

THE WITTENBERG DOOR

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Pastor's Message

“Listen, my dear brothers and sister: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”
James 2:5

Happy New Year! Here at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, you are invited to come and experience what it means to face life and all its challenges, struggles, pain and fears—as well as the joy and peace, hope and healing that can be ours through a blessed life of faith in Jesus Christ. At Emmanuel we believe it is God in Christ who is “God with us, empowering us with His Holy Spirit” to reach out to others for Jesus sake!

And in the reaching out, we seek to take the single greatest news we could ever receive or share by God’s grace; that God in Christ, has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world, to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him.” (James 2:5)

The following verse accentuates the point even more when James writes, “But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich man who oppress you, is it not they who drag you into court? (V.7) Is it not they who blaspheme the honorable name which was invoked over you?”

Pause a second. Honorable name invoked over your? Whose Name would that have been? That of my parents, family, friends who were prosperous? What if not? That of our nation, our allegiance to the things for which we would live, serve, and even die for? Now we’re getting warmer. Yet, not knowing what those names would be for the average person, in all circumstances, times and places, all nationalities, economic realities and physical make-up? What honorable Name was invoked over you; once and for all times? Ultimately, and most surely, there is not greater Name than the name of Jesus. Perhaps when you were baptized in God’s Name? On the day that you and I are found in any adverse or destitute situation, we can know whose we are, and to whom we can call out to for help, forgiveness, new life, and for salvation. (John 3:16-20; Acts 4:12)

“Has not God chosen those who are poor*...to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him.”

*Matthew would say, “blessed are the poor in spirit.....for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3) Is this not the very definition of being rich in faith? To be loved by God, so richly as to love him in return, by his grace, through the Holy Spirit? Brothers and sisters in Christ, and those who may be reaching out for God in this place; we are a church for those who need the Lord! We are a church empowered by the Word of God. The Holy Sacraments, instituted and given by Christ to those who follow Him, and who H has called to go out to all people/nations and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). We are promised by Jesus himself that according to His Word, and by His Holy Spirit, He would be with always, wherever and to whomever we go: Jesus said: “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age.” (Matthew 28:20) —Pastor Gary Koutsopoulos

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 or
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An Awesome Christmas Pageant This Year!!

Thanks to Judy, Kristen, Rhonda, Delores and our children and young people, we were blessed with a wonderful pageant. The children and young people in our congregation told the awesome story of the birth of Jesus. Thank you to all that helped make this happen.



Special Thanks to Thrivent and Our Congregation!!!

This year we adopted two families which included 5 children from our childcare center to help provide a special Christmas for them. These children were carefully selected by the childcare staff. The parents are always essential workers that have had a challenging year. It was our pleasure to provide them with Christmas gifts and a gift cards to help supplement their food budget.

A special thank you to those that helped wrap the gifts. Thank you for taking time away from your busy schedules to do that. The parents of these children were so appreciative.



Sharie, coordinator

Our Christmas Eve Worship Service

Special thanks to Rhonda and our musicians who helped make our candlelight service one to remember.



An annual visit from St. Nicholas that always tells the true story of St. Nicholas.

From the President.....

My time as President of the Council will soon be over. It has been a challenging year. But, all-in-all, things have turned out pretty well...thanks be to God. We have a new furnace, we had a great interim Pastor, we had a Pastor who "stepped-up" even though he was retired and, we successfully called Pastor Gary as a full-time Pastor for Emmanuel. Lots of other "small" things were accomplished as well. However, there is one issue I still struggle with. That is our situation with the Parsonage. Many of you know the details and many of you are, like me, a bit discouraged with our lack of closure. In the past several months and weeks, I have "beaten myself up" over this issue. However, on Sunday, December 4th, Pastor Gary delivered a sermon which spoke to my heart. "We are not in control". God, is in control...do what you are able to do and then turn it over to the Lord. And, as our name (Emmanuel) implies, "the Lord has truly been with us". Thanks so much Pastor Gary. I am reminded of what Plato said about courage in times of challenge. "Courage is knowing what not to fear-wisdom is knowing what to fear." I fear to drive on the freeway, but I have no fear now of failing while following the path the Lord has set before me. (especially when I have the help and support of a "great" Council and members of a congregation that is always there more like a loving family than a group who just show up on Sundays, Christmas and Easter.) Larry Farner

Thank you, Larry, for a job well done these past years as our council president!!

