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# THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Look! Water!”

The Acts of the Apostles is part two of St. Luke’s canonical writings. Perhaps a more appropriate title for the Book of Acts would be “The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church”. Disciples are sealed by the Holy Spirit & marked with the cross of Christ forever”. Disciples are Holy Spirit powered Apostles (sent-out ones).

Jesus gave this promise to his Disciples on the occasion of his Ascension, the fortieth day of Easter: “But you will receive power (dynamite) when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses (martyrs) in Jerusalem, & in all Judea & Samaria and to the end of the earth.” - Acts 1:8.

The early church, commissioned by Christ to be and make disciples of all nations, baptized in God’s name—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and taught obedience to the teachings of Jesus. On Pentecost Sunday, Peter preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ—crucified and risen, announcing good news: “Everyone who calls on the name of



the Lord shall be saved.” Those who heard the good news were cut to the heart. “What shall we do?” they asked. Peter answered, “Repent (present tense verb) and be baptized (passive verb).” The baptized receive the promise of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. “Look! Water!” 3000 souls were baptized that day, walking wet in the Word of God!

What were the marks of these baptized believers? The disciples devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teachings. They kept to the Book. They didn’t entrust themselves to the error of progressive enlightenment. They shared *koinonia*—Christ-centered fellowship. Daily they worshiped and prayed and broke bread together (The Lord’s Supper). They held all things in common & praised God. Daily, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

As the church grew, polity needed to be addressed. The Apostles were spending too much time waiting on tables, and neglecting their call of prayer & the ministry of the Word—preaching and teaching. 7 deacons were appointed to take care of church administration. The Word of God continued to increase and the number of disciples multiplied greatly. One of these deacons, Stephen, became the first martyr of the church. Another deacon, Philip, became a preacher.

In Acts 8 we hear the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Philip explains Isaiah 53 to a God-fearing Eunuch, who becomes a Christ-follower. “Look! Water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Word and Sacrament always go hand in hand.

*Continued on page 2...*

**November 2014  
Newsletter  
Volume 2  
Issue 11**

### *Food For Thought:*

*“Why do you prepare stomach and teeth? Only believe, and you have already partaken of the Sacrament.”*

—St. Augustine

### **INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS**

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## SATURDAY SCHOOL

Saturday School has been going for over a month, & we are off to a great start! We now begin at 5:10pm with a light snack, followed by our lesson for the day. We are currently revisiting many of the great Old Testament stories. Each week we try to incorporate some storytelling, crafts, games or talk into the lessons. We have had good attendance and want to thank all the families that have been so faithful in bringing their kids or grandkids to participate! PLEASE NOTE: We will not meet for Saturday School on Nov. 29th—Thanksgiving Weekend. Also, if anyone has any ideas for a more ‘exciting’ name for Saturday School—we’d love to hear it!! Contact Julie Steffenson for more information or to share your ideas: (507)-206-3048.



**Samaritan’s Purse—International Relief:** The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) gives a clear picture of God’s desire for servants of Emmanuel to help those in desperate need throughout the world. After describing how the Samaritan rescued a hurting man whom others had passed by, Jesus told His hearers, “Go and do likewise.” For over 40 years, Samaritan’s Purse has been following Christ’s command by going to the aid of the world’s poor, sick, and suffering; effectively reaching hurting people in countries around the world with food, medicine, and other assistance in the Name of Jesus Christ. This, in turn, earns Samaritan’s Purse a hearing for the Gospel, the Good News of eternal life through Jesus Christ. When people in crisis areas of the world ask, “Why did you come?” The answer is always the same: “We have come to help you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This ministry is all about Jesus—first, last, and always.

**Invitation:** Isn’t it wonderful that Christians can offer compassion and mercy to people in need (evangelical justice and social ministry), not simply as good citizens, but as servants of Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all? Samaritan’s Purse invites Servants of Emmanuel to share the heart of Christmas—the good news and great joy of Jesus—with the least of these throughout the world. Operation Christmas Child invites participants to say “Merry Christmas” in a shoebox! Since 1993, Samaritan’s Purse has delivered shoebox gifts to more than 113 million children around the world. Pick up a box at church, fill it with small toys, school supplies, hygiene items, etc.; tangible demonstrations of God’s love. Add a personal note with a picture of you and your family. Include your name and address. Pray for the recipient of your box. Include a gift of \$7.00 to cover shipping, and follow your box online as it is delivered somewhere in the world to a child in need. The collection date is Saturday, November 8 at Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester. Visit [www.samaritanpurse.org](http://www.samaritanpurse.org) for more info.

