

The Latest News and Happenings at  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church in New Philadelphia, Ohio

## From the Desk of Pastor Rob

**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor – The Eighth Commandment**

**What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light. – Martin Luther's Explanation on the Eighth Commandment**

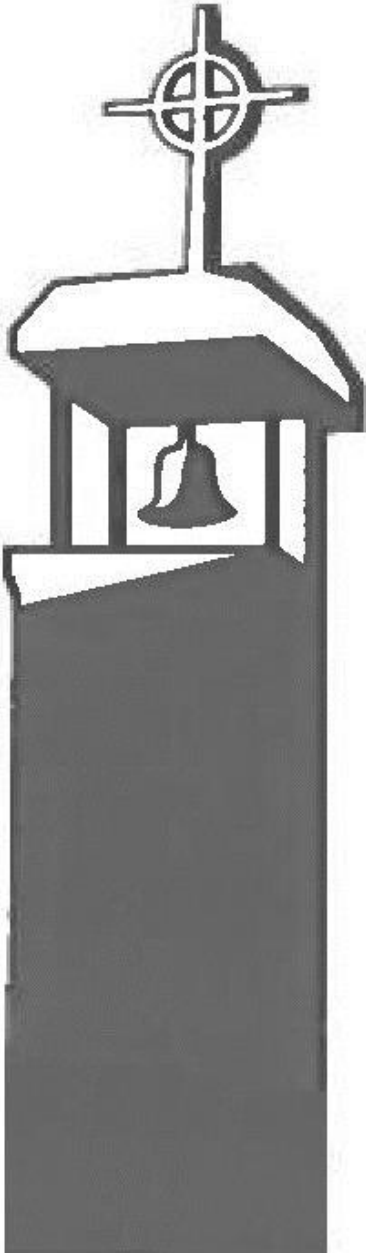
Nothing can destroy a congregation quicker than an out-of-control rumor mill. Gossip and rumors spread like wildfire, often fueled by half-truths, misunderstandings, or assumptions. It's easy to get sucked into one without realizing it until it's too late. A casual comment here, a whispered conversation there, and suddenly the narrative has spiraled into something far removed from the truth. It starts innocently enough—someone mentions a concern, a speculation, or even just a passing thought. But like a snowball rolling downhill, it gains momentum, collecting exaggeration and hearsay along the way. Before we know it, people have been deeply hurt—reputations tarnished, trust eroded, and relationships strained.

The consequences ripple through the congregation, creating factions, breeding mistrust, and diverting focus from the church's mission to share Christ's love and serve the community. A congregation divided by rumors becomes less effective as a body of Christ, losing sight of its unity and purpose. Worse, it creates an environment where people feel unsafe or unwelcome, pushing them away from the fellowship they once cherished.

This kind of behavior cannot be tolerated in a church, especially when the comments are negative and directed at an individual. Gossip and harmful talk not only damage relationships but also undermine the core values of Christian community, which should be built on love, grace, and truth. When we allow such behavior to go unchecked, it creates an environment of distrust, fear, and hostility, which is the opposite of what the church is called to be—a place of refuge and unity.

Martin Luther's explanation of the Eighth Commandment serves as a powerful reminder of how we are to conduct ourselves in speech and thought. Luther emphasized that we are called to "fear and love God so that we do not betray, slander, or lie about our neighbor," but instead "defend them, speak well of them, and explain their actions in the kindest way." This teaching is more than a call to avoid gossip; it is an invitation to actively build each other up. When we hear something negative or questionable about someone, Luther challenges us to resist

Continued on next page...



From the desk of Pastor Rob continued...

the temptation to assume the worst or spread the story. Instead, we are to think the best of that person, give them the benefit of the doubt, and, if necessary, come to their defense.

This approach reflects the heart of Christ's teachings. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus commands us to treat others as we would want to be treated. If we were the subject of gossip, we would hope others would speak up on our behalf or refuse to perpetuate the negativity. In following Luther's advice, we practice this golden rule, contributing to a culture of grace where misunderstandings are clarified, and wounds are healed, rather than exacerbated. In a church, every member has a responsibility to uphold this standard of care and accountability. When we hear negative talk, we must courageously redirect the conversation, encourage reconciliation, or simply refuse to participate. By doing so, we protect the dignity of others, preserve the unity of the church, and model the love of Christ in our words and actions.

Let us commit to being peacemakers—people who defend one another, speak well of each other, and interpret actions in the kindest way possible. Let us embody the teachings of Martin Luther and the heart of Christ by choosing words that build up rather than tear down, that heal rather than harm. When rumors arise, we have a choice: to fuel the fire or to extinguish it with grace and truth. By refusing to spread negativity and stepping in to foster understanding and reconciliation, we become vessels of God's peace and agents of His love.

Together, we can create a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported—a reflection of the kingdom of God on earth. Let us, as a congregation, commit to guarding our words and aligning our hearts with Christ, so that our fellowship may shine as a beacon of love, unity, and grace to all who enter our doors.

Prayerfully yours,

*Pastor Rob*

## Upcoming Events

**Kids movie night** is Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 at 6 PM. We are having Pizza and dessert. Please sign up in the lobby. Any questions, see Deb Ritenour.

### **Souper Bowl Sunday**

Join us after church on Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> for a soup lunch with a free-will offering benefiting the Dover – New Phila Food Pantry. Sign -up sheet is in the lobby.

## In Appreciation

Dear Emmanuelites; Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed (belated) Christmas and joyous New Year. May God grant you peace and love during this Holy Season.

