

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Membership is a Privilege”

St. Paul writes, “Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it.”

For several years I have been wrestling with, and praying about, this thing we call MEMBERSHIP. What images surface in your head and heart when you hear the word membership? Do you immediately think about dues, duties, expectations and responsibilities; rights, privileges, advantages and entitlements? I suggest that membership is all about privilege. It is our privilege, our honor and delight, to be chosen by God for membership in His family & Kingdom. Conscripted by Christ in the washing of regeneration, discipleship is our birthright, our joyful duty and our delight.

The old way of understanding, and doing, church membership isn’t working. Defining active membership in church constitutions as one recordable contribution and communion is ridiculous. Such definitions are embarrassing, guaranteeing decline. Congregations are expected to do an annual review of membership. This often results in members being reluctantly taken off the roster due to gross inactivity, with Pastors and Churches becoming the “bad guy”. Offended parishioners cry “foul” and



accuse their congregation or pastor of being heartless for “taking them off,” or “removing them.” Why are inactive people so concerned about having their name on a list? One parishioner responded, “What if we need a church to get married or buried in?” Here’s a secret, “You don’t have to be a member for me to marry or bury you.”

Recently I received a letter of transfer for Arne Nelson. Recently, James Wagner became a member of Emmanuel through Baptism. Julie and I plan on having our church membership officially transferred to Emmanuel on January 1, 2014. Vicky Mulvihill had her family’s letter of transfer sent to Emmanuel.

What will membership mean at Emmanuel Lutheran? After much prayer, here is what I am proposing: Emmanuel won’t require “exclusive” membership. You can have your name on several church lists if you wish. Emmanuel won’t ever remove someone from our membership list. Membership will be on an annual basis. Members will need to re-up each January,

by voice or in writing. Members will never go off of our list unless they choose to do so, by not re-up or by dying during a calendar year.

Membership at Emmanuel will be all about birthright and privilege. We will delight daily in the duty of discipleship. We will subscribe to the marks of discipleship and expect of each other what Christ expects of us. We will worship weekly, pray daily, give generously, and immerse ourselves in the Scriptures through daily Bible reading and regular devotions and Bible Study. We will grow spiritually, serve others eagerly, and share the Good News always! Membership for those who choose to join will be about being a Servant of Emmanuel. Being your pastor and partner in ministry is my privilege.

Membership doesn’t mean SOMETHING...it means EVERYTHING!
Thank you Jesus for the privilege of serving You!

**November
Newsletter
Volume 1
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Food For Thought:

“The Law says, ‘do this’ and nothing is done. Grace says, ‘believe this’, and everything is already done.”

*Martin Luther
Heidelberg Disputation*

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

<i>DMC or DMC??</i>	2
<i>Iowa Mission District Convocation Highlights</i>	2
<i>Getting To Know You</i>	3
<i>Dave & Carol Olson</i>	3
<i>IN HIS NAME</i>	4
<i>THANKSGIVING</i>	4
<i>“Back Page Stories”</i>	4

“DMC or DMC²?”

Medicine and Christ-centered ministry! The Book of Esther doesn't mention the name of God, and yet the imprint of the LORD, the presence and providence Christ, is written on every verse of this beloved story. Mordecai says to his cousin Esther, “Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” Do you ever wonder why you're here? Scripture tells us that we are here for a holy purpose: to Love God and to serve our neighbor.

DMC: Destination Medical Center; a half-a-billion-dollar tax initiative

from the State of Minnesota for the Community of Rochester, promising economic vitality and population growth during the next 20 years. What if DMC is God's baby, and not the offspring of our State or Community? What if economic prosperity and physical healing is just the icing on the cake and not the main course? What if we square DMC and put the focus on being Christ-Centered? What if Rochester became a place where people were made well physically and spiritually by Dr. Jesus? Wouldn't it be a shame if people came to destination Rochester and missed the Great Physician, getting only a physical reprieve and a temporary extension of

life, and missing out on eternal life and destination heaven?

DMC is God's mission, God's mandate, God's ministry for destination Rochester. DMC is our call to be a light to the nations; to offer in the name of Jesus what is eternal. Ten lepers came to Jesus (Luke 17). Ten were made clean, but only one was healed (i.e. saved), and returned to Jesus offering thanks and praise to God. Who knows, maybe you and I have been put here, not by accident, but by Divine providence and plan, for a time such as this. DMC²: Destination Ministry, Christ-Center Community!

Iowa Mission District Convocation—Highlights

Pastor Dave Steffenson and Arne Nelson attended the 2013 Iowa Mission District Convocation as representatives of Emmanuel, and were given voice and vote.

