

The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: I AM, My Beloved!”

Recognize these words? “I AM my Beloved’s and He is mine, His banner over me is love!” God delights in you; God is head over heels in love with you! Jesus is the lover of our souls. He died for our sins on Good Friday, and on the Third Day rose for our salvation. As we abide in Him & He in us, our joy becomes complete.

In a Burning Bush, The LORD revealed Himself to Moses as the Great I AM. In the Gospel of John, Jesus proclaims the TRUTH: “I, I AM! The Father and I are One!” “Before Abraham was, I AM.” Disciples are not shy about bowing before the throne of the Great I AM. We travel barefoot with unquenchable Light. We are Temples of the Holy Spirit walking on holy ground to the praise of God. We raise the Easter Banner and proudly proclaim: “Jesus IS My Beloved!”

“Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me. Died that I might live on high, Lived that I might never die. As the branch is to the vine, I am His and He is mine.”

In a Guideposts article (April 14, 2014), Michelle Medlock writes, “God Is Madly in Love with You!” I



agree! Having no tolerance for sin, God has determined to set us right with Himself thorough the sacrifice of His only Begotten Son. Michelle, then proceeds to compare God’s love to our *doting love* for our kids & pets. “**That’s exactly how God is,**” Michelle says.

“If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept ALL that he said; if he didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said?”

— Timothy Keller

Wait a minute! It may be true that our doting love is an attempt to illustrate or copy God’s steadfast love and mercy, but to say that our doting love for our kids and pets is “exactly how God is,” is most certainly overreach. We must not start with our doting love and then cast it upon God.

The problem we humans have is that we always like

to start with ourselves; our limited & finite abilities and understandings. We like to place ourselves on the throne, rather than humbly bowing before the Sovereignty of God. When it comes to love, we start with love and then move to God. We mistakenly say, “Love is God.” We reduce love to feelings, emotions, ideas, and generic labels.

So who gets to define love? Me or My Beloved (GOD). Who gets to decide what is in TRUTH loving? Is it loving for me to let my children do as they please? Do we put our definition to a vote? Does majority rule, & decide the definition and meaning of love? Making love into a self-made god is dangerous to say the least.

What exactly does St. John do in his first epistle; the subject matter for my sermon series in the Season of Easter? St. John begins with GOD. St. John begins by reminding us that love always begins with God.

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**April 2021
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“The best way to imitate Christ is through suffering. Those who are closest to Jesus on earth are those who suffer the most.”

— Mother Teresa

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MARK Your Calendars!

Easter Monday, April 5, 2021

In-Home Reading of the New Testament

7pm: Emmanuel Huddle—April 17, 2021

7pm: Congregational Meeting—Apr. 24, 2021

Disaster Preparedness & Response

WHEN? Sunday, April 25 from 1-3pm

WHERE? Holy Cross Lutheran Church—2703
9th Avenue N.W., Rochester, MN

WHO? Mary Bates, Coordinator of the NALC Disaster Response Task Force, will be speaking and answering questions on immediate disaster response, FEMA regulations, and long term care after a disaster has occurred.

The NALC would like to set up a Warehouse in each of its Mission Districts to house supplies; & wants to have a team ready to respond when a disaster takes place. Rochester is a preferred site.

QUESTIONS? Contact Larry & Deb Vomhof if you would like more information (507-251-1342; or dvomhof@gmail.com).

SEMAC Mission Work Trip—TEXAS

San Miguel Lutheran Church, an NALC Hispanic Church in Fort Worth, TX, had a foot of water in its building after pipes burst. Many members of San Miguel also suffered a lot of damage to their homes. Many were in need of help before the winter storms, and even more so now, having minimal resources & no insurance. Larry Vomhof is putting together a work trip for the last week of May; leaving May 22; coming home on Memorial Day weekend. The work will be mainly plumbing, sheet-rocking & taping. Contact Larry if you wish to serve or want more information (dvomhof@gmail.com, or #507-251-1342).

Easter Season: “Sermon Series on 1 John”

Eve of Easter, April 3: “Beloved! The 3rd. Day!”

Practicing Resurrection & Real Presence!

Easter II: “Beloved! We Confess Our Sins!”

Easter III: “Beloved! God’s Children NOW!”

Easter IV: “Beloved! In Deed & In TRUTH!”

