

The Emmanuel Epistle

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

Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Confessing I AM”

Question: What are you doing? **Answer:** Confessing I AM, in word and deed!

“If we confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord & believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved.” “Whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” We are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone. “Faith comes by the hearing of God’s Word and what is heard through the preaching of Christ.” Jesus is God’s Word for you. Jesus is “I AM” for you.

When God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush on Mount Sinai (Horeb), Moses asked, “Who are you? What’s your name? Do you have a calling card?” God replied, “I AM WHO I AM.” The Ten Commandments begin with a promising word: “I am the LORD your God.” I AM for you! Believe it! Live it!

In Matthew, Chapter 16, Jesus is in the region of Caesarea Philippi. The Cave of Pan (god of the underworld) is located at the base of Mount Hermon. The Cave of Pan was believed to be the gate to Hell. In this location, Jesus asks his 12 disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” What is the word on the street? Answers vary. Some say John the Baptist reincarnated. Others



say Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets.

Jesus moves from popular opinion to particular confession. “Who do you say that I am? Peter speaks on behalf of the Twelve: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Two chapters earlier, Peter was walking on water and sinking in the Sea of Galilee. He cried, “LORD save me.” Jesus grabbed him & put him in the boat. The Twelve worshiped Jesus and said, “Truly you are Son of God.”

“Whenever I go by my church, I always stop and visit; so on the day I’m carried in, the LORD won’t ask ‘Who is it?’”

Now, in Matthew 16, Peter gets specific: “You are THE Son of God.” See the difference? Jesus is not one of many options. He is the only way; the only option. Jesus is THE Messiah; THE Savior of the world. In Matthew 14:27, Jesus says, “Take heart. I AM. Do not

be afraid.” In Matthew 16, Jesus tells Peter that his confession is not self-made. His confession of THE TRUTH is God-given. “Flesh and blood has not revealed THE TRUTH to you Simon Bar-Jonah, but my Father who is in heaven.” It’s all grace. Even our faith. Even our confession.

“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood & righteousness. No merit of my own I claim, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ the solid ROCK I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.” Peter will later refer to the church as living stones and Jesus as the footings and foundation. “The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.”

Jesus tells His disciples that this confession is the foundation (the ROCK) of His Church. Shod with Gospel shoes and carrying the sword of the Spirit in their hands, the Church, the Bride of Jesus, is on the attack. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Jesus gives the “Office of the Keys” to His Church.

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Food For Thought:

“I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity.”

—C.S. Lewis

INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

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Outdoor Church Lighting

Exterior Lighting will be installed on the main entrance to the Oasis Church around the end of September. The cost will be less than \$2,500. Members of Emmanuel wishing to make a contribution to this project are invited to do so. Please designate your offering envelope or check accordingly. Thanks for helping the light to shine in the darkness! Those who enter God's Church at night will be very grateful!

Blessing of Backpacks

School will soon be in session. Emmanuel is inviting all preschool & school age children and teachers to bring their backpacks, lunch boxes, etc. with them to church on Labor Day Weekend (Saturday, September 2 at 6pm) so that we can bless & pray for our children & teachers as they begin a new school year. A gift will be given to all children who come for the blessing.

Hint: "Jesus Rules!"

SATURDAY SCHOOL & G.I.F.T. "Race to Rally Day!"

Rally Day for Saturday School and G.I.F.T will be on Saturday, September 9th. Our theme this year for Saturday School is "**Run Toward the Goal**" and is based on Philippians 3:14. We will kick off our year in the Oasis Fellowship Hall where you can race the clock with a number of "Minute-to-Win-It" style games. We will also enjoy root beer floats (after worship, during the fellowship time). All kids and adults are welcome to come as we off kick-off another great year of Christian education. We'll see you at 5:10pm on September 9th!!

EMMANUEL CHURCH PICNIC

Thanks to Larry and Deb Vomhof for hosting this years Emmanuel Picnic. Next Year's date is pending. Watch future newsletters for the date.

