

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


From the Desk of Pastor Rob

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. – Jeremiah 29:11

The human mind plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps. – Proverbs 16:9

One of my favorite phrases is “If you want to hear God laugh, tell Him your plans.” And boy has God been laughing at me a lot. During the process three years ago when I starting to interview with churches for my first call coming out of seminary, Tanya and I were trying to plan out what our next steps were and no matter how much we tried to plan, we seemed to be in a constant holding pattern waiting for whatever would come next. I needed to be reminded by colleagues and classmates that some of this was out of my hands and that I needed to leave room for the Holy Spirit to also be part of the process.

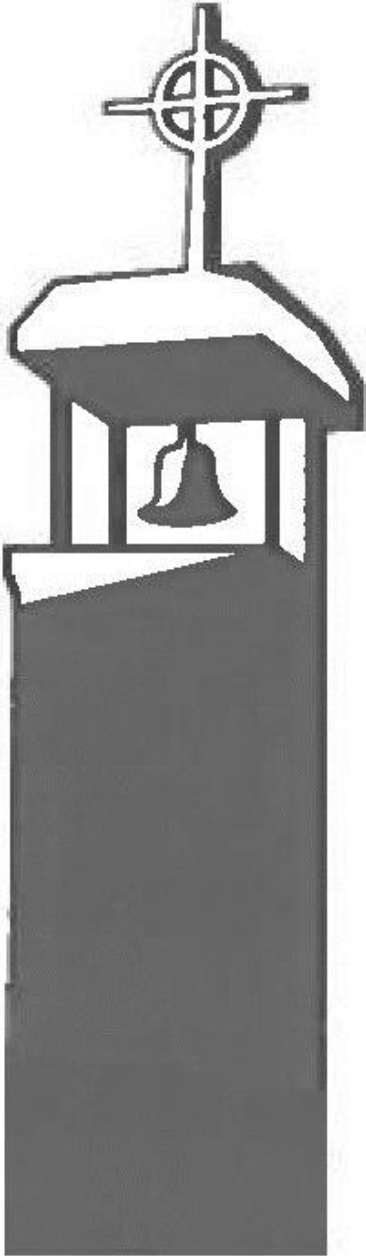
“For
I KNOW
the plans
I have for you,”
declares the LORD,
“... plans to give you
HOPE and a
FUTURE.”
Jeremiah 29:11, NIV



If you are anything like me, you like to plan for the future, especially if you are planning something important. When Tanya and I plan for a trip, we often make plans and backup plans and backups for the backups in case not just one thing goes awry, but if multiple things happen. When I am getting ready for anything, I do not like to jump into it blind without knowing what could possibly happen. Those plans are in a way a security blanket for me, giving me comfort in knowing I have some control in what is about to happen, or at least I think I have control. But we need to remember that the plans are not always up to us, that many times those plans are from God and that we need to be open to listening.

We are at a point in the church where we are starting to make plans for our future and what we want Emmanuel to look like in the next three years, five years, and even ten or twenty years beyond. As the world continues to move ahead, it is important that the church does as well. At our annual meeting in January, council presented the proposal from the St. Timothy class for some of that planning, something that we have spun into an initiative called re(NEW), “A vision for the future of Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Spirit inspired, People led.” One of the main pieces of this initiative is the creation of a Vision Committee, whose purpose is to help craft the direction in which the congregation should be headed with strategic planning goals as well as crafting an updated mission and vision statement for the congregation so that our identity aligns with these plans and goals. Our 200th anniversary is approaching in 2031 and this work will help Emmanuel grow and thrive for many years to come.

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From the Desk of Pastor Rob continued...

I have mentioned it many times in my sermons, but one of the few silver linings of the pandemic has been that it has forced churches to make quantum leaps in rethinking what it means to be church in the twenty-first century. It has forced us to embrace and include social media and internet presence as a means of reaching out to people and doing ministry. It made us realize that church can happen in places other than the buildings we worship in and it can happen in smaller and more intimate settings. It has also made us appreciate what we have as it was so easy to lose in the first place.

I have made it known to many in the congregation my intent to be the pastor here at Emmanuel for many more years and I want to help see where re(NEW) leads us. I am optimistic about the future of Emmanuel and the progress we have made in the last year. With help and guidance from God, we will grow and thrive in the future.

