

# THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship—Advent Waiting”

Discipleship is all about waiting. Waiting is all about service to others in the name of Jesus, the One who Comes in human flesh; the One who comes in Word and Sacramental bread and wine. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna in the Highest!

The color of Advent is Blue, which symbolizes hope. Waiting is a pregnant posture, filled with anticipation, expectation, and hope. Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hope is not possibility or wishful thinking, (perhaps, maybe). Hope is the certainty of promise rooted in the faithfulness of God.

Discipleship is all about bending the knee and bowing the heart before God. I am grateful to my wife Julie who abounds in hope and shares this hope by offering her sewing skills to the glory of God. She recently completed a new pulpit parament with beautiful shades of blue for the Advent Season. She’ll also have a new one ready for Christmas



Eve. LeRoy Quam is crafting two new candle holders and the Vomhof family is donating 2 altar candles. These gifts will be dedicated through use on Christmas Eve. Disciples practice the generosity of Jesus in thanksgiving and thanks-living.

*“Hope is the only bee that makes honey without flowers.”*

*Robert Green Ingersoll*

What are you waiting for? Some people ask the question in response to hesitancy, or a delay of game on our part. Who are you waiting for is the better question. We’re not waiting for times to get better, or luck to improve. We are waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His gifts of a new heaven and a new earth.

While it’s true that waiting can be frustrating and feel wasteful, it’s also true that waiting is a large part of our lives

(45-62 minutes a day). Rather than gritting our teeth and hating every minute of it, we have the opportunity, as we wait, to cultivate patience and spiritual productivity.

Two people in the Bible who knew how to wait well were Simeon and Anna (Luke 2). These two were devout Israelites who looked forward to the arrival of the promised Messiah. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die before he saw this Messiah. Anna was an 84-year-old prophetess who never left the temple. Both Simeon and Anna waited by worshipping God & listening to his voice.

During Advent, we look backwards, remembering the longing of the Israelites for Messiah, and we look forwards, in anticipation of Messiah Jesus’ return & the renewal of all things. Peaceful, joyful, servant waiting! Wait well my friends!

*Advent Waiting, Pastor Dave*

**December 2015  
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### Food For Thought:

*“At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God’s own love and concern.”*

*— Mother Teresa*

### **INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS**

<i>RING ANY BELLS?</i>	2
<i>“The Twelve Days”</i>	2
<i>Feast of St. Nicholas</i>	2
<i>Saturday School</i>	2
<i>ICV—A word from Jim</i>	3
<i>Concert/Cantata</i>	4
<i>An Advent Hymn</i>	4
<i>Back Page Stories “Emmanuel Huddle”</i>	4

## PRAYING FOR OUR SCHOOLS

Each month, on the 15th day of the month, we pray for an area school. During the month of December we are praying for Washington Elementary School and delivering goodies as an expression of our love & gratitude (Monday, December 14). Thanks for keeping students and their families, teachers and administrators, in your prayers! This ministry is supported by an Action Team gift from Thrivent.

## 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. The 2016 Emmanuel Discipleship Covenants are available for signing. Remember, membership at Emmanuel is an annual renewal. The best way to make disciples is by being a disciple. Thanks for getting caked in the dust of Rabbi Jesus.

## VETERANS RECOGNITION

Thanks for honoring our local veterans and helping out with the appreciation event at the Rochester VA Clinic on Monday, November 9. Our thank you was warmly received and much appreciated!

## *Celebrating Christmas & the Birth of our Savior Jesus!*

### The Feast of St. Nicholas - Saturday, December 5, 2015

**9:00 am-12:00 Noon—RSVP Required #507-206-3048**

- Learn about the real Santa
- Get a free book: The Legend of St. Nicholas
- Receive a keepsake photo with St. Nick
- Enjoy refreshments & holiday music



[www.emmanuelofrochester.org](http://www.emmanuelofrochester.org)



## RING any BELLS?

Servants of Emmanuel are having a great time ringing bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Christmas Appeal. Our goal is forty hours of bell ringing. 32+ hours have already been pledged. Compassion is a command of Christ & it is in the blood of his servants. Did you know that the Salvation Army has little overhead. In this Christ-centered ministry 82 cents of every dollar goes directly to the cause.

