

# February 2026

# The Messenger

*A Newsletter for Members and Friends of  
Immanuel Lutheran Church of Saratoga*

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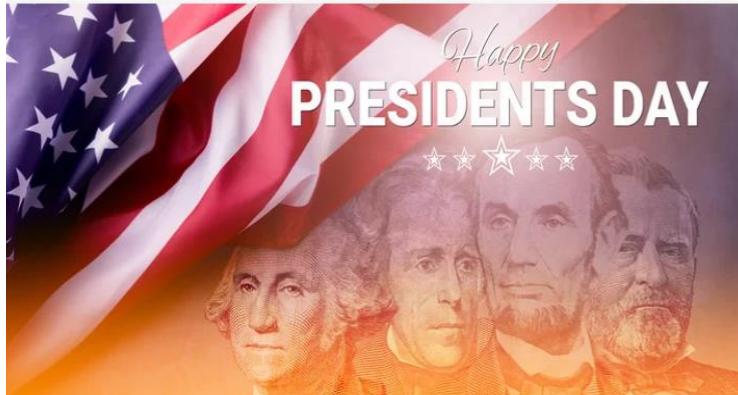
\*\*\*\*\* BUILDING PEOPLE, SERVING GOD \*\*\*\*\*



Immanuel Lutheran Church  
of Saratoga

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## Pastor Derek Writes...

By Pastor Derek Engfelt



## Pastor Derek Writes...

“My ears have heard of You  
 But now my eyes have seen You  
 Therefore, I retract my words  
 And repent in dust and ashes.”

Job 42:5-6

Even as we experience the ups and downs of life, so we encounter both highs and lows in the Church Year.

The year begins with Advent, as we anxiously await the coming of the Messiah, whose birth we celebrate on

Christmas Day. After 12 days of rejoicing over the incarnation of God, we arrive at the Day of Epiphany, a

remembrance of the visit of the magi, as they bow before Jesus in worship and present their gifts of gold,

frankincense and myrrh. The season of Epiphany (in which we find ourselves presently) is a season of light and

revelation, increasing by the day and culminating in the Transfiguration of our Lord, when the closest disciples

of Jesus behold Him in all of his heavenly glory. The trajectory has been nothing but upward, and hopes are

high for Jesus to assume earthly glory and to set up His earthly throne, as the rightful King from David’s line.

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Soon after, however, the bottom drops out. Jesus does not fulfill their Messianic vision, but instead reveals a character quite different: He tells them He's heading to the cross.

It is in the season of Lent that, with wonder and awe, we somberly follow our Lord to the cross. The season begins on Ash Wednesday – this year, February 18 – when we contemplate our sinful state, our brokenness, and recognize that the reason Jesus heads to the cross is to bring about our redemption by the gracious outpouring of His own life.

Many are familiar with the story of Job – deemed by God to be unique. He is presented as the poster-child for righteousness: blameless, upright and God-fearing.

But then tragedy strikes. He loses everything: family, farm, possessions, health. He is confronted by his so-called friends, who accuse him of some secret sin. We, the readers, since we have been told Job is God's man, are on his side throughout the lengthy book.

It then comes as no small surprise that Job is not as righteous as we might have appraised him to be. When he argues his case before God and hears God's reply, he sees the light, comes to his senses, and humbles himself before the One whose knowledge is inscrutable.

The path to enlightenment and right thinking in the sight of God begins when we correctly assess our state before God as broken sinners. (Luther once said that we sin because we are sinners. And so, our *being* precedes and informs our *doing*.) As we follow our Lord to the cross (and beyond!), we discover a merciful Lord who saves us whole and entire – our *being* and our *doing*. Another way to put it is to say that running the race of faith (which the writer to the Hebrews talks about in 12:1) begins on our knees at the foot of the cross.

And so, we will begin on our journey to the cross on our knees around the altar this coming Ash Wednesday, February 18, at 7:30 PM.

There is truly no greater journey we can take.

Serving in Your Midst with Joy & Gratitude,

Pastor Derek J Engfelt



**An experience by congregation member** – 1. Man on the Median – Our member was driving and was about to make a left-hand turn at Saratoga and Prospect/West Campbell Ave when he saw a man with a sign asking for food or money. Our member rolled down his window and showed him the People Helping People clear bag so he could see what was inside. He then told the man "Our Church, ILC, made the bags to help people. The man said that he could really use this and then that he and others lived under the bridge on Prospect Ave. near Lawrence and that he was also collecting food and money for them. Our member gave him two bags and he thanked him profusely and said God Bless.

2. Young man sagging by the Store: Our member was shopping at Trader Joes and on his way out saw a young man looking very dejected with a sign asking for food. He sat next to the young man and asked him what was wrong. He answered that he had been living at the shelter and that the other day all his belongings were stolen from the shelter, including his cheap cell phone. He said he needed this in order to get around and look for a job. Our member mentioned about the food packages and that our Church ILC was always trying to help people. The young man said that was very special. Before saying goodbye, our member told the young man to try to keep his spirits up and to go back to the shelter. He said he was but was trying to get some food and money to get another phone. They talked about positivity and using all the gov't services available. The young took the two bags and he thanked our member profusely.

Helping anyone even if it is just a little means so much to people who literally have nothing. God's grace.

