

# The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Don’t Waste It!”

“Waste not, want not.” God created us for good stewardship. Some people turn the faucet on and let the water run while brushing their teeth. Some people turn the lights on and forget to shut them off when they leave the room. Some people waste money, or time or life itself. Waste management can be a problem for individuals and municipalities. I am a firm believer that God wastes nothing, and that God wants us to be good stewards of His good gifts in daily life.

When Jesus was being prepared for his “lifting up,” He received a costly anointing by Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Judas offered his 2 cents worth: “Why the waste? This nard could have been sold for 300 denarii (one year’s salary) and the money given to the poor.” What is seen as a waste in the eyes of one, is seen by another as an offering of love. Jesus knew the heart of Judas. Judas cared nothing for the poor. What a waste of a good life!

God wastes nothing. Our Good Lord breathes life into us and invites us to bear fruit for His glory with every breath we take. We know that in everything



God works for good with those who love Him and are called according to His holy purposes. We cast all our cares on God, because God cares for us. God’s care is beyond comprehension and beyond measure. St. Paul reminds us that “He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will most certainly give us all good things with Him. Our good God is a provider, a preserver, and a protector.

*“All good gifts around us, Are sent from heav’n above; Then thank the Lord, oh, thank the Lord, For all His love.”*  
—Matthias Claudius

As I live with cancer and undergo Chemo, I am daily reminded and determined to make the most of every second God gives me. I’m not trying to outrun death, nor am I trying to squeeze every second out of every day in a frenzied manner. Instead, I am trying, by the grace of God to recapture

the gift and meaning of life. None of us is here by accident. Our lives are planned by God. So if we are here by Divine purpose, then we might as well live by & for Divine purpose.

I’m keeping company with the psalms during my walk with cancer. David writes, “The evil ones scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life, but I trust in you O LORD; I say ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hand; rescue me!”

God didn’t create us to simply watch us waste away. God didn’t save us so that our lives could be a “vanity of vanities,” and a mere unraveling of tissue as we meander toward our finitude. God creates, redeems, and sanctifies us, so that we might sing His praises and serve His holy purposes. St. Peter reminds us that we are a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God’s own treasured possession.”

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June 2020  
Newsletter  
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### *Food For Thought:*

*“He is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”*

*“All heroes are shadows of Christ.”*

—John Piper

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## Emmanuel Church Happenings!

*“We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered, by God’s Almighty hand.”* God’s land is taking shape. DeCook Excavating gave us a sweet deal and removed lots of brush and trees for a very low price. Praise God! Larry Vomhof & Don Holtan assembled a team of “socially distancing” volunteers (yes, you can do that on 5 acres of land), and the land is getting groomed/prepared to be the site of God’s church for the praise and glory of His Holy Name! Thanks is offered to all who carry the hope of God and dream of what is yet to be for our Lord’s beloved Emmanuel.

Vern and Bridget Westbrook, donated to Emmanuel a baby grand piano. They are storing it at their home during COVID-19, but we will need to have a permanent home for our piano no later than September 1. Emmanuel has the piano insured. If you know of a home for our piano, please contact our church office at 507-206-3048 or send an email to one of our council members.

What’s next? We are hoping to have a  **blessing of the land service** very soon. The Service will be short, about 15 minutes in length. The date is pending, but we are hoping for a Sunday in July. Participants will need to bring lawn chairs and practice social distancing. If you haven’t heard, friends from Little Falls, MN (Brad and Peg Bellamy), are engraving a birth stone for our land. The date on the stone will be the day Emmanuel purchased the church land (Dec. 27,



## Tentative WORSHIP PLANS FOR June 2020

A word of thanks! Emmanuel is grateful for the faithful witness and efforts of our worship team who have kept worship going virtually during the time of “sheltering in place.” Hundreds of people across the United States have joined Emmanuel for worship in the past few months. Thanks is extended to Julie, Don, Mary Ann, Karen, MarJean, Sandra and Adam. Liturgy throughout the summer will be the **Lutheran Book of Worship**. We will gradually introduce “in-person” worship while continuing to offer virtual worship to our members and friends. All that we do will be done with caution and care, compassion & faithfulness.

**Saturday, May 30—Feast of Pentecost:** Wear the color red as you participate in Virtual Worship with us from a distance. MarJean Damerval will serve as our worship pianist, and Pastor Tim Duesenberg will be our guest preacher as Pastor Dave recovers from Round 2 of Chemo.

**Saturday, June 6—Feast of Holy Trinity:** Virtual Worship with MarJean Damerval as our worship pianist. Pastor Dave will be leading us in worship and serving as our preacher. The Governor of MN is now allowing “**in-person**” worship (25% building capacity). Presently, we plan on receiving RSVP’s from 25-30 people for this Worship Service. Worshipers will be asked to wear masks, and will be seated in assigned locations. Ushers will direct foot traffic. Call the Church’s phone number (507-206-3048) if you would like to reserve a worship spot. We also plan on offering the Lord’s Supper (the HOST only) to worshipers as they leave worship that night; distribution outdoors, weather permitting.

**Saturday, June 13—Pentecost 2:** Mary Ann Groven will serve as our worship pianist. “In-person” worship will accommodate 25-40 people. RSVP required.

**Saturday, June 20—Pentecost 3:** MarJean will serve as our worship pianist. “In-person” worship will accommodate 25-40 people. RSVP required.

**Saturday, June 27 —Pentecost 4:** MarJean will serve as our worship pianist. “In-person” worship will accommodate 25-40 people. RSVP required.

