EMMANUEL'S EPISTLE

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OCTOBER 2020

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FROM THE PASTOR

The Pain and Honor of Discernment

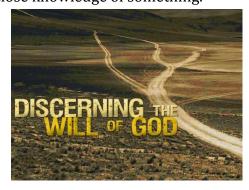
I am writing this article exactly one month before Election Day in these United States. God must have an even greater sense of humor than we ever imagined in that, on top of all the troubles of this year, we get to crown it with what appears to be a hugely divisive voting process and Election. The Chinese curse/proverb, 'May you live in interesting times' is beating us into smithereens, that's for sure.



Our Lutheran faith tradition has a unique view of government. It is well accepted liturgical practice to include prayers for secular leaders in our *Prayer of the Church* on Sundays and to accept 'rulers' as agents of God.

In my second Call, I prayed for then Presidentelect George W. Bush the Sunday following the Election. Afterwards, a parishioner (a defense lawyer by trade!) stopped me on my way back to my office and commented that he was surprised I was "a Republican". Certain that I had not given any impression one way OR the other regarding my personal political preference, I asked him what made him think that. His answer: "Well, you were praying pretty hard for George Bush." I could not help but laugh out loud and told him that he must have missed how hard I had prayed for Bill Clinton! Those who will make use of their voting privilege on November 3rd are asked to be of a discerning mind. To discern means to separate one thing from another, to discriminate. Of course, discernment is not a stranger to Christian or biblical thought process. In the Old Testament is simply meant "to observe"; in the New Testament it is associated with having close knowledge of something.

Put simply, to discern has to do with making a distinction between two or more things. Maybe more often than



not, it has to do with making a distinction between something "good" and something "better" or something "bad" and something "worse".

The Old Testament account of King Solomon, the third King of united Israel and son of King David, is probably the best example of discernment we can find in Scripture that connects with our upcoming task of electing a President.

Solomon realized the responsibility that had been placed in his hands and goes before God in prayer, "Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people that I may discern between good and evil." God's answer? "I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you." (1 Kings 3:9,12).

Clearly, if one is going to discern a matter, one must have a basis for such. That basis, perhaps among other things, is usually knowledge and wisdom. There is no question that many of the decisions we make with regard to everyday matters are important, yet of far greater significance and consequence are the decisions we make with regard to things eternal. Discernment is key in both areas, but the "wisdom and knowledge" needed for discernment is not necessarily the same in both cases. Just because a person has 'brains' does not mean they are knowledgeable or wise. And just because a person seems to be making good and wise decisions in connection with his home and family, does not mean such is the case when it comes to matters of the soul.



Solomon was blessed in that God gave him the wisdom and knowledge necessary to discern in both areas. But as we read and study the life of Solomon we see that he didn't always use those gifts. None of this is automatic. We must be in the Word (Scripture) and in prayer. We must seek the help of the Holy Spirit in using what God has provided us in discerning between good and evil, between the better and the best, between what God desires and what we desire.

In 1523, Martin Luther offered a vision for the power of government. In his writing Luther places governing among the other vocations Christians are called to – similar to marriage, parenthood or a trade. Luther said: "There must be those who arrest, prosecute, execute, and destroy the wicked and who protect, acquit, defend and save the good. Therefore, when they perform their duties...there is no peril in that; they may use their office like anybody else would use his trade, as a means of livelihood..."

And still, later on Luther writes, "...a wise prince is a mighty rare bird and an upright prince even rarer. They are generally the biggest fools or the worst scoundrels on earth; therefore one must constantly expect the worst from them and look for little good..." Ouch! Luther never minced a word, that's for sure.

But then again, in a commentary on Psalm 82 Luther writes, "The second virtue of a prince is to help the poor, the orphans, and the widows to justice, and to further their cause." Luther insisted that if nobody would make sure the laws are kept, we "all would become beggars and be ruined and destroyed".

