

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Marks of Discipleship: PRAYER”

The marks of discipleship are signposts. They are not standards, report cards, or measuring sticks. Signposts are navigational aids, assuming we pay attention to them. We disregard them to our own peril. The marks of discipleship don’t save us; they aid us in our walk with Jesus.

Sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever, Disciples seek to pray daily, worship weekly, grow spiritually, read & study Scripture on a regular basis, serve others, share the good news, & give generously. Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us that “salvation is free, but discipleship will cost us our lives”. “When Christ calls a Man, He bids him come and die.”

This month I want to PRAY with you! To pray is to speak and to listen; to practice the presence of God. Hint: God gave us 2 ears and 1 tongue. Mother Teresa said that the beginning of prayer is silence: “*When I pray, I listen.*” Disciples pray without ceasing. The Psalms are Israel’s musi-



cal prayers. Martin Luther said that whoever sings, prays twice.

One of my favorite songs contains these words:

“Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place; Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us power, send us grace.”

— WOV #775.

“Beware of practicing your piety to be seen by others.”

The Season of Lent begins on March 5. The Ash Wednesday Gospel reading each year is from Matthew 6. Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount preaches/teaches about three marks of discipleship: Praying, Fasting, and Almsgiving. Jesus commands those who offer petitions to do so IN SECRET. We don’t pray, give, or fast to be seen by others or to toot our own horns. We pray

so that we might find our way into the mind of God and discern what is the good and gracious will of our Lord.

Jesus assumes that disciples will practice their piety; live out their faith, & do their righteousness. Sound no trumpet. Don’t be a hypocrite (two-faced). Don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing, even when they are enfolded in prayer.

Jesus teaches us How NOT To Pray, and then HOW TO PRAY (Matthew 6:5-8, 9-13). Pray publicly, but don’t pray for show. Life is prayer, but that’s no excuse for avoiding private prayer. Go into a locked room and spend some alone time with your Lord. Your stammering will be the Holy Spirit’s sighs too deep for words. Brevity is okay when it comes to praying. One needn’t go on and on as though God is impressed with our wordiness. — p.2 —

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Food For Thought:

“Christ says, ‘Give me all. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there. I want to have the whole tree down. I don’t want to drill the tooth, or to crown it, or stop it, but to have it out.’”

C.S. Lewis: *Mere Christianity*

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God already knows what we need before we ask. Less is more, & silence is golden when it comes to praying.

Dale Bruner writes, "The paradox of prayer is that only when it is relieved of the *necessity* of much will people experience the *freedom* for much. When disciples know they don't have to pray *much*, they will, surprisingly, desire to pray more." Martin Luther adds, "*Prayers should be brief, frequent and intense.*"

Jesus turns prayer into children's conversation with their Heavenly Father. The Father, to whom prayer is addressed, is not a reluctant listener. HOW TO PRAY: *Like this...* The Lord's Prayer (exactly in the center of the Sermon on the Mount...3 divine petitions followed by 3 human petitions. Enough said. Locked Room!

SPRING AHEAD: *On Saturday, March 8, after worshipping at Emmanuel Lutheran, don't forget to change your clocks for Daylight Saving Time, which officially begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 9. You'll lose one hour, but you'll get it back on Sunday, November 2 when we FALL BACK.*

Lenten Plans

Transfiguration Eve—Saturday, March 1, at 6 pm: Return your palm fronds if you still have them. Bury our Alleluias.

Shrove (Fat) Tuesday—March 4 (5-8 pm): Enjoy French Toast and a pastry feed at the Steffenson's. Bring something fat to share.

Ash Wednesday—March 5 at 6 pm: Confession, Imposition of Ashes, & the Lord's Supper. Lent Begins (FORTY DAYS)!

Saturdays in Lent—6 pm: Lectionary texts with a liturgy of Word & Sacrament; using portions of LBW & WOV.

Wednesdays of Lent—Drama Series: How to be a Disciple. Evening Prayer with Disciple Sketches by guest pastors.

Eve of Palm/Passion—Saturday, April 12 at 6 pm: Palm fronds will be distributed.

Maundy Thursday—April 17 at 6 pm: Foot Washing (John 13) and the Lord's Supper.

Good Friday—April 18 at 12:00 Noon: Bidding Prayer & Passion Reading (John 18-19).

Holy Saturday—April 19, Easter Eve at 6 pm: Celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord with an Easter Vigil—Light, Scripture, Baptism, & the Lord's Supper. The FIFTY DAYS BEGINS!