**Come join us as we serve those in need in practical ways. As we do so, we're living into our ILC vision of "passionately responding to the grace we've received by joyfully serving others in the name of Jesus."**

**Sunday school provides a structure for teaching God's Word. Preaching isn't enough. A systematic teaching of the Scriptures – not just preaching (Acts 5:42) needs to occur through all age levels. Children, youth, and adults need opportunities for discovery, review, and interaction as they study God's principles.**

**Sunday School meets needs!**



# THE MESSENGER

## Volunteer to Serve on Sundays



Thank you for  
Serving!

For God is my witness, whom  
I serve in my spirit  
in the gospel of His Son.

Rom. 1:9

**It takes many people to make Sunday mornings "happen". You're welcome to participate and be one of them!**

Service Opportunities include:

**Altar Guild:** Prepare communion elements, prepare sanctuary for worship; clean up after worship.

**Audio:** Make sure our sound system is in good working order and monitor sound during the service.

**Livestream:** Control the livestream setup and camera during the service to support our "Church without Walls"

**Coffee:** Provide treats for fellowship time after service

**Communion:** Help distribute communion during service

**Greeter:** Warmly welcome people at the door and hand them a bulletin

**Lector:** Read lessons in church

**Liturgist:** Assistant leader in worship, chant the opening liturgy

**Usher:** Hand out announcement pages, take offering, light and extinguish candles



If you have questions about any of these Sunday Morning Activities, please email Alyssa Morgan [alyssamccoy@comcast.net](mailto:alyssamccoy@comcast.net)



**Worship + Love + Serve**



### The Seven Wonders

Anna was a 9-year-old girl from a small village. She finished elementary school through 4th grade in her village. From the 5th grade onwards, she will have to get admission to a school in a nearby city. She was delighted to learn that she has accepted into a highly reputable school in the city. Today was the first day of her school, and she was waiting for her school bus. Once the bus came, she got in it quickly. She was very excited.

Once the bus reached her school, all the students got out and went to their classes. Anna also made it to her classroom after asking fellow students for directions. Upon seeing her simple clothing and knowing she was from a small village, other students started making fun of her. The teacher soon arrived, and she asked everyone to keep quiet. She introduced Anna to the class and told them she would be studying with them only from today onward.



Then the teacher told the students to be ready for the surprise test now! She told everyone to write down the 7 wonders of the world. Everyone started writing the answer quickly. Anna began to write the answer slowly.

When everyone except Anna had submitted their answer paper, the teacher came and asked Anna, "What happened, dear? Do not worry, just write what you know, as other students have learned about it just a couple of days back".

Anna replied, "I was thinking that there are so many things, which 7 I can pick to write!" And then she handed her answer paper to the teacher. The teacher started reading everyone's answers, and the majority had answered correctly, such as The Great Wall of China, Colosseum, Stonehenge, the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Taj Mahal, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, etc.

The teacher was happy as students had remembered what she had taught them. At last, the teacher picked up Anna's answer paper and started reading.

"The 7 Wonders are – To be able to See, to be able to Hear, to be able to Feel, To Laugh, To Think, to be Kind, To Love!"

The teacher stood stunned, and the whole class was speechless. Today, a girl from a small village reminded them of the precious gifts that God has given us, which are truly a wonder.

**Moral:** Value what you have, use what you have, trust what you have. You do not always have to look away to find inspiration. God has given you all the strength to reach your goals.



# THE MESSENGER

## Men's Breakfast



Men's Breakfast is held the first Saturday of each month at Effie's Restaurant in Campbell (331 W. Hacienda Ave). We meet at 8:00am, share breakfast, fellowship, and engage in a free-wheeling, Bible topic discussion. We conclude by 9:30 am.

All men of the congregation – members and visitors – are welcome.

ILC Men enjoying a relaxing Saturday morning breakfast (photo credit: Tom Lowdermilk)



## Women's Breakfast

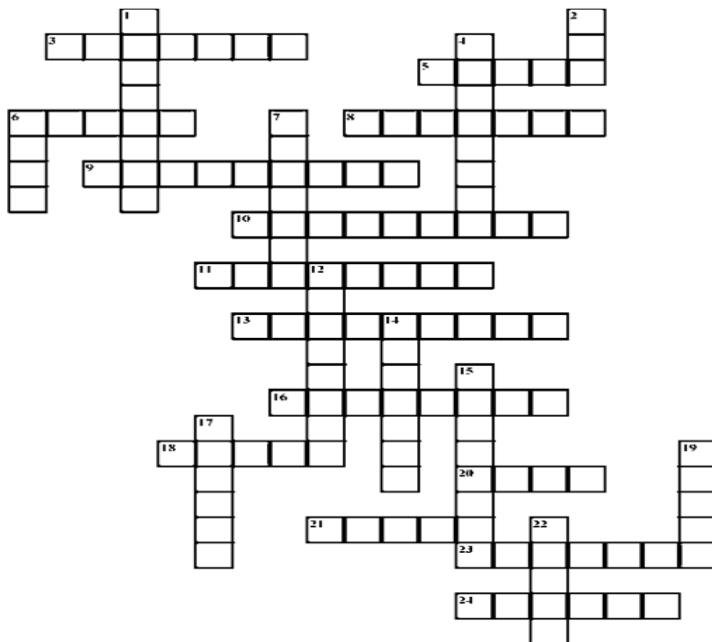
The Women's Breakfast is held the third Saturday of each month at Effie's Restaurant in Campbell (331 W. Hacienda Ave). We meet at 8:30am for a short devotion, after which we share breakfast and fellowship. We conclude by 10:00. All women of the congregation – members and friends – are welcome.