Finally the Reformer asserts that "...there is on earth no better jewel, no greater treasure, nor richer alms, no fairer endowment, no finer possession than a ruler who makes and preserves just laws. Such men are rightly called gods." No pressure here, Dr. Luther!

The power and authority of all government originates with God (Romans 13). Anarchy is surely against God's will for it would harm God's people. The 'correct' or 'optimal' form of government is not listed in the Bible. Israel governed itself very differently from the church of the first century and we do not resemble much of that time any longer. The conscience of Christians is not bound to a particular type of government. In Lutheran theology we speak of the "Two Kingdom Doctrine".

The left hand of God reigns within government, the right hand of God works through the salvific



works of Christ. Both, State and Church, are ordained by God.

Surely, it can be most difficult to see the goodness of an office when the goodness of those who occupy it is ambiguous at best. Perhaps Luther was right when he spoke of 'rare birds'. He reminds us of the legitimate role of government and couples it with blunt realism concerning those who govern. Where does that leave us? I suppose it calls us to discernment – discernment where we employ knowledge, wisdom, and prayer guided by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Every Sunday we pray "Thy Kingdom Come", words tucked in the middle of the Lord's Prayer. This is a pretty radical request and more than a pious phrase. It is the prayer of the children of God who are living in the world, trying to figure out how to be faithful surrounded by many unholy circumstances, always challenged to live as redeemed rather than forgotten sinners. We know that our own struggles are those of men and women in elected office and vice versa. We know that our final help is not going to come from anyone we elect to any position but from the God who holds all things in his hands. And yet, there are responsibilities laid upon us in selecting those who will best govern us, rare birds as they may be, so that "the poor, the orphans and the widows" will be given justice and that we all may live in peace and harmony.



I pray discernment upon you and upon our nation. And I pray that the one who will be chosen to lead our country will speak with Solomon: "Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people that I may discern between good and evil". Most of all: May God answer and have mercy on us all as we live into an uncertain future with complete trust and confidence not in those who govern us but in the Creator God who made and sustains us.

Pastor Solveig Zamzow +

Pastoral Acts



Four young people took their First Communion on Sunday, September 6th. The group included Kaylee Haxton, Lane Mayer, Olivia Putz, and Madelynn Rosenberg.We pray that this gift of life will always be the hope and comfort to them as they

journey through life.

Two 2nd Graders received Bibles on Sunday, September 27th: Brantley Kuntz and Brody Trenhaile. May God's word guide their way today and always.





Join us on October 18th at 9:30 am for a worship service with our small but mighty band. The Council has decided to designate one Sunday in October, November and December for a service with contemporary music. Bring the kids, grandma and your friends! See you then!

Iovs and Sorrows

Congratulations to...

Jonathan and Lisa (Hulshizer) Dolan, on the birth of a daughter on September 10th. Etta Rose Dolan was born at 2:50 p.m. and is welcomed by big sister, Anastasia, age 2½. If you would like to send a card, their address is 308 4th Street SW De Smet, SD 57231.



Damon Dalluge and Krissi Blodgett on the birth of their son, Tucker Michael, who was greeted on September 11th to join his parents and big sister, Raedyn.



Please start paying close attention throughout the next few weeks regarding plans for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas, With COVID-19 still a significant issue in Iowa we most likely will have to make serious adjustments in our worship plans for those special occasions. Pastor will discuss these matters with the responsible groups in the very near future and see to it that the information gets disseminated as soon as it is available. Speaking of these special services: Pastor Z is looking for and encouraging vocal and/or instrumental special music for the upcoming holiday season. If you can offer up special music please contact Pastor at your earliest convenience so she can incorporate your plans in her worship service preparations. Making plans for Christmas is not too early for the Church in October!! Thank you for offering up your talents and gifts.



Thank You Stewards

...to Anna Rosenberg for helping us out for two weeks when Jeff, our custodian, had to isolate due to contact with a COVID-19 positive family member. We are very grateful to Anna for her quick and excellent help!!

...to Johnny Duvall for his help with recent electrical problems at ELC.

