
THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship—By Their Fruits”

By their fruits they shall be known. They’ll know we are Christians by our love. Perhaps. But what if the fruit tree is barren or just covered with lots of leaves. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, then it is only good for melting ice on slippery walkways. God lets nothing go to waste. Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

621 miles one way! I just arrived home from a week-long mission trip to Brookport-Unionville, Illinois. I joined hands with 14 other volunteers ages 33-74 in offering hope to a community devastated by a tornado on November 17, 2013. Four people were killed and dozens injured. A year later, recovery is still in progress.

The group I labored with is called SEMAC; an acronym for South East Minnesota Area Christians. Participants come from about ten different churches. This is truly an ecumenical offering. SEMAC has been in existence since 1998,



offering hope by offering a helping hand in the name of Jesus. These men and women, are gifted laborers, sheet-rocking, roofing, siding, plumbing, and painting. They do it all. They are an amazing group of people. I was honored to be in their midst. Each day began with prayer and devotions.

“We love others best when we love God most.”

On the way to Brookport-Unionville, a leaf-spring broke on our leader’s trailer. The good news is that our expert & gifted volunteers were able to temporarily fix the problem. The breakdown happened at a convenient location in daylight. We proceeded to our destination driving through St. Louis in darkness & rain. We prayed for safe travels and God answered our prayers. Not without

incident, but certainly with much grace.

I had an opportunity to do interior painting in two homes. The second home had heat but no lights. Have you ever tried cutting-in & painting in the dark? It’s particularly challenging when doing bathrooms and closets. Our leader had a BIG work light in his trailer. It’s amazing what a difference light makes. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. Jesus is the Light of the world. He makes all the difference!

Servants of Emmanuel wear their witness by praising, proclaiming and practicing “God with us” in daily life. Loving God means serving the neighbor. One evening, during the mission trip, three of us went to a Bible study at our hosting church. It was there that I learned about the demographics of the

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**February 2015
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Food For Thought:

“The Gospel is the real antidote to spiritual destitution: wherever we go, we are called as Christians to proclaim the liberating news that forgiveness of sins committed is possible, that God is greater than our sinfulness, that he freely loves us at all times, and that we are made for communion and eternal life. The Lord asks us to be joyous heralds of this message of mercy and hope!”

Pope Francis, *Message for Lent*

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SATURDAY SCHOOL

Youth continue to meet each Saturday at 5:10pm for Christian Education under the direction of Julie Steffenson.

During the Season of Lent (February 21 & 28, and March 7, 14, 21, & 28) youth will learn about the gift of Holy Baptism & make keepsake Baptismal Banners. We hope you can join us!

THE FORTY DAYS OF LENT

Lent. The word means lengthen. The days are growing longer; lengthening. Lent is referred to as the "springtime of the soul". Daylight Saving Time begins on March 8. Spring officially arrives on March 20. Lent: The care of the soul. Good housekeeping (repentance & fasting) is in order.

The Season of Lent begins with the Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday, February 18. Remember to bring your palm fronds from last year to worship with you on February 14. Ash Wednesday Worship will begin at 6pm, preceded by a Soup Supper (5-6pm), consisting of homemade soup and breads, compliments of Julie Steffenson.

This year's Lenten theme will be "Baptism: Water Stories". Each Wednesday during Lent, we will enjoy the revised liturgy of Holden Evening Prayer and a sermon series on Baptism, featuring favorite "Water Stories" from the Bible. Pastor Fred Morck (March 4) and Pastor Jack Miller (March 25) will be guest preachers. We hope you and your friends will join us for the journey of Lent; walking wet!

Save the Date: Emmanuel will host its first **Mother-Daughter Brunch** on Sat, May 2, 2015 (11am-2pm). Judy Pearce & friends are organizing this event. Bring that special mother or daughter in your life to this special event! The Speaker will be LeeAnn Knutson (Faith Like a Teapot Ministry). Gifts of music will be offered by the "Teapot Singers".

