

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “A Building for God”

It’s the Season of Easter and God’s Church is celebrating the resurrection of our Lord. Discipleship is all about being a Building for God!

A children’s song contains these words: “The church is not a building where people go to pray. It’s not made out of sticks and stones. It’s not made out of clay. We are the church; the body of our Lord. We are all God’s children. We have been restored.”

The author of this song wants us to remember that God’s church is first and foremost the Body of Christ, the Bride of Jesus. Church by definition is not an address or a geographic location. In TRUTH, the church is an organism, not an organization. Nevertheless a building or a location can serve a Godly purpose, if the church doesn’t fixate on brick and mortar, and seek only institutional survival. The building exists to serve the mission of God!

Jesus did a little House Cleaning in what we call Holy Week. The Temple was designed by Almighty God to be a House of Prayer for all people. But instead, it became house of trade for commercial gain. God’s



people were being fleeced by the very ones appointed to protect & serve them.

St. Paul, writing to the church in Corinth, reminds them and us of our God-given identity. The Church in Corinth was splitting into factions and focusing on personality cults. Though they were physically, grown adults, spiritually they were still on breast milk and Pablum (cereal for infants). Disciples don’t follow Paul or Apollos, or Luther. Disciples follow Jesus.

“The Church, it is a people living out their lives; called, enlightened, sanctified, for the work of Jesus Christ. We are the Church, the body of our Lord. We are all God’s children. We have been restored.”

—Jay Beech

Paul reminds us that he and Apollos, (and Luther) are

servants through whom we have come to believe as the Lord has assigned to each. One servant plants and another servant waters, but God gives the growth. We are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field; God’s Building. A field or a building exists to produce, to preserve, and to protect. The apostrophe reminds us that we are not our own. We are bought with a price (the cross). We are God’s property. We are owned!

What kind of a building are we? St. Paul says that our bodies are a Temple of the Holy Spirit. A Temple is a place of worship, sacrifice and prayer. We are God’s portable places of worship. In other words, you and I are the brick and mortar of God, consecrated, holy, for the sacred work of Christ in this world. We don’t need a building to be the church. We are a building for the glory of God.

Emmanuel Lutheran spent the forty days of Lent reading Bible verses & praying. We are discerning the will of God for us. What does

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**April 2018
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“Whenever God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel right next door.”

— Martin Luther

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LENT & HOLY WEEK

Thanks to everyone who attended this year's Lenten Services and Soup Suppers. A special thanks to all of our soup and bread providers. Fellowship and tasty soup was enjoyed by all. Holy Week is upon us. Keep the following Worship Opportunities in mind:

- Saturday—March 24 (6pm)—Holy Week begins with the distribution of Palm Fronds.
- Maundy Thursday Worship (March 29 at 6pm) Foot Washing and Holy Communion.
- Good Friday Worship (March 30 at 12:00 Noon) St. John's Passion Story; veneration of the cross.
- Easter Saturday (March 31) — Easter Egg Hunt at 5:10pm and Easter Worship at 6pm.
- Easter Monday (April 2) — Public Reading of the entire New Testament (5am—Midnight). Also, an opportunity to offer a gift in support of the Emmanuel Building Fund!

May God bless all who keep the 40 Days, fasting, praying, & giving alms with repentant hearts.

Emmanuel Choir—Grafton, Iowa

Mark Borchardt and the Emmanuel Choir, from Grafton, Iowa, are making a return trip to Rochester on Easter III—**Saturday, April 14 (6pm)**. The Choir will offer several gifts of music at our Emmanuel Lutheran Church evening Worship Service. Spread the word and invite a friend to join you for worship as we celebrate the hope and joy of our Lord's resurrection during the 50 Days of Easter. Emmanuel will be offering extra hospitality and treats to our guests on April 14.

Bible Study: "The Great Commissions"

New Study. New Time. New Location. In the Season of Easter, women of Emmanuel will meet for a six session study on "God's Call to Make Known the Gospel". The location of this study will be at the Bridgemoor Pavilion (Bldg. #5520) of the Homestead Complex (home of Nancy Stanley).

The dates for this study are: Thursdays at 10am on April 19 & 26; May 10, 17, & 31; and June 7.

Everyone knows the Great Commission, but it isn't the only Commission found in the Bible. All four Gospels, plus Acts and St. Paul, contain God's Call to Make Known the Gospel. Resurrection People want to get the WORD out! Join us. Bring a friend!

