

# The Emmanuel Epistle

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “Remembering”

The repentant thief on the cross confesses his sin and asks for mercy. “Jesus, remember me *when* you come into our Kingdom”. Jesus, as you may recall, responds with a definite TODAY: “Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

It’s the Season of Lent and God commands us to remember. Remembering is not just recalling a past event, or happening. It’s not just thinking about facts or information. It is not just a cognitive activity. To remember is to actively participate in the gift of promise and fulfillment.

In a garden cemetery, on the first day of the week, angels addressed grieving women with these words, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? Jesus is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise?” And they remembered!

Memory is a precious thing. People sometimes refer to momentary memory loss as a senior moment. Memory loss is no laughing matter. I remember Mildred Shelley. She battled Alzheimer’s. When her husband Helmer died, I officiated at the funeral. Mildred stood at the



head of the casket, greeting those who came to pay their respects. I hugged Mildred and said, “I’m sorry for your loss.” Mildred said, “Did you know him?” I replied, “Not well, but I wish that I had known Helmer better.”

**“Remember, God has caused you to be a river, not a reservoir.”**

*Robert Morris  
The Blessed Life*

Mildred broke down and wept, “Helmer? Is this my Helmer? Oh no!” I felt so bad that I had caused such anguish to Mildred. By the time the funeral was over, Mildred was back in the cocoon I call Alzheimer’s. She had no recollection that her husband of 60 years was dead. Then I realized, that God in His mercy had brought Mildred out of this shell, briefly, so that she could experience appropriate grieving. She needed to remember Helmer, and the life God had given them.

I read an article recently about a North Carolina couple who have an eight

year old daughter named Keira, who suffers from childhood Alzheimer’s. Keira’s rare genetic condition (Sanfilippo syndrome) was diagnosed in 2015. In April 2016, Keira’s parents captured her saying, “I love you” on camera. They had no idea that it would be the last time they’d hear these words from their daughter.

Keira’s father, Dave Esposito, said, “As a parent [you] know the firsts, the first time they take the first step, the first words they say, you know you record those dates, you know you can play those back. You never know or expect when the last time they’re going to say something is and we just feel amazing and really lucky that we captured the last time she said [‘I love you’] on film.”

Since that 2016 video, Keira’s condition has continued to worsen. She can’t speak at all now. Eventually she will lose the ability to walk & eat before her organs start to fail, but her parents are trying to focus on enjoying the moments they have left with her. Keira’s mom,  
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**March 2018  
Newsletter  
Volume 6  
Issue 3**

## Food For Thought:

**“Heaven is where Jesus is & I am going to Him soon!”**

—Rev. Billy Graham  
(November 7, 1918-  
February 21, 2018)

## **INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS**

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## LENT & HOLY WEEK

Throughout the 40 days of Lent we are reading daily words from Scripture and offering prayers to God for guidance as Emmanuel discerns God's will for the future of our congregation. Mid-week Soup (5pm) and Worship (6pm) is being enjoyed on Tuesday evenings. This year's Lenten Theme is: "Parables of Judgment". **Holy Week** will include a Maundy Thursday Service with foot washing and holy communion on March 29 at 6pm. Our Good Friday Worship will be at 12:00 Noon on March 30. Our Easter Service will be on Holy Saturday, March 31, at 6pm. May God bless all who keep the 40 Days, fasting, praying, & giving alms with repentant hearts.

## **FAT TUESDAY Fundraiser**

Thanks to everyone who attended this year's pre-Lent (Shrove Tuesday) celebration. Food, fellowship and lots of laughter was enjoyed by all participants. A freewill offering was received in support of acolyte robes & supplies (\$345.00). Robes have been ordered for our acolytes & will be used for the first time in the Season of Easter.

## **SEMAC 2018**

The South East Minnesota Area Christians, under the leadership of Larry Vomhof, traveled to Rosenberg, TX, offering hope & restoration in the name of Christ to those who suffered the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. The Mission Team arrived home on February 24. Thanks for keeping them in your prayers. A "**Welcome Home**" Reception is being planned for **Saturday night, March 3**, after worship.

## **Bible Study: "The Great Commissions"**

*New Study. New Time. New Location.* In the Season of Easter, women of Emmanuel will meet for a six session study on "God's Call to Make Known the Gospel". The location of this study will be at the Bridgemoor Pavilion (Bldg. #5520) of the Homestead Complex (home of Nancy Stanley). The dates for this study are: Thursdays at 10am on April 19 & 26; May 10, 17, & 31; and June 7. Everyone knows the Great Commission, but it isn't the only Commission found in the Bible. All four Gospels, plus Acts and St. Paul, contain God's Call to Make Known the Gospel. Resurrection People want to get the WORD out! Join us. Bring a friend!