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Why has God chosen, called and claimed us? SO THAT we may proclaim the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We are Easter People. We are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit so that we may bear witness to the TRUTH in daily life. We are saved and sent for the sake of the world. Every moment, every interruption, every planned occasion is an opportunity for God's glory to be revealed and manifested. What brings our Heavenly Father glory? The Father is glorified when a sinner is saved in the name of Jesus by power of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor John Piper wrote a book in 2003 entitled, Don't Waste Your Life. In his book, Piper writes, "I will tell you what a tragedy is. I will show you how to waste your life. Consider this story from the February 1998 Reader's Digest: A couple 'took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast five years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball and collect shells. . . .' Picture them before Christ at the great day of judgment: 'Look, Lord. See my shells.' That is a tragedy." "God created us to live with a single passion to joyfully display his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life. The wasted life is the life without this passion. God calls us to pray and think and dream and plan and work not to be made much of, but to make much of Him in every part of our lives."

Most people slip by in life without a passion for God, spending their lives on trivial diversions, living for comfort and pleasure, checking off items on a bucket list, and perhaps trying to avoid sin or outrun death. Piper warns the reader not to get caught up in a life that counts for nothing. Piper challenges us to live and die boasting in the cross of Christ and making the glory of God our singular passion. If you believe, "that to live is Christ and to die is gain" (i.e. more Jesus; Philippians 1:21), then live for Christ, and don't waste your life! **"ONLY ONE LIFE; IT WILL SOON BE PAST; ONLY WHAT'S DONE; FOR CHRIST WILL LAST."** Death is defeated. Eternity is now. Don't waste it!

Jesus spoke the hard truth: "Whoever would save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. What will it profit a person if they gain the whole world and forfeit their soul?" We get one pass at life. That's all. Only one. And the lasting measure of that life is Jesus Christ. Don't waste it! Invest it to the glory of God!

Serving a Lord who wastes absolutely nothing, Pastor Dave

### WORDS from Martin Luther

In His farewell discourse, Jesus offers these promising words to his disciples: "I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."-John 14:16.

Luther writes, "Therefore must we learn to know the Holy Spirit and believe Him to be as Christ describes Him and sets Him before the eye of the soul, namely, that He is not a Spirit of wrath and terror but of grace and comfort, and that thus the whole Godhead shows nothing but comfort. The Father wills to comfort us, for He gives the Holy Ghost; the Son gives comfort, for He prays the Father to send Him; and the Holy Ghost is Himself the Comforter. There is therefore no terror, threat, or wrath over Christians, but only gracious laughter and sweet comfort in heaven and on earth. And why is that? The reason is (He says) because you have already enough torturers and hangmen to plague and frighten you.

This is the right way of teaching the Holy Ghost, that He is called a Comforter, and that is His nature, character, and ministry. His divine essence

or substance we will not now discuss in any detail. As regards His Godhead, He is of indivisible divine essence with the Father and the Son; but to us He is called a Comforter, and a comforter is one who makes a sad heart glad and joyful toward God and tells you to be of good cheer for your sins are forgiven, death is slain, heaven is open, and God smiles upon you. Whoever could grasp this definition rightly would have already won the victory and would not find or see anything but sheer comfort and joy in heaven and on earth."

From: Exposition of John xiv. W.A 45. 562 ff.

Taken from the book: Day by Day We Magnify Thee by Martin Luther, Page 222.

*"Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for the treasure that it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain. What was once foolishness to us—a crucified God—must become our wisdom and our power and our only boast in this world."* — **John Piper**

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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### SAVE THE DATE!

We hope to have a

### *Blessing of the LORD'S LAND!*

on a Sunday afternoon in July.

We'll keep you posted as to date,  
time and details.

## 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.

## Women's Bible Studies

The Women's Study on I PETER ended on April 28. Thanks to all who participated from their homes. Several took the opportunity to enjoy a phone call conversation with a friend while studying the Word together. I hope we all gained a deeper perspective on suffering (a little while) and the living hope which is eternal. When opportunity presents itself we look forward to gathering in one place for a new study in Scripture.

## Acts 4:31—The Church Prayed!

“And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the Word of God with boldness. Each day at 4:31pm, Members and Friends of Emmanuel continue to join hands and hearts in prayer, although it be from a distance. Send prayer requests to Pastor Dave Steffenson Thanks for joining us. At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

## Back Page Stories

**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. Please keep our dear friends at the Madonna Towers in your prayers.

**Men's Morning Bible Study:** The men of Emmanuel Lutheran Church are currently meeting via email and studying the Scripture Readings for the upcoming Sunday. Let Pastor Dave know if you would like the study notes emailed to you.

**Church Council Highlights:**  
**May 8, 2020—Zoom Mtg:** Income for the month of April was \$9,245 and expenses were \$10,456. Property taxes of \$338 for 2020 were paid. An

application along with supporting information has been submitted seeking property tax exemption for our church land henceforth. Thrivent choice dollars continue to come our way. Thank you! Pastor Dave will not be doing any additional pulpit supply preaching for the foreseeable future. Approval was given to hire DeCook Excavating for some church land preparation and tree removal. We are awaiting some preliminary church building drawings from AB Systems. A new date for our Emmanuel Huddle is pending. Several ministry matters are on hold: Homestead Worship, & the Baby Shower for New Life. Pastor gave an update regarding his health and chemo treatment which began on May 11. Pastor will receive paid sick leave during

his first round of chemo. Contact will be made regarding when the donated worship piano needs to be moved from the Westbrook home (Sept. 1). Storage for this gift will also need to be found. The next council meeting will be held on Friday, June 5 (1pm).

### MANY THANKS!

Pastor Dave and Julie offer thanks to the members and many friends of Emmanuel for all of their kind thoughts, cards, fervent prayers and acts of love during these hard days of living with pancreatic cancer. The LORD reveals His Presence in His people. The Steffenson family is finding their fortitude in the faith of Jesus and His promising WORD. We are confident that God will waste nothing and will use all things for His glory!