

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship—A Word about HATE”

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. It’s the season of Easter. It’s time for a little heart to heart conversation about hate. Is it possible to love Jesus while harboring hate in one’s heart? Hate has become a favorite word in the language of our culture. The word generally communicates excessive disdain or disgust toward, or for, someone or something. People often use (or misuse) the word “hate” indiscriminately. Accusations abound: “If you don’t agree with me or share my beliefs and values, then you must be a hateful person; unenlightened, phobic, & intolerant.” What parent doesn’t dread receiving from their child the verbal dagger: “I hate you!” Yes, hate can be a nasty, caustic word, or behavior.

There are some things that people actually love to hate. What is it that you hate, loathe, or abhor? Is it okay to hate



those who practice hate? Don’t you just hate it when someone cuts you off in traffic, or refuses to let you merge from the on-ramp, and then adds insult to injury by giving you “the bird”?

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”
- I John 3:15

Don’t you just hate it when your favorite team loses a sporting competition and your arch rival wins? Don’t you just hate it when someone you detest is right, and you are proven to be wrong, forced to eat a little humble pie? Some people claim to hate certain foods, but I’m

guessing that it’s simply a palatable distaste that may actually change over time. Some people hate what others love, and vice versa.

What does the Bible say about hate? Does the God of “steadfast love and mercy” sanction or practice hate? Ecclesiastes says that there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven, including “a time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace” (3:8). The prophet Malachi reminds us that God hates divorce (2:16). The Psalmist says that God hates all evildoers (5:5), loathes the violent & wicked (11:5), and has disdain for the perverse (101:3). Proverbs says that God hates seven things because they are an

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May 2015
Newsletter
Volume 3
Issue 5

Food For Thought:

“Hate the sin and not the sinner’ is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practiced, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world.”

—Mahatma Gandhi
(1869 - 1948)

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abomination to him (6:16-19). Those who love the Lord, hate evil (Psalm 97:10).

Jesus, the Prince of peace, appears to sanction hate. Speaking about the cost of discipleship, Jesus offers these disturbing words: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26); "You will be hated by all for my namesake" (Luke 21:17). Jesus is not advocating self-loathing or indiscriminate abhorrence of others. The word "hate" means "to love less". When St. Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated," (Romans 9:13), he is simply saying that God chose Jacob & didn't choose Esau.

In Indiana, Memories Pizza, owned by a Christian family, said that they wouldn't cater a same-sex wedding. Not because they hate gays, but because their Christian convictions say that marriage is ordained by God to be the union of one man and one woman. Lovingly standing up for their beliefs, they became the object of ridicule, hate and death threats. They had to go into hiding. In California, a different scenario is unfolding. The Oakland Athletics are set to hold the team's first ever LGBT Pride Night on June 17. After some season ticket holders reacted negatively to the gay-friendly event, A's pitcher Sean Doolittle & his girlfriend, Eireann Dolan offered to buy all unwanted tickets at face value; "No judgments. No questions asked." I like that. No labeling. No shaming. Just an honest acknowledgment that we don't all see things through the same glasses, so why be hateful?

Don't you just love it when people of different views actually embrace diversity and stop labeling and denigrating each other? Don't you just hate it when those advocating tolerance are so intolerant, and those condemning the beliefs and behaviors of others are so unloving toward those who disagree with them? —continued on page 4

***"Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
only light can do that. Hate cannot
drive out hate; only love can do that."***

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

EMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING—May 30

The Church Council has finished reviewing the Constitution & Bylaws and is ready to present the revised documents for congregational approval. A special meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, May 30, immediately following Worship in the Worship Space. Respectful of families with small children, and visitors, the meeting will be brief. Printed and electronic copies of our revised governing documents will be available by Saturday, April 25. Please read the documents prior to the May 30 meeting. **We look forward to your attendance on May 30.**

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!

**Women’s Bible Study:
“Practicing Resurrection”**

Women of Emmanuel & their good friends from Oasis Church are keeping company with Jesus and practicing the resurrection as they study St. Paul’s letter to the Church at Ephesus. Participants meet on Wednesdays, twice a month, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Remaining dates: May 13 & 27; June 10 & 24. Please join us!

**COMING THIS FALL:
“THE STORY”!**

The Story is an abbreviated, chronological overview of the Bible that reads like a novel. The Story is a 31 week Bible study. **Beginning in September** Pastor Dave will lead us through this amazing study.

“The Greatest Story Ever Told” is more than just a cliché. God goes to great lengths to rescue lost and hurting people. That is what The Story is all about: the story of the Bible, God’s great love affair with humanity. Condensed into 31 accessible chapters, The Story sweeps participants into the unfolding progression of Bible characters & events from Genesis - Revelation. Like any good story, The Story is filled with intrigue, drama, conflict, romance, and redemption; & this story’s true!

