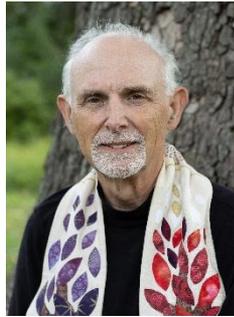


The Messenger – March 2026



Beloved of God,

I am writing in this in the final week of February. We are at the dawn of the first month of spring. The weather forecast seems to indicate that March will come in like a lamb. I wonder, will it go out like a lion? March is like that; it has wild swings in the weather. The ups and downs of temperatures, the rain or snow, and the thawing of the ground all prepare for the growth of plants. March is nature's transition from winter to spring.

March is also the Lenten season. Lent traditionally was the final time of preparation for baptism which marked a new beginning. There were disciplines to prepare including prayer, fasting, and final studies. I am wondering if March -Lent- might be for us also a time to prepare for rebirth. Before I explore this further I want to embrace it all with grace. Grace is the core truth that we are loved by God, we are all beloved ones, and our destiny is a gift. The Divine invites us to live into this truth. Preparation might include deepening into practices that enable us to make room. Our practice could be a metaphorical or spiritual spring cleaning. Our Lenten practice could be clearing out what no longer works for us, or what is not longer essential. This is the time to make room for whatever may be coming in the future. We can spend the month of March simplifying our practices and letting go of our routines and expectations.

I invite you to a prayer practice of meditation of sitting a few minutes with open hands, open hearts, and open minds (imagination more than intellect). As thoughts come just release them into the care of God. You can imagine them flowing from your mind through your heart, and then resting in your open hands where they are released to God. I invite you to consider writing in a journal or creating art that expresses what you would like to let go of, and what might also be taking root in this month of transition. Our openness can prepare us for what is coming- what has taken root in our souls, in our congregation, and in our wider community. This is different form of fasting which prepares us for something to be birthed or reborn.

Another image comes to my mind. Perhaps it can be helpful. Controlled burns are done in this natural transitional season. Last year's growth in the prairie is burned away to make way for new growth. Lent can be a time for doing a controlled burn in our soul prairie in preparation for new growth. Easter will come on the first Sunday in April, April 5. How can we be prepared for Resurrection and Rebirth?

I also want to share a word about digital communication dangers. Members of Emmanuel have been getting text messages and emails claiming to be from me which ask for money in some form. We have removed names and contact information from our website to help end this practice. Please, if you receive one of these do three things. One, ignore it because I will never contact you by text or email asking for financial assistance. Two, inform me of receiving the request including the phone number or the email address used. Three, report them as fraudulent messages through your messaging app.

March Lenten Blessings

Pastor Frank

Emmanuel's Congregational Council

Members and Officers

President: Karen Van Howe, Worship & Music

Vice-President: Kelli Luebke

Treasurer: Rich Lundin, Finance

Secretary: Kathlyn Wright, Outreach/Pantry

Taj Guzzardo, at large

Dena Rasmussen, at large

Dan Goldberg, at large

Kristie Heath-White, at large

Susan Hurley-Whitacre, Art @ Emmanuel

Marcia Terrill, at large

Happenings at Emmanuel

Yoga With Claudette Pirrello,

Mondays at 5:00 pm & Thursdays at 1:00 pm

Cardio Drumming With Beth Campisi Mondays at Emmanuel,
4:00 – 5:00pm

Spiritual Journeys on Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 am on Zoom

Wednesday Noon Bible Study on ZOOM

There is NO Bible Study during Lent, until after Easter



Silent meditation
practice in the
Benson Room at
Emmanuel.

*Thursdays from 5:30
– 6:00pm – All are
welcome.*

Enter by parking lot entrance. Questions or text Sara 815-742-0581.

Women of the ELCA

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Pantry— Fridays 9:30-11:30

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

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 9:30 am at Emmanuel.

Next WELCA gathering is March 19th at 9:30am.

The commitment of WELCA is to grow spiritually by praying, studying the Bible, and maturing in faith. As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to growth in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.



