



“Behold, angels came and were ministering to him.”

ST. MATTHEW 4: 11

FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL FOR THE INVOCABIT, THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT



Esprit

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Lent—A Time to Take off Our Masks

by Pastor Meyer

Art critic and columnist Maureen Mullarkey [January 14, 2022] wrote an insightful column entitled, *What Hiding Our Faces Tells Us About The Condition Of Our Souls*. This got my attention because we have hidden our faces behind masks for two years. While I won't get into a debate about the necessity or lack thereof of wearing a mask in public, I will endeavor to speak about the metaphorical use of a mask.

Mullarkey wrote, “We can choose our words; we cannot choose our faces.” Indeed, our faces are given to us by God in the womb. Countenance is the word used in the Aaronic Blessing at the end of the Divine Service where the officiant says in the last line: “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.” To lift up one's countenance is to smile at someone. So, following our reception of God's gifts in the Divine Service God smiles at us as we depart.

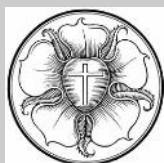
But back to faces. The face has a number of organs – eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. These are all sensory organs which enable communication and reception. The eye is said to be a window to the soul. Fortunately, we have not had to cover our eyes like a Muslim woman wearing a burqa. Consider the many metaphors which use the term face. I'll use Mullarkey's list. “Things stare us in the face. Face up to them. We take things at face value. We set our face against enemies who would wipe us off the face of the earth. He has egg on his face. Face the music. Lose face. Save face. Make a face. On the face of it. The list is long. Even clocks have a face.”

If the face is a window to the soul, and I think it is, then what of the masks that we wear to cover up the condition of our souls? As mask has usually been used to hide behind. On Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday many people dress up in costume and engage in questionable behavior. Debauchery is probably the best word to describe it. All of it is done behind elaborate masks. People “let go” before the austerity of Lent. The event is also called Carnival, which is Latin for “farewell to meat,” since Roman Catholics were required to refrain from meat during Lent. From this we get the idea of “giving up something for Lent.” There is nothing wrong with depriving one's self from pleasurable things during a season devoted to self-discipline, but fasting and bodily preparation are not commanded by God. See Lu-

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Esprit is the informational and educational newsletter of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Esprit de corps indicates a sense of union and of common interests and responsibilities, as developed among a group. Our community of Immanuel is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to us in the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments.

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church is an historic and centrally located parish—called, gathered, and strengthened by Christ's Word and Sacraments—confessional in doctrine, evangelical in orientation, orthodox in liturgy, cosmopolitan in membership; serving the Terre Haute community and the students of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and reaching out to the nations since 1858 as a parish of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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ther's Small Catechism, Sacrament of the Altar part 4. Lutheran Service Book, p. 327.

Lent is really about taking off our masks of our sinful hearts and baring them before God who judges on the basis of his Ten Commandments. We often wear the mask of piety, acting as though we have pure thoughts and words. But every catechumen knows those words of Jesus about what is in the heart.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander (St. Matthew 15.19).

I am sure that most of you have had the same experience I have had with the physical face masks, not being able to hear or understand someone else, especially if that person is also standing behind a plexiglass screen. For the hearing impaired this is an extremely frustrating situation. One cannot see the person's lips and so, no communication.

Lent is the time when all is laid bare before God. The writer the Hebrews says:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4.12-13).

It is only when we admit to ourselves what the all-knowing God sees that healing can happen. It isn't that God cannot see behind our masks of denial—coverup, really!—it is that we believe that we are safe behind that mask.

The salutary practices of Lent—self-denial, repentance, setting aside time to hear and contemplate God's Word in midweek prayer offices—help us to remove those masks. As more and more government entities are removing the burden of mask wearing, shouldn't it be time that we take off the masks of self-centeredness? Isn't it the time to take off the mask of false piety and repent?

