

# The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Wisdom from Above!”

Get Wisdom! Disciples keep company with Jesus, & sit at his feet, so that they may be blessed with wisdom from above. Wisdom from above is godly wisdom. Wisdom from below is fleshly wisdom. Wisdom is more than getting smart or accumulating book learning or head knowledge. A person can be academic smart and still not be truly wise. A person can be a champion of trivial pursuit and not be wise in the ways of God.

St. James, the brother of our Lord, reminds his readers that if anyone lacks wisdom, all they have to do is just ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and wisdom from above will be given to them” (James 1:5). Wisdom comes from above, not from below. It is heavenly, not earthly. It is a gift of God, not a human work.

Recently, I have been meditating on Solomon’s wise sayings and reading the Book of Proverbs. When asked by the LORD what King Solomon desired, Solomon asked for the gift of wisdom so that he might serve God and his people faithfully. It is said that



Solomon composed 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs (I Kings 4:34). People from all over the world, including the Queen of Sheba, came to hear the “wisdom of Solomon”.

*“Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God’s holiness and sovereignty.*

*Acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can divine wisdom become ours.”*

— J.I. Packer

Solomon received a wonderful gift, but he did not always use this gift of God in a fruitful manner. Solomon expanded the boundaries of Israel, brought great wealth, prosperity, and peace to the United Kingdom of Israel and built the Temple in

Jerusalem, but his achievements came at a great cost: heavy taxes and slave labor. When he formed treaties with other nations, he allowed pagan religions and idolatry to infiltrate and compromise the faith of Israel. With the treaties came wives and concubines. Solomon ended up having 700 wives and 300 concubines. Wisdom is a Godsend, but it must be employed faithfully, lest it be lost or misused in sinful & foolish ways.

Jesus says that “wisdom is justified by her works and children” (Matthew 19:11; Luke 7:35). In other words, wisdom is proven by what it produces. James, penned these words, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:17-18).

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**November 2020  
Newsletter  
Volume 8  
Issue 11**

### Food For Thought:

*“Righteousness is a free gift from God. Jesus is our Wisdom from above. Wisdom gets us and we are His forever! Fear God and Pray!”*

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## Building for the Future “Implementation Team”

After prayerful deliberation, the Church Council has appointed the following four people to serve on a Committee charged with implementing the next steps of our Emmanuel Building Project: Larry Vomhof, Don Holtan, Judy Pearce, & Don Wanek. Pastor Dave serves as an ex-officio member of this Committee. Their appointment is a one-year commitment beginning on November 1 & includes the following responsibilities: Seeking God’s will for His Church, His Land and His People; Developing a church site master plan; Soliciting input & feedback from church members; Identifying, prioritizing, and implementing necessary tasks in a timely manner; & Presenting all proposals to the Church Council & Congregation for approval. Each Team Member will form a sub-group to assist with the completion of their duties. First Team Meeting: Nov. 1 at 5pm in the Oasis Fellowship Hall.

## Men’s Bible Study (In-Person)

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran are currently meeting on Tuesday mornings at 8:30am via email & studying the Scripture Readings for the upcoming Sunday. Let Pastor Dave know if you would like the study notes emailed to you. We will have two in-person studies during the month of November: Wednesdays, **Nov. 11 & 25 at 11am.** Location: Oasis Church Fellowship Hall. We will physically distance & wear masks. Bring a Bible.

## “Creative Solutions to Challenging Situations”

Doug Schommer is the Community Outreach and Marketing Director for Visiting Angels Home Care of Rochester. Visiting Angels Home Care has been providing “in-home” care & support for Rochester area seniors and their families since 2009. Free, monthly educational programs are being offered via Zoom. In 2020—**November 4:** “Helping to understand Dementia” by Teepa Snow, Dementia Expert, presented by Visiting Angels staff; **December 2:** Visiting Angels Holiday Christmas party to include Holiday music, a presentation by Dale Lipsky on creating memory books, & your best Holiday memory. Contact Doug at [DSchommer@visitingangels.com](mailto:DSchommer@visitingangels.com) or #507-289-1147 for more information.

## WORSHIP PLANS FOR November 2020 — 6pm

We will use three Liturgies throughout the fall/winter: Holden Evening Prayer (HEP), Bread of Life from WOV, and a special Advent Liturgy. As our Community and Country continues to monitor COVID-19, we will adjust our worship services accordingly. We will continue to exercise caution & care, compassion & faithfulness as we gather for in-person worship. We will offer the **Lord’s Supper** at least once each month during the fall/winter (**October 31, November 14 & 25; December 12 & 25**). As Pastor Steffenson continues to undergo chemo treatment for pancreatic cancer, Rev. Tim Duesenberg and Rev. Waldemar Gies are both available, should the need arise, to step in and help with pastoral services.

