

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor's Keyboard: "Marks of Discipleship: WORSHIP"

A Contemporary song includes these words: "Here I am to worship, Here I am to bow down, Here I am to say that You're my God." Maybe you've heard or spoken these words: "We've missed you at Worship." Or these words, "I don't need to go to church to be a Christian. I can worship God in my boat or on the golf course." Or these words, "Sunday is MY day to sleep in."

Disciples pray and read God's Word daily. This month we are embracing the mark of discipleship called WORSHIP. The whole life of a disciple is a worship service. St. Paul exhort the Christians in Rome to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is their spiritual worship—Romans 12:2. St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that individually and collectively your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit—I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19. We are portable worship centers, sanctuaries of the Most High God. The Book of Hebrews offers the following exhortation: "Do



Lutheran Church of Rochester

not neglect the assembling together of believers (worship) as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching"—Hebrews 10:25.

"All creation join in praising, God the Father, Spirit, Son, Evermore your voices raising to the Eternal Three in One. Come and Worship!"

The Third Commandment, given to Israel, says, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." Two reasons are given for the keeping of Sabbath (rest): God rested on the seventh day after He finished creation; and God redeemed His chosen people from captivity in Egypt. The LORD who appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush on Mount Sinai said, "I will be with you and this will be a sign for you: 'When you have

brought Israel out of Egypt you shall worship God on this mountain."—Exodus 3:12.

Matthew's Gospel begins and ends with Emmanuel. The Magi come to Jerusalem and inquire of Herod, "Where is He who is born King of the Jews, for we have seen His star on the rising and have come to worship Him?" When they meet the newborn King (enter the House of God), they fall at Jesus' feet and worship Him—offering gold and frankincense and myrrh.

The Gospel of Matthew concludes with Easter and Pentecost: Come and see; go and tell. The women at the tomb fall at the feet Jesus and worship Him. The disciples meet Jesus on the Mountain to which He has directed them. They worship and doubt... and graciously receive the Great Commission from the One who has ALL authority!

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Food For Thought:

"Beautiful is the moment in which we understand that we are no more than an instrument of God; we live only as long as God wants us to live; we can only do as much as God makes us able to do; we are only as intelligent as God would have us be."

Oscar A. Romero

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Women's Bible Study: Discipleship Parables

"**The Wise and the Foolish**" is a Nine Session Bible Study that focuses entirely on Jesus' "people parables" – or what might better be described as Discipleship Parables. These are the character stories that focus on the nature of discipleship and what it means to be a wise and faithful follower of Jesus. Class is taught by Pastor Dave and Julie Steffenson. This Study is held at Oasis Church (1815 – 38th Street N.W. Rochester), twice a month, on Monday afternoons from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Each session is an individual learning opportunity. So come to one, several, or all nine sessions as you are able. On April 21 we studied the Parable of the Two Builders. On May 5 we will look at the parable of the "Wicked Tenants" found in Matthew 21:33-46. Please join us. Bring a friend.

READING GOD'S WORD: *During the fifty days of Easter, Servants of Emmanuel are collectively reading the entire New Testament. Everyone gets to participate in this Bible Reading Course. Select your books and chapters of choice!*

Recommended Read!

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus

by Nabeel Qureshi

Qureshi describes his dramatic journey from Islam to Christianity, complete with friendships, investigations, and supernatural dreams along the way. Providing an intimate window into a loving Muslim home, Qureshi shares how he developed a passion for Islam before discovering, almost against his will, evidence that Jesus rose from the dead and claimed to be God. Unable to deny the arguments, but not wanting to deny his family, Qureshi's inner turmoil will challenge Christians and Muslims alike. Engaging and thought-provoking, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus tells a powerful story of the clash between Islam and Christianity in one man's heart---and of the peace he eventually found in Jesus. 'I have seldom seen such genuine intellect combined with passion to match ... truly a 'must-read' book.'