Prayerfully yours,

Pastor Rob

Musical Notes

By Ruth Patrick, Director of Worship and Music

The Emmanuel Choir will finish up our year at the end of May. Our many thanks to the singers who have been so faithful this year- they are a terrific group of people who have brought us a lot of special music to enrich our worship services. Please thank them personally if you have the chance.

We will offer special music during the summer from soloists, small groups and guest musicians. Please let me know if you or someone you know would like to participate in our summer musical program.

Women's Bible Study

By Ruth Patrick

The Women's Bible Study group will meet again on May 15 at 1:30 pm in the second floor meeting room. We will use the study in the May issue of Gather magazine, if you are a subscriber. If not, we will provide you with a copy of the lesson for the day.

We enjoyed our recent lesson that centered around food and many aspects of God providing what we need and also how we can better serve as Christians in our eating habits and sharing with others. We had snacks to share and also had 9 attendees that day which was our biggest group yet! It was wonderful to share our snacks and also our ideas and thoughts.

Please feel free to bring a guest, relative, friend or neighbor to our May meeting. We look forward to seeing you all!

Postscript



In last month's newsletter, I wrote about one of my apple trees in my backyard

surviving the winter after being broken off at ground level by starting new roots. I just wanted to share this update. This tree not only survived and has buds, it has flowers if you can believe that. I have dubbed this tree the Lazarus tree because not only did it survive death, God used it to teach me an important lesson, one that I shared with you last month.

In Appreciation...

Dear Emmanuel Lutheran Church, We wish to thank you for your generous donation to Birthright of New Philadelphia. We will use the money to purchase diapers, wipes, and baby care items for the families that come to us for assistance. Thank you on behalf of all the moms, dads, and babies who receives help from us. They appreciate the kindness and generosity of our community. Thank you so much for think of us.

With gratitude,

Birthright of New Phila Volunteers



Thank you everyone who came to the Spring potluck at our house! It was a wonderful

evening of food and fellowship with everyone who came!

~ John Foust and Wayne York

Dinner and a Show!

Congregational Life is planning an outing this summer to see the production Ruth at the Ohio Star Theater in Sugarcreek with a meal before or after at Dutch Valley Restaurant. The show is based on the book and Biblical person of Ruth. Look for more details in the following months as the date and details are finalized. We are looking going to the matinee showing on either August 10th or 17th.

Church Picnic

It is almost that time of year again, time for the annual church picnic. This year we are trying something different by moving the picnic and worship to our green space outside. Cindy and Dane Smith will be handling the food this year. The picnic will be June 9, worship at 10:30 with the meal following. We will have lawn games set up. Worship will be a different format from years past as well. More information coming soon.

Gift Card Ministry

Many folks come to us asking for assistance. The church keeps gift cards on hand for this purpose. This is funded through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. If you would like to help, you can donate to the fund to purchase more gift cards. The people we help are grateful for the assistance and by doing this we are living out the command from Jesus to help the least of these. Please prayerfully consider helping this small but important piece of the ministry that we do here at Emmanuel.



Introducing a new column in The Messenger, Voices from the Pews, a chance for the members of the congregations to give suggestions as well as tell their own stories related to Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Our stories shape our faith and our lives, whether they are stories of happiness and joy or grief and sorrow. By telling our stories, we can connect with one another and reach others with similar experiences. The topic is up to the author, but some ideas include:

- What brought you to this church?
- Is there a song or a saying that has pointed you in the direction of gratefulness?
- Who are your people? From whom did you inherit your capacity for hope? Who gave you this capacity to envision the future, and believe in it, and work for it, sacrifice for it?
- How is the Spirit moving here?
- How did someone bless you recently (whether they knew it or not)?
- When was the last time you felt you were standing on Holy Ground?
- Should church be a place that answers all our questions or a place where people feel safe to ask them?

Submissions for this column can be sent to Pastor Rob or the church office. We ask that you include your name with your submission.

Reintroducing Free Prayer with Pastor Rob

After taking a couple months off for Lent and Easter, Free Prayer with Pastor Rob will be returning in May on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at Magic Mugs in Dover. There has been some confusion and questions regarding what this is and why it is called "Free Prayer." Free Prayer is a movement among pastors of various traditions to go out into their community and talk or pray with anyone who needs it. The idea is two-fold, it gets the pastor out of their office and into the community and gives people a chance to talk with the pastor without worrying about any anxiety related to coming into a church building. Prayer is not the only thing that happens in these encounters, it can also be conversation or questions. It is "Free" because there are not any strings attached to it, the pastor does not expect anything in return from the person they are praying with or talking to. If anybody ever wants to talk to or pray with Pastor Rob or maybe you know someone who could use some spiritual guidance but is hesitant to walk into a church, this is the opportunity for you and for them. Pastor Rob will be at Magic Mugs (237 West 3rd Street, Dover) on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 11:00am-1:00pm. Grab beverage and pull up a chair.

