

February 2026

The GOOD NEWS Newsletter

Emanuel Lutheran Church

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Marion, OH 43302

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Find us on Facebook!

Church Staff:

Pastor Michael L. Poole Jr.

Associate Pastor Ian Boden

Administrative Assistant:

Ashley Koehler

Financial Secretary:

Stacy Hoch

Child Care Director:

Abby Chase

Maintenance & Contract

Administrator: Jim Anderson

Church Custodian:

Tabby Keirns

Door Attendants:

Brian and Christy Penrod

Pat Thomas, Rob Valentine

Organist:

Paul Burnside

Assistant Organist:

Sandra Becker

Praise Team Director &

Multimedia Technician:

Teri Turner

Emanuel Choir Director:

Steve deWeber

Emanuel Bell Choir Director:

Carolyn Fox

Updates from the Congregational Meeting

Due to Winter Storm Fern, our Annual Congregational Meeting was held one week late on February 1, 2026.

The following Parish Planning Council was approved:

President – Glen Campbell

Vice President (Interim) – Don Davis

Secretary – Betty Anderson

Treasurer – Kathy Sherman

Worship – Bethany Rice

Spiritual Life – Ann Thomas

Communication and Administration – Dee Rinehart

Fellowship – Jennifer Valentine

Stewardship – Steve Laird

Outreach and Social Ministry – Donna Thomas

Education and Youth – Jean Smith

Property – Don Davis

Learning Center – Steve Andrews

The following changes to worship were presented:

ELW – 8:45am; Education – 10:00a.m.; Praise Team – 11:15a.m.

Additionally, Pastor Ian will be adding a Sunday night worship beginning after Easter. He will do some education leading up to it.

The new worship schedule was approved and changes will take place Sunday, April 12 and will remain in effect for a minimum of three years. After some discussion, we will look into ways to ensure people who listen on the radio are informed of the changes.

Additionally, we approved the 2026 Budget and an amended Welcome Statement to be printed in the order of worship as well as the announcements of our weekly bulletin.

Be Merciful

*(Jesus said) "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."
Luke 6:36*

Pastor Ian drew our Watchword for 2026, and it is: Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. This verse is in the Sermon on the Plain, which is Luke's version of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. We have the Beatitudes, Loving your enemies, the Golden Rule, and then Loving people regardless. Jesus says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

In this section Jesus speaks in the Imperative; these are commands. Jesus is commanding us to be merciful. We hear Jesus say that God's action that is the standard for us follow. We are commanded to be merciful, to show compassion, in the way that God shows compassion.

Think about all the ways that God is merciful and compassionate with you. That is how we are to act with others. Notice this is in the context of loving enemies, doing good to everyone, behaving properly regardless of how people are with you. This is the standard.

This is the message the world needs to hear today. If you look out at our world, love is very little mercy and compassion. We treat people horribly. We say and do things because people don't agree with us, or believe what we believe, or think like us or look like us. And Jesus commands us to be merciful, just as God is merciful. What if God behaved with us the way we behave with others? How would that feel?

God is merciful with us, even when we are not merciful. God is compassionate with us, even when we are not compassionate. This year, the Holy Spirit is calling us to reflect on this command from Jesus. We are to be much more merciful, we are to be much more compassionate, we are to love all people just as God loves.

As we truthfully make this change, and show mercy in all directions, we will change the world.

Peace,



Pastor Mike

A Note from Pastor Ian

Thank you so much to everyone for your prayers, cards and gifts for my ordination and installation! And thank you to everyone to come to these worship services. Your support and welcome means so much to me and I cannot express my gratitude enough. It truly means a lot to me and I am very grateful that God has called me to be a Pastor here at Emanuel.

Thank you!

-Pastor Ian



PD Ann's Corner: Journey Through God's Names

When children were named in the ancient world, names were given to reveal the essential nature and character of a person and connect them with their family heritage. This year I would like you to journey with me through the names of God. In the English language there are few words for God's name. In the Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic languages there are different words to describe the nature and character of God and Jesus. I hope when you learn names that reveal God's nature and character, you will have a deeper relationship with him. The reference for the articles I am using is "Praying the Names of God for 52 Weeks by Ann Spangler.