Emmanuel will continue to offer online worship opportunities via the Emmanuel Facebook page and the Emmanuel Church Website. Thanks for worshipping with us in person (6pm) and virtually online.

**Saturday, October 31—All Saints:** Mary Ann Groven will be our Worship Pianist. WOV with **Holy Communion** being served following worship in the church Gathering Space.

**Saturday, Nov. 7—Pentecost 23:** MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist. HEP.

**Saturday, Nov. 14—Pentecost 24:** Mary Ann Groven will be our Worship Pianist. WOV with **Holy Communion** being served following worship in the church Gathering Space.

**Saturday, Nov. 21—Christ the King:** MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist. HEP

**Wednesday, Nov. 25—Thanksgiving Eve Celebration:** Mary Ann Groven will be our Worship Pianist. Service of WORD and SONG with **Holy Communion** served following worship.

**Saturday, Nov. 28—Advent I:** MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist. Advent Liturgy. Thanks to Don Holtan for recording our Services and to Julie Steffenson & Peg Holtan for their help.

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Solomon wrote Song of Songs at the beginning of his life, Proverbs in the middle of his life, and Ecclesiastes at the end of his life. Solomon had this to say about wisdom from above: **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7)**. Throughout the Book of Proverbs, wisdom (righteousness and the fear of the LORD) is contrasted with folly (wickedness and sinfulness). There are only two paths which the Child of God may and must choose between: the path of wisdom which is saving faith in Jesus (the fear of the LORD), or the path of willful foolishness (wickedness) which brings sorrow in the present and endless separation from God for all eternity.

Reformation Sunday is October 25, so it seems only fitting that we would consult Martin Luther for some words of wisdom from the Book of Proverbs. Martin Luther didn't write a commentary on the Book of Proverbs, but in his writings, he references Proverbs almost 500 times. In his **Table Talk** from the winter of 1542-1543, Luther praises the Book of Proverbs and recommends it specifically to rulers: “Proverbs is an excellent book. Rulers ought to read it. There one can see how things happen in the world. There is nothing in the book but **‘Fear God’ and ‘Pray.’**” The fear of the LORD is not trepidation and angst; it is reverence and worshipful awe, and saving faith in Jesus.

Luther interpreted the Proverbs through the lens of Messiah Jesus and saving faith in his name. **Proverbs 24:16 and 28:1** are mentioned considerably more in his writings than the other wise sayings of Solomon. Key verses from **Proverbs 8** are mentioned more than 20 times. Along with the Church Fathers, Luther understood the personified wisdom in **Proverbs 8:22-31** to refer to Jesus; the eternal nature of the pre-incarnate Christ (John 1:1-3).

St. Paul has this to say about wisdom in his letter to the Christians in Corinth: “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.’ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1:18-25).

Then Paul invites the Corinthians to consider their call and God's imputed gift of wisdom from above, which is the righteousness of Jesus: “For consider your calling, brethren: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness & sanctification & redemption, so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord’ (1:26-31). God made Jesus to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus is our wisdom from above, and our only boast!

**Luther's favorite proverb seems to be 24:16** (“For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity.”), as it is found fourteen times in Luther's Works, more than any other. In Luther's commentary on Psalm 1, he takes some space to describe the ungodly and the righteous, two terms that also appear in Proverbs 24:16. **The second most beloved proverb by Luther is 28:1** (“The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”) as it is found at least twelve times in his works. Those who trust in the LORD will be vindicated. Having the mind of Christ, they follow the humble path of Jesus (Philippians 2:5-11), who is the Lamb of God from the Lion Tribe of Judah. Proverb 24:14 reminds us that the righteous fall daily (7 times is a perfect number), but the LORD always raises them up and guarantees them the gift of eternal life. The wicked fall just once and they are “down for the count,” eternally separated from the LORD. There is no reason to envy the wicked. Righteousness is a free gift from God. Jesus is our Wisdom from above. Wisdom gets us and we are His forever! Fear God and Pray!

