

February Worship Schedule
Sunday mornings – the heart of our life together
10:00 Worship for All Ages
Available on Zoom and on our Website

Sunday, February 4: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany and Mission Sunday and Brunch
Mission Sunday Speaker will be David Mayonado of Chesapeake Housing Mission.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11 and 20c, I Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

Our lectionary lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures this week begins with a description of God's majesty and ends with the familiar words, "but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." The Psalm too, is a psalm of praise, as the psalmist offers words of praise for God's care for Jerusalem. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes that he proclaims the gospel, not for his sake or his own personal glory, but for Christ's sake and the glory of God. Our lessons conclude with another episode of Jesus healing many people in the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in the gospel of Mark.

Sunday, February 11: Last Sunday after Epiphany (Transfiguration)

Scripture: 2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50:1-6, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9

As the season of Epiphany, and its themes of light and Jesus' identity conclude, we will read the story of Jesus taking Peter, James, and John up the mountain and being transfigured before their eyes. Paul will write about Christ as the light that shines out of the darkness and the difficulty some have in seeing the light. The story shared in Second Kings is about Elisha witnessing Elijah ascend to heaven and the psalmist sings of God calling the heavens and earth to witness the judgement of the people.

February 14: Ash Wednesday 6:30pm

Scripture: Joel 2:1-2 and 12-17, Psalm 51:1-17, 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, Matthew 6:1-6 & 16-21

Ash Wednesday will find us considering mortality and the pain of our sin. The traditional Old Testament lesson for the day is from Joel and is a prophecy of imminent danger, and includes the sentence, "Blow the trumpet in Zion: sound the alarm on my holy mountain!" Another choice of Old Testament lessons is from Isaiah and is about the difference between false worship and true worship. The gospel lesson from Matthew is similar. Matthew's lesson is from the middle of the Sermon on the Mount and teaches faithful followers about proper almsgiving, prayer, fasting and treasures. The Psalm is a prayer for Cleansing and Pardon and Paul writes about Christ's sinless life and reconciling work, Paul exhorts those who hear his words to a conversion of heart.

Throughout Lent, in each worship service, we will be making some changes to the liturgy. These will include:

- The use of the psalter
- The addition of another hymn
- We will recess in silence without a postlude
- And the sermon will be shortened to be primarily brief comments on the scriptural lessons

February 18: First Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-10, I Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15

As we enter the season of Lent, God makes a covenant with Noah and his family, the sign of which was the rainbow, and in the gospel of Mark, in seven short verses, Jesus is baptized, tempted in the wilderness, and begins his public ministry. The author of I Peter exhorts us to live a righteous life in order to honor the undeserved pain and suffering of Jesus and his resurrection and the psalm is a prayer for guidance and for deliverance.

February 25: Second Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Genesis 17:1-7 and 15-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38

Today we review the story from Genesis where God makes a covenant with Abram and promises him and his wife an heir. The psalmist offers words of thanksgiving following, a plea for deliverance from suffering and hostility and in the epistle lesson, using Abraham as a model, Paul explains that we are saved by faith and not by the law. And as the focus of the gospel shifts from the teaching of the crowds to the teaching of the disciples, Jesus tells the disciples of his impending death and resurrection.

Looking into March:

Sunday, March 3: Third Sunday of Lent, Communion

Sunday, March 10: Fourth Sunday of Lent, Pastor Dale Unavailable

Sunday, March 17, Fifth Sunday of Lent

Sunday, March 24: Palm/Passion Sunday

Thursday, March 28: Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Worship

Sunday, March 31: Easter

Pastor's Message

The season of Lent is just days away, so I am choosing to talk about sin in my message this month. As I grew up at Zion Evangelical Lutheran UCC in Golden Ring, MD, practically every week I recited this (or one other) confession of sin:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and have done those things which we ought not to have done. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare those, O God, who confess their sin. Restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

To this day, I can recite this Confession of Sin from heart. Yet, as I consider it today, despite its beauty for me, it really doesn't "define" sin. It really does not define what we are to confess, therefore allow me to begin with a simple definition of the subject found on Wikipedia:

Sin: an immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law.

Sin can also be a verb, as in to commit a sin, but since this reverts back to the noun, I will focus on the definitions of the noun and not on the act of committing a transgression, wrongdoing, or immoral act. Fifty years ago, in my Confirmation Class days, I seem to remember Pastor Wickkiser telling us sin is anything that separates us from God. That definition obviously has stuck with me. I liked it then and now. One thing he, nor my seminary professors teaching me though, is the branch of [Christian theology](#) which is the study of sin is called *Hamartiology*.

