

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: New Math”

“Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?” Answer: To infinity and beyond! The forgiveness of God and His faithful followers knows no limits.

When I was a child growing up, my mother would tell me that she couldn’t understand the new math they were teaching us in school. This month I want to visit with you about the New Math that Rabbi Jesus teaches His Church. We call it “The Kingdom of God Math”. It is inexhaustible and incomprehensible.

In Matthew 18, St. Peter asks Jesus a question about forgiveness. Context is everything. In this Chapter, Jesus stresses the seriousness of sin, warns against despising a little one, tells the parable of the lost sheep, and proclaims that the Father wants none of His little ones (disciples) to perish. The goal of Church Discipline is restoration, not condemnation. Everything is to be done with humility. Everything is done in the presence of a “Promising God”.

According to the Rabbis of Jesus’ day, the governing principle was “three strikes and your out”. St. Peter ups the ante and suggests the number 7. 7 was a perfect number, but it wasn’t



enough. Jesus said to Peter, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.” Put your calculator away! In the Kingdom of God, unlimited forgiveness is not an extracurricular; it is a core requirement. How often must we forgive? To infinity and beyond.

Earlier in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught His disciples to pray the “Our Father”. Jesus said, “For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins.”

“Forgive our sins as we forgive, you taught us Lord to pray; but you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say.”

LBW #307

Martin Luther, in a sermon on Matthew 18, wrote these words: “It’s a simple thing to mouth the expression ‘forgiveness of sins’ just as it is a simple thing to repeat the basic truths of Christian doctrine. Ah, yes, if all we had to do was to mouth the words! The problem is that

when it comes to putting that expression into practice, we don’t know the first thing about it! You see, it is such a tremendous truth, a truth that I am to believe wholeheartedly, that all my sins are forgiven, and that by faith I am righteous before God. Oh, what a marvelously astounding righteousness this is! How totally different this is in contrast to the righteousness of this world as proclaimed by all its lawyers, intellectual giants, and philosophers! For they all reach the same conclusion, namely, that righteousness must be an inner, inherent characteristic of the human heart and soul. But this Gospel lesson teaches us that Christian righteousness is not a universal characteristic of the human heart which all share. No, Christ is teaching us that we become righteous and are freed from sins through the forgiveness of sins!

When we hear that we have been promised forgiveness of sins, we really cannot grasp that, and take this

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**November 2017
Newsletter
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Food For Thought:

“A Christian is in a peculiar situation. In himself, he is altogether sinful, but according to the Word and faith, he is without sin—pure & righteous.

—Martin Luther
House Postil, Trinity 21

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Reformation Sunday Prayer Walk

Each year, servants of Emmanuel walk around our Oasis neighborhood, offering prayers on behalf of our city. Please join us on Sunday, October 29 for our fifth annual prayer walk and potluck. We'll meet outside the South Entrance of Oasis Church at 3pm. Participants are asked to park on 38th Street. Following our prayer walk, a potluck meal will be enjoyed at 5pm at The Homestead of Rochester (Community Room in **Building 5520**—residence of Dick & Nancy Stanley). Please bring a dish or a dessert to share. We hope you can join us!

Daylight Savings Time Ends!

Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour at 2am, Sunday, Nov. 5. Spring ahead. Fall back.

RING THOSE BELLS

Emmanuel Lutheran Church is partnering again this year with the **Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing campaign**, with locations throughout the Rochester area, Bryon and Stewartville, from November 18th through Christmas Eve. A staffed kettle brings-in about **\$50 more per hour** than an unstaffed kettle. Kettle donations provide local services such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental assistance, counseling, adult day care programs and spiritual guidance. **November 18th is kick-off** with Emmanuel staffing two kettles at the Hy-Vee West (the newest store) from 9am til 5pm. **We still need ringers for several time slots!** See Lee Pearce to sign-up now as part of the **Emmanuel** Bell Ringing team to get your choice locations and times. Make it a family affair!

