

The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Forgiveness is a MUST”

Let’s talk about sin and forgiveness. *“Forgive our sins as we forgive, you taught us Lord to pray. But you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say.”* Forgiveness is a work as well as a grace. Only God’s grace can empower us to live the words we sing and say.

Martin Luther reminds us that “Forgiveness is God’s command.” Forgiveness is not optional, nor is it an elective. Forgiveness is a MUST. It is compulsory. It is a core requirement in the Kingdom of God. Discipleship is the daily practice of forgiveness.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 18, Jesus preaches on the topic of sin and forgiveness. Jesus speaks about repeat offenders in the life of the church. Jesus offers steps one must take when a brother sins against a fellow church member. If there is no repentance, then the final move is excommunication from the church. The cast-out one is to be relentlessly pursued like a lost sheep or a pagan so that their soul may be saved.

On the heels of these words comes Peter’s question about limits. Jesus seems to imply that there must be



limits when it comes to repetitive sin and forgiveness. Peter asks, “How often shall my brother sin against me and I be obligated to forgive them? The Rabbis say three times. How about seven times? Jesus replies, “Not seven times, but 70 x 7. Put the calculator away. We must forgive others as God forgives us.

“Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it.”

— Mark Twain

Peter has apparently forgotten Jesus words in Matthew 6 on the Lord’s Prayer: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

C.S. Lewis writes, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass

against us. We are offered forgiveness on no other terms. To refuse it means to refuse God’s mercy for ourselves. There is no hint of exceptions and God means what He says.”

Henry Ward Beecher, commenting on forgiveness writes, “God pardons like a mother, who kisses the offense into everlasting forgiveness.” Beecher adds, “I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying, I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note - torn in two, and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one.”

After addressing Peter’s question about sin and forgiveness, Jesus adds a punchline parable. A King’s servant is forgiven a debt of \$10,000 talents. This amount was the largest numerical and monetary value in Jesus’ day. A Talent was worth 15+ years of daily labor.

—Continued on page 3...

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Food For Thought:

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

— C.S. Lewis

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

<i>Building Committee Implementation Team</i>	2
<i>October Worship News</i>	2
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	2
<i>National Night Out</i>	2
<i>Worship Bags for Kids</i>	3
<i>Men’s In Person B.S.</i>	3
<i>Little Lending Library</i>	3
<i>SOLA Online Bible Study</i>	4
<i>Back Page Highlights Council Minutes</i>	4

Building for the Future “Implementation Team”

The Church Council is soliciting names of people interested and available to serve on a Committee designed to implement the next steps of our Church land & building. Tasks will include: Develop a church site master plan; solicit input and feedback from church members; identify, prioritize, and implement necessary tasks; & present all proposals to the Council/Congregation for approval. The mandate, timeline, group size, members, and duties will be taken care of at the October 9 Council Meeting. Anyone interested in serving on this Committee may contact one of the Council Members or Pastor Dave.

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 and 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 on the Nominating Committee.



SAVE THE DATE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020



National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie.

Pastor Dave & Julie are once again hosting an Emmanuel NNO event at their home (6330 Fairway Drive NW Rochester; 6:00-7:30pm). No root beer floats this year due to COVID-19; safe treats will be offered & social distancing will be practiced.

WORSHIP PLANS FOR October 2020 (Fall Schedule)

We will use two Liturgies throughout the fall: Holden Evening Prayer (HEP) and Bread of Life from WOV. 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 (**October 3 & 31, & November 21**). As Pastor Dave Steffenson continues to undergo chemo treatment for pancreatic cancer throughout the fall, Rev. Tim Duesenberg and Rev. Waldemar Gies are both available, should the need arise, to step in and help with pastoral services. We offer thanks to Pastor Gies who served as pulpit supply twice during the month of September.

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 and virtually online.

Saturday, Oct. 3—Pentecost 18: Karen Salz will be our Worship Pianist. WOV with **Communion**.

Saturday, October 10—Pentecost 19: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist. HEP.

Saturday, October 17—Pentecost 20: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist. HEP

Saturday, October 24—Reformation: Karen Salz will be our Worship Pianist. HEP

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.

Thanks to Don Holtan for recording our Services and to Julie Steffenson & Peg Holtan for their help.

—Continued from page 1...

10,000 talents would be the equivalent of at least 150,000 years of labor. How in the world did this servant amass such a debt? No explanations are given. The King/Master orders the servant to be sold along with his wife and children. The debt is irreparable. No amount of restitution is going to cancel the debt. The servant is down to his last move. He falls on his knees and begs the King to just be patient. “Be patient and I will repay you every penny that I owe you.” The plea for patience and the promise of repayment is laughable at best. No one lives 150,000 years. What the servant needs is not patience, but MERCY. The King has pity on his servant. He releases the servant & cancels the entire debt. WOW! Undeserved and unexpected mercy. This is a game changer, but will it be a life changer?

