

The Immanuel *Light* Abridged

APRIL 7, 2020

For the Living of These Days

His voice surprised me. I had dialed his mother's phone; I expected to hear her say, "Hello." There was wonder in his greeting, however. The plans for his day had not allowed for a conversation with his pastor.

Sheltered at home, this fourth grader has found a classroom outside. I asked if he had observed any "critters." He was immediate with his response. "I am holding an inchworm," he said with a noticeable uptick in interest. Instantly I visualized the looper on his finger, clinging to the very end, revolving in air, feeling for something to reach something. Catching sight of his mother, he abruptly ended our chat and handed the smart phone to its owner.

As I pondered our talk, I saw a fitting metaphor in the inchworm. I feel of late as if I have plummeted. I have fallen from my daily routines, the life I expected to live, desired to live. Normal emotions appear in larger than usual servings. The valley of anxiety, fear and death we currently pass through shows no sign of ending. My mood seesaws from a veiled optimism to a blank, bare cracking feeling. Like my young friend's inchworm, I revolve in the air, feeling for something to reach something.

Holy Week has begun. Our Palm Sunday worship managed a tinge of the majesty the triumphant entry evokes. Sitting a great distance from my nearest neighbor in worship, emotion welled up within me as Richard played "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" on the organ. Sorrow weaved its way through me, burning darkly and beautifully in the words of the hymn: "'Hosanna in the highest!' that ancient song we sing: for Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heaven, our King."

Trauma always makes it difficult to engage in intimate relationships. Whether it is the result of something done to you or something you yourself have done, trauma generates distance. The last week in the life of our Lord and Savior was awash in loneliness. The evangelist Mark went out of his way to chronicle Jesus' last week on a day-by-day basis beginning in Mark 11.1. Surely, we will read and hear these familiar words afresh through the lens of what plagues us.

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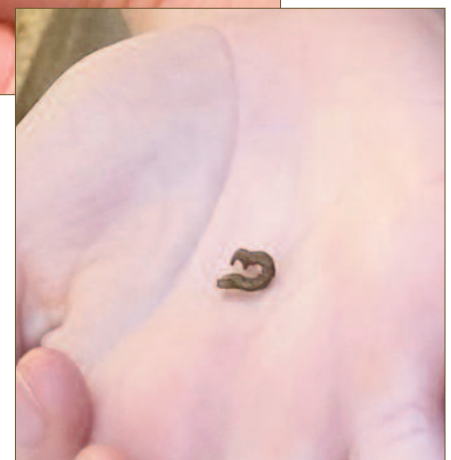


The isolation Jesus experienced in his last days hit me like an avalanche. Alongside the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter and the falling away of the disciples, the loneliness is almost diabolical. Christian Wiman observes the possibility of grace in the agony of seclusion. He writes, "Loneliness becomes a condition in which God can be. When passed through love, loneliness assumes an expansiveness and active capacity."¹ By the love of God, you may be lonely but are not empty.

I join you in living the days of Holy Week. May we walk each step with eye on just above the horizon of our foreboding reality, keeping our hearts attuned to the love of our Lord and Savior.

—Steven

¹ Wiman, Christian. My Bright Abyss. P.21



Inchworms compliments of Edmond Jarnigan, Campbell and Lyla Gnetz



Preparing for Worship
Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020

Flowering the CROSS!

Although our church family won't be gathering to flower the cross this year, we want to provide an opportunity to share our faith in the community. Here are some guidelines for this Immanuel tradition:

The cross will be located in front of the church. Stop by and flower the cross on Saturday evening between 5:00 and 7:00 or Sunday morning between 8:00 and 10:00

A few buckets of flowers will be available for your use. Keep your social distance; wait your turn in your car.

This beautiful cross is a reminder that Christ is risen indeed!



Just for Some Easter Egg Fun!

We've added a third page to the abridged LIGHT to give each of you an Easter activity! Enjoy!

Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020

What I miss not sitting on the back row is watching the children with the palms—I would give thanks for each family as they walked by—

Today, instead, I will pray for the choir members as they sing at home. Their devotion to our church is the love that our church is all about.

I will rejoice in my own home for years of being at Immanuel on a Sunday morning!

—Billie Patton

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Those among our family of faith who are facing moments of crisis and celebration.



Immanuel Baptist Church

The mission of Immanuel Baptist Church is to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to deepen our love for God and others, to fully engage our neighbor, and to wholeheartedly serve those on the margins of society.

God is calling Immanuel Baptist Church to practice the radical, compassionate discipleship taught by Jesus Christ.

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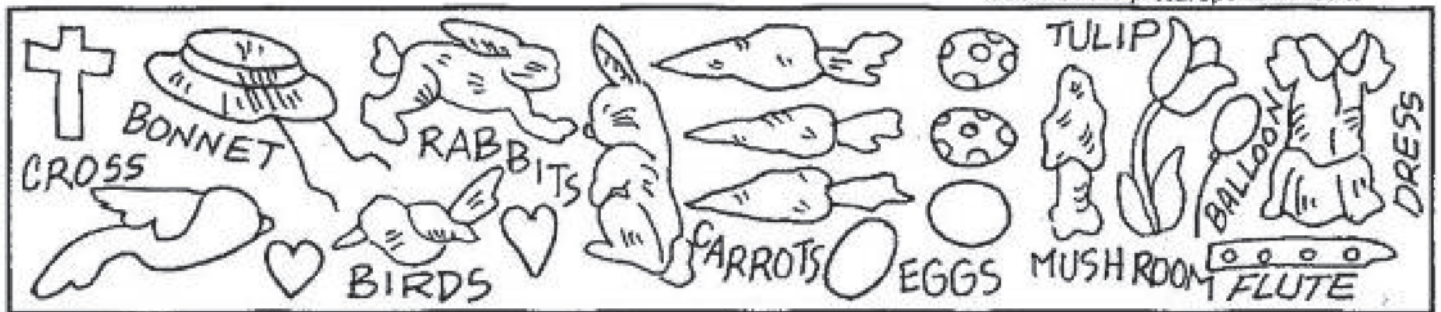
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www.hiddenpicturepuzzles.com



Can You Find All the Hidden Objects in this Picture (shown below picture)?
Happy Easter!