

EMMANUEL'S EPISTLE

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
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DECEMBER 2020

**SPONSORED BY
Merlin & Lisa Bartz**

FROM THE PASTOR

Waiting for and receiving THE gift

Somewhere in my 'stuff' I found the Advent prayer printed below. I cannot give credit to the author as I do not know who it is. Therefore, I am sending it to you with my best blessings and prayers for this season of anticipation and reflection that began on November 29th and leads us into the celebration of the birth of Christ.



This Advent Season is so full, so crammed with human emotions – the wondering anticipation of little children, the joy and anxiety of parents, the grinding loneliness of those far from family and home, the glimmering hope of all who find the meaning of their life laid in a humble manger, the weariness and despair of those who cannot believe the old, old story and thus see only the false and ugly aspects of our celebration.

Break in–break in to all our lives this day, Lord Jesus. Come to us as you came long ago, in gentleness and tender vulnerability.

Evoke in all of us that love which alone can save us, and through us save your world. In this season of giving and receiving, we pause a moment to recall the gifts you bless us with at Christmas.

We thank you for you snow, coming down like a quilt upon our busy world and quieting us, slowing us down, compelling us willy–nilly to take time to be with ourselves.



For your stars, we bless your name, Frosting so bright by these December nights, lifting up our eyes, raising our heads, signaling across the centuries, the vastness, the infinity, the sheer and splendid glory of your creation.

For your birds, we are grateful, companying with us through the winter, brightening the grays and whites of our landscape with flashing reds and blues, rich brown and blacks reminding us of springtime, of birdsong, of nesting, and of summer suns.

For your trees and bushes we return our thanks; for the fragrant, lively evergreens – balsam and fir, spruce, hemlock and pine, and bitter, red and glossy holly; primeval trees that know the depth of winter, have learned to live with grace amid the cold.



For children, O God, we bless you; young lives that call us back into our truest selves, blessing us with their wonder, their games and songs, their curiosity, their needs so simply satisfied after all – a candy cane, a coloring book, a kiss.

And for the child of Bethlehem, your Word made flesh, your love alive and mingled with us, rejoicing in our waiting hearts this season through each and every one of these your gifts.

For all these gifts we bring our thanks, and add a prayer for those whose blessings have been hard to find, whose joys tend to be few and far between, asking that somehow we might be a blessing to them in the name and for the joy of the babe in the manger. Amen



I was one of those children who did not get too anxious about Christmas gifts – don't ask me why; I just wasn't. I was much antsy to get to Christmas Eve with our family traditions: my dad decorating the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve (!) with the living room door tightly locked while my mom would make delicious potato salad that we would enjoy with the best wieners my parents' meager funds could buy.

After Christmas Eve worship service and supper the living room door would be opened and there was the tree in all of its splendor (real candles) – and some gifts, of course. Truth be told: I cannot with any amount of certainty recall many specific gifts. I know one Christmas, when I was quite young, I got "Petra" my all-time favorite and beloved doll and a few years later a doll house including pots and pans for my little kitchen. Other than that: beats me!

Don't get me wrong: there always were gifts for me under the tree until I was in College and my father died. By then I was the one who made sure there were gifts for my mother and my much younger brother.



As a wife and mother I do recall some gifts we gave to our sons and some we received. And while we usually would fret and worry about what to buy and always are extremely appreciate for all we receive (our sons are kind and generous toward us), with each passing year I just know that the memory of certain gifts will fade and one of us will say: Now, when and where did we get THAT? Maybe this does not sound at all like your household – good for you! ☺

I do, however, try my best not to forget the gift that comes at Christmas and keeps on giving: Emmanuel, God with us. Of course, I am only more or less successful. This begs the question how well all of us try to remember that special gift. No, I do not sit in my office or in front of my TV, constantly pondering or admiring how great a gift we have been given.

Yet, when all of the Christmas gifts are used, forgotten, discarded or have fallen into obscurity (Now, when and where did we get THAT?), Emmanuel remains with us. Even if we cannot remember or dismissively disregard what we have been given, God does not forget. God keeps His promise to be with us in Jesus Christ.



Take a moment during this time we call Advent and reflect on your life and where you see that God has indeed been that gift that keeps on giving – can you tell Emmanuel was and is with you? Do not worry that this will change any time soon. God has made his dwelling place in our world and in our hearts for good. What a gift!



