

# The Emmanuel Epistle!

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

## Pastor’s Keyboard: “Discipleship: Buried and Raised!”

In the beloved hymn of the church: “We Know That Christ Is Raised And Dies No More,” we sing these promising words: “*We share by water in His saving death. Reborn, we share with Him an Easter life as living members of our Savior Christ. Alleluia!*”

St. Paul writes, “*We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.*”—Romans 6:4-5.

I’ve lost several dear friends lately. “Lost” is perhaps too harsh of a word. They were all baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, so I know that they are with Jesus. In the course of a month, I found myself grieving & saying goodbye to Julie Blanchard, Pastor Dan Berkland, Kelly Jo Stoyles and Laura Kolden.

Paraphrasing Winnie the Pooh, “I know how blessed I am to have someone that makes saying goodbye so hard.” Baptized into the forever love of Jesus, I



know that “living is Christ and dying is more Christ!” Death stinks, but it does not have the final word. Death is our last enemy, but in Christ it is a defeated foe. We are buried and raised with Christ in the daily washing and renewal of Holy Baptism. Martin Luther speaks of mortality as *Das Todlein* (the little death). The Big Death takes place in Baptism!

*“How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”*

— Winnie the Pooh

St. Paul speaks with blessed assurance, confidence and certainty! Saved by grace through Faith in Christ Alone, St. Paul knows the reliability & trustworthiness of God’s promising Word. “*I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the Day of Jesus Christ.*”—Philippians 1:6. “*I am sure that nothing in all of creation will be able*

*to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”—Romans 8:39.

When someone we love dies, we have a funeral, a memorial service, or a celebration of life service. Regardless of the title we use, properly understood, the service for our departed loved ones is the *Church’s Rite of Burial*. It is first and foremost a Service of Worship, which seeks to glorify God, while proclaiming the Good News of salvation in the name of Jesus, and offering comfort to the grieving.

If it’s a funeral, then the body or the ashes are present. If it is a memorial service, then the burial of the body or the ashes has already taken place. If it is a celebration of life, then what we celebrate is not human existence here on earth (*BIOS*), which is a date, a dash and a date on a tombstone. But instead we celebrate eternal life (*ZOE*), which is in Christ

—Continued on page 3...

September 2021  
Newsletter  
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## Food For Thought:

*“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”*

— Francis of Assisi

## INSIDE AND BACK PAGE NEWS

<i>Bible Saturday</i> <i>September 25</i>	2
<i>Bible Studies</i>	2
<i>September Worship</i>	2
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	3
<b>RALLY DAY</b>	3
<b>MAYRA’S STORY</b>	4
<i>New Life Thank You</i>	5
<i>Implementation Team</i>	5
<i>Back Page Highlights</i> <i>Council Minutes</i>	6

### September 25—Bible Saturday

We will celebrate the gift of Holy Scripture on Bible Saturday. A Gideon Presentation by Gary Froiland will be offered during worship. A freewill offering will be received in support of the work of the Gideons. Thanks for keeping company with the WORD of God. Bring your favorite Bible with you to worship on September 25 (6pm).

### Women's Bible Study - October 6 (1pm)

Twelve Extraordinary Women: How God Shaped Women of the Bible and What He Wants to Do with You! Beginning on Wednesday, October 6 at 1pm. Leitha Bothun will be leading a study on 12 amazing women of the Bible who, though ordinary by virtue of their humanity, became extraordinary by the grace of God. Women will meet every other Wednesday at the home of Judy Pearce. The Bible Study, written by John MacArthur, will be a study of 5 Old Testament and 7 New Testament women, each of whom participated in the redemptive work of Christ. The study books are being provided free, compliments of Lee & Judy Pearce. Participants wishing to make a donation to the Emmanuel Building Fund are welcome to do so. Questions? Contact Judy or Leitha. Invite a friend to join you!

### Men's Bible Study (In-Person) - 2021

The men of Emmanuel Lutheran are currently meeting on Tuesday mornings at 8:30am via email & studying the Scripture Lessons for the upcoming weekend. Let Pastor Dave know if you would like the study notes emailed to you. We will have in-person studies in the following **Wednesdays: September 1, 15, & 29 at 11am**. Location: Oasis Church worship space. Bring a Bible & heart eager to hear God's Word. Invite a friend to join you.

