

# The Emmanuel Epistle

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “The Divine Service”

I bring you greetings from our dear friend the Rev. Scott Schilbe; Pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Carlyle, Illinois.

Recently I participated in a continuing education event on the meaning and practice of worship. Permit me to share some reflections with you from my continuing education event. The Divine Service is our weekly worship liturgy. Christians familiar with liturgy and hymnody, will recognize words like *Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Nunc Dimittis*. The word *liturgy* means the “work of the people.”

Worship is a holy work whereby God is glorified & praised, and God’s people are blessed with the “for-you” presence of the Triune God.

Visitors unfamiliar with the Divine Service may find liturgy cumbersome and confusing. Preferring praise bands and contemporary music, some worshipers may find hymns archaic and tedious to sing. The Divine Service was instituted by Almighty God and is found historically in the life of God’s worshipping people. When we participate in the Divine Service we are join-



ing with ancient Israel, the Apostolic Fathers, saints—past, present, & future, and the whole company of heavenly angels in the praise of the Triune God.

*“As we worship, so we believe; and as we believe, so we worship.”*

*If someone wants to understand what we believe, they will need to join us in worship.”*

Our historic liturgy is solidly based on God’s Word, enabling us to receive God’s gifts of mercy and grace in Word and Sacrament. Lutherans believe that *worship is an act of receiving God’s gifts*. That’s why the worship service we use is called the Divine Service. There is only one Divine Service, but there are different settings. Some of the music & language differ between the settings, but the core of them all is the same; i.e. God delivering to us His forgiveness and salvation.

The Divine Service is, first

and foremost, God coming to us with His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. The action is always from God to us. He is the Giver, and we are the receivers. Worship is not merely something we do as an act of reverence to God. Worship should not be centered on an individual’s feelings, wants, or desires. God is not present in worship to entertain us, but to save us.

Peter Reske, senior editor of music & worship at Concordia Publishing House, reminds us of the *sacramental and sacrificial rhythm* found in the Divine Service.

Reske writes, “Lutherans use the terms *sacramental & sacrificial* to distinguish (1) the parts of the service in which God serves us with His Gospel gifts from (2) those in which we respond with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. In true Christian worship, God’s gifts should predominate over our feeble response.

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## Food For Thought:

*“The One who sings,  
prays twice!”*

—Author Unknown

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# CELEBRATING

## Friendship

### It's a Gift of God!

### Saturday, October 5, 2019

Joe Vomhof received a \$250 Thrivent Action Team grant in support of our October 5th "Friendship Celebration". **Don and Peg Holtan will be our worship musicianaries that night.** Friendship Treats will be served. Members of Emmanuel are invited to bring a special friend, or 2 or 3, with them to worship that night. Friends will receive a special gift. Think about, & pray for, the special friend God wants you to bring with you to worship on October 5. Remember! A Friend's a friend forever if the Lord's the Lord of them!

### New Life Family Services GALA Event

Emmanuel is a proud supporter of ministries dedicated to the sanctity of life. This year's New Life GALA event will be held on Thursday, Oct. 24 at the Rochester International Event Center (6:00-8:30pm). Emmanuel is hosting a table of ten. Seven of the ten spots are already spoken for. If you are interested in attending contact Pastor Dave ASAP. This year's keynote speaker is: Nashville recording artist, Steventhen Holland. Steventhen is the author of a book entitled, The Journey: Brokenness to Wholeness, in which he shares his amazing story.

His life is the result of the gang-rape of an 18-year-old mentally challenged woman. Incredibly, despite his mother's lack of intellectual ability, homelessness & social pressures to abort, Holland survived. His mother, unable to care for him, placed him in foster care. He was later adopted. Steventhen Holland is married and has three daughters. He is the founder of "Broken Not Dead Ministries."

- 1 in 4 women will have an abortion by age 45.
- New Life provides more than 450 ultrasounds each year. Of the women who receive follow up care, 94% choose life for their child.
- New Life provides adoption services.

### WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR OCTOBER

#### Saturday, October 5 - Pentecost 17 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson  
Ushers: Arne Nelson, Matt Serr, & Gavin Edwards  
Acolyte: Mason Edwards  
Coffee: Peg Holtan

#### Saturday, October 12 - Pentecost 18 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof  
Ushers: Larry Vomhof & Joe Vomhof  
Acolyte: Nora Serr

#### Saturday, October 19 - Pentecost 19 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Jean Wanek  
Ushers: Bob Harms & Rich Sunde  
Acolyte: Nora Serr

#### Saturday, October 26 - Reformation (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce  
Ushers: LeRoy Quam & Creig Anderson  
Acolyte: **Pending**

MUSICIANARIES: Don & Peg Holtan  
Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson  
Sound: Deb Vomhof  
Treats: Samia Nelson, Marcia Harms,  
Judy Caudill, and Deb Vomhof

PIANIST: Karen Salz (Bread of Life)  
Communion Assistant: Judy Caudill  
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
Treats: Deb Vomhof

PIANIST: Mary Ann Groven (LBW)  
Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson  
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
Treats: Julie Steffenson

PIANIST: Karen Salz (LBW)  
Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce  
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
Treats: Judy Pearce

**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. Greeters for the month: Darald & Leitha Bothun.

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The Lutheran Divine Service has a particularly well-tuned balance between the two (gifts and response). This comes fundamentally from building the service around those two great gifts of Word and Supper. The Service then provides appropriate ways for us to respond to the gifts.”

Reske adds, “It’s vital not only to keep the balance right, but also to keep the order right. Wouldn’t it be absurd to proclaim the forgiveness of sins before we speak our confession? It works the other way around. So, also, God speaks to us in the Scripture readings before we respond to Him by confessing the Creed, which is taken from those Scriptures. We proclaim the promises of God in Scripture and Sermon before we take up those promises and beg for His help in the Prayer of the Church. And we pray our thanks and say our Amen chiefly after we have received the Lord’s precious body and blood. The *careful rhythmic heartbeat* of the Lutheran Divine Service saves us from the sort of me-centered worship that we might otherwise invent if left to ourselves. Whenever we’re tempted to say, ‘Look what I can do for You, God!’ the Divine Service trumps our selfish claims with His overwhelmingly gracious gifts.”

**Bottom line:** God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the subject of worship. God not only comes to us first in worship, but He also actually gives us the words to say when we respond. God teaches us to worship Him in much the same way a parent teaches a child to speak. When a parent hears their child, for the first time, speak the words, “mama, or daddy,” the parent’s face beams with joy! So, also, the Divine Service is drawn almost entirely from Scripture. This has always been true. We can respond to God with confidence, using the very words He gives us.

“As we worship, so we believe; and as we believe, so we worship.” If someone wants to understand what we believe, they will need to join us in worship. The culture should not influence the church, but worship should influence the culture. The Divine Service should not be like the local pop concert. Instead, it is a “heaven on earth symphony”. The Divine Service is holy and different than anything in this world. The Divine Service is the place where God Himself distributes His life-giving Word and sacraments. Certainly, the church has a great responsibility to act faithfully in its worship as God bends down to sinners to bestow on them the righteousness won by the blood of His Son. We receive God’s gifts of salvation with thanksgiving in word and in song.

The command and invitation are given: “Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth; ye who sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth: Come & worship, come & worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.” Heaven came to earth and the angels sang the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Simeon held the infant Savior in his hands and sang the *Nunc Dimittis*. In the real presence of the HOLY, HOLY, HOLY GOD, we sing the *Sanctus*. We behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world & we sing the *Agnus Dei*. God, the Giver, comes to us & we receive the Aaronic Benediction. We shout, “AMEN.” As we enter the mission field of daily life, we carry the “for you” presence of Jesus with us. We are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Dismissal is given: “Go in peace. Serve the Lord.” We respond, “Thanks be to God!” The Divine Service is our Lord’s gift to His people. And so we “come & worship!”