Here are a few classical definitions of sin relevant to our tradition:

Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

Sin is "a word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God," or as scripture states, "sin is the transgression of the law."

Harper's Bible Dictionary

Sin, that which is in opposition to God's benevolent purposes for his creation. According to the Biblical writers, sin is an ever-present reality that enslaves the human race and has corrupted God's order. The concept of sin is, first and foremost, a religious concept, because all sin is ultimately against God, God's laws, God's creation, God's covenant, and God's purposes. It is the basic corrupting agent in the entire universe.

There are numerous Hebrew and Greek words used to designate sin in the biblical writings. Perhaps the most basic is a Hebrew word meaning "revolt" or "transgression" and indicating a deliberate act of defiance against God. This idea lies at the heart of the Genesis account of the beginning of sin (Gen. 3:1-7), where essentially the problem lies in the desire of humans to "be like God." All sin is an act of idolatry, the attempt to replace the Creator with someone or something else, usually one's own self or one's own creation. Paul understood this very well, as he indicates in Romans 1:18-3:20: all humankind lies under condemnation because all are idolators of one type or another.

The Handbook of Theological Terms *Van A. Harvey*

Actual Sin: In both the Roman Catholic and Protestant orthodox traditions, Sin is usually defined as any act, which includes thoughts as well as deeds, done in conscious and deliberate violation of God's will as expressed in the revealed or Natural law. Sins arise from the state of Original Sin but are to be distinguished from the latter. Guilt is regarded as properly imputed to all Sin where there is no repentance.

Harvey also defines "Original Sin," "Mortal and Venial Sins," and "Seven Deadly Sins."

I hope I can correctly describe this, and you understand what I am trying to say, but “Sin is important to me!” In the words of another theologian, many [Protestants](#) of a [Reformed](#) orientation teach that, due to [original sin](#), humanity has lost any and all capacity to move towards reconciliation with God (Romans 3:23;6:23; Ephesians 2:1–3); in fact, this inborn sin turns humans away from God and towards themselves and their own desires (Isaiah 53:6a). In other words, we must first understand our brokenness, our apartness, and our separation from God, before we can acknowledge our need for salvation through Jesus Christ.

In whatever way we define Sin, and without going to pages and pages of theological discussion, people may be brought back into a relationship with God (saved) only by way of God's rescuing the sinner from his/her hopeless condition through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Recognizing our sinful ways and God's grace-filled, saving ways through Christ is the focus and theme of the Lenten season.

I would like to conclude with a summary of Barbara Brown Taylor's book **Speaking of Sin**:

In Speaking of Sin, Barbara Brown Taylor brings her fresh perspective to a cluster of words that often cause us discomfort and have widely fallen into neglect: sin, domination, repentance, penance, and salvation. She asks, “Why, then. Should we speak of sin anymore?” and yet abandoning the language of sin will not make sin go away: it will simply leave us speechless before its effects and will increase our denial of its presence in our lives. Ironically, it will also weaken the language of grace, since the full impact of forgiveness cannot be felt apart from the knowledge of what has been forgiven.

Contrary to the prevailing view, Taylor calls sin “a helpful, hopeful word.” Naming our sins, she contends, enables us to move from “guilt to grace.” In recovering this “lost language of salvation in our worship and in the fabric of our individual lives, we have an opportunity to “take part in the divine work of redemption.”

Peace,
Pastor Dale

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual congregational meeting of Immanuel United Church of Christ took place on Sunday, January 28th following the worship service. The annual report was reviewed, which included committee reports and financial information for the 2023 calendar year as well as the budget for 2024. Elected to serve on the church council for three years were John Adkins, Debbie Luthy and Susie Creighton. They will be joining current council members: Tina Lyte-Davis, Max Schnoor, Lou Jones, Chuck Hanson, Carolyn Price, Sam Shelly and our President of the Congregation for 2024, Bill Bair. Special thanks to our retiring members: George Barnett, Sherry Hoefler & Jack Breil.

SPIRITUAL COUNCIL

There will be a meeting of the Spiritual Council on Thursday, February 1st at 5:30pm at the Immanuel.

