

January 2024

The GOOD NEWS Newsletter

Emanuel Lutheran Church

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What Is God Calling Us To Do?

*"With what shall I come before the LORD and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will
the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of
oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what
is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love
kindness and to walk humbly with your God? - Micah 6:6-8*

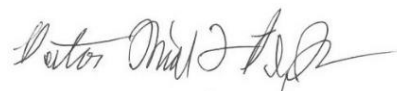
We turn the page on a new year. In doing so, we are able to look back. The underlying theme for 2023 was, "What Is God Calling Us To Do?" In 2022, we looked at, "Who Is God Calling Us To Be?" With who God calls us to be, we ask what is God calling us to do.

We have heard that God calls us to be active in the world God has created. Christ calls us to follow his example. And the Holy Spirit continues to inspire us to fulfill the mission laid before us.

As we move through this process, we have to look at what we are currently doing; as individuals, as a congregation, as part of the whole church. The world continues to change, and our response to the world needs to continually change. We need to evaluate what we are currently doing. Is it still effective? Do we need to change or stop something? What do we need to start doing to meet the needs of the world?

As we move into 2024, we lean into what God is calling us to do. What might that be??

Peace,



Pastor Mike

1 Samuel 2:2 **“There is no one Holy like the Lord.
There is no one besides you. There is no rock like our God.”**

There is an old hymn called, “The Solid Rock” by Edward Mott. The words are as follows:

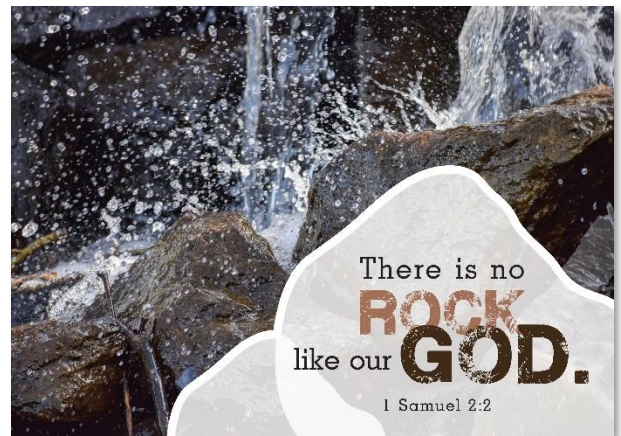
1. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

Refrain: On Christ the solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.

2. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil. *Refrain*
3. His oath, His covenant, His blood, support me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. *Refrain.*
4. When he shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found. Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne. *Refrain.*

Matthew 7:24-27 talks about one man who builds his house on a rock and another who builds his house on sand. When the storms come it is the house on the rock that stands because that man listens to Jesus’ word and carries out his word. The other man does not listen to Jesus’ word and does not carry it out and his house is swept away.

Our world is filled with wars, floods, earthquakes, dysfunctional families, and countries torn apart. It seems the world is on sinking sand. It can be discouraging. Someone wrote, “When I don’t know what’s adrift in life, I need to find an anchor point and I remind myself that the best anchor point in this changing world is always God.” It is God’s word thru Jesus’ death and resurrection and the power of the Holy Spirit that stands firm. Amid all these changes that leave us feeling adrift, our anchor holds. As 2024 begins, may you thank God for sending Jesus and remember by standing on His word you can stand firm on solid rock. May you have a blessed year believing God will do what He says He will do because you are saved by grace and stand on His word.



You Know You Are a Steadfast Lutheran If...



- You always have a few loaves of banana bread and a few pans of bars in the freezer at home, just in case.
- You know how tired Jesus must have been after performing all those miraculous feedings, and you secretly wonder if He wore comfortable shoes.
- You realize that white dishtowels are very practical and can be used as headgear for kids playing Joseph in the Sunday School Program, a tourniquet in case of kitchen mishaps, a strainer for coffee grounds in the giant pot, and as a sturdy rag for dusting off the old hymnals that have been laying around.
- You know January 1st is not the first day of a new year. The first day of the new year is either Rally Day to kick off Sunday School or the First Sunday of Advent to start the liturgical year.

