

# The Echoes

May 2024



**Inside: Spring Tea**

**Remembering Pat Smith**

**Pillow Project**

**Servant of the Month: Rebeca Owen**

# Emanuel Lutheran Church

*Our Mission: To share Christ's unconditional love with everyone.*

## From Pastor Lyn

Dear People of Emanuel,

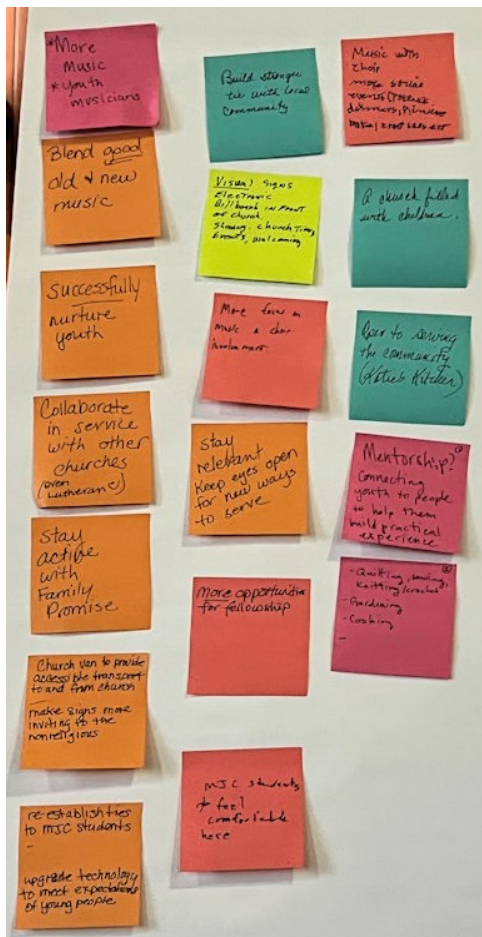
Can you believe it's already May! April was filled with amazing ministry happenings, post-Easter! It's still Easter for a couple of weeks until the Day of Pentecost on May 19. Remember to wear red on that day as we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit!

This past Sunday, April 28, we began the process of wondering what the Holy Spirit is up to here at Emanuel. Most certainly, the Spirit is moving; pray we will be attentive enough to hear, see, and respond to that movement.

*O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

The first session of “wonderings” are below. I invite you to answer these questions and give your responses to me. I genuinely want to know what you are thinking. If you missed the first session, please join the next one scheduled for May 26 at 11:00 am. And if that doesn't work, come to the first Pizza with the Pastor on June 22, where responses and a plethora of other topics will be explored. Bring your questions!

- 1) Why in God's name do we exist? Where in Jesus' name are we going? How, by the power of the Holy Spirit are we going to get there? What is the greatest possibility we can imagine God doing or could do in our community? In other words, what is God up to and how can we get on board?
- 2) What is **DISTINCTIVE** about ELC?



Emanuel is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Sunday Worship: 9:30 am

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Church Office Hours:  
Monday through Thursday:  
8 am — 3 pm  
Friday 8 am — 2 pm

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### OUR VISION

Emanuel's vision is to be loving, supportive, and welcoming, as we reach out in service and in witness to our neighborhood and the city beyond.

We share a passion to nurture people in all stages and circumstances of life.

We, as disciples of Christ, minister to our changing community in challenging cultural times.

God is calling us to joyfully follow the Holy Spirit in ministry to others.

## Pastor Lyn, continued

- 3) What are our VALUES? Values ARE the organization; our values define who we are to the community at large. Organization is derived from “organic”. Are our values “organic” in nature — growing, dying, rising, nurturing, blooming, broadcasting (seeds)?
- 4) What are ELC’s ASSETS & RESOURCES?
- 5) What are our BIGGEST CHALLENGES?
- 6) What are your HOPES & DREAMS for ELC?
- 7) Between now and Session #2, reflect on the three great “listeenings”:
  - a) Listening to God
  - b) Listening to one another
  - c) Listening to the neighborhood and context in which we are planted.

Record your musings and responses to these and other questions you may have and record what you heard while listening.

I firmly believe God is up to something big for our congregation – and it is all good. Pray God makes us courageous and bold in our visioning.

May will be an active month. Many of you have graduations, weddings, family reunions, etc. to get the summer kicked off. God’s blessings in your travels and for your special occasions. Again, if you have input into the above – and I hope that you will – please let me know.