Mission Partners: Words from Pastor Jim & Diane Wagner (AIM)

At our Emmanuel Annual Meeting, we approved a gift of \$1000 in support of our global mission partner, the International Church of Vilnius in Lithuania. The Wagners are parents of our own Matt Wagner. Pastor Wagner wrote Emmanuel a letter and said that his church had just taken a leap of faith— i.e. deciding to grow the church budget for 2014 by 20%, not knowing where the funds would come from. Low & behold, the next morning, Matt sent his parents an email telling them about our decision at our annual meeting.

Here are a few words from the Pastor Wagner's letter to the Servants of Emmanuel Lutheran: "Greetings in Christ for this New Year! We greet you from the lovely, but wintry city of Vilnius. We are truly grateful for your support of the ministry of the International Church. Your pledge will go a long way in facilitating our ministry — which we hope to expand greatly in the coming year. As you surely know, we serve an ever-changing congregation of expatriates from around the world. This includes a number of European exchange students in what is called the "Erasmus Program," as well as African and Asians. They are a vital part of our ministry, and we are always pleased when young people present themselves for worship. Your gift will help us to continue this Gospel ministry to our students and many others, including tourists who show up nearly every Sunday ... and then are gone. We appreciate your partnership in ministry! You can follow our work at www.facebook.com/Wagnersinlithuania. Diane may be in Rochester this fall (2014), and we both plan to make a visit to Rochester in the summer of 2015. We will see you then!"
Yours in Christ, Pastor Jim and Diane Wagner — mzeewagner47@icloud.com.

Please keep Jim & Diane, and the International Church of Vilnius, in your prayers! When the Wagners are home visiting Emmanuel, we will have a Mission Festival Sunday and hear more about their servant work.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU: David, Kari & Ian Richards

By Carol Olson
Phone: 507-367-2353



TEACH—PLAY—INSPIRE

When we hear these motivational verbs we might think they are applicable to a teacher, or maybe even a preacher. But instead these directives are part of the mission statement for the company Discovery Toys. Our own Kari Richards is not only a representative of this company, but she also adheres to these action verbs in her personal life.

Where it began. Kari grew up in Rochester, graduating from John Marshall High School. Like most high school students, Kari had given some thought to what she wanted to do when she “grew up” and she intuitively knew-- she wanted to TEACH. Kari was raised in a faith-based home, so when it was time to seek a college, it seemed like a natural segue to attend a college which would offer education plus a faith-based environment. So after planning, application, and acceptance, she packed her bags and with the encouragement and support of her parents, she headed down Highway 52 to Decorah, Iowa and Luther College.

For the next four and a half years Kari’s embarked upon a learning journey, which included a semester in Denmark, to obtain a degree in elementary education with certification to teach children with special needs. Following graduation, yet prior to student teaching, she had an opportunity to be a counselor at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp near Kalispell, MT. She not only served as a counselor, but this is where she learned to combine TEACHING AND PLAYING. Her passion and deep love for the outdoors took hold. Her enthusiasm for skiing still plays a role in her life as she

volunteers on ski patrol one day a week at Welch Village. After completing her student teaching, she returned to Whitefish, MT to TEACH skiing and the following summer, worked at Wilderness Canoe Base – a Lutheran camp at the end of the Gunflint Trail near Grand Maris, MN. She heard the call of another bold adventure and in the next saga of her story we find her teaching school in Hilo, Hawaii. And there she stayed for 4 years. In 1995 Kari returned to Rochester with the intent of pursuing her Master’s Degree (completed in 1997) and working for The Reading Center/ Dyslexia Institute of Minnesota. Through mutual friends she was invited to go on a blind date with a young man who was living in St. Paul. The name of that young man was David Richards, and in 1999 they married. David began a newly acquired job at the Mayo Clinic just three weeks before they were married, and since then Dave has worked as a Biomedical Equipment Technician for the Anesthesia Department.

Five years after they were married, their son, Ian, was born. When Ian was 16 months old, Kari joined Discovery Toys. She said, “The starter kit for selling their toys was nominally priced making it a no-lose opportunity - worst case scenario? We’d end up with great educational toys for Ian.” Although her career with Discovery Toys has not been like some of their leading sales people, she does lead two very successful toy fundraisers--Toys for Toys and The Ronald McDonald House. Thrivent – Rochester Chapter provided matching funds to purchase toys for the Ronald McDonald House one of the years.

Although Kari has not been a Discovery Toys corporate kind of gal, her life has revolved around their 3 main concepts-- TEACHING, PLAYING, and INSPIRING. We are a young mission church, and we don’t have to go back too far to the days before we even had a name. Kari shared some of that journey. “I had attended some meetings in Rochester and was encouraged to attend a Bible Study (October 2011) that was going to be led by Pastor Ken Kimball who was the Dean of the Iowa Mission District of the newly formed NALC (August 2010). While we were finishing the Bible Study, we, along with the addition of several others, became a steering committee for a

launch of a new mission congregation in Rochester kicked off by the NALC Missions Director, Rev. Gemechis Buba. It has been an exciting time!”