What Goes Up-Must Come Down....Really?

As food and utility prices continue to rise, two in five seniors worry that they won't be able to afford food and household necessities (like being warm). About the same number also worry that they won't be able to afford to put gas in their car. One in seven seniors skip meals because they can't afford enough to eat. High prices have affected seniors because they depend on a fixed income. Almost half cut back on energy use leaving their homes cold and dank. These are all the reasons why YOU the members of Emmanuel must continue to donate each and every month to support our local food bank mission. YOU feed those seniors who don't eat enough for fear of running out of food before the end of the month. Because of YOUR generous donations in 2022, 1,293 pounds of food and \$900.00 were delivered from OUR Church to the Bremerton Food Line. We must continue our first fruits mission in 2023 not just to help ensure the very "survival" of our senior citizens but also to ensure the normal health and growth of our children. Remember, what YOU do matters. Happy New Year and may God bless us all and may God be with us as we share our bounty with our neighbors in need.



Sally, coordinator ***Next First Fruits, February 5th***

Luther and Lutherans—Part Four

Politics and Economics: For Luther, the Church using their "authority" to direct lay people to appeal to Mary and the Saints instead of Jesus himself was a satanic twisting of the most holy truth in the universe—challenging the Church with hypocrisy by their insistence of works righteousness and by-passing Jesus in favor of human lords. In Luther's time, the Church had become more and more powerful. Rules and laws the Church possessed were not even close to anything resembling the Church of the first century. For example, the practice of selling indulgences had become not only unreasonable, but, a primary source of revenue on the level of a modern world corporation. They had been able to commit the perfect crime. "Who would pass-up the chance to buy their way into heaven?" "Who would challenge the authority of the Church?" Luther would, and did using the authority of Holy Scripture. Luther clearly and plainly announced to the faithful that you cannot buy your way to heaven and you cannot reason your way to heaven. (Corinthians 1:23). "We can", said Luther, "reason only so far, at some point we come to an end and are stuck." "At this point, we must wait for God's revelations to come to us." Basically Luther was saying, faith begins where human reasoning ends. So, Luther set out to bring the Church back to where it was at the beginning. However, his greatest fears were realized. The Cardinals, the Priests, the Bishops and the Pope care not a fig for Holy Scripture and even worse, that Church decrees actually superseded the actual Word of God. (sound familiar?) Luther then finally realized that Faith was the only and true path to heaven. Without faith, the Priest's absolution was an empty religious act. (Romans 1:17). Following this public declaration, Staupitz of Austria offered Luther, who by now, was on the Pope's hit list, a safe haven, telling Luther in a letter that, "the world hates the truth and by such hate, Christ was crucified."



Staupitz of Austria

Your Presence is Needed!

The Annual Meeting will be held January 29th after our worship service. This will be a short meeting but important. Please come to help make our quorum. Like we do each year we need to pass our budget and elect our new council members. You are important to us so please put Sunday, January 29th on your calendar.



Who's a Lutheran?

A Lutheran is somebody who.....Feels that "passing the peace" is a little too touchy; Thinks that clapping and laughing out loud are more appropriate to auditoriums than in the house of God.....Still calls it the "new" green hymnal.



Who Said That?

Grace doesn't depend on suffering to exit, but where there is suffering, you find grace.....When you mess up again, ask for forgiveness again, it's a process....True love never forces.



Thank you for all you do!