Best Poem in the World "JUDGE NOT"

"I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights of its décor.
But it was the folks in heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp...
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.
Bob, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.
I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?
I would love to hear your take
How'd all these sinners get up here
God must've made a mistake.
And why is everyone so quiet,
So somber — give me a clue.'
'Hush child,' he said.
'They're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you!'"

(Shared at NALC Convocation)

Confirmation Class The Chronicles of Narnia

Pastor Dave will be leading a class on C.S. Lewis' "The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe" this fall during Saturday School. This class will explore the message of Redemption in the name of Jesus. Youth in grades 3-8 are invited to participate. Deb Vomhof will be assisting Pastor Dave with this class.

—Cont. from page 1

In His name and in His stead, we loose sins & bind sins. The absolution is spoken and “there is now therefore no condemnation (no con-damnation) for those who are in Christ Jesus”—Romans 8:1.

Who is Jesus? Lunatic, Liar, or Lord? C. S. Lewis, who was a professor at Cambridge University and once an agnostic, writes about Christ: “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.” Then Lewis adds: “You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Jesus asks His disciples, “Who do people say that I AM?” More importantly, “Who do you say that I AM?” The question begs a confession. The confession bestows a way of life. For some it is THE Way and THE Truth, and THE Life. For others it is an aimless and hellish path of self-consumption and self-destruction. “From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He MUST go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and on the third day be raised.” This is Messiah Jesus, crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins! Those who are conscripted into Christ’s Kingdom are caked in the dust of Rabbi Jesus, sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ forever. “If anyone would come after me,” Jesus declares, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.”

What are you & I doing? Filled with the Holy Spirit, I am confessing I AM, in word and deed, and so are you!

—Confessing I AM, Pastor Dave

WORSHIP SERVANTS FOR SEPTEMBER

<p>Saturday, September 2 - Pentecost 13 (6pm) Scripture Reader & Prayers: Jean Wanek Ushers: LeRoy Quam & Rich Sunde Acolyte: Emma Matzke</p>	<p>PIANIST: Karen Salz (WOV — Bread of Life) Communion Assistant: Jean Wanek Coffee: Peg Holtan/Julie Steffenson Sound: Don Holtan/Lee Pearce</p>
<p>Saturday, September 9 - Pentecost 14 (6pm) Scripture Reader: Larry Vomhof Ushers: Matt Serr, & Jim Siebenaler (Addison) Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler</p>	<p>PIANIST: Rev. P.J. Stohlmann (Holden Evening Prayer) Communion Assistant: Jenna Serr Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan Treats: Jenna Serr</p>
<p>Saturday, September 16 - Pentecost 15 (6pm) Scripture Reader & Prayers: Deb Vomhof Ushers: Larry & Deb Vomhof Acolyte: Cabe Siebenaler</p>	<p>ORGANIST: Rev. Scott Schilbe (LBW Setting II) Communion Assistant: Deb Vomhof Sound & Coffee: PENDING Treats: Deb Vomhof</p>
<p>Saturday, September 23 - Pentecost 16 (6pm) Scripture Reader & Prayers: Julie Steffenson Usher: LeRoy Quam Acolyte: Elijah Matzke</p>	<p>ORGANIST: Rev. Scott Schilbe (LBW Setting II) Communion Assistant: Julie Steffenson Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan Treats: Julie Engle & Julie Steffenson</p>
<p>Saturday, September 30 - Pentecost 17 (6pm) Scripture Reader & Prayers: Lee Pearce Ushers: Larry & Deb Vomhof Acolyte: Ava Siebenaler</p>	<p>PIANIST: Karen Salz (WOV — Bread of Life) Communion Assistant: Lee Pearce Sound & Coffee: Don & Peg Holtan Treats: PENDING</p>

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 are currently working on improved lighting & a visual monitoring system for the organ loft, both of which will aid the worship musician when he is playing the pipe organ for worship services.