Kari’s love for adventure and boldness has been an inspiration to our fellowship. Kari remembers how Dr. Buba emphasized that we can put our feet to the ground, but ultimately Jesus is responsible for its growth. She has leaned heavily on this truth as she and the other initial key members followed the tangled web through the logistics and paper work of taking a few people from a Bible Study to a steering committee and finally to the launch of our church. In the early days, when the hopes of a new church were borderline “wishful thinking”, she asked her son, Ian, “If we help start a new church, what do you think a good name would be?” His response was immediate and prophetic when he said, “Emmanuel”. Could there have been a more perfect name? Indeed *God is with us!*

We all admire Kari’s strengths and the inspiration she brings to us. Her character and strengths have been built in a community of Christian fellowship. In 1997, she trained as a Stephen Minister, and in January of 2014, she attended a H.E.R.O.E.S. Care training session. H.E.R.O.E.S. Care is especially for people affiliated with any branch of military; the training is available to previously trained Stephen Ministers. She has sung in church choirs, participated in Bible Study Fellowship International, Community Bible Study and the Women’s ‘Coffee and Friends’ through Calvary Evangelical Free Church. She and Ian also participated in The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at Pax Christi. It is a Montessori approach to religious education. She completed the Level I and Level II training to become a trained catechist for CGS at Pax.

Kari’s days are full as she and David raise their son, Ian. Ian has two dogs, Rocket and Skipper, who were adopted from Paws and Claws. Although they are technically Ian’s dogs, Kari appreciates the opportunity they offer to her for exercise. Ian, like his Mom, enjoys taking the dogs for a walk, reading, skiing and playing Minecraft. His favorite color is red, his favorite ski run at Welch is Heidi’s Hollow, and his favorite book is 4 ½ Friends.

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SAVE THE DATE!

Prayer Walk & Potluck:

Sunday, October 26

*Praying for the welfare of our
community and celebrating the
Lutheran Reformation*

Book Reading: "Spring Training for Christians"

Emmanuel Lutheran received a generous gift of 30 books from Rev. Neal Snider. Baseball Players know the importance of honing their skills and getting ready for the regular season of play—162 games, so they head south & participate in Spring Training, rehearsing the basics of the game. Believing that the Christian Walk is a lifelong journey of Discipleship where preparation is necessary, Pastor Snider has written a book aimed at helping Christ-Followers get ready for the regular season and the post season; culminating in the World Series.

Everyone needs a foundation on which to build for time and eternity. Pastor Snider offers eight basic building blocks, inviting participants to explore the essential topics of Sin, Covenant, God, Jesus, Bible, Creation, Church, and Sacraments. This book is a quick read. As readers crack open the cover, and reconnect with the basics of their faith, a hunger for deeper learning is sure to develop. Players (Disciples) will gain greater competency for fielding questions, while making their pitch for Jesus. We hope this book is a hit for you as you hone your skills and move members of God's Team around the bases.

Contact Pastor Dave for your free copy of Spring Training for Christians. Use the forty days of Lent to improve your swing and increase your batting average, while hitting for the cycle.

Back Page Stories

Men's Bible Study Breakfast:

Weekly fellowship around God's Word at 8 am Tuesdays at Charlie's (1408 2nd. St. SW). Join us in being Evangelical. Invite a friend. Share the Good News!

Women's Book & DVD Bible

Study: "Simplify Your Life", a Women's Study based on the Book of Proverbs is being enjoyed by 12 women. Margaret Quam is hosting this study in her home (304- 15th Ave. S.W.). Next Mtg.—March 10.

NALC House Church—Twin Cities: Dr. Jim Nestingen & his wife

Carolyn have launched a new NALC House Church in the Twin Cities in partnership with Pastor Steve King (Maple Lake Church) and Pastor Challa Barro (Ethiopian Church). Worshipers are meeting weekly for Bible Study at 5 pm on Sundays at the Nestingen house (2216 Ferris Lane, Roseville, MN). Topic of study is: "Who Is Jesus?" If you have friends or relatives in the Twin Cities area, let them know about this new House Church. Prayers are welcome.

Super Market Saturday: The next Channel One opportunity is Mar. 15 (9 am—Noon). Let's share the heart of Emmanuel by caring for the needs of our neighbors.

Thrivent Workshop: Social Security-Strategize to Maximize!

Prevent costly mistakes when making decisions about your Social Security. The purpose of the workshop is to help you sort through information, answer questions about your situation, and help ensure your choices are tailored to meet your specific needs. 2 sessions containing the same info: Mar. 10th 5 & 7 pm—Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (1212 12th Ave NW). A light meal will be provided between the two sessions. Please RSVP to Carol Ficher at 507-289-1841 by March 3.