Testament stories of Ruth and Esther. The introduction to Ruth was included in last week's mailing. Esther is included in this week's mailing. You can find a link to the introductions to both books on the home page of our website, www.emmanuelutheraneastmont.org.



Worship and pray every Sunday at 10 a.m.

In person in the sanctuary OR

By phone: Call 312-626-6799. When prompted, enter the meeting ID 923 3815 0341.

By computer or smartphone: Go to www.zoom.us. Enter Meeting ID 923 3815 0341.

At home without technology: Read the bulletin. Read the Scripture. Pray. Meditate.

INVITATIONS TO VALUABLE EVENTS:

Unity in the Community Black History Show and Concert: **MIXXTAPE**

Sunday, March 10, 6:30- 8:00 pm

Mt. Hope Presbyterian Community Church

Sisters Celebrating Diversity & Moving in Unity

Our Neighbors at Light of Life – Debunking the Myths of Homelessness in Pittsburgh

Saturday, March 23, 2024, Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at 234 Voegtly St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212

An interactive program that includes Praise and Worship, a guided tour, and more. Learn about the myths of homelessness. Continental breakfast provided. Optional volunteer opportunity — 1:00-3:00 p.m. If interested, call Sue Smith at 412-977-4891 or email sisterscelebratingdiversity@gmail.com.

The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: *Fires of Freedom and Cloud of Witnesses*

Sunday, April 7: 4 PM

House of Prayer Lutheran Church - 2100 W. Irwin St., Aliquippa

Our synod's annual commemoration of Dr. King and call for anti-racist action will highlight stories of the people, especially women, who kindled the fires of freedom in the Civil Rights Movement. The day includes a panel discussion, youth activity, dinner, and service of Holy Communion where Rev. CeCee Mills of the North Carolina Synod will preach.

ESTHER

A beautiful queen, a powerful king, intrigue and danger, big egos, and humble people, evil plots foiled and parties to celebrate God's deliverance. If you have never read Esther, you have a treat in store. These ten chapters are worthy of big movie screen action-suspense treatment.

Our heroine, Queen Esther, risks her life and position to reveal the evil plot of the prime minister Haman. He is intent on killing her cousin (who raised her) and all the Jews throughout the Persian Empire. Mordecai's offense is that he will not bow down before Haman. This is an essential religious issue: to bow down is an act of worship, but Mordecai worships God, not the King or his second-in-command.

However, Mordecai and Esther demonstrate true loyalty to the king by risking their own safety to reveal plots against the king and his loyal subjects. The King Ahasuerus learns Haman's plan, he has Haman killed on the gallows Haman had built for Mordecai, and gives the Jews public permission to defend themselves against the planned persecution. This book is the basis for the Jewish festival of Purim. (The dates for the planned destruction were chosen by casting lots, which was called "Pur.")

As you read this exciting story, the faith question you will encounter is "What does God want me to do – what risk does God want me to take – in the position he has placed me now?"

I find the first two chapters a little slow, but essential to set up the situation and the characters. The book of Esther is set in the Persian court of Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.), who is called by the name Ahasuerus in Esther, Ezra, and Daniel. In 538 B.C., the Persians overthrew the Babylonians who had conquered Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Both empires recruited and trained talented leaders from all the ethnic groups they conquered. Chapters 1 and 2 convey the

absolute power of the king, how members of a conquered people could have a place in the royal court, and the context of power and powerlessness in this story. Susa, the Persian city where the action takes place, was not the capital, but a city with a royal palace, probably used on a seasonal basis.

Esther is a unique book in that God is never mentioned, although religious behavior is essential to the story, such as Mordecai's refusal to bow down and the days of fasting (which accompany prayer) before Esther approaches the King. Later Greek and Latin additions, which are found in the Apocrypha, include Esther's and Mordecai's prayers and other devout behavior and language, perhaps to make up for perceived deficiencies.

Cast of Characters

AHASUERUS – King of Persia. His Greek name is XERXES or Artaxerxes.

ESTHER – beautiful Jewish orphan who becomes Queen of Persia and prevents destruction of Jews. Also called HADASSAH.

VASHTI – queen who refuses to come to the king's banquet; Esther replaces her.

MORDECAI – cousin and guardian of Esther; royal official serving King Ahasuerus; son (or descendant) of Jair who was among the leaders in Jerusalem brought to Babylon as captives; a descendant of King Saul (family of Kish).

HAMAN – Persian official, Amalekite by ethnic group, referred to as an Agagite which means that he is a descendant of King Agag (see I Samuel 3).

EUNUCHS – castrated servants of the King.

If you keep silent at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter. ... Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this? Esther 4:14