...to Myra Dierks who completed the unbelievable task of finishing 100 quilts which have been given to various causes. What a labor of love! Myra, you are our very own Quilting Queen!

...to Will Bartz and Marena Henkle who continue to provide us with virtual services and Pastor's Facebook devotion via their technical abilities and kindness of heart!

...to our organists, Charlotte Cole, Donna Schilling and Marena Henkle for their faithful service and the occasional pleasure of special prelude music by partnering with one another.

...to the September Hospitality Team led by Charlotte Cole for making arrangements so we could begin our Fellowship Hour after worship. ...to the members of our Church Council (Darren Marsh, Mark Fredrickson, Emi Kuntz, Sandy Thompson, Marena Henkle, Michael Cole, Brittany and Will Bartz) who have 'performed' with great care in the midst of what already has been an incredibly difficult term of office. Please show them your appreciation when you have the opportunity. ...to all who have faithfully helped us remain solvent throughout the months of the pandemic. While we have 'saved' money in some areas of our ministry we have chosen to allocate more in other areas to respond to the needs at hand. We sincerely appreciate all financial offerings, large and small, from our members and friends of Emmanuel. Thank you for your faithfulness. If you have not yet contributed and are unsure how to do it electronically or otherwise, please connect with Sharon at the office.

...to our September counters for their diligence in accurately discerning our offerings; thanks Teresa Braun, Gloria and Phil Hackbart and Orland Bartz.

...Mavis Stevens was our Altar Guild steward last month. Thanks, Mavis.

...to our cadre of PA operators who make a faithful and diligent commitment to make sure we can 'hear the Gospel' every Sunday. Thank you one and all!!!

Thank vou, Emmanuel

Thank You to those who helped at the Borchardt Work-Athon, your selfless act of kindness was truly a labor of love. Also, thanks to those who sent them donations as this was equally as helpful in this time of need. God Bless You All!

-Mari and Mike Momberg

We would like to thank Mike and Mari for setting up this day and everyone that was involved in any way with the work day that was held at our home on August 29th. It was all greatly appreciated and also overwhelming with your caring and kindness. The financial help also was greatly needed and appreciated. Thank you all again,

- Bill and Tammy Borchardt.

Thank you all for thinking of me as I celebrated my 93rd birthday on September 27th. I enjoyed all the cards I received and your kindness is appreciated more than you know.

God Bless! - Chrystal Braun

DID YOU KNOW...

...that your Church Council at each monthly meeting reviews our COVID-19 guidelines so we are not only in compliance but also responsive to needed changes in either direction? All decisions are by mutual agreement or vote.

...that Pastor Christopher Staley of First Lutheran in St. Ansgar is the newly elected Dean of our Iowa-Mission District of the NALC? He was elected to a three-year term via an email-sponsored District meeting last month. Our prayers are with him as he fulfills that office. Pastor Z continues to serve the NALC as one member of a three-person Vetting Panel deciding on the certification of pastors who wish to serve in our church body.

...that Pastor Z will participate with a one hour Zoom lecture about Lutherans in North Iowa on October 10th organized by Ben Caron, a St. Ansgar graduate and brother of Brittany Bartz, who is leading **The Re:United States of America Project!** in an effort to bring understanding between various parts of the nation? Participants from North Iowa as well as New York and California are expected to attend.

...that all families/households are encouraged to offer up Altar flowers? If you need information about how you can go about this, just call the office.

We have a very fine arrangement with a local florist which makes this rather easy. Home-grown flowers are also always welcome.



...that as of mid-July, 32% of Christians in the USA had not yet attended church –in person or online? 50% of millenial Christians (born between 1980 and 2000) had not attended worship one way or another and one in seven church attendees had switched churches while 18% of church goers were watching more than one service per week online. How might it look now, the beginning of October? ...that the biblical practice of gleaning is finding fresh relevance during the pandemic? An Episcopal

fresh relevance during the pandemic? An Episcopal Church in New York is working with New York's Sycamore Farms and Cornell Cooperative Extension to get thousands of pounds of fresh produce to a food desert. Almost 200 gleaning programs exist in North America, distributing about 50,000 tons of food each year.



