

# THE EMMANUEL EPISTLE

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Quitters Pressing On!”

“You can’t fire me. I Quit!” To quit is to cease; to stop; to give up. “Quitters never win and winners never quit.”

True or false? When it comes to discipleship the word QUIT isn’t in our vocabulary. Or is it? There are some things worth quitting, like smoking, or cheating, or lying, or complaining. Quit worrying! Quit while you’re ahead!

When you’re only 26 years old and at the top of your game, the announcement that you are quitting is bound to create a stir and a few rumors. By 1981, Swedish tennis player, Bjorn Borg, had already won 6 French Opens and 5 straight Wimbledon titles. Having won 11 Grand Slam titles by the age of 25, Borg left the professional tennis circuit saying that it was no longer fun. He told reporters, “I was hoping this feeling I had inside would change ... that I would say, ‘Okay, I enjoy this again.’” When he officially announced his retirement in 1983, players and fans were shocked.

St. Paul is in prison



under house arrest when he pens his letter (An Epistle of Joy) to the Church in Philippi. Seeking to muzzle Paul in prison, the opposition has actually given him a megaphone and a pulpit. Paul’s Creed is simple and profound: “For me to live is Christ and to die is more Christ.” “Bring it on! Take your best shot!” Paul says. It’s a “WIN-WIN” situation for those who are buried into the death of Jesus and raised to new life through the washing of regeneration & renewal of the Holy Spirit.

***“If you quit ONCE it becomes a habit. Never quit!!!”***

**—Michael Jordan**

When is quitting a good thing; a necessary thing. Stop sinning, right now! And when is it a tragic miscalculation or a cop-out? Quitting is usually seen as failure, as giving up. This is ironic because the Christian life is all about quitting and

pressing on...at the same time! Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Stop hitting your head against a brick wall. Stop & think about what you are about to do. Stop doing church and press on being church. St. Paul offers this word of encouragement for disciples exhausted from the labors of daily life: “Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those who are mature, be thus minded.”

When and what to quit. That is the question. But in Christ always pressing on. Keep on keeping on! That’s what disciples do. Caked in the dust of Rabbi Jesus, we make it our aim to please Him, becoming like Him in His dying and rising. I have been crucified with Christ. Game over. Throw in the towel and press on! No quitting on Jesus!

*Pastor Dave Steffenson*

**October 2014  
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### ***Food For Thought:***

*“It’s always to soon to quit!”*

*—Norman Vincent Peale*

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## **Channel One: Empty Bowls 2014**

Date: October 9th, 2014

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Location: Rochester Art Center

Join Channel One Regional Food Bank for this special 10th Anniversary celebration of Empty Bowls. Enjoy a simple meal of soup & bread provided by top local restaurants and bakeries. Attendance allows participants to choose donated hand-painted bowls as a take home memento of the event. Access to all Art Center exhibits & a silent auction will also be included.

Empty Bowl Tickets are now available.

Pre-sale tickets are: \$10 for individuals and \$30 for families.

## **SATURDAY SCHOOL has arrived!**

Rally Day took place on September 20. We are making adjustments as we go along and find out what works best. We are now planning on meeting at 5:10pm, and will start our time with a light snack for the kids. We will then have a Bible lesson with various activities such as music, drama, story-time, crafts and games. We are offering this time for all kids, ages 3 years old and up, and we will continue to make changes as we grow & expand. If you would like more information or have questions, please email or call Julie Steffenson at [steffensonjulie@gmail.com](mailto:steffensonjulie@gmail.com). or 206-3048.

## **God's Got This! - Submitted by Pastor Dave to the Rochester Post-Bulletin**

The Psalmist proclaims, "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His Word I hope". This past May I visited Mayo-St. Mary's Hospital to check on a parishioner. The parishioner, Peg, was having brain surgery for the removal of a tumor. While keeping time with Peg's husband, Don, in the waiting room, I noticed suitcases & a nearby family. The family was a mother, her daughter and her granddaughter. I suspected that they too were awaiting news regarding a serious surgery. The daughter was wearing a sweatshirt with I Peter 5:7 written on the front & "Team James" written on the back.

I recognized I Peter 5:7 – "Cast all your anxieties on God because He cares for you." When the opportunity presented itself, I commented about the daughter's sweatshirt. She proceeded to explain its significance. A close friend of hers, named James, was recently murdered. James' wife, also a dear friend of this forty-something woman, was diagnosed with breast cancer one week later. The woman telling me about her sweatshirt also informed me that her own husband had suffered a stroke. This woman and her daughter, recent arrivals from the Carolinas with suitcases in hand, were in the waiting room awaiting word from the doctor about her father's brain surgery for the removal of a fist-sized tumor.