--Ravi Zacharias

Jim & Diane Wagner—International Church of Vilnius in Lithuania.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. Spring has come to Vilnius. The trees and flowers are in blossom and we have had our first seventy-degree days of the year. Now the cafés are spilling out onto the sidewalks. We had a glorious Easter service at the International Church with visitors from Germany, England, Holland, Russia and America. And it was a good thing: many of our regulars were out of town, so the visitors made up the majority of our crowd. It was also nice to be able to pick hymns which everyone seemed to know. In addition we had a mother-son duet on the organ and flute for our special music and a Sunday school choir. A real treat. Lent and Easter were quite different for us this year. We are used to midweek Lenten services, plus services on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, an Easter Vigil and a sunrise service. At the International Church there were no midweek services, or Holy Week services; only the morning service on Easter day. On the other hand, we walked the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and climbed the Hill of Three Crosses early Easter morning. But it seemed odd to preach only once this week as opposed to five times in the recent past. It is a joy to bring the gospel to this congregation! Many of our Lithuanian members come from nominal Roman Catholic backgrounds and have never really heard the simple message of God's love and forgiveness sealed with the blood of Jesus. Others of our members come from "American Evangelical" backgrounds where the gospel is assumed and the sermon is given over to teaching. So I just keep hammering away at the simple gospel of Jesus' love. From my point of view it just doesn't get any better than that! As I wrote in a recent Facebook post, one of our regulars at the International Church got teary eyed and told Diane, "The pastor looked right at me and said, 'You are a child of God.' I had never heard it said like that before." Another man told me that his Lithuanian wife had never heard the gospel spoken so plainly and simply before they started coming to the International church. This is our mission and this is our joy. Alleluia! Christ is risen. Follow us on Facebook at "WagnersinLithuania". —Pastor Jim and Diane

Emmanuel Lutheran recently sent our gift of support (\$1000.00) to the International Church of Vilnius.

Confirmation Class—for Youth

During the Season of Easter, elementary youth are joining Pastor Dave for a reading of C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, beginning with "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe". We meet at Oasis Church on Wednesdays from 4:15-5:15 p.m.

CONTINUED from PAGE 1...Pastor Dave writes...

Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday. Christians worship on the 8th. Day of the week; the first day of the new creation, the Lord's Day, in celebration of Easter. We are created and redeemed for Worship. In the New Jerusalem, heaven will be an endless Worship Service (Revelation 5). Worship is what we do! —**Pastor Dave**

Pastor Dave's Article for the Iowa Mission District May Newsletter

We are witnesses of the resurrection; Pentecost People with a shout of Alleluia forever flowing from our lips. Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! We don't make a peep; we make a loud AMEN. Our Easter inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for those who are, by the power of God, guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In Christ, we know that the One who began a good work in us will bring it to completion at the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born again into a living hope that does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are scattered seeds, sprinkled with the blood of Christ. The Resurrected One invites us to come and see, and to go and tell! Quickly!

In Matthew 28, we have three commissions. The Resurrection Mission begins with a mega earthquake and the testimony of an angel. The Counter Mission begins with a conspiracy and the proclamation of a lie. The Great Commission begins with worship and doubt, and ends with obedience and Emmanuel. Frederick Dale Brunner, in his *Matthew Commentary*, reminds us that the resurrection does not happen for its own sake; hence Matthew ends his Good News Story not with resurrection, but with the Risen One's Great Commission to disciple the nations. The Resurrected One always goes ahead of us and, as promised, meets us on the way to our prescribed destination. The women run with haste in obedience to their call and commission. The Mission of God—the resurrection message—is not only wonderful, it is also urgent. We've been told, and so we must go and tell. Quickly. The Sent One sends us into a mission field where the fields are always white for harvest. Pray therefore!

The journey from Jerusalem to Galilee is about 100 miles. In Matthew's Gospel faith is a walk. Brunner writes, "Only faith, that is to say, only a walk to Galilee, will see Jesus." St. Luke reminds us that on the road to Emmaus our hearts will burn and burst as Jesus opens the Scriptures to us. In the breaking of the bread our eyes will be opened, and in the dark of night we will travel up the road seeking brethren to share good news with. No one can see Jesus, hear the Good News, and keep the resurrection to themselves. St. John reminds us that Pentecost begins on the cross as Jesus hands over His Spirit, and continues on Easter Evening as Jesus breathes on His disciples, blesses them with peace, and bestows upon them the "office of the keys". The fifty days of Easter will climax with the Feast of Pentecost. The mighty rushing wind bestows explosive power upon the church for the mission of witnessing. Come & see; go & tell. Quickly!

