

The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Tracing the Rainbow”

Do you like rainbows? They often adorn church nurseries or church preschools. What about the Irish cereal, “Lucky Charms?” They’re magically delicious. Perhaps you enjoy the Wizard of Oz, and these lyrics: “Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high; There’s a land that I’ve heard of once in a lullaby. Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue; And the dreams that you dare to dream, really do come true.”

Do you like rainbows? I do! What about a double rainbow? A double rainbow is considered a symbol of transformation and is a sign of good fortune, prosperity & luck in eastern cultures. Is there a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow? Do our dreams really come true?

In the Bible, God offers the rainbow as a sign of hope & promise. In [Genesis 6-9](#), God commissions Noah to build an Ark. *Why?* “Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth” A massive flood (deluge) destroys a wicked and corrupt creation. The



Flood becomes God’s means by which evil is judged and destroyed. The Ark becomes God’s means by which a righteous remnant is saved; namely Noah & his family.

“Grant that this child be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church.”

—from Luther’s Baptismal Prayer

The Ark was an incredible vessel, 450 feet in length, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It would serve to save both man & animals. After the Flood ended, the LORD made a solemn promise: “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

While unbelievers found judgment, Noah found favor and grace. The LORD hung up his BOW (*literally an instrument of war*) as a sign that GOD would save His people through the watery grave of His Son’s death and resurrection. Jesus, the Living Water, would become the source of God’s new Creation, and our being born again!

In [Genesis 9:15](#), God promises that when He looks upon the rainbow, that He will remember: “I will remember My covenant that is between Me and you & every living creature of all flesh.”

[Pastor Jesse A. Burns \(IA\)](#) writes, “The connection between the salvation given to the human race in the flood and the eternal salvation distributed in holy baptism cannot be overlooked. [St. Peter](#) writes, ‘God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few,
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**February 2021
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“We your people stand before you, Water-washed and Spirit-born. By your grace our lives we offer, Re-create us; God, transform!”

— “Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters”

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ANNUAL MEETING — January 30, 2021

Following an abbreviated Worship Service, we will begin our Annual Meeting around 6:55pm. Our Meeting will be short & sweet. Printed Annual Reports are available for Covenant members of Emmanuel. We will meet to celebrate the gifts & blessings of 2020, to receive reports, to approve the Mission Plan Budget & Goals for 2021, and to conduct elections. Goal: 30 minute meeting!

LENT 2021 — Real Presence

Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 17. We plan on having worship at 6pm on Feb. 17. The Imposition of Ashes and the Lord's Supper will be offered with "physical distancing care". We will not be hosting mid-week soup suppers and services as we have done in the past. Instead, Pastor Dave will be preparing & posting a mid-week message with music on our Emmanuel Face Book Page & Website. **Our Lenten Theme this year** is "*Real Presence in Unexpected Places!*" In the Season of Lent, as we walk with Jesus to the cross, we see how God reveals Himself to us continually in unexpected places & unexpected ways. Marked with the cross of Christ, God opens our eyes to behold His Real Presence, His saving grace, in the flesh of a crucified & risen Savior. We can expect the unexpected, because God is with us, in us, for us, & working through us!

WORSHIP PLANS FOR February 2021 — 6pm

As our Community & Country continues to monitor COVID-19, Emmanuel is adjusting our worship services accordingly. We will continue to exercise caution & care, compassion & faithfulness as we gather for in-person worship. We will offer the **Lord's Supper on February 17, March 13, & April 3, 2021**.

Emmanuel will continue to offer online worship opportunities via the Emmanuel Facebook Page and the Emmanuel Church Website. Thanks for worshipping with us in person (6pm) and virtually online.

Saturday, Jan. 30—Epiphany IV—Annual Meeting: Karen Salz, Worship Pianist. We will have an abbreviated worship service (45 minutes) with a short Annual Meeting following Worship at 6:55pm.

Saturday, February 6—Epiphany V: Mary Ann Groven, Worship Pianist.

Saturday, February 13—Transfiguration of our Lord (bring Palm Fronds): Mary Ann Groven, Worship Pianist.

Wednesday, January 17, 2021—Ash Wednesday: Karen Salz, Worship Pianist. **Imposition of Ashes** will take place in a safe manner, & **Holy Communion** will be served following worship.