ILC ladies at the women's group meeting (photo credit: Cheryl Moorman)



## Crossword Puzzle: The Noble Man



## January Answers



## Across

- 3 This man is without honor in his own country
  - 5 Affliction of the nobleman's son
  - 6 What Jesus turned to wine
  - 8 Province in which Cana is found
  - 9 City where the nobleman lived
  - 10 When the boy was healed
  - 11 Feast at which Jews had seen Jesus work miracles (cf. Jn. 2:23)
  - 13 City where Temple of the Jews located
  - 16 The reason why Jesus worked miracles (cf. Mk. 9:24; Jn. 20:30-31)
  - 18 "Except ye see \_\_\_\_\_ and wonders, ye will not believe."
  - 20 Where Jesus worked His second miracle in Galilee
  - 21 "And himself believed and his \_\_\_\_\_ house."
  - 23 Where Jesus had been before returning to Galilee
  - 24 To esteem

Down

- 1 A Jew who served Herod the King (cf. Lk. 8:3; Ax. 13:1)
  - 2 Address of the nobleman to Jesus (in KJV).
  - 4 Why the nobleman left Jesus in Cana
  - 6 Proof that the nobleman believed (Jn. 4:50)
  - 7 A miracle
  - 12 Met the nobleman with good news
  - 14 Hour in which the boy was healed (What time of day is this?)
  - 15 What Jesus did in Jerusalem at Passover
  - 17 "Thy son \_\_\_\_."
  - 19 Province in which Jerusalem was located
  - 22 To get better

**\*To view the on numbers the crossword puzzle, please use the '-' minus and '+' plus sign on top of the pdf page to enlarge this page.**

# THE MESSENGER



Here's  
What's  
Happening!

## ILC EVENTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

**THE FOOD CART** - Please consider adding a package or two of food to the cart whenever you shop. The hunger problem seems always to be with us, and all donations help. Thank you for keeping this in mind when you shop! The Community Service Committee

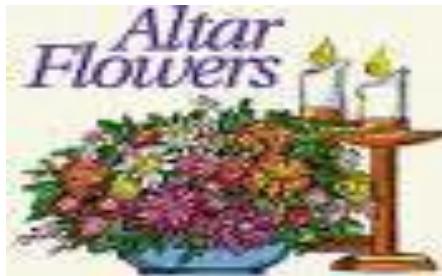
**Community Support:** Thank you for your continued donations of clothes (placed in bags), food, and children's books. The collection bins are located alongside the church office parking lot, and you can drop items (non-perishables) in the bins at any time. Your generosity is appreciated!

**If you would like to make an E-Donation to ILC**, then either download the Givelify App on your smartphone, or go online to <http://ilcsaratoga.org/give>. Givelify gives you a beautiful, easy-giving experience using your smartphone, tablet, or PC. There are no frustrating web forms or text-to-give codes to memorize. Even better, it's free to download and use. It's safe and secure, and for tax time, you have one-tap access to your complete donation records. Please consider making a contribution the old fashioned way, by cash or check, or electronically, via Givelify, PayPal, or Zeffy.

**Givelify**  
Tap. Give. Done.

[PayPal](#)

[Zeffy](#)



**Each Sunday, we adorn our altar in the sanctuary with flowers.** If you would like to purchase flowers in honor of a special birthday or anniversary, please email our Office Administrator, Sheila Wallace at [office.ilc.saratoga@gmail.com](mailto:office.ilc.saratoga@gmail.com) or Pastor Derek at [pastord63@gmail.com](mailto:pastord63@gmail.com)

Also are available for sign-up in honor or memory of someone for:

Easter Lily plants for Easter  and Poinsettia plants for Christmas! 

\*These flowers adorn the sanctuary for these special services!

**Memories at ILC****EASTER****LADIES RETREAT****Habitat for Humanity****Summer Concerts  
In the Park****Thanksgiving  
Interfaith Service****Tree Decorating****Christmas Concert****Children's Christmas Play**

## Worship Offerings

We offer three worship experiences – traditional, contemporary and livestream. <https://ilcsaratoga.org/live.php>. Please check website for each week's Livestream start time.

### Wednesday Bible Study: Expanding Our Vision

Join us Wednesday mornings in at 10:00 AM as we take a deeper dive into the second reading appointer for the coming Sunday. The class is entitled *Expanding Our Vision*. Because Sunday's sermon is almost always centered on the gospel selection, we don't often explore the second reading in any depth. This class gives us the opportunity to do so. In addition to taking a closer look at the second reading itself, we'll also consider any connections it has to the gospel reading for that Sunday.

We meet in person in the Fireside Room. Treats are served at the conclusion of the class (11:30). If you're unable to meet with us in person, you can join via Zoom by clicking here:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83250020639>

If you would like to participate or for more information regarding the material we are using, please contact Pastor Derek at [pastord63@gmail.com](mailto:pastord63@gmail.com)

### Thursday Morning Study

**Thursday morning Bible study** (Yokefellows) continues to meet each Thursday morning at 6:30 AM in the church Fireside Room. Refreshments are served. We are continuing our study on the minor prophets, now considering the witness of *Zephaniah, Haggai & Zechariah*. If you're unable to join us in person, you can participate from the comfort of your own home by clicking here:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87581100281?pwd=dEgrblEwUFZlaU5NQy91RE9sWINIQT09>

We meet every Thursday at 6:30 AM, in person in the church Fireside Room and via livestream [Thursday AM Bible Study](#)). (If in person, you will also be able to partake of morning refreshments – coffee & pastries.) All are welcome! For any questions, please contact Jack Moorman [jack.moorman@gmail.com](mailto:jack.moorman@gmail.com) or Pastor Derek [pastord63@gmail.com](mailto:pastord63@gmail.com).