MISSION UPDATE & LUNCH

Founded in 2009, Chesapeake Housing Mission is a non-profit organization that provides vital home repair to low-income families in the Chesapeake Region of Maryland. Through volunteerism and donations, to date we have successfully helped over 400 families in need in Maryland's Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.



Chesapeake Housing Mission helps ensure local neighbors have warmer, safer, and drier homes. Most of our projects involve building wheelchair ramps and steps, giving back our clients the freedom and independence to remain in their homes.

Immanuel UCC has been thankful for the help we have been able to offer in the building of ramps for our local neighbors.

We hope you will join us on Sunday, February 4th following worship as we welcome Mr. Mayonado as he tells us more about the work that Chesapeake Housing Mission does and the projects they have coming up right here in Dorchester County.

The Mission Committee will be accepting a Love Offering to go toward both the Chesapeake Housing Mission and our own Local Missions here through our Church.

ASH WEDNESDAY PANCAKE LUNCHEON

You are invited and we hope everyone will attend our annual “**Ash Wednesday Pancake Luncheon**” on February 11th in the Fellowship Hall. The luncheon will be held immediately after the Church service.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

Ash Wednesday is February 14nd. We will have worship service at 6:30pm.



SPAGHETTI DINNER



Plans are well underway for our Spaghetti Dinner on Friday, February 9th 4:30-7pm Dinner includes spaghetti (sauce – with or without meat) salad, garlic bread and drink. Desserts available for purchase. Bakers

you can bring your desserts on Thursday 9-1 or any time on Friday as someone from Hospitality will be here all day.

Adults: \$12, children 5-12: \$6, children 4 and under: free. Family Package: 2 adults & 2 children (under 12): \$30.



DORCHESTER COUNTY WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

This prayer breakfast is a long-standing tradition of women from many different Dorchester churches joining together for prayer. We will be hosting the Prayer Breakfast this year on **Saturday morning, March 16th, starting at 8:00am** in our Fellowship Hall. h.

The Lady's Prayer Breakfast on February 17th will be held at St. Luke's UMC, 712 Bradley Avenue, Cambridge, MD at 8:00am

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY – EMERGENCY COLD WEATHER SHELTER

Our local shelter serves some of the most vulnerable people in Dorchester County: those without homes who struggle with joblessness and, in many cases, addiction and mental illness. The Shelter opened in December at the Salvation Army on Washington Street in Cambridge, where the guests are provided a warm bed, hot dinner, and breakfast in the morning. In addition, guests receive counseling regarding local transition resources for their various needs. All of this is made possible by the generosity of local congregations such as ours, donations from businesses, foundations and community groups and the hard work of many volunteers.

Immanuel Church is responsible for preparing dinner and breakfast items on the second and fourth Thursdays from December through March. We will need people to step up and help. We will only be delivering the meals (we will not be serving them.) The meals must be delivered to the Salvation Army building by 6:00pm

Please look at the sign-up sheet in the Narthex. If you are able to handle one of the open dates, it would be very much appreciated.

WATERFOWL HUNT 2023

The Hunt Committee is thankful for all the volunteers, sponsors/donors, guides, and host farms who helped to make our January 21, 2023, Hunt a success. We are also thankful for the hunters who helped to make it happen. Thanks to Pastor Dale for running the slide show and for putting together the Hunt brochure. Again, this year we had a shotgun donated by Farm Creek Insurance to raffle off, held a 50/50 raffle, and had many door prizes donated to give away to the hunters. This event takes a tremendous amount of planning over several months, with many volunteers. For this, we are very grateful. This year, we netted \$7,702 and had enough delicious meat loaf left over to feed the homeless shelter.

MEMBERS & STAFF FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS

February Birthdays

Aaron Collins	2/1
Cheryl Tomey	2/3
George Barnett	2/7
Taylor Middleton	2/7
Chad Malkus	2/11
Mitchell McDonald	2/11
Alexia Bair	2/15
Kelly Dodson	2/15
Jean Foxwell	2/16
Jim Creighton	2/17
Dale Krotee	2/17
Scarlet Luthy	2/21
Meg Windsor	2/23
Maggie Meilhammer	2/26
Dennis Jones	2/28
Blake Parker Todd	2/29

