

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: What’s Your Story?”

“Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine, Oh what a foretaste of glory divine. Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. *This is my story, this is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long*”

What’s your story? Everyone has a story. All of us tell stories about ourselves. Stories define us. To know someone well is to know their story—the experiences that have shaped them, the trials and turning points that have tested them. Radio icon, Paul Harvey was famous for his, “The Rest of the Story.” Paul Harvey ended each of his stories with these words, “And now you know the rest of the story.” His sign off at the end of each broadcast was: “This is Paul Harvey. Good Day.”

What’s your story? The question begs an answer. The question is an invitation for self-disclosure and vulnerability. The question is an opportunity to tell others about yourself. What & who has influenced you and your journey for good or for ill? How has and how does faith in God play a central role in your story? Each of us has a faith story.



That which we fear, love and trust the most is our god. What is the source and object of your faith? Truth be told, Jesus will have a place in everyone’s story. He is the Lord of all. He is the Judge of the living and the dead. St. Paul writes to the church in Philippi, “At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven & on earth & under the earth, & every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

“Other people are going to find healing in your wounds. Your greatest life messages and your most effective ministry will come out of your deepest hurts.”

— Rick Warren

Jesus was a Master Story-Teller. Rabbis love to tell stories. When asked a question, Jesus often replied with a parable; a down-to-earth story with a heavenly meaning. When

Andrew & another disciple of John the Baptizer followed Jesus, Jesus asked them, “What are you seeking?” They replied, “Rabbi where are you staying?” Jesus said, “Come and you will see.” Jesus invited seekers to enter His story; to abide with Him!

What’s your story? Take a risk and tell your story. Sharing your story is heart work. It’s not easy work, but it might be the most important thing you’ll ever do. When we tell our story we are bearing witness to the TRUTH.

As a pastor, I have the privilege of hearing and telling stories. When people bare their souls and tell me their stories, they are entrusting the song of their heart into my shepherding hands. I dare not violate that sacred trust. We all need someone we can trust with our story. As a pastor, I make it my aim to connect God’s story with the stories of those whom I serve.

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**February 2020
Newsletter
Volume 8
Issue 2**

Food For Thought:

“God is still writing your story. Quit trying to steal the pen.”

“Your story could be the key that unlocks someone else’s prison. Don’t be afraid to share it.”

TobyMac #SpeakLife

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Women's Bible Study

Women of Emmanuel will complete a Six Session study on *Martin Luther's Small Catechism* on February 13. Weekly sessions are held on Thursday afternoons at 1pm in the Oasis Church Fellowship Hall. **Remaining Dates:** January 30; and February 6 & 13.

During the season of Lent, the Women's Study will be taking a break, and resuming for a short 5 session study on *I Peter* during the Season of Easter. First Peter is a baptismal homily celebrating the promise of Easter and the hope of the resurrection. **Study Dates:** April 23, 30, May 7, 14, & 28. **Location:** To Be Determined.

"My story isn't over yet. God alone holds the pen that gets to write 'THE END'."
—HolleyGerth.com

SEMAC MISSION TRIP

This year's SEMAC mission work will take place in Dayton, Ohio from **February 9-21**. Workers, prayers, and Financial Support are welcomed! The mission team will be offering assistance to families impacted by the Memorial Day 2019 tornadoes. The mission team stay at Salem Lutheran Church (NALC), located in West Alexandria, near Dayton. Pastor Dave will be participating in this Mission Trip from Feb. 11-19. **Contact** Larry Vomhof for more information.

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, & live and give generously.

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR FEBRUARY 2020

Saturday, February 1 - Epiphany IV (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Darald Bothun & Bob Harms
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Saturday, February 8 - Epiphany V (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Jean Wanek
Ushers: Tom Vomhof & Joe Vomhof
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Saturday, February 15 - Epiphany VI (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce
Ushers: Darald Bothun & Creig Anderson
Acolyte: **PENDING (Ushers)**

Saturday, February 22 - Transfiguration (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Elise Patzke
Ushers: Jeff & Elise Patzke
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Wednesday, February 26 - Ash Wednesday (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof
Ushers: Larry Vomhof & Joe Vomhof

Saturday, February 29 - Lent I (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Darald Bothun
Ushers: Arne Nelson & Rich Sunde
Acolyte: **PENDING (Ushers)**

PIANIST: MarJean Damerval

Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Elise Patzke

PIANIST: MarJeanDamerval

Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Barb Steffenson

PIANIST: Karen Salz

Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Judy Pearce

PIANIST: MarJean Damerval

Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: **PENDING**

PIANIST: MarJean Damerval

Communion Assistant: Judy Caudill
Acolyte: **PENDING (Ushers)**

PIANIST: Mary Ann Groven

Communion Assistant: Darald Bothun
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Leitha Bothun

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down during the month. Pastor Dave will preach at all Worship Services, except February 15. Pastor Waldemar Gies will serve as pulpit supply on Feb. 15 while Pastor Dave is on the SEMAC Mission Trip. **Greeters: Pending!**

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Susie Larsen, talk show host, accomplished author and a national speaker, offers these encouraging words: “May you give God full access to your story. May you allow Him to correct & redirect; heal and deal; refine and define. May you remember that you are part of a plan that’s bigger than you are. May you trust the Lord’s work in your life so He can use you in ways beyond your wildest dreams. Lean in and trust Him. He’s got you. Walk forward with expectant faith and a listening ear today.” Our stories belong to Jesus!

During the Season of Lent this year, we will be hearing faith stories, some from the Bible and others from members and friends of Emmanuel. You may be hesitant to share your story, but perhaps you would entrust your story into my hands and allow me to share how the faith of Jesus has transformed your life and your story. Someone needs your story. Don’t be afraid to tell it. When we share our stories, we offer healing grace to others.