### Diving Deeper: Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm.

All are welcome to attend a Wednesday evening one-hour gathering, at which we will read and study the Scriptures that will be read in church the following Sunday. Not only will this event prepare you for a more meaningful experience on Sunday, it will also give you a chance to provide sermon input. And, of course, it's always meaningful to share in fellowship with others around the Word. Can't join us in person? Participate from the comfort of your home by clicking here:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87353776510>

### Enter the Bible

Luther Seminary has created a powerful, free resource to break down each book of Scripture to give you an in-depth overview of its background and context, its author and setting, the issues and themes you can find in it, and so much more. Click here to get access now: <https://enterthebible.org/free-account-registration/>

## Lions in Sight

Got Glasses? Just a reminder that we have a donation box church office to collect used prescription eyeglasses, sunglasses (prescription or non-prescription), printer/toner cartridges, hearing aids and cell phones in partnership with the Lions Club. Your donation of these unused items will help those locally who cannot afford prescription glasses; the other items are used to fund the program. If you can't drop the items in the box, please email Laura Gloner ([laura.gloner@gmail.com](mailto:laura.gloner@gmail.com)), and she'll be happy to arrange a pickup or drop-off. (Website: <https://www.lionsinsight.net/>)



## Echo, Echo...

Yes, that's right, ILC supports the [Echo Shop](#) in downtown Saratoga with our time and donations! The Echo Shop is a high- end resale shop, run by our neighbors at St. Andrews Episcopal Church since 1961. It's staffed entirely by volunteers, so all of the money raised can go directly to local charities, including Santa Maria Urban Ministries, as well as houseless, women's, and children's causes. High-end items can be donated directly to the shop's red back door during business hours or by making an appointment. Our Children's Book Ministry flows through the shop, as well. Several women from ILC regularly volunteer and have a great time pricing, sorting, and stocking merchandise, while making new friends. If you have any questions about volunteering or donating, please contact Myra Sternlieb ([msmyrabeth@yahoo.com](mailto:msmyrabeth@yahoo.com)) or Margit Chapman ([margitc@aol.com](mailto:margitc@aol.com)). (website: [The Echo Shop](#))



## Wordoku

Wordoku has the same rules as regular Sudoku, but uses letters instead of numbers:

- Each of the nine rows is nine cells wide, and must contain the 9 letters used in the puzzle. So, each letter must appear once and only once in each row.
- The same is true with the nine columns. So, each letter must appear once and only once in each column. The third unit, the region, is a « 3 x 3 » square bordered by a thick line, and it must also contain the 9 letters used in the puzzle. So, each letter must appear once and only once in each « 3 x 3 » square.

When the grid is completed, the grey squares will reveal a nine-letter word or sentence at the center of the puzzle, between the two arrows.

	H				D	O		
I	A		M	O			E	
		O	T					
O	R	H				T		
			E	A		D	R	
T	M	O		D				
A	R	E			I			



<b>Hint</b>
The centurion's servant

<b>The 9 letters to use :</b>
A D E H I M O R T

### January Answer

UNDER OATH
------------

<b>Did You Know ?</b>
Caiaphas said, «I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!» (Mt.26:63). He appeals to Jesus in the most solemn manner to assert or deny His Messiahship. So Jesus said He was the Messiah.

# THE MESSENGER



Preschool from 2 years old to entry to 1st grade

License# 434414738

## NOW ENROLLING

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
14103 Saratoga Ave, Lower Fellowship Hall, Saratoga, CA 95070  
Tel: 408.781.7874, [info@ButterfliesAcademy.com](mailto:info@ButterfliesAcademy.com)

Please Call us at above number to schedule a tour

[www.ButterfliesAcademy.com](http://www.ButterfliesAcademy.com)





## Weddings at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Saratoga



**Judy Onton is our ILC wedding coordinator.**

To find out more, take a brochure from the pew rack, or check out our website: [www.ilcsaratoga.org/weddings](http://www.ilcsaratoga.org/weddings). Follow us on Instagram:ILCSaratogaweddings. Share with family and friends of this beautiful and charming sanctuary to hold their matrimony.



Many couples have joined hands to their lives at quaint church and its tranquil surroundings



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Coronavirus: I have put together hotline numbers and some useful and informative websites!

Coronavirus Hotline for Seniors - The hotline number is **1-833-544-2374**.  
 Call **2-1-1** in 150 languages. 24/7  
 Text **211211** to receive texts on updates  
<https://www.kcra.com/article/gov-newsom-coronavirus-update-march-31/31983378>



Emotional Listening Support Contact 24/7 Helpline: **1-800-932-4616** (Toll Free)  
[Warm Line - Mental Health Association of San Francisco \(mentalhealthsf.org\)](http://www.contacthelpline.org/emotional-listening-support)

<http://www.contacthelpline.org/emotional-listening-support>

Santa Clara County (SSC) Update on Coronavirus – [www.sccphd.org/coronavirus](http://www.sccphd.org/coronavirus).  
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/DiseaseInformation/novel-coronavirus/Pages/home.aspx>

Covid-19 on CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>  
 State of California hotline to deliver services & help for older Californians - **1-833-544-2374**.

Anyone interested in reporting a possible violation - Can email [pubhealthreferral@dao.sccgov.org](mailto:pubhealthreferral@dao.sccgov.org) or call 408-792-2300 to leave a voicemail.