Adding My Voice to the Sacred Song, Pastor Dave

**Worship is Practice for Eternity:** “I can safely say, on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is not ready for heaven.”—A.W. Tozer

**We Worship an Amazing God:** “Many Spirit-filled authors have exhausted the thesaurus in order to describe God with the glory He deserves. His perfect holiness, by definition, assures us that our words can’t contain Him. Isn’t it a comfort to worship a God we cannot exaggerate?”—Francis Chan

**Music is a Divine Gift:** “Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music.”—Martin Luther

**The World Needs to See our Worship:** “God directs his people not simply to worship but to sing his praises ‘before the nations.’ We are called not simply to communicate the gospel to nonbelievers; we must also intentionally celebrate the gospel before them [in our worship].”—Timothy J. Keller

## EMMANUEL HUDDLE

Members of Emmanuel Lutheran will gather on Saturday, October 12, following worship, in the Oasis Fellowship Hall for treats and conversation regarding our ministry together. The main topic of conversation will be an update on the possible purchase of church land, and input for the 2020 Mission Plan Budget. We hope you are able to attend our next Emmanuel Huddle!

### Reformation Sunday—Prayer Walk

Each year, servants of Emmanuel walk around our Oasis neighborhood, offering prayers for our city and her people. Please join us on Sunday, October 27 for our 7th annual prayer walk and 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 and Judy Pearce. Following the evening meal, we will join in a House Blessing of the Pearce home. Please bring a dish or dessert to share. We hope you can join us!

### 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!

### “Lutherans for Life”—Regional Conference

On Saturday, September 14, four members of Emmanuel attended the Regional Conference of “Lutherans for Life,” held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Rochester. Here are few nuggets:

- How does one find a Christian Hospice where the sanctity of life, natural death and “God’s timing” are respected. The American Hospice Movement is at a crossroads. Medical killings are becoming more common.
- Read Psalm 139:13-16. God’s got a huge plan for life & we’re all a part of it! Life is sacred!
- The ancient heresy of Gnosticism (matter is evil & freedom comes through special knowledge) is being revived. Self-deification, individual truth & autonomy, & disorder are celebrated!

## Education Opportunities!

Rally Day took place on Saturday, September 14. Youth and adults enjoyed a skit presented by Julie Steffenson and Nora Serr. Following worship everyone enjoyed ice cream sundaes. **Saturday School (youth) & G.I.F.T.—Growing In Faith Together (Adults)** will meet each Saturday at the Oasis Church at 5pm. Youth are learning Bible Stories. Adults are discussing the topic of “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:** October 3, 10, & 31; November 7 & 14; and December 5 & 12.

**Men’s Bible Study:** The men of Emmanuel have begun a new study. It is 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 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. Please 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.

### What Millennials say about Evangelism!

Sharing one's faith, evangelizing, is a core practice among many religions. For Christians, it is viewed as a mandate from Jesus himself before he departed earth: commanding his disciples to "spread the good news." Yet, today, a number of factors are hindering many Christians' enthusiasm for faith-sharing, including the decline of religion in America, a spreading apathy toward spiritual matters, & a growing cultural suspicion of people of faith.

Millennials are those people who were born from 1984-1998 (ages 20 to 34). The Barna Group has been conducting & analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984. In a recent study, "*Reviving Evangelism*," Barna discovered that Millennials are deeply conflicted about sharing their faith (doing evangelism).

Almost all practicing Christians believe that part of their faith means being a witness about Jesus (ranging from 95% to 97% among all generational groups), and that the best thing that could ever happen to someone is for them to know Jesus (94% to 97%). Millennials in particular feel equipped to share their faith with others. Almost three-quarters say they know how to respond when someone raises questions about faith (73%), and that they are gifted at sharing their faith with other people (73%). This is higher than any other generational group: Gen X (ages 35-53), Boomers (ages 54-72) and Elders (ages 73+).