From our house to yours a very Merry Christmas to each of you and those you love. In the midst of chaos, despair, illness and countless struggles we are coming to this festive season, I pray, with the clear recognition that Emmanuel, God in flesh, is indeed with us.



With great fondness and truly best wishes – Pastor Solveig Zamzow +



Join us on December 13th at 9:30 am for a worship service with our small but mighty band. The Council has designated one Sunday in November and December for a service with contemporary music. Bring the kids, grandma and your friends! See you then!



We will observe Advent with four Wednesday evening services – all of them will be **virtually only!**

There will be no in-person gathering. These services will replace Pastor's mid-week devotions for the month of December. The services will be available for electronic viewing on **Wednesdays, December 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd beginning at 6:30 pm.**



In anticipation that Covid-19 will still be a concern in our wider community and/or for a good number of our member households, we have decided to offer three Christmas Eve services. The services will be identical.

The times are 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm, and 10:00 pm.

You can sign up for the time slot you/your family wishes to attend by using the sign-up sheets on the round table in the entry, calling the office, or emailing Pastor at Pastorz@wctatel.net. We will restrict each time slot to approximately 100 persons. **It will be important that you indicate how many persons will attend. Example: John and Jane Doe – 7 persons total.** Of course, we recognize last minute changes may occur. Still, we ask that everyone will honor this plan as much as absolutely possible. We will stream one of the services on Facebook and our website; it will be **accessible starting at 8:30 pm on Christmas Eve.**



The service for this festive day will take place in-person at our regular worship time, 9:30 am. This will be a Holy Communion service and it will **not be streamed virtually!**

Joys and Sorrows

Our Condolences... to Dale Schultz on the loss of his sister Arlene's son, Roy Sletten, age 57, from Lake Mills, who died of COVID 19 on November 8th. May God comfort all who mourn.



...to the family of Olga Borchardt who passed away in the early morning hours of November 9th. May God comfort all who love and miss her and may her memory be blessed.
...to Ardis Hanson who mourns the death of her sister, Lillian Loland.

...to the family of Patsy Schotanus, who grieve after her death. May God comfort them.

We remember... the loved ones of all Covid-19 victims and those who lost dear family members and friends for reasons other than those who get so much of our rightful attention during these pandemic days. May God comfort and strengthen all sad hearts and may the promise of the Resurrection shine brightly into the lives of all mourners near and far.

Thank You Stewards

...to Will Bartz and Marena Henkle who continue to provide us with virtual services and Pastor's Facebook devotions.

...to our organists, Charlotte Cole, Donna Schilling and Marena Henkle for their faithful service and special prelude music.

...to the November Hospitality Team led by Clarice Bartz. (In mid-November, our Church Council made a decision to discontinue fellowship for now.)

...to our November counters: Dan Nack, Jason Hackbart, and Marlin Rosenberg.

...to Emi Kuntz and Val Bork, our Altar Guild stewards last month.

...to our November PA operators, Dan Nack and Josh Rosenberg

...to our Ushers for the last month: Paul Hackbart, Garry Backhaus, Duaine Dierks, and Marlin Rosenberg.

...to Emi Kuntz for serving as our Lay ministry steward for November.

...to Carol & Linda Koschmeder for the lovely Thanksgiving display and to Linda for helping us many times putting up banners.

...to Candi Feldt for once again donating two advent wreaths for our Advent observance.

Thank You Emmanuel

...to Pastor Z for her visits and communion

—Gene & Betty Rosenberg

...to all who gave memorials in Ellen's name

—the family of Ellen Glassel

...for all the cards and get well wishes I received after my recent hospitalization. It means a lot to live in such a caring community.

—Lisa Bartz



We are making plans to share with you:

"Just a little Christmas".

Come and hear the story told by our youngest followers of the Baby Jesus!

**On Sunday,
December 20th
during Worship!**

A message from our SS sponsored child, Lawrence:
2/9/2020 (Sept 9)

Dear Sponsor,

It is my great pleasure to write for you this letter hoping that you are good in the United States. Here in Kenya, me together with my family, we are doing fine and good.

I am so sad to inform you that since the corona pandemic began, we have been staying at home because schools were closed. How we pray that God is still fighting for us and we are grateful the number of victims is still going down.

My only prayer is that God protects you from the virus and grant you good health as well as your entire family.