Emmanuel Annual Meeting Saturday, January 24, 2015 Highlights

1. 50 Discipleship Covenants have been signed for 2015.
2. Minutes from the January 25, 2014 and September 27, 2014 Congregational Meetings were approved. Written reports were approved.
3. The Emmanuel Constitution and Bylaws were tabled and referred to the Church Council. Member comments need to be submitted to Lee Pearce prior to the February Council Meeting. A special Congregational Meeting will be called in the Spring to address the Constitution and Bylaws.
4. Arne Nelson and Kari Richards were elected to 2 year council positions. Don Holtan was elected to fill out the remaining year of Kalo Lockerby's position.
5. Judy Pearce & Leitha Bothun were elected to the Nominating Committee. The Council was authorized to appoint 2 additional people.
6. The 2015 Mission Plan Budget (\$107,035.00) was approved.
7. An audit report was received. Larry Vomhof, Rich Sunde, and Darald Bothun were elected to the 2015 Audit Committee.
8. Lee Pearce was elected to serve as Emmanuel' lay-voting delegate at NALC Convocations. Julie Steffenson will serve as the alternate.
9. A motion was made to authorize the Church Council to distribute 2015 local benevolence dollars to the following three ministry partners: Supermarket Saturday, Salvation Army, and SEMAC (Larry Vomhof).
10. Thanks to Deb Vomhof for volunteering to serve as our Financial Secretary, and to Judy & Lee Perce for providing our Meal.
11. Meeting commenced at 7:45pm and adjourned at 8:45pm.

The Salvation Army 150 years old

Emmanuel Lutheran Church partners with ministries of compassion that are Christ-centered. One of our benevolence partners is the Salvation Army.

At a recent pastor's meeting, a retired Navy officer, now the Director of Sugar Creek Bible Camp (Ferryville, WI), shared this story with us: A number of years ago, during a recovery operation off the coast of California, the Salvation Army stepped in and offered counseling & food to Navy personnel charged with the difficult task of recovering bodies of the deceased. The Salvation Army gave everything away in the name of Jesus. They set up their food station and provided hot, nutritious meals—pork chops, pot roast, etc. They also sat, listened, and prayed with military guys and gals who were overwhelmed by their assigned tasks. They offered a Word from the Lord. They shared the Incarnation. As the food station was being set up on the first day, they took food orders and went to a local restaurant; all gratis of course. A pastor from Rushford Lutheran Church offered a similar testimony of praise for the holy work of the Salvation Army in the aftermath of the Rushford flood. What a difference compassion makes when Christ is present in the offering.

Another new record: \$1,213,433! This was the 124th year of the Red Kettle. In November & December of 2014, several of our Emmanuel members and friends participated in bell ringing for the Rochester Salvation Army Red Kettle—Christmas effort. Others dropped in offerings as they passed by

collection sites. Emmanuel provided a Kettle Challenge Match of \$500, and received a certificate of appreciation.

Dave Ferber, Director of Community Engagement & Development for the Rochester Salvation Army, sent Emmanuel a thank you email and gave this summary report: "The Rochester Salvation Army was entrusted with \$407,529 in annual funding through the Red Kettles in November & December. We also exceeded our campaign goal of \$1.05 million! Gifts to the Rochester Salvation Army supplied the resources necessary to serve 3,172 individuals who sought Christmas assistance from the Rochester Salvation Army. In this past season of giving 2,001 ringers endured and persevered through 6,212 hours of ringing at 34 distinct kettle locations. 271 volunteers gifted 1,037 hours to help children shop, parents provide, and to make Christmas bright. The Red Kettle/Christmas Campaign is a major source of funding for the Rochester Salvation Army, accounting for over 50% of annual operating costs. This year 17% more children (153) were able to buy gifts for their family during the Children's Shopping Trip and 2,932 individuals (1,884 children) were able to receive toys and gift vouchers during the Toy and Joy Shop. YOU helped make Christmas a reality for many who lack the resources or find themselves needing assistance. We did it all in the name of Jesus. Thank you again for your compassion and kindness. God bless you!"