Easter V: “Beloved! God IS LOVE!”

Easter VI: “Beloved! The Victory, Our Faith!”

Easter VII: “Beloved! The Testimony of God!”

WORSHIP FOR April 2021 — 6pm

As our Community & Country continues to monitor COVID-19, Emmanuel is adjusting our Worship Services accordingly. We will continue to exercise caution & care, compassion & faithfulness as we gather for in-person worship. We will offer the **Lord’s Supper on April 3, and May 8 & 22, 2021.**

Emmanuel will continue to offer online worship opportunities via the Emmanuel Facebook Page and the Emmanuel Church Website. Thanks for worshipping with us in person (6pm) and virtually online.

Saturday, March 27 – Eve of Palm Sunday (Passion Week): Pianist—Mary Ann Groven

April 1 – 6pm Maundy Thursday Worship (Guest Preacher: Dallas Groten)—Pianist: Karen Salz

April 2 – 12:00 Noon Good Friday Worship – No Pianist

Saturday, April 3 – Eve of Easter: Pianist—Mary Ann Groven; **Holy Communion** following worship.

Saturday, April 10 – 6pm: Easter II: Pianist: Mary Ann Groven

Saturday, April 17 – 6pm: Easter III: Pianist: Mary Ann Groven (Emmanuel Huddle at 7pm)

Saturday, April 24 – 6pm: Easter IV: Pianist—Karen Salz (Emmanuel Congregational Mtg. at 7pm)

Easter Liturgy Worship: Each week, during the 50 days of Easter, the sermon will come from the First Epistle of John. A special Easter Liturgy will be celebrated.

Thanks to Don Holtan for recording our Worship Services and to Julie Steffenson, Peg Holtan, Lee and Judy Pearce, Rich & Janet Sunde, Fred Morck, and Larry & Deb Vomhof for assisting with worship; setup, takedown and sanitization.

—Continued from page 1...

God is the source and content of love. The LORD's steadfast, rock-solid, immovable, unconditional and forever binding love is displayed (*like a banner*) on the Cross. When Jesus says, "It is finished," He isn't kidding. He certainly is not just doting on us. St. John writes, "In this IS love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." God has given us His Spirit. "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ... So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love!**"—I John 4.

We must not start with our earthly understandings of Fatherhood or love or justice or morality, and then project and impose them on to God as absolutely definitive. St. Peter made this unfortunate mistake in Mark 8. He confessed Jesus as the Christ & then assumed his own definition to be correct. When Jesus defined what it really means to be Messiah—THE CROSS, Peter blew a gasket and started to rebuke Jesus. Our Lord looked at Peter and said, "Get behind me Satan. Your thoughts are not of God, but simply human." We must always start with God & His revealed WORD for us. God's WORD, in the flesh of Jesus, proclaims to us the TRUTH! When we begin with GOD, everything falls rightly into place.

What is this TRUTH? "I am my Beloved's and He is mine. His banner (cross) over you and me is love!" God's love for us is not performance-based on our part. There is nothing we can do to make God love us more, or to make God love us less. **God is love.** Love is not god! God doesn't just dote on us or pull out his Daddy's Brag Book filled with pictures of us. God loves us, because we are His! "There is NOTHING that can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Romans 8:28-39. So bask & bathe in God's forever love for you! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! For You!

Beloved! I AM, Pastor Dave



Army Food Pantry. We've collected 289 cans of soup thus far! Thank You!

Thank You Emmanuel!

Soup to Go! Soup to Share! During the Season of Lent, members of Emmanuel have been donating soup in support of the Salvation

Easter Monday (April 5): In-Home Bible Reading

Each year, on Easter Monday, Emmanuel Lutheran publicly reads the entire N.T. (all 27 Books, New Testament) in celebration of our Lord's Resurrection. This year will be our 6th year in a row of reading the N.T. on Easter Monday. Participants are selecting a Book of the New Testament & reading it out loud (in their home) on Easter Monday. The Jewish Day begins in the evening at 6pm. That means participants can read their chosen Book of the New Testament anytime from 6pm on Easter night (April 4) through 12:00 Midnight on April 5. We've got 30+ Readers signed up so far. Thanks!