Sunday School News

Sunday School will resume on January 7, 2024 at 9:15a.m.

Our next Breaking Bread Together is Wednesday, January 17, at 5:00p.m.

We're hoping a chili cook-off sounds good to you. Most everyone who likes to cook has a favorite or signature chili dish. Please, share any kind of chili you make. The winner gets bragging rights of course, but we will also rename your winning chili...“EMANUEL ANNIVERSARY CHILI!”

If you would like to enter a pot of chili for this meal or volunteer to be a judge, please let Cindy Rinker or the church office know.



Trip to New Orleans for the National Youth Gathering

We are planning on taking a group of youth to the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July 2024. We have had an initial meeting. The group has several ideas for raising funds for the trip. We are also looking forward to getting together to do some group building prior to the trip. We are combining with a group from St. Paul's (Waldo) for this trip.

Musings from the Church Mouse...

We have started a new year! I wonder what new things will be happening around here? There seems to be a lot of excitement, a lot of action, a lot of work. I have to pay more attention to not get caught in my mischief! Even so, I am wishing you all a happy new year as you continue in your 150th celebration.

See ya in worship!

Church Mouse

Christmas Thank You's!



A big “Thank You” to all who helped decorate the church and take the decorations down. It is a big job and we are so grateful. The Altar Guild

Thank you to everyone who helped put together the Christmas Program on December 3rd. It turned out beautiful and the meal afterwards was delicious!

Memorial

The new angel on the top of the Christmas tree is in memory of Norma Claffey, “Lifetime Member” of Altar Guild that died this past March. It is given by her four daughters, Sheri, Linda, Connie, and Robyn and the Altar Guild.





Communication and Evangelism

The Communication and Evangelism committee has been busy as usual. Here are some of the things we did recently:

- Gave away goodie bag favors and informational posters at the Thanks and Giving Event
- Began the creation of our visitor Welcome Centers in the narthex and the gathering space
- Hosted the “All is Bright” Event.
- Worked on planning/training for new audio/visual volunteers

On a personal note, I want to thank and give a round of applause to the people who made this team great over the last number of years: Janet Musser, Daryl Kraner, Laurie Wise, Pastor Mike, and Brian Barger. I will no longer be the “director” of this team and appreciate all the support I’ve been given. Emanuel IS making a difference in our community by showing our neighbors that God truly loves them and has a place for them in the kingdom!

Dee Rinehart, Director of Communication and Evangelism

Welcome Centers - The Communication and Evangelism team is in the process of making “Visitor Welcome Centers”. One will be located in the gathering space and one in the narthex. These stations will have a trifold poster with pictures of recent church events, information about Emanuel, bottles of water with the Emanuel “logo” on them and eventually a swag bag of goodies. Feel free to give any of these “goodies” to visitors on Sunday morning or Thursday evening.

“All is Bright” - The Communication and Evangelism team would like to thank everyone who participated in the planning and implementation of the December Christmas open house. This includes members who:

- attended meetings and participated in the planning
- made Chrismons
- made cookies and goodies
- attended the event and welcomed our visitors
- And supported this effort in anyway.

We also ran the bookfair and had a fundraiser for the youth trip to Louisiana. There was a lot to see and do! Our littlest were also represented though the Pre-K poster and the Sunday school candy cane give aways. Even though it was storming we hosted 38 (approximate) visitors and showed God’s love through hospitality and warmth. Great job Emanuel! Check out some pictures from the event above.

Social Ministry News....

Mitten and Good Gifts Trees were once again up during the Christmas season. Thanks to all who purchased an ornament to benefit ELCA global ministries. Thanks also, to all who either purchased or made mittens, gloves, and scarves for the needy in our community. Both of these ministries provide benefits both local and global. Thank you, Emanuel members and friends, for your generosity.

Feed the Need is a ministry to our area homeless youth that is growing. The group led by Sue Rakow and administered by Amy Vanderhoff is now serving 35 meals every Wednesday. The Spirit is alive and at work within our community to minister to some of our most vulnerable.