Be blessed where you are and may he expand your territories forever.

Yours loving friend,
Lawrence Emojong



Did you know...

...that we will start up our **Noisy Offering** again? In keeping with CDC guidelines we will not ask the children to go through the pews with their little buckets. However, we will have a Noisy Offering bucket standing in the narthex. Please bring along your coins, if you so choose, and we will add them to our **Campership Fund** for our kids to attend Summer Bible Camp. Thank you for making this important event in the lives of our young people possible.



\$1,500 of our total **Christmas** offering will be routed to our **Benevolence Fund**. This decision comes to you via our Stewardship Committee.

STEWARDSHIP MUSINGS

O Tannenbaum – For many years we have had the same conversation at our house: real or fake – the Christmas tree that is. So far, I have ‘won’ and all of our trees have been live/natural/real. Although, over the years our trees have gotten much smaller and I agreed to decrease the size of the 2020 tree even more. I also indicated my willingness that perhaps this is indeed the last year before I just might be ready to make a trip downtown and look for a fake rendition of this beloved holiday tradition.



There was even a time when I thought we should start a Christmas tree farm. Michael has experience working on one and knows how to trim those little evergreens just the right way so they grow up straight without countless ‘tops’. Well, that looked like too much work, upon further study!

Land is a finite resource, so Christmas tree growers are careful to protect our natural environment. To minimize resource degradation, many use the latest proven scientific methods of field preparation, planting and fertilizer/herbicide application. I read of a farm where trees are harvested using helicopters to assure product freshness with minimal environmental impact. The farm-grown tree is a renewable resource that is environmentally superior to oil based (plastic) artificial trees, they say. Natural trees decompose in landfills and quickly replenish soil nutrients rather than release toxins for a period of years. Trees can be recycled into mulch for gardens after Christmas. Besides, the smell of a ‘real tree’ still is pleasurable for most noses – short of folks who are allergic, of course. But, indeed, there are many circumstances when and where we need to decide that an artificial tree must be our choice. Nowadays there are wonderful ‘fake’ trees to be purchased and I have been fooled more than once to think a tree was ‘live’ when it was not.



The tradition of Christmas trees goes all the way back to 16th century Germany. Legend has it that Martin Luther himself was the one who first carried a tree into his house and put lights on it. Like I said: legend has it.

Wherever we land with our preference or whatever background story we wish to follow, the green branches of the Christmas tree always remind us of life. The candles, for those of us who follow Christ, certainly give credence to the Lord being the light that dispels all darkness. The ornaments we place on our trees show the love and connections we have in our personal lives and families. We hang a special ornament for each of our grandchildren on our tree each Christmas – depicting what was special and important for the child during the outgoing year.



You see, the Christmas tree is not without its relation to our Stewardship. Whether we look at it from an environmental standpoint by buying ‘real’ trees or whether we reflect on how the love and care of our steadfast God works in our lives. Either way: we are reminded that we are to be good stewards, careful managers of what God has given to us. Enjoy your tree – no matter where and how you get it. It will bring the sparkle of divine love into your life once again.

And speaking of Stewardship: Thank you to all who have faithfully continued to bring in their offerings. Even with diminished numbers in worship and a period of virtual services only, the members of Emmanuel have been truly fantastic in supporting our ministry. Thank you for making sure that Emmanuel will be well and strong as we look forward to an end of the pandemic and a renewed opportunity for worship and fellowship together. Thank you for your generosity and support of the Kingdom of God in this time and place.



The last day to make a financial contribution to Emmanuel and have it recorded on your 2020

statement is Wednesday, December 30th at noon. Any funds received thereafter will be acknowledged on your 2021 statement. If this statement is important for your tax preparation, please be sure to observe the deadline as the Bank has a deadline for us to process funds. Thank you.

New offering envelopes have been ordered for 2021 and will be available to pick up by Christmas Eve.



If you are the chair of a standing Committee or Auxiliary or have financial reports to present at our Annual Meeting in January, please be sure to have your

information in the church office not later than January 11th as the Meeting will be on January 31st. If you are able to forward it to us in electronic form, we would very much appreciate that effort. Please keep in mind if you submit it electronically, to use a format that Sharon can manipulate—so do not send in PDF form. You may send it as an attachment or in a Word format. If you have questions as to what needs to be reported, feel free to ask Pastor or Sharon for a sample of a previous report. We do ask that you oblige by the deadline. Thank you so much!



