

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

## From the Desk of Pastor Rob

**“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” – Matthew 25:35-36, 40**

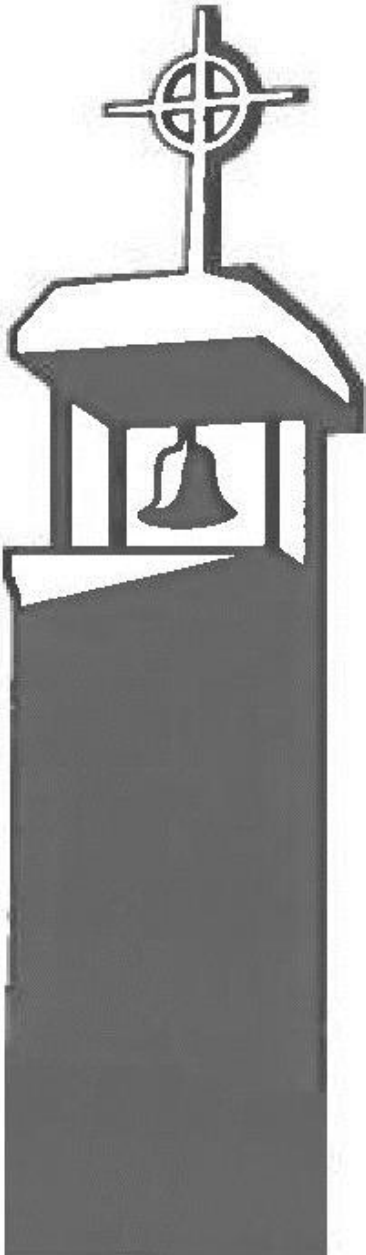
**The crowds asked John the Baptizer, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” – Luke 3:10-11**

Every church has an identity that defines it and sets it apart in the community that it serves. This identity is not just about the building or denomination but reflects the unique way a congregation lives out its mission and values. For some, this identity may center on ministry to children, evident through programs like Sunday school, a robust youth group, a daycare or preschool, or even an affiliated elementary school. These ministries speak to a commitment to nurturing faith and education in the youngest members of the community. Other churches find their identity in worship and the arts, becoming known for vibrant music ministries, drama productions, or visual art galleries.

When I first came to Emmanuel, I thought our identity was rooted in music. It seemed so obvious. The sheer amount of musical talent within our congregation was striking. From our vibrant choir to skilled instrumentalists, we appeared to be a church where music thrived. We even seemed to have a tradition of “collecting” organists—so many gifted organists from other churches chose to make Emmanuel their spiritual home. Our annual organ recital was a highlight of the year, showcasing incredible artistry and talent from near and far. And the summer music camp we used to host was a joyful testament to how deeply embedded music was in our life together, nurturing a love of music in children and connecting with families in our community. However, as I’ve spent more time here, I’ve come to realize that music, as significant and cherished as it is, isn’t our sole identity—or even our primary one. Music is a beautiful thread in the fabric of who we are, but it is not the whole tapestry. Beneath the surface, I’ve seen that our true identity lies in something deeper and more multifaceted.

Our identity is deeply rooted in the way we help others in the community. While many churches take on a single service project during this season of giving—such as organizing a food drive, collecting winter coats, or assembling care packages—we go beyond that. At Emmanuel, we don’t just take on one project but three. For many churches, that level of commitment might seem impossible to pull off. But for us Emmanuelites, it’s not extraordinary; it’s simply who we are. It’s just another month of living out our mission as a church dedicated to service and compassion. In addition to those projects, we helped launch the Free Store at New

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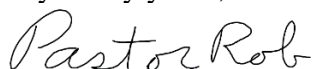
From the Desk of Pastor Rob Continued...

Philadelphia High School for their students, assembled Blessing Bags for those in need, and donate to local and regional organizations through our monthly benevolence offerings. This dedication to helping those in our community and around the world, particularly those living on the margins, is what truly defines us as Emmanuel Lutheran Church. It's more than a mission statement or a seasonal focus—it's the heartbeat of our congregation. It's in the way we continually rise to the challenge of serving others, not out of obligation but out of a deep-seated belief that this is how we live out our calling as followers of Christ.

