

The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Running the Race”

What race are we running?

A friend once told me, “Life for many people is a rat race. And even if you win, you’re still a rat.” When it comes to movies, a memorable line stands out, “Run, Forrest, Run!” When it comes to races, I have many friends who are avid runners. They train and they race. Some excel at sprinting, and others at long distance running or marathons. St. Paul says to his beloved Timothy, “*I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith*”—II Timothy 4:7.

Everyone is running a race, but as I watch the lives of people I love, I’ve noticed two types of runners: Those who are running with their hearts set on eternity; and those who are simply trying to outrun death.

Have you noticed that some people are paralyzed by the prospects of death & dying? They often write up “bucket lists” and attempt to squeeze out “every ounce of life” & “tick of the clock” before their proverbial number comes up. The assumption is that if I eat right, exercise right, and watch my “p’s and q’s” then I can at the very least get some more



time; an extension of life. The goal becomes simply trying to postpone the inevitable. But no one outruns death. Sooner or later it snags us all.

As a pastor, I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death with many a soul and many a family. I have witnessed slow, agonizing deaths, and sudden, unexpected deaths. There is no rhyme or reason in my mind for the senseless deaths of so many. But I also know that life and death cannot be reduced to luck, fate or a cosmic lottery system.

“Accepted in Christ, we now run the race ‘for the joy that is set before us’ rather than ‘for fear that comes behind us’.”
—Timothy Keller

From dust we came and to dust we shall return. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed. The wages of sin is death. Our mortality hunts us and haunts us,

making us captive to fear. God is not the source of our mortality; sin is. God is the source of our immortality. Listen to these beloved words from St. Paul, “*When the perishable puts on the imperishable, & the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*”—I Corinthians 15:54-57.

And so we run the race that is set before us. We run not from death, but toward Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith! Jesus is the gift of eternity for you and for me. He guarantees the finish line.

Recently, I was diagnosed with aggressive pancreatic cancer. This is not my fate or my recompense for
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July 2020
Newsletter
Volume 8
Issue 7

Food For Thought:

“Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid, ourselves of every burden & sin that clings to us & persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.”

—HEBREWS 12:1

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

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Emmanuel Huddle Highlights!

Emmanuel is now gathering for IN-PERSON worship as of June 1. RSVP's are no longer needed as seating has been reduced to allow for social distancing. Members are still asked to wear masks when arriving and leaving the church premises; especially when one is singing. Masks and hand sanitizer are both available at the entrance of the church building.

Thanks is offered to Fred and Sandra Troendle, who picked up and delivered our Emmanuel Stone commemorating the purchase date of our church land (December 27, 2019). This Stone, a gift from Brad and Peg Bellamy, will be blessed along with our church land on Sunday, August 2.

Emmanuel Lutheran's application for property tax exemption has been approved. The Land is assessed as Commercial Property and is valued at \$246,500 for 2021. ("Your application for exemption has been approved beginning for taxes payable in 2021. This exemption will remain, in place, so long as there is continued

progress for construction and eventual full Church use of your parcel.")

The Emmanuel Website now has a donor button allowing friends of Emmanuel to support God's holy work in Rochester.

On Sunday, August 2, Emmanuel will host its annual Church Picnic on our church land we also plan on blessing the land and dedicating it to the LORD for His glory and His holy purposes.

Emmanuel was approved for Payroll Protection Program and received \$11,800.

The new Emmanuel Church Member Picture Directory will be distributed by July 1.

Storage Space is needed by September 1 for the donated Baby Grand Piano (Gift from Vernon and Bridget Westbrook).

Pastor Dave will be enjoying a Week of Vacation with his family from Sunday-Saturday, July 5-11. Pastor Waldemar Gies will serve as our pulpit supply on July 11.

Tentative WORSHIP PLANS FOR July & August 2020

Our Liturgy throughout the summer will be the **Lutheran Book of Worship**. We continue to exercise caution and care, compassion & faithfulness as we gather for in-person worship. We will offer the Lord's Supper once each month during the summer (July 4 and August 1). As Pastor Dave Steffenson continues to undergo chemo treatment for pancreatic cancer throughout the summer, Rev. Tim Duesenberg and Rev. Waldemar Gies are both available, should the need arise, to step in and help with pastoral services.

Emmanuel will continue to offer online worship opportunities via the Emmanuel Facebook page and the Emmanuel Church Website.

Saturday, July 4—Pentecost 5: Holy Communion will be served following worship in the church parking lot. Karen Salz will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, July 11—Pentecost 6: Pastor Dave will be on vacation. Rev. Waldemar Gies will serve as our pulpit supply, leading worship and guest preaching. MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, July 18—Pentecost 7: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, July 25—Pentecost 8: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, August 1—Pentecost 9: Holy Communion will be served following worship in the church parking lot. Mary Ann Groven will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, August 8—Pentecost 10: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, August 15—Pentecost 11: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, August 22—Pentecost 12: MarJean Damerval will be our Worship Pianist.

Saturday, August 29—Pentecost 13: Karen Salz will be our Worship Pianist.

Thanks to Don Holtan for recording our Services and to Julie Steffenson & Peg Holtan for their help.

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some particular sin. It is my mortality. Only God gets to decide when my race on earth is complete. I trust God's sovereignty. I know that cancer is an uninvited, trespasser in my body; a body which was created and redeemed by God for His glory. I know that, in Christ, my body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit. I know that all things are possible with God and that in everything God works for good with those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. Therefore I am receiving each day as a holy gift from God. With hundreds of prayer warriors running beside me, I am soaking in the WORD of God daily. I am praying that God would give my oncology team wisdom from above and glory to His name. Most importantly, I am praying that in all things, God would set my heart on eternity.

