

## The Messenger – May 2025

### Beloved Ones

I offer you three readings for your reflection this month: a poem by Mary Oliver, and two readings from the gospel of John.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Jn 10:10*

*Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.[f] . Jn 11:21-25 - Jesus of Nazareth*

*"If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it. There are plenty of lives and whole towns destroyed or about to be. We are not wise, and not very often kind. And much can never be redeemed. Still life has some possibility left. Perhaps this is its way of fighting back, that sometimes something happened better than all the riches or power in the world. It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins. Anyway, that's often the case. Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb. (Don't Hesitate)" Mary Oliver*

What are your memories of May Day? I remember creating May flower baskets and distributing them to people in our neighborhood. May Day celebrates the eruption of life in this new springtime. The grass is greening, trees are leafing out, and flowers are blooming. The birds are celebrating the beginning of every day. This is a time of vibrancy in the world around us. The vibrancy of May comes every year. I think of seasons as a spiral. The movements of the spring are the same every year.

*Continued...*

However, every year is different. The environment has changed from last year. Spring is different than it was last year. Yet, once again there is the greening and flowering of the earth, and the birthing of the next generation.

Easter is more than a Sunday. It is a season, and we are in the middle of that season. We have seven weeks to reflect on the promise of resurrection-the promise of Life. Easter is a season in which we can explore what resurrection means in this ordinary world, in our ordinary lives. In John's gospel there is a movement, a flow, that comes to the surface in chapter ten then continues through chapter twenty. I am drawn to these two readings because of their focus on Life in the here and now. Notice that Martha believes in a resurrection on the last day, and Jesus points her to a present reality of resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is the witness that Life flows through this life which is bordered by birth and death. Our lives and the life of the world we live is filled with many and varied experiences. Some of them are pleasant, some are difficult, some of them are traumatic, and some of them are comforting. Life, which John's gospel calls eternal life, is a flow in the world which is beneath, within, and among the details of living. This divine gift which is witnessed by the resurrection is present with us in every circumstance of our living. The Divine beloved is present always, and where God is present there is Life. Mary Oliver celebrates joy which comes from love, and shows up in a world of difficulties. I wonder if Joy and Life are partners in this dance of living.

We celebrate the resurrection every year while every year is different. Life is not the same as it was a year ago. We have changed, and the world around us has changed. Again, this year the question is What does it mean to confess "Christ is risen." May invites us to reflect on joy and resurrection. We might begin by asking how we are experiencing life this year, and what has been changing within and around us. We might ask how new and renewed life is showing up especially in unexpected ways. We might ask what is being us joy. Consider sitting in nature, or at a window looking out upon the greening earth as you reflect on Life and Joy.

Blessings of Life and Joy, *Pastor Frank*



## **From our Faith Community Nurse:**

### **Taking Care of Your Health**

Our environment shapes us in ways that we sometimes overlook. What surrounds us — the air we breathe, the water we drink and even the light we absorb — profoundly affects our well-being. When considering the

impact of environmental factors on our body, mind and spirit, morning sunlight stands out as a powerful catalyst for health and vitality. Recent scientific research reveals that sunlight offers far more than just a warm glow. It's a natural remedy that goes beyond just the well-known vitamin D benefits. Studies show that sunlight, especially in the morning, can transform our health from the inside out, touching nearly every aspect of our being:

1. impacts our metabolic health.
2. improves key health indicators: reduced body mass index, lower blood glucose levels and decreased HbA1c levels — particularly important for those at risk of diabetes.
3. mobilizes nitric oxide in our skin, potentially reducing cardiovascular morbidity.
4. morning light exposure can significantly improve sleep quality by regulating our circadian rhythms, as early morning light can help set your body's internal clock, promoting more restful nights and more energetic days.
5. Even our mental health receives a boost from morning sunlight. Studies have shown that high-intensity morning light can help reduce anxiety and depression-like behaviors, offering a natural approach to emotional well-being.

So, how can you incorporate these insights into your daily life? Start small. Commit to spending just 15-20 minutes outside in the morning. Allow the sunlight to touch your skin, breathe in the fresh air and notice how you feel. Consider this time as a gift to yourself — a moment of wellness and connection.

*Continued...*

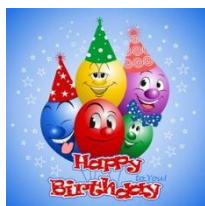
It's also a great time to reflect on God's magnificent creation and His daily provision. Just as the sun rises faithfully each morning, God's mercies are new every day, lighting up our path and sustaining our lives. As Psalm 84:11 reminds us, "The Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." By embracing the morning light, we not only care for our physical bodies but also connect with our Creator who designed the Earth, the Sun and every intricate detail of our well-being.