Our president, Larry , is asking for reports from the following people. We so appreciate all you have done for our congregation. We would like to see a summary of all that has happened this past year. ***Thank you to you if you have already sent in your report to Larry.*** If you haven't you still have time to send it in.

Pastors Rob and Gary -----Pastor's Report
Judy Armstrong ----Treasurer's Report & budget reports for ELC and Child Care Center, Sunday School and Youth Programs.

Larry Farner-President's Report & Synod Actions

Carverlynn Prothero-Child Care Report

Sally Farner—Food Bank Report

Bob Klempan— Church Elder & Special Projects

Glen Adrig— Church Administrator Report & Lutherhaven Report

JoEllen Klempan & Sharie Adrig— Altar Guild Report

Teresa Prange & Rose Link-Fellowship Report

Carol Reece-Women's Study/Service Report

Pastor Tim ---Confirmation Class Report

Teresa Prange—Lutherhaven Report

Carl Knight— Missionary Status Report

Pastor Gary— Nominations for Council, Financial Secretaries, Lutherhaven Board, Martha & Mary Board, Elders, Church Administrator



Go Figure!

How did God announce the impending birth of a savior? (hint) Isaiah 7:14. Why was Jesus born in a humble state to an average working class family? What does the birth of Jesus mean for "all" the people of the world?

January Birthdays

14-----Chris Knight
 18-----Dolly Williams
 26-----Gladyce Castsgnola
 29-----Larry Ficca
 29-----Miki Turowski

January Anniversaries

2----- Pastor Gary & Lori
 14-----Mike & Carverlynn Prothero

February Birthdays

2-----Tiffany Johnson
 5-----Pat Alcantra
 11-----Patrick Gehring
 14-----Ward Erickson IV
 15-----Bob Klempan
 23-----Jim Turowski
 24-----Rebecca Fuller
 29-----Annabell Williams

If you have any additions or corrections to our birthday—anniversary list please let our editor, Sharie Adrig, know at gadrig@comcast.net



Members Serving in January

Altar Guild -----Sharie Adrig
 Reader -----Glen Adrig
 Acolytes 8th-Nathan, 15th-Rebecca, 22-Arabelle and 29th-Tiffany

Members Serving in February

Altar Guild ----- Teresa Prange
 Reader-----Bob Klempan
 Acolytes 5th-Kaelyn, 12th-Nathan, 19th-Rachel and 26th –Tiffany

What's Coming Up?

January

9-----6 pm--- Peninsula Knitting Guild
 11 ----- 12, noon --- Women's Lunch Hour
 12-----10 am----- Bible Study, James
 3:15 pm---Confirmation Class
14-----10 am---Undecorating Party
 15-----10 am---Sunday Worship Service
 18-----12, noon---Women's Lunch Hour
 19-----10 am-----Bible Study, James
 22-----10 am---Sunday Worship Service
 25-----12, noon---Women's Lunch Hour
 26----- 10 am-----Bible Study, James
 29-----10 am---Sunday, Worship Service
29-----ELC Annual Meeting

February

1-----12, noon---Women's Lunch Hour
 2-----10 am-----Bible Study, James
 3:15 pm-----Confirmation Class
 5-----10 am ---Sunday Worship Service
 6----- 6 pm--- Peninsula Knitter's Guild
 8-----12, noon ---Women's Lunch Hour
 9-----10 am-----Bible Study
 3:15 pm-----Confirmation Class
 12-----10 am --- Sunday Worship Service

Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Men's Fellowship Breakfast is being held at 8:30 am the second Saturday of each month at All Star Lanes in Silverdale. If you would like to receive email updates on this please let Glen Adrig know so that your name and email can be added to the contact list.

Helping with Coffee Hour

There are several ways you can help with coffee hour. 1. You can sign up to host a Sunday. 2. You can put money in the offering and designate it for coffee hour. Or 3. you can talk to Rose Link or Teresa Prange and ask what you can bring to help supplement the coffee hour refreshments.