The Lord launches His Resurrection Mission, and His enemies (religious leaders in cohorts with the laity) quickly mount a Counter Mission. Brunner writes, "The Countermission says, 'Christians lie; their gospel is a fraud; they sneaked in, stole the body, and now everything they say about a "raised Lord" is a confidence game.' But Matthew says, 'The fraud is not ours.'" Brunner adds, "Wherever God erects a House of Prayer, the Devil builds a Chapel there." The Resurrection Mission prevails in spite of the opposition by the enemy and the reticence of disciples. Filled with the Spirit, Disciples find the faith to obey and, as promised, meet Jesus on the Mountain where directed church people (believers and doubters) receive a Great Commission. The One with all authority commands us to make disciples of all people in all places by being disciples, christening all people into the all-encompassing name of the Triune God, and teaching them to keep all that our Lord has commanded. Remember, Emmanuel is with you all-ways, at all times and in all places, forever.

Bill Hybels in his book, *Just Walk Across the Room*, writes, "Ten thousand steps. Roughly, that's the distance you travel from sunrise to sunset, each and every day of your life. It adds up to about 115,000 miles in a lifetime—or more than four times around this big blue planet of ours. With that said, just one question: Are you using your steps wisely? Assume the distance across most rooms is twenty feet—about ten steps. What if ten steps—just one-thousandth of your daily average—could actually impact eternity?" What are we waiting for? He has risen as He told you. Come and see. Go and tell. Quickly. Do I have an AMEN? Alleluia!

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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

April 22—COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- \$1,731 Thrivent Choice Dollars received in March.
- \$1000.00 support sent to International Church of Vilnius in Lithuania. First Quarter support of the NALC is ready to be sent: \$1000.00. Support for Supermarket Saturday is being sent to Oasis Church: \$500.00.
- Kari is working on purchasing Witness Logo Wear from Superior Printing. Contact Kari for purchases.
- Emmanuel will discontinue ads in the Post-Bulletin until Fall.
- Kari met recently with the Oasis Council President to discuss ministry partnerships: VBS, Summer Picnic, & the Truth Project.

The TRUTH Project: Focus on the Family Video Series!

13 weeks, Sunday mornings, Oasis Church—June 1, 2014.

10:30 a.m.—Coffee Hour & Fellowship

11:00 a.m.—Video Segment

12:00 Noon—Discussion with departure @ 12:30 p.m.

- Pastor Dave will be attending his daughter's graduation from Medical School, his grandson's baptism, & officiating at a wedding in Little Falls. Rev. Tim Duesenberg will serve as Pulpit Supply.
- Pastor Dave will be serving as pulpit supply on Sundays during the summer at Gift of Grace Lutheran, Holmen, WI, and Rushford Lutheran, Rushford, MN.
- Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, May 20 at 10 a.m.

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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!

Supermarket Saturday: The next Channel One opportunity is May 17 (9 am—Noon). Let's share the heart of Emmanuel by caring for the needs of our neighbors.

Thanks to Margaret & LeRoy Quam for the gift of a Paschal Candle Stand, and Michelle and Dean for the gift of our Paschal Candle. Both gifts are being dedicated through use during the 50 Days of Easter.

St. Paul Lutheran Fellowship

(church plant)! The House Church is becoming a Fellowship. St. Paul Lutheran Fellowship, NALC, is moving to a new location. Beginning on Sunday, April 27, worshippers will be meeting at the Falcon Heights City Hall (2077 Larpenteur Ave. W, St. Paul, MN 55113). Weekly Bible Study and Prayer will be enjoyed by all participants. Please keep this mission congregation in your prayers. We hope you'll visit Saint Paul Lutheran Fellowship when you're in the Twin Cities. Check them out at www.saintpaullutheranfellowship.blogspot.com

Oasis Garage & Bake Sale—The 7th annual Oasis Church garage and bake sale is just around the corner—

Friday and Saturday, May 2nd - 3rd. Bring your kid's clothes, household items, books, seasonal items, plants, outdoor items, linens, games, toys, etc. to the church garage ASAP.

SUMMER VBS AT OASIS

"Weird Animals"

Sunday, July 13 // 9:30 – 2:30 PM

Mon-Wed, July 14-16 // 5:30 – 8 pm;
5:00 pm Optional supper.

Free for all children, ages 5-11!

JESUS LOVES YOU...

Even when you're left out

Even though you're different

Even when you don't understand

Even though you do wrong, and

Even when you're afraid!