Bert and Phyllis Kohler

Thank you for opening your doors to us. We are ever so grateful to you for allowing us to have our Christmas Dinner here. Thank you again and have a Blessed and Merry Christmas.

Tuscarawas County College Club

## Altar Flowers

There are 3 Sundays open in January and 4 Sundays open in February for altar flowers. Please consider signing up so we will have flowers at the altar those weeks.

Thank you!!!

## Bible Trivia (test your knowledge)!!

1. What book in the Bible has a talking donkey?
2. What prophet in the Bible married a prostitute with God's blessing?
3. Who was the prostitute that hid spies in Jericho and was also in the lineage of Jesus?
4. Who was the only woman judge in Israel?
5. Who killed Sisera, commander of the Canaanite army?
6. Who sold his birthright in the Old Testament?
7. What old testament king was known as "a man after God's own heart"?
8. What old testament prophet was taken to heaven in a whirlwind and did not die?
9. Who else in the Bible was taken to heaven and did not experience physical death?
10. Who was the non-Israelite prophet that the talking donkey spoke to?
11. What book in the old testament tells us to care for our animals?
12. What are we to put on to withstand the wiles of devil?

## ADDICTED TO GOD

I have a radical theory that God made all humans to be addicts. That's right, every one of us is an addict, and God designed us that way! That is, God wired us to be addicted to Him. And when people reject Him, they struggle in vain to fill that cavernous black hole with some other obsession. Some become workaholics; some become addicted to food and suffer bulimia or obesity. Others choose alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes as their favorite addiction. For some, it's sex or music; still others, fashion and outward appearances. They become consumed with materialism and vanity. And there are those who become addicted to other people in twisted codependent relationships. All this is done in a misguided attempt to fill a void designed for God. Human beings were created to be filled with God's Spirit, and when God is not the center of their lives they will desperately seek to fill that vacuum with something else. God designed us to be addicted in love to Him. It is only in Him that we will find joy and satisfaction.



**Pastoral Care Visits**

If you or anyone you know would like a visit from Pastor Rob, please call the church office or Pastor Rob to make arrangements. If you can help with visiting and taking communion to shut-ins, please see Pastor Rob.

**Staying Connected**

330-364-7571  
 Church Office  
 office@emmanuelnp.com  
 740-214-6896  
 Pastor Rob Eller’s Cell  
 pastor@emmanuelnp.com  
 330-260-1224  
 Prayer Chain  
 www.emmanuelnp.com  
 facebook.com/  
 EmmanuelNewPhilly  
 instagram.com/  
 EmmanuelNewPhilly  
 youtube.com/  
 @EmmanuelNewPhilly

**Words of Wisdom:**

In the Bible, Mark 2, Jesus healed a paralyzed man because of his friends’ faith. This is why your circle does matter.

**Worship Volunteers**

**January**

**January 5**

**Lector:** Evelyn Blake  
 (Greeters, Ushers, Communion Assistants from Council)

**January 12**

**Greeters:** John and Barb Sandy  
**Lector:** Jerry Gartrell  
**Usher:** Deb Ritenour  
**Communion Assistants:** John and Barb Sandy

**January 19**

**Greeters:** Neil Rupe and Chuck Moore  
**Lector:** Myrna Hugh  
**Usher:** Neil Rupe  
**Communion Assistants:** John Foust and Wayne York

**January 26**

**Greeters:** Dane Smith and Dorothy Glass  
**Lector:** Wayne York  
**Usher:** Dane Smith  
**Communion Assistants:** Dick and Myrna Hugh

**February**

**February 2**

**Lector:** Marsha Smith  
 (Greeters, Ushers, Communion Assistants from Council)

**February 9**

**Greeters:** Tom and Bonnie Yanders  
**Lector:** Sally Dorn  
**Usher:** Tom Yanders  
**Communion Assistants:** Rob and Karen Sterling

**February 16**

**Greeters:** Neil Rupe and Chuck Moore  
**Lector:** Myrna Hugh  
**Usher:** Barb Rupe  
**Communion Assistants:** Myrna and Dick Hugh

**February 23**

**Greeters:** John and Barb Sandy  
**Lector:** Rob Sterling  
**Usher:** Dane Smith  
**Communion Assistants:** Barb and John Sandy

**Emmanuelite**

(ih•man•yoo•uhl•a hyt)

*noun-* A person of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, past or present, who welcomes everyone, who loves and serves their neighbors unconditionally, who puts their faith into action.

(Ephesians 6:11)

God  
 12. The whole armor of  
 11. Proverbs 12:10  
 10. Balaam  
 9. Enoch  
 8. Elijah  
 7. David  
 6. Esau  
 5. Jael  
 4. Deborah  
 3. Rahab  
 2. Hosea  
 1. Numbers

**Trivia**

**Answers to Bible**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	30 12pm - AA Meeting	31 11am - Pastors' Group	1	2	3 Office CLOSED 6pm - Kids Movie Night	4
5 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	6 12pm - AA Meeting 6:30pm - Tusc. Co. Coin	7 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Property Meeting	8 1pm - Healing Service	9	10 Office CLOSED	11
12 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	13 12pm - AA Meeting 6pm - Finance Meeting 7pm - Council Meeting	14 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir	15 11am - Free Prayer	16	17 Office CLOSED	18 Messenger DEADLINE
19 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	20 12pm - AA Meeting	21 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir 6pm - Stamp Club	22	23	24 Office CLOSED	25
26 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	27 12pm - AA Meeting	28 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir	29 5:30pm - Pub Theology at	30	31 Office CLOSED	1