

# The Emmanuel Epistle

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: No Other Gospel”

John 3:16! It’s the Gospel!  
Jesus plus Nothing equals  
Everything. Everything  
minus Jesus equals Nothing.

The Letter of Philippians  
testifies to the TRUTH.  
They put Paul in a prison,  
but God gave him a pulpit.  
They tried to muzzle the  
Gospel, but God gave Paul a  
megaphone. The Gospel is  
advancing. The Kingdom of  
God cannot be stopped!

Carefully consider the one  
verse of Scripture which the  
church reformer, Martin  
Luther, called “the heart of  
the Bible, the Gospel in  
miniature”: *“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.”*

This month, Lutherans  
around the world are  
celebrating the 500th  
Anniversary of the  
Protestant Reformation,  
which many believe began  
with Luther’s posting of the  
95 Theses on the Castle  
Church Door in Wittenberg,  
Germany on All Saints Eve  
— October 31, 1517.

The heart and soul of the  
Reformation can be found  
in one word, namely,  
“GOSPEL”. In the New  
Testament the Greek word  
for “good news”  
(*euaggelion*) is found 76  
times as a noun and 54  
times as a verb (always in



the singular). The word  
“Gospel” means “good  
news” There were many  
gospels (plural) in the first  
century AD, but the Gospel  
Writers always put this  
word in the singular. St.  
Mark says it well: “The  
beginning (*genesis*) of the  
Gospel of Jesus Christ, the  
Son of God.” Gospel is a  
literary genre, which refers  
to “*victory announced be-  
forehand.*” St. Mark an-  
nounces the rest of the story  
in his “one verse summary  
title”. The Gospel begins  
and ends with JESUS!

### **John 3:16**

*“The Gospel in  
miniature.” “The  
greatest sentence ever  
written.” “The Hope  
Diamond of the  
Bible.”*

St. Paul echoes St. Mark in  
his letter to the Romans: “I  
am not ashamed of the  
Gospel for it is the power of  
God for salvation for in it  
the righteousness of God is  
revealed from faith for  
faith.” This verse was a  
“towering experience” for

Luther. It opened the gates  
of paradise for Luther.

This is what Martin Luther  
and the Reformation is all  
about: Luther rediscovered  
the Gospel (the good news  
of Jesus Christ). The Gos-  
pel captured Luther. God  
saves sinners *by grace  
alone, through faith alone,  
in Christ Jesus alone.*

Martin Luther believed that  
the freedom that comes  
through the Gospel was  
worth living and dying and  
fighting for. And so he did.

Paul’s letter to the Gala-  
tians was one of Luther’s  
favorites. In his Table  
Talks Luther writes: “The  
Epistle to the Galatians is  
my own epistle. I have  
betrothed myself to it. It is  
my Katie von Bora.” Paul  
proclaims the TRUTH of  
the Gospel: Forgiveness &  
salvation are unconditional  
(no strings attached), free  
gifts from God through  
Jesus Christ. We do noth-  
ing to earn or deserve  
God’s love, forgiveness or  
the promise of Eternal life.

When Paul writes Gala-  
tians, he is beside himself.  
“O foolish Galatians, who  
has bewitched you? Who

—Continued on page 3...

**October 2017  
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### ***Food For Thought:***

*“Unless I am convinced by  
the testimony of the  
Scriptures or by clear reason,  
I am bound by the Scriptures  
I have quoted and my  
conscience is captive to the  
Word of God. May God help  
me. Amen.”*

—Martin Luther, 1521

### **INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS**

<i>Emmanuel Huddle</i>	2
<i>Prayer Walk &amp; Potluck</i>	2
<i>Worship Servants for October</i>	3
<b>RED KETTLE</b>	4
<i>Women’s Bible Studies</i>	4
<i>“Luther Hated God!”</i>	5
<i>Marriage Conference</i>	6
<i>Back Page Stories Council Minutes</i>	6

### **Church Building Space**

Space is always a premium in Church. We are attempting to use the Oasis Church space as it was designed. On Saturday nights, members and guests of Emmanuel are invited to use the Gathering Space for conversations, and the Nursery Space for child care. The Worship Space is available for those wishing to meditate, listen to prelude music, or prepare for worship. Christian Education is available for all ages. Saturday School is being held in the basement, & G.I.F.T. is being offered in the Fellowship Hall.

