

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

“Praising, Proclaiming and Practicing Emmanuel—God with us—in daily life!”

Pastor's Keyboard: “Discipleship—Caked in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus”

Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Now get to work. Go and tell! Jesus, the Resurrected One has ALL authority. He commissions His Church to Go and MAKE Disciples of ALL people in ALL places. He promises to be with us ALL-WAYS to the end of the age. Disciples are learners who sit at the feet of Rabbi Jesus. Disciples are practitioners of Emmanuel—God with us. Disciples are copy-cats caked in the dust of Christ their Teacher.

We make disciples by being disciples. We disavow our proclamation when we fail to practice what we preach. The claim, “I can’t hear what you are saying because your actions are speaking too loudly,” may be justified. Jesus sends us out into the world to be witnesses; the salt of the earth, the light for the world, and a city on a hill. You may be the only Bible some folks ever read.



Recently, I listened to a lecture by Valarie Moody, a Messianic Jew. The lecture was Session One of, “My Big Fat Greek Mindset 1”. Valarie invites Christians to see the Scriptures with a Hebrew mindset. She describes the educational system of the first century Palestine.

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.” - Psalm 119:103

How did one become a disciple? First of all, you had to be a boy. Boys entered Beit Sefer (House of the Book) and studied Torah, five days a week, from ages 5-10. The practice of teaching Torah dates back to the return of the exiles

from Babylon. The teacher placed honey on the student’s slate, and while the Torah Scroll was being brought out of the Ark, the student would lick the honey from their slate. God’s Word was honey to a believer. There was nothing sweeter than honey.

By age 10, a boy committed to memory the 5 Books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy). Then the student graduated from primary school, and entered secondary school (Beit Midrash, i.e. House of Study). By age 15, the entire Old Testament was memorized. The Hebraic manner of learning was “answering a question with a question” (e.g. Matthew 15:1-3).

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Food For Thought:

“Let thy house be a meeting-house for the wise; & powder thyself in the dust of their feet; and drink their words with thirstiness.”

Yose ben Yoezer
(Mishnah, Avot 1:4)

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“The LORD will Provide”

In Genesis 22, The LORD puts Abraham to the test. The LORD commands Abraham to take his son, his only son, Isaac, whom he loves, and to sacrifice him on Mount Moriah (aka Calvary). Isaac, whose name means laughter, is the son of promise. Through Isaac shall Abraham’s descendants be numbered and known. Surely God must be joking. This is no laughing matter. What kind of a God would ask for such a sacrifice? Answer: A God who authors and writes the rest of the story; a God who supplies all of our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19).

Abraham believes that God keeps promises and can even raise the dead back to life (Hebrews 11:17-19). Abraham tells Isaac that God will provide Himself a lamb for the sacrifice. Sure enough, a substitute is provided. “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Abraham calls Mount Moriah by a new name: “The LORD will provide”. “On the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” Abraham told his servants that he and the boy would offer sacrifice and return. The story of faith takes place on the third day.

Recently Pastor Steffenson traveled to Mankato to visit with a couple scheduled to get married on April 11. Resurrection Lutheran (LCMC) in Mankato offered a meeting place in their church. The Lord provides. Pastor Steffenson worshipped with the good folks of Resurrection Lutheran and attended an adult study on “The Story” (an overview of the Bible).

The Story of Resurrection Lutheran is an interesting one. Lutherans in Mankato who were concerned about happenings in the ELCA began meeting in 2010. By 2011 they numbered 40 people. They decided to call a pastor. In January 2011, Rev. Greg Lenz accepted the call. Resurrection was looking for an office space for their pastor and found hospitality at First Christian Church. First Christian was a “Disciples of Christ” congregation. Resurrection Lutheran moved their worship space from the conference

center at the AmericInn Hotel to First Christian. The relationship between the two congregations grew and blossomed. In October 2011, First Christian, offered their facilities for sale. The price for this \$2-3 Million property was unbelievably generous: \$1000 a month for 10 years. 75% of First Christian, whose membership was down to about 15-20 people, also decided to join Resurrection Lutheran.