Lent is a salutary season for Christians. It will be so when we remove the masks of our sinful thoughts, words, and deeds, and flee for refuge in the blood our Lord Jesus Christ. ✠

Don't Lent Me Down

by Vicar Norris

The Lent season is upon us and we may mark it in several ways. Some of us marked the start of Lent with Ash Wednesday and the imposition of ashes on our foreheads. Sometimes it may involve "giving up" something for lent, or one might more earnestly devote themselves to reading of the scriptures. I, for one, have never been too good at giving up certain things. One year I tried to give up my favorite Golden Oreo Double stuff cookies for lent. I was mostly successful, but several weeks into lent, I slipped up. I unconsciously grabbed some cookies and started to eat one. I realized what I had done about one chew into the first cookie. I put the rest of the cookies back and spit the one in my mouth into the trash.

I felt terrible for the rest of the day that I had not been able to keep my promise to God and go without a cookie. Sure I could try to blame it on my wife for buying the cookies and leaving them out, or some other rationalization I could think of. But that is not really being honest. The fact is I stink at keeping my promises to God. I was so disturbed by my own inability to keep this one thing, not eating Oreos during lent, that I spoke to my pastor about it.

My gracious pastor was quick to point out that despite our shortcomings and inability to keep our promises; God never breaks his promises to us. It may seem absurd to be disturbed by eating an Oreo, but thank God my pastor was there to comfort me with the Gospel. I may be off the mark a little but this is what I have learned about

my life because of Lent; I cannot keep my promises to God, but he always keeps his promise to me by sending his only begotten Son, Jesus to die on the cross for us! Dr. Luther once said, "The Law is for the proud and the Gospel for the brokenhearted." I was broken hearted because of my failure, but the Gospel gave me such comfort.

For me, and maybe for you, lent is a church season which I honestly don't like that much. The Lenten season starts with Ash Wednesday. For all intents and purposes, it is like any other Divine Service. Confession and absolution, chanting the Psalms, but then the Alleluias are missing. As the weeks of Lent go on more and more stuff goes missing from the services. The chanting stops, only the words are spoken. Finally on Good Friday during the Tenebrae service it is about all I can take. There are no paraments at all in the sanctuary and the altar is bare, the crucifix is covered up, no chanting, no closing hymn, not even a soft organ postlude to lead us out. Just the sharp thwack of the strepitous to remind us of the closing of the stone on Christ's grave and the earthquake that followed.

Everything I love about the Divine Service is gone. It nearly leaves me in tears. I feel very distant from God and Christ on Good Friday and it makes me feel terrible. I long for Christ to return in the Divine Service. According to my home pastor this is exactly what it is supposed to make me feel like. My mind goes to the suffering that Christ endured for us in his death on the cross. I feel ashamed that I

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have caused my savior this pain and anguish. There is hope, Easter is coming..."

It is a long three days, three days that I think and meditate on the suffering of our blessed Savior. When Easter Vigil arrives the Divine Service is everything I need to lift me out of the Lenten funk. We chant the Psalms, we sing "This is the Feast", and during the Sanctus the organist even rings the zimblestern which I haven't heard in weeks! Christ Is Arisen! He is Alive! My heart is filled with thanksgiving to God for sending His Son Jesus for us. I don't deserve it, I have not kept any promises to God, but he still kept His and sent His Son to earth for me. What amazing love Our Father in heaven has for us wretched, sinful, deceitful, despicable people. Despite all our sins and doubt God kept his Lenten promise!

And that, to me, is the purpose of this Lenten season. To demonstrate to us that even though we might try to be holy or sanctified, we cannot be holy or sanctified without Christ. It is Christ alone who paid the debt of sin on the cross, and it is Christ alone who triumphed over death on Easter morning. In Genesis 3:15 God made a promise to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that he would send a savior to crush the serpent's head.

