

THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Christmas Caroling”

St. Luke writes: “At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God’s praises: ‘Glory to God in the heavenly heights, peace to all men and women on earth who please Him.’”—Luke 2:13-14

One of my favorite joys during the Season of Christmas, and the Keeping of the 12 Days, is to participate in Christmas Caroling. While ringing bells for the Salvation Army, my wife Julie and I broke out into song: “Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exaltation, Sing all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God in the highest.” - “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”

So you think you can sing, huh? Some people tell me that they can’t carry a tune in a bucket. Some people exercise caution and sing only in the privacy of their shower, while others prefer public perfor-



mances and mass choirs. Do you like to harmonize when singing or do you stick with the melody line? A friend once told me, “If God gave you a voice, use it to praise Him; if not, use it to get even with Him.” The Psalmist exhorts us to “make a joyful noise”. Not all music is pretty.

“Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!”

In addition to the angels’ Song, Luke’s Gospel contains three beautiful canticles: **Mary sings** the *Magnificat* (1:46-55) in response to a birth announcement. Mary, the handmaid of the LORD, gives birth to Messiah Jesus. **Zechariah sings** the *Benedictus* (1:68-79) in thankfulness for the birth of his son, John the

Baptist, who prepares the way for Jesus. **Simeon sings** the *Nunc Dimittis* (2:29-32) announcing that he can now die in peace since he has seen the Salvation of God in the infant Jesus. The Savior is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel. A sword will pierce Mary’s soul also.

I love to sing. I hope you do too. Martin Luther composed more than 35 hymns during his life and published a total of 9 hymnals. The words of “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” are inscribed on his tomb. Luther said, “When we sing, we pray twice”. Some people put their songbooks away after December 25. Others participate in Christmas Caroling all year long. May God grant us grace to pray twice 24/7.

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Food For Thought:

“Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our hearts, minds and spirits. A person who does not regard music as a marvelous creation of God does not deserve to be called a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hogs!”

Martin Luther

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Got Questions? Doxology: The Lord's Prayer

This month's question comes from Carol Olson. She asks: When did the Doxology get added to the Lord's Prayer and why? Good question! Which version of the Lord's Prayer do you prefer? The Traditional version, the Contemporary version, Matthew's version or Luke's version? All four are different. If you've worshipped in a Roman Catholic Church you may of noticed that the people and the priest pause before the doxology—"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever," (then, a second pause) followed by the concluding word, AMEN.

Neither version of the "Our Father" found in Scripture contains the doxology (literally, "glory word"). In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus says "pray like this". In Luke

11:2-4, Jesus says, "when you pray, say...." So is the Lord's Prayer an example of prayer (flexible) or is it written in stone (rigid)?

In the Bible & in the early church, prayers were concluded by the supplicant with a spontaneous response; i.e. a short hymn-like verse exalting the glory of God. By the end of the 1st Century A.D. the *Didache* concluded the Lord's Prayer with the Doxology found in our Lutheran Worship Services. The ragged ending of Matthew 6:13b is an invitation to petitioners to close the formal prayer with their own free petitions.

The early Church Father Tertullian rightly affirms that the Lord's Prayer is "truly the summary of the whole gospel". We add our own Doxology, and Amen (Hebrew for "So be it") to the Prayer Jesus taught us.

Feast of Epiphany: "Burning of the Greens"

The Feast of Epiphany is observed on Jan. 6. It celebrates the meeting of the three Magi (Kings) with the baby Jesus. In the New Orleans area, Epiphany is known as King's Day, the beginning of Mardi Gras. King Cakes have become part of the celebration symbolizing the finding of the baby Jesus. King cakes are oval-shaped, celebrating the unity of all Christians and decorated with the carnival colors of green, yellow and purple; some bakers add red to symbolize the life of Jesus. King Cake Season ends on Fat (Shrove) Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday (March 5).