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

During the month of October, Julie will continue to teach our little ones (ages 3-grade 2) stories of the Bible corresponding to the Scripture Lessons heard in worship each week. Pastor Dave will continue to teach youth in grades 3-12 the story of our Salvation using C.S. Lewis' "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" as a teaching tool. G.I.F.T. will be welcoming Pastor Wendy Berthelsen on October 7 as she leads a Bible Study on "What it Means to be the Church". Pastor Wendy is the daughter of our beloved Gloria Wiebusch. Adults are invited to arrive for G.I.F.T. by 5pm on Saturday, October 7 so that we have as much time as possible to learn from Pastor Wendy. During the remaining Saturdays in October, weekly conversations will center around the teachings of Martin Luther in celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

### **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 at the South Entrance of the Oasis Church at 3pm. Participants are encouraged to park on 38th Street. Following our prayer walk, a potluck meal will be enjoyed at 5pm (location pending). Please bring a dish or a dessert to share. We hope you can join us!

### **EMMANUEL CHURCH PICNIC**

The date for next year's Emmanuel Church Picnic at the home of Larry and Deb Vomhof will be on Sunday, July 29. Save the Date!

### **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, and Julie Edwards).

### **EMMANUEL HUDDLE**

Our next Emmanuel Huddle will take place on Saturday, October 7 following worship. Join us as we discuss our mutual ministry. Conversation will focus on the 2018 Mission Plan Budget. As we prepare for the gift of 2018, we want to be mindful of some changes to our rental lease with Oasis Church. Rent will be increasing to \$650.00 per month. This is still far below market value in the Rochester area. We will have the Oasis building for six hours on Saturdays (2-8pm), plus an additional six hours of space usage during the week. We can have additional hours of rental space for \$15.00 per hour. Our rental lease also requires that Emmanuel members be responsible for snow removal on all Oasis sidewalks one day per week. At our Emmanuel Huddle, we will also be discussing the continued use of the pipe organ and the budget costs associated with its use. Please join us for our Emmanuel Huddle!

—Continued from page 1...

has cast a spell on you?” Why would anyone exchange real money for counterfeit cash? Why would anyone trade in the AUTHENTIC for the FAKE. There is only one Gospel. All others are imposters & counterfeits. There is no other Gospel. In the words of Martin’s beloved wife Katie, “Cling to Christ like a burr to a dress.”

Martin Luther wore the whole armor of God. When tempted by the devil, Luther would cling to the Gospel. Luther writes, “So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: ‘I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!’” — (Letter to Jerome Weller, July, 1530). In 1531, discussing an illustrative conversation he had with the devil (which took place on a toilet), Luther said to the devil, “I am cleansing my bowels and worshipping God Almighty; You deserve what descends and God what ascends.”

Yes, Luther was a raw & earthy man. He had no time for the father of all lies, because he was wedded to Christ who is the Way and the Truth and the Life. Paul may be in chains for the Gospel, but the Gospel is not in chains. In 1517, Luther “hit the nail on the head”. He was captured by, and captive to, the Gospel. The Gospel is a “promising word”. The Rev. Dr. Mark Mattes writes, “When Luther presents the Gospel, it is powerful. It grabs you and emboldens you to be ‘footloose’. Since God has conquered sin, death and the devil, and even His own law against you—and has set you free from them all, you cannot help jumping for joy! We tend to think of Lutherans as stoic and unemotional, but Luther felt that when the Gospel was heard, it was bound to get you on your feet and leap for joy. And it is a message so good that we can’t keep it to ourselves.” See Luther’s first hymn, designed for congregational singing, published in 1523, “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice” (LBW #299). We’ll be singing this hymn on Reformation Saturday in worship!

