

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship - “Worry-free”

“Don’t worry about it.
Fuggedaboutit! Easier
said than done!

Thus says the LORD:
*“Do not be afraid, I am
with you. I have called
you each by name. Come
and follow me, I will lead
you home. I love you and
you are mine.”*

In Isaiah 43, the Prophet
reminds captive Israel
that fear is not in her
future. Therefore fear
need not be in her present
either. I’ve been told that
the command, “FEAR
NOT” is found some 365
times in the Bible; once
for every day of the year.
Perhaps God is trying to
tell us something!

We find ourselves in the
Season of Epiphany with
Lent fast approaching. It
seems like only yesterday
that we were singing
Christmas Carols and
preparing for the Advent
of our God.

An angel told Joseph not
to fear taking Mary as his
wife, for the child
conceived within her is
from the Holy Spirit. An
Angel told Zechariah to
fear not for his prayer had
been heard. Elizabeth in
old age would give birth
to a son, John, who would
be filled with the Holy



Spirit. An Angel told
Mary to fear not, for she
had found favor with
God. She would conceive
and bear Messiah. It
would be an Immaculate
Conception; a Virgin
Birth. An Angel told
shepherds keeping watch
over their flocks by
night, “Fear Not, for I
bring you good news of a
great joy for all the
people. For to you is born
this day in the city of
David a Savior who is
Christ the Lord.”

***“When we worry in the
presence of God, we are
essentially doubting
God’s promise to be
with us & for us.”***

By the grace of God,
disciples are called to be
worry free. The word
“anxious” is related to
the Latin word *angere*,
which literally means “to
strangle or choke”.
Worry wraps its fingers
around our necks and
makes us gasp for air.
Our word “angina”—the

sharp, piercing pain that
precedes a heart attack,
also comes from this
Latin word. Anxiety can
kill you. Our word
“anger” also comes from
the root word *angere*.
Anxious people are often
angry people.

St. Paul reminds the
church in Philippi that
they need not worry.
Worry is a waste of time
and energy. Instead of
worrying we can rejoice.
The Lord is at hand!
Instead of worrying, we
can pray. “What a friend
we have in Jesus ... oh
what peace we often
forfeit ... all because we
do not carry everything
to God in prayer!”

We need not fear. The
LORD of Hosts is with
us; the God of Jacob is
our refuge. God created
us, formed us, redeemed
us, & calls us by name.
Thus says the LORD, “I
love you. You are mine.
You are precious in my
sight.” We are too price-
less to worry.

I AM worry-free, Pastor Dave

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Food For Thought:

*God’s Got This! Be
anxious for nothing!
“Cast all your
anxieties on Him for
He cares for you!”*

— I Peter 5:7

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PRAYING FOR OUR SCHOOLS

Each month, on the 15th day of the month, we pray for an area school. During the month of February we are praying for Bishop Elementary School and delivering goodies on Feb. 22 as an expression of our love & gratitude. 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—2016 Covenants

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; a reinvestment. The best way to make disciples is by being a disciple. Thanks for getting caked in the dust of Rabbi Jesus. 58 Discipleship Covenants have already been signed for 2016. The Church Council approved the signed covenants at their January 12 meeting.

Salvation Army Red Kettle update

Servants of Emmanuel had a great time ringing bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Christmas Appeal. Our goal was forty hours of bell ringing, AND WE EXCEEDED IT. Emmanuel logged in 45 hours of bell ringing and raised \$2,367.00; which is \$52.60 per hour. Yay God. Thanks for offering your time in service to Jesus, Who is our Emmanuel. Compassion is a command of Christ & Service is in the blood of His servants. We serve our Lord as we care for the needs of “the least of these” in our midst. The Salvation Army is hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Event on January 27.

Daily Devotions are now available on the NALC website. Visit: www.thenalc.org.