For more info, please go to the following website. 1. <https://covid19.ca.gov/>

### Doggy Dial

I was working as a telemarketer for a home security firm. Once, while reciting all the benefits to a potential customer, he interrupted me and said, "We don't need it because we have a big dog".

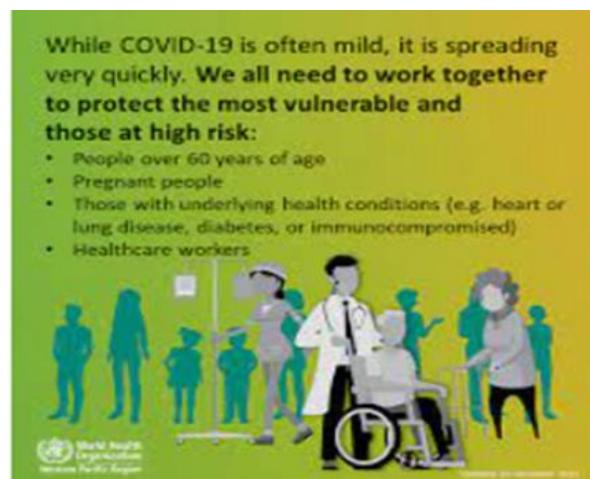
"That's great", I replied. "But can he dial 911?"



**Covid Coach" for self-care and mental health:** App found in Google Play on Android phones and Apple Store on iPhone or iPad <https://mobile.va.gov/app/covid-coach>

Be empathetic to those still susceptible to Covid-19. Some have multiple high-risk factors, making them vulnerable to COVID-19 and new subvariants. Feeling more isolated and unable to partake in most human interactions, these people can do with a smile, a compassionate glance, or a kind nod that gives comfort, support, and encouragement!

God Bless, and Stay Safe!  
 Vaskie Turner



A powerful story illustrating the Christian value of human life is that of a man who realized that every person, regardless of their circumstances, is created in the image of God. When he stopped to offer his own coat to a freezing, overlooked person on the street, he discovered that restoring dignity was just as important as providing for physical needs, demonstrating that true worth comes from God, not societal status.

### The Story of the Hidden Image

A man named Daniel was rushing through a cold evening when he passed an elderly person sitting on a street corner, wearing torn clothing, and holding a sign for food. Initially, Daniel almost kept walking, rationalizing that someone else would help. However, he felt compelled to stop.

Instead of just handing over money, Daniel bought the man a hot meal and offered him his own jacket. The man looked up, teary-eyed, and said, "You gave me more than food, you gave me respect."

In that moment, Daniel realized that the man was not just a face in the crowd—he was a person created in the image of God, worthy of honor. This experience transformed Daniel's perspective on human dignity, showing him, that valuing life often means recognizing the humanity in the forgotten, the broken, and the marginalized.

### Biblical Foundation of Value

- **Jesus' Teachings (Matthew 6:26):** Jesus emphasized the high value of human life, noting that people are more valuable than other parts of creation
- **Divine Ownership (Genesis 9:5-6):** Because life belongs to God, humans are accountable to Him for the treatment and protection of other human lives.
- **Created in God's Image:** According to Genesis 1:27,28, all humans, male and female, are made in the image of God, which gives them inherent, equal value that cannot be taken away.
- **Worth Beyond Performance:** Human life is not measured by productivity or societal status, but by its divine origin.

This story highlights that the Christian perspective places a high value on every human life, rooted in the belief that people are loved by God and meant to represent Him on earth.



## The Hills Are Alive... with ILC Hikers!

Come join us, as we explore part of the wonderful nature that surrounds our neighborhoods.

### Feb. 14: Calero County Park: Lisa's Lookout (5.5 miles; moderate)

**Getting There:** Heading south on Highway 85, exit Almaden Expressway. Head south and continue on Almaden Expressway for about 5 miles (until it T's at Harry Road). Turn RIGHT. Then, in about 100 yards, turn LEFT on McKean Rd. The park entrance is about a mile down the road on the right-hand side. There's plenty of free parking available.



**Time:** Arrival: 7:45 AM; Departure: 8:00 AM

### Feb. 28: Skyline Adventure (This will be an out-and-back hike, with some "rolling hills.")

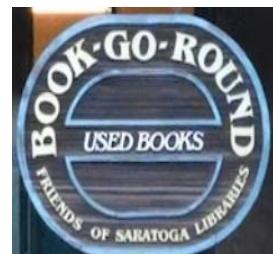
**Getting There:** Meet at the church at 7:45. We will carpool from there to our place of departure, at 8:00 AM

**Plan to arrive for both hikes by 7:45 AM. We'll gather our group and plan our hike. We'll hit the road at 8:00 and plan to return to our cars by 10:00.**

Please RSVP so I know you'll be coming. In case of bad weather, I'll send a cancelation note to all who RSVP by 9:00 PM the evening before. Dress in layers, bring a water bottle, and wear comfortable and sturdy shoes/boots. You can RSVP by emailing me at [pastord63@gmail.com](mailto:pastord63@gmail.com) or calling 408-499-4866.

## Book-Go-Round

For a treat, visit Book-Go-Round (BGR) at 14410 Oak Street in Saratoga. BGR is a secondhand bookstore operated by volunteers of the Friends of the Library and the National Charity League, Inc (NCL). The store opens at 12:00 PM every day (Saturdays at 10:00 AM). BGR has supported the Saratoga Library for 50 years and is packed with a wide range of books, as inexpensive as \$.25. Newer paperbacks are usually \$1 to \$3. Also available are also a number of children's books, as well as CD's, DVD's, VHS, Audio books, sheet music and records – all at good rates. Additionally, there is a comfortable seating arrangement, where visitors may enjoy classical music while perusing.



