

the mercy we've been shown, to abstain from sinful ways and battle with the enemy's evil intent for us, and then to live good lives which lead others to glorify God because of us! Are you daunted yet? Don't forget how this devotion started, with God's assurance of His love, His calling, His constant presence with us. By His Holy Spirit within us, we pray that God will be revealed and glorified. Pray the words of this Gospel chorus – "In my life Lord, be glorified today. In my words Lord, be glorified today. In your Church Lord, be glorified today."

### **Saturday – Power of conviction**

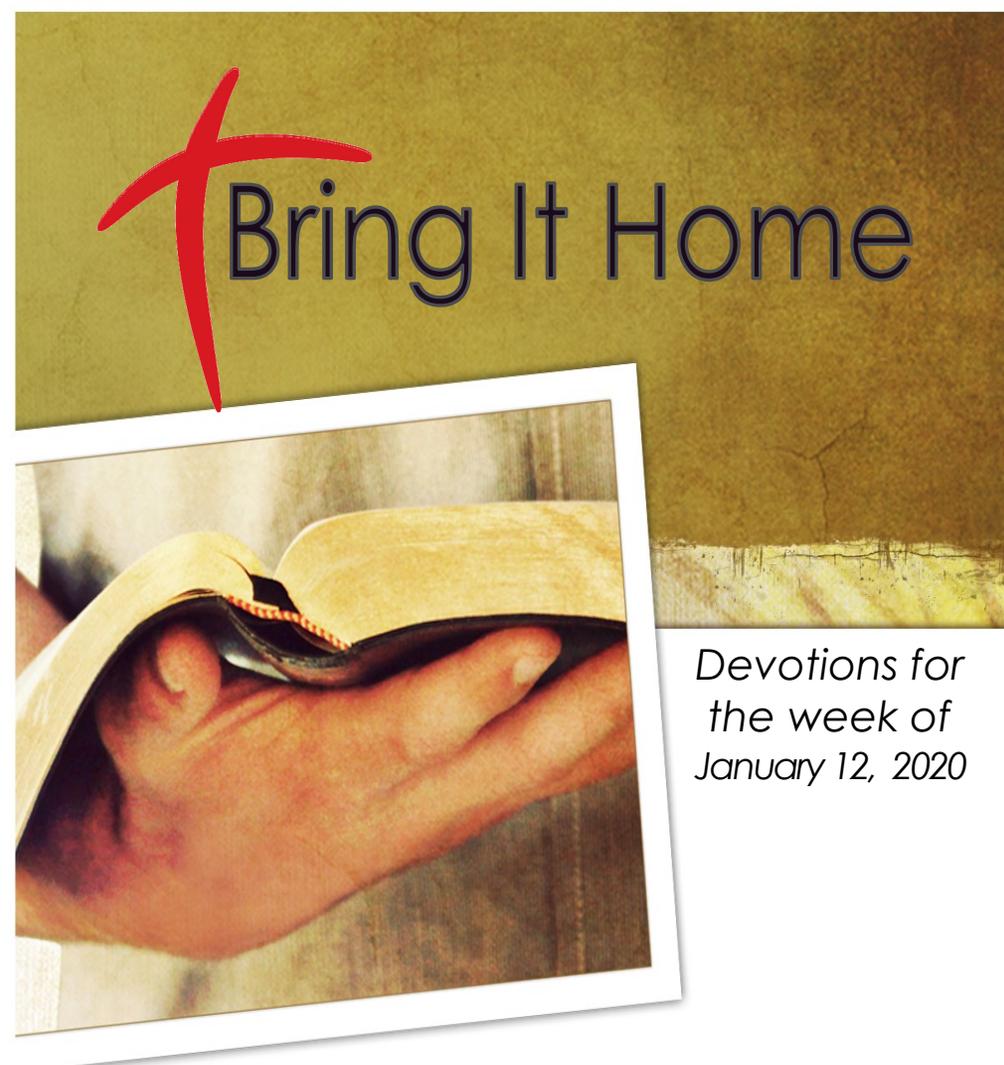
One of the Scripture readings from last Sunday was a sermon given by Peter beginning in Acts 10:34. The events in the first 33 verses of chapter 10 are amazing and are what leads Peter to the conviction and realization he expresses in verse 34. Take time to read all of Acts 10. Imagine how shocking the command of the Lord would be to an observant Jew like Peter. He is so horrified by the command to eat animals considered unclean by his faith tradition that he rebukes the Lord saying, "Surely not, Lord!" Yet, through the following verses, Peter submits himself to God. He allows God to overrule his own conviction and be conformed to God's truth.