When it rains, it pours. Suffering has a way of intersecting our lives. Suffering also provides us with an opportunity to witness God's glory and healing presence; to see and to testify to the mercies of Christ. The man undergoing brain surgery was Ron, from the Rice Lake, Wisconsin, area. His wife's name is Pat. As I visited with Pat and her family in the waiting room, I discovered a family with a deep faith in Jesus. They didn't ask for this episode of suffering. It came upon them quickly and uninvited. Two weeks after an episode that signaled a possible stroke, Ron was at Mayo having a stage-four aggressive tumor removed.

Pat showed me a picture of her husband Ron on her Smart Phone. The picture was taken right before surgery. Written, by Pat, on Ron's forehead were the words, "God's Got This!" What will be the outcome of Ron's surgery? Only the Lord knows. Faith assures us that God's got this, and everything else that comes our way! God's eyes are on the sparrow and we know God watches over us. In everything God works for good.

Scripture tells us that the outcome of our faith is the salvation of our souls. St. Peter writes, "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you." St. Peter reminds us that our inheritance is imperishable, unfading, and undefiled; kept in heaven for the kept ones. St. Peter's final word is this: "Peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus."

Don & Peg have continued to keep in touch with their fellow faith travelers, Ron & Pat. During a final visit in the hospital, Don gave his address and phone number to Pat & Ron, telling them, "We've got extra bedrooms. If you are in town for treatment and need a place to stay, you can stay at our home." Yes, God's got this. The hairs on our heads are all numbered. Have no fear little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. "Team Jesus".

## Pastor Appreciation

October is Pastor Appreciation month, a designated time for officially and collectively expressing our gratitude for the myriad ministries & tasks our spiritual leaders perform. Clergy appreciation was initiated formally in 1994 as an emphasis of Focus on the Family, and typically is observed during October. It's a good time for us to personally express and assess exactly how we appreciate our Pastor and value his work and the role he fills in our lives. In other words, what does 'Pastor' mean to us?

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Standard Occupational Classification provides the following as a job description of Clergy: "Conduct religious worship and perform other spiritual functions associated with beliefs and practices of religious faith or denomination. Provide spiritual and moral guidance and assistance to members." It includes Rabbi, Priest and Imam under the same collective heading as Clergy. By its very description, that's open-ended and a typically bureaucratic attempt at an all-encompassing definition.

Too many times we allow ourselves to fall into just such a cloudy, ill-defined perception. Have we lulled ourselves into accepting society's easily-offered 'P-C' image of our Pastor as our personal religious CEO, theologian, counselor, psychologist, philosopher, teacher, researcher, musician, facilities manager, author, speaker, staff personnel manager, financial planner, architect, event planner/scheduler, marriage/divorce counselor, life coach, grief consoler, visionary, spiritual guru? If we have, it's time to pull ourselves from that perceptual abyss. By necessity, our

Pastors all-too-often find themselves filling those roles for us. Maybe we should look for some Biblical guidance: "And I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:15)

Pastors and their families live in a fishbowl with incredible pressure-filled lives loaded with our expectations of them. They are always under the scrutiny of parishioners, neighbors, & the community-at-large putting them under a microscope of criticism. They must have the ideal family, be perfect in all conduct, dress 'just-so' and always be available at our beck and call, always be 'up' and never get depressed (especially with us!), have ready answers to every question, and keep us focused and always on an even keel. And, let's not forget the Pastor's wife! It doesn't matter if she's educated, a dunce, too pretty, not pretty enough, friendly, interested in activities, nosey, inquisitive, intellectual, too big, too short, fashionable, interested or not in church affairs. How would we measure-up to our own expectations?