...that 17% of American adults trust religious leaders "a great deal" to act in the best interest of the public whereas only 3% trust elected leaders in the same way?

...that the stress and expectations connected with the current pandemic has increased suicidal thoughts in pastors across denominations? Likewise, other research has found that the pandemic hastens pastors to retire early or seek another career.

...that a group of 50 religion scholars from around the world is calling on President Vladimir Putin and his administration to end the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia? The statement of October 1st follows the Center for Studies on New Religions' one-day conference, "Jehovah's Witnesses and Their Opponents: Russia, the West, and Beyond". Among reported recent events is an armed raid of 110 homes of Jehovah's Witnesses in July that the scholars call the "largest number of

coordinated raids on Jehovah's Witnesses in modern Russia". More than 170 Jehovah's Witnesses have reportedly been imprisoned or put in pre-trial detention in Russia since 2017 for practicing their faith. There are an estimated 175,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. They are not recognized as Christian by Orthodox and other Christian traditions, primarily because they do not believe in the Trinity. They also do not salute the flag, bear arms, or participate in politics

Stewardship Musings:

No doubt, looking around our nation these days, many, if not all of us to some degree, have been affected financially by the pandemic. Some have been laid off. Others lost jobs. Everyone's retirement portfolios have shrunk a bit, if not a lot. Add to that the closing of churches for many weeks and the 'hesitant' attendance numbers almost all churches are now experiencing. Most often that translates into smaller offerings. Churches. however, continue to have obligations that must be met whether they have been meeting in their buildings or not. As written in our 'Thank-You' section, we have been blessed that many of our members have been extremely faithful and active in maintaining or even increasing their financial support of Emmanuel Lutheran. Thanks so much for that!! Still, it is always a good reminder to be made aware of some easy Stewardship principles. Here they are!

#1 Remember that God is the owner of everything. And I am the manager, the steward. "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts" (Hag. 2:8). As stewards, we are to be faithful with everything that has been entrusted to us (1 Cor. 4:2; Lk.16:10). Small things. Large matters. All things. In good times. In difficult times.

All is given to us by God

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter 4:10

Everything we have —
Time, Talents, Treasures, Health, Property, Material things, Relationships, Faith – All have been given to us by God.

#2 God deserves first place in our lives. The Old Testament calls this the "first fruits" (Ex 23:9). The wise man advised, "Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the first fruits of all your increase" (Prov. 3:9). This means first giving ourselves to God (2 Cor. 8:4-6). Financially, it is not giving God what is left over, but what we purpose, plan and build our budget around (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

#3 Giving is best done cheerfully, joyfully, and voluntarily. It should not be forced, coerced, or done under any kind of emotional or spiritual duress (2 Cor. 9:7). Most preachers and churches do not want to appear overly concerned about money during these challenging and uncertain times. Yet, the reality is that bills come due. And obligations must be met.



Stewardship deals with our present #4 resources. We all have heard the following: "If I won a million dollars, I would give it to the church." Well, that's not the point. What are you doing now with what you have? Stewardship begins with today. Furthermore, our financial capacity changes; sometimes for the better; at other times for the worse. God does not require us to give what we don't have. We give on the basis of what we do have (2 Cor. 8:12). For those whose income has decreased or even has been eliminated, there is no need to feel guilty about your decreased giving. However, others may be doing as well, or in a few cases even better and can offer up a greater blessing for the common good.



Considering these principles as you think about your own giving pattern based on your purpose and prosperity. Not only does our local work need our financial support, but consider as well our Benevolence Budget which serves the wider community as well as national and global concerns.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Gal. 6:9-10).



