

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “The Jonah Complex”

God opens doors that no one can shut. God shuts doors that no one can open. The LORD is the Door Keeper. TRUTH be told, shared and proclaimed, “Jesus IS The Door of the sheep”. The Great I AM offers these promising words: “Amen, Amen. I, I AM the door. If anyone enters by me, they will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture”—John 10:7-10. Salvation is good news, “for me.” But what about, “for others?”

John Ortberg writes, “God is the God of open doors. He opens doors all around, boundless opportunities to contribute to humanity in ways large and small, to make our lives count for eternity. Who could not want that? I could not want that” (from: All the Places to Go, page 181).

We long for open doors and yet we often resist going through them. Abraham Maslow referred to our evasion and avoidance of destiny as “the Jonah Complex.” Every time God opens a door for someone in the Bible there is a little tug-of-war. The story of Jonah is a prime example. Gregg Levoy refers to the prophet Jonah as the “patron saint of refused callings.” Bottom



line: God always wins. “His yes is louder than our no.”

Ortberg writes, “Sometimes doors are not fun. Sometimes they’re not even safe. Always they’re about something greater than our own benefit. Often they lead to Nineveh. Nineveh is the place God calls you where you do not want to go. Nineveh is trouble. Nineveh is danger. Nineveh is fear. What do you do when God says to you, ‘Go to Nineveh; go to the place you do not want to go?’ Because God will say that to you”—page 187.

“God says, ‘Go.’ Jonah says, ‘No.’ God says, ‘blow.’ Jonah says, ‘So?’ The captain says, ‘Bro.’ Jonah says, ‘Throw.’ The sailors say, ‘Whoa!’ So they tossed Jonah in and he sank very low, But God had more places for Jonah to go.”—page 197

Who/what is your Nineveh? The name Jonah means “Dove,” a metaphor for Israel. Jonah’s story is our

story. Jonah is the son of Amittai. The word Amittai means “faithfulness,” but Jonah is not exactly a great example of faithfulness. Jonah resists his God-given destiny. He is a “long-distance runner” of sorts. God commissions Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against it. According to the prophet Nahum, Nineveh was “a city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims.... Piles of dead.” So Jonah runs!

Jonah has what might be called situation avoidance. Jonah resists God’s call and boards a ship headed for Tarshish. He is running away from the presence of the LORD, which of course we all know is impossible to do. Ironically, Jonah’s fleeing actually results in the conversion of pagan sailors. God uses Jonah’s failure, to bring unsaved people to faith. The Book of Jonah is not a story about a human plan. “It is an ‘opened’ door, and we are not the openers.”

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**August 2019
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“Work becomes worship when I see that I’m fulfilling what I’m supposed to be doing.”

—John Ortberg

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Men's Bible Study: "Augustana"

The men of Emmanuel continue to meet on Tuesday mornings throughout the summer. Each week we are discussing and meditating upon the Psalm for the week. This fall, we will launch into a new study. The new study will be a 16 week course on the Augsburg Confession. In 1530, the Lutheran Reformers presented a statement of faith to the Holy Roman Emperor in the town of Augsburg, Germany. This statement of faith became known as the Augsburg Confession. This document was penned by Luther's dear friend Philip Melanchthon, and is considered to be the bedrock & summary of what it means to be Lutheran. The Augsburg Confession is a true confession of the Christian faith because Christ Himself is expressed in it. This study is an opportunity for growing deeper in one's Lutheran identity & walk of discipleship. Available for purchase: The Augsburg Confession (\$5.00) or the Book of Concord (\$35.00) - Concordia Reader's Edition. Contact Pastor Dave Steffenson if you want to purchase one of these resources.

7th Annual Mega Kid's Camp

Record enrollment—375+ kids already signed up. Dates: Monday-Thursday, July 29-August 1. Cost: \$40 per youth. Visit: www.evangelum.org.

National Night Out—August 6 (5:30-7:30pm)

This year's neighborhood celebration event will be held on Tues, August 6. The following 3 Emmanuel households are hosting an Emmanuel NNO in their neighborhoods: Gary & Julie Engle, Matt & Jenna Serr, and Pastor Dave & Julie Steffenson. Stop by one of these hosting sites and enjoy a root beer float.