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 MUSICIAN

We are still searching for a 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.

God has faithfully provided Emmanuel with substitute worship musicians for most of the upcoming fall. Thanks is offered to Karen Salz (Pianist), Rev. P.J. Stohlmann (Pianist), & Rev. Scott Schilbe (Pipe Organist) who are accompanying our worship services during the month of September. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

G.I.F.T.

G.I.F.T. (Saturday Night Adult Education) resumes on Saturday, September 9. We will begin the year with a short study on the New Testament Book of Jude. Pastor Waldemar Gies will lead this study. The Letter of Jude is only 25 verses long, but cites 9 different examples of God's judgment from the Old Testament. Jude exhorts his readers to beware of false teachers. A handout for this study will be distributed on Rally Saturday, and the study will be held on September 16, 23, & 30.

RED KETTLE TIME

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. The Red Kettle campaign is a critical part of the Salvation Army's funding for innumerable LOCAL programs. Our help is desperately needed to help staff the familiar Red Kettles during the Thanksgiving-through-Christmas season.

Emmanuel Lutheran's 2017 pledged goal is to ring bells for 62 hours. With everyone's help, we can do that easily! I invite you to sign-up individually, as groups, and as families. Don't forget to include the children & grandchildren. Everyone can help. 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.

For every two hours that you ring bells, you raise \$100 (on average) versus virtually \$0.00 for unstaffed kettles. The Red Kettle campaign is the primary funding source for more than 30 LOCAL programs that help provide basic needs and training for people. Programs include critical spiritual guidance & support, as well as those services that focus on physical & mental needs.

There are two important things to remember and to **DO** right now: **SIGN-UP NOW!** Emmanuel members can pre-register for the bell ringing season before the volunteer website opens to the general public. By doing this NOW you can lock-in the location, date, and time slot that you want so you get your preferred slot! Remember the hours that you pledged during our

Emmanuel Huddle in April and plan accordingly.

Emmanuel members will help '**Rock the Red Kettle**' on Saturday, Nov. 18th 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

Emmanuel servant members **Praise, Proclaim** and **Practice** God with us – in daily life to help "the least of these" in our midst.

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.

Remember, **DO IT NOW!** You'll be glad you did. Pastor Dave has already reserved his 10 hours. Now it's your turn! A special bell lanyard (a keepsake) will be given to each Emmanuel bell ringer.

NALC Convocation — Lee Pearce

“Holding Fast – Being (Re)FORMED”

“Every Christian is a minister, an evangelist.” Those words came from the Right Rev. Dr. Frederick Shoo, the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania during the opening worship service of the 2017 NALC Convocation. Almost 700 people gathered for the North American Lutheran Church convocation during Luther Week, focused on a theme of “Holding Fast - Being (Re)FORMED!” Preaching emphasized discipleship and the vital need to continue the work of the Holy Spirit begun in the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s. The mandate to be (Re)FORMED called for a continuing modern-day Reformation against widespread apostasy, cultural obstacles & “over-intellectualization” within today’s church.

NALC Bishop John Bradosky stated, “The greatest mistake and crisis in the western church was when we started to push the Word of God away from the center. When we put ourselves at the center, the church started to decline.” He said that we don’t need to teach new programs or mechanics, but “bring Jesus and His Word to the center of our mission and ministry.” So, the week was not centered around a Reformation celebration focused on a German monk, priest & theologian of the 16th century. It was focused on God! This year’s convocation asked for individual commitment to “hold fast” to the Word (Phil. 2:12-20), praying that God will continue to renew, reform and transform His church in today’s society.

Dr. Shoo said, “Discipleship begins with our relationship to Christ,” that individual dedication to discipleship will be a critical factor in the battle to defeat the false theology prevalent today. He said the “Disease of ‘over-intellectualization’ is a result of falling for prefabricated myths.” Another speaker said, “Americans would rather accept rationalization over repentance.” Bishop Bradosky said we can cite obstacles such as Sunday sports, a 24-7 society, transitional lifestyles, and many other excuses, but quite simply, “We have accommodated the dictates of our culture!”