God blesses His people when they are faithful to His Word & committed to the Great Commission. On this Mount the Lord will Himself provide. Resurrection Lutheran is a illustration of God’s providence. They are currently renovating their church. They worship about 75-100 people on a Sunday. They already have gifts and pledges of \$550,000 for their renovation project. The LORD just keeps on providing. If you’re in Mankato on a Sunday, please join Resurrection for worship.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

Youth continue to meet each Saturday at 5:10pm for Christian Education under the direction of Julie Steffenson. There will be no Saturday School on Saturdays, April 4 & 11. Saturday School will resume on April 18 and continue to May 30. We hope you can join us as we celebrate the 50 days of Easter.

Holy Week Worship Opportunities

Eve of Palm Sunday—Sat, March 28 @ 6 p.m. - Distribution of Palm Fronds

Maundy Thursday—April 2 @ 6 p.m. - Foot Washing and Holy Communion

Good Friday—April 3 @ 12:00 Noon - Bidding Prayer and Passion Reading

Eve of Easter Sunday—Sat, April 4 @ 6 p.m. - Celebrating the Resurrection of our LORD.

Check out: www.Jesusfactorfiction.com

Women's Bible Study: "Practicing Resurrection"

Eugene Peterson, author of THE MESSAGE, refers to the Book of Ephesians as "*Practicing Resurrection*"; *i.e. keeping company with Jesus*. We are people of the third day. Christ's resurrection is the firstfruits of those who fall asleep. During the 50 days of Easter, women of Emmanuel & their friends will study Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus & practice the gift of resurrection in daily life.

We will meet twice a month, on Wednesday afternoons from 1:00-2:30pm, beginning April 8. In preparation for this study women are asked to read Acts 18-20 (portions of Paul's Second & Third Missionary Journeys).

Marcus Barth writes, "Ephesians is, within the New Testament, the magna carta of the one, holy, apostolic, and catholic church." Gentile Christians are not distinct or inferior to Jewish Christians. Both are God's new Israel. Ephesians is one of Paul's four prison epistles (Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon), perhaps written while Paul was in a Roman prison (60-63 A.D.). It was written to saints so that they may know "what is the hope of God's calling (1:18); what are the glorious riches of God's inheritance in the saints (1:18); and what is God's great power toward those who believe (1:19).

Ephesians is an Operator's Manual for All the Saints!

Ephesians is all about being born again and growing up (4:15) into the full maturity of Christ; healthy in God and robust in love. God has given us a new way of "walking". God's people are called to live in a way distinctively different from that of our surrounding culture. Christians have Christ in them. We are Christ's display.

Join us as we keep company with Jesus and practice resurrection in daily life.

Thrivent Action Team Prayer Opportunity

Emmanuel Lutheran Church has a new opportunity to pray & support our schools. Beginning in April, the Monthly Prayer Calendar will feature a Rochester School on the 15th of each month. Please use this day to pray for that school's teachers, administrators, staff and children. Emmanuel has received a \$250 Thrivent Action Team gift. The grant will be used to provide the staff at the school a "treat" and will be accompanied by a note letting them know we are lifting them up in prayer. Julie Steffenson will be coordinating the delivery of the treats each month. If you would like to help any month, please contact her (507-206-3048).

Adult Bible Study THE STORY!

The Story is an abbreviated, chronological overview of the Bible that reads like a novel. The Story is a 31 week Bible study. **Beginning in September** Pastor Dave will lead us through this amazing study.

"The Greatest Story Ever Told" is more than just a cliché. God goes to great lengths to rescue lost and

hurting people. That is what The Story is all about: the story of the Bible, God's great love affair with humanity. Condensed into 31 accessible chapters, The Story sweeps participants into the unfolding progression of Bible characters & events from Genesis -Revelation. Like any good story, The Story is filled with intrigue, drama, conflict, romance, and redemption; & this story's true!

Each story in these 31 chapters reveals the God of grace---the God who speaks; the God who acts; the God who listens; the God whose love for his people culminated in his sacrifice of Jesus, his only Son, to atone for the sins of humanity." Read the Story & experience the Bible.