*Continued from page 1... “Look! Water!”*

In Acts 16, Lydia, a worshipper of God, became a Christ-follower when God opened her heart to hear the preaching of Paul. “Look! Water!” A place of prayer, down by the river, became a baptismal font and a means of grace for Lydia and her entire household. Later, while in Philippi, Paul and Silas are locked up in prison for casting a demon out of a slave girl. They participate in a Midnight Prayer and Hymn Sing Service. A jailbreak becomes an occasion for conversion. The Jailer says, “What must I do to be saved? Paul says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Look! Water! The jailer and his entire family are baptized at once. Word & Sacrament are inseparable in the Book of Acts. Both are means of grace for creating belief in Jesus. We must be born again of Water and Spirit (Jn. 3). Unless we eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, we have no life in us (Jn. 6). Look! Water, Word, Bread & Wine...Jesus...for you!

*Pastor Dave Steffenson*

## In Case You Were Wondering: “The Pascal Candle?”

Someone recently asked, “Why don’t we light the candle when we worship. The candle referenced is the Pascal Candle, which stands by our Baptismal Font. Pascal comes from the Hebrew word for Passover. Pascha (Greek: Πάσχα), also called Easter, is the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord. Pascha is a transliteration of the Greek word, which is itself a transliteration of the Hebrew *pesach*, both words meaning Passover.

God commanded that His chosen and redeemed people celebrate annually the Feast of Passover, commemorating the LORD’S deliverance of Israel from Egyptian captivity (The Exodus). The Tenth Plague was the death of the firstborn. The angel of death passed over (Passover) the homes that were marked with Lamb’s blood (Exodus 12). All were welcome to participate in the Passover Meal, but circumcision was a requirement for admission to the table.

St. John’s Gospel refers to Jesus as the Passover Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus shares a Passover meal with His disciples on the night in which he is betrayed. He transforms the meaning of the meal into a New Testament in His blood. The real presence of Jesus is our exodus

from sin and death. Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me”.

The Pascal Candle is lit beginning on Easter until the Ascension of our Lord (40th. Day of Easter). Some churches keep the candle lit for the 50 Days of Easter, which concludes on Pentecost Sunday. The candle is lit signifying that Jesus is the Light of the World; the Light no darkness can overcome.

The Pascal Candle is also lit whenever a Baptism takes place. The Light of Christ is given to the baptized Child of God (a candle lit from the Pascal Candle). The following words accompany the gift of the candle: “Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

The Pascal Candle is also lit in conjunction with the Burning of the Greens and the Feast of Epiphany, signifying the Light that the Magi followed and found. The Pascal Candle is also lit on the occasion of a funeral, reminding the gathered people of God that not even death can extinguish the Light of Christ (Jn. 8:12). Baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have an imperishable hope. Some churches will also light this candle on special occasions such as All Saints Day and Confirmation Sundays.

**Next month, words about other candles used in worship!**

## Prayer Walk—Potluck

Are you ready for our second annual “prayer for the welfare of our city” walk & potluck? On Reformation Sunday, Oct. 26, Servants of Emmanuel and their “walker friends” will gather at Oasis Church at 2:45pm and walk around our Oasis neighborhood praying for our schools, churches, public servants, & businesses. Following our prayer walk, we’ll gather at the Gramercy Coop, home of Sharon Hart, where we will enjoy a festive potluck from about 4:30-6pm. Following the Potluck, the 1953 Black and White Martin Luther film will be shown at Oasis Church (6pm). Join us for some or all of our Reformation Sunday festivities.