### Coffee Hour Fellowship—After Worship

Once a month, members of Emmanuel are hosting & serving refreshments following worship. Special thanks to Arne and Samia Nelson for hosting the August Coffee Hour. Gary & Julie Engle will be hosting the September Coffee Hour on Sept. 18. Contact Pastor Dave if you would like to host the October or November Coffee Hours. Judy & Lee Pearce are hosting the December Coffee Hour.

### Thrivent Choice Dollars

Got Thrivent Products? Don't forget to designate your Choice Dollars. Call #1-800-847-4836 or go online at [www.thrivent.org](http://www.thrivent.org). We've received \$1,418 in Thrivent Choice Dollars in 2021. Thank You!

### WORSHIP FOR September 2021 — 6pm

Emmanuel will continue to offer in-person worship weekly on Saturday nights at 6pm as well as online worship opportunities via the Emmanuel Facebook Page and the Emmanuel Church Website. Thanks for worshipping with us in person and virtually online. We will offer the Lord's Supper on September 18 and October 2 during worship in prefilled cups.

**Saturday, September 4 – 6pm: Pentecost 15** — Pianist: MarJean Damerval (Summer Liturgy); Greeters: Gary & Julie Engle.

**Saturday, September 11 – 6pm: Pentecost 16** — Pianist: MarJean Damerval (Holden Evening Prayer Liturgy); Greeters: Tom & Sheri Vomhof.

**Saturday, September 18 – 6pm: Pentecost 17** — Pianist: MarJean Damerval (Holden Evening Prayer); **Holy Communion**; Greeters: Gary & Julie Engle; **Coffee Hour hosted by Gary & Julie Engle**.

**Saturday, September 25 – 6pm: Pentecost 18** — Pianist: Mary Ann Groven (Liturgy of the WORD); **Bible Saturday**: Gideon Presentation; a freewill offering will be received! Greeters: Don & Jean Wanek.

**Saturday, October 2 – 6pm: Pentecost 19** — Pianist: MarJean Damerval (Bread of Life Liturgy); **Holy Communion**; October Greeters: pending. Give Julie Engle a call if you are able to serve as a Greeter!

**Thanks** to Don & Peg Holtan, Julie Steffenson, and all of our weekly servants who assist with worship; recording, ushering, setup, takedown, greeting, etc. Soli Deo Gloria!

—Continued from page 1...

Alone! The Church's Rite of Burial is not an occasion for venerating or deifying the deceased. It is an opportunity for proclaiming the good news of Jesus: the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. In Christ we are buried and raised to new life! Jesus is THE Resurrection and THE Life (*zoe*).

My friends, recently surrendered to the Lord, were all buried. Some were cremated & buried in the ground, or above ground in a Columbarium. Others were buried in a casket and placed in a cemetery. Some Christians prefer burial of the body rather than burial of the ashes; both are a burial of the mortal flesh. What does the Church say about cremation? The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has no official position on cremation, but offers the following guidance: Those favoring cremation often do so as a matter of stewardship. "The early Christians rejected cremation and preferred burial because Jesus Himself was buried, and because Greek philosophy looked down on the physical creation & thought that only souls, not bodies, survived death. The Christian burial of bodies was viewed as a way to proclaim the belief that our bodies will be raised from the dead." "In their textbook, Pastoral Theology (LCMS seminaries), LCMS Pastors Norbert H. Mueller & George Kraus offer this perspective: 'Not too long ago, the church viewed cremation negatively. Because the general public associated the practice with heathen religions and/or an attempt to disprove the possibility of the resurrection, Christians were reluctant to consider it. In itself, the practice has no theological significance and may be used in good conscience.'" However one is buried (as a corpse or as ashes), burial should be done with utmost reverence & respect. A Christian's funeral offers an opportunity to give witness to our faith in Jesus Christ's victory over death, and His promise of the resurrection of our bodies for eternal life (John 6:40, 44, 54). "Cremation is a matter of Christian freedom, and no Christian who chooses to have a loved one cremated rather than buried should be led to think that such a decision is sinful or in opposition to the Word of God." The LCMS discourages the scattering of ashes.