Each story in these 31 chapters reveals the God of grace---the God who speaks; the God who acts; the God who listens; the God whose love for his people culminated in his sacrifice of Jesus, his only Son, to atone for the sins of humanity." Read the Story & experience the Bible.

Rochester Day of Prayer Activities! - “Hear the cry and the prayer that Your servant is praying in Your presence this day.” - I Kings 8:28

Wednesday, May 6

6-7 pm—First Annual “Miracle Prayer March”. Walk begins near St. Mary’s Hospital (Second Street SW) and concludes at the Peace Plaza Downtown.

Thursday, May 7

12:00 Noon—Prayer at Government Center, Council Chambers Main Floor (151 4th St. SE).

7:00 pm—Evening Worship at “Word of Life Church of God in Christ”. Located at: 400 - 13th Ave. SE

Mother-Daughter Brunch is being held on Saturday, May 2, 2015 (10:30am-12:30pm). Special thanks to Judy Pearce and friends for organizing this event for mothers and daughters. The Speaker will be Lee-Ann Knutson (Faith Like a Teapot Ministry). Gifts of music will be offered by the “Teapot Singers”. Emmanuel received a Thrivent Action Team gift of \$250 in support of this ministry opportunity. 70+ women and girls are expected to participate in this fellowship event.

THRIVENT ACTION TEAM PRAYER OPPORTUNITY

Each month, Servants of Emmanuel are praying for the students, families, teachers & staff of area Rochester schools. During the **month of April** we prayed for Bamber Valley Elementary School. We also delivered a generous helping of snacks and goodies to the Bamber Valley Staff Lounge.

Here is a thank you we received from Bamber Valley: “*On behalf of the staff at Bamber Valley, I would like to thank you for the yummy treats you brought us. It was so nice of you to reach out to us with your generosity. Of course we appreciated your prayers too! Working with children is a gift, but its nice to have support from caring people like you.*” Sincerely, Brenda Wichmann, principal.

During the **month of May**, we will be praying for Gage Elementary. Treats will be delivered on Tuesday, May 12. Julie Steffenson is coordinating the delivery of the treats each month. If you would like to help, please contact her (507-206-3048). Thanks for praying for our schools.

**“Faith, like light, should ever be simple and unbending; while love, like warmth, should beam forth on every side, and bend to every necessity of our brethren.”
—Martin Luther**

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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.

—Pastor's Keyboard, continued from page 2

Disciples need to be careful how they use or abuse the word “hate” lest they practice the very thing they despise. “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (I John 3:15). God hates sin, but God loves sinners. God hates sin so much that He sends His only Son Jesus into our world where He is hated & crucified on a cross for the forgiveness of our sins (John 3:16). By His stripes we are healed. We are healed to hate sin & to love sinners. “

I hate fornication, adultery, drunkenness, child abuse, domestic violence, abortion, capital punishment and war. But I love adulterers, drunks, abusers, murderers, and evildoers. I hate sin, but I love sinners. There are things that I legitimately, discriminately hate, so please don't hate me for loving Jesus and practicing my faith.

It's the Season of Easter. God has a word for us about hate. Jesus delivers it: “Love your enemies, & pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:44f). There are things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19), and so must we. “Don't be surprised that the world hates you,” Jesus declares (I John 3:13). It hated Jesus too (John 15:18). But even if others do hate you, love them in return...in the name of Jesus.

—*Hating sin & evil, but loving sinners, Pastor Dave*

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 May 16, 2015 (9 am—Noon).

Women's Bible Study: Studying Ephesians for six sessions (1:00 p.m.). Dates: May 13 & 27.

Council Highlights (April 21): Emmanuel Christmas Eve Worship will be at 4pm on December 24, 2015. Oasis Worship will be at 6pm. Emmanuel Constitution and Bylaws review was completed. A Special

Congregational Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 30, following Worship in the Worship Space, to discuss and approve changes to our Constitution and Bylaws. The next Council Meeting: May 12 @ 10am.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS: Emmanuel Lutheran budgeted \$3,750.00 in Choice Dollars for 2015. As of April, we have received \$906.00 in Choice Dollars. Thanks is offered to Thrivent Members who have chosen to designate their Choice Dollars in support of Emmanuel Lutheran Church and its Mission.

SATURDAY SCHOOL: Youth continue to meet each Saturday at 5:10pm for Christian Education under the direction of Julie Steffenson. The final session of Saturday School, until

fall, will be will May 30.

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.

WEBSITE Worth Visiting!

Thanks to Rev. Steve King, who designed a website for the Minkota Mission District of the NALC. Visit: www.minkota.org and check out what's happening!

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