Church Council Minutes
October 13th, 2020

Meeting called to order by: Darren Marsh–President

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

Absent: Michael Cole–Property, Emi Kuntz–Lay Ministry

Devotions: Sandy Thompson

Education Segment: “A Peculiar Approach to the Pandemic”, written by Bishop Dan Selbo

Agenda review: M/S/C to approve agenda as amended: under Old Business: b) Social Media and under New Business: a) Nominating Committee and b) Annual meeting date.

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

Treasurer’s Report: PPP Loan forgiveness papers have been submitted, waiting for approval. Treasurer’s report accepted.

Pastor’s Report: 1) Copy machine is being paid for monthly with the payment schedule through 2023, a suggestion to make a larger payment towards the payoff at sometime. 2) Pastor has been very busy with preparing and printing sermons, mid-week devotionals, taping Facebook devotionals and teaching a zoom class on life as a Lutheran in the Midwest. 3) The parsonage front lawn on the North side has been sustaining damage from the squirrels and could use reseeding of grass. 4) Building concerns for the church—there are a number of items needing addressed.

Board Highlights:

Stewardship–Written report submitted. The Board met on October 8th and discussed Current Estate interest, the food bank fund, and benevolence. There will be less in benevolence to distribute this year, but 20% will be given to 5 entities, after the NALC commitment is honored. Thanksgiving offering

will go to benevolence and the first \$1500 of Christmas offering will be designated to benevolence as well, the remaining designated for the General Fund. Mission Fest will be on November 8th, with Jo Hafferman from the Caring Pregnancy Center as our guest speaker. There will be no potluck this year.

Lay Ministry–will be meeting on the 15th.

Evangelism–none

Y&E: SS is going well.

Property–Written report submitted: 1) The flooring company has come to re-glue the tiles in the ed unit which were not sticking and most remain attached. 2) Kitchen wall repair: Kenison Construction has submitted a bid to repair the skim coating on the kitchen wall. Since no other company has contacted the property board or come to look at the project, they recommend hiring Kenison. **M/S/C to follow the Property Board recommendations.**

Membership review: none

Unfinished business:

- a) Coronavirus/Worship decisions
 - 1) Discussion of re-opening the nursery for nursing mothers and those with young children. Members will look into a privacy curtain or blinds for the window.
 - 2) All hymnals will be put back into the pews.

New Business:

- a) Nominating committee: Members are Albert Ralph, Liz Backhaus, Teri Sorenson, and Ardis Hanson.
- b) Date for Annual Meeting: Sunday, January 31st, 2021 has been chosen with February 7th as a snow date.

Next meeting devotion’s preparer: Darren Marsh
Next meeting date and time is Tuesday, November 10th at 7:00 p.m.

M/S/C–Meeting adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer.

–Secretary, Sharon Hulshizer

Electronic Meeting Minutes
Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council
October 2020

On October 20th, 2020, the Church Council unanimously passed a vote to accept, without change, the recommendation of the Lay Ministry Committee and Pastor Zamzow regarding services for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas.

–Secretary, Sharon Hulshizer

**Financial Balance Information for
October 1-31, 2020
General Fund**

Beginning Balance: \$3,316.64

Interest: \$7.08

Offering Revenues: \$14,503.33

E-giving Revenues: \$1,473.87

Total Revenues: \$15,984.28

Total revenues + Beg balance: \$19,300.92

Expenses: \$11,962.81

End of month Balance: \$7,338.11

Women's Ministry

TWC (The Women's Council)