Emmanuel Huddle — April 17, 2021

Members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church will enjoy a time of conversation and information sharing on Saturday, April 17. We will have a shorter service of worship that night and begin our Huddle no later than 7pm. The Huddle will be held in the Worship Space of Oasis Church & will conclude no later than 8pm. The Implementation Team will provide an update of their work. Emmanuel Members will have an opportunity to ask questions & share feedback. No motions will be made and no actions will be taken, as this is a Huddle & not a congregational meeting. Masks will be worn & physical distancing observed.

Congregational Meeting — April 24, 2024

Notice is given that Emmanuel Lutheran Church will have a congregational meeting on Saturday, April 24 at 7pm. The purpose of the meeting will be to approve recommendations and funding for specified steps in our Phase One "Building for the Future" Plan of Action. A quorum of 35% of our members is required. Actions are by majority vote with no proxy or absentee voting permitted. An Emmanuel Huddle will be held on Apr. 17 (7pm).

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

3819 - 18th Ave. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:
253-302-9845 (Mobile)
507-206-3048 (Home)
pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATES!

Easter Monday, April 5, 2021
In-Home Reading of the New Testament

Emmanuel Annual Meeting Date:
Saturday, January 29, 2022

Happy Birthday!
Emmanuel turns 10 on Feb. 25, 2022!

Emmanuel Care Team!

Emmanuel is a congregation where members and guests are loved and cared for with the compassion of Christ. During COVID-19, members have reached out with phone calls, cards, & other acts of kindness, intentionally keeping in touch with one another. Emmanuel is a family of Care Givers! During the past few years, Judy Pearce has served as the Team Leader of the Emmanuel Care Committee. We thank Judy for her faithful leadership & service. Judy will be stepping down as Chair & concentrating on the work of the Implementation Team. **The Care Committee will be meeting on Monday, April 19 at 10am at the HyVee Barlow.** BECAUSE YOU CARE, we are inviting you to attend. Contact Judy Pearce if you have any questions.

Men's Bible Study (In-Person)

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran are currently meeting on Tuesday mornings at 8:30am via email & studying the Scripture Lessons for the upcoming weekend. Let Pastor Dave know if you would like the study notes emailed to you. We will have in-person studies during the months of April & May: **Wednesdays, April 7 & 21, and May 5 & 19 at 11am.** Location: Oasis Church Worship Space. We will physically distance & wear masks. Bring a Bible & a heart eager to hear God's Word.

Back Page Stories

Church Council Highlights March 5, 2021-Zoom Mtg.

Budget Income for the month of February was \$7,879.89; Expenses were \$15,250.74. Pastor's pension for 2021 was paid in full. Benevolences for India Transformed were paid allowing Emmanuel to double it's gift with a matching funds gift. Lenten and Easter plans were discussed. Canned soup is being collected. Scripture readers for Easter Monday are being recruited. Rev. Mark Chavez, General Secretary of the NALC has submitted his resignation & will be returning to parish ministry. Mary Bates will be in Rochester on Sunday, April 24 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church (LCMS) speaking on Disaster Response. Gary Froiland

will be with us on Sept. 25 with a Gideon presentation (freewill offering will be received). Don Wanek has resigned from the Implementation Team. Dan & Mary Jo Grimsrud have been appointed to replace him. The Church Council is working with the Implementation Team on a sign for our church land. Joel Simpson, Oasis, will offer a worship video training session to Emmanuel. Julie Engle asked about a wheelchair for Emmanuel. An Emmanuel Huddle has been set for April 17 to discuss plans for the church land. Next Council Mtg. is April 8 at 1pm.

THANKS!

Pastor Dave & Julie offer thanks to the members & many friends of Emmanuel for all of their kind thoughts, cards, fervent prayers &

acts of love during these days of living with pancreatic cancer. God loves you and so do we!

Children's Ministry

Worship Bags are available for kids each week. We hope children enjoy these resources during worship. Youth are asked to take the bags home with them. We look forward to the time when we can resume Saturday School with our little ones. Until then, we will provide take-home resources for our children. **Children's Messages** are posted weekly on our Emmanuel Website & Facebook Page.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you have Thrivent Products don't forget to designate your Choice Dollars. Go online at www.thrivent.org or call #1-800-847-4836. Thank You for supporting Emmanuel!

Acts 4:31—The Church Prayed!