Pastor Ken Kimball announced that he will complete his final year as Mission District Dean, but will pass the baton on to a new servant in the fall of 2014. He has logged 6,772 servant miles. Emmanuel has been a recipient of his generous spirit. He received a standing ovation of thanks! The Mission District Budget was approved at \$11,900, with congregational assessment set at \$350 per church. We have 34 congregations in our Mission District, twelve of which are supporters of Emmanuel.

Pastor Mark Chavez, NALC General Secretary, was the keynote speaker. He reminded us that while the world does multiplication, the church often satisfies itself with doing addition. It's time for Great Commission Congregations to embrace Genesis 1: “Be fruitful and multiply!” God has built multiplication in to the Orders of Creation. The Ethiopian Church is a multiplication model. Going forward the NALC will avoid looking in the rearview mirror, but we will certainly learn from the past. Mission-driven churches know that “it takes one to make one”; i.e. disciples.

Greetings were brought to us from several of our ministry partners:

Lutherans for Life (www.lutheransforlife.org) reminded us that Lutherans are FOR LIFE: Living In Faith Everyday! Instead of telling people what we are pro or against, let's tell people what we are for. **United Marriage Encounter** (www.unitedmarriage.org) reminded us that Marriage Encounter began in the 1960's in Spain. A Catholic Priest asked, “How do we build and renew strong churches?” Answer: “By building and renewing strong couples and families.” Marriage Encounter operates on a “pay it forward” model. The actual cost for a weekend is \$600 per couple. Maybe Emmanuel would like to budget a weekend as an investment in healthy marriages and families? An Encounter Weekend was recently held in Hawaii for military couples. At the end of the weekend one soldier made this comment: “I work every day defending millions of Americans I don't know. In the last 48 hours I've learned how to stand up for and defend my marriage and family.”

Updates were given about the new NALC Seminary and the Navigators Program. Securing evangelical and confessional pastors for the future means investing in quality Seminary education in the present. We have 24 Mission Districts and 371 NALC congregations. We need to raise startup funds of \$1 Million; this comes to \$41,666 per Mission District, or \$2695 per church. Emmanuel is looking at ways that we can make a generous offering in support of the NALS.

The day closed with elections, greetings from Pastor Herb Haferman (50 years of missionary service to Tanzania), and worship with Pastor Chavez preaching. We delivered 24 choir robes from Oasis to Pastor Mark Lund for use by his church choir in Readlyn, Iowa.

In 1951 Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote the music and lyrics to “Getting to Know You”. Part of the lyrics read as follows:

*Getting to know you, getting to know
all about you.*

*Getting to like you, getting to hope
you like me.*

*Getting to know you, putting it my
way,*

But nicely,

You are precisely,

My cup of tea.

Getting to know you,

Getting to feel free and easy

When I am with you,

Getting to know what to say

Haven't you noticed

Suddenly I'm bright and breezy

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

*Because of all the beautiful and new
Things I'm learning about you*

Day

by

day.

Walking with Jesus in the Bible, we know by his dialogue with others that he wanted to have a personal relationship with folks—he wanted to know their needs, their hopes, and dreams. So beginning with this issue of the **Emmanuel Epistle**, we too will be “getting to know you” as we build our faith community.

Thank you Carol Olson for using your spiritual gifts and writing this monthly

feature article from a distance, giving us a close-up view of the Servants of Emmanuel. You’ve got Jesus inside of you and your husband Dave right beside you!

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Dave & Carol Olson

“One one thousandth, two one thousandth, Geronimo.” Fifty-five years ago these were the words Dave was speaking into the wind as he parachuted out of an airplane. After service in the Marine Corps, he lived in California and was one of the first members of the Parachute Club of America. Jumping out of an airplane at 12,000 feet is not everyone’s cup of tea, but he loved to take a chance. His life style segued into our marriage. Dave’s various jobs in transportation (dispatch and driving) lent itself to a nomadic life and we lived in Arizona, Utah, and Iowa and then we returned to Minnesota in the mid 1970s. We took some chances, but the people we met and the experiences we shared opened new vistas.

Years later our son and daughter were at an independent age—college, travel, jobs. We looked at one another and said, “What’s next?” We took a chance and bought a Harley. For the next 20+ years, we toured the country which of course, included several trips to Sturgis. Envisioning

Dave on a big Harley wasn’t too hard, but seeing Carol dressed in her leathers as a motorcycle “mama” was a stretch of the most vivid imaginations.