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

**Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, Nov. 2. Don’t forget to set your clocks one hour back on Saturday night (Nov. 1) before you go to bed. Spring ahead & Fall back.**

October 2014

Pastors and Congregations of The North American Lutheran Church

Letter from our NALC  
Presiding Bishop,  
Rev. John Bradosky

Dear partners in ministry;

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There is confusion and misunderstanding within the Body of Christ today, and especially within Lutheran churches, regarding the relationship between Holy Baptism and admission to the Lord's Supper. This confusion weakens the public witness of the Church with regard to our Biblical and confessional understanding of the Holy Sacraments entrusted to the Church of Jesus Christ. For this reason, it is my desire to provide clear, concise, easily understood pastoral guidance to our congregations. I have consulted with members of our Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine for this purpose.

We in the North American Lutheran Church affirm the doctrine and practice of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church and the churches of the Lutheran Confessions which assert that only baptized Christians may be admitted to the Lord's Supper, trusting that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

The Sacrament of the Altar is the "food of souls," to strengthen and nourish the baptized "new man or woman." The baptized receives the real presence of Christ as a great treasure, His own body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, received through faith (Large Catechism V, 20-22; Matthew 26:28).

The concern for the unbaptized is pastoral, in light of what St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:24. Martin Luther also addresses this in the Large Catechism, where he states that those who do not believe the words of Christ and do not believe the benefits offered in the Lord's Supper may eat and drink judgment upon themselves by eating and drinking unworthily (Large Catechism V, 33-37; Tappert, 450-451).

The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of unity, to create and maintain unity with Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body, and the Body of Christ as baptized community (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). While reception of the Lord's Supper is personal, it is never private. As the community of believers communes at the altar, they are making a public declaration of the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. "And they devoted themselves to the apostolic teaching, the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

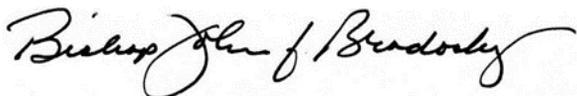
Within the life of each congregation, unusual circumstances may arise. We acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the local congregation and pastor to provide appropriate pastoral care with regard to admission to the Lord's Supper, as well as determining the appropriate age for first reception of Holy Communion, how instruction will be offered and how the faithful will be taught the value and meaning of the Lord's Supper. At the same time, each congregation needs to respect the historic practice of the Church: Baptism is the entrance into the Church; the Lord's Supper is the nurturing meal for those who are in the Church, baptized members of the Body of Christ.

Each congregation of the NALC is asked to publicize this understanding of the Holy Supper, either verbally or in print in worship bulletins:

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*All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.*

With you in Christ's service,



Bishop John F. Bradosky

### **The Voice of the Martyrs: Tortured for Christ, by Rev. Richard Wurmbrand**

Special thanks to Samia Nelson for reading this book and offering the following reflections:

The Communist came to power in 1945, when the Russian troops entered Romania. They used prisons as their means to starve, torture and brainwash the youth and people. Their language of seduction and love are the same. The torturers often said, "There is no God, no hereafter, no punishment for evil, so we can do what we wish." They took the possessions from everyone. From the farmers they took their fields and livestock. They tortured Christians and put them in prisons. This led to the underground churches that met secretly in houses, woods and in basements. The Communist Secret Police greatly persecuted the underground church because they recognized it as the only resistance left, and saw it as a threat.

The methods of torture were not from men, but from the devil. Such a force of evil can only be countered by a greater spiritual force—the Spirit of God. "God, judge us not according to how much we can endure, but by how much we can love." There is only one method of resisting to "brainwashing," and that is "heart-washing". If the heart is cleansed by the love of Jesus Christ, that heart can resist all torture. The Christian teaching is clear: Communists are men and Christ loves them too. The Christians in prison were witnessing to their torturers. Many Communist officers became Christians and were happy to suffer in prison for having found Christ. In these Communist prisons, the idea of Christian mission to the Communist was born. They can imprison the body and kill it, but they cannot kill the soul. Only love can change the terrorist, Communist and those blinded by hatred.

Christian love is always universal. Jesus said that God's sun rises on the good and bad. Communism poisons the people and youth with atheism. Persecution has backfired as it has produced better & more dedicated Christians, witnessing, and the winning of souls. The persecuted prefer to be called, not the underground church, but the Christian believers and Children of God.