Marks of Discipleship:

Signposts guide our way—Disciples seek to pray daily, worship weekly, grow spiritually, read & study Scripture on a regular basis, serve others, share the good news, & give generously.

Save the Date: Emmanuel will host its first Mother-Daughter Brunch on Saturday, May 2, 2015 (10:30am-12:30pm). Judy Pearce and friends are organizing this event for mothers & daughters. The Speaker will be LeeAnn Knutson (Faith Like a Teapot Ministry). Gifts of music will be offered by the "Teapot Singers". Seating is limited. "Invitations" are available beginning March 28. Emmanuel received a Thrivent Action Team gift of \$250 in support of this ministry opportunity.

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SAVE THE DATE!

Join Us!

Saturday, April 18, 2015 (6pm)
Emmanuel Lutheran Choir,
Grafton, IA will perform an Easter
Cantata at Emmanuel Lutheran of
Rochester.

—Pastor's Keyboard, continued from page 1

Having graduated from the House of Study, a boy could then apply for acceptance at the University (i.e. Beit Talmud - House of Teaching), which would be 15 years of further study of God's Word. If one was accepted by a Rabbi into the House of Teaching, and only the very best were accepted because the admission process was rigorous, then one would hear the words, "Come and Follow". The student would sit at the feet of the Rabbi and literally get caked in the dust that came from the Rabbi's feet as they traveled together on the dusty roads of Palestine. The goal was to copy everything the Rabbi did. Graduation meant that one would "take the yoke of the Rabbi and spread his teaching to others" (Matthew 11:29).

Jesus began his public ministry at the age of 30. He called misfits (the unqualified) to be his disciples. On the night that he was betrayed he washed the feet of his disciples. "I have given you an example to follow," Jesus said. "All people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:15, 35). Jesus commissions disciples to make disciples of all people everywhere. What's the recipe? Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and teach obedience to the teachings of Jesus. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. Who gets to be a disciple? Men and women, boys and girls. Caked in the dust of Rabbi Jesus, born again of water and the Spirit, Christ's resurrection is also ours. We are lifelong learners/practitioners. Go make disciples!

Licking the honey from my slate, Pastor Dave

Back Page Stories

Men's Bible Study Breakfast:

Weekly fellowship around God's Word at 8am Tuesdays at Charlie's (1408 2nd. St. SW). Join us in being Evangelical. Invite a friend.

Super Market Saturday: The next Channel One opportunity is April 18 2015 (9 am—Noon).

Women's Bible Study: Studying Ephesians for six sessions beginning on Wed, April 8 (1pm).

Council Highlights (March 10):

Election of Officers—Kari Richards, President; Lee Pearce, Vice President; Don Holtan, Secretary, and Arne Nelson, Treasurer. A special meeting to resolve remaining Constitution & By-

laws questions is being set (March 24 @ 7pm). Church-at-Large (NALC and NALC Seminary) gifts will be submitted twice a year: January and July. Lee Pearce will draft an Ushers' Duties List. Pastor Dave and Arne will draft a written policy for staff vacation & benefits. Pulpit supply compensation was increased from \$90.00 to \$125.00 per Worship Service, plus mileage. Pianist rate will remain at \$90.00 per Worship Service. Gloria Wiebusch 2015 Discipleship Covenant was approved. Thrivent Choice Dollars received in March: \$472.00. Next Council Meeting: April 21 @ 10am.

Liturgies: During Easter we will be using "Bread of Life" from With One Voice as our primary liturgy.

CASE FOR CHRIST: Come, watch, and discuss The Case For Christ DVD. Legal editor Lee Strobel, encouraged by his wife, Leslie, follows the evidence for the reliability of New Testament eyewitnesses, Jesus's miracles performed, prophecies fulfilled by Jesus, and His resurrection transforming His disciples. Two showings: Basement of Immanuel of Potsdam, Wed, April 8, 7:30pm, and the Narthex of Oasis Church of Rochester, Wed, April 15, 6pm. Discussion will be facilitated by Pastor Fred Morck.

Pastor Dave is taking Mondays as his weekly day off. Please call for emergencies only. Thanks!