Emmanuel T-Shirts & Yard Signs

Advertising Emmanuel is our God-given mission. T-Shirts that say, "Love My Church" & Yard Signs that say, "I Love Jesus" have been received and distributed. Campaign & garage sale signs may be fun, but JESUS is always #1. Thanks for promoting the good news of Jesus! We are clothed so to speak! If you would like to put up an Emmanuel Yard Sign in your front yard, give Pastor Dave a call.

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR AUGUST

Saturday, August 3 - Pentecost VIII (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: Rich Sunde and LeRoy Quam
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Saturday, August 10 - Pentecost IX (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Arne Nelson and Creig Anderson
Acolyte: **Pending**

Saturday, August 17 - Pentecost X (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Vicky Mulvihill
Ushers: Bob Mulvihill & Creig Anderson
Acolyte: Elijah Matzke

Saturday, August 24 - Pentecost XI (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce
Ushers: Larry Vomhof and Joe Vomhof
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

Saturday, August 31 - Pentecost XII (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof
Ushers: LeRoy Quam and **Pending**
Acolyte: **Pending**

PIANIST: MarJean Damerval (Bread of Life)

Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Julie Engle

PIANIST: Karen Salz (Bread of Life)
Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Julie Engle

PIANIST: Karen Salz (Bread of Life)
Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Deb Vomhof

PIANIST: MarJean Damerval (Bread of Life)
Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce
Sound: **Pending** Coffee: Julie Steffenson
Treats: Judy Pearce

PIANIST: Mary Ann Groven (LBW)
Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Margaret Quam

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down. Pastor Dave will be our worship leader and preacher each week. Greeters for the month: Don & Jean Wanek.

—Continued from page 1...

The LORD commissions a BIG FISH to swallow His chosen ambassador, Jonah. In the belly of the fish, Jonah repents and prays. The LORD hears and forgives. The LORD commands the Big Fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land. Jonah's resurrection, if you will, takes place on the "third day". In the life of Jesus, the sign of Jonah will become a foreshadowing of our Lord's resurrection...on the third day (Easter)—Matthew 12:40. The third day is an open door for you!

Jonah gets a second chance. God opens another door for Jonah. Will the repentant Jonah be faithful? He preaches a "fire-and-brimstone" sermon in Nineveh and waits for God to lower the boom. Ironically, the entire city repents and the LORD forgives them. "What is great to God—grace to Nineveh—is great evil to Jonah. Jonah pouts and sulks. Jonah screams, "I knew it!" Then he quotes the most famous confession of God's identity in the history of Israel (Exodus 34:6): "You are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, & relenting from disaster."

The LORD isn't done with Jonah's story, or our story for that matter. God appoints a leafy plant to provide shade for Jonah. God appoints a worm, a scorching east wind, and the sun to do its duty. The LORD asks Jonah a question, "Do you do well to be angry. Jonah slams the door in God's face and says, "Angry enough to die." God gets the last word. It's a question. Ortberg writes, "There's a door out there with your name on it. Right now. It's open. What will you do?"

Is the Jonah Complex a problem for you? It is for me. I don't always like the doors that God opens. Like Jonah, I resist, refuse and run. But God is faithful, even when I am not, for He cannot deny Himself. He is a Prodigal Father, and Jesus is an open door for me and for you! God's yes is louder than our no, requiring perhaps a big fish & a little vomit.

A Proclaimer of the Third Day, Pastor Dave

THE SEX BOMB: Prayers for ECC

Human sexuality continues to be an explosive issue in both our culture and our church denominations.

In MINNEAPOLIS, MN, on June 22, 2018, after intense debate, delegates to the 133rd Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), defeated a motion that would have added an agenda item that would call for forming a task force for the purpose of studying the denomination's stance on sexuality. The vote was 538 (64.56%) to 294 (35.35%). The denomination's official guiding position is, "*Faithfulness in heterosexual marriage, celibacy in singleness.*" Recently, on June 27, 2019, in Omaha, NE, the Evangelical Covenant Church voted to remove a Minneapolis church from its roster for being "out of harmony on human sexuality." Two pastors were also expelled from the ECC. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC).