Saturday, February 20—Lent I: Mary Ann Groven, Worship Pianist.

Saturday, February 27—Lent II: Mary Ann Groven, Worship Pianist.

Mid-Week Worship: Messages with music will be posted on our Emmanuel Face Book Page and Website each week during Lent. Our Lenten Theme this year is "*Real Presence in Unexpected Places!*"

Thanks to Don Holtan for recording our Services and to Julie Steffenson, Peg Holtan, Lee and Judy Pearce, and Larry & Deb Vomhof for assisting with worship; setup, takedown and sanitization..

Men's Bible Study (In-Person)

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran are currently meeting on Tuesday mornings at 8:30am via email & studying the Scripture Lessons for the upcoming weekend. Let Pastor Dave know if you would like the study notes emailed to you. We will have two in-person studies during the months of February and March: **Wednesdays, Feb. 10 & 24, and March 10 & 24. at 11am.** Location: Oasis Church Worship Space. We will physically distance and wear masks. Bring a Bible & a heart eager to hear God's Word.

SEMAC Mission Trip—Pensacola, FL

Larry Vomhof and his team of South Eastern Minnesota Area Christians will be serving others in the name of Jesus from **Feb. 7-19**, in partnership with Mary Bates & the NALC Disaster Response. About 40 families in the Pensacola area are in need of assistance. Work will consist of replacing sheetrock, taping, painting, some roofs and soffit damage from trees and branches, fences, & yard clean up. SEMAC has a much smaller group with COVID-19, but if anyone knows of anyone else that might want to join the Team, please let Larry know. Prayers and financial support are always welcomed.

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that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you...’ (1 Peter 3:20-21). ... This sign should remind us to give thanks to God. For as often as the rainbow appears, it preaches to the entire world with a loud voice about the wrath which once moved God to destroy the whole world. It also gives comfort, that we may have the conviction that God is kindly inclined toward us again and will never again make use of so horrible a punishment. Thus it teaches the fear of God and faith at the same time, the greatest virtues.”

The Season of Lent is fast approaching. Ash Wednesday is February 17. On the cross, the wrath of God is satisfied and the promise spoken in Genesis 3:15 is fulfilled. Jesus is the Promised Seed. In the Flood, we see the wrath of God over sin, but we also see that God is merciful and provides salvation. In the Flood Waters of Holy Baptism, sinners are brought safely into the ark of the Holy Christian Church where they receive God’s gift of salvation in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In my first call right out of seminary (1983), I inherited a deep love for Gospel hymnody. The good folks in Lake Lillian, MN introduced me to a hymn entitled, “**O Love That Will Not Let Me Go.**” The hymn is a creed for me. The lyrics include these words: “*O Joy, that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to Thee; I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be.*” Daily God invites us to cling to His Son, claim the solemn promise, and put our baptism into practice as we trace the rainbow through the rain. The promise is not vain. Morn shall tearless be! I love rainbows!

George Matheson was inspired by God (like a dayspring from on high) to write this beloved hymn on the evening of June 6, 1882. It was composed in less than 5 minutes. Each of the four stanzas begins with a key word—Love, Light, Joy & Cross—that are not only attributes of his relationship with Christ, but also names given to Christ. Love is a haven for a “weary soul” and is as deep as the “ocean.” The second stanza focuses on Light that illumines the way of the singer. Our “flickering torch” is augmented by the “sunshine’s blaze” of Christ, the Light of the world. Stanza three is one of Joy—a joy that seeks for us “through pain.” The “rainbow” is a promise of hope following the rain indicating that “morn shall tearless be.” The Cross is the theme of the concluding stanza. Through Christ’s suffering on the cross “blossoms red” are formed that lead to the birth of new life.” Though nearly blind by age 18, George Matheson became a brilliant student at Glasgow University. He never married, & his sister learned Greek, Latin & Hebrew to help him through his theological studies. She also helped with his pastoral responsibilities.

“*O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust life’s glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red, Life that shall endless be.*” In the Spirit, St. John beholds the ONE seated on the heavenly throne, Jesus, the Lamb who was slain and has begun His reign. St. John writes, “And He who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald” (Revelation 4:3). Yes, “we trace the rainbow through the rain and know the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be.”

