



THE PILLARS

Pastor J.J. Lynn

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Monthly Newsletter of Emmanuel Lutheran Church

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Pandemic Edition 2020 Volume 49 Number 4/5/6

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I hope this finds you well, this edition of the Pillars is being sent to you primarily via email, and via United States Postal Mail to those that we are not certain of an email address and reliable accessibility to email. If you have received this edition via traditional mail but are able to effectively interact with it via email, please let us know at the office.

We have entered the season of Pentecost, the season that we celebrate the sending of the Holy Spirit to be with us, and also the sending of the followers of Jesus into mission in the world. Can you imagine the number of changes they experienced at this time of their ministry? It brings me some comfort that the message of life in love and hope of Jesus continued in the midst of those changes. It gives me hope that we too will find new models of ministry in the midst of sudden and drastic changes in our time.

This pandemic has forced us into all kinds of new methods and procedures. Some we are satisfied with, some probably not. One of the new methods I am happy with is our new method of worship via Livestream on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/elcetna. While I am happy about this I also look forward to the day when we are able to return to in-person worship and all the other faith activities we miss so dearly, not the least of which is the opportunity for fellowship. Unfortunately I think fellowship will be one of the slowest aspects of our faith journey together to return. It is not with joy that I say this, but I do think it important to be upfront about expectations.

Included in this edition of the *Pillars* is the letter I emailed out recently on May 20, 2020. We have included it again because it attempts to highlight the number of factors that we are taking into account for returning to worship. The biggest question we are currently praying about is how to have safe in-person worship in the midst of this pandemic, especially as it continues on with no permanent resolution. In other words, how do we go about living in a pandemic in the face of risk? We have not set a date for when we will worship in person again. We do not anticipate setting a date. Instead we are seeking to identify the needs of how to keep as safe as possible with in-person worship. Once we have identified those needs, then created parameters of how to meet them, and are confident we can meet and maintain them; we will be able to speak of timelines. I realize some faith communities have returned to in person worship, in fact some likely never stopped. We are not worrying about that, we are focusing on our role to support the safety of our immediate congregation, community, and neighborhoods.

Some of you have written to me where you are on the level of confidence and comfort of the idea of gathering in-person again. I greatly appreciate your input so far, and invite you to continue this. I worry myself about the feasibility of returning safely to in person gatherings; this is not an item we are taking lightly.

The reality too is that things will not look the same as they did, we will have to make adjustments to our processes and our patterns of worship. For instance imagine those you typically sit near during worship, and then imagine what it will be like to maintain social distance in the sanctuary. Ironically the age old joke about the pastor forcing people to change their pews is no longer a joke. It is a reality, a reality very few of us are going to like. We are not people that tend to like change, especially forced change, because it causes discomfort, and even at times a little bit of fear. The question is: how we respond to our fear. Do we allow it to prevent us from acting with love to others, or do we rely on our faith to carry us forward?

Our faith is about not being prevented in living out our calling due to fear. This does not mean recklessness or carelessness. Our faith is about living out our calling of devotion and love to God, our Selves, and our Neighbors, in a manner that seeks to build up our neighbors and our communities. We are still called to this even or perhaps especially, in the face of this pandemic. For now the church building remains closed for non-crisis relief activities. The building is closed to protect the building and the people. I realize it is hard to stay away from your church building. However, this is for the long-term safety of the whole of the congregation.

The church as the people however remains open! We are "open" to consider the impact on our neighbors of everything we do, from idle conversations, to public postings, to what we choose to speak to strangers at the store, and to how we interpret the events of the world. We are called to build up and encourage and be a beacon of hope and love, focused on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to show us how to love one another.

I also want to ensure you that the livestreaming of worship will continue for the future. In fact, we are going to be working to increase the options for interaction during worship in these times. We will keep livestreaming for a multitude of reasons. We are pleasantly surprised with the extended reach of worship. We also want to make sure that even when we return to in-person worship we keep livestreaming available for those that are not able to rejoin us at that time. In this quest we are currently seeking quotes for high quality equipment and software.

I pray that you are well. If you are not well, reach out to someone who will respond to you in love, the love that is modeled to us through the life of Christ our Lord.