Despite this, many Millennials are unsure about the actual practice of evangelism. Almost half of Millennials (47%) agree at least somewhat that it is wrong to share one's personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith. Among practicing Christians, Millennials report an average of four close friends or family members who practice a faith other than Christianity. In summary: Millennials know the faith of Jesus & the Biblical mandate of evangelism. They know how to answer faith questions. But half of them are hesitant to share their faith.

### Union Theological Seminary—Plant Worship?



Union, located in New York City, is the oldest independent seminary in the U.S. It was founded in 1836 by members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Recently, chapel students were invited to pray to potted plants. One student posted the following message online: "*Today in chapel, we confessed to plants. Together, we held our grief, joy, regret, hope, guilt and sorrow in prayer; offering them to the beings who sustain us, but whose gift we too often fail to honor. What do you confess to the plants in your life?*" It puts a new spin on what it means to be a "church plant".

Students never know what they're going to get, even though the seminary is "grounded in the Christian tradition," because the chapel is "deeply committed to inter-religious engagement" as "a place where people from all the wondrous faith traditions at Union can express their beliefs," so worship looks different every day.

"One day, you may come in to find a traditional Anglican communion, another day you may enter into a service of Buddhist meditation or Muslim prayer. Another, you may find a Pentecostal praise service or a silent Quaker meeting," Union explained: "We create a home where people can worship side by side, in traditions similar to and very different to their own." Despite the criticism, Union explained: "The diversity and breadth of our chapel services is a huge part of what makes Union Union. And we wouldn't change it for the world."

The irony in all of this paganism, is that Union claims to be a Christian Seminary. Really!?

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

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### SAVE THE DATES!

#### Friendship Saturday Worship

Saturday, October 5 (6pm)

#### Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Social

November 27 at Madonna Towers (6pm)

## MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES!

- Prayer Walk & Potluck—Sunday, October 27 at 3pm. Potluck & Housing Blessing at 5pm at the home of Lee & Judy Pearce (1636—6th Ave. S.W. Unit 16). The Pearce's are providing eating utensils, beverages, and pulled pork sandwiches. Please bring a side-dish or a dessert to share with your church family.
- Christmas Worship 2019: Children's Nativity on Saturday, December 21 at 6pm; Christmas Eve Worship on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 9pm; and 12 Days of Christmas Bell Ringing Service on January 4 at 6pm.
- Annual Meeting—Saturday, January 18 at 3:30pm.
- SEMAC 2020—Dayton, Ohio: February 9-21, 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.

### 2020 Membership Covenants!

Advent I begins on Saturday, November 30. Discipleship Covenants for 2020 will be available that day for servants of Emmanuel wishing to sign or renew their membership for the new year. A Covenant Renewal service will take place at the January 18 Worship Service.

## 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, October 2 & 16 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:

**September 13, 2019:** Thus far in 2019, we have received \$68,632 in Budget income and paid out \$73,763 in Budget expenses. Emmanuel has two CD's invested with Edward Jones (\$145,000) both maturing in December. Giving Statements will be distributed in early October. Calendar requests for Christmas & Lenten Services have been submitted and approved by Oasis Church. The Iowa Mission District Convocation coincided with Rally Day. No one from Emmanuel was able to attend the convocation. Several educational opportunities are being offered to members and friends of Emmanuel.

An Emmanuel Huddle has been set for October 12. Emmanuel is sponsoring a Table for Ten at the New Life Gala (Oct. 24). Don't forget to invite a friend to Friendship Saturday on October 5. The next council meeting will be held on Friday, October 11 at 4pm.

**Emmanuel of Grafton, IA:** Their church & community choir will be joining us for worship and offering gifts of music on Saturday, May 2, 2020. Save the date and invite a friend.

**Gideon Presentation:** Gary Froiland will be sharing a testimonial regarding the work of the Gideons International in worship on Saturday, October 19. A free-will offering will be received.

**Bring Your Bible To School Day:** **Thursday, October 3.**