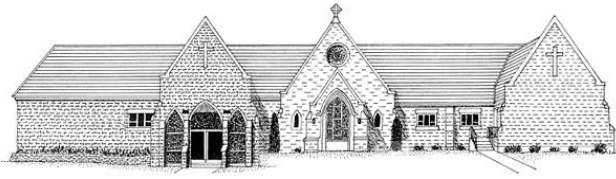


THE MESSENGER



Monthly news for Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Menominee, Michigan

JULY

2021



FROM THE PASTOR

Brothers and Sisters in Christ;

As I sit down to write, I am coming off of a two-week vacation which included Amy and I taking a long-awaited trip to New Orleans. While we were blessed to experience so much of what New Orleans has to offer (for me, that means eating a lot of the local cuisine), one of the other highlights for me during this trip was visiting the St. Louis Cathedral, a Catholic house of worship since 1720. The architecture, art, and history of this majestic building are very powerful; and while this church, like everything else in New Orleans, does cater to tourists, they are just as adamant about taking up money for the poor while you are visiting. The St. Louis Cathedral is undoubtedly a unique place of worship, set in the French Quarter, a unique setting in its own right; yet the universal work of the church happens here. Thanks be to God.

Late on the Sunday morning that we were in New Orleans, Amy and I found our way into Jackson Square, the historical park nestled on the plaza in front of the church, taking up residence so that we could enjoy some (more) overpriced morsel in the oppressive southern heat before continuing on our day's activities, when I heard something that gave me pause, and that was the ringing of the church bells.

Since we don't have church bells at Emmanuel, and since I am usually at Emmanuel on Sunday mornings, I don't remember the last time I heard church bells ring on a Sunday morning. It was a long, sustained, ringing, for roughly five minutes, a call to worship at the 11:00 hour. From my vantage point in the park, I couldn't see the front doors to see if people were still entering, but what I could see, were people on the plaza and in the park, tourists and natives alike, continuing on in their conversations and transactions, as if the bells were silent to them.

I don't write this in judgment, for I cannot know, nor do I need to know, if my fellow park visitors at this moment are people of faith. Nor is it my place to impose upon them how I think they should have responded to the bells. But what it did awaken in me is how often we, as Christians, ignore the call to worship, so as not to divert us from the everyday activities in our lives. We are all guilty of blending worship with secular, elevating that which is not worthy to experience praise that is, and should be, reserved solely for the God who creates and sustains us.

It's a trap that is easy for many of us to fall into yet today, to want to make God appear for us, like a genie, when we want something, instead of the other way around, of us being responsive to God's call. For example, many hear the toll of the political bell and that defines their faith. I've experienced this first-hand, having been publicly accused of not being a person of faith because my personal politics didn't align with my accusers. Ironically, the fact that I publicly cling to the promises of baptism meant nothing to these persons; to them, my faith was tied solely to who I voted for. As well, many people hear the toll of the "I'm OK, you're OK" bell to faith, those who believe that since God loves me no matter what, I can say and do what I want without consequence, which sadly cheapens the sacrifice that Jesus made in dying for our sins.

Ultimately, our faith should determine our politics, not the other way around. As well, remembering first and foremost that we are sinners, unworthy to come before the throne of God is always a reminder that we're not OK when it comes to securing our own salvation. Answering the call to worship is an invitation to suspend judgment and to welcome vulnerability. In doing so, we wade into the mystery that is faith, faith being a personal gift from God for all people. In what manner we accept that gift is unique and personal to each and every one of us. Sincere worship is humbly receiving this gift and, in turn, boldly giving thanks to God, and to God alone, for it.

Beginning this coming Sunday, July 4th, we will begin a six-week sermon series on the Old Testament book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a Judean prophet whose activity spanned four of the most tumultuous decades in Judea's history. He received his call to prophecy sometime around 627 BC and continued his ministry until after the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. As a prophet, Jeremiah pronounced God's judgment upon the people of his time for their wickedness. He was concerned especially with false and insincere worship and failure to trust God. Basically, he was ringing the bells, calling God's people to worship and give praise to God. God's people, in turn, responded by ignoring his pleas, as if they couldn't hear him, going about their own business, anticipating that God would be there when it was convenient for them for God to be there.

In these next six weeks as we read through the book of Jeremiah and experience the prophet's frustrations with God's people not responding to God's call to them to return to worship, let us be mindful of our own worship practices.

Let us remember that corporate Sunday worship is made up of individuals who bring their own unique burdens to the altar, as well as their own unique joys, but do so as redeemed sinners alike. In remembering in this way, we cast away judgment upon those who don't think like we do, speak like we do, or even believe in the exact same way that we do.

Instead, let us focus on the gift that worship is, our unique opportunity to engage with the divine in a way that is personal and public, humble and bold. In doing so, we will hear the clarion bell call to worship, loud and clear, the opportunity to praise God for the gift that is life and love in Christ, a gift which we can never give enough thanks for.

In Christ,
Pastor Mark

A Special **"Thank You"** to Robin Gustafson for leading worship and sharing her gift of teaching about the Armor of God on Sunday, June 20th. We are indeed blessed to share in Robin's passion and expression of her faith!