Beginning in January we will once again resume **Community Meals**. Under the leadership of Janet Musser meals will be prepared on the second Thursday of each month in our church kitchen and served in the Parlor beginning at 5:00p.m. Information about these meals has been mailed to each address in the LODO (area surrounding the church) and posted at other community meal locations. Want to be a part of this ministry? Talk with Janet or a member of the Social Ministry Board.

God's Work, Our Hands is getting ready for volunteer opportunities in 2024. Watch the weekly bulletins for details.

Mark your calendars; the first **2024 Laundry Day** is slated for Saturday, April 27. We will again be looking for smiling faced volunteers to work at either Colonial Coin Laundry locations. If you've never worked this event, it is a wonderful experience and we'd love to have you join us.

Thanks and Giving - THANK YOU - to everyone who helped with Emanuel's 24th Annual Thanks & Giving meal on Thanksgiving Day. Whether you donated food or helped out before or on Thanksgiving Day – you are greatly appreciated!

Similar to last year, we primarily served meals in the parlor. We had more join us this year, closer to 200 individuals. Also, again this year Brock & Amy Parker, with Luke 3:11 Ministries (Peanut Butter & Jelly Trucks) volunteered to help out and delivered all remaining meals (close to 200) out into the community. Our very own Dee Rinehart rode in one of the Peanut Butter & Jelly Trucks to help deliver the meals that afternoon.

A special thank you to those that served as part of the Thanks & Giving organizing group: David & Stephanie Cook, Steve Andrews & Scott Inskip, Bruce & Lou Ann Showalter, Darren & Dee Rinehart, Donna Thomas, Christy Penrod, Matt Primmer & Ed Stofcheck.

Thanks & Giving has been one of many blessings that Emanuel shares with our community. Going forward, Ed and Matt will provide the notes and documentation from the past Thanks & Giving events to the organizing group as well as to the Board of Social Ministry for their coordination.



“Share with the Lord’s people who are in need...”

Romans 12:13

Faith Journeys

One of the disciplines that God calls us to do is continue our Faith Journey. We all need to keep on this learning journey. Our Faith Journey events are meant for all ages. In January we will meet in the Gathering Space to view the film, "In God's Name – Wisdom from the world's great spiritual leaders." This is a National Geographic film produced in 2008. It interviews twelve religious leaders who discuss the similarity in faith traditions.

Future Faith Journey Events:

Saturday January 6th 9a-12noon – Film "In God's Name". Look at the major religions of the world.

Lenten Midweek services 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 3/28, 3/29, 3/31 – Seven Deadly Sins

Saturday March 2 10am – Bible 3:16

Friday – Saturday, March 15-16 – Confirmation Retreat

APRIL – BIBLE'S BIG STORY OUR STORY - TBD

MAY – CONFIRMATION PRACTICE - TBD

JUNE – CONFIRMATION CAMP – TBD

Note: LGBT and Allies will not be meeting in January. Monthly meetings will resume in February. Please plan to join us the First Sunday of each month at 6:00p.m.:

February 4 – March 3 – April 7 – May 5

All are welcome! This is a potluck format, so please bring a dish to share.

Questions? lgbt.emanuel@gmail.com or call/text 740-262-2655

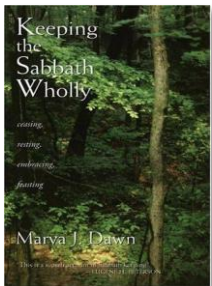


Journey through the Bible Together

Pastor Mike still has a Bible study on Sunday afternoons. We are taking time to read the entire Bible together, from Genesis to Revelation, from cover to cover. It is interesting that the vast majority of Christians have not actually read the entire bible once. This is the book that we confess to be the rule, source, guide and norm of all that we think, say, and do. Maybe we should actually read it.

We began with Genesis and will take one to three weeks working through each book, depending on the discussion and conversation. Pastor Mike has notes and handouts to guide us through this journey. This has always been an enjoyable journey for Pastor Mike in all his congregations. We meet on Sundays from 2p – 4p. We meet most Sundays. You don't have to be at every single week to get benefit from the study. We will let everyone know where we are in the Bible from week to week. So join us when you are able. We have just started the New Testament. So if you'd like to join us for the second half, feel free! We are currently in the Acts of the Apostles.