On page 5 of this Newsletter, a friend of mine has written a wonderful article on Luther. Please read it! Luther hated God, because he believed that God hated him. But in TRUTH, God hates sin and loves sinners; enough to send His only begotten Son to the cross for our salvation. If you have access to the Internet & want to learn more about Martin Luther and the Reformation, visit the following websites: Lutheran Hour Ministries ([www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)) and view/read items under Video-Based Bible Studies & Resources under the “Resources” Header; or visit the Institute of Lutheran Theology ([www.ilt.org](http://www.ilt.org)) and read/view some of its free resources.

Luther may be a bag of maggots (in his own words), but John 3:16 is “The Gospel in miniature. The greatest sentence ever written. The Hope Diamond of the Bible.” Call yourselves Christians! Yes Martin. Indeed we shall!

—The Gospel is Advancing, Pastor Dave

## WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR OCTOBER

**Saturday, October 7- Pentecost 18 (6pm)**  
 Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson  
 Ushers: Brock Edwards and family  
 Acolyte: Emma Matzke

ORGANIST: Rev. Scott Schilbe (LBW Setting II)  
 Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson  
 Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
 Treats: Julie Edwards

**Saturday, October 14 - Pentecost 19 (6pm)**  
 Scripture Reader: Julie Engle  
 Ushers: Darald & Leitha Bothun  
 Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler

PIANIST: Rev. P.J. Stohlmann (Holden Evening Prayer)  
 Communion Assistant: Katie Siebenaler  
 Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
 Treats: Katie Siebenaler

**Saturday, October 21 - Pentecost 20 (6pm)**  
 Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce  
 Ushers: Darald & Leitha Bothun  
 Acolyte: **PENDING**

Don & Peg Holtan (Word & Sacrament Service)  
 Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce  
 Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
 Treats: Judy Pearce

**Saturday, October 28 - Reformation (6pm)**  
 Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof  
 Usher: Creig Anderson & Larry Vomhof  
 Acolyte: **PENDING**

ORGANIST: Rev. Scott Schilbe (LBW Setting II)  
 Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof  
 Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan  
 Treats: Deb Vmhof

**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.

## **“A Question of Faith!”**

### **Coming to a Theater near You**

“A Question of Faith” centers on 3 families from different cultures who live in the same community. They are complete strangers living vastly separate lives until a texting and driving accident thrusts them onto converging paths where they discover love, forgiveness, grace, and mercy.

Along with a message of faith, the storyline touches on racial

prejudice, the consequences of texting and driving, and also addresses the debate surrounding organ donation. Movie Release Date: September 29.

## **ELECTRONIC GIVING**

Members wishing to contribute to Emmanuel Lutheran with automatic giving may do so by contacting Judy Caudill or Deb Vomhof. Offerings are transferred once a month on the 15th of the month. Thanks for supporting the holy work of God at Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Rochester, MN.

## **WORSHIP MUSICIANS**

Our search continues for a permanent Worship Musician. Let Pastor Dave know if you hear of someone who is a gifted pianist, and/or organist, looking for an opportunity to serve in Worship. In the interim, God has faithfully provided our church with substitute worship musicians. Thanks is offered to Rev. P.J. Stohlmann, Rev. Scott Schilbe, Karen Salz, and Don & Peg Holtan who are providing musical accompaniment for our worship services.

## **Schaeffer Academy: Fall Play**

### **“A Boar in the Vineyard” - The Life of Martin Luther (7-9pm).**

This is a must-see performance in celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

Date: Friday, November 3.

## **Women’s Evening Bible**

**Study Group:** This year “Lady Light” is looking at “Holy Christian Marriage & Family” through 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 2: Wed, October 18.