In peace and in confidence of a loving active living God,

Pastor Lyn



## Pat Smith

Submitted by Mike Epting

On Sunday, April 21, Pastor emailed me to let me know that Pat Smith had passed away. Most of you know that Pat had been very, very ill for a long time, perhaps years. She seemed to be a survivor and tolerated a lot of pain (with a lot of grumbling!) and clearly wanted to live. Pat had sensibly stopped driving, so I and many others had been providing transportation to many church activities. Despite her pain, she continued to participate in nearly everything. She finally ended her council membership just this past January.

In recent weeks, Pat had been unable to go to church. Rose and I usually picked her up on Sunday morning, after confirming on Saturday. A few weeks ago, Pat had been positive on Saturday, but when we arrived on Sunday morning she was still in bed. This was so unlike her norm that we felt the situation was ominous. The same thing happened the following week. On Easter, she called me and wanted to be certain that I was picking her up, but again she was unable to go.

Pat was a great presence at Emanuel, quick to share her opinions and feelings. She wasn't always upbeat, but she always made an effort. Pat was especially endearing to small children. When I was taking Pat to Tuesday Text Study, the children were usually in the play area when we arrived. Most weeks it was nearly impossible to get her past the children and inside for Bible Study. Pat was also the small child specialist for Sunday School. We adults will miss her, but children will miss her more.

Pat's soul is in good shape, but please remember to pray for Jack, who has taken such good care of her.



## 90th Anniversary Quilt Project

Submitted by Donna Vickroy

Have you heard that we are working on a quilt to be used as part of the celebration for Emanuel Lutheran Church's 90th anniversary next year?

The quilt is in progress and it's time to share a status photo with you. We would also like to offer everyone an opportunity to be part of this project. The anniversary team is inviting you to sponsor a quilt block. Since there are only a few blocks on the quilt, and we want everyone to have an opportunity for sponsorship, we have opened multi-sponsorship for each block.

The blocks are:

- Top Row - Palms - reaching upward toward heaven, Baptism shell, Lamb of God with staff, Communion chalice
- Left side - Resurrection Butterfly, Crucifixion Crown of Thorns, Guardian Angel, Dedication block (yet to be completed)
- Right side - Dove with olive branch, Eternal Love, Cross and Crown, Dedication block (yet to be completed)
- Bottom row - Palms laying down for where the donkey trod, Mary, Jesus in the manger, Joseph

The cost of sponsorship is \$20. Please select the block you wish to sponsor, make check payable to ELC with "quilt sponsorship" in the memo line. If you wish a dedication to be included on the label (placed on the back of the quilt) indicate that with your donation. You may speak with Donna or Sue about your dedication. The anniversary team thanks you for your participation.



## Step into Spring Tea

Submitted by Donna Vickroy

Photos by Suzanne Wilke, Marsha Waggoner, and Mercy Maya

On behalf of Leah Circle we wish to send a huge thank you to all who participated in the "Step Into Spring" tea held Saturday April 20. It was a wonderful event, well attended, and enjoyed by all. It was a joy to see so many ladies in hats. A special shout out to the men who stepped up to take such great care of the ladies. Bruce, Mark, Tom, Dan, David, Dennis and Dick - your help made the day even more special and the ladies LOVED seeing you in your fancy bow ties. Thank you Samantha for sharing your musical talent with us and thank you Hannah Brady, from Senior Advocacy Project, for helping make us aware of the unique services available to all over 60 in Stanislaus County. Additional thanks go to those who organized, set up, created food, and stayed around to clean up. You are our heroes. Thank you to all who generously offered opportunity items and congratulations to those who were the lucky winners. As a reminder — all net proceeds of the event go toward helping fund the expenses for our upcoming 90th anniversary celebration year.



### Step into Spring Menu

#### Savories:

- Chicken salad
- Stuffed mushrooms
- Egg salad sandwiches
- Smoked salmon sandwiches
- Cucumber sandwiches
- Veggie quiche

Scones: Served with lemon curd, clotted cream, jam

- Blueberry
- Orange cranberry

#### Sweets:

- Dream bars
- Cream cheese cookies
- Filled phyllo shells
- Strawberries



## Spring Tea, continued

Everything is ready, so let's open the doors!



# Spring Tea, continued

The food has been served and everyone looks satisfied.