Peace
Pastor JJ



TITHE.LY

When the pandemic reached its tentacles into our neighborhood there were a number of things that changed in an instant, including the method of receiving financial offerings. Many of us have made the switch to electronic giving using Tithe.ly, and others have switched to mailing our checks and envelopes to the church. We want you to be sure that your offerings will be recorded properly for your future use.

If you have switched to Tithe.ly, your contributions are automatically recorded by Tithe.ly and a statement at the end of the year is created by the program for us to print and send out to you.

If you have switched to mailing your contributions to the church with the United States Postal Service, your offerings will still be counted and deposited on a regular basis. We have council folks that are volunteering weekly to come in to count and prepare the bank deposit. Your contributions in this manner are being recorded by number or name as is our typical process.

If you intend to switch to Tithe.ly in the future, or switch back to in person offering when we are finally able to gather for in-person worship again, do not worry. We will be sure to combine the databases to ensure that your end of year statement reflects both methods of giving and your combined total. There are two methods that we will be able to use to do this. 1. We may upload your in-person contributions to our Tithe.ly database so that they are recorded on that statement. 2. We may download your total giving via Tithe.ly and enter it into our internal database for in person contributions.

We were working on switching our entire membership database, known as Church Management Software (ChMS), to Tithe.ly

when the pandemic hit. We are still working on that, albeit more slowly now, and hope to still complete this process this year.

Assuming we complete the process, option number one above will be our solution. Any questions or concerns about this please feel free to reach out to Pastor JJ.

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Along with the pandemic comes paradigm shifts. One of those shifts may be having your goods and supplies shipped to your home via an online retailer, rather than shopping in person. If you have switched to an online retailer and it happens to be **Amazon**, please consider Emmanuel for your **Amazon Smile Contributions**. This is another way you can help support our ministries at Emmanuel in Working to Care for ALL God's People.

How to support Emmanuel through Amazon Smile

- Begin your Amazon shopping at this unique link
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1267230>
- Confirm that you want to support Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- When shopping simply be sure that smile.amazon.com is in your address bar to support Emmanuel
- You may also select Emmanuel as your charity to support in your account settings
 - From your account menu select "Your Amazon Smile"
 - Select or Change your charity
 - Search "Emmanuel Lutheran Church 15223" to find the correct Emmanuel
 - You can also search just using the number "25-1267230"
 - Once you have found Emmanuel simply click the yellow "Select" button.
- Pat yourself on the back for so simply supporting Emmanuel

**Emmanuel's Financial Status through
May 2020**

Budget	\$72,727
Spending	\$66,757
Offering Collected	\$66,440

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I hope you are doing well and holding things together. If you are not holding things together, that's probably okay; call someone to vent, or share, or cry, or pray. This is a highly stressful time and we are all experiencing some level of trauma around this pandemic. In other words, I hope your first priority is that of your health, emotional, physical, and mental. Please take care.

This coming Monday is Memorial Day and obviously we will not be able to celebrate with public prayers and parades as we would typically. I have just finished reading a little bit of Memorial Day in preparation for Sunday worship and I was reminded that one of the ways we honor Memorial Day is to pray for "permanent peace" as encouraged in Presidential Proclamation No. 7315 of May 26, 2000. Also encouraged is to join in prayer and remembrance at 3pm local time on Memorial Day. I encourage you to take some time on Memorial Day to do this, pray for peace, remembrance, and hope. Because we will not be able to join together on Memorial Day with our neighbors at the Etna service, we will be taking extra steps to incorporate remembrance and prayer for peace into Sunday's worship on the 24th of May. One of the things we will do is remember specifically those from Etna who have died in armed conflict, as obtained from the Etna Memorial. If there are members of your family or friends that you have lost in armed military conflict that you would also like us to remember by name on the 24th, please send me those names by Friday evening via text, email, or voicemail. If you would be so kind as to include a phonetic

spelling for me also, that would be wonderful.

We will continue to have our weekly Healing Prayer service on Wednesday evenings at 7pm for the foreseeable future. Pastor Tara and I hope that this is simply an opportunity to have some prayers and check in with one another, and to know that there is a scheduled moment of prayer each week in addition to Sunday worship. The instructions for participating in Wednesday prayer are below.