Elohim (e-lo-HEEM)- God, Mighty Creator

Elohim is the plural form of El, one of the oldest words for divinity in the world. It can refer to the true God or to pagan gods. Elohim is used over 2,500 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is used to emphasize the majesty of the one true God. He is the God of gods. "In the beginning Elohim created heaven and earth." Every time that you read God in the first chapter of Genesis you need to insert the word Elohim. Elohim occurs 32 times in Genesis 1. When you walk the paths of the OSU Prairie, you can remember all the plants, trees, animals, birds and insects Elohim created. When Jesus was on the cross, he used a form of the name. "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?'--- Which means my God, my God why have you forsaken me?" Mark 15:34. Often Elohim is combined with Yahweh which translates to Lord God in our language. Genesis 28:15 reminds us of a promise from Elohim. "Remember I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, I will also bring you back to this land because I will not leave you until I do what I have promised you." Read Psalm 18:28 and Isaiah 41:10. Consider the name Elohim and how it's meaning relates to you.

El Shadday (El-shad-DAI)- God Almighty

El Shadday was considered to be the covenant name of God. The patriarchs believed El Shadday reveals God as one who not only created and maintains what he created but he initiates and maintains a covenant with his people. When Abram was 99 years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram. He said to Abram "I am El Shadday. Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. I will make my covenant with you and I will give you, by which I will guarantee to make you into a mighty nation." Genesis 17: 1-2. El Shadday was often translated as God Almighty. God was seen as strong and unchanging. Shadday occurs 31 times in the book of Job and seventeen times in the rest of the Bible. As children of God we are part of God's covenant relationship. God is faithful in keeping his promises. Read Psalm 91. How have you experience God's Almighty power working in your life? How have his promises been revealed in your life?

A heartfelt, "Thank You" to every one of you that helped put up the Christmas decorations and helped take them down. We couldn't do it without you. The Altar Guild

Bridges Approach

When we look at what personality traits each of the different socio-economic class has, we find that those who live in poverty, focus on entertainment. A sense of humor is highly valued. For the middle class, the emphasis is on acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued. And for those who have wealth, it is about connections. Financial, political and social connections is highly valued.

Church Mouse

I heard some talk over snacks that Lent is comin' up. And one lady said, "I hate Lent. It is so sad." Why is Lent sad? Can there be joy during Lent? I scurried to the library to see if I could find joy in Lent. I found this:

The Joy of Lent

"It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with JOY for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God."

That is the Proper Preface for Holy Communion during Lent!

Walter Huffam – Dean of the Chapel at Trinity Lutheran Seminary once wrote:

"It is not oxymoronous to speak of the JOY of Lent! History remembers Lent as the time of rigorous preparation of catechumens for Holy Baptism. In a later development, Lent also became the time to return to baptism, to reclaim baptized members who had fallen away from the church. This season of penitential and baptismal formation was characterized by a severe fast, exercise of purification, scrutiny and exorcism, prayer and works of charity. For many Christians, Lent has the character of a grim ordeal; Easter is the time for JOY. Nevertheless, the church can sing a Eucharistic preface that speaks of JOY and Lent in the same breath. C.S. Lewis tries to make sense of this incongruity. In *Surprised by Joy* he defines JOY as 'and unsatisfied desire, which is more desirable than any satisfaction.' Thus, he differentiates 'JOY' from 'pleasure' or 'happiness'. The only thing that pleasure or happiness or JOY have in common is that once you have experienced them, you will want to experience them again. Lent, however, is a time of eschewing pleasure or happiness for the purpose of being surprised by JOY. Lent is time of discovering who we are and what we truly need, a restlessness which, according to Augustine, is a symptom of being made for something we can never possess. Ironically, longing for what we cannot have brings JOY! The liturgy of Lent expresses this bittersweet message. In scripture and song and prayer, we find JOY remembering our mortality, beatitude in confessing brokenness, riches in our poverty, elegance in simplicity, sound in silence. In Lent, we die in baptismal waters that become for us the amniotic fluid of new life. We follow an itinerant prophet whose teachings contradict the accepted pattern of our lives. The vocation of our discipleship is defined by footwashing and we end up under a cross with his blood splashing on the ground around us. The JOY of Lent! How does one find this JOY? C.S. Lewis confessed that only when he was 'startled into self-forgetfulness' did he taste JOY. Beyond all the spiritual aerobics of this season is the call to self-forgetfulness in service to others as the way of self-forgetfulness and JOY. As we sing and believe on Maundy Thursday, 'Where charity and love prevail, there is God' – and there is the JOY of Lent!"

See ya' in worship
Church Mouse

Join us Wednesdays during Lent!

Ash Wednesday we will have a 7pm worship service. Every Wednesday after in Lent we will have a Lenten Meal at 5pm, followed by worship at 7pm.