Just Asking/Praying for Wisdom from Above,  
Pastor Dave

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, & do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, & he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, & turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh & refreshment to your bones.”*

### Reformation Sunday Prayer Event (Sunday, October 25)

Emmanuel has a tradition of hosting a prayer walk and potluck each year on Reformation Sunday. Each year, Emmanuel walks around our Oasis neighborhood, offering prayers for our city and her people. In the past, the prayer time concluded with a church potluck. This year will be our **8<sup>th</sup> year of walking and praying**. This year will be a little different. Instead of walking the sidewalks of our neighborhood and enjoying a potluck meal, we will gather on our church land at 4:31pm for prayer on October 25. Pastor Dave is inviting members and friends of Emmanuel to submit prayers to him. The prayers may be one word, one sentence, or several sentences in length. Pastor Dave will assemble the prayers and send the collated prayers your way. Whether we sit in a chair on the church land, physically distancing, or in our vehicles, or remain at home, we can all join our voices in prayer for our churches, families, communities, country and world on October 25. Feel free to pack a snack or even a simple picnic supper if you wish to enjoy some food as you pray. Stay for a few minutes or as long as you wish. Thanks for PRAYING!

**Nominating Committee:** Contact Lee Pearce, Julie Steffenson, Heather Mikesh, & Leitha Bothun if you are looking for ways to serve Christ and his Church. *There are many ways to use your gifts for the glory of God.* Judy Caudill & Deb Vomhof have offered to serve another term on Council and also to serve as our church voting & alternate delegates in 2021. Bob Mulvihill has agreed to serve another term on the Audit Committee. The four Nominating Committee members have agreed to serve again next year.

**SEMAC—Larry Vomhof:** During the week of September 23-October 3, Matt, Nancy, KC & Larry took a trip to Caldwell, OH . This is the location of the NALC Disaster Response Headquarters; also, the hometown of Mary Bates, the coordinator. They worked at 3 different homes - putting in a wheel-chair ramp, repairing some flooring & fixing some leaky windows. The NALC just built a new warehouse in Caldwell, and one of the days they helped put in shelving & put in a ceiling & flooring in a bathroom in that warehouse. Larry talked with Mary about the 2021 SEMAC winter work trip. At this point nothing is set up in Nashville, so Mary suggested that SEMAC go to Florida. They are set up in Pensacola after hurricane Cathy. An NALC church was flooded & several of the members had extensive damage. They took the shower trailer down there that week as several volunteers have started on the clean up. **The SEMAC 2021 Work Trip will be Feb. 7-19.**



### Thanksgiving Eve Celebration! Wednesday, November 25 at 6pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church will host a Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service at Oasis Church on Wednesday, Nov. 25. at 6pm. We won't have our traditional pie social, but we will be serving pie. Store-bought pie will be purchased & packaged in single serving containers. Worshipers will be invited to take home a piece of pie after worship, & a second piece that they can share with a friend.

The distribution of pie will be done in a safe manner. We are also purchasing Thanksgiving Greeting Cards and encouraging members of Emmanuel to pick up a card or two and to send them to friends. Members will write a note and send a card to a neighbor, a friend, a co-worker, etc. We will collectively spread the Good News of Jesus & the Spirit of Thanksgiving to others. Greeting Cards will be available for distribution by November 1. Our Thanksgiving Eve Worship will be a simple Service with the Lord's Supper being offered following worship. We hope you can join us!

## Reinhold Niebuhr: “Serenity Prayer!”

“God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
Taking, as He did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
Trusting that He will make all things right  
if I surrender to His Will;  
That I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with Him  
Forever in the next.  
Amen.”

ZIGGY | TOM WILSON & TOM II



## 2021 Membership Covenants!

Advent I begins on Saturday, November 28. **2021 Discipleship Covenants** will be available that night for servants of Emmanuel wishing to sign or renew their membership covenant for the new year. A Covenant Renewal Service will take place on January 23 at our 6pm Worship Service.

Membership at Emmanuel is an annual renewal; a yearly commitment to the walk of discipleship in the footsteps of Jesus. *Disciples seek to pray daily, worship weekly, grow spiritually, read & study Scripture on a regular basis, serve others, share the good news, & live & give generously.* Those signing an Emmanuel Discipleship may have membership in another congregation as well. Questions? Contact Pastor Dave!

## Children’s Ministry

Worship Bags are available for kids each week. We hope children enjoy these resources during worship. Kids are asked to take the bags home with them. We look forward to the time when we can resume in-person Saturday School with our little ones. Until then, we will provide resources for our children and Pastor Dave will continue to put Children’s Messages on our Emmanuel Website and Facebook Page.

## Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you have Thrivent Products don’t forget to designate your Choice Dollars. Go online at [www.thrivent.org](http://www.thrivent.org) or call #1-800-847-4836 to designate your choice dollars. Emmanuel has received over \$1600.00 in Choice Dollars already in 2020.