I am also holding a regular check-in call each Friday from 2pm-3pm via Google Meet. This is simply a scripture reading and conversation, sort of part bible study part fellowship. The instructions for this are below as well.

One of the things this pandemic has laid clear is that once we return to in person worship and gatherings, especially in the congregational setting, things will not be as they were. I realize that we tend to use the language of returning to normal often when we hear about reopening society and what not, but I think it best to start adjusting our hearts and minds to the changes that we can pretty much assume will occur.

Council is actively discussing these changes and working to make plans and procedures that we can follow. We will address all of these changes from the perspective of faith and concern for our neighbor (those of the congregation as well as those of the community) and especially from the perspective of the Fifth Commandment, specifically Martin Luther's explanation of the Fifth. From the *Small Catechism*; "The Fifth Commandment: You shall not murder. What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs." I'm calling your focus here to the directive that we not endanger our neighbors.

We decided that we will not re-open the church building for non-crisis relief activities

until at least Allegheny County has journeyed to the green zone, or June, whichever comes second. Even when we get to the green zone we will not automatically open back up. We will open back up when we have a level of confidence that we are ready to respond to the multitude of new things to consider and practices to put into place, and practices that require adjustment. Put more simply, the church building remains closed until further notice. I know it is tempting to come to the church for normal visits during the week, but please remember one of the reasons we are closed is for your individual safety and also to isolate our building as best as possible, especially the sanctuary from possible exposure. Opening back up will be even harder if we have an exposure in the building.

A non-exhaustive list of the items we are taking into consideration and into account in our planning and conversation are as follows. If you would like individually more information as to where we are on a specific item, please feel free to ask me directly via email, phone, or text (with patience for a response of course).

- Greetings and passing of the peace
- Post-worship greeting line
- Management of foot traffic
- Social distancing guidelines
- Worship times and number of worship opportunities
- Cleaning of sanctuary and facility
- Registration of guests each week
- Collection of offering
- Hymnals
- Bulletins
- Door handles
- Air circulation
- Supplies of cleaning materials
- Encouragement of hygiene
- Accessibility of hand sanitizer
- Live Stream technology
- Face coverings
- Communion distribution
- New requirements of groups in support of sanitization

- Six feet of separation possible throughout the facility
- New roles and training for serving as an usher
- Weekly council conversations
- Remote Viewing
- Response to an outbreak

I hope you are well and pray for all of us on a consistent basis. Please do the same.

Peace
Pastor JJ

Directions for Wednesday Healing Service

ZOOM Password: 123123

Through the Zoom App

- 1) Open the Zoom app on your tablet or smartphone. It is a free download you can get in your phone's app store.
- 2) Click "join" and type in this Meeting ID: 580 925 3839, then click "Join Meeting"
- 3) You're in! You should see Pastor Tara on your screen. You may choose to have your own video on or off (on is preferred so we can see each other!), but either way, please mute your audio by clicking the microphone icon on the bottom left of the screen so that a red slash appears over the icon.

Zoom Through your Internet Browser (i.e. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox)

- 1) Copy/paste or type into your browser: <https://zoom.us/j/5809253839>
- 2) Type in this Meeting ID: 580 925 3839
- 3) If prompted for a password enter: 123123
- 4) You're in! You should see Pastor Tara on your screen. You may choose to have your own video on or off (on is preferred so we can see each other), but either way, **please mute your audio** by clicking the microphone icon on the bottom left of the screen so that a red slash appears over the icon.

Zoom By Phone

- 1) Dial (646)558 8656

Please note that this number is considered "long distance". If you do not have long-

distance capabilities, please let Pastor Tara know.

- 2) When prompted, dial in the Meeting ID: 580 925 3839, then press #
- 3) When asked for your participant ID, press #
- 4) When asked for password enter 123123#
- 5) You're in! **Please mute your phone**, which should be a button on your cellphone or handset.

Directions for Friday Check-In Call

Please note the following requirements to be able to use Google Meet.