Have you had that experience of having a strong opinion or conviction and having it challenged by God through His Word? Maybe you can relate to my experience. Like many people, terrible hurts have haunted me in my life. I was wronged either in actuality or in my perception. Hurts fostered unforgiveness and distrust and bitterness. But recently I read, as if for the first time, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9) My long-held anger and hurt was not bringing me any good. Instead it was God's will that I be a peacemaker. The living Word of God can speak truth – new truth – through a well-known passage, bringing new vision and new hope. Read Isaiah 42:8-9. God wants to do a new thing – even in me! God will not share His glory with another, even when it is my strong opinion or my hurt or my "rights" taking the role of an idol for me to worship. Rather than Peter's, "Surely not, Lord!," may my response be as Mary's, "I am the Lord's servant," or Samuel's, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

#### **IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL**

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This week's *Bring it Home* devotions were written by Gail Hein.  
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### **What Now?**

1. Hear for yourself the powerful, life-giving love that our Lord has for you – and know it is true!
2. Pray about and have your eyes open to at least one opportunity this week when you can shine His light, share His love, and reveal Jesus to one other person.

## **Monday – How Great is Our God**

We continue our “Revealed” Epiphany series as we observed the Sunday of Jesus’ baptism. As we looked at the prophecy of some of the important elements of this and of Jesus Himself from Isaiah 42, begin this week by reading that prophecy for yourself once again – Isaiah 42:1-9, and focus particularly on verses 5 and 6. These powerful words of the prophet turn our hearts and minds to consider the greatness of the Lord God Almighty. In His great might, creativity, and love, He created all that we can see in heaven and on earth. He gives every person life and breath. Not only that, but He sustains us each and every day and promises us His presence with us...taking hold of our hand. His greatness moves us to worship as we hear in words from this song sung by Chris Tomlin, “How Great is our God” –

The splendor of a King Clothed in majesty; Let all the earth rejoice; He wraps Himself in light And darkness tries to hide And trembles at His voice; How great is our God, Sing with me, How great is our God, And all will see How great, how great is our God.

Age to age He stands And time is in His hands, Beginning and the end, The Godhead Three in One, Father, Spirit and Son, The Lion and the Lamb, Name above all names, Worthy of all praise; My heart will sing How great is our God.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLO1td3MbE>

## **Tuesday – The God of Compassion**

Read Isaiah 42:1-4. I especially treasure verse 3 in this passage: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.” Have you felt bruised by life or like your wick is burning only faintly. I have good news! Our great God is not like the punitive or vengeful gods of mythology, ready to crush the broken and weak. Read Isaiah 40:28-31. If you are feeling weak and weary, you need to hear this truth. God gives new strength to those who are hopeless in themselves and who put their hope in Him. We can easily put our hope in our own strength or our own accomplishments, however, those will let us down. Our great God wants us to put our hope in Him, trusting Him to bring good out of our trials and troubles. God sees us faintly burning wicks, and He loves us. Use Psalm 145 as your prayer and your confidence today!

## **Wednesday – This is My Son Whom I Love**

Today, read Isaiah 42:1-9 again, as well as Matthew 3:16-17. In these passages, God speaks of His affection for this Servant – His Son, Jesus. Wouldn’t you love to have been at Jesus’ baptism to hear the words, words spoken from God’s own voice! And think of what those words would have meant to Jesus and to those witnessing His baptism. God the Father, declaring the divine nature and the might of this human man! Everyone

present would have known Jesus as their friend, neighbor, and a true human person in every respect. His experiences, needs, and limitations were the same as theirs – yet the Father affirms Jesus’ identity as simultaneously God and man! Reverend James Lee wrote, “Through the incarnation, the Son of God shares in our life, our trials and sufferings, even our death. Similarly, as the Son of God shares our life, Jesus invites us into His life. This is the life of the Church, being a member of the body of Christ. The incarnation opens our eyes to see the fullness of the name Immanuel—God with us, as one of us, in Jesus. The incarnation teaches us that the Son of God comes to be like us, to die for us, so that we might live with Him.” Praise God today for that reality, that promise, and that life we’ve been given from Jesus!

## **Thursday – You Are All Sons and Daughters of God**

Read Galatians 3:26-29; Galatians 4:4-7; and 1 John 3:1-2. Since we are God’s children, we can, by extension hear the word spoken about Jesus at His baptism as words spoken about us. We are the beloved sons and daughters of God with whom God is pleased. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we are forgiven, redeemed, and blessed with a new identity! Our baptism identifies us as sons and daughters of the Living God! We are also His heirs, recipients of eternal life and all the riches of heaven. Affirm your identity as God’s own child with these verses of the hymn, “God’s own Child, I Gladly Say It.”

God's own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ! He, because I could not pay it, Gave my full redemption price. Do I need earth's treasures many? I have one worth more than any That brought me salvation free Lasting to eternity!

Satan, hear this proclamation: I am baptized into Christ! Drop your ugly accusation, I am not so soon enticed. Now that to the font I've traveled, All your might has come unraveled, And, against your tyranny, God, my Lord, unites with me!

## **Friday – Yes – YOU!**

Read Isaiah 42:6 as God’s words spoken to you – yes, YOU! “I, the Lord, have called YOU in righteousness; I will take hold of YOUR hand. I will keep YOU and will make YOU to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.” Now read Isaiah 42:7 as your marching orders – “YOU – open the eyes that are blind, YOU – bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.” God’s calling is not to some vague person out there somewhere, but is to each believer. And our calling is to bring the light we’ve been given to those who are blind and imprisoned by the darkness of sin. Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. As ones called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light we’re given direction to declare His praises because of