Pastor Dave and Julie are hosting **an Epiphany Party** at their home on **Sunday Night, January 5 at 5:00 pm**. A potluck of favorite soups and breads will be served with King Cake for dessert. The Epiphany story of the arrival of the Magi (Matthew 2) will be read along with the singing of some favorite Epiphany Songs (We Three Kings of Orient Are; As With Gladness Men of Old; Bright and Glorious Is the Sky; The First Noel; and It Came Upon A Midnight Clear). A sign-up sheet is available on Saturday nights, inviting the participation of all Servants of Emmanuel. Bring a favorite soup or bread to share!

Twelve Days of Christmas

"The Bells of Christmas chime once more, the heavenly guest is at the door." - LBW #62

Bring your bells to church and help us ring in the New Year while sounding the good news that "Christ is born to save".

Emmanuel Lutheran will have a special worship liturgy on Saturday night, January 4 in celebration of the Season of Christmas. Did you know that Christmas is a Season and not just a day? Did you know that the Keeping of the Twelve Days is a Tradition that began in 567 AD, the purpose of which was to allow God's people more time to reflect upon the gift of the Incarnation and to celebrate God's presence among us as Emmanuel? Some start counting the days on December 25, while others begin on December 26 and run through Epiphany (January 6). So we have a dozen or perhaps a baker's dozen of DAYS to celebrate the Incarnation.

"Come, Jesus, glorious heavenly guest, & keep your Christmas in our breast." - LBW #62

GETTING TO KNOW YOU:

Bob & Vicky, Roman and Emma Mulvihill

By Carol Olson
Phone: 507-367-2353



a day, he also commutes daily between Rochester and Owatonna. The attributes of his hobby impact his job. The job he does requires discipline and physical fitness and when the week-end and vacations come, his calm is replenished by spending time in nature.

Often times in social situations where folks are meeting one another for the first time, an “icebreaker” game is played. The organizer hands out a card to everyone and on the card each person writes down their hobby or something unique to them. The cards are turned back in to the organizer and then the identification fun begins. The clue: “The path to becoming an expert at this hobby does not begin at the location where the hobby is ultimately carried out. This hobby requires calm, discipline, and a degree of physical fitness. Two major factors affecting accuracy are the heart rate and breathing.” **What is the hobby and who in the Mulvihill family does it?** The hobby is target shooting and the 3 members in the family who do it are Bob, Roman and Emma.

In May Vicky and Bob will be celebrating 30 years of marriage. Bob, originally from Mendota Heights, MN, met Vicky who grew up in Hampton, Virginia, while he was stationed there with the Navy. Bob is an avid outdoorsman—enjoying deer and turkey hunting and fishing in literally any kind of weather. Bob drives a semi-truck for Yellow Roadway Corp which is based in Owatonna. His days are long and demanding because he not only drives the semi 8 to 10 hours

Although Vicky doesn’t spend her “free time” on the target range, you can find her curled up with a good book by Clive Cussler, PJ Tracy or Vince Flynn. If she doesn’t have a book in her hands, she will have yarn and a crochet needle, and in the summer time her garden tools. Vicky has been a computer programmer, but now she is attending RCTC in the Administrative Assistant program and works at Mayo High School as a “lunch lady”.

Bob and Vicky have two children. Their oldest, Roman, is a sophomore at Minnesota State University in Mankato. His major is geography with a concentration/certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). In addition to target shooting, his other hobby is running. Sometimes a bunch of words can be penned to describe someone, but there is a saying that actions speak a whole lot louder than words. Accordingly, one of the first times I met Roman was when Pastor Dave & Julie arrived. Several of us were there to help them move—carrying boxes and furniture. Minnesota was having one of its blistering hot and humid days, and since most of the helpers were just “slightly older”

than 30, we were feeling the heat and so were our arms and legs. And then this strong young man arrived and joined forces with Pastor Dave and Julie’s son-in-law, and it seemed that within a fairly short period of time, we were done. That strong young man was Roman.