## Children's Books Ministry



You may have noticed the green bins in the parking lot and wondered: Where do the children's books go? With a recent partnership with the [Echo Resale Shop](#) in downtown Saratoga, many of the children's books will now go to [Santa Maria Urban Ministry](#) (SMUM) in San Jose. SMUM runs a food pantry, helps the unhoused, and offers school-age tutoring support. Please donate new and used books that are just waiting to be the source of new adventure for young minds...

In Him was life,  
and that life  
was the Light  
of all mankind.

John 1:4

## PRAYER WORD SEARCH

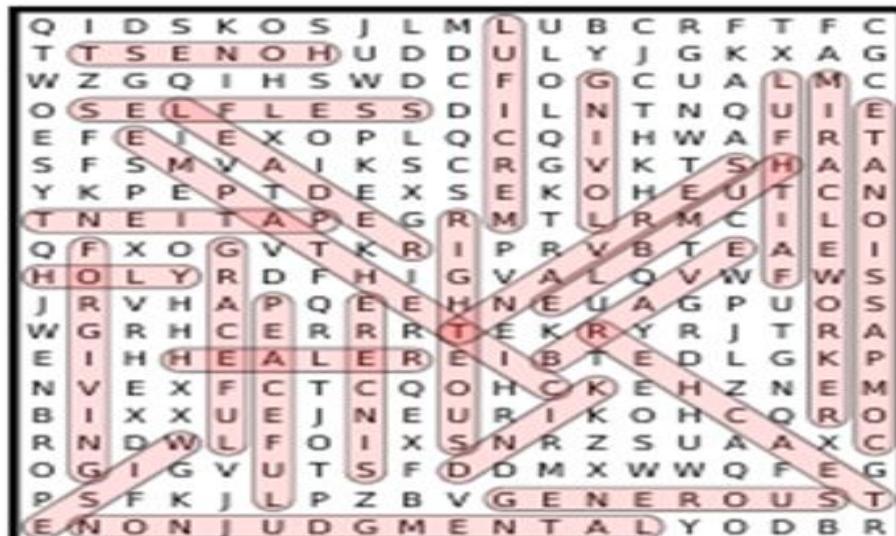


**BLESSING**  
**COMMUNION**  
**DEVOTION**  
**FAITH**  
**GRATITUDE**  
**GUIDANCE**  
**HEALING**

**HOPE**  
**HUMILITY**  
**INTERCESSION**  
**MEDITATION**  
**PETITION**  
**PRAISE**  
**PRAYER**

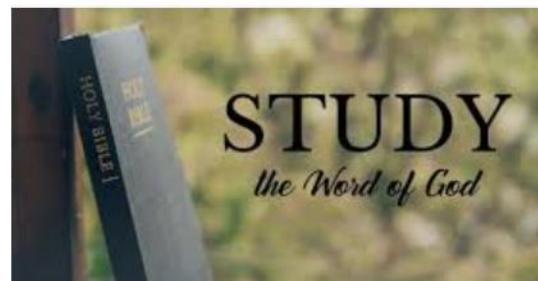
**REPENTANCE**  
**REVELATION**  
**SILENCE**  
**SPirit**  
**SUPPLICATION**  
**THANKSGIVING**  
**WORSHIP**

### January Answers



# THE MESSENGER

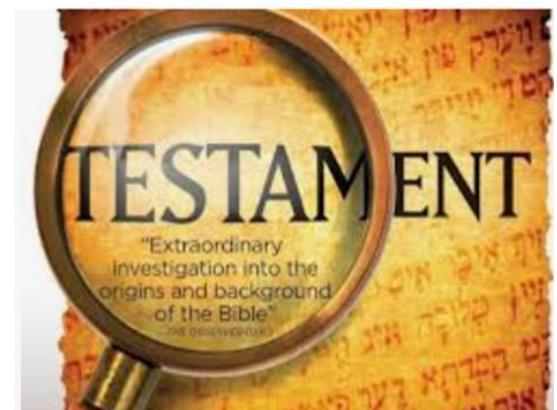
## Bible Trivia Questions: Physical and Character Bible



1. What does Adam's name mean in Old Hebrew?
2. Which of the following events did not occur at the time of Jesus' crucifixion?
3. What chapter of the Hebrew Bible starts each of its 22 sections with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet?
4. Who founded the Judaic religion?
5. Who is the Messiah?
6. Who was the king when Jesus was born?
7. Who hated the disciples but experienced conversion on the way to Damascus?
8. Who brought gold, myrrh, and frankincense to young Jesus?
9. Who was the judge at the trial of Jesus?
10. Jesus healed ten lepers. How many came back to thank Him?

### December Answers

1. The devil is mentioned alongside the archangel Michael.
2. He healed the withered hand of a man who could have been a mason.
3. The "whole city" requested his departure.
4. Matthew 17:21
5. Yes. The earth is said to be a circle in Isaiah.
6. Geneva
7. Judith
8. House cat
9. The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible.
10. Seventy-five



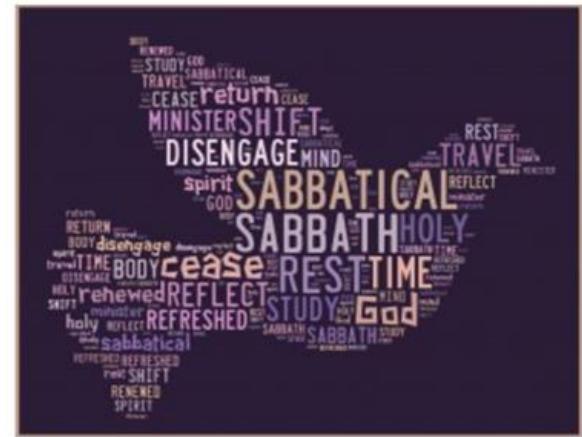
## Sabbatical Plans

I began serving the Immanuel faith community on September 1, 2008. How I treasure our congregation! How blessed the journey has been for me and my family! It has brought me great joy to accompany you on your journey of faith in the ministry of our Lord.