Congregational Council Minutes August 11th, 2020

Meeting called to order by: Darren Marsh-President

Attended: Pastor Zamzow, Mark Fredrickson-V President, Marena Henkle-Stewardship, Sandy Thompson-Evangelism, Emi Kuntz-Lay Ministry, Brittany Bartz-Christian Education, Will Bartz-Youth, Sharon Hulshizer, Secretary/Treasurer.

Absent: Michael Cole-Property **Devotions:** Brittany Bartz

Education Segment: Pastor Z gave a report on the NALC Virtual Convocation held on August 7th and 8th. She and Donna Schilling attended. 784 people were registered. The NALC is now 10 years old and has 445 congregations.

Agenda review: $\underline{M/S/C}$ to approve agenda as presented.

Review Printed Minutes: M/S/C to accept minutes as written.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer shared corrections made to fund reporting from the 2019 Annual report and gave an update about working with the ICON system. Report accepted.

Pastor's Report: 1) Vacation days this week will be cut short due to a funeral/next week Pastor Z will take four days for vacation. Council agreed to allow Pastor Z to carry over any unused vacation days from this year to next. 2) 1st Communion and Confirmation still need to be scheduled for this year. 3) Payroll taxes could be withheld and paid out the end of the year, council agreed to leave as is. 4) M/S/C to purchase a gift card for John

Duvall for his labor at the parsonage done without pay.

Board Highlights:

Stewardship- none Lay Ministry- none Evangelism- none

Y& E: Highlights submitted. 5 teachers will not be returning in the fall. Classes may be reduced, but teachers still needed. Sept 13th will be Rally Day, possibly at the park.

In-person classes are planned and will follow the lead of local schools. There will be 8 kids in confirmation this year.

Property- Written report submitted by Michael Cole in his absence. 1) Parsonage bathroomwaiting for cabinetry to be completed. 2) Flooring rep will be coming next week to look at the new flooring and recommend how to fix issues. 3) Kitchen wall repair- still looking into getting a contractor. 4) Furnaces are being checked over. 5) Loose tiles in church need to be looked into.

Membership review: none Unfinished business:

- a) Social Media- Still in progress, Rally Day may be good starting point to use it to boost followers.
 - b) Coronavirus/Worship decisions
 - 1) Discussion of purchasing a camera to use for virtual services and possibly other events.
 - 2) Pew distance: Both sides will use the same distancing now (every other pew.)
 3) Fellowship-will resume on September 20th, serving drinks and using prepackaged items.
- c) Employee Reviews- Sharon and Jeff are both due for review. Existing review forms will be completed by employees. A review date was chosen.

New Business:

a) Internet issues- Pastor Z and Sharon have been having internet issues in the office and had WCTA come and look into it. Will continue to monitor. Other discussion involved the router in the fellowship hall having security and needing a password. WCTA will be contacted about this issue.

Next meeting devotion's preparer: Emi Kuntz Next meeting date and time is Tuesday, September 8th at 7:00 p.m.

M/S/C- Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. -Secretary, Sharon Hulshizer

Treasurer's Report

Financial Balance Information for August 1-31, 2020 General Fund

Beginning Balance: -\$707.69

Interest: \$6.68

Offering Revenues: \$ 10,814.00 E-giving Revenues: \$985.74

Total Revenues: \$11,806.42

Total revenues + Beginning balance: \$11,098.73

Expenses: \$10,221.89

End of month Balance: \$876.84



Our Women of the church have been busy despite COVID ...

In June, 5 quilts were taken to the Women's shelter in Mason City.

School supplies were taken to the Salvation Army in August.

4 Women's personal kits and 4 school kits were delivered to the Women's shelter in August.

In September, Charlotte took 67 school kits to Osage, to be delivered to Decorah for LWR and Clarice took 10 quilts to Our Savior's in Mason City to be picked up by a Bremwood/LSI representative.

Myra Dierks has sewn 100 quilts and delivered 48 to various local places- the Women's shelter, Salvation Army, the VA, and to the Share Shoppe. 52 remain at Emmanuel to be delivered.

"Thank you" to all who participated in the quilting days in September- "Many hands make light work!"