SEMAC 2018

The South East Minnesota Area Christians, under the leadership of Larry Vomhof, are traveling to Texas in 2018 to offer hope and restoration in the name of Christ to those who suffered the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. The two weeks that have been chosen for mission work in Texas are February 10-24. If you are interested in being a part of this mission team, or wish to support their efforts, please visit with Larry Vomhof.

Nominating Committee

The Emmanuel Lutheran Nominating Committee is prayerfully searching for servant leaders for our congregation. If God is calling you to a position of leadership at Emmanuel, please give a member of the Nominating Committee a phone call (Deb Brown, Jean Wanek, Jenna Serr, & Julie Edwards).

Holiday Care

Judy Pearce is coordinating a Thrivent Action Team project that will begin during the last week of November. The project will involve taking trays of purchased cookies to some of the healthcare hospitality houses, such as Gift of Life Transplant House, Ronald McDonald House, etc. Along with the treats, we will be leaving postcards publicizing and inviting visitors who are looking for a place to worship during their stay to come to Emmanuel Lutheran Church. We would also like to compile a list of any people who might be able to provide some transportation to our church, for those who do not have cars. Dealing with a medical problem in an unfamiliar city can be very overwhelming; particularly over the holidays. We would like to extend a compassionate welcome to come to Emmanuel for fellowship & friendship. Contact Judy Pearce for more information.

ALL SAINTS Celebration

All Saints' Day celebration has a long history in the worship life of the Christian Church. It began as a commemoration of the martyrs who had died for the faith, and it has since become a day when we honor and remember those who, in death, have joined the Church Triumphant, as well as the faithful saints of the present who serve Jesus Christ. Martin Luther held that all Christians are simultaneously sinner and saint--a sinner because of our rebellious nature, but a saint because of salvation in Jesus.

On Saturday night, Nov. 4, during our worship prayers, we are naming the Saints who have passed away during the previous year and ringing a bell. Our hope is grounded in the resurrection of Christ as we name and remember our loved ones who have passed from this earthly life to a life that continues even more fully in the presence of God. We have much to be joyful about as we meditate upon God's great love and faithfulness to his people.

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position: I have committed this and that sin; to pay for them I will do thus and so, fast ‘x’ number of days, say ‘x’ number of prayers, fund ‘x’ number of poorhouses, and pay for all my sins. It’s because human nature is proud and always wants to be in control, pulling it’s own water bucket from the well, wants to have the honor of laying the first stone, of being Number One. That’s why this is a majestic message of divine wisdom: We must believe that our righteousness, salvation, and comfort lie outside of ourselves, namely, that we are righteous before God, acceptable to him, holy and wise, even though there is nothing within us but sin, injustice, and stupidity.

Human nature is defenseless against a bad habit; it cannot avoid an awareness of sins and yet cannot believe in pure grace and the forgiveness of sins. If you have developed this skill, of not seeing what you do see, and of not feeling what you do feel, then let me tell you something more nobler and more majestic. But I warn you, it will take you a long time to develop this artistic skill! For this business of faith in the forgiveness of sins is just as if someone were aiming a loaded gun at your face and was ready to pull the trigger, and yet you are to believe and to say, “Not to worry!” – House Postil for Trinity 22 (Matthew 18:23-35).

Forgiven, we forgive, by the grace of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus. Repentant hearts confess, receive, & bestow the forgiveness of sins. Forgiven an unrepayable debt (10,000 talents - 150,000 years of labor), made righteous through the atoning sacrifice of our crucified and risen Savior, we are released to go and do likewise; to forgive to infinity and beyond. It’s God’s New Math. My mother didn’t understand it and neither do I.