Book Study



Bishop Daniel has stated 2024 will be the Year of Rest. To join in this process we will work through "Keeping the Sabbath Wholly – Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting" by Marva J. Dawn. This book is more about living a holistic spiritual life, and goes far beyond just keeping Sabbath. We will be working through this book for most of 2024. We are looking at starting the middle of January. We will have in-person gatherings on Thursdays at 11:30a and 5:30p. We will also have a virtual session on Sunday nights at 6:30p. If you would like the zoom link for the virtual session, send an email to Pastor Mike. (*Pastor Mike invited Bishop Daniel to join in a conversation!*)

We Are Hiring!! Emanuel has an opening for the position of part-time Financial Secretary. Visit our website for a full job description and to apply. Questions? Contact Paula Burnside at 740-360-5019.

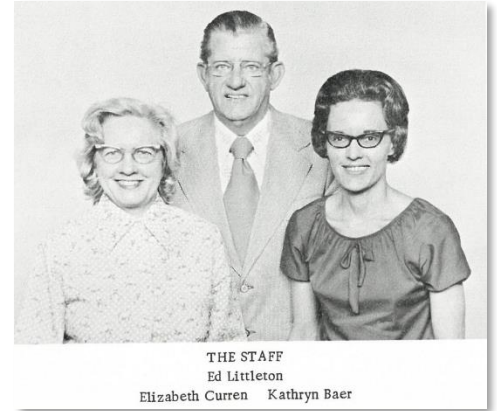
Part 6 of the history of Emanuel.

Senior Pastor James Rave and Associate Pastor David Augenstein began their pastorate together in 1973.

In the August newsletter I wrote about the 10 “Sons of Emanuel” (this is what the men that left Emanuel to go on to become pastors were known as years ago) that have died over the years. There have been more that came back to be ordained at Emanuel. These are the ones through 1973: Rev. Charles Gerlach, September 29, 1968, Rev. Pete Zieg, June 14, 1969, he now lives in Florida, Rev. Dennis Hacker, August 31, 1969, he now lives in Massachusetts, and Rev. Fredrick Rehl, April 29, 1973.

A special congregational meeting was held October 14, 1973 to adopt or reject a new constitution. The final vote was 269 for and 8 against the new constitution. This new constitution was similar to a model suggested by the American Lutheran Church.

At the Special Vestry Meeting (church council) October 20, 1973 Pastor Rave suggested Catherine Baer as the new full-time secretary with a salary of \$525 per month and Elizabeth Curren as part-time bookkeeper with a salary of \$250 per month. Pastor Rave’s recommendations were approved and he was authorized to proceed with hiring the two ladies.



At the Vestry Meeting November 14, 1973, the Centennial Committee Co-Chair, Troy Evans, reported that the budget for the 100-year anniversary of Emanuel be set at \$6,000.00. A motion was made asking Vestry’s approval for publishing a Church Directory by the Photo Publications of Mansfield, Ohio. The budget and church directory were approved. Also, at this meeting a letter was read from Don Showalter, the Building Superintendent of Emanuel at that time, stating that he was resigning as of November 10th. His resignation was accepted with regret by Vestry. Plans were in place to find a new Building Superintendent.

On March 31, 1974 the Board of Education and the Sunday School Board started plans for the Centennial Year also. They would sponsor an Old-Fashioned Congregational Picnic to be held Sunday, July 14th, a Bible Fair to be held Sunday, October 6th and a Special Sunday School Service on Sunday, October 27th. The Bible Fair was for students from kindergarten through senior grades. The students would create and display a religious themed project similar to a Science Fair. Then the displays would be judged and prizes would be awarded on Saturday, October 5th and the congregation would then view the displays on October 6th.

I wrote in a newsletter piece dated March of 2019 about the sale of recipe boxes by the Luther League of Emanuel and stated that Linda Hoch had come to me with a box and said there was a fund raiser in 2005. I just read in the minutes of the church council in November of 1973 that the Luther League was selling recipe boxes with recipes from the congregation for Christmas presents that year. That is 2 years in the history of Emanuel that the Luther League used the sale of recipe boxes with recipes as a fund raiser.