EMMANUEL BUDGET NEWS

As of May 31, 2021

*Your Contributions to the General Fund	\$96,406.53
*Your Approved Budget Amount	\$102,882.89

Giving Statements are available now – We are now halfway through the year and the 2nd quarter giving statements are now available, should you want one. If you are interested in receiving a statement of your offerings for 2021, please contact Judy in the church office at 863-3431, or, you may contact Emmanuel's Financial Secretary, Marcia Peters, directly, at 863-8810. Thank you all for your ongoing contributions in making the work of the church happen in 2021 and beyond!

Updated Indoor Worship Practices

(Approved by the church council on 6/8/2021)

- Masks are optional for those who have received a COVID-19 vaccination. For those who choose not to receive a vaccine or have not yet done so, we ask that you honor your fellow congregation members health by continuing to wear a mask while indoors and that we all continue to practice social distancing.
- We will continue to rope off every other pew so that we as the church can honor social distancing practices. Worshipers are welcome to sit in any pew not roped off.
- Ushers have resumed traditional duties at the entrance to the sanctuary by distributing bulletins from a basket and making members aware of the pre-filled communion cups that will be stationed there during services when we celebrate Holy Communion.
- Worshipers have options on how to receive Holy Communion. 1) Worshipers may take a pre-filled communion cup (the ones that we've been using) to their seat. At communion distribution, the member may either choose to remain in his/her seat and receive or may bring the cup forward for it to be blessed prior to consumption. 2)Worshipers may come forward and take an empty cup from the pedestal and continue to the communion station where he/she will receive the wafer from Pastor Mark (who will be masked and gloved) and have his/her cup filled by the Communion Assistant (who will also be masked). There will be no kneeling at the rail, nor will there be intinction at this time.
- The offering plate will continue to be stationed in the center aisle where worshipers can leave their offering upon entry into

worship. The offering will be brought forward by one of the ushers at the end of the service.

- Due to a sharp decline in attendance since in-person worship resumed, drive-through communion will now be offered only once per month.

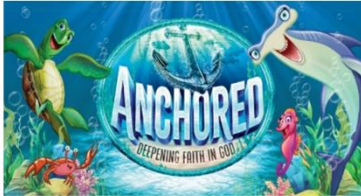
Second Sunday Sunshine Service

A reminder that on the second Sunday of each month this summer, weather permitting, we will worship in the 14th street parking lot. Our July outdoor service of the summer will be at 9:00 on July 11th. Don't forget to bring your lawn chair, and I'll see you then! – Pastor Mark

Care and Share Alzheimer's Support Group

June Ehlers will be resuming this group. They will start meeting on July 7. Meetings will be every Wednesday from 4:30 to 6:00 at Emmanuel. The meetings are specifically for caregivers and family members of loved ones with dementia and are mostly open discussion about caregiving issues, and sharing what works for each of us in certain situations,

For more information, you can call June at 715-938-3589.



2021
Vacation Bible School
Tuesday-Thursday
July 27, 28, & 29
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Children entering Kindergarten through 6th grade this fall are invited to go on an underwater adventure where they will discover that God is faithful!

We will be following Covid19 mitigation guidelines to keep everyone safe, so our VBS will look a bit different than our previous years, but our children will still enjoy fun experiences that will guide them through God's Word in unforgettable and thought-provoking ways that make Scripture come alive and help faith flow into real life. Registration forms are available in the church office or download and print a copy from the church website at www.e-mmanuel.com under "Our Learning/VBS".

Deadline to register is
Monday, July 12th



JULY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Church office hours are Monday – Thursday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. **The Church office will be closed on Monday, July 5th.** If you need to conduct church business outside of these times, please contact Pastor Mark at (906) 424-0003.
- **Sundays - In-person/Facebook Live Worship at 9:00 am.** We will celebrate Safe Distance Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, with **drive-through communion on Sunday, July 18th, available from 11:00 – 11:30** at the 14th Street Entrance. If you are planning on attending in-person worship, please be in compliance with all in-person practices, so that we can honor the safety and health of all who gather here.
- **Sunday, July 11th. Weather permitting, we will worship in the 14th Street Parking Lot.** Please bring a lawn chair if you have one. If not, chairs will be available. As well, Summer Sunday School begins on this day for all kids Pre-K through 6th Grade.
In-person Vacation Bible School – Tuesday, July 27th – Thursday, July 29th. Please see the enclosed information.



Kids, PreK through 6th grade join us for some summer fun learning about Jesus!

Each Sunday children will meet outside at the 14th street entrance to enjoy Bible stories, games, and crafts!
If there is rain, we will meet in the fellowship hall.

No registration needed - just show up!



SUNDAY MORNINGS AT EMMANUEL
Worship 9:00 a.m.
Livestreamed on our Facebook page

CONTACT US:

Phone: (906) 863-3431 Fax: 906-863-4193

Email:

Council President, Rhonda Pedersen

Email: elcpresident@e-mmanuel.com

or

Visit us on the Web at www.e-mmanuel.com



Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at
Emmanuel Lutheran Church Menominee Michigan ELCA

STAFF:

Pastor

The Rev. Mark Laatsch - Cell Phone: 906-424-0003

Email: pastor2901@e-mmanuel.com

Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Mrs. Patti Treptow

Church Secretary

Mrs. Judy Raygo

Custodian- inside Mrs. Carol Parrish

Custodian – outside Mr. Lee Parrish



We are a congregation of the Northern Great Lakes Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America