I AM sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the Cross of Christ forever, Pastor Dave

SOHL Month—January 2021

Historically, **Sanctity of Human Life (SOHL)**

Sunday is a day that churches across the nation set aside to celebrate & recognize the value of all human life. Emmanuel celebrated **SOHL** by providing compassion & Christ-centered support to women, their unborn children & families, in need life-affirming hope, help, & care. Emmanuel hosted both a Sanctity of Human Life Worship Service and a Virtual Baby Shower on the weekend of January 16-17. More than \$1,000 in baby shower gifts were delivered to New Life Family Services in Rochester, MN.

Thank You from New Life Family Services

“Thank you for Emmanuel’s generous gift of all the diapers, wipes, clothes, equipment and books to bless our clients with. We are truly grateful for your generosity & are so thankful that you continue to support our mission and ministry in many impactful ways. Even in the midst of a difficult 2020, God worked in beautiful ways. We would love to share the pictures of the gifts on our Facebook page and tag your church. Would you be okay with that? We are praying for your church!”

Thankful for your generous partnership!
In Gratitude, Madeline Maas

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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SAVE THE DATES!

Saturday, January 30, 2021
Annual Meeting at 6:55pm

Easter Monday, April 5, 2021
Virtual Reading of the New Testament

Looking Ahead! Plans for LENT

- Saturday, February 13, 2021—Feast of Transfiguration (Bring Palm Fronds from last year)
- Ash Wednesday: February 17 at 6pm. Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion.
- Lenten Theme: “Real Presence in Unexpected Places”
Midweek devotional services & messages will be posted on our Emmanuel Facebook page and Website.

Children’s Ministry

Worship Bags are available for kids each week. We hope children enjoy these resources during worship. Youth are asked to take the bags home with them. We look forward to the time when we can resume in-person Saturday School with our little ones. Until then, we will provide resources for our children and Pastor Dave will continue to post **Children’s Messages** on our Emmanuel Website and Facebook Page.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you have Thrivent Products don’t forget to designate your Choice Dollars. Go online at www.thrivent.org or call #1-800-847-4836. Emmanuel has received \$2,304.00 in Thrivent Choice Dollars in 2020. Thank You!

Building for the Future “Implementation Team” - Next Meetings: Sundays, January 31 and February 28 @ Oasis Church (5pm).

Back Page Stories

Church Council Highlights Jan. 8, 2021-Zoom Mtg.

Budget Income for the month of November was \$19,700; Expenses were \$9,066. The Payroll Protection Plan allowed our church to end the year with a surplus. Emmanuel also received a year-end gift of \$3,200 from Rushford Lutheran, and a gift of \$500 from Norway Lutheran Church (St. Olaf, IA) in support of God’s mission in Rochester. Plans are in place for the celebration of (SOHL) the Sanctity Of Human Life on the weekend of Jan. 16-17 (Worship and a Virtual Baby Shower). Pastor Dave shared plans for Lent this year. Sixty Discipleship Covenants (52 adults; 8 youth) were approved for Emmanuel

membership in 2021. A mission plan budget of \$117,800 for 2021 will be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting (Jan. 30 @ 6:55pm). Goals for 2021 were discussed & approved. Goals will be presented at the Annual Meeting. Pastor Dave and Deb will send out year-end giving statements with a Stewardship Letter by Jan. 31. The Council’s next meeting will be held on Wed, Feb. 3, 2021 @ 1pm.

SOLA Zoom Lent Bible Study “Why Did Jesus Have to Die?”

Led by Rev. Steve King. 6 Mondays: Feb 22, Mar 1, 8, 15, 22, & Mar 29 at 6pm. This six-week Bible study examines the most profound event of salvation history, the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, by exploring from a biblical perspective what is known as the Doctrine of the

Atonement. Visit the SOLA website or contact Pastor Dave for more INFO.

Madonna Towers Ministry

Our bi-monthly worship services in the Skilled Care Chapel of Madonna Towers is currently suspended until further notice due to COVID-19.

THANKS!

Pastor Dave & Julie offer thanks to the members & many friends of Emmanuel for all of their kind thoughts, cards, fervent prayers & acts of love during these days of living with pancreatic cancer. God loves you and so do we!

Acts 4:31—The Church Prayed!

“And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, & they were all filled with the Holy Spirit & continued to speak the Word of God with boldness.”