February Anniversary

Diana & Dale Krotee 2/14



Your Staff

The Rev. Dale Krotee
Janice Haller
J. Curtis White
Lynne Breil & Tina Tyle-Davis

Pastor
Church Secretary
Choir Director/Organist
Pianist

Your Church Council

Bill Bair – President

Tina Lyte-Davis
Max Schnoor
Lou Jones
Sam Shelly

Chuck Hanson
Caroline Price
George Barnett
Jack Breil
Sherry Hoefer

Incoming Members

John Adkins
Susie Creighton
Debbie Luthy

Church Contact Information

Office Hours - Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Phone: 410-228-4640 FAX: 410-221-6419

E-mail: info@immanuelucc.faith

pastor@immanuelucc.faith

IMMANUEL PRAYER LIST: *You are invited to remember these people in prayer*

Members of Immanuel:

Connie BARNETT, health issues
Carter BASS, grandson of Jim & Susie Creighton, health issues
Carole Ann BROHAWN, recovering from surgery at home
Dolores DIXON, health issues
Wells David DODSON, son of Scott & Amy Dodson
Bill FOXWELL, facing health challenges
Phyllis MURPHY, health issues
Frank SPILLMAN, health issues

Friends of Immanuel Church:

Kelsie BURTON, friend of Harriett Leap, health issues
Shirley BURTON, Robin Burton's mother, health issues at home
Kathy GRAY, friend of Bill Bair, health issues
Henry KROTEE, Pastor Dale's father, health issues
John LOWENSEN, father of Diana Krotee, health issues
Debbie McCRAY, friend of Beverly Shelly & the Kozaks, health issues
Terry VINCENT, friend of Beverly Shelly, health issues

Other Prayer Requests:

Guidance in Immanuel's leaders for 2023 and beyond
The leadership of Immanuel church, the need for people willing to
serve to do the business of the church.
Our adopted child, Royer Gaeel Arroyo Sulca, from Peru
Dorchester County Public Schools
Children at the border; Those shot in our country
Those suffering from natural disasters; those dealing with COVID-19
For the healing of our nation and the world, both physical & emotional

Members and Friends Serving in Our Armed Forces:

Christopher ANTENEN, U. S. Air Force, now stationed in the USA,
grandnephew of the late Jean Haddaway
Hunter BROWN, U.S. Army, stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany
Friend of Laura Dixon
Jake CREIGHTON, Captain, U.S. Army, stationed Ft. Sam Houston, TX
Alton FRASE, Lance Cpl, US Marine Corps, Camp LeJeune, North
Carolina, Son of Andrew & Tracy Luthy Frase, grandson of Jock &
Debbie Luthy
Buddy HAYDEN, friend of Robin Burton, U.S. Air Force
Keagan ROSARIO, U.S. Air Force, friend of Kim Leonard, now
stationed in the U.S.
Lucas TOLLEY, U.S. Marine Corps, son of Leslie & Adam Tolley,
Grandson of Lou & Dennis Jones, stationed in Okinawa, Japan
Jason T. WARDEN, Marines, nephew of Michal Dixon, in North Carolina

FEBRUARY 2024

An open-hearted church, empowering people to serve God and the community

Immanuel United Church
of Christ
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 5:30p Spiritual Council Mtg. 6:30p Choir	2	3
4 10A Worship 11:30a Missions Meal	5	6 11-noon Bible Study	7	8 6:30p Choir Practice Feed Shelter	9 4:30-7p Spaghetti Dinner	10
11 10a Worship 11:15a Pancake Lunch	12	13 11-noon Bible Study	14 6:30p Ash Wednesday Service	15 6:30p Choir Practice	16	17
18 LENT begins 10a Worship	19	20 11-noon Bible Study	21	22 6:30p Choir Practice Feed Shelter	23	24
25 2nd Sunday LENT 10:a Worship	26	27 11-noon Bible Study	28 1-6p Blood Bank	29		

COUNTERS

February 4 Sherry Hoefler & Bill Bair
February 11 Tom Wilkison & Bev Shelly
February 18 Robin Burton & Kathy Kelly

CHANCEL

February 25 Sherry Hoefler & Bill Bair
February 4 & 11—GREEN
February 14 & 18 & 25—VIOLET



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Return Service Requested

MISSION'S BRUNCH
February 4th 11:30am



SPAGHETTI DINNER
Friday, February 9, 2024
4:30-7:00pm



Ash Wednesday Pancake Lunch
Following worship
Sunday, February 11, 2024

ASH Wednesday Worship Service
February 14th, 6:30pm