

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: “Easter Rocks & Rolls!”

Are you ready to rock and roll? I am referencing an idiomatic expression that means, “ready to move, to start doing something”. I am not referring to the slang usage of this phrase as a sexual euphemism.

I was born on June 3, 1957 and baptized into the body of Christ on June 16, 1957. Rock and Roll was a big deal in the 1950’s. Names like Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Ricky Nelson were household names. Rock and Roll was a particular genre of music and dancing. Some people loved it. And some people didn’t.

Easter Rocks and Rolls; not just once in a blue moon, but daily in the life a Christ-Follower. Baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, we are “on the move and doing something” of eternal significance. We find ourselves in the Season of Easter, which is 50 days long. Jesus died for our sins and handed over His Spirit on a Good Friday cross. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are rocking & rolling to the glory of God.

In Mark 16, we read that on the first day of the week



several women brought spices to the grave of Jesus so that they might anoint his corpse. The first day of the week was a work day. The women were “ready to move and to start doing something”. They were ready to rock and roll. Little did they know, when the day began, that God had a Great Commission in store for them!

“Angels, roll the rock away; Death yield up thy mighty prey! See, the Savior leaves the tomb, Glowing in immortal bloom.”

—Thomas Scott

One item dominated their conversation, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” Graves, in those days, were often hollowed out clefts in a rock. A large stone, disk-shaped and several feet in diameter, was rolled in a hewn channel to seal off the entrance of the tomb. Moving that stone would have required the help of an

animal or several men.

Arriving at the cemetery, the women looked up and saw that the stone had been rolled away. It was VERY LARGE. Entering the tomb, the women received an Easter Proclamation: “Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed! Get moving and start doing something. Don’t be afraid. Go and tell His disciples, & Peter, that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you!”

Wow! Rock & Roll didn’t start in the 1940’s with Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Rock and Roll began at a Garden Tomb around the year 30 AD. So what did the women, who went to the tomb, saw the stone rolled away, heard the Easter message, do? Mark seizes the moment & ends his Gospel with a preposition: “They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling & astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, they were afraid for.”

—Continued on page 3...

May 2019
Newsletter
Volume 7
Issue 5

Food For Thought:

“In the year AD 132, near Ephesus, a follower of Plato becomes a Christ-Follower, and writes an Apology to Caesar: “You can kill us, but you cannot hurt us.”

—Justin Martyr, AD 165

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

<i>Worship Servants May 2019</i>	2
<i>EASTER Celebrations</i>	2
<i>Rochester Day of Prayer</i>	2
<i>Saturday School/G.I.F.T.</i>	3
<i>Bless Minnesota Week</i>	3
<i>Immigration Seminar</i>	3
<i>Ascension Day!</i>	4
<i>Back Page Highlights Council Minutes</i>	4

The Season of EASTER

Easter is not just a day; it is a season. In fact Easter is 50 Days long, concluding with the Feast of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Saturday, June 8). Emmanuel has several special gifts coinciding with the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection. **Recently, on Easter Monday**, we hosted our fourth annual public reading of the entire New Testament (April 22). 40+ people enjoyed hearing and reading God's Word.

Participants ranged from ages 2 to 90. Readers were as young as 6 and as old as 83. **On April 27**,

Emmanuel will be hosting a Children's Choir from St. John's Lutheran in Howard Lake, MN. The 25 children range in age from Kindergarten- grade 6. An evening potluck will be served at 5pm. The choir will provide 2 gifts of music in worship. **On May 4**, an adult choir, from our sister congregation Emmanuel in Grafton, IA, will be offering several gifts of music in our evening worship. Invite a friend!

Thanks to everyone who made our Lenten Journey at Emmanuel a huge success.

MAY 2—Rochester Day of Prayer

THURSDAY EVENING, May 2 from 7:00-8:15pm. **Theme:** "Love One Another!" Christians in the Rochester area will celebrate God's faithfulness. All Evening activities will be held at Autumn Ridge Church, (3611 Salem Road SW, Rochester). If you are unable to attend in person, please offer your prayers at home or at work.

Sanctity of Life!