One of the NALC Core Values is Discipleship. That

means “that we believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and make disciples for Christ” that it “must be a priority of the Church.” For that to be a reality, each of us must accept the command of Jesus himself, “Go ye therefore, & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

Statistics show the average for church attendance in the United States is 1.3 times per month; European churches are largely empty. However, where Christians are under daily threat of persecution, violence, injury and death, Jesus’ church is thriving. The Christian church in China is the fastest growing in the world, followed closely by Africa. It was inspiring and mind-boggling to hear some of the stories of dedication of some African Christians who can’t get enough of The Word. Dr. Shoo related having to censure a fairly new preacher for falling victim to the ‘Americanization’ of preaching a 10-15 minute sermon in a country where people travel for miles to hear the Gospel and routinely worship with sermons lasting 3 hours! One old man of nearly 80 complained, “I walk 20 kilometers one way to church. I am not hearing enough of the Gospel. I’m not being fed enough (spiritual) food!”

The mandate is clear: Every Christian must be a minister, an evangelist!

In case you were wondering...

The 2018 NALC budget will add one person to the staff dedicated to the domestic mission. That brings to 11, the total staff of the NALC headquarters.

Delegates approved a Resolution asking NALC congregations to consider increasing their national benevolence by 1% of their annual budget.

Approved a Disaster Response fund.

ATTENDANCE:

656 Total attendees

262 Clergy; 211 Lay delegates; & 183 Visitors (literally from all over the globe!)

Pastor Dave and I were bathed in the Spirit as we worshipped, learned and attended workshops for equipping the saints and ‘life-to-life discipleship.’ It was an awe-inspiring week!

Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

1815—38th Street NW
Rochester, MN 55901
Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

Contact Information:

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



Save the Dates!

***Saturday School and G.I.F.T. Rally Day**

Saturday, Sept. 9 at 5:10pm

***Annual Meeting**

Saturday, January 27, 2018

Women's Bible Studies

Women of Emmanuel and their female friends will have two Bible Study opportunities for learning this fall.

The Afternoon Group will be studying the Book of Acts this year. The Book of Acts is volume 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 Witness in God's World/Mission Field? Join the journey and you will not only learn what it means to be a missionary, but you will also find yourself ignited by the mighty rushing wind of God for the holy work of Christ in daily life. No one who reads & studies the Book of Acts will be left unchanged.

The **Evening Group - Lady Light** - will be looking at "Holy Christian Marriage & Family" through the lens of Scripture and the lives of Martin Luther and his wife Katie. Women will meet at the home of Katie Siebenaler once a month for 60 minutes, beginning on Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 6:30pm.

"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. Scholarships available!

Back Page Stories

Supermarket Saturday: The next Channel One ministry opportunity is September 16, 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, September 6 & 20 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 - August 17: Emmanuel has received \$641.00 of Thrivent Choice Dollars YTD. A mid-year financial review (Audit) was conducted and our books were found to be in good order. July income exceeded July expenses by almost \$2,000.00. Oasis would like to join us for Thanksgiving Eve Worship (Nov. 22); Pipe organ and Oasis Choir. Note: Change of Annual Meeting date: Saturday, January 27 at 3:30pm, followed by a potluck supper at 4:45pm, followed by worship at 6pm. Child care will be provided. No Saturday School or G.I.F.T. on January 27. Outside

lighting to be installed around the end of September. Byron Parade, Laundry Day, and National Night Out were all huge successes. Thanks to all who participated. The Nominating Committee has met. Anyone called by God into leadership at Emmanuel should contact members of the Nominating Committee. Emmanuel is hoping to host a "Trunk or Treat" event on Halloween night this fall. The next Council Meeting will be on Wednesday, September 6 at 3pm.

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. Thanks for walking the Way of Jesus!