## **Women’s Afternoon Bible Study Group:**

Emmanuel Women are studying the Book of Acts this year. The Book of Acts is Part 2 of Saint Luke’s proclamation of Jesus and His Church. Scholars refer to the Book of Acts

as the “Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church”. What does it mean to be the Church, the Body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit for witnessing in God’s World? The Book of Acts teaches us what it means to be missionaries, ignited by the mighty rushing wind of God. **Next sessions:**

Thursday, October 5 at 1pm in the Oasis Fellowship Hall (Acts 3-7).

October 12, 2017 – “The Church in Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8-9)

## **RED KETTLE**

### **Time to Sign-Up!**

It’s hard to believe that it’s already time for *Emmanuel* members to sign-up for this year’s Salvation Army **Red Kettle** fund drive, as we look forward to our annual bell ringing ministry partnership.

*Emmanuel Lutheran’s* 2017 goal is to ring bells for 62 hours. With everyone’s help, we can do that

easily! Sign-up individually, as groups, and as families. Include the children & grandchildren. Be as creative as you like during your ‘shift’ by playing and singing Christmas carols or just ‘ring the bells’ and greet people, reminding them of God’s gift to us and the real reason for the season.

*Emmanuel* members will help ‘**Rock the Red Kettle**’ on Saturday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> from 9am-5pm at the newest Hy-Vee store on West Circle Drive, just like we did last year. Emmanuel will staff the Red Kettles at both doors during the official kick-off. That alone will generate 16 hours of service

Lee Pearce is our Red Kettle bell ringing coordinator. You can sign-up with Lee at church, by phone (507) 753-9983, or by e-mail at [LeePeers@aol.com](mailto:LeePeers@aol.com).

Remember, **DO IT NOW!** You’ll be glad you did. A special bell lanyard (a keepsake) will be given to each Emmanuel bell ringer

## **“Can We Learn From A Sinner Who Hated God?”**

### **The 500th Anniversary of the Beginning of the Reformation**

“In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.”

—2 Corinthians 5:19

Can we learn from a sinner who hated God?

The Reformation is said to have started on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed the “95 Theses” to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, protesting the Church’s sale of indulgences. Luther believed this selling of indulgences led people away from God.

Yet Luther himself had lived with the persistent belief that he had been cast away from Almighty God, by his own undoing. And Martin Luther would be the first to admit that he was a sinner. He even called himself “a poor stinking bag of maggots” and therefore wanted no Christian to be referred to as a Lutheran. His status as a sinner terrified and troubled him to a point of complete despair because he stood in judgment under a holy and righteous God. Martin Luther’s medieval terror & torment over sin, appears so superstitious & archaic in the 21st Century, but dig deep enough into human conscience and such a terror and torment still lives. We are all under judgment.

Luther had tried to make himself right with God through the self-punishment of excessive fasting, sleeping outdoors, and even whipping his own flesh. He went to confession constantly, confessing all his known sins, but upon leaving the confessional booth he would be tormented by the need to return to confession again, continuing an endless cycle. Why didn’t a so called loving God make things easier? Where is the good news of the Gospel? What could he, Luther, do to obtain salvation? -- Martin Luther found himself hating God.

But Luther searched the Bible. And one day, Romans 1:17 blasts out: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Luther then felt “altogether born again” and that he had “entered paradise through open gates.”

God’s righteousness is a free gift in Christ through faith. The sinner is made right with God by receiving

faith, not by trying to earn God’s favor through achievement. Luther’s new understanding of Christianity was now all about the Christ who is God, and Christ’s saving work on the cross by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and this is all explained and proclaimed in Scripture alone. These spiritual truths had been buried for generations, and Luther’s unearthing of them turned both church and world upside down.