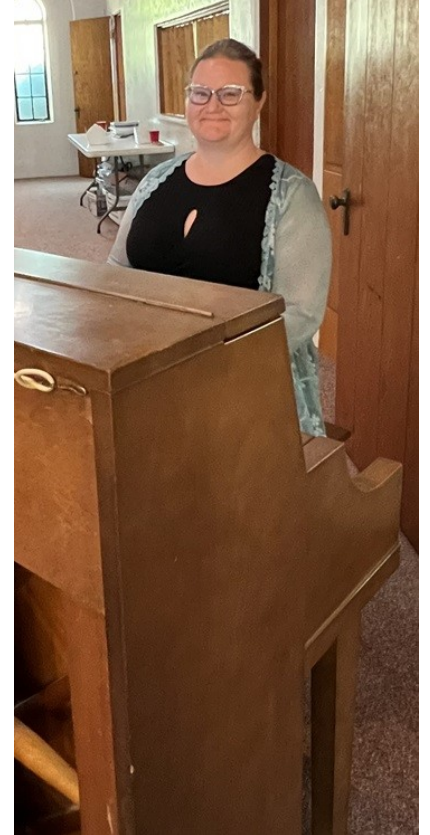
## Spring Tea, continued

Here are some more smiles.



## Spring Tea, continued

Jeri introduced Hanna, our guest speaker, Sue did “thank you’s”, and Samantha provided music. The men were plumb tuckered at the end.



## Chicken Salad Recipe

Submitted by Donna Vickroy

I was asked to share the recipe for the chicken salad that was served at the tea. I'm so happy you enjoyed it!

3 pounds of chicken breast (the packaged rotisserie chicken available at Costco comes in a 3 lb. package)

4 cups of finely diced apple. Leave the skin on the Gala apples

3 cups of finely diced celery

1-1/2 cup finely diced red onion

2 cups finely diced pecans

1 head chopped parsley

1-1/2 cups mayonaise

1-1/2 cups sour cream

salt and pepper to taste



Dice the chicken breast, being careful to remove any bone, gristle, or skin that may be included in the package. Place in a large bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients and toss together. Chill well and enjoy as a side salad or as a sandwich on bread of your choice. You can divide this recipe in half for less quantity. It will last several days in the refrigerator.

## Next Steps Workshop

Submitted by Donna Vickroy

MAY 12 DEADLINE IS APPROACHING.

Have you signed up for the "Next Steps" workshop, coming on Saturday, May 25? This time together is designed to help us explore what questions we, as women, need to research and think about as we plan for our future in a positive and proactive way AND how to go about moving toward pulling this information together as an action plan. Every "Plan A" needs a "Plan B". What are your plans for your health, housing, social network, resources, caring team, and spiritual growth? Registration is limited to 20 participants and closes Sunday, May 12. Cost for the day is \$40 and helps cover the costs for speaker, meals and supplies. Questions? Please see Donna Vickroy. For a registration form see Sue Wilke.



# Pillow Project

Submitted by Kristine Kraft

Hi!

I wanted to show you the project we've been working on with my niece, Donna's, 2nd grade class. These pillows are going to be their gift to their mothers for Mother's Day. I used the quilt batting pieces from Piecemaker's that I have been saving during COVID and after. Please continue to save any and all scraps. Since I now have my cousin's Fabric Markers, we plan on doing it again next year. The next step for the class is to make cards and wrap the pillows. We'll do that at the end of the month.

Thanks,

Kristine



## March Circle Reports

Submitted by Women's Circle Leaders

### **Leah Circle** April meeting

Present: Lois Owen, Jeri Johnson, Kaete Loeffler, Rue Knoll, Rose Epting, Donna Vickroy, Pr. Lyn, Suzanne Wilke

Under old business we discussed the up coming Tea. We will meet on Friday at 10:00 to set up and do some preliminary food preparation. Bruce and Tom will be there to help. We will meet on Saturday at 9 a.m. to finish food preparation and any last-minute details.

We also discussed the Boutique, scheduled for November 9, 2024. Sue asked everyone to do whatever craft skills they have. She also announced that we will have to have vendors to make it successful.

There really wasn't any new business.

Lois led the Bible study from The Wired Word on "Who is my brother?"

**Rebecca Circle** met April 18, 2024 at the home of Mary Lou Dieterich. Chris Paulsen led the meeting and Martha Strand led the bible study. We discussed who will provide the coffee and treats for the Friendship Sundays we are responsible for: May 12, 2024 and August 11, 2024. Connie Petersen presented the treasurer report for our WELCA and Christmas funds. Discussion was had regarding how we will use these funds during the year. Martha Strand showed us what Rebecca Circle will donate to the opportunity table at the April 20th tea sponsored by Leah circle. Our donation was a doormat with flowers and a beautiful door wreath that she made. Everyone was happy with our donation and thanked Martha for handling that for us. We also mentioned that the WELCA game day will be Saturday, August 24, 2024 sponsored by Miriam circle.