Remember, your environment is a powerful tool for health given to you by our loving Creator. By choosing to step into the morning light, you're making a conscious decision to nurture your body, mind and spirit. The sun isn't just rising — it's offering you a daily invitation to wholeness.

From *Creation Life*

April 1, 2025

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Sue Scott, (815-222-1299.)



### Happy Birthday

5/1	Beth McLean	5/18	Christopher Walter
5/5	Taj Guzzardo	5/19	Alexandra Koch
5/6	Bronte Benson	5/22	Bob Matheson
	Jim Roberts	5/24	Anastasia Benson
5/10	Sue Stauffer		Thea Sauer
5/12	Andrea Noble Wallace	5/26	Pat Becker
5/13	Bode Sauer		Erick Knaus
5/17	Brendan Noble	5/27	Rocio Aldana
	Paula Stahl		



A@E invites you to participate in our summer art exhibit,

## **"Sanctuary"**

June-August 2025

Opening Reception in the Gallery at Emmanuel,

Friday, June 6, 6:00-8:30 pm

920 Third Ave. Rockford

Calling all Artists!

Sanctuary will be a mixed media art show. It will highlight artists perspective of what the concept of sanctuary inspires. Sanctuary can represent a safe and protected place, whether a physical space or a metaphorical refuge, a place of worship, a wild life reserve, a garden or prairie, a forest or a personal haven of comfort. The concept of sanctuary also has roots in ancient religious traditions where it is referred to as a holy or sacred place. Artists are encouraged to pull from collective wisdom and share their interpretation of this concept with their art.

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Art due: Wednesday, June 4 drop off 10:00am-12:00pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 920 Third Ave. Rockford

Enter at church office north door (off alley, near parking lot)

If you need to drop off work earlier in the week, please contact the office to make an appointment: 815-963-4815.

If you would like to exhibit, contact Susan Hurley-Whitacre at 708-845-7207 or [susanhurley2010@gmail.com](mailto:susanhurley2010@gmail.com)



All female members of the ELCA are considered a part of WELCA and are invited to join us on the third Thursday of each month, except July and August at 9:30am at Emmanuel. Our next meeting is **Thursday, May 19th at 9:30am**. Hope to see you there.

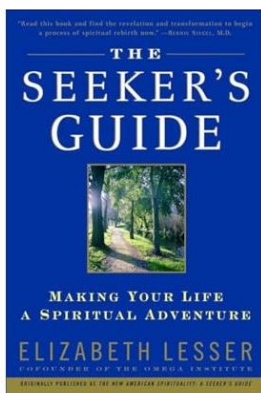
### **Women's Interfaith Potlucks**

All women are invited to attend the interfaith potlucks, listed below, which start at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass. Plates, silverware, and beverages will be provided, but you are always welcome to bring your own plate and silverware if you wish.

- Monday, May 19, 2025, at the Lakewood Hills shelter house at 4188 Lakeside Drive, Rockford. Karen Hill will speak about the work of Rockford Urban Ministries.
- Monday, June 30, 2025, at Phyllis Peterson's home, 7945 Coopers Hawk Trail, Machesney Park. Phyllis will speak about "The Expression of Feelings."
- Monday, July 28, 2025, at Christ Lutheran Church, 425 Riverside Rd., Belvidere. Christ Lutheran Church has a ministry called PATHWAYS <https://www.seekthepath.org/>  
Karen Glavin will be the speaker and she will review the history of connecting to the Divine with prayer beads.
- Monday, November 24, 2025, at Inscape Collective, 201 - 7th St., Rockford.

ALSO: All are invited to register for the May 8th Eliminate Racism 815 Summit on Racism, "Embracing Differences for a Change." Register on the website: <https://www.er815.org/>

Hope to see you soon!  
Susan Goldberg



## **Spiritual Journeys Tuesdays**

**9:30 – 11:00am**

We have chosen a new book for Spiritual Journeys which we plan to start on May 13, 2025–9:30 a.m. on Zoom.

It is The Seeker's Guide, by Elizabeth Lesser.

It is available on Amazon and from other sources. We will be reading together and discussing it, so no need to read

ahead. Please join us with this Zoom link on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89838350099?pwd=O4Hu08ruXp2VHLOZLm9lsHyRKypPv9.1>.



At Emmanuel's Breathe Meditation Service we gather for one hour to enter a sacred time - the "thin place" between the worlds -- and Breathe. We listen to sacred scriptures and poetry from many traditions, we chant,

and we sit in silence as we open ourselves to the Great Mystery.

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.

Don't go back to sleep

You must ask for what you really want.

Don't go back to sleep.