Apparently not. The forgiven servant finds a fellow servant who owes him 100 denarii (100 days of labor; a repayable debt). He shows no mercy, demands immediate payment, and has the debtor thrown into prison. Word gets back to the King. There is hell to pay. There can be *no mercy* for those who refuse to *know mercy*. Jesus’ final words are haunting: “SO ALSO my Heavenly Father will do to everyone of you all, if you all do not forgive your brother from the heart.”

Forgiveness is a work as well as a grace. “One of the most staggering truths of the Scriptures is to understand that we do not earn our way to heaven. ...works have a place—but as a demonstration of having received God’s forgiveness, not as a badge of merit of having earned it” (Ravi Zacharias). Thank God, that our Lord doesn’t keep score and doesn’t run a TAB on our sins. “The LORD forgives ALL our sins. The LORD heals ALL our diseases” (Psalm 103). “If You O LORD were to mark iniquities, LORD who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared” (Psalm 130). God doesn’t give us what we deserve. God gives us what we need; His steadfast love and mercy. On the cross, Jesus exercises the Office of the Keys: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” Forgiveness from the heart. This is God’s gift and God’s requirement for you and for me. We are pardoned and pardoning!

As We Forgive, Pastor Dave

Men’s Bible Study (Outdoor, In-Person)

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran Church 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 2 **in-person studies** during the month of October: **Wednesdays, Sept. 30, and October 14 & 28 from 11am-12 Noon.** Location: Oasis Church.



Little Lending Library Neighborhood Ministry

Thanks is offered to everyone who donated books to the Steffenson “Little Lending Library.” Your contribution of books, new or gently used, religious & secular, are a wonderful addition to this ministry. Future donations are also welcomed. Give Julie a call (507-206-3048) if you have questions.

Sympathies & Prayers to Karen Salz (& her family) in the loss of her father Leo Salz, who went home to be with the LORD on September 10.



Julie Steffenson received a Thrivent Action Team Grant of \$250 in support of take-home worship bags for the youth of our church.

Worship Bags are available for kids each week. Four different bags will be offered on four successive weeks. We hope children enjoy these educational resources during worship. Please take the bags home with you after worship. Enjoy!

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, and live & give generously.

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!

National Night Out!

Tuesday, October 6 (6-7:30pm)

Pastor Dave & Julie's House

Store-bought packaged treats will
be distributed.

Fall 2020
ONLINE BIBLE STUDY
Hosted by Sola Publishing
Monday Evenings (on Zoom)
Starting October 5th

Presented by the study's author:
The Rev. Dr. Steven E. King - Sola's Managing Editor

On October 5, Sola Publishing will be starting its very first online Bible Study: **"Not My Will, But Yours."** Make sure to buy your copy of it at the Sola online store!

Send an email to Amy Little saying, "I wanna join!" alittle@solapublishing.com to get more information about the Zoom codes for each session (6pm Central). This six-week study explores the topic of the "free will" from a biblical perspective, looking at what Scripture has to say about the bondage of the human will and how Jesus Christ has come to deliver us from ourselves. Topics: 1) How Free Are We? (False Assumptions About Freedom); 2) On Will & Choice (The Relationship Between Desire and Action); 3) The Legacy of Sin (Our Human Inability to Trust in God); 4) The "Free Will" Myth (Evidence of Being Curved in on Ourselves); 5) What We Couldn't Do (Salvation in Jesus Christ Alone); 6) Thy Will Be Done (Faith as the Exercise of God's Will in Us).

Call SOLA at #1-888-887-9840, & order Item #A-6040 (\$7.99)
Pastor Dave ordered 3 extra copies & is signed up for this class.

Back Page Stories

Church Council Highlights:

Sept. 11, 2020—Zoom Meeting: Budget Income for the month of Aug. was \$9,364.17, with expenses of \$8,499.49. Our year to date budget surplus is \$4,519.03. Current Building Fund Balance: \$86,601.10. Our church received a \$25,000 gift and \$28,138.59 in matching for the Building Fund in August. Thrivent YTD Choice dollars received: \$1,518.00. In-Person Men's Bible Study will be held on September 9th & 23rd at 11am at Oasis Church. Worship liturgies for the fall will be WOV Bread of Life, and Holden Evening Prayer revised edition. The Lord's Supper will be offered at least once per month. "National Night Out"

will take place on Tuesday, October 6. **Rochester will celebrate "Spirit Days" from Friday, October 16th - Sunday, October 25.** Names are being solicited for the Emmanuel Implementation Team. Committee Appointments will take place at the Oct. 9 Council Mtg. Larry Vomhof is taking a small group of SEMAC volunteers to Ohio from Sept. 27-Oct. 3. The Emmanuel Website now has a "Resources" header on the home page thanks to Adam Troendle. Members of Emmanuel are welcome to contribute books to the Steffenson "Little Lending Library. The Annual Meeting Date is Jan. 30, 2021. The church council is working on the 2021 Mission Plan Budget. The next council meeting will be held on Oct. 9 at 1pm—Zoom Meeting.

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."