Now serving in my 18<sup>th</sup> year, I'm excited about this coming year. I'm grateful to the ILC community for granting me sabbatical leave (April 27 – July 26). I look forward to a time of personal refreshment and renewal. I'm also excited about what God will do in the Immanuel faith community in my absence. I'm looking forward to hearing how the congregation will come together to honor God by doing the work of His Church – in familiar ways we have learned well and in new ways that will surprise us all. God is faithful, and I trust that He will continue to bless our community, even as we continue to be a blessing to others.

In my absence, ILC will receive pastoral support: a minister will preach and preside at our Sunday services and be available during the week for hospital visits and/or emergencies.

In addition, much of the work of the Church will be done by you – members of the ILC faith community. We have established a sabbatical team, and they are working with me to assemble congregational teams that will work on various aspects of the ministry. Please prayerfully consider the way(s) you would like to serve.



1. **Hymn Selection Team:** Contact: Mitzie Eddy (mitzeddy@gmail.com). **Need: 2-4 additional members.** This team will be responsible for working together to choose hymns for the 9:00 service each Sunday and submit them to Sheila on Tuesday mornings each week. The team will take into consideration the presiding minister's suggestions and/or input from the congregation. A list of hymns and dates sung will be provided.
  2. **Prayer Team:** Contact: Bill Flint (bflint1926@gmail.com). Need: 3-5 members. This team will work together to monitor our prayer lists. Work will include adding new names/needs and following up with names/needs to ensure all is current. The team will oversee in-service, long-term and short-term prayer lists and weekly communication with Sheila.
  3. **Visitor Follow-Up Team:** Contact: Lee Wheeler (mrleewheeler50@gmail.com). Need: 3 members. Work will include following up with Sunday visitors via phone or email in an effort to extend hospitality and answer any questions. Information will be gained by registration pad sign-ins and yellow visitor card submissions.
  4. **Member Care / Visitation Team:** Contact: Cheryl Sheehan (cherylshee@gmail.com). Need: 3-5 people. This team will work together to monitor church attendance and follow up with anyone who has missed two or more consecutive Sundays. If it is discovered that there is a need due to sickness, team will work together to provide food, visitation, transportation or other needed care.
  5. **Devotional Offerings:** Contact: Mitzie Eddy (mitzeddy@gmail.com). Need: **12 additional people / submissions.** Would you like to write a devotion to share with the congregation? It may be brief (like *Morning Manna*) or a little longer (like *Daily Bread*) and may or may not include a prayer. Devotions will be submitted to Sheila and included in weekly communications emails sent to the ILC faith community.
  6. **Bible Study Leaders:** Contact: Mitzie Eddy (mitzeddy@gmail.com). Bible study leaders will prepare and lead studies on Wednesday mornings (10:00 – 11:30 AM) or on Wednesday evenings (7:00 – 8:00 PM). Sign up for one or more weeks.

Please prayerfully consider how you might participate in one of more of the above ministries. Then reach out to the contact person listed or to Pastor Derek. God will grant you strength and insight, as you work with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to carry on this important work.

## When the Pastor Rests: The Congregation's Sabbatical Story

# The Value of a Sabbatical

Many ministries are learning the true value of offering their church workers a ministry sabbatical. This is an extended time away with the sole purpose of finding rest and renewal, not only physically, but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The often-demanding work of ministry can take a toll on a church worker, frequently without them being fully aware until the damage is done. We see this regularly with parish pastors in their passion to serve.

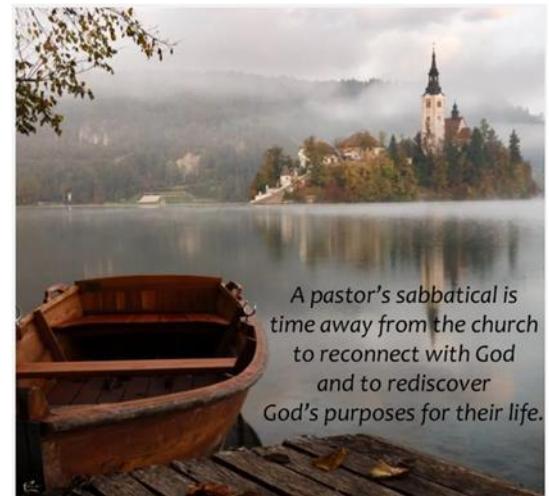
In Leviticus 25, we find instruction to allow the land to rest in the seventh year. The ground was to lay fallow so that in the following years, it would be more productive. This is the goal of a ministry sabbatical, allowing the church worker a time of rest so their work can become more productive; and where well-planned sabbaticals have happened, we see the fruit borne by what may seem like a risky decision by the congregation.