Plan to join us through Holy Week!

Thank you, Emanuel Family, for the beautiful throw, prayers, and heartfelt embrace during the remembrance of our dear Kris. – From the Davidson Family

Looking Back with Alicia

I hope that you all had a Merry Christmas and a wonderful start to the New Year. I thought I would begin this first newsletter piece of the year telling you some of the things I have observed with Feed the Need over the past few years of the program.

Feed the Need started when the Wednesday morning Bible Study learned about a program that Amy Vanderhoff was involved in through the city schools. We learned that there were people in the Marion community that had serious needs. The Bible Study decided that this was something they could certainly help with. Amy was contacted as to the specifics of what was needed. It was learned that food was a big issue.

Therefore, the name was decided, Feed the Need. At the time Amy told that there were approximately 25 meals that were needed that were made each Wednesday after Bible Study. Amy would pick up the meals around 11A every Wednesday and deliver them to those who needed them. Today the number has grown to 74.

There are families with small children, young people, and adults that Amy has found that need our help. Some of the families have experienced several of life's challenges. Circumstances that we could find ourselves in. There was a small child that ran to the door when Amy knocked and was so happy to see her since there was no food in the house that day. I know personally of one person that has a job but nowhere to live, and so lives out of their car. This person is so grateful to have a hot meal and sack lunch handed to them each week. There are many stories of how grateful these folks are for the food we provide.

This past Christmas there was a mother that wanted her children to have at least one present. So, she used what extra money she had for gifts and then no money for food. There is a story of a little girl that lives with her grandmother and the grandmother needs help providing for the little girl since her parents can't provide for her. As you can see the program has grown tremendously over these few years.

We now provide a sack lunch which includes a cold sandwich, fruit, cookies, chips, crackers, and condiments for the sandwich. We also provide a hot lunch to go along with the cold sack lunch. The hot lunch has been spaghetti casserole, beef stew, scalloped potatoes and ham etc. as examples. Also, we provide a vegetable, fruit or bread, biscuit, bottled water etc. We have containers for hot food so it will remain hot until eaten since some do not have access to an oven or microwave.

Thanks to your generosity of food and money to this wonderful outreach we have been able to help these children, teens, and adults in need.

Stephanie and Dave Cook recently took charge of this project when Sue Rakow moved out of state. There are many volunteers that have helped make this project a success. Many of you have donated food items from a list that is put in the bulletin weekly to make these meals, many donate



money to buy what's needed and still others donate their time to help prepare and get all ready for Amy to pick up and deliver. Amy doesn't reveal the identity of these folks so she delivers all herself to respect their privacy.

Christmas Eve day we put together boxes of items over and above the hot meal and cold sack lunch to give these folks an extra gift for Christmas with food staples and toiletries. This is a wonderful way for Emanuel to reach out and help those in need. These folks are so grateful. It says in the Bible that we should help those in need and we are doing that with Feed the Need. Thank you for all of you that have helped with your time, talents, food and monetary donations as we continue to do God's work.

More history to come, Alicia

February 2026 Feed the Need Menu

2/4 – Meatloaf/Mashed Potatoes/Gravy or Shredded Beef Sandwiches/veggies/tater tots

2/11 – Spaghetti/veggies or Ham and Potatoes/veggies

2/19 – Chicken Patty Sandwich/French Fries or Sloppy Joes/veggies/French fries

2/25 – Crescent Roll Hot Dogs/veggies/French fries or Ramen noodles/veggies

All meals are also served with a cold lunch that consists of a lunchmeat sandwich, fruit (fresh if we have it), cookies, PB Crackers, pudding, rice crispy treat, and applesauce.

If you would like to donate items this month, we are most in need of:

Tater Tots, Fresh Fruit (apples and oranges), Large cans of green beans and corn, crescent rolls, ground beef, chicken patties, and PB Crackers.

Thank you for your support of this important ministry!

Other News from Social Ministries

A record setting **Laundry Initiative was held** on January 10 at both Colonial Coin Laundries. 7758 pounds of laundry...yep almost 4 tons of washing and drying. Thanks to Colonial's owner, John Devore for \$130 loyalty credit and Lumpy Loads of Laundry for free detergent when needed. John estimated that 70 to 80 families were helped.

Creative Arts and Expression Updates

Ceramics Painting Class – Lannette Davis is leading a ceramics class where we'll be painting a cappuccino mug. You will have various patterns and paint to choose from. Your mug will be one of a kind! Please join us on: Saturday, February 21 from 10am-12pm in the Parlor. Please bring an apron or paint shirt to protect your clothing. There is no charge for the class, as Lannette is donating her time, the mugs, and all supplies.