So what’s your story? “I am in bondage to sin and I cannot free myself. In Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. I can will the good, but I cannot do it. Wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I have been buried with Christ in a death like His so that I may be raised with Christ in a resurrection like His. I am saved by grace through faith, not because of works lest anyone should boast. In my weakness, I do not know how to pray as I ought, but the Holy Spirit intercedes for me with sighs to deep for words. In everything God works for good. Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life. I have been born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for me. By God’s power I am being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” This is my story, this is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long! God is still writing my story; & yours too!

This is Pastor Dave. Good Day.

Saturday School and G.I.F.T.

During the month of February, Julie will meet with the little ones and teach them Bible Stories. Pastor Dave will continue to lead the Adult G.I.F.T. class as they search the Scriptures and learn about “Congregational Renewal”. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

LENT at Emmanuel

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26. Bring your palm fronds from last year to worship on Saturday, Feb. 22 (Feast of Transfiguration).

We will use the Holden Evening Prayer Liturgy & enjoy homemade soup each Tuesday night at 5pm during Lent. Set up and entrance to the Oasis Building will be at 4:30pm. Worship will be at 6pm. Our Theme this year is: “Faith Stories”. Members and Friends of Emmanuel will be sharing their faith journeys & stories with us. Gary Melin and Julie Steffenson have already agreed to be being lay story-tellers. Three more volunteers are needed. Contact Pastor Dave to sign up or to receive more information. We are also looking for a Lenten SOUPervisor this year to coordinate our weekly soup suppers.

FAITH STORIES—LENT 2020

Ash Wednesday: King David’s Story (Psalm 51)

Lent I: Adam & Eve’s Story (Genesis 3)

Lent II: Nicodemus’ Story (John 3)

Lent III: Samaritan Woman’s Story (John 4)

Lent IV: Story of the Man Born Blind (John 9)

Lent V: Lazarus’ Story (John 11)

Palm Sunday: The Jesus Story (Philippians 2)

Forty Days of Lent!

Lent is a time for self-examination, repentance, fasting and spiritual cleansing. Sundays, because they commemorate the resurrection, are not counted in the 40 days. Alleluias are buried during Lent and resurrected on Easter. In the early church Lent was a special time when new converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism on Easter. Lent becomes for us an occasion of catechesis, self-denial, spending more time with Jesus and less time with the things of this world. Consider a charity you and your loved ones may want to support during Lent. Make some home-made pretzels as a reminder to pray without ceasing (designed in the form of arms crossed in prayer). Read the Book of Jonah and reflect on the “sign” of Jonah (Matthew 12:39-41). Listen to a cd of Handel’s Messiah. Blessed Lent.

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:

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507-206-3048 (Home)

pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATES!

“Easter Monday Bible Reading”

April 13 (5am-Midnight)

Gift of Grace: 10 year Anniversary

Sunday, June 7 (1-4pm)

Thrivent Choice Dollars and Action Team Grants!

Emmanuel has already received two Action Team grants for 2020: \$250.00 in support of the mission trip to Dayton, Ohio, and \$250.00 in support of our Lenten Soup Suppers. If you have Thrivent products, don't forget to designate your Choice Dollars to Emmanuel. And don't forget to apply for a Thrivent Action Team grant. Questions? Contact Julie Steffenson.

New Life Baby Shower!

One of our Emmanuel Goals for 2020 is to host a baby shower in support of young pregnant women who seek out the help New Life Family Services. Contact Pastor Dave if you would like to help spearhead this exciting ministry opportunity.

Two Huge Lies!

“Our Culture has accepted two huge lies. The first is that if you disagree with someone's lifestyle, you must fear or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don't have to compromise convictions to be compassionate.”

—Rick Warren

Martin Luther: LENT

“There is no justification without sanctification, no forgiveness without renewal of life, no real faith from which the fruits of new obedience do not grow.”

Back Page Stories

Madonna Towers Ministry:

Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel twice a month on Wednesdays in 2020. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, February 5 & 26 at 1:00pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this ministry.

Men's Morning Bible Study: The men of Emmanuel Lutheran meet on Tuesday mornings (8am) at the Oasis Church for Bible Study & fellowship. The men are currently studying the Augsburg Confession (1530). Join us each week for conversation, treats, and coffee!

Church Council Highlights:

January 10, 2020: December Income was \$19,875.05; expenses were \$7,411.07, producing a net gain for 2019 of \$8,242.42. CD's of \$45,000 (General Fund) and \$25,000 (Building Fund) will continue to be invested for 3-months at a time with Edward Jones. The Year-End Giving Statements & Stewardship Letter are ready for distribution. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. This year's theme is, "Faith Stories." Worship Pianist Schedule is set for the months of February-May. Papers for the Church Land purchase were signed on Dec. 27 at the Ohly Law Office. The Building Team is meeting with Pete Schuller and AB Systems. 60 Discipleship Covenants were approved for 2020. The Council is giving Pastor Dave a bonus in the

form of increased pension dollars in 2020. Details for the Annual Meeting were discussed. 2020 Goals were discussed & approved. The resignation of Tom Vomhof was regrettably accepted. Judy Caudill will complete Tom's second year of Council, and serve as Treasurer. The Emmanuel Vision Brochure was updated and approved. 2020 Council Officers will be elected following the Annual Meeting on Jan. 18. The February Council Meeting will take place on February 6 at 11am.

Council Meeting—January 18:

Following our Annual Meeting, the new council members met and the following officers were elected: President: Barb Steffenson; Vice-President: Deb Vomhof; Secretary: Don Holtan; & Treasurer: Judy Caudill. Installation of our 2020 Council will take place on January 25 (6pm).