Web Browser must be the most recent version of one of the following.
Chrome Browser by google.
Mozilla Firefox.
Microsoft Edge.
Apple Safari

When using a mobile device such as a tablet or smartphone you must have the Google Meet Application which can be found in your app store. Search "Google Meet"

From your desktop/laptop

In your browser go to meet.google.com

Click Join or Start a meeting

In the pop up dialog box that opens enter meeting code TDY KDUE PMI

If your browser asks you to give permission for microphone and camera click yes, or agree, or whatever would be the affirmative response.

From the Meet App

Select "Meeting Code"

Enter TDY KDUE PMI into the meeting code box

Select Join Meeting

Via Phone

Dial (347) 363-5646

When prompted for PIN dial 450 617 475 #

If you need assistance in learning these methods please contact Pastor JJ so he can try to make arrangements with you.

Council Update

Council is currently meeting on an increased frequency to prepare for a return to in-person worship. We have decided to not set a date for return to in-person worship. Rather than set a date for a return to in-person worship we are working on determining the policies and procedures that will need to be implemented and adjusted to provide as safe an environment for in-person activities as possible. Once we have those parameters in place we will be able to determine when we will return for in-person worship.

In an effort to help us plan would you be willing to spend less than five minutes taking this survey at the following address,

<https://forms.gle/rBTofgHh683sPXbp7>

*There is a paper copy of the form included in the postally mailed pillars. If you require a paper copy please contact the office to have one mailed to you.

Looking for Volunteers to Continue Working to Care for All God's People by:

- Helping with lunch distribution weekdays from 10:30am-1:00pm
- Before we can return to in-person worship we need *many* volunteers for cleaning between and after worship times
- Operation of Audio/Visual production Livestream – Training provided
- Contact Pastor JJ and he will put you in touch with the appropriate team leader.



Day Camp Update

We will not host in-person day camp. We are exploring options for an online version. Stay Tuned.

Preparedness- A word we have all come to know all too well in these recent days. Only a short time ago our focus was on preparedness of a completely different type....security enhancements for our building and congregation.

In 2020 the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) made available \$5 million in state funding for security enhancements for churches, synagogues, and other nonprofit organizations throughout the Commonwealth that may fall within a bias motivation category for hate crimes as identified by the FBI. This year's funding was this first of an anticipated five (5) year funding program.

Applicants were eligible for grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000 for enhancements designed to protect the safety and security of their facilities and membership including security and threat assessments, preparedness and response training, physical facility security upgrades. Grants requested over \$25,000 required matching funds.

A task group comprised of Pastor JJ, Judith Erlen, Dan Barr, and Kevin Smith with great assistance of Chief Timothy Rodman of the Borough of Etna Police Dept. started the process in late January of assessing our needs both immediate and long term. While it was understood that many non-profit organizations face a greater threat of hate crimes and that the likelihood of award in the first year of funding would be limited, the task force recognized that in today's world this would be a beneficial and necessary step regardless of award. By doing so, it would identify and prioritize our needs, some of which may not require funding, and lay the ground work for reapplication, if needed, in the 2021 funding cycle.

The task force developed the following prioritized list of needs:

1. Preparedness and post event training, procedures and equipment
2. Building surveillance and monitoring equipment
3. Security access control system

Through the resources available through Dan Barr as well as the Etna Police Dept. and other agencies, there was no need to request grant funding to complete item #1 which is currently ongoing. \$14,110 was requested for item #2 and \$10,890 for item #3 totaling \$25,000.

Applications were submitted on February 14th and notice of awards was posted on March 11th. As anticipated, the number of applications far exceeded the state's current funding and organizations facing more immediate threats were awarded. Emmanuel Lutheran was not among the recipients in this first year of funding. However, many of the needs identified along with some minor facility modifications can and will proceed without this grant funding to put us in a much stronger position to protect our church family and facility. It also lays the groundwork for future grant funding pending the state legislature's approval of funds in the next four (4) years.