We can show our gratitude in many ways to encourage our Pastor and his family; an unexpected phone call to just say 'Thanks' for all that you do, a note, a card, a warm handshake, or even a personal gift. But, you know what? We can show appreciation also by helping with the tasks of ministry! We can't preach the sermons, but we can 'preach' to others every day. Remember the adage, "You may be the only sermon some people ever hear." We can ask someone to come to church with us, and offer to pick them up. We can visit the sick, the shut-ins, visit with those whose family is undergoing surgery. We can

'do' ministry; we can 'be' church. Many people in large, multiple-Pastor churches can be content to 'just show up' for services. We at Emmanuel Lutheran can't fall into that trap. And, we shouldn't want to let it happen. We have too much good news to share! We need to show appreciation! Just as Martin Luther described Christ-followers as 'Little Christs' we can be 'little Pastors' helping with ministry and really showing appreciation to our Pastor and to the Great Shepherd. Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." (Matthew 9:37)

Being a Pastor is hard work. It requires a sacrificial dedication. After all, God entrusted Pastors with the spiritual well-being of His flock. That's a pretty high standard for a job description in anybody's book! True Pastors are equipped with the gifts described in Ephesians, & have as their purpose "...the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12) We who sit in the pew hardly can appreciate the true value of God's chosen Pastors. So, let's make Pastor's job a little easier by joining in and working for the mission of Christ, 'being' church together.

So, Pastor Dave and Julie, "Thank You" for all that you do; the seen and the behind-the-scenes, too. You are sincerely, deeply appreciated every day!

— Submitted by an Emmanuel Member

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

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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### SAVE THE DATE!

*Saturday, April 18, 2015 (6pm)  
Emmanuel Lutheran Choir,  
Grafton, IA will perform an Easter  
Cantata at Emmanuel Lutheran of  
Rochester, MN*

## “Prayer Walk & Potluck”

Are you ready for our second annual “prayer for the welfare of our city” walk and potluck? On Reformation Sunday, October 26, Servants of Emmanuel and their “walker friends” will gather at Oasis Church at 2:45pm and walk around our Oasis neighborhood praying for our schools, churches, public servants, and businesses. Following our prayer walk, we will gather at the Gramercy Coop, home of Sharon Hart, where we will enjoy a festive potluck from about 4:30-6:00pm. Spread the word and please join us!

### LOOKING AHEAD

- *December Bell Ringing—Salvation Army!*
- *2015 Discipleship Covenants—December signing!*
- *Thanksgiving Eve Worship and Pie Social on Wednesday, November 26 at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship—December 24 at 6 p.m. Twelve Days of Christmas Bell Ringing Worship—January 3, 2015.*
- *Parents Night Out —Investing in Marriage!*
- *Ministry Event with St. Paul Lutheran Fellowship and the Nestings!*
- *Winter 2015—Confirmation Class on Communion and Potluck Bible Study on Revelation.*

## Back Page Stories

### Men’s Bible Study Breakfast:

Weekly fellowship around God’s Word at 8 am Tuesdays at Charlie’s (1408 2nd. St. SW). Join us in being Evangelical. Invite a friend. Share the Good News!

**Super Market Saturday:** The next Channel One opportunity is October 18 (9 am—Noon). Let’s share the heart of Emmanuel by caring for the needs of our neighbors.

**Women’s Bible Study:** Our study on Paul’s letter to the Church at Corinth continues twice each month on Wednesday afternoons at 1pm. Remaining dates: Oct. 8 & 22; Nov. 5 & 19; Dec. 3 & 17.

### Council Highlights (Sept. 9):

Constitution & Bylaws review progress report was given; document to be distributed at the September 27

Huddle. Thank you letters were sent to our Emmanuel supporters. Thanks to Dick & Nancy Stanley for the gift of our Emmanuel Baptismal Cloths. Emmanuel is requesting dual membership in both the Minkota and Iowa Mission Districts of the NALC. Arne Nelson & Lee Pearce will be our voting lay members at the Iowa Mission District Convocation on Saturday, October 11 (Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Grafton, Iowa). Pastor Steffenson will attend both Mission District Meetings. Rev. Mike Lockerby will be our guest preacher on Oct. 11, with Pastor Steffenson presiding. Exciting fall happenings include: Confirmation for grades 4-9, “God’s Not Dead” Matinee, the Women’s Study on I Corinthians, & Saturday School. Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 10am.

### NEW LIFE Family Services:

“Celebrate the Vision” ANNUAL

BANQUET & SILENT AUCTION Thursday, October 2, 2014 at the Rochester International Event Center. Keynote Speaker is Carol Everett. Contact #507-282-3377 for more information.

**Special Offerings:** Our designated offering for Thanksgiving will be the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. The designated offering for Christmas will be the NALC Seminary.

**Liturgies:** During the Month of September we used the Revised Edition of Holden Evening Prayer with the ReClaim Hymnal. During the months of October & December we will be using LBW Setting II. During the month of November we will be using With One Voice Bread of Life.

**Please keep Jim & Diane Wagner (International Church of Vilnius in Lithuania) and St. Paul Lutheran Fellowship (Twin Cities Church Plant), in your prayers.**