Rev. Richard Wurmbrand (1909-2001) was called the Iron Curtain Paul; a courageous and faithful man. He survived and endured 14 years of torture and bore the scars of suffering in the Communist prison. By the miracle of God Rev. Wurmbrand was set free from prison. It was decided by the underground church of Romania, that he should leave and take his message to the free Christians of the world. He was able to fulfil the charge given to him, by those who remained behind, laboring, risking, suffering and dying in dozens of captive nations. He speaks for the underground church, the silenced church, which has no voice to speak. He asks us not to forget about the underground church, but give them tools, like Bibles, and most of all to pray for them and their families. Rev. Wurmbrand founded The Voice of the Martyrs in 1967.

More martyrs are being made all the time; in some 60 countries around the world. Jesus warned us that, in the world we will have tribulation, and we will be hated by all for his name sake. We should rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is our reward in heaven. So we have the obligation as members of the Christian faith to encourage, forgive, support, build up & pray for those who suffer for the name of Jesus!

Visit [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com) to learn more about The Voice of the Martyrs.

**Hebrews 13:3**

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

1815—38th Street NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

### Contact Information:

253-302-9845 (Mobile)

**507-206-3048 (Home)**

[pastor@emmanuelofrochester.org](mailto:pastor@emmanuelofrochester.org)



### SAVE THE DATE!

*Saturday, April 18, 2015 (6pm)  
Emmanuel Lutheran Choir,  
Grafton, IA will perform an Easter  
Cantata at Emmanuel Lutheran of  
Rochester, MN*

## Bell Ringing—Salvation Army

One of Emmanuel's Ministry Partnerships is the Salvation Army. For a second year in a row, we are ringing bells and sharing the good news of Christmas (EMMANUEL) with our neighbors. Lee Pearce is coordinating this activity. This year's dates and locations are as follows:

- Saturday, November 29 at Shopko North (**FILLED**)  
1-2pm: Rich & Janet Sunde  
2-3pm: Larry & Deb Vomhof & grandchildren
- Saturday, December 6 at Hy-Vee North (37th St.)  
11am - 12:00 Noon: **OPEN**  
12:00 Noon - 1pm: **OPEN**
- Thursday, December 11 at Hobby Lobby (**FILLED**)  
1-3pm: Don & Peg Holtan and LeRoy & Margaret Quam
- Monday, December 22 at Shopko North  
11am - 12:00 Noon: **OPEN**  
12:00 Noon - 1pm: **OPEN**

**Wednesday, November 26 @ 6:00pm: Thanksgiving Worship** with Holy Communion followed by a pie social. Bring a pie or dessert to share with your church family & enjoy the gift of Christian Table Fellowship.

## 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!

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

**Women's Bible Study:** Our study on Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth continues twice each month on Wednesday afternoons at 1pm. Remaining dates: November 5 & 19; December 3 & 17.

### Council Highlights (October 14):

\$730.00 in Thrivent Choice Dollars was received, bringing our YTD total to \$3,822.00. Thanks to everyone

who is designating Choice Dollars to Emmanuel. We have used only \$9,000.00 of our budgeted reserves of \$24,000.00 toward our Mission Plan 2014 Budget. The 2015 Discipleship Covenant was reviewed and will be available in December. Emmanuel Lutheran received permission to dual affiliate with both the Minkota and Iowa Mission Districts. Our next Emmanuel Huddle will be Saturday, December 6, following worship—bring input for the 2015 Budget and questions regarding our Governing Documents. Thanksgiving cards will be sent to our supporting congregations; Emmanuel members will be invited to sign and write a message. Pastor Dave will be in California presiding at a wedding on Saturday, November 1. Pastor Tim Duesenberg will be our pulpit supply. Pastor Dave will be on vacation the week after Thanksgiving, with Pastor Fred

Morck filling in as pulpit supply. Members are encouraged to visit our church website and to read "Bedrock Beliefs" authored by Pastor Steffenson. By request, Educational Snippets will appear from time to time in our Church Bulletins and Newsletters. The next Council Meeting is Friday, November 7 at 10 a.m.

**Special Offerings:** Our designated offering for Thanksgiving will be the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. The designated offering for Christmas will be the NALC Seminary.

**Liturgies:** During the month of November we will be using With One Voice Bread of Life. During the month of December we will use LBW Setting II.

**Please keep Jim & Diane Wagner (International Church of Vilnius in Lithuania) and St. Paul Lutheran Fellowship (Twin Cities Church Plant), in your prayers.**