Their daughter Emma will be graduating from high school this spring. She works at the Rochester Public Library & coaches girls’ hockey for the Rochester Youth Hockey Association. She is a member of the Rochester Police Department Explorers Organization and this fall she will be studying Law Enforcement when she begins college. In addition to target shooting, Emma loves dogs.

The Mulvihill family, like most of us, attended another Lutheran church in Rochester before coming to Emmanuel. One day a friend of Vicky’s who is also a friend of Kari Richards, told Vicky about some folks who were coming together to worship under the NALC banner. Vicky has been one of the cornerstones of our church since the beginning and was a member of the call committee.

The Mulvihill family believes that Emmanuel Lutheran Church will consistently hit a bull’s eye for God’s Kingdom if we practice the same guidelines followed by successful target shooters: always offer to people a place of respite and **calmness**; always be **disciplined** to follow the teachings of the Bible; always realize that growth requires hard work and a need to maintain at all times a degree of **spiritual and physical fitness**. The 2 major factors affecting our accuracy will be our heart rate (are we beating in rhythm with Christ?) and our breathing (are we feeling the breath of the Holy Spirit on us?)

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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SAVE THE DATE!

Emmanuel Annual Meeting:

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

“No Regrets” Men's Conference

Live at Christ Community Church - A one-day national event that transforms men's lives by empowering them to walk towards a lifetime of faith. On Saturday, February 1, from 8:30 am—4:30 pm, men will be encouraged to be the men God created them to be and to move forward to become more fully-devoted followers of Christ. Event Goal: To develop men with a heart for God, bearing in their person, the imprint of His character, reflected in all that they think, say and do. To this end, bringing reconciliation between men and God, men and their families, and men and their calling. Pastor Dave Steffenson is inviting the men of Emmanuel Lutheran to join him for this one day conference, enjoying guest speakers, small group breakout seminars, worship and testimonies. Location: 4400 55th Street Northwest, Rochester, MN 55901. At the conclusion of this conference, Emmanuel men will grab a quick bite to eat and then assemble at Oasis for our Saturday Night Worship Service at 6 p.m. Cost: \$35.00

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. Share the Good News! Next Mtg.—Jan. 7.

Women's Book & DVD Bible Study:

“Simplify Your Life”, a Women's Study based on the Book of Proverbs is being enjoyed by 12 women. Margaret Quam is hosting this study in her home (304– 15th Ave. S.W.). The next gathering is on Monday, Jan. 13 @ 1 pm.

Super Market Saturday: The next Channel One opportunity is Jan. 18 (9 am-Noon). Let's share the heart of Emmanuel (Christmas Presence) by caring for the needs of our neighbors.

Benefactors and Patrons: Special thanks to Dean and Michelle Paxson for the gift of a new Paschal Candle.

Thanksgiving Offering: Thanks for your generosity on Thanksgiving Eve. An offering of \$660.00, designated for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, assisting people in need, was received. Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP 2014: “Now you are the Body of Christ and individual members of it”—I Cor. 12:27. Baptized members are servants of Emmanuel, living out their God-given faith in congregational life; committed to the walk of discipleship, growing up into the full maturity of Christ. Each January, Christians desiring membership at Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester are invited to sign up (be enrolled for the calendar year) on our Servant Roster. To be a member is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, baptized and committed to the Marks of Discipleship. If you desire to “praise, proclaim, and practice Emmanuel—God With Us—in daily life,” then complete the 2014 Emmanuel Membership Covenant and walk with us to the glory of God!

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.

Post-Bulletin Ad: Contact Larry Vomhof if you would like to help fund an Emmanuel Ad in the Post-Bulletin. Ads are about \$50.00 per week. \$250.00 has already been received. Thanks!

Christmas Eve Offering: Gifts received on Christmas Eve support the North American Lutheran Church Seminary. An anonymous donor pledged a matching gift of \$1500.00. At the time of printing, Emmanuel has already received offerings in excess of \$2700.00 for Seminary support. Thanks for helping to support Seminary Education & the training of our future pastors.