

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “Being Renewed””

By the grace of God, we are all “Being Renewed”

In our liturgy, we often begin our Worship Service with a “brief order for confession & forgiveness.”

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we beseech Almighty God to cleanse our hearts and to forgive our sins. We confess and we pray: “for the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.”

In our worship liturgy, we often sing these familiar offertory words as our tithes are brought forward:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Ps 51:10).

This fall, adults are participating in a study on “Congregational Renewal.” We are learning what it means to be renewed. The brief order for confession and forgiveness, and the offertory are petitions for renewal. Renewal is Christ-centered & purpose-driven. Renewal seeks to give glory to the name of the Triune God, and salvation to His chosen people.

By the grace of God, we are being renewed. The LORD is the active agent of our renewal and we are the



passive recipients of daily renewal. Renewal is not a “once and done.” Renewal is a daily dying and rising in Word and Sacrament. What happens if something or someone is not renewed? Expiration is the outcome & natural end of all that is not renewed. God forbid!

“If you are renewed by grace, and were to meet your old self, I am sure you would be very anxious to get out of his company.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book God is in the Manger, writes, “God can make a new beginning with people whenever God pleases, but not people with God. Therefore, people cannot make a new beginning at all; they can only pray for one. Where people are on their own and live by their own devices, there is only the old, the past.”

In the Old Testament, we meet Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. Around the year 627 BC, Jeremiah received his call from God. He was

commissioned as a young man—under the age of 20. When called, Jeremiah begged the LORD to send someone else on this “hit-your-head-against-a-brick-wall” mission. But the LORD refused to take “NO” for an answer. Believe it or not, Jeremiah was consecrated and appointed by the LORD before he was born “to pluck up and break down, to destroy & to overthrow, to build and to plant.” Renewal is costly. Renewal doesn’t come about without someone paying the price.

In Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah offers us these hope-filled words: “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is YOUR faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I have hope in Him.’” Mercy is renewing!

Though he knew how to weep, Jeremiah also knew how to bask in the faithfulness of God. God’s love doesn’t come and go.

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November 2019
Newsletter
Volume 7
Issue 11

Food For Thought:

“What is the scent of water?” “Renewal. The goodness of God coming down like dew.”

— Elizabeth Goudge
“The Scent of Water”

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

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Emmanuel Nominating Committee!

Leitha Bothun, Julie Steffenson, Lee Pearce and Julie Engle were elected at last year's Annual Meeting to serve on the Nominating Committee. Pray about servant leadership opportunities that will be available in 2020: Two church council positions, 4 people for the nominating committee, one member for the audit committee, and two people for the NALC Convocations.

2020 Membership Covenants!

Advent I begins on Saturday, November 30. Discipleship Covenants for 2020 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 18 at our Worship Service.



Reformation Sunday (October 27) Prayer Walk & Potluck

Each year, servants of Emmanuel walk around our Oasis neighborhood, offering prayers for our city & her people. Please join us

on Sunday, October 27 for our 7th annual prayer walk & potluck. We'll meet at the South Entrance of the Oasis Church **at 3pm**. Please park on 38th Street. Following our prayer walk, a potluck meal will be enjoyed **at 5pm** at the home of Lee & Judy Pearce. Pulled Pork Sandwiches, eating utensils and beverages will be provided. Please bring a side-dish or dessert to share. Following the evening meal, we will have a House Blessing of the Pearce home. We hope you can join us!

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 2 - Eve of All Saints (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Jenna Serr
Ushers: Bob Harms & Darald Bothun
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Saturday, November 9 - Pentecost 22 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Darald Bothun
Ushers: Rich Sunde & Creig Andreson
Acolyte: **PENDING**

Saturday, November 16 - Pentecost 23 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof
Ushers: Larry Vomhof & Tom Vomhof
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

Saturday, November 23 - Christ the King (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: **PENDING**
Acolyte: **PENDING**

Wednesday, November 27 - Thanksgiving (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce
Ushers: **PENDING**

Saturday, November 30 - Advent I (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Bob Mulvihill & **PENDING**
Acolyte: Nora Serr

PIANIST: Mary Ann Groven
Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Jenna Serr

PIANIST: Annette Engelmann
Communion Assistant: Barb Steffenson
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Leitha Bothun

PIANIST: Karen Salz
Communion Assistant: Judy Caudill
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Jean Wanek

PIANIST: Annette Engelmann
Communion Assistant: Judy Caudill
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Barb Steffenson

PIANIST: Karen Salz
Dessert Coordinator: Julie Steffenson

PIANIST: MarJean Damerval
Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Julie Edwards

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down. Pastor Dave will be our worship leader/preacher each week, except on November 16, when Pastor Tim Duesenberg will be our pulpit supply. Greeters for the month: Judy Caudill & Joe Vomhof.

