

# THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship—Convictional Christians”

Recognize this jingle? “I am a C; I am a C-H. I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N. And I have C-H-R-I-S-T in my H-E-A-R-T & I will L-I-V-E E-T-E-R-N-A-L-L-Y.”

The word “Christian” means different things to different people. What does it mean to be a Christian? In the early Church, followers of Jesus were called “People of the Way”—Acts 9:2. They were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Christians were identified by the WAY they believed and behaved. Unacceptable beliefs and behaviors disqualified one from the calling/naming of “Christian”.

When I was growing up churches would often categorize Christians as nominal and regular; as C&E folks who attended worship twice a year at Christmas & Easter, and those who were regular attenders. Church Constitutions often label members as active or inactive; or as baptized, confirmed, & communing members.

About 70-75% of the U.S. population calls itself Christian, but about 25%



of the U.S. population practices that faith in a robust manner. This includes, in order of size, evangelicals, Catholics, mainline Protestants, & others.... Christians are baptized believers (IN CHRIST) who walk with a Gospel gait. As the song says, “They’ll know we are Christians by our love”.

***“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”***

— Matthew 7:13-14

Ed Stetzer, pastor and church planter, identifies Christians as belonging to 3 groups: Cultural Christians are the least connected — they call

themselves Christian because of heritage or culture. Congregational Christians have some connection to a local church, but rarely attend. On the other hand, Convictional Christians call themselves Christians like the other two categories, but they attend church services regularly and order their lives around their faith convictions.

Nominal Christians (cultural & congregational) are becoming the “NONES” (religiously unaffiliated). Convictional Christians are remaining steady in the church, while other categories of Christians are in rapid decline. Convictional Christians are willing to live & die for their faith. Commitment is not a dirty word for them. They practice the Resurrection & keep company with Jesus in daily life. What does “Christian” mean for you? I am a C....

*WAY-following, Pastor Dave*

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### *Food For Thought:*

*“To become an admirer of Jesus’ is much easier than to become a follower.”*

—Søren Kierkegaard

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**THIS WOMAN HONKED & SCREAMED AT HIM FOR STOPPING ON A YELLOW LIGHT. BUT WHAT FOLLOWED IS PRICELESS.**

The light turned yellow, just in front of him.

He did the right thing and stopped at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman behind him was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer.

The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up.

He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed and placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door.

She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, giving the guy in front of you the finger and cursing at him.

I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' licence plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, so naturally .....

I assumed you had stolen the car."

Priceless

**Women of the Word! The Women's Bible Study resumes on Wednesday, September 9 at 1pm. We'll be studying famous Women in Scripture.**

**EMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING—May 30, 2015**

On Saturday, May 30, the proposed revisions to the Emmanuel Constitution & the newly created Emmanuel Bylaws were both approved by a vote of 26 to 2. The revisions to the Constitution will need to be ratified at our Jan. 2016 Annual Meeting. Thanks to everyone who attended.

**PRAYING FOR OUR SCHOOLS**

Each month on the 15th day of the month we pray for an area school. During the month of July, when all schools are in summer recess, we are praying for all area schools. During the month of August we will be praying for Longfellow Elementary. Our pianist, MarJean Damerval, is a music teacher at Longfellow.

**SATURDAY SCHOOL**

Saturday School ended on May 30 with an ice cream party and a Bible challenge between kids and parents. The Kids won decisively. Rally Day is set for September 19.

**BIBLE SATURDAY**

On Sat, August 29 at 6pm we will celebrate the gift of God's Word in our lives. Bring your Bible to worship with you. If you are in need of a Bible or would like to provide one to someone in need, contact Pastor Dave.

**Visit the following Websites...**

[www.iowamissiondistrict.com](http://www.iowamissiondistrict.com)

[www.minkota.org](http://www.minkota.org)

[www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org)

[www.lutherreadingchallenge.org](http://www.lutherreadingchallenge.org)

[www.solapublishing.com](http://www.solapublishing.com)

[www.lutherancore.org](http://www.lutherancore.org)

[www.vilniuschurch.org](http://www.vilniuschurch.org)

*Pastor Dave is taking Monday as his weekly day off. Please call for emergencies only. Thanks!*

## **TEAM Jesus—Together Each Accomplishes More ... for Christ's sake!**

There are a variety of gifts and the Holy Spirit apportions gifts as God pleases. Gifts are given for equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the Body of Christ." - Ephesians 4:12

"Someone has imagined the Carpenter's tools holding a conference. Brother Hammer presided. Several suggested he leave the meeting because he was too noisy. Replied the Hammer, "If I have to leave this shop, Brother Screw must go also. You have to turn him around again and again to get him to accomplish anything." Brother Screw then spoke up, "If you wish, I'll leave. But Brother Plane must leave too. All his work is on the surface. His efforts have no depth." To this Brother Plane responded, "Brother Rule will also have to withdraw, for he is always measuring folks as though he were the only one who is right." Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper: "You ought to leave too because you're so rough and always rubbing people the wrong way."