A word of thanks to all the task force members and Chief Rodman on their efforts to pull this grant together in such a short amount of time and for the ongoing efforts to make all of us and our Church House a safer place.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



G.I.F.T.: The gift that keeps on giving GIFT continues its focus on *Expressions of Our Faith through the Experiences of Women of Faith* as our way of honoring the 50th anniversary of the ordination of the first female pastor in the Lutheran church. GIFT will not be meeting face to face during April. But, do not despair as Edna Zimmerman, the facilitator, will be providing a self-study on the Christian characteristic of "LOVE" that will be posted on the church website. We are anticipating that the sessions in May focused on "GENEROSITY" facilitated by Tom Kleeb may also be presented virtually. Like Edna, Tom will be providing a self-study that each of us can use to increase our understanding of this important characteristic. Additionally, the sessions from March on "STRENGTH" facilitated by Judy Erlen will be posted allowing individuals who did not attend the in-person discussion to have an opportunity to view this presentation.

GIFT does not meet during the summer. However, we will be planning to launch a new series of facilitated discussions beginning in September 2020. Stay tuned for the announcement of the theme for the 2020-2021 series.

Thank you to our 2019-2020 incredible facilitators: Fred Prefling, Edna Zimmerman, Tom Kleeb, Pastor Chris Hough, Pastor JJ Lynn, and Judy Erlen. If you would like to serve as a facilitator or co-facilitator, please contact Tom Kleeb, Pastor JJ, or Judy Erlen.



Children's Church

Children's Church lessons and activities continue *LIVE* on Emmanuel's Facebook page and will be posted there for future viewing.

You can find Pastor Chris *with TJ* on www.facebook.com/elcetna.

Children's Church is a part of Sunday morning worship to which children (serving children 2 to 9 years of age and on average 5 to 10 children) look forward. A cadre of volunteers leads this learning opportunity during the middle part of the service with the children and volunteers returning during the passing of the peace. Children's Church provides a time for socialization, for further discussion of the Bible story, and an activity. Pastor Chris has been spearheading Children's Church. We want to thank her and the many volunteers for making Children's Church a welcomed opportunity.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP

Choir Notes

The choir had been working on anthems for Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter before our practices were abruptly halted. Thank you to the choir's members for your dedication and musical leadership during worship on Sunday mornings.

Please note that there will not be a face to face choir practice until further notice. Quite possibly that means not until September 2020 since we do not have regular practices during the summer. We invite new members to try us out when we are able to gather again to practice and to join in the fellowship and opportunity to raise one's voice in song to the Lord.



Until further notice, the ministers' schedules are on hold.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS



Rebecca Lindenberger	04/03
Thomas Stumpf	04/05
Sophia Archer	04/07
Janet Jennings	04/09
Janice Long	04/09
Jessica Lindenberger	04/12
Carolyn Spahic	04/12
Deborah Simon	04/12
Matthew Holinbaugh	04/13
Robert Klaus	04/13
Dennis Tuite	04/14
Christopher Zimmerman	04/14
Mary Smith	04/16
Michael Lindenberger	04/18
Elaine Niekum	04/19
Devin Bieri	04/21
Donald Zimmerman	04/21
Daniel Hartmann	04/22
Sarah Lindenberger	04/23
Ronald Heckman	04/23
Cheryl Pfab	04/23
Roland Kania	04/25
John Demko III	04/26
Rebecca Renner	04/26
James Suhadolnik	04/26
Natalie Morgenstern	04/26
Matthew Kiernan	04/28
Joshua Lindenberger	04/28
Christopher Jennings	04/30

(We apologize if your birthdate is missing or not correct. We can only go by the information we have in our membership rolls, but would be very happy to update that information if you call the office or send an email to the secretary.)

Continue saving for our following ongoing projects; but please keep your items at home for the time being until we can once again be in church:
Glade Run Bottle Cap Project (metal caps and lids)
WELCA's Blessed Bundles designated outreach for 2020
Box Tops for Education
Men's Shelter Ministry clothing collection
Baked goods for the Elfinwild Home Meals Ministry

OFFICE HOURS:

Our secretary, Linda Farmerie, has these regular office hours: Monday-9 to 3 pm; Tuesday-no office hours; Wednesday-9 to 4 pm; Thursday-no office hours; Friday-10-5 pm
Linda is also available by email (secretary.elcetna@gmail.com), or leave a voice mail on the phone.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Due to the current health and safety concerns caused by the coronavirus (covid-19), many activities may be postponed for a period of time. We will keep you up-to-date through our Sunday bulletins, etc.