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God's love doesn't start and abruptly end. God's love never ceases. Justice is getting what we deserve. Mercy is getting undeserved grace. God's mercies are renewing and renewable. Couched in between his confessions ABOUT God is Jeremiah's direct address TO God: "Great is YOUR faithfulness." Jeremiah knows firsthand that hope is found in having Jesus as one's chosen portion! When one chooses the good portion, it will not be taken away—it is permanent (Luke 10:42). God's mercies are being renewed in us every morning! They never get old or depleted. They never end!

What have we learned as we have searched the Scriptures each Saturday night in G.I.F.T. looking at "Congregational Renewal?" Permit me to share a few of our group insights: 1) Prescriptions, subscriptions, & leases run out & expire. They must be renewed to stay active. 2) Renewal is the *inspiring* work of the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing the full maturity of the child of God. Don't quench the Spirit! 3) Renewal requires daily repentance, weekly worship, daily Bible study, and constant prayer. 4) Renewal is best done in a group setting, where ministry is responsibly shared. 5) Renewal is purposeful. God gets all the glory as discipleship is authentically practiced in daily life. 6) God's Word brings renewal. Lay people beg for Bible studies & more of God's Word. 7) Renewal is for everyone. Are we okay with our enemies being renewed too? 8) Renewal requires our participation. Some plant and others water, but only God gives the growth. There is only one foundation for renewal; namely, Jesus Christ! We are God's Building—temples of the Holy Spirit.

In our weekly G.I.F.T. (adult study), we are now looking at what hinders and gets in the way of congregational renewal and our "being renewed." The short answer is ME. That is why St. Paul bluntly proclaims, "*I, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me*" (Galatians 2:20). Each week, new verses of Scripture are being digested, & participants are being renewed in God's WORD! It's all God's grace! Join us for weekly RENEWAL!

Being Renewed, Pastor Dave



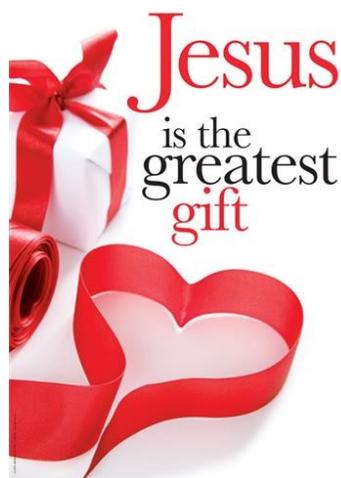
Wednesday, November 27 at 6pm

Madonna Towers Main Chapel

Thanksgiving Eve: Join us for a celebration of worship and thanksgiving to be followed by a dessert social.

*"Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
For His steadfast love endures forever!"*

Psalm 107:1



2019 ADVENT
& CHRISTMAS

**"AND the GIFT
GOES ON ... and
ON ... and ON!"**

November 30: The GIFT of "War No More!"

December 7: The GIFT of "Hope!"

December 14: The GIFT of "Salvation"

December 21: The GIFT of "A Sign"

Children's Nativity

Christmas Eve: Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2019 @ 9pm

Carols, Candlelight & Communion

Sermon: "The Ultimate GIFT: Jesus!"

December 28: The GIFT of "Steadfast Love"

Jan. 4: Bell Ringing — 12 Days of Christmas

ALL SAINTS WORSHIP—Saturday, Nov. 2

All Saints Day was placed on November 1 by Pope Gregory IV in 835 A.D. This day is a celebration of all "the holies" – those people who have died faithful to Christ; all whom God has called to glory.

All Saints Day reminds us that we are saints (set apart, holy people) with a promise of eternal life. Jesus prepares a place in heaven for all the Saints (John 14:1-6). We stare death in the face, and live in the hope and promise of Easter.

