

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship—It’s our Duty”

When you hear the word DUTY, what comes to mind? Is duty a drudgery or a delight for you; an obligation or an opportunity for you? Disciples are duty-bound to Jesus.

Women of Emmanuel are currently studying the Book of Ephesians. Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus is an “operator’s manual” for all the saints. We were “Dead Men & Women Walking” - on death row without a prayer, if you will. But God made us alive, together with Christ. By GRACE we have been saved.

Paul begins his epistle with three chapters on the topic of Doctrine and then moves to three chapters on the topic of Duty. Paul transitions from words about correct belief to words about correct behavior. “In Christ”—baptized into our Lord’s death & resurrection—we keep company with Jesus and we practice resurrection in daily life.

Paul reminds the Christians in Ephesus that if



one is IN CHRIST then one must also be IN CHURCH. Grace is the source of our boast, the content of our praise, and the fuel of our good works. Grace and good works are inseparable.

“We ARE God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
—Ephesians 2:10

God has given us a new way of walking. It is a Discipleship gait. “We are one in the Spirit...and they’ll know we are Christians by our love.” We are called to walk in unity, purity, harmony, and victory. Why would anyone choose to walk in sin and keep company with Satan

when they can walk in righteousness and keep company with Jesus?

Paul is captive to Christ. He begs the Church to walk in a manner worthy of its calling; to grow up into the full maturity of Christ; to put off the old self and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness & holiness. This is what baptism means for daily living. Discipleship is our duty, delight, & labor of love!

We walk in grace, by grace. We walk in love. We walk as children of light. We walk with wisdom from above. We walk as the bride of Christ, dressed in the full armor of God. We walk with prayer, power and peace. In the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit, we walk well.

In Christ, Pastor Dave

**June 2015
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“You can safely assume you’ve created God in your image when it turns out that God hates all the same people as you do.”

—Anne Lamott

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EMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING—May 30, 2015

As the June Newsletter goes to print, we are awaiting the results of our May 30 Congregational Meeting. The Church Council has spent several months prayerfully reviewing the proposed changes to our Constitution and the newly created Bylaws. Regardless of the outcome on May 30, it is important for us to remember three things: 1) We have an adopted Constitution from August 11, 2012; 2) The proposed changes and additions are an attempt to review and improve upon our original document—only time will tell; and 3) In the words of Bishop Brodosky, “Our primary governing document is Jesus Christ, His Word and Sacraments, Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Constitutions, Bylaws, and Roberts Rules of Order are intended to serve the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not replace it.” As a mission congregation we will continue to trust God to guide us and keep us in His Word. Thanks for attending the May 30 Meeting and prayerfully reading the Revised Constitution and Bylaws. (UPDATE: The revised Constitution & Bylaws were approved by a vote of 26 to 2.)

PRAYING FOR OUR SCHOOLS

Each month on the 15th day of the month we pray for an area school. During the month of June we are praying for Elton Hills Elementary School, its students, families, teachers and staff. Treats will be delivered to Elton Hills Elementary School on June 3. During the month of July, when all schools are in summer recess, we will pray for all area schools.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

It's amazing how much our little ones and big ones have learned this past year in Saturday School. Our first year of Saturday School was a tremendous success. Special thanks to Julie Steffenson, who devoted many hours to the spiritual and educational care of our children. Saturday School ended on May 30 with an ice cream

party and a Bible challenge between kids and parents. (UPDATE: the Kids won decisively.) Rally Day is tentatively set for September 19.

CHRISTMAS WITH EMMANUEL

Its official! December may seem like a long ways off, but time flies when you're having Gospel Fun. As you begin to make your family plans for Christmas 2015, please note that Emmanuel Lutheran will be having Christmas Eve Worship at 4:00 p.m. at the Oasis Church. Oasis will be worshipping at 6:00 p.m.

One of our goals for 2015 is to have at least 100 people in worship on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus. **Christmas with Emmanuel!** Our big goal is 200 people in Worship. All things are possible with God. Now is the time to share good news with family & friends, neighbors and co-workers. Invite your loved ones to join you for Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship as we sing carols & celebrate the Incarnation in Word and Sacrament. Imagine a packed house singing praises to Emmanuel - God with us!

SUMMER HAPPENINGS

Several summer events are in the works. We'll keep you posted as tentative plans become actual happenings. Details forthcoming!

Saturday, June 27 at 6pm—Mission Festival Worship with guest missionaries, Rev. Jim & Diane Wagner (International Church Vilnius).

Saturday, July 4 at 6pm—Patriotic Worship

Friday, Aug. 21 at 7pm—Mark Smeby Concert

Saturday, August 22—Oasis, Emmanuel and Iglesia potluck picnic at Oasis Church.

Sunday, August 23—Emmanuel Picnic at the home of Larry & Deb Vomhof.

Saturday, August 29 at 6pm—Bible Saturday, celebrating the gift of God's Word.

Creating a Church Picture Directory!

Lutheran Core: “Who Is the Fundamentalist?” - by Pastor Steven K. Gjerde

“So I have a question for you,” my mother said during one of our Sunday afternoon phone calls. “You know Guy and Marlene?”

Oh—yes, I know them. Guy was my high school chemistry teacher. He and his wife go on little day trips with my parents. It’s sort of nice, and sort of weird.

“Hm. Mm-hm,” I said.

“Well, they’ve been meeting with some Jehovah’s Witnesses, and they want to know: does the Bible actually say that God is the Holy Trinity? Where does it say that?”

Right: where does it say that?