-Rumi

**Next Breathe will be May 10th at 5:00-6:00 pm**

Enter by the north parking lot entrance.



## **Soul Garden Hikes**

Please text Holly, 815-543-1191, if you would like to hike!  
Knowing who is coming will allow us to wait for everyone before starting out.

**Join Soul Garden for continuing hiking experiences in the Winnebago County Forest Preserves. Dress for the weather! Text Holly if you want to join the hikes. 815-543-1191**

### **Please note the time of each hike.**

#### **Monday, May 5th, 10:00am**

Pecatonica River Forest Preserve

7260 Judd Road & 14960 Brick School Rd, Pecatonica, IL 61063

#### **Saturday, May 17th 9:00am**

Sugar River Forest Preserve

10127 Forest Preserve Road, Durand, IL 61024

### **Link to Descriptions of all 44 Forest Preserves**

**<https://www.winnebagoforest.org/items>**

## **Scholarships are Available**

Emmanuel has four scholarships available for members and family, senior high school seniors in a Christian School and for college. Contact the church office at 815-963-4815 for information and application. Applications must be returned by May 30, 2025.





## **May 2025 MLP Newsletter**

*Serving the people who live, work, worship, and play in the neighborhoods of Midtown*

Check out our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Midtown-Lutheran-Parish-101030175425386>

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### **Opportunities in MLP—ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Katie's Cup is open Tuesday thru Friday 8 am - 2 pm

Midtown Market—9 a.m.—1 p.m., Thursdays June 3 through September 25

Katie's Walking Club—Thursdays at 9:15 a.m., weather permitting

Katie's Choice Book Club—Second Thursday of the month, 10 am.—11:15 am. Check with Katie's Cup for book selection

Katie's Cup Conversations— noon (11:30 room open):

\*May 20, 2025—Rev. Michael Thomas on the topic and Dangers of Christian Nationalism

\*June 10, 2025—PRIDE

Cars and Coffee—First Saturday April through October. 9-noon (June Cars and Coffee is on 2nd Saturday) in the RPS parking lot.

Indoor Music at Cars and Coffee:

Jeff Layng—May 3, 2025

Sam the Saxophone Kid—June 14, 2025

Open Mic—May 13, 2025 from 5:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m.



Our 2nd clay workshop with Three Ravens will offer the opportunity to hand-build these delightful little Gnome Luminaries you may use indoor or outdoor to bring some whimsical fun to your home. Tom enjoyed having us in January and is looking forward to having us back again.

Three Ravens Pottery, 1009 5th Ave, Rockford, 61104

Sunday May 18th 2:00-5:00 Cost \$45.00

Email, call or text Holly to register for this workshop. We have seats for 12 people. Looking forward to hand-building with you!

Holly 815-543-1191 [hollyblair@mac.com](mailto:hollyblair@mac.com)

### **We Pray for Healing**

Allison, Sally, Jerry, Don, Madeleine, Tim, Millie, Sally, Ron, Jonathan

Jennie, Char, Linda, Judy, Shannon, Ian, Miguel, Mike, "CeCe", Beverly, Brooke, Mary Lee, Tammi, Matthew, Margie, Tom, Sophie, Vince, Todd, Bina, Deborah, Jeff, Roycealee, Jonathan, Peg, Karen & Jerry, Nathaniel & Hannah, Tim Geoppo

We pray for the family and friends of Roberts Calvert who died on Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Funeral service is Saturday, April 26, 11:00am at Emmanuel.



**Can you give Andrea a ride now and then?  
(Remember, it doesn't need to be every week.)**

After being in a car accident Andrea Glynn is without transportation but she would still like to join us for Sunday worship. If you are able to offer her a ride now and then it would be much appreciated and Andrea is able to give drivers \$5 toward gas expenses!

She lives on Fincham Drive off of Trainer. Her phone number is 815-226-4662. Please give her a call if there are some times when you can give her a lift. Thank you for considering. It takes a village!

**The Church Council Members for 2025 are:**

Karen Van Howe: President, Worship and Music  
Holly Blair-Cascio: Vice President, Soul Garden  
Kathlyn Wright: Secretary, Outreach, Food Pantry  
Rich Lundin, Treasurer, Financial  
Susan Hurley-Whitacre, Arts @ Emmanuel  
Marcia Terrill, at Large  
Taj Guzzardo, Care for Creation, Membership, Caring  
Connections  
Sally Susan, at Large  
Dan Goldberg, at Large  
Kristie Heath-White, at Large

Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
P. O. Box 4362  
Rockford, IL 61110  
815-963-4815 Fax: 815-963-4808  
Emmanuelchurch07@gmail.com

Elcrockford.org

Pastor Frank Langholf  
309-509-5241  
fslangholf@gmail.com