

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “Filled with the Spirit”

“Spirit of God, descend upon my heart; Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move. Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art, And make me love Thee as I ought to love.” Be filled with the Holy Spirit! St. Paul writes, “If we live by the Spirit, (AND WE DO) let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

Members of the NALC are mission driven because we are Christ-centered and Spirit-filled. Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which we have from God. We are not our own. We glorify God in the body. “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. The Holy Spirit is the initiator, incubator, and inciter for missions. There is a reason why the organizational structure of the NALC is imbedded in “Mission” Districts. The Great Commission of Christ is our shared DNA. By the grace of God we are disciple-making disciples. We dare not grieve the Holy Spirit, nor quench it.



The North American Lutheran Church (NALC) met in Convocation on August 15-17, in Denver, Colorado. In attendance were 224 clergy delegates, 212 lay delegates, and 151 visitors. It was an exciting time as Pastor Dave was accompanied for the first

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
— Ephesians 4:30

time by his wife Julie, who served as Emmanuel’s Lay Delegate. The Theme of this year’s Convocation was, “The Holy Spirit: Calling, Gathering, Enlightening, & Sanctifying”. This year’s focus was on the third person of the Holy Trinity. Our Scriptural verse was Acts 1:8, a familiar verse to members of Emmanuel, who have spent the last 12 months immersed in a bible study

on the Book of Acts (aka “The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church”).

St. Luke quotes our Lord on the occasion of His ascension: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The power and presence is for a purpose; namely, the proclamation of Jesus, crucified & risen for the forgiveness of sins! Daily we pray, “Come Holy Spirit!”

Bishop John Bradosky in his opening Convocation sermon reminded us that we are not in a “witness protection program”. Yes, in Christ, we are given a new identity. But not so that we can relocate and remain hidden. We are not called to go witnessing, we are called to be witnesses. God does not place us into a witness protection program to keep others

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September 2018
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“Teach me to love you as your angels love, one holy passion filling all my frame: the fullness of the heaven-descended Dove; my heart an altar, and your love the flame.”

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Blessing of Backpacks

A new school year is beginning. On Saturday, September 1, we are blessing our schools and those who teach and learn. Bring your backpacks and lunch boxes so we can bless them and you! Stick with Jesus, because He's stuck on you! A special gift awaits you!

Rally Day

Saturday School & G.I.F.T.

Join us on Saturday (Sept. 8) at 5:10pm as we kick off another year of Christian Education. We will kick off our year in the Fellowship Hall with special activities & Root Beer Floats. This fall, Pastor Dave will be teaching "The Last Battle" by C.S. Lewis to youth in grades 3 and following. G.I.F.T. this fall will be a study of Mark Cahill's book, "One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven"—Learn how to share your Christian faith with a others! Julie will teach Bible Stories to our little ones. Join us for the Journey!

Women's Bible Study: "The Psalter"

Women of Emmanuel will launch a new study on the **Book of Psalms** (The Psalter) on Sept. 6. We'll meet twice a month on Thursdays at Oasis Church at 1pm. **Dates:** Sept. 6 & 27; Oct. 4 & 25; Nov. 1 & 29; Dec. 6 & 13. The Psalter was Israel's Prayer Book & Hymn Book. Martin Luther saw the imprint of Jesus on every page & verse of the Psalter. Invite a friend!

GOT Change?

Thanks for offering your change as an investment in the future of Emmanuel. The coins are adding up for the glory of God. We've already reached our goal of \$500.00. Now we're working on our next \$500.00.

New Mailing Address!

Pass the word around! Oasis Church (Emmanuel also) has a new mailing address! 3819 - 18th Ave. NW, Rochester, MN 55901.