In the midst of all this discussion, in walked Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth. He had arrived to start His day's work. Putting on His apron, He went to the bench to make a pulpit from which to proclaim the Gospel. He employed the hammer, screw, plane, rule, sandpaper, and all the other tools. After the day's work when the pulpit was finished, Brother Saw arose and remarked: Brethren, I

observe that all of us are workers together with the Lord."

"Now *you all* are the Body of Christ and individually members of it." - I Corinthians 12:27

### **The Reliability of the Written Word!**

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the child of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" - II Timothy 3:16-17.

Skeptics & disbelievers question the reliability of the Holy Scriptures. Consider this: One of the criteria for the authority of ancient documents is the extent of supporting ancient manuscripts – the more the better, and the closer to the time of the original documents as possible. In light of these tests, the New Testament is the best attested to work from the ancient world. It has by far the greatest number of existing ancient manuscripts. *Ancient classical works are attested to by very few ancient copies, usually less than 10. In contrast, the New Testament is attested to by over 5,000 full or partial Greek manuscripts.* In addition, thousands of other copies in other languages exist, especially Latin.

The total number of ancient manuscripts supporting the New Testament amounts to 24,970+. Far more than any other book of antiquity. While it is true that "there are no known extent (currently existing) original manuscripts of the Bible, the abundance of manuscript copies

make it possible to reconstruct the original with virtually complete accuracy."

According to Biblical scholar John Warwick Montgomery,

*"to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament."* The number of manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947), at Qumran, further validate the reliability of the Old Testament. Archeological evidence confirms the historical accuracy of both the New & Old Testament documents.

Lee Stroebel, atheist turned Christian, reminds us that the evidence is in, and a Case for Christ has been made. It takes more faith to be an unbeliever than it does to believe in Jesus. Josh McDowell provides an illustration of Scripture's reliability: In Luke 3:1-2, we have 22 historical references that have all been confirmed apart from the Scriptures; validated by archeology and historical literary sources. God's WORD is reliable. We can trust the Scriptures!

***Priorities: My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, "You're tearing up the grass." "We are not raising grass," Dad would reply, "We are raising boys."***

— Harmon Killebrew

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### SAVE THE DATE!

#### Christmas With Emmanuel!

*Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord on Thursday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m. at Oasis Church. Invite your family and friends to join us for Christmas Eve Worship.*

## EMMANUEL CHURCH PICNIC

**Deb and Larry Vomhof** are hosting a congregational picnic at their house (11530 Hwy. 52 S.E., Chatfield, MN) on **Sunday, August 23**. Emmanuel members and friends are invited to participate in a fun day of food and Christian fellowship. We hope you can join us.

**Time:** Arrive after 11:30 a.m. We will eat at 12:00 Noon.

**Bring:** A dish to share, and a dessert. Hamburgers, brats, and hotdogs, along with the fixings will be provided. Coffee and Lemonade will also be provided. Bring additional beverages if you wish.

**Activities:** Vomhofs have a pool, so bring swimsuits, towels, lifejackets, & blowup tubes. Enjoy conversation, & outdoor games. Grow a friendship or make a new one.

**Directions:** From Oasis Church—travel on U.S. 52 South approximately 20 miles. Destination will be on the right; about 5 miles from Marion between the 2 county road 7's. Watch for the balloons.

**July 4th Worship Celebration!** Declaring our Dependence on God! Thanks to our musicians, MarJean Damerval and Don & Peg Holtan for their gifts of music. Freedom isn't free. "Since the Son makes us free, we are free indeed."

## Back Page Stories

### Men's Bible Study Breakfast:

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

**Super Market Saturday:** The next Channel One opportunity is July 18, 2015 (9 am—Noon).

**MISSION FESTIVAL SATURDAY:** Thanks to Rev. Jim & Diane Wagner, missionaries at the International Church Vilnius, Lithuania, who shared the Gospel with us on June 27.

### Council Highlights (June 16):

\$36 in Thrivent Choice Dollars has been received bringing our YTD total to \$975. Emmanuel has used \$9,624 from our Reserves YTD. Daily

Devotional Books are available. Rev. Jim and Diane Wagner will be our guests on June 27 as we celebrate the Great Commission; a gift of \$1000.00 in support of our ministry partnership with the International Church Vilnius will be presented to the Wagners. A special Patriotic Service will be offered on July 4. Congregational Picnic at Vomhof's on August 23. Bring a Bible to Church on Aug. 29. Pastor Dave will be on vacation Aug. 5-11. NALC Convocation in Dallas is Aug. 12-14. Vomhofs have offered to purchase altar candles. Next Council Meeting is July 14.

**THANKS:** To Julie Steffenson who sewed a new parament for our pulpit, and to Rich & Janet Sunde who provided monies for the purchase of our new hymnal cart. Thanks to Kari

Richards and Ardis Christen and their families for the loan of the previous hymnal cart and pulpit hanging.

**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.

**OASIS VBS:** "Everest - Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power". July 12-15. Ages 5-12. Register by July 6. God has the power to provide, comfort, heal, forgive & love us forever.  
Sunday, July 12: 9:30am—3pm  
Mon-Wed, July 13-15: 5:30—8pm (Optional Supper at 5pm)

**Have a safe and blessed 4th of July!**