In the words of Pastor Timothy Keller, also recently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer: "I have terrific human doctors, but most importantly I have the Great Physician himself caring for me. Pray for God to use medical means or his direct intervention to make the cancer regress to the point of vanishing. For my wife and me, that we use this opportunity to be weaned from the joys of this world and to desire God's presence above all. For my family to be comforted and encouraged. For the side effects of treatment to allow me to continue writing and speaking."

Dear friends in Christ, we can't outrun death; we need not try. Jesus has conquered death & the crown of righteousness awaits us all. We run the race set before us with joy, because Jesus ran an infinitely harder race, with joy, for us. We press on toward the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. We run with Jesus, and by His grace we keep the faith and finish the race.

Faith-Running with Jesus, Pastor Dave

New Life Family Services **"Carry Them through Campaign"**

During the month of July, area churches are sponsoring 200 women seeking help and counsel for their unplanned pregnancy. For every \$550 raised, a church will be carrying one woman and her unborn child through birth and beyond.

Emmanuel has set a goal of saving at least one child. Presently, we have already received gifts in excess of \$1,300. Thanks for putting your faith into action & standing in the gap with the least of these.

SEMAC Mission Trip—Michigan

Larry Vomhof and three other SEMAC members recently spent a week in Beaverton, MI offering Christ-centered compassion and hope to an elderly couple (Dale and Sharon). Flooding resulting in 3 feet of water in their home. Dale and Sharon, both in their 70's and unable to pay for repairs, were planning on letting their home go back to the bank. The NALC Disaster Response stepped in and, with the labor of SEMAC, home and hope were both restored. Larry and his crew were able to insulate the home, put in new flooring, sheetrock, & a shower stall, and repair plumbing and some electrical outlets. Dale is currently battling cancer. His daughter also worked with the guys. She also provided the group with lunch each day. The neighbors were so grateful

that they hosted a big picnic meal before the SEMAC TEAM headed home on June 19.

NALC 2020 Virtual Mission Convocation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NALC will be hosting its first ever Virtual Mission Convocation. Voting Delegates and Visitors are invited to register for this online opportunity to hear from Bishop Dan Selbo on the 2020 Vision, participate in elections and voting, and hear updates from across the NALC.

Dates: Friday, August 7, 6-9 p.m. ET

Saturday, August 8, 2-6 p.m. ET

Cost: \$25 (voting delegates), \$0 (visitors)

It is easier than ever to attend the NALC Mission Convocation. With no need to travel, and minimal registration costs, the NALC is hoping to have more participants than ever before.

"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race & complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace." — Acts 20:24

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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Rochester, MN 55901
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:

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SAVE THE DATE!

Blessing of the LORD'S LAND!

Tentatively set for Sunday, August 2, along with our church picnic on our church land. We'll keep you posted as to time and details.

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, and live & give generously.

Men's Bible Study (with Outdoor, In-Person options)

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran Church are currently meeting on Tuesday mornings at 8:30am via email and studying the Scripture Readings for the upcoming Sunday. Let Pastor Dave know if you would like the study notes emailed to you. We will have two **in-person studies** during the month of July: Tentatively, Wednesdays, July 1 and 29 from 11am-12 Noon. Pending Location: Church Land or outside Oasis Church.

Acts 4:31—The Church Prayed!

“And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the Word of God with boldness.” Each day at 4:31pm, and other times as well, Members and Friends of Emmanuel continue to join hands and hearts in prayer, although it be from a distance. Send prayer requests to Pastor Dave Steffenson. Thanks for joining us. “At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

Back Page Stories

Church Council Highlights:

June 5, 2020—Zoom Meeting:

Income for the month of May was \$8,280. Expenses for the month were \$3,186 (offset by PPP funding). Presently our YTD shortfall is only \$4,336. In-Person worship resumed on June 6. We continue to offer virtual worship opportunities as well for kids and adults. The Gospel is advancing! Church land has been cleared by DeCook Excavating and many Emmanuel volunteers. We are hoping to have a church picnic and a blessing of the land on Sunday, August 2. Property Tax Exemption has been approved for our church land. The new Emmanuel Church Picture Directory will be delivered by

July 1. Don Holtan is working with Adam Troendle to put a DONATE BUTTON on our Website (DONE). By September 1, we're in need of a new location for storage of our Baby Grand Piano. An Emmanuel Huddle is scheduled for June 20, following worship. Pastor Dave continues his cancer treatment, and has Pastors Duesenberg and Gies available to step in as needed. The Nominating Committee will need to meet sometime in August. The next Council Meeting is July 3 @ 3pm.

Women's Bible Studies:

Our study on I Peter concluded on May 28. Women interested in getting together for an outdoor in-person study once in July & once in August should contact Pastor Dave. Dates, location and time to-be-determined.

Madonna Towers Ministry: Our bi-monthly worship services in the Skilled Care Chapel of Madonna Towers is currently suspended until further notice due to COVID-19. Please keep our dear friends at the Madonna Towers in your prayers.

MANY THANKS!

Pastor Dave and Julie offer thanks to the members and many friends of Emmanuel for all of their kind thoughts, cards, fervent prayers & acts of love during these hard days of living with pancreatic cancer. The LORD reveals His Presence in His people. The Steffenson family is finding their fortitude in the faith of Jesus and His promising WORD. We are confident that God will waste nothing and will use all things for His glory!