Though God’s Word speaks through both Law and Gospel, Martin Luther did not have to do anything to be saved from “sin, death, & the power of devil”. Christ had done it all, completely saving him and offering this gift through God’s external Word. All Luther -- or anyone -- needs is to simply trust in God’s promise, with God’s help, as recorded in the Bible. Our relationship to God is not based upon our good works or efforts, but based instead upon trust created by the Holy Spirit’s work of grace through the preaching of the Gospel in Word & Sacraments.

So Martin Luther no longer hated God. And having experienced this love of Christ, Luther taught that we no longer need to worry about our own salvation, so we are now free to serve and love our neighbor, sharing all good things with those in need as we rely upon divine mercy and forgiveness. We are free and forgiven and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

At the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, let us remember that the cultural changes that laid the foundation for Western Democracy emerged from the Reformation as a result of Luther’s discovery of freedom in Christ. This discovery was not extracted from Luther’s internal spirituality however, but instead drawn from the authoritative Word of God. It is especially important today to celebrate this Christ who is for us and not against us. Such an understanding is vital for people who do not know what their relationship with God happens to be, people living in fear erupting from a desire to serve self.

—Continued on the BACK PAGE...

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

### Contact Information:

253-302-9845 (Mobile)  
**507-206-3048 (Home)**  
pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com



### SAVE THE DATE!

#### \*Annual Meeting

**Saturday, January 27, 2018**

**3:30pm — Meeting**

**4:45pm — Supper**

**6pm — Worship**

—Continued from PAGE 5...

To truly understand the Reformation, please read Luther's Small Catechism which is still extremely relevant because it is grounded in Scripture. So many memorize this little book and then forget it, but in this age of "spirituality" we can learn from the Catechism about a "spirituality of the cross" as Gene Veith so aptly calls it. In this spirituality we are encouraged to "drown" the "old sinful self ... through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever." (Fourth Article: "What Does Baptism Mean for Daily Living", "The Sacrament of Holy Baptism")

Martin Luther was a brilliant but flawed human being. Though some of his tirades against others horrify us and must be condemned, we can indeed still learn a great deal from this forgiven sinner who once hated God.

*(Dallas Groten is a member of First English Lutheran Church, LCMS, of Spring Valley, MN.)*

### "Secrets for Lifelong Romance" Conference

Cost: \$79.00 per couple. Location: Autumn Ridge Church Sanctuary. Dates: Friday, October 27 (6:00-8:30pm) and Saturday, October 28 (7:30am-12:00 Noon). Join Dr. Greg and Erin Smalley for proven, biblically-based strategies to navigate relationship roadblocks, improve communication & build a romance that lasts a lifetime. 3 Scholarships remain!



## Back Page Stories

**Supermarket Saturday:** The next Channel One ministry opportunity is October 21, 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, October 4 & 18 at 1:00 pm. Give Lee Pearce a call if you would like to help with this wonderful ministry.

**Channel One:** The thirteenth annual "Empty Bowls" fundraiser will be held at the Rochester Art Center on

Thursday, October 12 (11am-8pm). Support a worthy cause and enjoy some excellent soup!

**Church Council Highlights - September 6:** YTD expenses are exceeding our YTD income by \$7,153. We budgeted to use \$17,854 of our Reserves this year. The outside lighting is scheduled to be installed during the first week of October. A Joint Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service with Oasis Church will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 22 at 6pm. The Oasis Choir will sing. A Dessert Social will follow. Singers from Emmanuel are invited to attend the Oasis Choir practices on Wednesdays, November 8 & 15. A comparative review of our insurance will be done (Guide One vs. Church

Mutual). Emmanuel has three keys to the Oasis Building, assigned to Pastor Dave, Lee Pearce, and Don Holtan. An Emmanuel Huddle has been scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 7 following worship. The New Life Gala Event will be held at the Mayo Civic Center on Thursday, October 26 at 6pm. The possibility of an Emmanuel Council or Congregational Retreat was discussed. The next Church Council meeting will be held at Oasis Church on Thursday, October 5 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 generously.