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

SEMAC 2016

Larry Vomhof will be taking a crew of Christ-centered servants to Brookport-Unionville, IL in 2016. Participants will be offering compassion in the name of Jesus and restoration of hope to people devastated by natural disaster. SEMAC stands for *South East Minnesota Area Christians*. The two weeks of service will be **February 7-20, 2016**. Deb Vomhof and Judy Caudill will be serving as cooks. If you would like to participate (1 or 2 weeks) in this mission trip, or support it with an offering, contact Larry or Deb for more information. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10. Perhaps you want to make this mission trip a part of your Lenten discipline and walk of Discipleship? Pastor Dave will be representing Emmanuel Lutheran & joining the group in service from Feb. 14-19.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

Julie Steffenson is teaching our children engaging Bible Stories each week; usually corresponding with our Scripture Readings for evening Worship. MarJean Damerval is leading the children in singing. During the 5 Saturdays in Lent, children will be learning about the Apostles' Creed: “I Believe”. Class continues to meet each week at 5:10 p.m. in the Oasis Fellowship Hall. A special unit on the Lord's Prayer will also be taught in 2016. Thanks for making Children & Christian Education a priority in your family life.

Madonna Towers Ministry Opportunity

In 2016, Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel on the first Wednesday of each month. Emmanuel members are invited and encouraged to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. The first Service was held on January 6. Special thanks to Sharon Matzke, Lee & Judy Pearce, & MarJean Damerval for offering your presence & your gifts at this Service. Our next Service will be on Wednesday, February 3 at 1:30pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like

LENT 2016

Emmanuel Lutheran Church is hosting a Lenten Sermon Series this year on “Faith Practices”. Discipleship is a faith practice, a spiritual discipline. The marks of discipleship are signposts on our journey with Jesus. You may be the only Bible some folks ever read. What are they reading? Are they able to hear what we’re saying, or are our actions speaking too loudly to the contrary? Each week during the Season of Lent, a faith practice will be explored. Followers of Jesus “pray daily, worship weekly, read & study Scripture, give generously, grow spiritually, share the good news, and serve others”. Worship will be held each week at the Oasis Church Building on Tuesday evenings (February 16, 23, and March 1, 8, & 15) at 6pm. Worship will be preceded by a soup supper at 5pm. Our Soup Coordinator will be Judy Pearce. Emmanuel Members will provide soup each week. Worship Services will feature our revised edition of the popular Holden Evening Prayer Service. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10 with Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes. Good News: Emmanuel received a Thrivent Action Team Grant of \$250 in support of our Lenten Fellowship.

Lee Pearce - Council President

“Our Assigned Tasks”

We all have job descriptions regardless of our current status; banker, baker, candlestick maker, preacher, parents, child, student, etc. Military job descriptions outline specific tasks that identify what is expected of every position. But, they all have one thing in common; the added caveat “*all other duties as assigned.*”

As Christians we are expected to perform “our assigned tasks.” There is precedence for individually-assigned duties beginning in Numbers 4 after the tribes of Levi had been appointed responsibility for the tabernacle (Tent of Meeting) & all the instruments of worship. 3 families had the jobs of dismantling, transporting and erecting the tabernacle time and again during the wilderness journey.

This hard, physical labor was restricted to strong men between the ages of 30-and-50 because the jobs were dangerous, involving the handling of heavy, sacred worship equipment. While the sons of Kohath

performed the labor, only Aaron and his sons, the priests, were allowed to pack and unpack the two altars, the ark, the lampstand and all the utensils. This shows that every individual member of God’s people had a vital part to play. And, so it is today!

How do we know what “our assigned tasks” are? We don’t have Moses or Aaron handing out jobs from a duty roster, or divine skywriting and an ‘inspired’ text message to let us know. We must rely on the prompting of the Holy Spirit and the development of our individually-appointed Spiritual Gifts as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12. And, sometimes we just have to do what needs to be done. Often a task is set before us that we would never consider as being within our particular ‘skill set’ or interest. But once we’ve done it, we wonder “why didn’t I do that before now?” There’s no such thing as “Not my job, man!” The Holy Spirit enables us to meet the tasks at hand.

