

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship - I Am Tempted”

Throughout the Season of Lent, we have been living with Luther’s Catechism. The Father is the author of the Ten Commandments. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Creed. The Son is the author of the Lord’s Prayer.

Martin Luther once wrote, “You can’t keep the birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.” Martin Luther was referencing temptation. And so we sing: “*In the hour of trial, Jesus, plead for me, lest by base denial, I depart from Thee. When Thou seest me waver, with a look recall. Nor from fear or favor suffer me to fall.*” And so we pray: “*Let us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*” Luther referred to the Lord’s Prayer as the “Prayer of the Tempted”.

One of the Gospel Readings appointed for Lent each year is Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. It happens immediately after Jesus is baptized. The Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus as a dove. The Voice of the Father speaks: “You are my Son, the Beloved. With you I am well pleased.” Depending upon which Gospel you read, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, is either lead or driven by the Spirit of the Living God into the wilderness where He is tempted by the devil. The careful reader



notices that even the devil knows Scripture & recites it. He throws Psalm 91 in the face of Jesus.

Recently, during the Men’s Bible Study at Panera’s, one of the participants wanted to talk about our daily reading from Luke 4, “Jesus’ temptations”. I asked, “Did you notice how Jesus responds to each of the temptations?” Another participant replied, “With Scripture”. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy three times: “It is written. It is written. It is said.” What do we do when trials and temptations come our way? We stand on the Word of God. And we pray!

“...the safest road to hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts”.

—C.S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters (XII)

Our Bible Study Group had a lively conversation about temptation. One participant referenced C.S. Lewis’

book, The Screwtape Letters, a Christian apologetic novel first published in February 1942. The story takes the form of a series of 31 letters from a senior Demon Screwtape to his nephew Wormwood, a Junior Tempter. The uncle’s mentorship pertains to the nephew’s responsibility in securing the damnation of a British man known only as “the Patient”.

In Letter VIII, Screwtape explains to his protégé the different purposes that God and the devils have for the human race: “We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons”. In Letter XII Screwtape remarks: “...the safest road to hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts”. Satan is patient in his pursuit of us.

The devil doesn’t worry about those who ignore God, Scripture, Worship & Prayer. The devil already has them in his quiver. The devil focusses his attention —continue on page 3

**April 2017
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”

— Martin Luther

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

*Public Reading of the
New Testament* 2

Easter Egg Hunt 2

*Women’s Study
The Luther household* 2

CALENDAR DATES 2

*Worship Servants for
April 2017* 3

St. Photina 4

Luther & Alleluia 4

*Back Page Stories
“Council Highlights”* 4

THE LUTHER HOUSEHOLD

An Eight Week Women's Afternoon Bible Study will begin on Thursday, April 20 at 1pm. In celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's Posting of the 95 Theses, we will be looking at a new study on "*The Lutheran Understanding of Marriage and Family*"; both of which are under assault by today's culture. This study will look at what Scripture says about Marriage and Family. It will also take a close look at the Luther Household. Luther spoke often about the honorable vocation of marriage and family. Martin married Katharina Von Bora on June 13, 1525. Katie was 16 years younger than Martin, cloistered at the age of 5. God blessed Martin & Katie with six children. Class participants will learn much about the gifts of marriage and family as they view the Luther Household.

SATURDAY SCHOOL & G.I.F.T.

Each week children are learning faith stories and acquiring faith stones in Saturday School (5:10pm), while adults are learning what it means to "Grow In Faith Together" (5:10pm). Faith Stones aid us in our exercise of Faith Webbing. Youth will have "Song Time" in Saturday School and sing in worship on the following dates: April 8 (Palm Sunday Weekend), and May 13 (Mother's Day Weekend). Thanks to Julie & MarJean for coordinating Saturday School and Song Time!

There will be no Saturday School or G.I.F.T. on April 15 (Easter Eve). **The youth will be treated to an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 22.**

EASTER MONDAY—Bible Reading!

We are celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord and the gift of God's Word by sharing a public reading of the entire New Testament on Monday, April 17 from 6 am - Midnight. Refreshments, will be served. Stop by for a portion of the day, or make it a marathon. Hear God's Word and, if you wish, offer your voice to the text!

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, & give generously.

Electronic Giving

Members wishing to contribute to Emmanuel Lutheran with automatic giving may do so by contacting Judy Caudill or Deb Vomhof. Offerings are transferred once a month on the 15th of the month. Thanks for supporting the holy work of God at Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Rochester, MN.