A discussion began about the conversion of the parsonage of the church into new offices. Pastor Rave stated that the present office space in the educational wing was not sufficient and it was agreed to convert the old office space into a chapel and the parsonage into the new offices at the council meeting December 12, 1973. Pastor Rave would then move out of the present parsonage and into the home he had purchased.

December 24, 1973 dual Christmas Eve candlelight services were initiated.

I noticed that with the start of 1974, since adopting the new constitution, the meetings of the leaders of the church are now called “Church Council Meetings” instead of “Vestry Meetings”.

The “Kick Off” for the Centennial Year was Sunday, January 6, 1974. At the January 9 Church Council Meeting Co-Chair, Jack Bull, gave a report on the progress the committee was making with planning the years activities. Jack stated that the

theme for the year would be S.O.S., Sharing Our Savior. Jack was asked how thank-offering contributions for the anniversary year would be solicited, he stated that it would be with envelopes being mailed to all members for their contributions. The big events for the anniversary year will start May 2 through October 31st. Another plan for the 100th Anniversary Year was as follows: There was an Every-Member-Visitation Committee formed and there was a lot of good feedback about implementing the process of having a committee of members visit the homes of every member in the congregation.

At that same council meeting, January 9th Ed Littleton was hired as the new Building Superintendent.

Pastor Rave reported to Church Council in the January 9th meeting that he was told about a Convention of Music and Workshop for church musicians being held at Wittenberg in February and suggest that they make plans to send our organist, Beverly Quaintance and choir director, Keith Becker. Those plans were approved. Wittenberg University is a private liberal arts college in Springfield, Ohio that is associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (Sometimes in the minutes of council things are left out at the time they happen and then put in later. That's the case with Bev Quaintance. She was hired right after Minnie Ackerman retired.)

At the February 20, 1974 Church Council meeting it was stated that the new office furniture for the offices in the old parsonage would be financed by the estate of Galen Carter. What was left would help finance the remodeling that would happen to the old offices in the church.

As I have written before about parking meters that were part of our parking lots, they are still being used in 1974. The church received 40% of the money received from the meters and the city 60%. I stated before that I didn't remember when they were removed and never heard from any of you that might remember. I'm still reading, so I will let you know when I find it.

The Centennial Committee bought sterling silver charms and tie tacks as souvenirs for the anniversary year. There were 300 of each purchased. I am still on the lookout for samples to show you.



The Centennial Year celebration continued with a walk from the old church on S. State St. and Columbia St. on Sunday, June 2, 1974. Among the members on the walk were some that walked 56 years before in the original walk in 1918. The walk ended at the front steps of our present building with hymns and prayers before entering into the sanctuary with music provided by musicians from Eber Baker Junior High choir directed by Sandra Becker. There were 4 pastors present at that service: Emanuel's Pastor Emeritus, Rev. Martin Hollensen, retired pastor, Rev. M.L. Baseler, and leading the worship that day was Senior Pastor, Rev. James Rave and Associate Pastor, Rev. David Augenstein.

Just as we are doing this year for the 150th Anniversary Year it was stated that in celebrating the 100th Anniversary Year Emanuel also was asking pastors to come back to preach on a Sunday. In 1974 the first pastors to return to preach were Jack Maxim and Rennix VanScoy. They both delivered sermons on Sunday, June 30th. I can't find the bulletins but I'm assuming that one pastor had his sermon at 8A service and the other at 10:30A.

After each service with the visiting pastors there was a reception held for all attending to greet them.



At the June 12, 1974 Church Council meeting permission was given for the graduating class of Licensed Practical Nurses to have their graduation ceremonies July 28th at Emanuel.

At the July 10th council meeting it was stated that John Gast and John Kerr would be the next guest pastors to preach for the 100th Anniversary Year July 14th. The new church directory had arrived and they were being sold as part of the Anniversary Year.

At the August 14, 1974 council meeting it was stated that Pete Zieg and Dennis Hacker would be returning to Emanuel to preach September 8th. Also, at the August council meeting a discussion was started about the remodeling of the lounge and office area into a chapel and lounge. Council authorized to proceed with that plan.