The impact of a ministry sabbatical for a pastor also benefits the congregation. Consider the summary of comments from a congregational leader reflecting on the impact of their pastor's ministry sabbatical. The most common thought shared was how energized their pastor was when he returned. "He was full of renewed vision, and we can hardly keep up with him", said one enthusiastic leader. He was elated to see how excited his pastor was, with new ideas and "tons of energy".

While it is not uncommon to hear comments like, "Why should he get a sabbatical; I don't get one with my job..." Or, "That is too long a vacation. Is he looking for a new job?" Or, "How will we manage without the pastor being here?" Educating a congregation about a ministry sabbatical and helping them understand its value is essential to success.

Another leader shared how the congregation was initially indifferent to allowing their pastor to take a sabbatical. The leader shared that while people came onboard in supporting the sabbatical at different times, some not until he returned, the agreement to support this blessed their ministry. Leaders stepped into new roles, discovered new gifts in God's people, and learned how to be more adaptive in ministry. Congregation members became more aware of the multitude of things the pastor did to keep the ministry moving forward, and there was an increase in voluntarism and a renewed ownership of the ministry.

A ministry sabbatical not only offers church workers much needed rest and renewal, but it also offers congregations the chance to rediscover their values and God-given strengths as they sacrificially step into new roles for the sake of their church worker and, more importantly, for the sake of God's kingdom.



## Campus Hospitality

Ebenezer Church, a bilingual (Spanish/English) congregation of approximately 30 members, will be meeting for worship in the nursery area (front part of the Fellowship Hall), each Sunday at 8:30. Let us extend our kindest hospitality to this worshiping community in Christ's name.

## Serving at Family Supportive Housing: Info on next Service

Would you like to prepare food? Serve it with a smile? Please contact Linda Jacks, leader of this important service through our faith community. You can reach her Linda at [lindaloubob5@yahoo.com](mailto:lindaloubob5@yahoo.com)

## Ash Wednesday, February 18, 7:30 PM.

The season of Lent (the 40 days – not including Sundays – leading up to Easter) begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18.

The faith community will receive the imposition of ashes and hear the sobering reminder, "Remember that you are dust – and to dust you shall return." We will also gather around the altar to partake in the Lord's Supper, during which we will also hear the words of Jesus, "This is My body, given for you... this is My blood, shed for you." As we're reminded of our mortality, we also receive the promise of life – now and forever – in Christ Jesus our Lord.



If you're unable to be present in person but would like to participate remotely, prepare some ashes, set aside some bread, wine or grape juice, and join us via livestream by clicking here: [Livestream](#)

## Community Support

Thank you for your ongoing donations of clothes (placed in bags), food, and children's books. The collection bins are located alongside the church office parking lot, and donations (non-perishables) may be dropped off in the bins at any time. Your generosity is appreciated!



In the words of Jesus, "When you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40)

# THE MESSENGER



## Vaccinations...

**GOT YOUR SHOT?** The latest updates on vaccine eligibility and how to schedule an appointment are available on the County's website at [sccfreevax.org](http://sccfreevax.org). In addition, residents without internet access or who need additional assistance can make appointments for the County Health

System vaccine sites through the Valley Connection Call Center at 408-970-2000. The Call Center is open Monday through Friday from 7 am to 9 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 8 am to 4:30 pm. Assistance is available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and other languages. If you have trouble making your appointment and need assistance, please let Pastor Derek know. We have people standing by ready to help. [Influenza \(Flu\) - Public Health - County of Santa Clara \(sccgov.org\)](http://Influenza(Flu)-Public Health - County of Santa Clara (sccgov.org)) CDC recommends that adults 50 years or older should talk with a healthcare provider to make sure they're up to date with pneumococcal vaccination – 10/02/2025.

[COVID-19 Vaccines | COVID-19 | CDC](#) JULY 30, 2025

## Resources

### [Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

People who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine have lower risk of severe illness.

### [Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

Learn how to schedule and know what to expect at your COVID-19 appointment.

### [COVID-19 Vaccine Basics](#)

Learn how COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19.

### [Benefits of Getting Vaccinated](#)

Find out why you should get the COVID-19 vaccine and how it protects you from getting sick.

### [Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#)

COVID-19 vaccine information for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

### [COVID-19 Vaccination for People Who Would Like to Have a Baby](#)

Information on COVID-19 vaccines for people who would like to have a baby.

### [COVID-19 Vaccination for Women Who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)

What you need to know about COVID-19 vaccines if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

### [COVID-19 Vaccination for Long-term Care Residents](#)

Information about COVID-19 vaccines for long-term care residents.

### [Vaccine Effectiveness](#)

Information for public health professionals and researchers on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness.

# THE MESSENGER

## Come Worship With Us!



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.ilcsaratoga.org](http://www.ilcsaratoga.org)

### Traditional Service 9:00 a.m.

**Come hear our wonderful choir, bell choir, and organist.**

Communion is served each Sunday as part of the liturgy.

**Visitors are always welcome!**

### Contemporary Service 10:45 a.m.

Features a more contemporary worship. Sing praises to the Lord with our Contemporary Worship Team. The music is uplifting and enjoyable for all ages. What a great way to start the week? Communion is served every Sunday.

## About the Messenger

Please submit articles if possible by the **20th** of the month, typed (preferably text or word processing file, but a paper copy is ok too), and be about **150 words**. If you are interested in submitting an article for publication in our Newsletter, please contact our office.

Editor: Vaskie Turner

Webmaster: Aart Bik

[https://ilcsaratoga.org/pdf/newsletter\\_2026\\_02.pdf](https://ilcsaratoga.org/pdf/newsletter_2026_02.pdf)

**"THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU HERE!"**

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