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Gen 3:15)

God has kept his promise and sent us the messiah, Jesus, and He has paid the debt of our sin on the cross and triumphed over sin, death and the devil forever! Thanks be to God for Christ Jesus our Redeemer! ✕

From Pastor Sutton, Karie, Noah, Adam, and Levi Sutton:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ of Immanuel:

Thank you for all you have done for us during Pastor's illness and ongoing recovery. Your generosity towards us is greatly appreciated. Many have given to us monetarily, gift cards, donated auction items and organized the benefit tea, some raked leaves, cleaned the landscaping and gardens, others have driven kids to activities, helped finish and organize our kitchen, and helped remodel our bathroom for greater accessibility. Most importantly, you have prayed for us. God has truly blessed us with a loving church family.

Pastor is getting stronger everyday. He is standing up, close to taking steps, and is easily sitting up and scooting from his bed to his wheelchair. He has had some bumps in the road with his recovery, but God has been with us every step of the way. It is by God's strength and blessing and to His glory that all these things continue moving forward.

Thank you again for everything you have done for us. The Lord bless you all.

The Sutton Family

I Thank My God... For You All With Joy

by Kantor Schultz

Dear members of Immanuel,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1.2-6).

It has been my joy and privilege to serve as Kantor at Immanuel for the past six years. I have enjoyed playing the organ, directing the choir, organizing soloists and small ensembles, working with instruments, praying the liturgy, preaching the Gospel, and serving in different ways with many of you at Immanuel.

I have greatly enjoyed serving at a parish that sings so well during Divine Service, and is well acquainted with a wide range of hymns from the early church, through the heritage of the Reformation, to our own day.

For the last several years, I have been pursuing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree from Ball State University. I have made the difficult decision to leave Immanuel to complete this degree this year, to serve an internship

this summer, and to pursue full-time employment in that field in the future. Lord willing, I will find a community with a parish where I can also serve as a part-time Pastor or Kantor.

I am thankful to Pastor Sutton and the Council of Deacons for the opportunity to serve at Immanuel. It was a wonderful fit and afforded me a joyous time of service in the church. I will especially miss the wonderful acoustics of the Nave at Immanuel.

I would like to thank all those who support Immanuel and made it possible for me to serve here. I am especially thankful for the dedicated members of the choir for their excellent work: Peter Bertermann, Joe and Emily Eckardt, Faith Fenner, Rachel Gibbens, Chelsea Osfansky, Hailey Schulz, Kristin Schulz, Mandy Schulz, Karie Sutton, Noah Sutton, Jodi Tate, Kathy Todd, Conner and Emily Walts; to our instrumentalists: Marshall Rector, Noah Sutton (trumpet); Adam Sutton (trombone); Arlington Hayne (baritone); Chelsea Osfansky, Conner Walts (flute); Andrew Jacobson (violin); and Pearson Tate (timpani); and to all who have sung as part of the children's choir and as soloists or in small groups.

Church music assists in an important way in the proclamation of the Gospel through liturgy and hymns. Church music accentuates our Reformation heritage of Lutheran doctrine and theology and handing over the

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faith once delivered to the saints. I have enjoyed leading this responsibility at Immanuel and thank you for the opportunity.

Though it is difficult to say good-bye, I am thankful for our time together. I ask for your prayers as I depart to begin a new endeavor in my life, even as I will remember you in my prayers. My time at Immanuel has been unforgettable, and I pray Our Lord's continued blessing on the Preaching of the Gospel, the

administration of the Sacraments, and the singing of the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection from the grave to give the forgiveness of sin.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3.20).

Kantor Schultz ✕

Financial Update

by John Schulz, Deacon of Finance

Thank you for the continued support of Immanuel. As 2021 came to a close, our overall expenses were just slightly above our overall receipts. With a strong fourth quarter, we were able to return money back to the Immanuel Fund that had helped to keep us afloat over the summer months. Gifts received in January also turned out to be a good start for 2022. Remember that offerings can be given either in person in the offering plate, by mail to the church office, or electronically using the new Vanco mobile app. All offerings of time, talents, and treasure are greatly appreciated. ✕

Our Website: IELCTH.org

Our website is the best way to stay up-to-date with Immanuel news as we share our regular weekly and monthly correspondence and special events on-line! Visit the website for announcements and information about upcoming events, Divine Service, the church year, catechesis, and the *Parish News* which is published weekly. Share the website with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers as a way to spread the word about our confession of faith and activities at Immanuel. ✕

Immanuel's Google Calendar

View the church calendar on our website. At the top of the page, go to "Events." Click on the "click here" link to add the calendar to your own Google calendar to stay up-to-date on events at Immanuel. ✕

Board of Outreach, Assimilation, and Fellowship by Brad Cress

Fellow members of Immanuel!