September 29th for the 100th Anniversary Year celebration Fred Rehl and Dick Williams were the guest preachers that Sunday.

Renovation of the new offices in house that used to be the parsonage went pretty slow and were under way for several months. It was stated in the minutes of Church Council in September of 1974 that all renovations should be complete by the end of October.

I will have a chart with the break-down of the duties as of October 9, 1974 on the display table for Pastor Rave and Associate Pastor, David Augenstein I found in the minutes of Church Council.

More history to come. Alicia

Introducing Guest Pastor Todd Milner



Pastor Todd Milner will be at Emanuel Sunday, February 11th from Holland, Ohio.

Todd was born April 30, 1959 at Marion General to Joyce and Raymond Milner. He is the youngest of their 3 children. His sister, Robin, some of you may remember, lives in Texas and has been at services at Emanuel several times over the years. His brother, Mark, was in my confirmation class and also graduated in the same class at Marion Harding.

Todd was baptized by Rev. M.E. Hollensen at Emanuel July 26, 1959 and was confirmed at Timothy Lutheran April 15, 1973 by Rev. James Gronewold.

Todd graduated from Marion Harding in 1977 and served as the class vice-president. He graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication. In 1982 Todd graduated from Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science as an Associate in Applied Science. He was a licensed embalmer for 39 years and worked in the casket business for 28 years.

He graduated from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN with a Master of Divinity Degree. He served on Sylvania City Council, Sylvania, Ohio as Council Member 11 years and served as Council President 2 years. He has lived in the Toledo Metro area for 38 years and has lived in Ohio his entire life.

He has been married to Dawn 21 years and has 6 adult children between them with ages ranging from 25-38 and 9 grandchildren. He says, "Grandchildren are much more fun than children!" They have 2 dogs that keep them busy. His wife, Dr. Dawn Milner, is an Associate Professor of Education at Adrian College, Adrian, MI.

The rest of Pastor Todd's story will be in his own words:

My path to ordained ministry is a crooked road. I first felt called to ordained ministry right after I graduated from Mortuary College in 1982, due to family reasons, I did not listen to the call. I worked in the casket business calling on funeral homes in Ohio and Michigan, and I had a great deal of worldly success.

But I always felt vocationally unfulfilled and restless. I was an active lay member of St. James Lutheran, Toledo and Olivet Lutheran, Sylvania.

In 1997-98, my first marriage failed after 15 years, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, and my father died suddenly. I was fortunate that I met Dawn Glassmoyer in 2000 and we married in 2002. While attending the Christian men's retreat "Christ Renews His Parish" in 2011, I distinctly felt called again to ordained ministry. I saw a friend of mine from church attending the new Distributed Learning Program at Luther Seminary. I thought to myself: "If he can do it, so can I!" I began the ELCA entrance process in 2011 and began my studies at Luther Seminary in January 2012. I served my internship at Zoar Lutheran, Perrysburg, Ohio under the Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum. I graduated from Luther Seminary in August 2016.

I was called to serve as Pastor of Providence Lutheran Church, Holland, Ohio in January of 2017. I began serving at Providence on February 1, 2017. I have since had cancer two more times, but God's grace has seen me through successful treatments. I am now cancer free. It has been an honor serving the good people of Providence.

As I began seminary at 52 years old, it is NEVER too late to listen to God's call, as the "hounds of heaven" are always chasing after us. It has been a true honor and privilege to serve Christ as an ordained minister in his church. After 30 years of the business world, I finally feel like I am doing what Jesus has called me to do. THANKS BE TO GOD!

We look forward to meeting and hearing from Pastor Todd.

Until next time, Alicia

Pastor and Folks of Emanuel,

Thank you for your invitation and hospitality. I celebrate you, as you approach your 150th Anniversary Year in ministry and mission. And as you continue on, being a witness and light to the Good News of Jesus Christ, here in Marion, central Ohio communities, and beyond....Faith Active in Love.

I hope to be with you ----in worship on the "Big Celebration" Sunday, September 8, 2024. Emanuel will always have a special place in my heart and spiritual journey and vocation.