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR SEPTEMBER—Pastor Dave preaching

Saturday, September 1 - Pentecost 15 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Creig Anderson & Bob Mulvihill
Acolyte: Siebenaler

Saturday, September 8 - Pentecost 16 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: Darald & Leitha Bothun
Acolyte: Elijah Matzke

Saturday, September 15 - Pentecost 17 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Engle
Ushers: Bob Mulvihill & Brock Edwards
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

Saturday, September 22 - Pentecost 18 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Matt Serr
Ushers: Creig Anderson & Matt Serr
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

Saturday, September 29 - Pentecost 19 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof
Ushers: Larry Vomhof & Joe Vomhof
Acolyte: Siebenaler

PIANIST: Karen Salz

Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Julie Steffenson

PIANIST: Scott Schilbe

Communion Assistant: Leitha Bothun
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Deb Vomhof & Judy Caudill

PIANIST: Scott Schilbe

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

PIANIST: Scott Schilbe

Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Jenna Serr

PIANIST: Scott Schilbe

Communion Assistant: Judy Caudill
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan

Treats: PENDING

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up. Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down.

—Continued from page 1

from recognizing us as fully devoted followers of Jesus. In baptism we are given a new identity: Beloved & Forgiven Children of God. “Were they to take our house, goods, honor, child or spouse; though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day! The Kingdom is ours forever.” This is the true witness protection program of God.

Day One of the Convocation was an inspiring Mission Festival, featuring two Roman Catholic women (Sherry Weddell & Katherine Coolidge) who have spent a major portion of their lives participating in vocational discipleship. Sherry and Katherine spoke about fruitful discipleship, reminding us that discipleship is not primarily about church programs and building maintenance. Did you know that 90% of Roman Catholics are spiritual infants? Only 3% have matured to the stage of apostleship, whereby they eagerly seek opportunities to share the Gospel daily and bear fruit to the glory of God. Research suggests that the vast majority of Lutherans are also infant Christians. God wants us to grow up into the full maturity of Christ. Many people know **about Jesus**, but few actually **know Jesus**. If we want to share the gospel with others, then we will need to begin by building a bridge of trust with others. Talking openly about a “personal relationship with Jesus” is essential. People need to hear the message of salvation 7-11 times before they will respond.

The Worship Services at the Convocation were fantastic. Julie and I attended two workshops on church technology. Did you know that the average teen in America opens their phone 300+ times per day? Their anxiety is captured by the acronym **FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out**. There are more smart phones in Africa than there are toothbrushes. The major takeaway from these workshops was this: Have a Good Website (pleasing, with good up-to-date information, and consistent updates). Real Content is the lifeblood of a good website. Did you know that NALC has its own Servers and its own App? You can download the NALC App on your smart phone for free! We need not let technology capture and control us. We can capture it and use it for the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

During the Convocation, recognition of pastoral service was highlighted. Two pastors were recognized for 65 years of service since their ordination. Yours truly was recognized for 35 years of ordained ministry, five of which has been as pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester. Yay God! Delegates at the Convocation were informed that there will be changes in our NALC Seminary. The Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin has been wearing two hats for the past few years, namely President and fulltime faculty member. A five year transition plan is being implemented whereby a new Seminary President will be sought, allowing Pastor Schiffrin to focus entirely on teaching. The costs for this transition have been secured by two large designated gifts, totaling \$400,000. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Dr. Gemechis Buba shared stories of several new mission starts securing their own property and buildings. An NALC congregation in Minneapolis purchased a building formerly owned by an ELCA congregation. There is an interesting twist to this purchase. The ELCA would not sell it to the NALC Oromo Congregation, so an individual, speaking Arabic (the ELCA assumed he was Muslim), purchased the building and then one day later sold it to the NALC congregation. How sad that a church body would rather sell its property to Muslims than fellow Christians.

Financially, the NALC is doing very well; in large part due to curtailing of costs and generous giving by members. The 2019 Operational Budget was approved at \$2,128,384. This budget is easily achievable if each congregation tithes 5-7% of their operational budget. One distressing piece of news was presented by the NALC Treasurer: Less than 80% of the NALC congregations are giving benevolence dollars to the NALC. I’m not sure what is in the hearts of those other 20% but I’m praying about it.

Currently, we have 424 congregations in the NALC & a baptized membership of 142,000. The NALC Natural Disaster Response has been busy offering compassion in the name of Jesus to those affected by natural disasters. NALC congregations donated more than \$1.2 million in material goods, along with the donation of time by 2000+ volunteers. More than \$11,000 in gift cards was collected by the Women of the NALC in support of Disaster Relief during Luther Week (“Stuff the Tonka” truck). Pastor Wendy Berthelsen, daughter of Gloria Wiebusch, was reelected to our Seminary Board of Regents. As the NALC continues to grow, our church structure will also need to grow. Eventually we may have four regional bishops and smaller Mission Districts composed of 12-15 congregations.