No one listening to rank denial of the triune Lord can shut it down with a verse. It’s not there—and if you’ve ever found yourself engaged in any kind of apologetics in the last several years, you know what that absence means: your argument is immediately held in suspicion.

Does it ever say anywhere that we have to go to worship? Does Jesus say anything about homosexuality? Does the New Testament say we have to give money to the church? Does Paul say anything about the virgin birth? Does the Bible ever say Jesus is male after he rose from the dead? And on it goes. If your response to any of these questions begins with, “Well, no,” you can see it in your listener’s eyes: your position’s already got one foot in the grave. Why?

You know why: proof-texting and

fundamentalism have more supporters than anybody ever realized, and not only among “conservatives”. I do believe it was revisionists who first pointed out how many times the Bible speaks on homosexuality (the famous “seven verses”), and it was a bishop defending the 2009 decisions of the ELCA who first said to me, “I don’t believe Jesus died for any sin related to homosexuality, because he never mentions it.” There you go: if Jesus didn’t specifically mention a sin between His baptism and His death, He didn’t die for it! How frightening to contemplate an atonement so limited. Yet how commonly people will count the number of times Jesus mentions something in the gospels and use that number to determine its relative weight in the Christian faith. Hmm...do you suppose that’s why some Lutherans only celebrated Holy Communion 4 times a year?

The better course is surely what my first church history professor, Gottfried Krodel, taught me at Valparaiso University regarding the development of *homousios*. As I recall him putting it: “The bishops at Nicaea didn’t sit about in long robes, scratching their chins and casting about, grabbing theological formulae out of a verse here and a verse there. Their confession of the Holy Trinity grew from their whole reading of the Scriptures”—a point stressed by many other theologians, as well. Nothing in our faith or life, from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to the practice of weekly worship, hangs on but one verse, but on all

the prophets and apostles as the word given to them continues to be heard in the Church.

So what did I pass on to my parents’ friends? I gave them some of the easier things to remember: the fact that our Lord commands baptism in the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, and not in their names; the places where Jesus receives the worship due to God alone; the fact that He preached “the kingdom of God,” but received in mercy the robber who called it “your [Jesus’] kingdom”; the confession of St. Paul in Philippians that Jesus bears the name of the Lord as His own. Happily, the friends stayed in their triune-teaching church. It is not always so.

But the real lesson of their question, and all its variations across today’s theological debates, stayed with me. Most of the disagreements we now face in the church involve more than differing interpretations over a few handfuls of Scripture. They involve radically different ways of reading Scripture, and sometimes, a lack of patience to read it deeply. Just what is the connection between the Old and New Testaments? Wherein lies the unity of Scripture? If you answer “Christ” to that question, why do you? Christians have worked their way through questions of law and gospel for centuries: why did they come to such different ethical conclusions from those of today’s revisionists? Was it simply culture, or was there a

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SAVE THE DATE!

Christmas With Emmanuel!

Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord on Thursday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m. at Oasis Church. Invite your family and friends to join us for Christmas Eve Worship.

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hermeneutic at work that today's Christians have rarely heard? Whenever you engage debate on issues of the day, these questions usually hang in the background, unattended.

Bring the questions out. Citing verses is fine—what's wrong with proof-texting if the text proves something?—but equally, if not more, important is leading our interlocutors to a different relationship with Scripture, shifting our conversations from snippy “gotcha” moments to a lifetime of being changed by God's Word. Interrupt the debate, and bring out what's behind it: “Wait a minute—may I ask: if you don't see any of the laws given to Moses as being effective today, why do we still teach the Ten Commandments?” “So, please help me understand: do you believe that, for something to be true, there must be a specific verse citing it? Would you have the time for me to show you a larger argument, drawn from all of Scripture?” “Do you think it's possible that, if Jesus doesn't mention something, it's because He doesn't commend it, and not that He doesn't care about it?”

It makes for a longer conversation (or sometimes, a very brief one!). But it's where the conversation must go. Traditional and confessing Lutherans have many concerns, but at the core of all of them, from the lordship of Jesus Christ to the priesthood of believers, stands this question of the God's Word, and how we read it.

Wish List ... NEEDED: 20 ReClaim Hymnals

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.

Super Market Saturday: The next Channel One opportunity is June 20, 2015 (9 am—Noon).

Women's Bible Study: Studying Ephesians for six sessions (1:00 p.m.). Dates: June 10 & 24.

Council Highlights (May 12): An Ushers Brochure has been completed. Pastor Dave and Lee Pearce are registered for the NALC Convocation scheduled for August 12-14 in Dallas, TX. \$33.00 in Thrivent Choice Dollars was received bringing our year to

date total to \$939.00. Thanks is offered to all who designate their Choice Dollars to Emmanuel. Final preparations for the May 30 Congregational Meeting have been made, along with a motion to approve the Constitutional revisions and Bylaws. A Church safe has been purchased and a new hymnal cart is being ordered. Emmanuel church storage spaces are being redesigned. The next Council Meeting: June 16 @ 10am.

THANKS: Rich and Janet Sunde have provided a financial gift for the purchase of our new hymnal cart. Oasis is giving Emmanuel 2 candle-lighters. New shelving is being secured. Margaret & LeRoy Quam, and Marcia & Bob Harms wish to thank the members of Emmanuel for their prayers and acts of kindness.

SATURDAY SCHOOL: Ends on May 30. Rally Day is tentatively set for Saturday, September 19.

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, & give generously.

Sympathies: Prayers of comfort and peace to Marcia and Bob Harms. Marcia's mon (Babe) died recently, just five days short of her 102 birthday. Thanks be to God for the promise of Easter.

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