Thank you for everything.

Rev. Craig Lewis

Pastor Poole's Pins



We continue to have beautiful baptisms here at Emanuel. The baptismal candidate receives several items upon their baptism. One is a medallion from Thrivent that shows a shell with drops of water, symbolizing baptism. Pastor Poole has this same design on a pin, which typically wears on Baptismal Sundays.

Happy Birthday!



Let's remember Jim & Thirza with our cards and prayers!

(Contact the church office for addresses)

Jim Creager celebrates his 91st birthday on January 8th
Thirza Shaw celebrates her 94th birthday on January 9th



Welcome to the January Music Notes!

*Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle 'til breaking of dawn
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo!
Angels are singing "The Christ child is born"*

This is the refrain to the classic Christmas anthem, "Candlelight Carol" by John Rutter. *"How do you capture the wind on the water? / How do you count all the stars in the sky? / How can you measure the love of a mother? / Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?"* The lullaby-like setting tells of the nativity, of Jesus as the *"Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation."* The Christ child is God become flesh, but at this moment in time, He is primarily a little baby boy, whose mother cares for him, holds him, and sings him to sleep. Although the heavens declare His glory, He remains *"A child with his mother that first Christmas Day."*

One of my favorite traditions is to watch all of the Christmas specials broadcast on WOSU TV overnight Christmas Eve and early Christmas Morning. You may have seen some of these, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has a new special every couple years or so. The highlight(s) for me are the concerts originating from various colleges and universities around the country. Many of the performances are of a professional-grade level, and there is always a nice variety of old and new music to whet the appetite of a restless musician like me. Watching them brings me back to my college years, singing in choral ensembles, just soaking up music.

My favorite specials are the occasional concerts from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. An ELCA-affiliated university, they are known for their musical excellence and world-wide touring. Almost a third of the 3,000 member student body participates in a music ensemble. This speaks highly of not only the music program but of the Lutheran music tradition as well. Right now I have two, perhaps three, of their Christmas concerts saved on my DVR for repeated viewing. They really are that good.

*Before the marvel of this night, adoring, fold your wings and bow,
Then tear the sky apart with light, and with your news the world endow.
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace, that fear and death and sorrow cease:
Sing peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace!*

This moving Christmas hymn/anthem by Lutheran hymn writers Jaroslav J. Vajda and Carl Schalk can be found in our With One Voice hymnal, #636. The birth of Christ is a gift of peace, heavenly bliss, and the *"love that we have always known, our constant joy and endless light."*

*Awake the sleeping world with song, this is the day the Lord has made.
Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splendor come arrayed.
Give earth a glimpse of heav'nly bliss, a teasing taste of what they miss:
Sing bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss!*

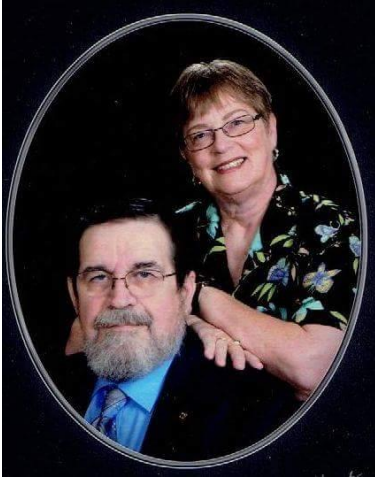
As beautiful as these anthems are, I will leave you with perhaps the most moving Christmas anthem of all. "This Christmastide (Jessye's Carol)" was originally written for and recorded by the opera singer Jessye Norman. Deceptively simple, it is packed with meaning and a wide range of musical emotion. I don't have room here to quote the entire song, but I hope you will take a few minutes to look up the words online and watch the St. Olaf and Norman (from Ely Cathedral) videos on YouTube.

*From a simple ox's stall came the greatest gift of all
Truth and love and hope abide this Christmastide, this Christmastide*

May Truth and Love and Hope abide within you and your loved ones all year long.
Until next time, Soli Deo Gloria!