We all have certain comfort zones and abilities, but each person has something important to contribute, whether we’re young or among the “old and gray-headed” (Ps. 71:18). There’s something vital that each of us can contribute to the kingdom of God and to the life of His church at Emmanuel. Let’s all seek to explore & develop our spiritual gifts, be open to the prodding of the Holy Spirit, and keep our eyes and hearts open for opportunities for evangelism & service, desiring to walk in His way. It’s a tremendous responsibility to sincerely ask for God’s guidance. It’s an equally overwhelming privilege to be in His service.

All of this boils down to doing “Our Assigned Tasks.”

Worship Servants for February 2016

How’s our New Year's Resolution coming? Our goal is to have worship helpers for our Saturday Evening Worship Services always in place by the end of the previous month. Can we do it? Disciples say, “YES WE CAN!”

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

1815—38th Street NW
Rochester, MN 55901
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:

253-302-9845 (Mobile)

507-206-3048 (Home)

pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATE!

EASTER With Emmanuel!

*Join us for the Season of Lent,
beginning on Ash Wednesday,
February 10, and concluding
with the Resurrection of Jesus on
the Eve of Easter, March 26.*

Year End Financial Report

Our God is an awesome God. When we began 2015 we were budgeting for a \$17,785 shortfall. We were planning on using almost \$18,000 of our Reserves. But when the 2015 came to a close, the providence of God, and the generosity of Emmanuel Members and supporters, changed our financial outlook significantly. Our net loss was only \$1,899.77. This means that we have about \$16,000 extra in our Reserves. This positions Emmanuel very well as we look at 2016 to be a strong year for us in terms of membership growth. Our Reserves will give us some extra time to grow and become self-supporting. Thank you for believing that our best years are always ahead of us! "Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son & Holy Ghost. Amen."

Annual Meeting: Change of Date

This Year's Emmanuel Lutheran Church Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2016, at 4:00pm, followed by a potluck supper. It will be family friendly. Child Care will be provided. Meat and beverages will also be provided. Please bring a dish (salad, side dish or dessert) to share. A special highlight of this year's annual meeting will be a slide show featuring pictures from 2015.

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 February 20, 2016 (9 am—Noon).

Women's Bible Studies: The Afternoon Study Group has ended its study on Fascinating Women of the Old Testament. They will resume in April and study "Fascinating Women of the New Testament". The Evening Study Group is also studying Women of the Word. They will continue to meet monthly at the home of Kati Siebenaler. Session Four will be on Thursday, February 25 at 6:30pm.

Council Highlights (Jan. 12):

We resolved a couple of very minor differences between our Treasurer's Report, our Financial Secretary's Report & the Bank Statements. A 2016 Budget of \$100,500 will be presented to the Congregation for approval at the Jan. 31 Annual Mtg. Year-end giving statements have been mailed out. Beginning in 2016, Pastor's Continuing Education days and dollars may accumulate up to six weeks and \$2,250. Three items loaned to Emmanuel are being returned to Kari Richards. Council recommends ratification of the Emmanuel Constitution and approval of the changes to the NALC Constitution. 58 Disciple-

ship Membership Covenants for 2016 were approved. A thank you card and gift is being given to Arne, our retiring Treasurer. 20 additional copies of the ReClaim Songbook are being purchased; also 60 copies of the revised ed. of Holden Evening Prayer. Next Council Mtg. date is pending.

Nominating Committee: Church Council - Lee Pearce, Don Holtan, Judy Caudill, & Katie Siebenaler have already said YES. Judy Caudill is willing to serve as our Treasurer. Lee Pearce will be our Lay Voting Delegate at Convocations; Don & Peg Holtan will be our two Alternates. Nominating Committee members are: Leitha Bothun, Jean Wanek, & Peg Holtan. Larry Vomhof has agreed to serve a 3-year term on Audit Comm.