Next year’s NALC Convocation will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana (**August 7-9, 2019**), with the election of a new presiding bishop. Bishop Bradoksy will not be running for re-election. May God grant each of us a prayerful heart as the Holy Spirit selects us a new spiritual leader for the NALC. Bishop Bradoksy has served Christ and His church very well. I will miss his pastoral, Christ-centered, mission-driven leadership. Bishop Bradoksy reminded us that each of us, like Paul with Timothy, must faithfully pass on the Gospel baton to others. ... (Continued on Page 4)

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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SAVE THE DATES!

* **Reformation Sunday Prayer Walk & Potluck: Oct. 28, 2018.**

* **Children's Christmas Nativity will be held on Saturday, Dec. 22 (6pm).**

* **12 Days of Christmas Bell Ringing Service (Saturday, Jan. 5 at 6pm)**

*Continued from Page 3...*In a relay race, the successful passing of the baton is essential; the handoff must be made well lest the team get disqualified. Who are we investing in and discipling in the Christian faith? Bonhoeffer reminds us that: "Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ" (From: The Cost of Discipleship).

Bishop Bradosky also reminded us that "as called and gifted members of the Body of Christ, when we are missing from corporate worship, the whole Body of Christ is deprived". Our absence is not only about what we don't get; it is also about what we don't give. Fired up for Jesus, let's not quench the Holy Spirit! We are Called, Gathered, Enlightened and Sanctified for the Work of Jesus Christ.

We are Spirit-Filled and Spirit-Filling, Pastor Dave & Julie

"Building for the Future"—A Shared Vision

Emmanuel Huddle Summary Notes: Maintaining continuity with our God-given strengths, we will build upon our combined assets by 1) Maintaining a strong sense of community—a warm and welcoming environment where everyone is valued, 2) Growing the worship life of our congregation without compromising our core values & beliefs, 3) Remaining solidly Confessional & Orthodox—Christ-centered & Traditionally-grounded, 4) Securing financial stability & sustainability, 5) Enhancing the visibility of Emmanuel & growing the footprints of Jesus in our Community, and 6) Finding a church site where form follows function and the facilities serve the mission of Emmanuel. Scripture will remain the centerpiece of our life together.

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 2018. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, September 5 & 19 at 1:00 pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

Church Council Highlights—

August 3: July Income was \$9,038 and expenses were \$10,370. We received a benevolence check from Rushford Lutheran in the amount of \$2,500. The mid-year audit has been completed. Pastor Dave will be

participating in several continuing education events in August and Sept. The 2019 Emmanuel Picnic will be at the Vomhof home on August 4. Guidelines for Congregational Care ministry were presented. Christmas Eve Worship will be at Oasis Church at 9pm. Next Council Meeting will be on Friday, September 9 at 10am.

Men's Morning Bible Study:

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran meet on Tuesday mornings (8am) at Oasis Church for Bible Study and fellowship. The men are currently studying the Psalms appointed for weekly worship. Join us each week for conversation and coffee!

The Lutheran Study Bible Top 12 Reasons to PURCHASE

This month: Reasons #8 & #7.

#8. The Lutheran Study Bible has over 31,000 concordance entries, helping you locate important topics and issues throughout the Bible. If you check one reference a day, the fun won't end for 84 years! #7. The Lutheran Study Bible has more notes than nearly any other study Bible available today: over 26,500, all researched, written & edited by faithful Lutheran Bible scholars, pastors and Bible teachers. This is most certainly true.

Next Month: Reasons #6 and #5. If you can't wait, contact Pastor Dave & he'll email you all 12 reasons.

"Rock the Red Kettle"

Salvation Army kickoff: Bell Ringing at the HyVee North (Circle Drive) on Saturday, November 17 from 9am-5pm at both doors! Emmanuel is Rocking!