"When someone is pregnant, she is not "expecting a child" – she already has one. She is not "going to be a mother" – she already is a mother. The baby is not "on the way," the baby has already arrived. If we are going to change the way society treats unborn children, we have to change the way we talk about them." (Rev Frank Pavone, 7/7/12)

7th Annual Mega Kid's Camp

100+ kids are already registered. Several adults from Emmanuel are also signed up to be helpers. **Dates:** Monday, July 29th - Thursday, August 1st, from 8:45am-Noon each day). www.evangelum.org.

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR MAY

Saturday, May 4 - Easter III (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: Rich Sunde & LeRoy Quam
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Saturday, May 11 - Easter IV (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof
Ushers: Creig Anderson & Brock Edwards
Acolyte: Elijah Matzke

Saturday, May 18 - Easter V (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof
Ushers: Larry Vomhof & Bob Mulvihill
Acolyte: Nora Serr

Saturday, May 25 - Easter VI (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Bob Harms & Brock Edwards
Acolyte: Mason Edwards

PIANIST: Pat Mackin (Grafton, Iowa)
Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Judy Pearce

PIANIST: Mary Ann Groven
Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Deb Vomhof

PIANIST: Mary Ann Groven
Communion Assistant: Judy Caudill
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Jean Wanek

PIANIST: Beth Daede
Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson
Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan
Treats: Samia Nelson & Marcia Harms

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down. Pastor Dave & Julie will be gone on May 4; our pulpit supply pastor will be Pastor Chris Brekke. Our Greeters for the month will be Julie and Gary Engle.

—Continued from page 1...

Do you remember how St. Mark began his Gospel. Permit me to remind you: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God!” Mark begins his Jesus Story with a declaration. Mark lets the “cat out of the bag”. There are not many gospels (good newses). There is only ONE GOOD NEWS. Jesus is the source and content of Good News! In Christ, a new Genesis is beginning. A “gospel” is “a victory announced beforehand”. From page one, we know how this Jesus Story is going to end! Does the ending of Mark’s Gospel surprise or disappoint you? I hope not. God has chosen each one of us to Rock and Roll with the good news of Easter. We don’t have to be afraid. We can go and tell. God is determined to use us to finish His story. Each one of us must write the ending of this story in our own lives.

I grew up on a farm. Rocks were plentiful. Picking rocks was a chore. I needed to roll those pesky stones away. When the stones were large, I needed the help of friends or a front-end loader. I also enjoyed collecting rocks; especially agates. When I met the woman of my dreams, my Julie, I placed a stone (rock) on her finger, and God made us one flesh in holy Christian Marriage. Jesus is the Bridegroom and we are His redeemed bride. “On this ROCK,” Jesus declares, “I will build MY Church, & the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” We are Easter people, commissioned to Rock and Roll for the Glory of God. Easter Rocks and Rolls!

The Bible identifies Jesus as the ROCK of our salvation (Psalm 118:22). Jesus, a stone rejected by the builders, has become the cornerstone. St. Paul, writing to the Christians in Corinth, references the Wilderness Wanderings and says, “Our ancestors all drank from the Spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.” St. Peter writes a baptismal homily and encourages his hearers to “grow up into salvation”. We have tasted that the LORD is good and so we come to Him, a Living Stone, & like living stones we are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood. “We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, so that we may proclaim the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light”—I Peter 2:1ff. Christ is Risen Indeed! Go & Tell!

I AM, ready to move & start doing something, Pastor Dave

Bless Minnesota Week (May 2-9)

It’s time to “GO BEYOND NICE” by joining hundreds of Minnesota Christians in doing not so random (intentional) acts of kindness. In John 13:34-35, Jesus said, “A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Bless Minnesota Week begins with the National Day of Prayer on May 2.

Visit: blessminnesota.org

“Welcoming the Stranger”—May 7 (7-9pm)

Thinking Biblically about Immigration. **Autumn Ridge Church** is hosting this Seminar in their Timothy Chapel. The immigration issue is complicated. Christians find themselves torn between the desire to uphold laws and the call to minister to the vulnerable. Plan on attending this free and informative seminar with World Relief’s Matthew Soerens and Liz Dong, who will encourage attendees to thing biblically about

immigration while sharing personal stories and experiences, along with thoughtful policy analysis & facts. They point toward immigration reform that is compassionate, sensible, and just, all while encouraging the church to offer welcome and friendship to our new neighbors.