Emmanuel Lutheran received a Certificate of Appreciation for our Kettle Challenge Match gift of \$500. Members also participated in bell ringing.

EMMANUEL WINTER FUN DAY!

On Sunday, February 15 from 1-3 p.m. Members & Friends of Emmanuel are invited to cross country ski at Oxbow Park at 5731 County Rd. 105 NW, Byron, MN. For those not wishing to ski, fellowship, nature walking, animal observation, games, & refreshments will be enjoyed in the large classroom/equipment room. Ski Rental Cost: \$5 for adults and children. Bring snacks & games to share with the others. Questions? Call Pastor Fred Morck or Darald & Leitha Bothun. Please join us!

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, and give generously.

THANKS is offered to LeRoy Quam who is currently building our new Baptismal Stand. Thanks to Mike & Kalo Lockerby for loaning us our temporary stand! Our baptismal bowl has been gifted to Emmanuel from Pastor Dave & Julie.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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SAVE THE DATE!

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

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community we were serving. 92% of the children attending the Brookport Elementary School are on free breakfast and lunch. The community we were serving was a VERY poor community with lots of challenges. But the churches were doing their part. Our hosting church provided us with free lodging. Another church provided our group with hot lunches each day. Our hosting church also provides 26 weekend food bags for needy school children each week. Kids were hoarding school cafeteria food because there was no food at home. Cumberland Presbyterian Church saw a need and responded. The weekend food bags contain six meals for a hungry child.

Faith without works is dead. SEMAC is making a difference, planting seeds of compassion and trusting in the LORD of the Harvest to produce the necessary fruit. 621 miles one way. Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the Life. He is the One Way. Followers of Christ are known as people of the Way. They'll know we are Christians by our love.

So keep serving, here, there and everywhere. Do it in the name of Jesus. We love others best by loving God most.

A Servant of Emmanuel, Pastor Dave Steffenson

Back Page Stories

Men's Bible Study Breakfast:

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

Super Market Saturday: The next Channel One opportunity is February 21, 2015 (9 am—Noon). Let's share the heart of Emmanuel by caring for the needs of our neighbors.

Women's Bible Study: Our next study will begin after Easter.

Council Highlights (Jan. 13):

Due to generous giving on the part of Emmanuel members and friends, we have entered 2015 in the black without having to tap our reserves. Don Holtan was appointed to temporarily fill the vacancy created by Kalo Lockerby's resignation. Don agreed

to take minutes at the Council Meeting and Annual Meeting. A gift card and thank you will be given to Kalo in appreciation of her faithful service. The Annual Report and a final draft of the Constitution and Bylaws was distributed. Lenten advertisement in the Post-Bulletin was approved for Lent. Deb Vomhof will be meeting with leadership from Olivet Lutheran (La Crosse) to discuss resources for tracking member giving. Wish List and goals/plans/ideas for 2015 was discussed. Discipleship covenants were approved. Next Mtg.—Feb. 10.

Liturgies: During Lent we will use LBW Setting II on Saturday evenings and Holden Evening Prayer (revised edition) on Wednesday evenings.

Please keep Jim & Diane Wagner (International Church of Vilnius in Lithuania) and St. Paul Lutheran Fellowship in your prayers.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING— Discipleship

Pastor Mark Schwartz and the members of South Zumbro Lutheran Church (Kasson) have invited members of Emmanuel Lutheran to join them for a Council Retreat and a Congregational Leadership Event. Rev. Mark Vander Tuig (Service Coordinator of LCMC) will be the guest speaker.

Topic: "Shifting from Membership to Discipleship"

Dates: Friday, February 6 @ 6pm—Hubble House in Mantorville for dinner & meeting; Council only. Saturday, February 7 @ 10am—South Zumbro Church for "Discipleship Workshop" (Cost: \$5). All are welcome!