

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “A Real Godsend”

A Godsend is more than just good fortune or random luck. Discipleship is a real Godsend. It is a gift from God that keeps on giving. I remember the first time I laid my eyes on my bride to be. It was in the Science Building, on the last day of my freshman year at college. I didn’t thank my lucky stars that I had met the love of my life. I knew that God had brought a blessing into my life. My wife was and is a Godsend.

People often times refer to a particular gift or happening in life as a Godsend. What exactly do we mean by a Godsend? I suspect that we mean, “a benefit, blessing, boon, or benediction”. An unexpected or unplanned event or thing, turns out to be exactly what the doctor, the Great Physician—Jesus, ordered. A Godsend is a providential gift from God.

Christmas is a Godsend. “For God so loved the World that He gave His one and only Son to be the Savior of all people. God didn’t send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” To send is to deliver. God is the Sender and God is the Deliverer. God’s gift



of salvation required more than a “forever” postage stamp. God’s sending, which is priceless and eternal, required the sacrifice of God’s only begotten Son. The Godsend we receive at Christmas and throughout the year is the Incarnation.

“A faithful and good servant is a real Godsend, but truly, ’tis a rare bird in the land.”

—Martin Luther

Recently, my wife informed me that we had received 4 packages in the mail on a single day. “One of the packages,” she said, “Was in a manila envelope. You’ll never guess what was in it.” “Probably not,” I replied. Instead of playing 20 Questions, I asked, “So what was in the package?” I discovered that the envelope didn’t have a return address. Inside the envelope was 10 envelopes

with \$50.00 in each one, along with the printed text from John 3:16. The instructions were simple: “Share the Good News of Emmanuel. Give the cash to one or more people who are in need. No restrictions. Merry Christmas.”

Discipleship is a Godsend. God flips the switch and turns on the LIGHT, so that we can see, and then flip the switch and turn on the LIGHT for others. Jesus is the Light of the World for those who walk in darkness; for those who live in the land of deep darkness.

Some former parishioners of mine, Bob & Jan, owned a Furniture Store. Before I arrived in town, they had prayed that God would help them sell their store so that they could move to another town. God did not send a buyer their way. They were upset & angry with God. Years later, they confessed that “Not selling the business, & not moving was In Truth a Godsend!”

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**January 2019
Newsletter
Volume 7
Issue 1**

Food For Thought:

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.”

—I John 4:9

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TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Bell Ringing Service - January 5, 2019

Emmanuel will have a special worship liturgy on Saturday night, January 5, 2019 in celebration of the Season of Christmas. Did you know that Christmas is a Church Season & not just a one day holiday? Did you know that the **Keeping of the 12 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 and to celebrate God's presence among us as Emmanuel? Bring a bell and help us celebrate the birth of Christ, & ring in the New Year 2019!

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.

City Prayer Gathering

Sunday, January 6 (6:00-7:30pm) in the Fellowship Hall of Calvary Evangelical Free Church!

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR JANUARY

Saturday, January 5 - Eve of Epiphany (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: Darald Bothun & Rich Sunde
Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler

Saturday, January 12 - Baptism of Our Lord (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Vicky Mulvihill
Ushers: Larry Vonmhof & Brock Edwards
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

Saturday, January 19 - Epiphany II (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers:
Ushers: LeRoy Quam & Matt Serr & girls
Acolyte: Addison Siebenaler

Saturday, January 26 - Epiphany III (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Darald Bothun
Ushers: Creig Anderson & Bob Harms
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

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. Our Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday, January 26 at 3:30pm; followed by a potluck supper at 4:45pm and worship at 6pm.

Year-End Gifts & Offerings

Members wishing to give a year-end contribution to the 2018 Emmanuel Budget, or a Designated Gift, will need to do so by Saturday, December 29. Thanks for your attention to this matter.

2019 DISCIPLESHIP COVENANTS

Membership at Emmanuel is an annual renewal. 64 Covenants were signed in 2018. Presently, we have 44 signed covenants for 2019. Thanks for walking the walk with Jesus, & making Emmanuel your church home. Covenant Deadline: January 9, 2019.

EMMANUEL ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE the DATE! Saturday, January 26!

Meeting at 3:30pm—Oasis Church

Potluck Supper at 4:45pm

Worship at 6pm

Covenant members of Emmanuel will meet to celebrate the gifts & blessings of 2018, to receive reports, to approve the mission plan budget for 2019, and to conduct elections.

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Hindsight is always 20/20. Looking back, God allows us to see what Joseph and Mary saw: “The Virgin Birth and the Immaculate Conception were a Godsend.” In the Gospel of John, Jesus is the SENT ONE, revealed by the ONE who sent Him as the “Light and Life” of all people. Jesus is also the SENDING ONE. In John 20, Jesus breathes on His Disciples and commissions them: “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. If you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Jesus is a Godsend and so is discipleship. The SENDER sends us to bring Life and Light to all People. “And you shall call His name JESUS, for He will Save God’s people from their sins.” Life is full of daily Godsend. The Greatest Godsend of all is Jesus! Disciples get, & distribute, the Godsend!

Recently, I read in the news that a woman who accidentally flushed her wedding ring down the toilet ten years ago, got it back. What a Godsend. What a Christmas Miracle. An eleven year old girl in Texas had an inoperable brain tumor. The doctors gave her 3-6 months to live. Loved ones prayed in the name of Jesus for a miracle. A recent MRI shows that the tumor is completely gone. The doctors are bewildered. The parents call it a Godsend, a Christmas Miracle.