We see the face of Christ in those we serve, whether they are neighbors struggling to make ends meet, families seeking warmth and comfort, or strangers in distant places needing a reminder of God's love. Every act of service, no matter how big or small, becomes a tangible expression of our faith. It's through these actions that we live into our name, Emmanuel—"God with us"—by being present for others, offering hope, and making a difference in their lives.

This identity as a church that shows our Faith in Action doesn't come from a place of pride but from a place of gratitude and purpose. It's a recognition that we have been blessed to be a blessing, that we are called to share God's love in ways that transform lives. And that is what makes us Emmanuel Lutheran Church—not just a building or a congregation but a community of faith, compassion, and unwavering dedication to serving God by serving others.

Prayerfully yours,



## Baptism and First Holy Communion

As we get a new Sunday School year underway, there has been interest from some families about baptism, First Communion, and confirmation classes. If there are any families who are interested in having their child baptized or would like to start First Communion classes, please contact Pastor Rob Eller. First Communion classes would take place during the Sunday School hour on Sundays. Baptisms can be during Sunday worship or in a private ceremony.

2025 Flower Chart is up. Flowers are \$20 a vase. Please sign up for the Sundays that you want.

## 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.

## Blue Christmas Longest Night Service December 21

For many people, the holiday season is not a joyous time of year, whether it is because of the added stress or because of the loss of a loved one. Blue Christmas services are a quieter, more somber and contemplative style service that gives space for slowing to grieve and think, often on night of the Winter Solstice, lending to its other name, Longest night. In conjunction with our GriefShare program, Emmanuel will be hosting a Blue Christmas service this year on Saturday December 21 at 5:00PM in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

## Christmas Eve Services

This year we are making a time change to our Christmas Eve service to make it more accommodating for families with young children. Our traditional family service will start at 4:00pm this year. In addition to the traditional family service, we are also adding a candlelight vespers service at 10:00pm. Both services will be in person and livestreamed on YouTube.

## 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:

"The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but its sending capacity."  
- Mike Stachura

## Worship Volunteers

### December

#### December 1

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

#### December 8

**Greeters:** Kenny and Lisa Lab  
**Lector:** Tom Yanders  
**Usher:** Barb Rupe  
**Communion Assistants:** Kenny and Lisa Lab

#### December 15

**Greeters:** Tom and Bonnie Yanders  
**Lector:** Rob Sterling  
**Usher:** Tom Yanders  
**Communion Assistants:** Neil and Barb Rupe

#### December 22

**Greeters:** Dane Smith and Dorthy Glass  
**Lector:** Barb Rupe  
**Usher:** John Foust  
**Communion Assistants:** John and Barb Sandy

#### December 24

**Lector:** Dane Smith  
(Greeters, Ushers, Communion Assistants From Council)

#### December 29

**Greeters:** Roger and Marcia Lile  
**Lector:** John Foust  
**Usher:** Dane Smith  
**Communion Assistants:** Ward and Linda Holdsworth

### 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 Dorthy Glass  
**Lector:** Wayne York  
**Usher:** Dane Smith  
**Communion Assistants:** Dick and Myrna Hugh

## Emmanuelite

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*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.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service 10:30am - Special	2 12pm - AA Meeting 5pm - Delta Phi Chapter 6:45pm - Tusc. Co. Coin	3 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Property Meeting	4 11am - Free Prayer	5 4:30pm - Food Pantry 4:30pm - Tusc. Co.	6 Office CLOSED	7
8 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	9 12pm - AA Meeting 6pm - Finance Meeting 7pm - Council Meeting	10 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir	11 1pm - Healing Service	12	13 Office CLOSED	14
15 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	16 12pm - AA Meeting	17 11am - Pastors' Group 6pm - Bell Choir	18 Messenger DEADLINE 11am - Free Prayer	19	20 Office CLOSED	21 5pm - Blue Christmas
22 8:30am - Adult Sunday 8:30am - Kid's Sunday 9am - Choir Rehearsal 9:30am - Worship Service	23 12pm - AA Meeting	24 4pm - Christmas Eve 10pm - Christmas Eve	25	26	27 Office CLOSED	28
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	4