Public Reading of the New Testament & "Building Fund Launch Day"

In celebration of our Lord's Resurrection and the promise of the third day for all who are baptized into Christ's dying and rising, Emmanuel will once again host a public reading of the entire New Testament on Easter Monday, April 2. We will begin our reading at 5:00am & conclude by Midnight. Refreshments will be served throughout the day. Stop by for a portion of the day, or make it a marathon. Hear God's Word and, if you wish, offer your voice to the text!

Members of Emmanuel will be given an opportunity to make a financial gift, or a pledge, to the Building Fund. We have starter cash of \$25,000 and hope to double it on April 2. Our Goal is to raise \$100,000 in cash and pledges for the building fund by year end 2018. Thanks for prayerfully discerning God's will for Emmanuel during the Forty Days of Lent!

Men's Morning Bible Study

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran meet on Tuesday mornings (8am) at Oasis Church for Bible Study and fellowship. The men are currently studying the Book of Acts and discussing the gift of Witnessing in Daily Life. Join us for conversation, coffee and treats.

Invite a friend and double your joy!

6th Annual Mega Kid's Camp

An amazing camp for kids, including Creative Arts, Horses, Legos, and Adventure Games & Sports will be held in the summer of 2018 (Monday, July 16th - Thursday, July 19th, from 8:45am-Noon each day). This year's theme is "Team Spirit". Youth will learn how to be great teammates through both sports stories and Bible stories about Jesus and his team of disciples. Kids will discover what it means to put team first. Over 300 kids (Preschool age 4-Grade 6) are expected to participate in this year's "Kids Camp". **Location:** Century High School. Cost is only \$25.00 per kid, which includes snacks, T-Shirt, & prizes. **Earl Bird Registration opens on April 2.** Scholarships are available. Lots of opportunities for volunteers. Background checks are required. Last year: 270 kids & 104 volunteers participated! See Pastor Steffenson for more information.

Pastor Dave is taking Monday as his weekly day off. Please call for emergencies only. Thanks for your partnership in ministry!

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God want us to do for Him, His glory, and His Kingdom. It's not about you and me. It's all about Emmanuel—crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins. We've launched a building campaign in hopes of raising \$100,000 by the end of 2018. We believe that God has planted us in His field to bear fruit. On the cornerstone of Christ, we are the construction site of Almighty God. Emmanuel Lutheran is God's church, God's people, for God's purposes. Do we need a building when we already are a building? I believe in my heart of hearts that God's answer to that question is YES! The building is a tool, a vessel; not an idol. Join me on Easter Monday (April 2) as we invest in the future God is giving us.

Jesus said to St. Peter, "On this Rock I will build my church. The gates of hell will not prevail against it." The church belongs to Jesus. He is the One who gives it its growth. Jesus wants Emmanuel to grow, numerically and spiritually. Why? Because lost people matter to God, and there is salvation only in the name of Jesus. *"Built on the Rock, the Church shall stand, even when steeples are falling. Crumbled have spires in every land, bells still are chiming and calling—calling the young and old to rest, calling the souls of those distressed, longing for life everlasting."*

A Temple of the Holy Spirit, a Building for God and His glory! Pastor Dave

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR APRIL

Saturday, April 7 - Easter II (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: Joe Vomhof & Cabe Siebenaler
Acolyte: Addison Siebenaler

Saturday, April 14 - Easter III (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Darald Bothun
Ushers: LeRoy Quam & Rich Sunde
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

Saturday, April 21 - Easter IV (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Darald Bothun & Bob Harms
Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler

Saturday, April 28 - Easter V (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Sharon Matzke
Ushers: Arne Nelson & Creig Anderson
Acolyte: Emma Matzke

PIANIST: Karen Salz

Communion Assistant: Katie Siebenaler
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Margaret Quam

Choir: Emmanuel of Grafton, IA

Communion Assistant: Leitha Bothun
Sound: Matt Serr
Treats: Julie Edwards

PIANIST: Karen Salz

Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson
Sound: Pending
Treats: Leitha Bothun

ORGANIST: Scott Schilbe

Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr
Sound: Pending
Treats: Jenna Serr

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up, & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down. Pastor Dave will be our preacher on April 14, 21 & 28. Julie Steffenson will take care of coffee on April 14, 21, & 28. Pastor Tim Duesenberg will serve as pulpit supply on April 7. Seminarian Dallas Groten will lead worship on April 21 & 28.

SATURDAY SCHOOL & G.I.F.T.