As we enter the New Year 2019, may the LORD grant us vision & grace to see the days ahead as a Godsend.

Sent and Sending, Pastor Dave

Merry Christmas in the Name of Jesus!

SEMAM MISSION TRIP

This year’s SEMAM mission work will be done in Wilmington, N.C. from **February 10-22**. Workers and Financial Support are welcomed! An Organization Meeting will be held on January 4 (7pm) at the home of Larry and Deb Vomhof. Contact Larry Vomhof for more information.

CHRISTMAS THANKS!

Celebrating the 12 Days of Christmas and giving thanks to God for the GIFT of Jesus. Thanks also to everyone who offered their time and talents during the Holy Days of Advent & Christmas. God has blessed us richly at Emmanuel with generous members & active disciples. Thanks to the youth who presented the Christmas Nativity Story on December 22. Thanks to Julie Engle for assembling the Goodie Bags for the Kids. Thanks to Ava Siebenaler & Jean Wanek for coordinating the fund raiser for the Dorothy Day Hospitality House. \$374.00 was received in the special offering, plus \$331.39 in Costco products. Thanks to Judy Pearce & her Team for delivering cookies to the area healthcare hospitality houses.

Pastor Dave and Julie wish to thank the members of Emmanuel Lutheran for the many gifts received this Christmas. The greeting cards, kind words, gift cards, and presents are a treasured expression of the love Emmanuel shares with their pastor and his wife as they labor together in service to Christ.

THANKS!

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

Women of Emmanuel and their friends will enjoy a **Five Session Bible Study on Solomon and his “Song of Songs”**. Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, is known for his wisdom and his many wives. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. He was an excellent builder. He spent 7 years building the Jerusalem Temple and 13 years building his palace. He expanded the territory of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River; and from Dan to Beersheba. His treaties and harem of wives brought pagan influences into the Kingdom. His exploits produced high taxes and slave labor. Eventually, after his death, the United Kingdom divided into North (Israel) and South (Judah).

A participant in our recent study on the Psalms asked, “Do you think Solomon was really happy?” We know that two of the Psalms in the Psalter are attributed to Solomon: 72 and 127. However, we are told in 1 Kings 4:29-34 that Solomon wrote 1,005 songs and 3000 Proverbs. According to Christian and Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote his SONG early in his reign, PROVERBS toward the middle of his reign, and ECCLESIASTES at the end of his reign. The Song of Solomon is the opposite of Ecclesiastes; it is an upbeat love song between a man & a maiden (Christ & the Church).

Study Dates: Thursdays at 1pm (Oasis Church)

January 10, 24 & 31; February 7 & 28

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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SAVE THE DATES!

“Annual Meeting”

Saturday, January 26 at 3:30pm
Potluck at 4:45pm

“Baptism of Bodhi Allen Konop”

Saturday, February 9, 2019

Saturday School and G.I.F.T.

During the month of January, Julie will meet with the little ones for Bible Stories, Pastor Dave will finish up the class on THE LAST BATTLE by C.S. Lewis, and the adults will meet weekly to discuss current events and how the happenings around us impact our faith and our walk with Jesus. In the months of February-April, G.I.F.T. will look at “Aging Well in our Walk with Jesus”. Topics such as Funeral Planning, Living Wills, Advance Directives, Financial Planning, Down-sizing, etc. will be discussed.

Nominating Committee

Is God calling you to serve in leadership at Emmanuel? Opportunities: Church Council, Audit Committee, Voting Delegates, or Nominating Committee. Thanks to Tom Vomhof who will serve on Council as our Church Treasurer. Judy Caudill has agreed to complete Tom’s remaining time on the Audit Committee. Deb Vomhof has also agreed to serve another 2-year Council Term. We still need someone to serve a 1-year Council Term. Also, 2 voting delegates, one of whom will travel to Indianapolis for the NALC Convocation (August 7-9, 2019) & the election of a new NALC Bishop. We need one new member on the Audit Committee, and four people to serve on the Nominating Committee. Nominations will also be received from the floor of our Annual Meeting (Saturday, January 26, 2019 at 3:30pm.).

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 2018. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, January 9 & 23 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 Oasis Church for Bible Study & fellowship. The men are currently studying the Psalms appointed for weekly worship. Join us each week for conversation and coffee!

Church Council Highlights:

December 6, 2018: Income for November was \$9,459. Expenses were \$8,621. We’re hoping for a good December offering and a strong year-end 2018. We received \$1,284 in Thrivent Choice dollars in 2018, plus 13 Thrivent Action Team grants of \$250 each. Pastor & Emmanuel will continue to host bi-monthly worship services at Madonna Towers in 2019. During the first four months of 2019 we will utilize the gifts of five different worship pianists. Pastor Gies will serve as pulpit supply while Pastor Dave is on vacation (Dec. 29). Pastor’s Designated Housing of \$20,000 for 2019 was approved. Deb Vomhof will serve as a Council Member again in 2019. We still need at least one member to serve a one-

year term. The Site Assessment Team met on December 2 and will meet again on January 13. The Council Members will enjoy a Meal at the home of Lee and Judy Pearce (Dec. 9). Mission Plan Budget for 2019 is almost completed. Next Meeting will be on January 10 at 10am (Approval of 2019 Budget and 2019 Discipleship Covenants).

Congratulations: We are offering thanks to God for the birth of Bodhi Allen Konop, born to Joe & Amber on Saturday, December 8, 2018. Bodhi is welcomed into the Konop Household by big brothers Marek & Eddie.

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