Our bible study was taken from the Gather magazine. This month we studied the third lesson in the series Scripture and nature: Teachers of faith. The topic this month was Rivers. We discussed that when Christians think of water many think of baptism. We shared where or with whom our faith journey began. For many of us it was with family members. We also talked about Jesus being the source of living water.

## Servant of the Month

Rebeca Owen is our May Servant of the Month. She has been a cherished member of our congregation since she was very tiny. Most of us remember her in Princess dresses trying to shepherd her little brother to communion. She's very grown-up now and serves Emanuel in many ways.

Rebeca was formally confirmed last October, but she actually began serving as lector and Assistant Minister even before that. In those roles, Rebeca reads powerfully and clearly, with great confidence. She also sings well on Sundays when the Emanuel Singers perform the offertory and has taken part in several drama performances.

Rebeca enthusiastically pitches in with many projects, especially Outreach crafts projects.

Please make sure Rebeca knows how much we appreciate all she does for us.



## May Birthdays

### Birthday Blessing Sunday is May 19

All those celebrating their births during the month of May will receive a Birthday Blessing Prayer from their Emanuel Family. Don't miss out!

- |                     |                          |                           |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5/1 David Fauskin   | 5/10 William Castleberry | 5/30 Lois Tollefson-Silva |
| 5/4 Sue Allen       | 5/10 Sam Gierhan         | 5/30 R. G. Crawford       |
| 5/4 Azaria Martinez | 5/12 Carol Schneider     | 5/31 Kathleen Obermeyer   |
| 5/4 Ray Simon       | 5/23 Kim Petersen        |                           |
| 5/9 Rose Epting     | 5/26 Jack Smith          |                           |



# Altar Flowers

Photos by Mike Epting

After church on April 21, Dennis Strand pointed out to me that the altar flowers that day were very special. They were grown on our property, mostly cared for by Debbie Van Diepen. They grow on the south side of our Sunday School buildings, so you may not normally see them.



## Epilogue

(You may safely skip this...)

by Mike Epting, Echoes Editor

I thought it might be interesting to search for solar-eclipse

references in the Bible. It turned out that it was not because there are no specific mentions of eclipses in the Bible. There are passages that are often referenced, but do not describe eclipses. Amos 8:9 says the sun will go down at noon, which is not what happens during an eclipse. Matthew 27:45 says there was darkness over the land unto the ninth hour. There was no eclipse during the crucifixion and it wouldn't have lasted more than a few minutes even if there had been one. Acts 2:20 says the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood; the sun part is OK, but not the moon part. Revelation repeats the Acts declaration.

I should have known that I would discover many, many attempts to read something spiritual into the eclipse. The ones I found were all total nonsense. I do not doubt or dispute that one might have a spiritual experience while witnessing an eclipse. Heck, I sometimes feel quite emotional when seeing a low-hanging full moon, which is quite a wondrous sight. The eclipse phenomenon itself is so "normal" that trying to assign mystical meaning to it is silly.

For one thing, it is easy with modern methods to calculate exactly where and when our moon's shadow fell (or will fall) on the Earth's surface. An annular solar eclipse was observable in Gibeon, where Joshua prayed for God to stop the sun, in 1207 BCE. I found a nice article in Oxford's "Astronomy and Geophysics" journal that makes a decent case for this interpretation of the Book of Joshua (so maybe there is one eclipse reference in the Bible after all).

For the most recent eclipse, the European Space Agency has posted a nice video of the shadow passing over North America from southwest to northeast. The photo here is captured from that

video, which clearly shows how the moon's shadow looks from space. The brown blob is over Texas, where Dan Johnson watched the eclipse.



An old work friend of mine takes amazing photos of celestial events and posts them on Facebook. This is one of her photos, also taken in Texas.

Several prominences (flares) are clearly visible and the sun's corona is, as well. While not at all mystical, these photos do, in fact, fill me with awe.



In my reading, I also ran across a Christianity Today article that veered away from the meaning of solar eclipse to the meaning of Revelation. Of course, I suffer from confirmation bias, so an article that confirms my beliefs is easy for me to believe. The author makes it quite clear that linking eclipse and other astronomical phenomenon to the end times is pretty silly. The author also made fun of the Left Behind series because of its misinterpretation of Revelation. The key point he makes is that we *are* living in the end times, and our ancestors also lived in the end times. He says "*The purpose of Revelation is to motivate believers through a message of hope. Jesus has already defeated evil!*" He goes on to say that seeing reality from God's perspective should motivate us to live out the Gospel message.

At Men's Bible Study, last Wednesday, Dan Johnson asked us what it means to "abide in Jesus". One thing I believe is that we should try to understand what Jesus is telling us by studying his words, not by looking for signs and portents in the sky.