Traditionally, the Roman Catholic Church opposed cremation on the grounds that the body is a holy temple, and so cremating a corpse is a desecration of God's work. However, in 1963, the Pope lifted the ban on cremation, although the Church continues to prefer traditional burials. Cremation is approved, as long as the remains are treated in a dignified manner. Catholics believe that God creates each person and that not only is the body the temple of the Holy Spirit, but Christians will be bodily resurrected by Christ. Catholic funeral practices are informed by these deeply held beliefs. Scattering cremated ashes or displaying urns filled with a loved one's cremated remains is prohibited. The Catholic Church requires the deceased's remains to receive a permanent, well-marked resting place.

In the daily practice of baptism, Christians are united with Jesus in a death & a resurrection like His; we are buried and raised to new life. The perishable must put on the imperishable; the mortal must put on immortality. In Christ, death is swallowed up in victory. When a loved one dies, a Christian grieves, but always in the guaranteed hope and promising love of Jesus! Job proclaims our hope: "*For I, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!*" Job believed in the resurrection of the body; so do we!

Interment or Inurnment, I, I AM, Buried and Raised with Jesus! In Christ's Love, Pastor Dave

### Emmanuel Nominating Committee

Contact Lee Pearce, Julie Steffenson, Heather Mikesh, or Leitha Bothun if you are looking for ways to serve Christ and His Church. *There are many ways to use your gifts for the glory of God.*

#### On the Ballot in January of 2022:

- \* Council Member: 2-year term: 2 positions.
- \* Nominating Committee: 4 needed; 1 year term
- \* Audit Committee Members: 2 needed; one—3 year term & one 2 year term. (Note: Don Wanek has one year remaining).
- \* Lay Voting Members for NALC Convocations.

### Rally Day — Saturday, Sept. 11

Join us for Rally Day. We will meet in the fellowship hall after worship.

This Fall (September-December), **Stories on the MIRACLES in the Bible** will be packaged in monthly sessions for youth ages 4-grade 3. Youth in grades 4-8 are invited to join Pastor Dave in a reading of **C.S. Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"**. Pastor Dave will host a monthly Zoom Meeting for participating youth & their parents. Weekly instruction videos will be posted on Facebook.

**Mayra's Story: Ex-Planned Parenthood director says abortion giant seduces immigrants with threat of deportation!**  
(Ryan Foley, Christian Post Reporter, Aug. 2, 2021)

A former Planned Parenthood director warned over the weekend that the nation's largest abortion provider exploits American immigration law and economic anxiety to encourage abortion in the Latino community in the United States and abroad.

Mayra Rodriguez, who worked with Planned Parenthood for over a decade and a half and at one point oversaw three clinics in Arizona before being fired after she reported unsafe medical practices, spoke at the Democrats for Life of America's annual conference in Columbus, Ohio, Saturday. "For 16 years, I devoted my life to Planned Parenthood," she said. "As an undocumented immigrant, Planned Parenthood opened the doors to the American dream. ... They hired me knowing I was undocumented." She said Planned Parenthood's decision to hire her despite her immigration status at the time was "the greatest and the most kind" action that an organization could take.

Rodriguez spent most of her career at Planned Parenthood providing women with birth control & treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. She reported that she was hired to "attract the undocumented immigrant community." While she did not deal with abortion during most of her time at Planned Parenthood, she held the belief that it's a woman's choice to have an abortion even though she wouldn't have one herself.

According to Rodriguez, the "undocumented immigrant community" knows "nothing about Planned Parenthood, just like I didn't."

Rodriguez said her friends told her, "they care for women. ... They don't care if you don't have papers, just come work."

After 16 years with the company, Rodriguez was promoted to abortion director at "the biggest [Planned Parenthood] clinic in the state of Arizona." Rodriguez's promotion made her aware of what she said is "the deception of Planned Parenthood" on the abortion issue. Rodriguez, who now resides

in the U.S. legally, noted that many illegal immigrant women who work in fields are raped by their foremen & then taken to Planned Parenthood. She said Planned Parenthood officials tell "immigrants that they're welcome there: 'we won't deport you, we won't call ICE on you. But if you carry your baby & go to the hospital & you live, for example, in Arizona or Ohio or other states where they have very strict anti-undocumented people laws, you may get deported.'" "So when you have that, what do women think?" she asked. "'Oh, I cannot have a child because I might get deported, and I could get separated from my other three kids.' ... As an immigrant, I can tell you it is the worst feeling ever to know that you may have to leave this country."