Paul

Steeple Sightings



Since this is the beginning of a new year, there will be a lot of "firsts" --first month, first day, etc. So, with that, I'd like to introduce Emanuel's first woman president of the congregation: Donna Thomas (drum roll, please).

Donna was born in Akron, Oh. and moved to Marion when she was in kindergarten. Although the family was Catholic, she went to Marion public schools where she was active in the Pep Club and the Harding Herald (the school newspaper). After graduation, she married her high school sweetheart. In 1976 they transferred church membership to Emanuel and eventually raised 4 children with ten grandchildren and innumerable great-grandchildren.

Admirably, at the age of 50, this dynamo hit her stride when she enrolled at Marion Tech in Business and Paralegal classes. All that education was put to use when working at Penny's, and a closing manager for K-Mart. From there, she worked at legal offices then Turning Point as a legal advocate for 14 years aiding victims of domestic abuse get aid and direction for legal and other areas of assistance.

Besides being in the choir since 1987, Donna has served on almost every board and committee, at least one national one, been involved in the Bethel and other bible studies, and lately been working at the laundry initiative events. (Whew!) Almost forgot, she has been President of the congregation 3 times.

Home life isn't slow and quiet either. When she isn't going to the Y several times a week, she tries to keep up with the little ones, 2 cats and a chiweenie named Frankie. Sadly, Pat, Sr. passed away in March of 2023. In the summer she tends her flower garden and has proudly grown 8' tall sunflowers.

Donna is excited about the direction in which the church is headed and, knowing her, she'll be right up front while supporting everyone, too!

I've heard people down below greeting each other with glad tidings for the season, so I'll add mine and thank you for all the crumbs that have been left from your gathering events, before Frank and Karl make their rounds. And yes, we left some for Church Mouse, too.

Have a Blessed New Year!

Batina Belfry

Notice of Annual Meeting – January 28, 2023

Our bylaws state that our **Annual Congregational Meeting** shall be held on the fourth Sunday in January. For 2023, **that will be Sunday, January 28**. The meeting will be held in the Sanctuary at 9:00a.m. before the 10:30 a.m. worship service. As a reminder, we have only one worship service at 10:30a.m. on January 28th with Guest Pastor Jon Bull.

ANNUAL MEETING

We will be voting on the budget, the slate of officers, directors, designates, and boards. In the event of a level 2 weather incident, the lack of a quorum, or if the service is cancelled for any reason, the meeting will be held the following Sunday.

January 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 8:00a.m. – Worship 9:15 - Worship 9:15 – Sunday School 10:30 – Worship 2pm Bible Study	1 Office & Daycare Closed	2 Office & Daycare Closed 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	3 9:30 Bible Study 6:00 C&A Choirs 7:00 Bell Choir	4 7pm - Worship	5	6 9am -12pm Faith Journeys – “In God’s Name”
7 8:00a.m. – Worship 9:15 - Worship 9:15 – Sunday School 10:30 – Worship 2pm Bible Study	8 5pm Hour of Prayer (Church Parlor) 6pm Communications 6:30 Spiritual Life (offsite)	9 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	10 9:30 Bible Study 6:00 C&A Choirs 7:00 Bell Choir	11 5pm – Community Meal 7pm - Worship	12	13
14 8:00a.m. – Worship 9:15 - Worship 9:15 – Sunday School 10:30 – Worship	15	16 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	17 9:30 Bible Study 5pm Breaking Bread 6:00 C&A Choirs 7:00 Bell Choir	18 10am Staff Mtg. 7pm - Worship	19	20
21 8:00a.m. – Worship 9:15 - Worship 9:15 – Sunday School 10:30 – Worship 2pm Bible Study	22 10am Anniversary Committee Mtg.	23 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	24 9:30 Bible Study 6:00 C&A Choirs 7:00 Bell Choir	25 7pm - Worship	26	27
28 Guest Pastor Bull 9:00am. Annual Mtg. 9:15 – Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12pm Guest Meal 2pm Bible Study 4pm Paint Night	29	30 6pm Praise Team 7pm Marionaires	31	1	2	3



Reminder: All events at the church will be cancelled if Marion County is under a Level 2 Snow Emergency.



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