Practicing God’s New Math, Pastor Dave

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 4 - All Saints (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson
Ushers: Darald & Leitha Bothun
Acolyte: Emma Matzke

Saturday, November 11 - Pentecost 23 (6pm)

Scripture Reader: Larry Vomhof
Ushers: Arne Nelson & Larry Vomhof
Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler

Saturday, November 18 - Pentecost 24 (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Darald Bothun
Ushers: **Pending**
Acolyte: **Pending**

Wednesday, November 22 - Thanksgiving (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Leitha Bothun
Ushers: Darald & Leitha Bothun
Acolyte: **Pending**

Saturday, November 25 - Christ the King (6pm)

Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce
Usher: **Pending**
Acolyte: **Pending**

NOTE: Julie Steffenson will take care of set up, & Janet Sunde & friends will take care of the take down. Pastor Dave will be our preacher each week. We will also have the services of a trumpeter, Warren Bandel on All Saints. Oasis Church will be our guests at our Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service, with the Oasis Choir offering two gifts of music. Emmanuel members are welcome to join the Oasis Choir for choir practice on Wednesdays, November 8 and 15 to rehearse these gifts of music (“A Thanksgiving Prayer” and “Give Thanks”). Brian Dunbar will direct the choir and play the piano.

Why Pray? (A Timely Message from President Lee Pearce)

Why bother with praying? I’m really busy. *Why* pray? Because we’re commanded to! Evidence of prayer as communication with God, intercessory supplication and receiving God’s direction to us appears in Holy

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SAVE THE DATE!

*Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 27, 2018

3:30pm — Meeting

4:45pm — Supper

6pm — Worship

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Scripture as early as Genesis 20:7. There God told Abimelech in a dream that “Abraham would pray for” him. Proverbs 15:29 says, “The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous.” Martin Luther is quoted as saying, “I have so much to do today that I’m going to need to spend three hours in prayer in order to get it done.” Prayer is not negotiating or haggling with God, or trying to get his endorsement on our plans. Prayer in the life of the believer is an act of complete faith and confidence in God’s purpose and His plan for us. It’s also the most effective communication tool we will ever have. James, the earthly half-brother of Jesus tells us in his Epistle that “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16b). And remember that Jesus himself taught his disciples, who were with him practically 24/7 for his three years on earth, how they should pray in Matthew 6:9. That’s the “Disciple’s Prayer” that some call the “Our Father,” or more familiarly known as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Our *Emmanuel Daily Prayer Calendar* is a reminder of our personal responsibility to lift up those around us in prayer. Remember that even a brief ‘arrow prayer’ will reach the throne of God. The Prayer Calendar is not just a list of daily events, birthdays and anniversaries, even though they are good to know. Some of the names you may not readily recognize on the Prayer Calendar are those of family members, ‘friends of Emmanuel’ or supporters who have requested to be included. Please contact Pastor Dave or Lee Pearce if you have someone you want added to the calendar or our worship prayers. We all stand in the need of prayer!

Back Page Stories

Supermarket Saturday: The next Channel One ministry opportunity is November 18, 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, November 1 & 15 at 1:00 pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

Women’s Bible Studies: Lady Light meets monthly at 6:30pm at the home of Katie Siebenaler; currently

studying the gift of marriage and family through the lens of Martin & Katie Luther. Session 3: Thursday, November 9. The Afternoon Study is currently studying the Book of Acts. They meet on Thursdays at 1pm at Oasis Church. Next Sessions: Nov. 2, 9, & 30.

Saturday School & G.I.F.T.

During the month of November, at 5:10pm each Saturday, Julie will teach our little ones (ages 3-grade 2) stories of the Bible corresponding to the Lessons heard in worship each week. Pastor Dave is teaching youth in grades 3-12 the story of The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe (C.S. Lewis). G.I.F.T. meets weekly to discuss current events in the life of our Faith Walk with Jesus.

Church Council Highlights -

October 5: Church Finances are great! IRS matter has been resolved. Thanksgiving Eve Worship will be jointly with Oasis Church. Offering is designated in support of the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. Outside lighting project is now complete. Insurance Review is pending. Mission Plan Budget for 2018 is in the works. Opportunities: Picture Directory, Prayer Walk, & Bell Ringing. Next Council Meeting: Thursday, Nov. 9 at 10am.

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/live generously. Thanks for walking the Way of Jesus!