Rodriguez argued that Planned Parenthood is lobbying to legalize abortion internationally. "We are down to 6 Latin American countries that are still pro-life because the rest of them, they have managed to get inside and affiliate with organizations in those countries & finance them to promote abortion," she said. While referencing an earlier panel discussion at the DFLA conference on the death penalty, Rodriguez likened herself to a warden who oversaw the administration of lethal injections to criminals on death row, calling abortion "the death penalty of the unborn." "It takes about 15-26 minutes for an abortion. They suffocate them and they also inject a saline solution into their heart until their heart stops for 24 hours before they pull them out piece by piece," she explained. "So, it is a death penalty to the unborn."

Not long after her promotion, Rodriguez began to have a change of heart. "I noticed all the atrocities. I noticed the irregularities. I noticed the malpractice. I noticed all the stuff the abortionists at Planned Parenthood hide from people. And I complained about it," she told the audience. "That got me fired & got me set up. Yeah, I was accused falsely of having narcotics in my office while I was out of my office."

Following her firing in 2017, Rodriguez took her former employer to court and won a lawsuit in 2019 against Planned Parenthood



for wrongful termination under the Whistle-blower Protection Act. Now, she characterizes herself as “a dedicated pro-life activist” committed to speaking out “against Planned Parenthood and the dangers of abortion, not only nationally but across the globe.”

Rodriguez works with the pro-life group Then There Were None, which seeks to help abortion clinic workers leave the industry. “We need to stop the business of Planned Parenthood,” she said. “We need to stop the business of other abortionists attacking our women and going after our immigrant communities & minority communities.”

When asked by an attendee about the issue of teachers encouraging pregnant high school girls to get an abortion, Rodriguez declared that part of her training at Planned Parenthood taught her how to sow the seeds of doubt in the mind of your girls facing unplanned pregnancies. “They train you to tell them ... and portray the horrible life if they have a child,” she said. “‘What are you going to do?’ ‘Your mom’s going to kick you [out],’ ‘the school’s going to kick you [out],’ ... ‘you’re not going to finish your schooling.’ ‘Your boyfriend’s going to leave you. ...’ ‘Your parents are not going to be with you. They’re going to be tired of babysitting for you and you’re going to have to drop out of school.’” After hearing that pessimistic outlook for their future, Rodriguez said that many girls see abortion as the most logical option. “And then, if that doesn’t work, then [they] give them the guilt trip that ‘that child deserves a good life that you cannot give right now. So, out of love of your child, you should kill him.’”

Rodriguez stressed the importance of countering the message by telling girls that having a child is “a blessing.” “[There are] obstacles. I’m not saying that being a mother has been easy and pink & all unicorns,” she said. “It is also the biggest blessing of my life.” “We have to change our society, the way we face teen pregnancy,” she added. She slammed the culture for showering teens who get pregnant with “negative comments about maternity, about parenthood ... [or] complaining about how horrible it is to have children or how tiring.”

### **“New Life” Thank You!**

“Pastor Dave, Thanks so much to you and your congregation for the unexpected gift toward God’s work at New Life. God is truly working in the lives of our clients. Just earlier this week, a Rochester Woman **CHOSE LIFE** despite having an abortion scheduled—because of an ultrasound she received for free in our Center. This is the work you are making possible! Thank You! — Jenna Holst

### **Building for the Future “Implementation Team”**

Good News! The Conditional Use Permit was approved on August 16 with a few stipulations. The city of Rochester must now approve the driveway and the parking area since it involves more than 10K square feet. Also, a stop sign will need to be placed where the access road meets 18th Ave. A formal contract with AB Systems has yet to be signed. Larry Vomhoff estimates that it will be late October before concrete is poured. Nothing can proceed until all permits are obtained. Date of the next Implementation Team Meeting is pending.