Programs & Events in Etna Borough
www.etnaborough.org

Programs & Events at Shaler North Hills Library
www.shalerlibrary.org

MAY BIRTHDAYS



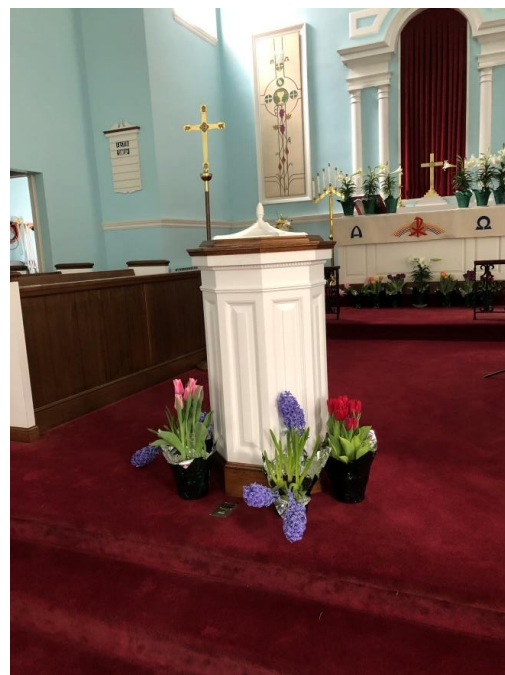
Joseph McDonough	05/01
Christopher Lee	05/01
Dalaney Vaughn	05/01
Barbara Setzenfand	05/04
Brian Stamper	05/04
Jamie Fincke	05/06
Cadby Sundermann	05/09
Austin Halley	05/11
Joseph Kiernan	05/11
Alexandra Schmitt	05/11

Jacquelyn Caton	05/12
Amy Stefanowicz	05/13
Sally Palka	05/14
James Bender	05/14
Matthew McCarthy	05/14
Brianna Fugh	05/16
Leslie Babyak	05/18
Anniston Bieri	05/20
Lisa Tuite	05/20
Julia Degenhardt	05/21
Barbara Buccigrossi	05/22
Nicholas Fugh	05/22
Kristin Santoro	05/23
Maria Zacchero	05/23
Taylor Jennings	05/24
Bertha Trdina	05/25
Timothy Fugh	05/26
Robert Hidek	05/29
Kevin Smith	05/30

Sebastian Pratt	06/27
Madeline Ruzomberka	06/28
Lisa Pritchard	06/29
Victor Zacchero	06/30
Isaac Auge	06/30
Kimberly Cathers	06/30

(We apologize if your birthdate is missing or not correct. We can only go by the information we have in our membership rolls, but would be very happy to update that information if you call the office or send an email to the secretary.)

Thank you to everyone who ordered Easter flowers in time to brighten our sanctuary Easter morning while we worshiped near but far from our church home.



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JUNE BIRTHDAYS



Dawn Devinney	06/02
Jayden Santoro	06/04
Michael Heller	06/04
Nicole Colwell	06/05
Amy Fugh	06/07
David Zilch	06/09
Victoria Scariot	06/09
Donna Fischetti	06/10
Julia Bernesser	06/11
Sara Zacchero	06/11
Donna French	06/11
Ella Barr	06/13
Kelli Kleeb	06/13
Kylee Stamper	06/14
Debra Klinefelter	06/15
Carmella Whelan	06/15
Jessica Fischetti	06/17
Barbara Jones	06/17
Megan Kobert	06/18
John Caton, Jr.	06/21
Frank Hartnett	06/21
Brandon Pfab	06/21
Laura DiVecchio	06/22
Abrielle DiVecchio	06/22
Brianna Marie Grzybowski	06/22
Joanne Caton	06/23
Rafelin O'Dell	06/23
Dennis Carr	06/23
Peyton Nelson	06/23
Mark Snead	06/24
Suzanne Spelic	06/26

***Introducing a new option for giving of
Offering!***

GIVE ONLINE WITH TITHE.LY

More info:

<https://help.tithe.ly/en/articles/1466110-giving-to-my-church>

**Find Emmanuel on the Web at:
elcetna.org**

**Find Emmanuel on Facebook at:
Facebook.com/elcetna.org**