TWC (The Women's Council) September 14, 2020

Sharon shared devotions based on Romans 15:1-6. Each of us should build up our neighbor, to encourage those who need encouraging, as God asks of us to do. Everyone needs encouragement! TWC was opened with the reading of the purpose. Secretary minutes were read and approved from June. Treasurer's report shows \$3,935.04 in checking and \$6,534.53 in savings. Emi needs to be reimbursed for the memorial plates purchased for the Olive Trettin memorial items. Correspondence included thank yous from Pastor Z, the Salvation Army, and Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rochester.

Old business: 1) LWR Projects: Charlotte took 10 boxes of school kits (67 kits) to Osage to be delivered to Decorah for LWR. 5 quilts, 4 personal care kits and 4 school kits were delivered to Northern Alliance homeless shelters. 10 quilts were taken to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Mason City to be delivered to Bremwood in Waverly. Myra Dierks has completed 100 guilts: 25 are here at the church, 24 in the Altar Guild room, 3 hung in the basement, 10 taken to the Women's shelter in Mason City, 10 to Salvation Army, 10 to the VA, and 18 taken to the Share Shoppe. We thank Myra for her dedication. Clarice applied for and received Thrivent funds for the school/personal care kit items. Quilting days are going to be September 21-23rd from 12:30-? Clarice will contact women to help and Sharon will put it in the bulletin. 2) Yearbooks: Ongoing corrections and updating for next year is being done until new ones are printed. . 3) BIble Study: Dates are scheduled and Bible study has begun. 4) Kitchen remodeling project: Two bids have been received. A meeting will be set up with members to review. 5) Fellowship team change: Debby Bublitz would like to step down as unit leader for her team, alternates were discussed.

New business: None.

Upcoming dates: Bible study: September 15th and 28th, October 13th (will need to be changed); October TWC: October 20th at 9 a.m.

Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. Secretary, Sharon Hulshizer

OCTOBER 2020 (All events subject to COVID restrictions)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
October				Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	2	3
4 18th Sunday of Pentecost w/ Holy Communion 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. fellowship 10:40 a.m. Sunday School	5	6	Confirmation 4:30 p.m.	Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	9	10
9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. fellowship 10:40 a.m. Sunday School	PEW SISTERS Bible Study 10 a.m./7 p.m.	Church Council 7:00 p.m.	Confirmation 4:30 p.m.	Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	16	17
18 20th Sunday of Pentecost 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Service-led by our live Worship band! 10:30 a.m. fellowship 10:40 a.m. Sunday School	19	TWC (The Women's Council) 9:00 a.m.	Confirmation 4:30 p.m.	Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	23	24
9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. fellowship 10:40 a.m. Sunday School	PEW SISTERS Bible Study 10 a.m./7 p.m.	27	28 Confirmation 4:30 p.m.	Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	30	31 Halloween

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October 2020



Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Pastor Solveig A.H. Zamzow 641-748-2736

308 4th Avenue PO Box 282 Grafton, Iowa 50440

Address Service Requested

May	<u>Acolytes</u>	Greeters	<u>Organist</u>
Sunday October 4 th	Zach Badker	Jerry & Joy Buechele	Marena Henkle
Sunday, October 11 th	Jaxson Edwards	Sara Buechele	Donna Schilling
Sunday, October 18 th Contemporary Worship	Aundraya Paulson	Pat Clark & Family	Charlotte Cole
Sunday, October 25 th	Brooklyn Hackbart	Michael & Nicole Cole	Charlotte Cole

Hospitality Team I: Leader: Lori & Darren Marsh

Ushers: Curt Schaub, Darren Marsh, Cody Marsh, Jon Badker, Zach Badker, and Neil Hackbart

Altar Guild: Lisa Bartz

PA Operators: Randy Hulshizer and Gary Schotanus

<u>Lay Ministry:</u> Janice Nelson <u>Share Shoppe:</u> Myra Dierks

Counters: Lori & Darren Marsh, Laurie Nack Bublitz, and Kim Badker