## **EASTER MONDAY—APRIL 2** **Public Reading of the New Testament** **"Building Fund Launch Day"**

In celebration of our Lord's Resurrection and the promise of the third day for all who are baptized into Christ's dying and rising, Emmanuel will once again host a public reading of the entire New Testament on Easter Monday, April 2. We will begin our reading at 5:30am & conclude by Midnight. Refreshments will be served throughout the day. 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!

A **dessert social**, where members of Emmanuel can offer a financial gift or a pledge to the Building Fund, will also be included. We have starter cash of \$25,000 and hope to double it on April 2. We hope to raise \$100,000 in cash and pledges for the building fund by year end 2018. We are discerning our church's future through prayer throughout the Season of Lent. Having funds on hand will allow Emmanuel to act faithfully when God opens a door and provides an opportunity for the purchase of land or a building.

## **Billy Graham is with Jesus!**

"My father Billy Graham was once asked, "Where is Heaven?" He replied, "Heaven is where Jesus is and I am going to Him soon!" This morning (Feb. 21, 2018), at the age of 99, he departed this world into eternal life in Heaven, prepared by the Lord Jesus Christ—the Savior of the world—whom he proclaimed for nearly 80 years. He will be missed by our family, his colleagues, faithful ministry partners, and, yes, many around the world. But what joy he has to be welcomed by God the Father, & be reunited with my mother in the presence of Jesus who speaks peace to eternal souls.

What about you? When you depart this world do you know with certainty where you will spend eternity?

You can know this today. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The One who comforts weary souls has given us this promise, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me ... I go to prepare a place for you ...

I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

— *Tribute by Franklin Graham*



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### SAVE THE DATES!

*\* Holy Week Worship Services!  
March 24, 29-31.*

*\* Easter Monday: Public Reading  
of the entire New Testament!  
April 14 — Emmanuel Choir  
from Grafton, Iowa*

### 6th Annual Mega Kid's Camp

An amazing camp for kids, including Sports, Creative Arts, Horses, Legos, and Adventure Games will be held in the summer of 2018 (Monday, July 16th - Thursday, July 19th, from 8:45am-Noon each day). This year's theme is "Team Spirit". Youth will learn how to be great teammates through both sports stories and Bible stories about Jesus and his team of disciples. Kids will discover what it means to put team first. Over 300 kids (Preschool age 4-Grade 6) are expected to participate in this year's "Kids Camp". Location: Century High School. Cost is only \$25.00 per kid, which includes snacks, T-Shirt, & prizes. Earl Bird Registration opens on April 2. Scholarships are available. Lots of opportunities for volunteers. Background checks are required. Last year: 270 kids & 104 volunteers participated! See Pastor Steffenson for a "save the date" magnet and more information.

### SATURDAY SCHOOL & G.I.F.T.

Julie continues to teach the little ones Bible Stories. Pastor Dave is teaching youth in grades 3-8 about Creation and the Fall, using C.S. Lewis' book, "The Magician's Nephew", from the Chronicles of Narnia. Youth meet in the Oasis basement. The Adults (G.I.F.T.) are reading "Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus" and learning "The Truth about Islam" (This group meets in the Oasis Fellowship Hall).

### Men's Morning Bible Study

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran are currently studying the Book of Acts and discussing weekly the gift of Witnessing in Daily Life. This study meets on Tuesday mornings at Oasis Church (8am) for conversation, coffee and treats.

## Back Page Stories

**Supermarket Saturday:** The next Channel One ministry opportunity is March 17, 2017 (9 am—Noon).

### Madonna Towers Ministry:

Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel twice a month on Wednesdays 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, March 7 & 21 at 1:00 pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

### Church Council Highlights -

**February 9:** Expenses exceeded income by only \$791 in our first

month of a brand new year. We also received a designated gift of \$2500 in support of our Building Fund from a non member. Rushford Lutheran will support Emmanuel with a gift of \$5000 in 2018; Pastor will offer free pulpit supply in return. \$15,000 has been transferred from Reserves into the Building Fund. The first half of the year's Benevolences have been paid. Worship pianists are lined up through April. We're looking at hosting a Church Planning Retreat. Visit with President Lee Pearce if you're interested in attending. Prayers for the SEMAC Mission Trip. Lenten Calendar for the Building Fund is printed. Looking into hosting an Emmanuel Booth at the Olmstead County Fair. Emmanuel of Grafton Choir will be with us in worship on

April 14. The next Council Meeting is Thursday, March 22 at 7pm.

### Women's Evening Bible Study

**Group:** "Lady Light" is looking at "Holy Christian Marriage & Family" thru the lens of Scripture & the lives of Martin Luther and his wife Katie. Women are meeting at the home of Katie Siebenaler once a month at 6:30pm (sixty minutes). Session 6: Date is pending ("Parenting").

### Women's Afternoon Bible Study

**Group:** Women are on break during the Season of Lent. Our next Study will begin after Easter on April 19. See Page 2 of this newsletter for more information. New place. New time.

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