Needless to say it's been a very challenging couple of years for everyone and everything. That's been especially true in regards to all of us gathering in fellowship and in our outreach to others.

But to quote the old "every cloud has a silver lining" line, this could be the perfect time to refresh and reimagine the Board of Outreach, Assimilation, and Fellowship.

In the near future you'll be seeing a date for an actual in person meeting. I'd encourage anyone who is interested to attend.

This board is one of the "busiest" of the five at Immanuel. As such member recruitment has been challenging. There are a number of innovations that have been brought up that can make this board more participant friendly. Events and meals being divided among many people or groups with OAF "overseeing". This is just one we're thinking of to lighten the

load on OAF and get more individuals involved. People always help DURING the events but if we can get groups or individuals to adopt the event, perhaps it will lighten everyone's load. Also perhaps switching to quarterly meetings to plan events as opposed to monthly meetings .

The pandemic made it very hard to plan or do anything. It made us appreciate many things we had taken for granted. I believe we all realize what a precious thing we have in our church family. Please consider hearing what we have in mind for the OAF by attending the upcoming meeting. Bring your ideas also. I'll set a date soon.

Here is a list of dates and events through July. Don't let it scare you! You've seen these for years.

Ash Wednesday	March 2nd
Wednesday Lenten	March 9, 16, 23, 30, & April 6
Easter	April 17
Confirmation Dinner	??
Vicar move out	??

Watch for upcoming dates! ✕

Immanuel Book Club

Join us on the second Monday of each month from 10am to noon in the Parish Center. In March, we will read *The Rose Code* by Kate Quinn. ✕

DIVINE SERVICE is celebrated every Sunday at 10:30am and on Feast Days as announced.

DIVINE OFFICE: MATINS (MORNING PRAYER) and **VESPERS** (EVENING PRAYER) are prayed as announced in the weekly *Parish News*.

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION is offered by appointment.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY are Sunday at 9am.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT BIBLE STUDY with dinner is on Sunday at 6pm.

"WORSHIP ANEW," produced by Lutheran Media Ministries of Fort Wayne and supported by Immanuel's special gift collection, airs every Sunday morning on WTWO at 8am.

YOUTH CATECHESIS is on Saturday at 9am.

ESPRIT DEADLINE for May/June is Friday, April 15. Volunteers are needed to help with the mailing. Watch the *Parish News* for the date.

Schedule of Divine Liturgies for March

March 2	Ash Wednesday, 7pm	Divine Service
March 6	Invocabit – First Sunday in Lent, 10:30am	Divine Service
March 9	Wednesday of Lent I, 7pm	Vespers
March 13	Reminiscere – Second Sunday in Lent, 10:30am	Divine Service
March 16	Wednesday of Lent II, 7pm	Vespers
March 20	Oculi – Third Sunday in Lent, 10:30am	Divine Service
March 23	Wednesday of Lent III, 7pm	Vespers
March 27	Laetare – Fourth Sunday in Lent, 10:30am	Divine Service
March 30	Wednesday of Lent IV, 7pm	Vespers

*Please remember Daylight Savings Time begins March 13.
Please set your clocks forward one hour the evening of March 12.*

Serving in March at Divine Service

Altar Guild

Sundays – Madeline Tate and Faith Fenner
Ash Wednesday – Kelly Bays and Sherrill Porter
Midweek Lenten Services – Stacy Gibbens and Linda Haas

Tellers

Brian & Georgianna Milner and Eric & Janet Crucitti

Ushers

Terry Cummings, Matt Mathias, Scot Mullins, Jasen Gibbens, Nick Sears