March



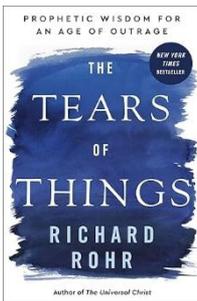
- | | | | |
|------|--------------------|------|------------------------|
| 3/3 | Karissa Swope | 3/23 | A Jeffrey Birch |
| 3/8 | Isabel Castrey | 3/23 | Benjamin Johnson |
| 3/11 | Allison Lakey | 3/28 | Anita Mueller |
| 3/11 | Catherine Rennert | 3/29 | James Burcham |
| 3/14 | Paula Fitzpatrick | 3/29 | Mark Hoffman |
| 3/17 | Ann Downie | 3/30 | Campbell Armas-Perrine |
| 3/20 | Christopher Lundin | 3/30 | Sally Susan |
| 3/22 | Bobby Moseley | | |



In Our Prayers

Allison, Jonathan, Julaine, Ray, Donna, Jim, Ellie, Wanie, Bob, Barb, Kathy, David, Steve

Norm, Jennie, Judy, Shannon, Mike, Matthew, Tom, Sophie, Vince, Todd, Bina, Jeff, Deborah, Peg, Karen & Jerry, Nathaniel & Hannah, Tim Geoppo, Mary Jo, Dr. Abu, Emi, Isaiah, Manny, Leeza, Louis, Barbie, Janine, Mike, Wade, Cindy, Billy



Spiritual Journeys

We started a new book February 3rd, "The Tears of Things; Prophetic Wisdom for an age of Outrage," by Richard Rohr. You can join us anytime, we read and discuss the book together. You can find more information about the book on Amazon. We meet every Tuesday 9:30 am to 11:00 am on zoom. Contact Karen

Van Howe at karenvanhowe@gmail.com for question or you want to join the group.

Winnebago County Forest Preserves Interest Hikes

Come hike for an hour in Winnebago Counties Forest preserves. Text Holly if you want to join the hikes:

815-543-1191. Meet at the Forest preserve entrances unless otherwise instructed.

Monday, March 9th 10:00am

Hononegah

#80 Hononegah Road, Rockton, IL 61072

Saturday, March 28th, 10:00am

Colored Sands

10602 Haas Road, Rockton, IL 61024



Link to Descriptions of all 44 Forest Preserves

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

All hikes begin at 10:00 a.m. Dress for the weather!

At Breathe we gather for one hour to enter a sacred time -- the "thin place" between the worlds -- and Breathe. We listen to sacred readings and poetry from many traditions, we chant, and we sit in silence as we open ourselves to the Great Mystery.



Our next Breathe Meditation gathering will be March 14th, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.



FREE EVENT

Saturday March 21st
9AM-1PM
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
920 Third Ave, Rockford, IL
Community is Invited

Bring your broken or torn items and meet our community of fixers! We will do our best to repair your beloved possessions and keep them out of the landfill.

WHAT WE FIX:

- small electronics & appliances**
- clothing repairs and mending*
- lamps and basic wiring
- bicycles
- toys and more!

REPAIR - DON'T REPLACE!



*Please wash any clothing you want us to mend.

**No computer or phone repairs available

For the most up to date information,
Follow us on Facebook: @SustainRockford

Are you handy and want to help? Call Paula at 815-871-0120
Email: info@sustainrockford.org



SUSTAIN RKFD



This event made possible with a grant from:
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Faith Community Nurse's Notes



March is National Kidney Month

March is National Kidney Month, a time when communities across the country raise awareness about kidney disease. This year's focus is on taking charge of your health and the many factors that go into managing your kidney disease.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a serious

condition affecting around 35.5 million people. Often overlooked until symptoms appear, CKD is progressive and can put you at risk for serious health complications including heart attack, stroke, and kidney failure. Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help you manage CKD and its complications from progressing.

An illustration of a pink kidney with a smiling face, next to a white clipboard with a checklist and a red checkmark. The background is a light orange color with a subtle pattern of small white dots.

Managing Chronic Kidney Disease

Take charge of your health

Follow these healthy lifestyle habits to take charge of your kidney health:

Meet regularly with your health care team. Staying connected with your doctor, whether in-person or using telehealth via phone or computer, can help you maintain your kidney health.

Manage blood pressure and **monitor blood glucose levels.** Work with your doctor to develop a plan to meet your blood pressure goals and check your blood glucose level regularly if you have diabetes.



Take medicine as prescribed and avoid NSAIDs like ibuprofen and naproxen. Your pharmacist and doctor need to know about all the medicines you take.