Each year in our "All Saints Worship Prayers," we remember the Saints who have died in the faith of

Jesus; those who have entered into the church triumphant. By remembering their lives we pray that we would be pointed to Jesus, their Redeemer and ours! On November 2, we are publicly naming the beloved Saints who have died during the past 12 months. Each name is followed by the ringing of a bell, offering praise to God for the gift of the resurrection & the forever life of the saints.

Please submit the names of loved ones you would like named & remembered in our worship prayers on November 2; i.e. saints who have died and been raised to new life during the past 12 months.

The Voice of the Martyrs invites you to...

JOIN A GLOBAL PRAYER MOVEMENT FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019

SEMAC 2020—Emmanuel Ministry Partner

The location/date of the 2020 South East Minnesota Area Christians mission trip has been determined. Larry Vomhof and his crew will be serving with the NALC Disaster Response team in **Dayton, Ohio** during the weeks of **February 9-21**. Volunteers, prayers, and financial support are welcomed!

"The Church is justified, not because her children do not sin, but because they do."
— G.K. Chesterton

PSALM 23
"Anoint My Head with Oil!"

Everyone loves the 23rd Psalm. "The LORD is my shepherd. ... He anoints my head with oil!" Oil is used for cooking, cleansing and consecrating. At Emmanuel, the



heads of baptized children of God are anointed with oil, from the Holy Lands. By the grace of God, we are a priestly people. Oil keeps things lubricated and ready for service. In our lives, Jesus is the oil of gladness. Christ gives us oil in our lamps & keeps us "burning, burning, burning, keeps us burning till the break of day!"

A shepherd shares these insightful words: "Sheep can get their head caught in briars and die trying to get untangled. There are horrid little flies that like to torment sheep by laying eggs in their nostrils which turn into worms and drive the sheep to beat their head against a rock, sometimes to death. Their ears and eyes are also susceptible to tormenting insects. So the shepherd anoints their whole head with oil. Then there is peace. That oil forms a barrier of protection against the evil that tries to destroy the sheep.

Do you have times of mental torment? Do worrisome thoughts invade your mind over and over? Do you beat your head against a wall trying to stop them? Have you ever asked God to anoint your head with oil? The LORD has an endless supply! His oil protects and makes it possible for you to fix your heart, mind, and eyes on Him today and always! There is peace in the valley!

May our good, good Father anoint your head with oil today so that your cup overflows with blessings! God is good and He is always faithful!!"

Lutherans for Life

This year's Lutheran's for Life Christmas Bulletin Insert includes these faith-filled words: *"Our Almighty Maker paints a bigger picture than one moment can behold. The God who gives you Jesus Christ plans further than you can perceive. Every life has an important place, from fertilization to final breath. The sorrows belong to Him as much as the celebrations. He creates each human being in His image, at every age & every stage. He redeems the whole race by His incarnation, whatever our appearances or abilities. He calls us that all might endure forever as His own precious treasure in everlasting family, no matter our origins, experiences, or durations. His gracious reigning even incorporates surprise pregnancies and terminal diagnoses. Our Savior's coming in human nature proclaims & performs the sanctity of human life. We have the privilege to courageously declare & compassionately demonstrate the same: Life Is Never a Sentence. Life Is Always a Whole Story!"* Visit: www.lutheransforlife.org.

Discipleship is a Lifelong Marathon!

There are two new world records for both men and women in the marathon. One set at the Chicago marathon where the fastest time for women is now 2:14:04, set by Kenya's Brigid Kosgei. In Vienna, Austria, Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge achieved the once unimaginable feat of running the men's marathon in under 2 hours. His time 1:59:40.2. We call to mind Hebrews 12:1-3, "Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders & the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary & lose heart." Carmen LaBerge reminds us that "Christian discipleship isn't a sprint, it's a [lifelong] marathon. Let us run with perseverance today, and let us finish well no matter how long it takes."

Advent Goodies — Hospitality Houses

Judy Pearce has received a Thrivent Action Team grant in support of this year's hospitality offerings to three local hospitality houses: The Ronald McDonald House, The Transplant House, and Hope Lodge. Plates of cookies and worship invites will be delivered weekly to these 3 locations. Anyone wishing to partner with Judy Pearce in this Christ-centered ministry of compassion and love should give Judy a call. This year's Advent and Christmas Theme is: "And the GIFT Goes On!" Jesus is the Ultimate Gift. Thanks for sharing the Gift.