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Don't forget to go call Thrivent (1-800-847-4836) or go online to designate your Choice Dollars. By phone, when prompted, say, "Thrivent Choice". They will ask for your full name and date of birth. Emmanuel has received \$1,149.00 in Choice Dollars—Year-to-Date. Thank you!

2019 Regional Conference: Lutherans for Life

Trinity Lutheran Church of Rochester is hosting this year's Lutherans for Life regional conference. The Date is Saturday, September 14. The Theme of this year's conference is: "*Did God Really Say...?*" Cost is \$50.00 per adult.

Visit lutheransforlife.org/registration

Abortions in America Since 1973: 60,942,033
Source: National Right to Life

Sixth Annual Emmanuel Potluck & Picnic

Location: the home of Larry and Deb Vomhof.

Date: Sunday, August 4. Arrive around 11:30am. We'll say our table prayer and eat at 12:00 Noon. Meats and beverages will be provided. Bring a side-dish or a dessert to share. We hope you can join us! **FYI:** Road Construction exists on U.S. #52.

Detour Directions: From Rochester, Take U.S. 52 toward Chatfield. Detour: Take I-90 East toward Wisconsin. Take (Exit 224) County Road #7 SE (i.e. MN #42 South). When County Road #7 intersects U.S. 52 take a right (north); not a left, south to Chatfield. Go past/through two road closed signs, one right at #7 and one by the Vomhof place. Watch for the Vomhof house (11530), first place on the left side of the road of U.S. 52.

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!

Emmanuel Potluck Picnic

Sunday, August 4 @ Vomhof's

Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Social

November 27 at Madonna Towers (6pm)

Byron Parade—Thanks!

Special thanks to everyone who decorated the Emmanuel float, donated cash or candy, & rode or walked in the parade.

Larry Vomhof provided the trailer and truck, and Deb Vomhof provided a grandma's lap to a tired little girl. We had LOTS of positive comments about our new Red T-Shirts and our float ("Come Grow with Us"). We gave out 1000 freezies, and LOTS of candy. In life there is nothing sweeter than Jesus! Thanks for sharing the love of Jesus!

Celebrating Christ-centered Friendship

What a friend we have in Jesus! Emmanuel Lutheran will be celebrating "Friend Day" on Saturday, October 5. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that a person lay down their life for their friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what their master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you"—John 15. Friendship is a choice.

Special plans are being made for Saturday, October 5. Don & Peg Holtan will be our worship *musicianaries* that night. Friendship Cake will be served. Members of Emmanuel are being asked to bring a special friend with them to worship that night. Friendship guests will receive a special gift. So start today, thinking about and praying for the special friend you want to bring with you to worship on October 5.

Back Page Stories

Men's Morning Bible Study: The men of Emmanuel Lutheran meet on Tuesday mornings (8am) at Oasis Church for Bible Study & fellowship. The men are currently studying the Psalms appointed for weekly worship. Join us each week for conversation and coffee!

Madonna Towers Ministry: Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel twice a month on Wednesdays in 2019. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this wonderful ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, August 14 & 21 at 1:00pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

Women's Bible Study: The Women of Emmanuel will begin a new study on the Book of Isaiah in the fall. Women will meet twice each month, on Thursdays at 1pm, in the fellowship hall of Oasis Church.

Church Council Highlights:
July 15, 2019: Church Council members have been reviewing our Governing Documents. Budget Income for June was: \$8,226.76. Expenses for the month were: \$8,871.33. \$45,000 from our general fund has been placed into a three-month interest-bearing CD. The IRS matter has been resolved. A mid-year financial audit will be done on Aug. 4, following the church picnic. Pastor Dave is busy guest-preaching on Sundays. Pastor will be in Carlyle, IL

for three days in Sept. for a continuing education class on Worship. A movie day is being planned for the youth of Emmanuel and their friends. Emmanuel T-Shirts and Yard Signs are being used for promoting our church. The Mega Kids Camp has 375+ youth registered. The Building Team is continuing to do due diligence regarding the potential purchase of land for a church site. Emmanuel will have three hosting sites for the National Night Out on August 6. A Friendship Worship Service will be on October 5. Next Council Meeting will be on Monday, August 5.

Ladies Get-Together: Thanks is offered to Julie Steffenson for hosting in her home a wonderful morning of fellowship and conversation. Those who attended had a great time.