Chair Yoga – Our Yoga program continues at 11:00a.m. on Fridays! Instructor Tracy Pryor has been teaching yoga since 2007 and holds many certifications through YogaFit. This class can be adapted to all skill levels. Yoga over time improves mental focus, increases flexibility, and fosters a greater sense of wellness. Recommended donation to cover the costs of our creative ministries is \$10, but pay as you are able.

Faith Journeys

Pastor Ian is leading the Faith Journey discussions this Spring. Pastor Ian is discussing worship and worship practices. All are welcome and invited to join in this exciting discussion.

Upcoming Events

Sunday January 18, 2026	12noon-2p	Worship
Sunday February 15, 2026	12noon-2p	Worship
Sunday March 15, 2026	12noon-2p	Worship
Sunday April 26, 2026	12noon-2p	Here We Stand
Sunday May 31, 2026	Confirmation of 2 nd Year Confirmands	

Book Worm

Stewardship is how we live out our faith in the world. We give to God and God's kingdom not only money, but our time, our talents, our treasures, our faith, our very lives. One of the better books about a wider understanding of stewardship is "Giving to God: The Bible's Good News About Living a Generous Life" by Rev. Dr. Mark Allan Powell. Dr. Powell was a seminary professor of Pastor Mike. This book calls us to look at our stewardship with a different lens. We used this for book study a few years ago, so there may be copies floating around, and people who might be willing to talk about it.

February Birthdays

Gerry Merz celebrates her 90th birthday on February 2nd
Elsie Mitchell celebrates her 92nd birthday on February 23rd
Let's remember Gerry & Elsie with our cards and prayers!
Call the church office for addresses.



Creation Care

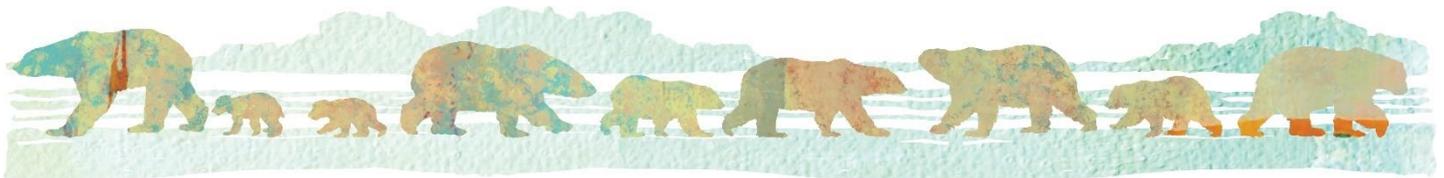
I have to admit, when I think of Creation Care, I picture green forests, colorful native flowers, blue skies and the shining sun. It can be hard to get into Creation Care mode in the middle of winter when all seems dull and grey. However, there is plenty that can be done year-round when it comes to caring for God's creation!



As it turns out, February 27th is International Polar Bear Day! A day aimed at raising awareness to the threats facing polar bears today – mainly habitat loss due to climate change – and encourage action to reduce individual carbon footprints.

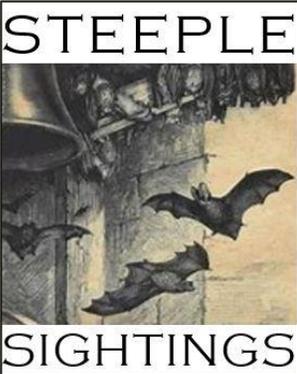
You might think, I don't live within 1,000 miles of a wild polar bear, what can I do to help them? One of the easiest things you can do is to participate in the Thermostat Challenge! During winter, set your thermostat to 68 degrees when you're home, and even lower when you're away or asleep. Consider installing a programmable thermostat and you won't even have to think about changing it each day. If 68 seems too low, consider starting by turning it down just 2 degrees from where you normally keep it.

Other easy actions include turning lights off when you leave a room, setting outdoor lighting on motion sensors, shortening showers, and not leaving the water running while brushing your teeth. None of these things are difficult, but collectively could greatly reduce our carbon footprint.



Mardi Gras Celebration! We will be hosting a Mardi Gras celebration & dinner on Tuesday, Feb 17th at 6pm in the parlor. We will have traditional Mardi Gras food, masks, beads, and some other activities.