Aim for a healthy weight. Create a healthy meal plan and consider working with your doctor to develop a weight-loss plan that works for you.



Reduce stress and **make physical activity part of your routine.** Consider healthy stress-reducing activities and get at least 30 minutes or more of physical activity each day.



Make time for sleep. Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night.



Quit smoking. If you smoke, take steps to quit. It may seem difficult, but small changes can go a long way keeping your kidneys and you healthier for longer.



Want more information? Check out...

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/national-kidney-month>

March Women's Interfaith Potluck

Monday, March 30, 2026,
at the Unitarian Universalist Church,
4848 Turner St., Rockford.

Regina Cook-Glanton and Deb Whinnery will discuss the mission and work of the All Faiths Team of Eliminate Racism 815.



The Love is... Art Exhibit is showing through April

In the Emmanuel Celebration Gallery.

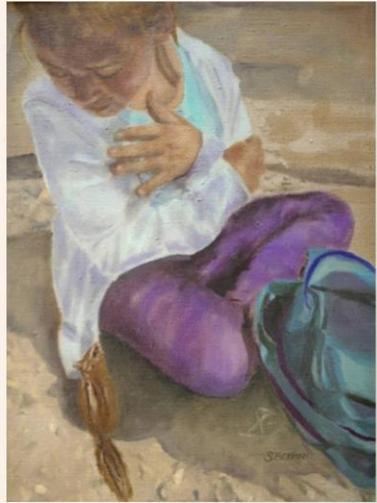
We have a lot of artists new to Emmanuel listed on the poster below.

Arts at Emmanuel A@E

Invites you to

Love is ...

NOW
SHOWING
thru April



I Know This Much Is True Artist: S. Berman

Celebration Gallery at Emmanuel
920 Third Ave. Rockford

Love is ... a mixed media art exhibit.

Exhibit open for viewing Tues, Wed, Thurs 9:00 – 1:30, Fri 9:00-11:00.

Artists exhibiting:

Jean Apgar, Sarah Berman, Barbara Berney, Susan Berry, Colletia Berryhill,
Holly Blair-Cascio, Diane Dailing, Holly Fuca, Karen Gines, Norm Knott,
Marsha Goodheart, Sadie Hoessrich, Susan Hurley-Whitacre, Julaine Loftquist,
Jenny Matthews, John Naretta, Brett Whitacre, Cassie Blair, Jonathan Chell,
Ronda McCaskey, Cheria Gillespie, Nancy King-Mertz and Janine Ziarko.

If you would like more information, please contact Susan Hurley-Whitacre
at 708-845-7207 or susanhurley2010@gmail.com

Don't forget Daylight Savings Time Starts

Sunday, March 8th at 2:00 am

So to be safe and get that extra hour of sleep or that extra cup of coffee move your clocks ahead on Saturday night.



Remember, spring ahead; fall back.

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC](#)

Time off in March

Pastor Frank will be on Retreat this month, from Monday March 16th to Monday, March 23. If you a need while he is gone, call the church office and we will know who is covering for him.

Sue Scott will be on vacation starting Friday, March 27th and returning Monday, April 6th.

Helen Bond will be at Emmanuel for Drumming Circle

Sundays, March 15th and 29th.

Members of Emmanuel

Will be having a "Blossom Equinox" Event
At Emmanuel
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Come and celebrate the return of Spring



2026 Midtown Midweek Lenten Services at Noon

Conversations with Jesus

March 4th at Salem Lutheran Church

Exercise Class led by our Faith Community Nurses

11:00 to 11:45 am, in the Fireside Room

Service to follow at Noon in Salem's Sanctuary

Pastor Chuck Olson preaching

March 11th at Zion Lutheran Church

Exercise Class led by our Faith Community Nurses

11:00 to 11:45 am, in the Fellowship Hall

Service to follow at Noon in Zion's Sanctuary

Pastor Frank Langholf preaching

March 18th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Exercise Class led by our Faith Community Nurses

11:00 to 11:45 am, in Emmanuel's Library

Service to follow at Noon in Emmanuel's Sanctuary

Pastor Leslie Aska preaching

March 25th at First Lutheran Church

Exercise Class led by our Faith Community Nurses

11:00 to 11:45 am, in Friendship Hall

Service to follow at Noon in First Lutheran's Sanctuary

Pastor Bill Dahlberg preaching

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