## SATURDAY SCHOOL

We have a special Christmas Eve Celebration planned for December 24. We will worship at 4 pm. Youth will reenact the Nativity Scene. We continue to meet each week at 5:10 p.m. in the Oasis Fellowship Hall. Recently, our youth sang in worship on "Christ the King" Saturday, under the direction of MarJean. In 2016, a special unit on the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed will be taught. Thanks for making Christian Education a priority in your family life.

## Merry Christmas!

We are thanking God for the Good News & Great Joy of sharing Jesus with our dear friends at Emmanuel Lutheran. May God grant each of you a blessed Advent & a joy-filled Christmas. God loves you and so do we! - Pastor Dave & Julie

## Twelve Days of Christmas Bell Ringing Service - Jan. 2, 2016

Emmanuel will have a special worship liturgy on Saturday night, January 2 in celebration of the Season of Christmas. Did you know that Christmas is a Season & not just a day? Did you know that the Keeping of the Twelve Days is a Tradition that began in 567 AD, the purpose of which was to allow God's people more time to reflect upon the gift of the Incarnation & to celebrate God's presence among us as Emmanuel? Bring a bell and help us ring in the New Year 2016!

## The International Church of Vilnius (ICV)

### Excerpts from a recent email

Dear Pastor Dave,

Praise the Lord! We surely enjoyed our evening with Emmanuel last summer. Emmanuel's contribution to the work of the International Church is deeply appreciated.

The work of ICV goes on week by week. Our attendance continues to grow which makes us extremely happy. From an average in the mid-twenties, it now seems to be running in the mid-thirties & several Sundays this fall have been in the mid-forties. Just a few years ago there were often only 6 to 8 present and 15 was considered a good Sunday.

We have a regular contingent of 5 or 6 or more male students from India who are a real joy for us. They are very enthusiastic and are always willing to help wherever they are needed. One of them, Daniel, has been with us for 2 years and is a real evangelist! He is always looking for new students to invite. It was Daniel's family that we visited in India in 2014.

We also are adding Lithuanians to our congregation. Although this is not our main thrust, they keep coming. We now have three mixed marriage couples who were married in our church who are quite regular, & a fourth who recently returned to Lithuania from England. Then of course there is the regular rotation of tourists week by week from all over the globe: Europe, USA, Korea, Russia, Australia, "you name it."

Our student ministry is a lively undertaking & is led by one of our council members who is with the mission Global Scholars and serves on the faculty of one of the local universities. She does an excellent job & has a social at least monthly and a regular following. Then of course there is a weekly mid-week bible study. We have now had 2 sessions of Christianity Explored for newer Christians.

Recently we hosted the British/Canadian Remembrance Day Service, marking the WWI Armistice (Veterans' Day in the USA). It is a more-or-less secular and multi-faith service, but it does give us the opportunity to fill the church with expats who would not normally darken the door. We are always hopeful that some may return, or at least remember us as the need arises at a later time. Likewise with our American Thanksgiving Dinner. Except for an opening prayer it is completely secular. Nevertheless we hope that it gives a chance to meet English speaking expats whom we might not see otherwise.

This year I have also been asked to preside at the Danish Christmas Service. In years past they flew in a pastor from Denmark, but this year they asked me. Since many of the spouses do not speak Danish, they decided a sermon in English might be more appropriate. This is really an outcome of my two years' involvement with the Danish Chamber of Commerce.

Time has been on our side. By this I mean it has taken the last two years to get sufficiently involved in the Vilnius community. We should know this from our experience back home: it takes time for pastoral ministry to become effective - often several years. It is no different here. We are just now beginning to see the fruit of the last two years' involvement. We can see clearly why the previous short term pastorates here at ICV were not so fruitful - it just takes time and there is no alternative.

Finally I want to mention our small but important commitment to *diakonia*. As you may have seen on our Facebook page, we are involved with a food kitchen that serves the very poor and homeless. We tried to get directly involved, but that did not work out so well since the ministry is entirely in the Russian language and few of our members are Russian speakers. We do however contribute money and toiletries on a regular basis. Toiletries - toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and feminine hygiene products - are always needed & are of a price and availability that most of our members - even students can manage. We also financially support two Lithuanian student ministry organizations.