### **WaterMission.org - Since 2001**

In the 20 years since Water Mission’s founding, more than 7 million people in 57 countries have been served with lasting water, sanitation and hygiene solutions; all in the name of Jesus who is “The Water of Life”. It all began when Molly and Dr. George Greene responded in faith to the Lord’s call. They engineered the very first “Living Water Treatment System” in response to Hurricane Mitch, which decimated the country of Honduras in the fall of 1998. Emmanuel is a proud supporter and prayer partner of Water Mission. Thanks for supporting Water Mission with your tithes and your prayers! Thirst-quenchers welcomed!

### **THANKS from Pastor Dave & Julie!**

Pastor Dave continues on a Chemo Break until his next CT SCAN, which is Sept. 23. His previous chemo took place on May 25. Pastor Dave & Julie are grateful to God for this miracle of healing and offer thanks to all their prayer warriors for their intercessions, and words of encouragement! PTL!

## Emmanuel Lutheran of Rochester, Minnesota

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Attn. Pastor Dave Steffenson

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### SAVE THE DATES!

*Saturday, January 29—Emmanuel Annual Meeting!*

*Emmanuel Turns 10: Feb 25th, 2022. Let's Celebrate!*

## LOOKING AHEAD!

- Aug. 28 - Blessing of Backpacks & Lunch Boxes! Celebrating a new school year in church and in our communities. Praying for our schools & all learners.
- Sept. 11 - Rally Day for Saturday School—new approach this year for kids and families.
- Sept. 11 - Iowa Mission District Convocation with Keynote Speaker, Bishop Dan Selbo of the NALC.
- Sept. 25 - Bible Saturday: Gideon Presentation with Gary Froiland; a freewill offering will be received in support of the ministry of the Gideons! Bring your Bible to church!
- Pastor Steffenson on Vacation—one week in October.
- Nov. 24 - Thanksgiving Eve Worship; plans pending.
- Nov. 27 - Advent Begins! The Littlest Watchman. Devotional book/gift for families.
- December 24-25 - Christmas Eve and Day Worship; plans are pending. Waiting on Oasis' plans.

### Children's Ministry

**Worship Bags** are available for kids each week. We hope children enjoy these resources during worship. Youth are asked to take the bags home with them. Pastor Dave continues to post **Children's Messages** on our Emmanuel Website and Facebook Page each week.

## Back Page Stories

### Church Council Highlights: August 12, 2021—Zoom Mtg.

Budget Income for the month of July was \$9,832.19; expenses were \$12,069.69. \$8,835 has been donated and designated to our Building Fund #357 since April to cover additional costs of our upgraded Phase 1 plan, bringing the total dollars available to \$98,835. A mid-year review of church finances was conducted by our Audit Committee on Saturday, July 17. Everything was found to be in order. Pastor will send a memorial gift of \$100 & a sympathy card to the family of Dan Berkland from Emmanuel. MarJean will be unavailable to play for Worship after October 31. Karen Salz is retiring in September and will

no longer be able to serve as one of our worship pianists. We are looking for 1-2 new worship pianists. Emmanuel will continue offering pre-filled Communion, & in-person Men's Bible Study. A new Women's Study will begin on October 6. Aug. 7 was Pastor's 8-year anniversary of serving Emmanuel. The Oronoco Township Planning Advisory Commission will meet on August 16 to consider our CUP (Conditional Use Permit). Barb Steffenson will meet with Julie Engle & Jean Wanek to review the Care Team Guidelines. The Nominating Committee will meet in September. Work on the 2022 Mission Plan Budget will begin in September. Council is working on a PTO (Personal Time Off) sick leave policy for our pastor. We have

obtained 6 of our Thrivent Action Team grants for 2021. The next Council Meeting is Sept. 9 at 1pm.

### Sympathies are Offered!

We remember in our prayers the family and friends of Kelly Jo Stoyles. Laura Ella Kolden, Julie Blanchard, and Pastor Dan Berkland as they grieve the loss of their loved ones. Pastor Dave officiated at Kelly's funeral on August 15, and Laura's funeral on August 20. Blessed be the Saints who share eternity with Christ Jesus!

### Acts 4:31—The Church Prayed!

“And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, & they were all filled with the Holy Spirit & continued to speak the Word of God with boldness.”