CALENDAR DATES!

Friday, April 7: Council Meeting at 1pm.

April 8-16: Holy Week Worship Services

Saturday, April 8: Eve of Palm Sunday. Children's Choir singing. *Palm Fronds will be distributed.* **Guest preacher:** Seminarian John Hoyum (future pastor of the NALC). Visit with John during the Adult Study (G.I.F.T. at 5:10pm). Worship at 6pm.

Maundy Thursday, April 13: Worship at 6pm. Volunteers are needed for the Foot Washing.

Good Friday, April 14: Worship at 12:00 Noon.

Easter Eve (Holy Saturday), April 15: Worship at 6pm. No Saturday School or G.I.F.T. **Kids:** please remember to unbury your colored "Easter Alleluias".

Monday, April 17: Second Annual Public Reading of the entire New Testament. 6am — Midnight!

Saturday, April 22: *Easter Egg Hunt* during Saturday School (5:10pm). Also, *Emmanuel Huddle* following evening worship.

April 24-25: NALC Iowa Mission District Pastors' Retreat at Okoboji Bible Camp (Iowa).

Saturday, April 29: Worship at 6pm with baptism of Charles August Wagner (born 2/10/17)

Saturday, June 3: New Life Family Services are hosting a "Walk & Run for Life".

Monday-Friday, July 24-28 (5:30-8:00pm): Oasis Vacation Bible School.

Tuesday, August 1 (5-9pm): National Night Out. Emmanuel will host a neighborhood gathering in the Oasis Church parking lot.

Sunday, August 6: Emmanuel Church Picnic at the home of Larry & Deb Vomhof.

Emmanuel Church—Group Picture!

Join us on Easter Eve, April 15, following worship, for a group photo of our Emmanuel Lutheran Church Family.

—continued from page 1

on those who are christened and made captive to the Lordship of Jesus Christ; those who are Spirit-filled, Spirit-led and Spirit-driven. To minimize the work of the devil is folly on our part; just plain stupidity. “Stupid is as stupid does.”

Scripture warns us to be on our guard. “Your adversary,” Peter says, “is prowling around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him firm in your faith.” The devil is no friend. He pretends to be Adam and Eve’s BFF. In Truth, the devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. The devil is your adversary. He isn’t looking for a nibble. The devil wants a seven-course meal. Like a roaring lion he seeks to devour us. We must, and we can, resist him firm in our God-given faith. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, “We are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the wiles of the devil. So put on the whole armor of God, and stand. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. And pray!”

In baptism, God puts a seal and a mark on our foreheads. The cross identifies us as God’s eternal property. Satan is determined to snatch sheep out of the Good Shepherd’s hands. His attempts are futile. A friend, commenting on Luke 4, shared his testimony. “I moved here from the Twin Cities. I left a support group and a great church. I was commuting for six months. I was away from my family. I was vulnerable. Satan was looking for a crack in my armor, so that he could pry it open with a crowbar of temptation. My wife and I are having some problems. She isn’t going to church. She doesn’t have a support group.” The devil always looks for exposed buttons to push, and Achilles heels to exploit. Ask yourself, “Where & when am I most vulnerable?” Satan has a target on our backs. Satan has us in his scope & is ready to squeeze the trigger. So resist him, firm in your faith, in Christ Jesus your Lord. *I Am Tempted, Pastor Dave*

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR APRIL

Saturday, April 1 - Lent V (6pm) “Fools for Christ”

Scripture Reader & Prayers & Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof

Ushers: Larry & Deb Vomhof

Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler

Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan

Treats: Deb Vomhof

Tuesday, April 4 - Lenten Mid-Week Service (6pm) - Liturgy: Revised Holden Evening Prayer

Usher: Pending

Acolyte: Cabe Siebenaler

Sound: Don Holtan

Saturday, April 8 - Eve of Palm Sunday (6pm) Kid’s Choir Sings! Guest Preacher: John Hoyum

Scripture Reader & Prayers & Communion Assistant: Don Holtan

Ushers: Creig Anderson & Bob Harms

Acolyte: Elijah Matzke

Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan

Treats: Katie Siebenaler

Maundy Thursday, April 13 (6pm) FOOT WASHING (volunteers needed)

Scripture Reader & Prayers & Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr

Usher: Pending

Acolyte: Pending

Sound: Don Holtan

Good Friday, April 14 (12:00 Noon)

Usher & Acolyte: Lee Pearce

Acapella with no musical accompaniment

Sound: Don Holtan

Saturday, April 15 - Easter Eve (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Vicky Mulvihill

Ushers: Brock Edwards & Pending

Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler

Communion Assistant: Pending

Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan

Treats: Julie Steffenson

Saturday, April 22 - Easter II (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers & Communion Assistant: Jean Wanek

Ushers: Rich Sunde & Pending

Acolyte: Emma Matzke

Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan

Treats: Deb Vomhof

Saturday, April 29 - Easter III (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers & Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce

Ushers: Brock Edwards & Pending

Acolyte: Cabe Siebenaler

Baptism of Charles August Wagner

Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan

Treats: Julie Edwards

NOTE: MarJean Damerval will be our pianist each week. Julie Steffenson will take care of set up, & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down. Pastor Dave will be our preacher each week, except April 8. Lenten Services conclude on Tuesday night, April 4 at 6pm, preceded by a soup supper at 5pm.

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

1815—38th Street NW
Rochester, MN 55901
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:

253-302-9845 (Mobile)
507-206-3048 (Home)
pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



Save the Date!

**Easter Monday, April 17*

Public Reading of the New Testament at Oasis Church!

The Season of Easter is 50 Days Long! The Ascension of our Lord is on Day 40 - May 25!

St. Photina (aka Svetlana)

In John 4, we hear the familiar story of the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well, near Sychar. Jesus asks this nameless woman for a drink of water and offers to give her "living water". After a lengthy conversation, where morals and religion are discussed, Jesus reveals that He is "ego eimi" (I AM). The woman leaves her water jar & becomes God's vessel of evangelical outreach. Seeds have been sown, and crops are expected in four months. But Jesus says, "Harvest Time has already arrived." The nameless woman preaches to the village folk, "Come and meet a man who told me everything that I ever did. He can't be Messiah, can he?" The question assumes an answer of "NO". But when the Word of God is preached, people are born again from above, of water & the Spirit. People come to faith. Those who read John 4 wonder about the "rest of the story". Recently, I read that this nameless woman has a name. In the Orthodox Church she is called Photina. During the reign of Nero (54-68 AD), Photina & members of her family fearlessly preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Carthage (northern Africa). Under persecution, St. Photina and members of her family left Carthage and joined the Confessors in Rome. They suffered greatly for the faith of Jesus. Eventually, refusing to renounce Jesus as Lord, St. Photina, the Samaritan Woman who received living water from Jesus and distributed it to others, along with members of her family, succumbed to martyrdom and surrendered her soul to God around 66 AD.

Back Page Stories

Women's Bible Studies: The Afternoon Group has concluded its study on Revelation. A new study will begin after Easter (April 20-June 8) on Thursdays at 1pm at Oasis Church. The Evening Group continues its study on Revelation monthly at the home of Katie Siebenaler at 6:30pm. Next Session: Wednesday, April 19.

Madonna Towers Ministry: Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel on the first and third Wednesdays of each month in 2017. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. Our next

Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, April 5 & 19 at 1:00 pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

Church Council Highlights -

March 3: Trail Life USA is three years old and 26,000 strong; located in 48 States. Seminarian John Hoyum will be our guest preacher on Saturday, April 8 (Eve of Palm Sunday). Our 2nd annual public reading of the entire New Testament will take place on Easter Monday, April 17 (6am-Midnight). Pastor Dave will be on vacation from June 18-28.

Save the Dates: National Night Out (August 1) and Emmanuel Picnic at Vomhof's (August 6). Larry Vomhof

has begun serving as Head Usher. Offering received at our Five-Year Anniversary Celebration was \$1,607 (new church plant). Attendance was 142+. Thanks to Julie for our wonderful Children's Worship Bags. Our next Emmanuel Huddle will be after worship on Saturday, April 22. Our next Council Meeting is Friday, April 7 at 1pm. Soup suppers and Lenten series are being enjoyed by all.

Supermarket Saturday: The next Channel One ministry opportunity is April 15, 2016 (9 am—Noon).

FYI: Luther argued for the singing of the Alleluia during Lent, Holy Week, and on Good Friday. "*For the Alleluia is the perpetual voice of the church, just as the memorial of His passion and victory is perpetual.*"