Family Movie Night Friday, February 27th at 6:30pm in the Three Kings Theater, on the fourth floor at Emanuel. We will enjoy Popcorn and watch *The Prince of Egypt!*



Hello-o-o down there! The days are getting longer and will soon be warmer. On some of my early evening flights I've begun to see some spring bulbs peeking up through the ground, and thoughts of Spring activities are naturally making me hungry. ('Course everything makes me hungry) I've noticed new people and activities around here like more evening gatherings such as the "Loop Troupe" group and additional worship services. And who is partaking of all these new meetings but our very own Jean Smith—a born and raised Marion Emanuel Lutheran member.



Yep, from right here in Marion County Jean got her foothold in the world of words. As a student in the River Valley school system, she was immersed in the choirs, musicals, the yearbook, and the newspaper. Graduation led her to Ohio University in Athens where she received her degree in English and extra education classes. The real world posed few problems as she returned to Marion for a teaching position and worked at the Job and Family Center as a family case worker specializing in child support. Through her work there she was hired by Pleasant Local School to teach high school English and continued until retirement after 22 years during which she also directed some of the Fall play productions.

Jean may have retired in 2023, but has remained in the literary world by volunteering at the library's book market, Heritage Hall, and teaching GED classes at Marion Tech. She has written and self-published 2 novels and contributed a short story in a Christmas anthology.

As a lifelong member of Emanuel, she has served on the Boards of Education, Spiritual Life, and Stewardship; she has taught Sunday School to our youth and adults; and holds the honor of being the first female Head Deacon.

Away from desks and duties, Jean enjoys traveling within the United States; spending time with her dog, Trixie; knitting (remember the above mentioned "Loop Troupe" group); movies; plays (but not directing them); "5 Nights on Campus" and holds season tickets to COSO in Delaware. Above everything, she feels that Emanuel is family to her, shaping her faith with many good memories. We're grateful for your presence in our congregation, Jean!

Blessings, peace, and especially warmth to all y'all Batina Belfry

Scholarship Opportunities

High school seniors and current college students are encouraged to apply for the **Robert and Margaret Mather Scholarship Fund, Agnes Baldauf Scholarship Fund, and The Hollensen/Dennis Fund** if you plan to attend or are already attending an accredited ELCA college or you are pursuing a career in Christian ministry or social services. This scholarship is open to any young and confirmed Emanuel Lutheran Church member. **The Rita Herbst Scholarship Fund** is now available and it is open to any Emanuel member furthering their education in any field or at any educational institution. Applications may be picked up at the church office. **The application and other support information are due no later than Monday March 2, 2026** to the chairperson, Rae Andrews at 379 Brightwood Dr., Marion, OH 43302. Rae Andrews, 740-387-5432.



>>> February 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9 - EWL Service followed by the Annual Meeting	2	3 8:30 - Quilters 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	4 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Feed the Need 6pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Bells	5 10 - Jon Burnside Visitation & Funeral 11:30 Book Study 6pm Loop Troupe	6 11am Chair Yoga	7 9am Staff & Leadership Meeting
8 9 - EWL Service 10 - Education 11 - Praise Worship	9	10 8:30 - Quilters 2pm Wedding 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	11 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Feed the Need 6pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Bells	12 10am Staff Meeting 11:30 Book Study 4:30 Comm. Meal	13 11am Chair Yoga	14
15 9 - EWL Service 10 - Education 11 - Praise Worship 12 - Faith Journeys	16 Learning Center Closed	17 8:30 - Quilters 1:30 Finance Bd. Mtg 6pm Mardi Gras Dinner & Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	18 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Feed the Need 6pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Ash Wednesday Worship	19 11:30 Book Study 2pm MAPP Playdate	20 11am Chair Yoga	21 10am - Ceramics Painting Class
22 9 - EWL Service 10 - Education 11 - Praise Worship	23 5pm Hour of Prayer	24 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	25 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Feed the Need 5pm Lenten Meal 6pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Lent Worship	26 11:30 Book Study	27 11am Chair Yoga 6:30 Family Movie Night	28

Take a look at some of our upcoming events:



Ash Wednesday Service Worship with us at 7:00pm on Wednesday, February 18!
Wednesdays during Lent we will have a Meal at 5pm followed by worship at 7pm. Plan to join us February 25 – April 1 for Food, Fellowship, and Lenten Worship!

Emanuel Lutheran Church
241 South Prospect Street
Marion, Ohio 43302-3921

*Return Service Requested.

Prepared Especially For:



Please Recycle this newsletter when you're finished. Thank you.