Well, I hope this gives you a little better idea of what we are up to. More than anything we want to be a Gospel ministry. Worship and preaching are at the heart and center of our ministry. While many of our people are life-long Christians, others may be hearing the Good News for the first time. We want to be sure that they have a chance to hear it each and every week. In this regard I suppose you could say that every week is an Evangelistic service - although not in the traditional American style. We are both liturgical and very hospitable at the same time - a style that seems unfamiliar to many Europeans, American Evangelicals, and Romans alike.

May you be blessed in your ministry,  
Pastor Jim Wagner

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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### SAVE THE DATE!

#### Christmas With Emmanuel!

*Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord on Thursday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m. at Oasis Church. Invite your family and friends to join us for Christmas Eve Worship.*

## Advent Hymn: "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel"

This beloved Advent Hymn was written by John Mason Neale. It made its first appearance in Neale's Medieval Hymns (1851). The hymn is based on antiphons (short verses sung before and after psalms) that date back to the 9th Century. Neale was an English clergyman, humanitarian, and poet, who suffered from ill health, was kept in low-paying positions because of church politics, and died at the age of forty-eight. He was fluent in 21 languages, was a prolific writer, a faithful pastor, & left us this special gift to the Church: "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel". Advent is a time of waiting. As the ancient people of Israel waited with longing for the birth of the Messiah, we also yearn for the celebration of Christ's birth and for His return in glory at the end of all the ages.

**Plainview Community Choir:** *The Annual Christmas Cantata will be presented at the Plainview High School on Sunday evening, December 6 at 7pm. The title of this year's Cantata is: "Majesty of Heaven" by Tom Fettke. Jan Fiskum will direct the choir, and Darald Bothun will be the narrator. Contact Darald Bothun for more information.*

**BENEFIT DESSERT CONCERT:** *Oasis Church is hosting the "Joy Of Christmas" benefit dessert concert with Crossroads Chorale & JuBell-Lante on Sunday evening, December 6 at 6:30pm. Concert & Dessert are free. Donations of food and cash will support the Supermarket Saturday Ministry of Oasis Church. Reservations are required (507-289-8596).*

## 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.

**Supermarket Saturday:** The next Channel One opportunity is Dec. 19, 2015 (9 am—Noon).

**Women's Bible Studies:** We are studying famous Women in the Old Testament. Sessions 7 & 8 of the Afternoon Study will be held at Oasis Church on Wednesdays, Dec. 2 & 16 at 1pm. The Evening Study will be at Katie Siebenaler's house on Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30pm.

### Council Highlights (Nov. 11):

Current budget shortfall is: \$19,967.  
Thrivent Choice Dollars YTD: \$1708.

Thank you to the Vomhof family for underwriting the costs of the Church Picture Directory. Pastor Tim Duesenberg will be our pulpit supply on December 26. Lee Pearce was elected to serve as Emmanuel's Council President. The Discipleship Membership Covenant for 2016 was approved. Next Church Council Meeting is December 8 at 10am.

**Emmanuel Huddle:** Join us on Saturday, December 12 following worship for an Emmanuel Huddle during our fellowship time. During our Information Exchange we will discuss our Emmanuel Mission Driven Roadmap for 2016. Bring your dreams, questions and ideas to the Huddle!

**Nominating Committee:** Is God calling you to serve in leadership at

Emmanuel Lutheran? Opportunities: Church Council, Voting Delegates, Nominating Committee, or Audit Committee.

**Saint Nicholas Celebration:** Sat, December 5 (9am-12:00 noon). Learn the real story of Santa Claus, get a picture taken with St. Nick, and go home with a keepsake storybook (one per household). Supplies are limited. Reservations are required. Saturday School and Worship on Dec. 5 will celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas.

**Madonna Towers:** In 2016, Pastor Dave will be leading worship and preaching at Madonna Towers on the first Wednesday of each month. Emmanuel members are invited and encouraged to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community.

**SEMAC: February 7-20, 2016.**