## Unveiled: Shining Light in the Darkness – Second Corinthians 4:6.

The Great Commission Society of the NALC is hosting an online Evangelism Conference on Wednesday, Nov. 4, 5, & 6, 2020. Viewers can participate on all 3 days at either 10:00am or 8:00pm CST.

**Invitation!** We all wear veils: veils we put on to hide ourselves, veils we allow others to put on us and veils to separate us. Jesus’ death on the cross tore the Temple veil in two and granted us access to God the Father, welcoming us behind the veil. We are released and welcomed into a life of worship. Our response is to shine and share that Light with others. Join your brothers and sisters in Christ as we gather virtually to support missionaries serving in their homes & neighborhoods, in their congregations, & internationally. This conference will provide encouragement, tools & training, inspiration, and connection to missionaries to be unashamed of the Gospel burning in our hearts, unleashed by the power of the Holy Spirit from the veils that darken our sight, unrestricted to be the aroma of Christ, and UNVEILED to be and to make disciples to shine light in the darkness. **Registration is required** ([bit.ly/GCS-Unveiled](http://bit.ly/GCS-Unveiled)).

**Daily Themes:** Wednesday – Unashamed - Genesis 3:8-11; Thursday – Unleashed - Isaiah 43:18-21; and Friday – Unrestrained - 1 John 1:1-4. Excellent speakers. You won’t be disappointed.

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

3819 - 18th Ave. NW,  
Rochester, MN 55901  
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

### Contact Information:

253-302-9845 (Mobile)

507-206-3048 (Home)

pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



### SAVE THE DATE!

#### Thanksgiving Eve Celebration

Wednesday, Nov. 25 (6pm)

Supported by a Thrivent Action  
Team Grant of \$250, compliments  
of Karen Peterson!

## Looking Ahead!

### Plans for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany

- Saturday, November 28: Advent Liturgy during four weeks of Advent with lighting of the Advent Wreath each week.
- Saturday, Dec. 5: Celebrating the Feast of St. Nicholas.
- Saturday, December 19: Children's Nativity to be done in a creative manner due to COVID-19.
- **NO CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE THIS YEAR!**
- Friday, December 25: Christmas Day Worship at 10am.
- Saturday, December 26: Twelve Days of Christmas Liturgy with Bell Ringing and Lighting of Candles.
- Pastor Steffenson on Vacation from December 27, 2020-January 3, 2021. Pulpit Supply is pending.
- Tuesday, January 5, 2021: Epiphany Celebration and Burning of the Greens on the Church Land (Brush Pile Burning, weather permitting). Alternate date would be Saturday, February 13 —Feast of the Transfiguration!
- Saturday, January 16, 2021: Sanctity of Human Life
- Saturday, January 23, 2021: Annual Covenant Renewal Service celebrating the gift of Membership at Emmanuel and Discipleship in the name of Jesus.
- **Saturday, January 30, 2021: Annual Meeting!**

## Back Page Stories

**Church Council Highlights: Oct. 9, 2020—Zoom Meeting:** Budget Income for the month of September was \$7,266.10 and expenses were \$8,039.85 resulting in a shortfall of \$773.75. NALC Disaster Response will receive \$500.00 from our Budget Benevolences. Our Thanksgiving Celebration will feature store bought pies in individual containers and greeting cards written and sent by members of Emmanuel. Karen Peterson received a Thrivent Action Team Grant (\$250) in support of this event. The Thanksgiving Offering will go into the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. An Implementation Team has been appointed to move the "Building for the Future" campaign forward.

Their first meeting will be on Nov. 1 at 5pm. Special thanks to Larry Vomhof, Don Wanek, Judy Pearce and Don Holtan for accepting their appointment. Members and friends of Emmanuel will be surveyed and asked to serve on sub groups. Pastor will serve on this Team ex-officio. Pastor's Health premiums are increasing in 2021 by \$120 a month, \$1,440 annually. This increase will be addressed in our 2021 Mission Plan Budget. Oasis is now requiring each user group to take care of its own sanitizing and cleanup when they are in the building. An appraisal of the donated piano and cost of repairs is being obtained. The next council meeting will be held on Monday, November 9, 2020 @ 1pm.

**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.

### MANY THANKS!

Pastor Dave & Julie offer thanks to the members & many friends of Emmanuel for all of their kind thoughts, cards, fervent prayers & acts of love during these days of living with pancreatic cancer. God loves you and so do we!

### Acts 4:31—The Church Prayed!

"And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, & they were all filled with the Holy Spirit & continued to speak the Word of God with boldness."