Tractor Pulls



It's that time of year again! Emmanuel Lutheran Church is once again proud to be a sponsor of the River Valley Antique Tractor Pull! Join us as we cheer on Emmanuel's own Wayne York as he competes. Tractor pulls start at 10:00 am on the first Saturday of the month from May until October at the Harvest Barn on 420 Dutch Valley Dr NE, Sugarcreek, OH, just

off State Route 39 across from Dutch Valley Restaurant and the Ohio Star Theater. Emmanuel will have tent set up to hand out bottled water and brochures for the church. Sign-up sheets will be in the lobby, please help with this outreach opportunity!

Kids Sunday School

Our Kids Sunday School class has been learning about why it's important to help others and to make sure they have enough to eat. Today they visited the Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County shelter to make a donation to help the shelter provide meals to their residents.



PRAISE GOD THOU HAST RISEN,
WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH
YOU ABOUT YOUR CAR'S
EXTENDED WARRANTY...

Help Wanted

As approved on at the annual meeting in January, we are going to start the process of hiring office and custodial staff. We need a personnel committee to modify the job descriptions and help with interviews. If you are interested or have the skills to help with this committee, please see Pastor Rob or Council President Neil Rupe.

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.



I heard the greatest story of First Communion just this week. Here's the scene:

Holy Communion and the First Communion Class. The congregation serves grape juice in individual cups (for those of you who might not know, these are very small - less than 1.5" tall. Little girl of about 5 with her little fingers around that tiny cup.

Now, most people tip back their heads and drink that cup in one swallow. It is really just a taste - a sip if you will.

But this little girl took the tiniest of sips off the top of that cup. Then she carefully carried it back to her seat. She continued to take the tiniest of sips. Her parents encouraged her to drink up. And her response? "Mommy, I am savoring Jesus!"

O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.

Psalm 34:8 (NRSVUE)

Oh. My. Goodness.

I can't remember the last time that I savored Jesus. That as I received the bread and wine I thought about what they tasted like or smelled like or how they felt in my hand. I can't remember that last time that I imagined Jesus next to me as I ate this incredible meal of Holy Communion.

And yet, as a Lutheran, this is what I profess: that Jesus is present in that meal with me. That the bread and the wine are his very life given for me. That in the meal, God's love reaches out to me in unimaginable and inexpressible ways.

Thank you, little one, for this important reminder to "savor Jesus"!

Peace this week,
Bishop Barbins

**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:**

At the end of the day
it's not about what you
have or even what
you've accomplished,
it's about who you've
lifted up, who you've
made better. It's about
what you've given back.

**Worship Volunteers
May June**

May 5
Lector: Sally Dorn
(Greeters, Ushers, Communion Assistants
from Council)

May 12
Greeters: Lori Rainsberg and
Mary Lou Westbrook
Lector: Jerry Gartrell
Usher: Barb Rupe
Communion Assistants: Ken and
Lisa Lab

May 19
Greeters: Ward and Linda
Holdsworth
Lector: John Foust
Usher: Neil Rupe
Communion Assistants: Ward and
Linda Holdsworth

May 26
Greeters: Dick and Myrna Hugh
Lector: Marsha Smith
Usher: Dane Smith
Communion Assistants: Dick and
Myrna Hugh

June 2
Lector: Wayne York
(Greeters, Ushers, Communion Assistants
from Council)

June 9
Greeters: Roger and Marcia Lile
Lector: Myrna Hugh
Usher: Marcia Lile

June 16
Greeters: Neil and Barb Rupe
Lector: Dane Smith
Usher: Deb Ritenour
Communion Assistants: Neil and
Barb Rupe

June 23
Greeters: John Foust and Wayne
York
Lector: Barb Rupe
Usher: Neil Rupe
Communion Assistants: Deb
Ritenour and Wayne York

June 30
Greeters: John and Barb Sandy
Lector: Ken Lab
Usher: Tom Yanders
Communion Assistants: John and
Barb Sandy

Emmanuelite

(ih•man•yoo•uhl•ahyt)

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.