Register: arriveministries.org/events

Saturday School & G.I.F.T.

Christian Education for youth and adults on Saturday evenings is coming to a close on **May 18**. Thanks is offered to Julie Steffenson for teaching our kids this past year, & to Lee & Judy Pearce, and Darald & Leitha Bothun, for hosting the adult studies each week. As the acronym implies, we are **G**rowing **I**n **F**aith **T**ogether. The remaining sessions of G.I.F.T. this May will focus on “Nutrition and Aging Well” (May 11) and “Financial Planning as One Grows Old” (May 18) with guest presenter John Van Camp. There will be no Saturday School and G.I.F.T. on April 27 and May 4.

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

3819 - 18th Ave. NW,
Rochester, MN 55901
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:

253-302-9845 (Mobile)

507-206-3048 (Home)

pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATES!

Musical Gifts in Worship!

April 27—Children's Choir, St. John's

May 4—Emmanuel of Grafton, IA

Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Social

November 27 at Madonna Towers (6pm)

The Ascension of our Lord—Easter Day 40

On Thursday, May 30, followers of Jesus Christ will celebrate the Ascension of our Lord. The Gospel of Luke ends with the Ascension of Jesus and the Book of Acts begins with the Ascension of Jesus. St. Luke writes, "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Stay in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.' Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them. While He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up to heaven. And the disciples worshiped Jesus and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the Temple blessing God"—Luke 24:49-53. See also Mark 16:19 & Acts 1:9.

Jesus ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living & the dead. And His Kingdom will have no end. Mission accomplished! As promised, Jesus does not leave His Church orphaned. He sends His Holy Spirit. The Ascension guarantees that our crucified & risen Lord is with us always. He intercedes for the Saints. He prepares an abiding place for us in the Father's House. In His name, forgiveness of sins is bestowed, and resurrection of the body unto life everlasting is guaranteed. Clothed with power from on high, we are witnesses of the Good News! Our Ascended Lord gives us the power of His Holy Spirit, so that we may praise, proclaim and practice Emmanuel in daily life. Jesus went home & so shall we! Easter People wait expectantly for the return of our Ascended Lord, as promised. Daily, we pray, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus."

Back Page Stories

Madonna Towers Ministry:

Pastor Dave is leading worship & preaching at the Madonna Towers Skilled Care Chapel twice a month on Wednesdays in 2019. Members of Emmanuel are invited to participate in this ministry to seniors of our community. Our next Worship Services will be on Wednesdays, May 1 & 15 at 1:00pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this ministry.

Men's Morning Bible Study: The men of Emmanuel Lutheran meet on Tuesday mornings (8am) at Oasis Church for Bible Study & fellowship. The men are currently studying the Psalms appointed for weekly worship. Join us each week for conversation and coffee!

Women's Bible Study: The Women have returned from a Lenten break and have begun an Easter Study on the Book of Esther (April 25-June 6). Perhaps God has "Chosen You for a Time Such as This!" Join us on Thursdays @ 1pm.

Church Council Highlights:
April 5, 2019: Budget Income exceeded Expenses by about \$2,119. Our Church Insurance is now with Church Mutual, which includes three policies: Commercial Multi-Peril; Worker's Compensation; & Umbrella Liability. Pastor's retirement dollars for 2019 will be submitted. Things are set for Holy Week and our Easter Monday reading of the entire New Testament. Two choirs will be offering gifts of music

in our Emmanuel Worship: St. John's Children's Choir (April 27) and Emmanuel of Grafton Adult Choir (May 4). Pastor will be on vacation on May 4; Pastor Chris Brekke will serve as our pulpit supply. Pastor will be attending the Iowa Mission District Clergy Retreat on April 29-30. Deb & Larry Vomhof and Pastor Dave & Julie will all be attending this summer's NALC Convocation in Indianapolis. 3 Members of Emmanuel have been appointed to the Building Committee: Larry Vomhof, Darald Bothun & Lee Pearce. Emmanuel is looking at hosting a "Friendship Celebration Worship Service" in the fall. Five Thrivent Grants have already been received this year. Our goal is 12. May is NALC Seminary Support month. Next Council Meeting is: Friday, May 10 @ 1pm.