The bike is now sold and we retired—Carol from Mayo, and Dave from commercial driving. Today we are nestled on a small acreage with apple trees out in Oronoco. We bought an old farm house at an auction on a whim one night. We took a chance, and even though we sometimes equated it with the money pit, we now call it home. Like most retirees, we travel some and on one trip we ended up in Fairhope, Alabama. The idyllic community situated on the Eastern Shore of Mobile bay reminded us of Lake Pepin and the bluffs surrounding Lake City. After three years of visiting, we took a chance and bought a small home where we live during the winter.

Both of us were raised Lutheran. At the church we were attending, we were hearing a new doctrine. Although we are not theologians, we both knew that what we were being

told was not what we were reading in the Bible. We had worshiped at our church a long time and had seen our grandchildren baptized, our friends buried—we had roots. When you are old, walking away from the familiar is difficult but we reached a decision. We knew we had to sit under the authority of God’s Word. We took a chance and made a leap of faith and that decision ultimately brought us to Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

Beginning a mission church requires courage, commitment, and yes, the willingness to take a chance. The “chances” are now becoming opportunities and decisions as our pastor and council begin to lay foundational stones for our church. We both have served in our faith communities by teaching, working with youth, singing in a choir, and working at the Dorothy Day House and the Salvation Army. Retirement years can be filled with new purpose and yes, opportunities to take new chances to reach out and to share the life-affirming truths of God’s Word and we are excited about being two of the builders.

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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SAVE THE DATES!

Emmanuel Annual Meeting:

Saturday, January 25, 2014
7 pm Following 6 pm Worship

Christmas Eve Worship:

Tuesday, December 24 at 6 pm

IN HIS NAME

In His Name is a ministry of Team Rochester...*providing food in the name of Jesus Christ to those in need!* Churches from the Rochester area cooperate together to supply the funding, pack the food, and distribute it to those in need. **In His Name** makes use of high quality surplus food. Each month, **In His Name** provides large boxes of food worth about \$70 at a cost of only \$15 per box that includes a lot of fresh produce, dairy, bakery, canned goods, and some meat. This food distribution ministry takes place on the 2nd (Berean Community Church—3157 Kenosha Drive NW) and 4th (Hope Summit Church—1315 6th Avenue SE) Saturdays of each month. To order a box call: (507) 206-1889.



Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Social

Thanksgiving and Thanks-living are marks of discipleship. Emmanuel invites you to join us for Worship on Thanksgiving Eve—Wednesday Night, November 27 at 6 p.m. We'll celebrate the Great Thanksgiving, the Meal of Forgiveness, the Body and Blood of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ. A special Thanksgiving story will be read. Children will receive a special gift. Following Worship we'll enjoy a pie social. Bring a favorite pie to share with your church family; a foretaste of the feast to come.

Back Page Stories

Men's Bible Study Breakfast:

Weekly fellowship around God's Word at 8 am Tuesdays at Charlie's (1408 2nd. St. SW). Join us in being Evangelical. Invite a friend.

Super Market Saturday: Thanks to Pastor Mike and Kalo Lockerby, and Vicky Mulvihill for joining Pastor Dave in servant work on October 19. The next Channel One opportunity is November 16 (9 am-Noon). The heart of Emmanuel caring for the needs of our neighbors.

Wish List: Ministry Opportunities...

- 1) Printed Brochures and Fliers
- 2) Baptismal Cloths; Pascal Candle & Stand; Hearing impaired devices.
- 3) Desk & Book Shelves for Pastor's

Home Office.

Benefactors and Patrons: Thanking God for the generosity of God's people: bunk beds & wheelchair for Bill Rose & Faith Zak—from friends of Emmanuel; copier from Deb and Larry Vomhof; Head Microphone from Thrivent Rochester Chapter; new church logo, Anne Schwartz. THANK YOU!

Introducing WOV: For 4 Saturdays in November, our Worship will be the Bread of Life Liturgy from With One Voice. Thanks to Dean and Michelle Paxson (WA) for gifting Emmanuel with 40 new songbooks.

Thank You to Thrivent: For hosting our coffee hour on November 2, & the gift of a \$750 grant. DON'T FORGET to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars in support of Emmanuel!

Women's Book and DVD Bible Study...Coming in November!

Kari Richards will lead a study on the Book of Proverbs: "Simplify Your Life". Margaret Quam will host this study in her home (304- 15th Ave. S.W.). Watch for more details or talk to Kari.

Thanksgiving Offering: Gifts received will go into Pastor Dave's Discretionary Fund to assist people in need.

Christmas Eve Offering: Gifts received will support the North American Lutheran Church Seminary.

*"Give thanks to the Lord,
for his love endures forever."
2 Chronicles 20:21b*