Julie Steffenson continues to teach the little ones Bible Stories. Pastor Dave is teaching youth in grades 3-8 about Creation and the Fall, using C.S. Lewis' book, "The Magician's Nephew", from the Chronicles of Narnia. Youth meet in the Oasis basement. The Adults (G.I.F.T.) are reading "Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus" and learning "The Truth about Islam" (This group meets in the Oasis Fellowship Hall).

The Sanctity of Life! We are Lutherans for Life!

In 2018, the United States marked the 45th anniversary of legalized abortion in all fifty states of our country. Let's do the math? The National Right to Life Committee indicates that there have been 60,069,971 abortions since Roe vs. Wade (January 22, 1973). That means that every day in our country 3,657 abortions take place. That is 152 abortions every hour. The youth of our country may want to consider a national school walkout in recognition of this holocaust. The United States isn't the only place where the sanctity of life is disregarded. A digital counter illustrates the horrible scale of abortions around the world. During the days of January 1-11, 2018, more than 1.2 million abortions took place somewhere on our planet. The World Health Organization estimates that there are 40-50 million abortions in the world every year; i.e. about 125,000 abortions per day.

Visit www.lutheransforlife.org

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SAVE THE DATES!

* *Holy Week Worship Services!*
March 24, 29-31.

* *Easter Monday: Public Reading
of the entire New Testament!*
*April 14 — Emmanuel Choir
from Grafton, Iowa*

Emmanuel Building Fund—Larry & Deb Vomhof

At the Annual Meeting on January 27, 2018, the proposal to start a building fund was brought up. We think too much emphasis was put on what we would do with the money raised if our church should fail to grow as hoped & planned. We were both with the group that, 7 years ago, talked about a NALC Mission Church being formed in Rochester because of the ELCA 2009 decision. We believed it was very important to get an NALC church formed in Rochester and we still believe in it now. We know there have been some struggles in getting Emmanuel Lutheran Church to grow as we had planned. In the past 6 years, \$100,000+ has been given in support of our congregation from the NALC Synod, other churches, and non-members, because they believe in the importance of having an NALC congregation in Rochester, and want to support our mission to carry out the Lord's work in this community.

Pastor David & his family have invested much because they believe in the mission of Emmanuel Lutheran in Rochester. We both have gained so much for our family and extended family from Pastor David, Julie and all the members of Emmanuel. We want to see our church continue to spread the Word of Christ throughout the Rochester area. That is why we encourage every member to donate what they can to the building fund (apart from one's general giving) as we plan to do. At the end of the building campaign we can prayerfully decide what to do. Whether it is purchasing land, or buying an existing structure for worship. Having our own worship space will open many doors for numerous ministry opportunities, such as hosting events, speakers, Christian daycare, etc. With so many types of outreach possibilities, we are only limited by not moving forward.

We believe that remaining positive and asking the Lord to open doors for us is what God would want us to do.

Back Page Stories

Supermarket Saturday: The next Channel One ministry opportunity is April 21, 2017 (9 am—Noon).

Madonna Towers Ministry: Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel twice a month on Wednesdays in 2018. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, April 4 & 18 at 1:00 pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

Church Council Highlights - March 22: Members of Emmanuel continue to give generously and our

congregation continues to distribute benevolences as first fruits offerings. YTD we have already received \$444 in Thrivent Choice Dollars. Pastor is busy serving as pulpit supply and sharing the gospel with Madonna Towers and other congregations. Acolyte robes have been ordered & received. Robes will be dedicated through use in the Season of Easter. Several items are pending: organ loft camera, church musician, insurance review, & church retreat. Four Thrivent Action Team grants have already been received in 2018. We are looking at hosting a booth at the Olmsted County Fair in 2019. Watch for implementation of Dinners for 6 or 8 in the next couple of months. Building Fund Launch: Emmanuel

has received gifts of \$114,000+ from supporting congregations, the NALC, and non-members in past 6 years. Thank you notes have been received from Dorene Vomhof, the NALC Seminary, & Johanna Heidorn. We are helping a seminarian fulfill a class requirement by having Dallas Groten serve as our worship leader on April 21 & 28. Our next Council Meeting will be on Friday, April 13 at 10am.

Women's Evening Bible Study Group: "Lady Light" is looking at "Holy Christian Marriage & Family" thru the lens of Scripture & the lives of Martin Luther and his wife Katie. Women are meeting at the home of Katie Siebenaler once a month at 6:30pm (sixty minutes). Session 6: Date is pending ("Parenting").