Education Opportunities!

Saturday School (youth) & G.I.F.T.—Growing In Faith Together (Adults) meet each Saturday at the Oasis Church at 5pm. Youth, taught by Julie Steffenson, are learning Bible Stories. Adults are discussing the topic of "Congregational Renewal." Thanks for making Christian education a priority in your household and in the Emmanuel family!

Women's Bible Study: Women are making their way through the Book of Isaiah, which is often referred to as the Fifth Gospel. Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the New Testament. The name Isaiah means, "The LORD is my salvation". Women meet in the Oasis Church Fellowship Hall on Thursday afternoons from 1:00-2:30pm.
Remaining Class Dates: November 7 & 21 (note change); and December 5 & 12.

Men's Bible Study: The men of Emmanuel are engaged in a 16 week course on the Augsburg Confession. On June 25, 1530, the Lutheran Reformers presented a statement of faith to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in the town of Augsburg, Germany. This statement of faith became known as the Augsburg Confession. It was penned by Luther's dear friend Philip Melancthon. It is considered to be the bedrock & summary of what it means to be Lutheran. "The Augsburg Confession is a true confession of the Christian faith because Christ Himself is expressed in it." This study is an opportunity for growing deeper in one's Lutheran identity & walk of discipleship.

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 DATES!

Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Social

November 27 at Madonna Towers (6pm)

Christmas Eve Worship

Tuesday, December 24 at 9pm

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES!

- 2020 Discipleship Covenants will be available for signing as of Advent I—November 30.
- Annual Meeting & Potluck—Saturday, January 18 at 3:30pm. Also a Covenant Renewal Worship Service.
- SEMAC 2020—Dayton, Ohio: February 9-21, 2020.
- Public Reading of the entire New Testament at Oasis Church on Easter Monday, April 13, 2020.
- The church & community choir of Grafton, IA will be joining Emmanuel for worship, and offering several gifts of music on Saturday, May 2, 2020.
 - Mega Kids Camp—July 20-23, 2020.
- Lutheran Week: NALC Convocations—August 3-7, 2020 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania & August 2-6, 2021 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

GOOD READS

Consider It Pure Joy, A Mother's Fears and God's Miracle of Peace, by Kristen Milligan (Inheritance of Hope).

Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert, and Openness Unhindered, by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield.

Speak the Truth, How to bring God back into every conversation, by Carmen LaBerge.

Back Page Stories

Madonna Towers Ministry:

Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel twice a month on Wednesdays in 2019. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this wonderful ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, November 6 & 20 at 1:00pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

Thrivent Choice Dollars: Don't forget to go call Thrivent (1-800-847-4836) or go online to designate your Choice Dollars. By phone, when prompted, say, "Thrivent Choice". They will ask for your full name and date of birth. Emmanuel has received

\$1,226.00 in Choice Dollars—Year-to-Date. Thank you!

Church Council Highlights:

October 11, 2019: Thus far in 2019, we have received \$76,830.63 in budget income, and we have incurred \$85,493.77 in budget expenses. We budgeted for a \$7000 shortfall. We are current on our benevolences and still have three months of giving left before year end. Third quarter giving statements have been distributed. Building Fund balance: \$101,000. Hospitality House balance: \$4,556. Pastor Dave will be on vacation during the weeks of November 13-19 and December 25-January 3. Pastor James Puotyal is home from the hospital after a two month stay. Things are moving

forward with the potential purchase of church land from Arne Nelson (4.7 acres for \$75,000). 10 people will be attending this year's New Life Gala and sitting at the Emmanuel Table. The Emmanuel Church Picture Directory is being put together. We have received 11 Thrivent Action Team grants so far this year. The Annual Meeting and Potluck will be on Saturday, Jan. 18 at 3:30pm. The 2020 budget is in process. The next church council meeting will be on Friday, November 8 at 2pm.

THANKS: Gary Froiland shared a Gideon Testimonial with us in worship on October 19. Members responded with a gift of **\$388.00** in support of the holy work of the Gideons (placing Bibles in the hands of God's people worldwide).