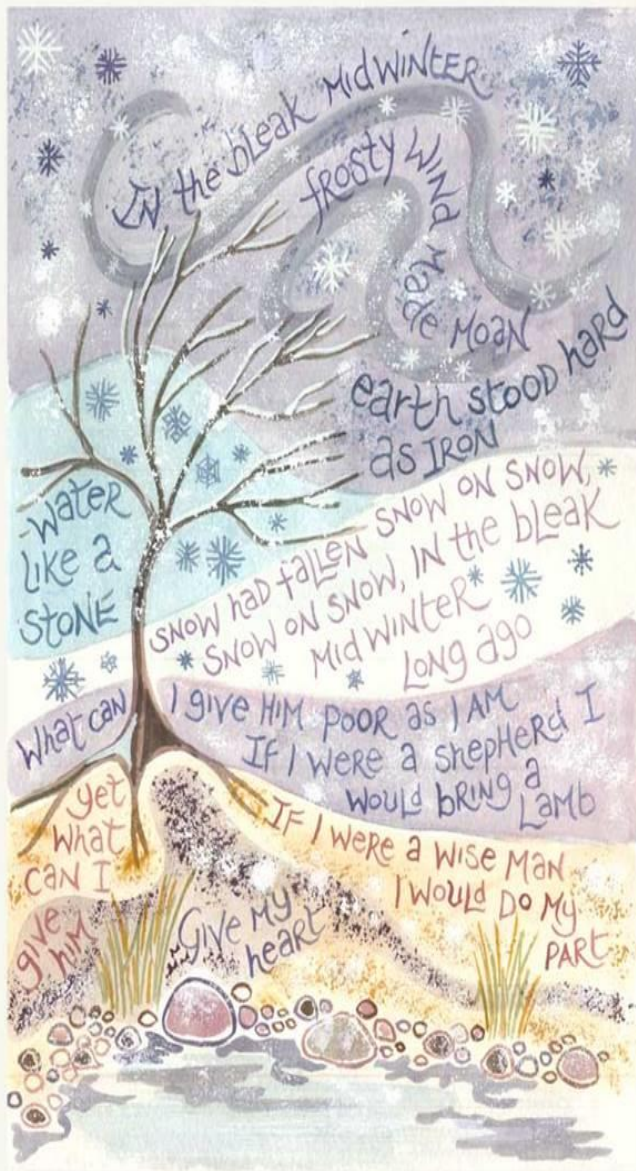
November 17, 2020

Charlotte opened with devotions based on Genesis 8:15 and titled, Harvest and Thanksgiving. Moses was told by God to celebrate the harvest and even now, we realize that without God's great design for us, we would have nothing to celebrate. TWC opened with the reading of the purpose statement. Secretary's minutes were read and approved from October. Treasurer's verbal report shared no changes in the Savings account and \$4,312.16 in checking. There are a few outstanding bills yet to be paid. Correspondence included Thank you's from both the Decorah and Mason City organizers that shipped our items to LWR. **M/S/C to send \$25 to the Decorah trucking organization for taking the LWR items in September.**


Old Business: 1) LWR Projects: Quilting days will be determined as needed, most likely after the first of the year. Clarice will be taking some quilts to One Vision. 2) Yearbooks: will be printed for distribution next month for those interested in having one. 3) Bible Study: the final one will be on November 23rd for this year and we will re-evaluate after the first of the year whether to continue or not. 4) Kitchen Remodeling Project: Sam Venchuk met with the Kitchen Committee to discuss the option of replacing one set of double sinks in the new island with one larger and deeper sink. The committee will look into pricing of sinks, faucets, and other items needed for the remodeling project. They will also talk with the Property Committee about how to proceed to make sure all areas of remodeling are covered in the grant application in the spring. 5) Fellowship Team V: a replacement unit leader has been found for this team and we thank Teresa Sorenson for being willing to head this. 6) Love/Thankoffering: will continue to be collected through November and used for budgetary commitments and end of the year distributions. 7) Soup Supper: a date of February 7th has been tentatively set and discussion was held about an alternative to not being able to have it in person.

New Business: LRH Christmas Gifts: Charlotte will contact Mavis Stevens to see how LRH is handling this for the upcoming Christmas season. Upcoming dates: Bible Study: Monday, November 23rd at 10:00 a.m.; December TWC: Tuesday, December 15th at 9:00 a.m. Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

-Secretary, Sharon Hulshizer



DECEMBER 2020 (All events subject to Covid restrictions)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 1 st Sunday of Advent 	30 	1  December issue Coming soon...	2 <u>Confirmation</u> 4:30 p.m. <u>Advent Service</u> (virtual) 6:30 p.m.	3 Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	4 	5 
6 2 nd Sunday of Advent 9:30 Worship with Holy Communion 10:40 Sunday School	7 	8 Church Council 6:00 p.m.	9 <u>Confirmation</u> 4:30 p.m. <u>Advent Service</u> (virtual) 6:30 p.m.	10 Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	11 	12 
13 3 rd Sunday of Advent Contemporary Service w/band 9:30 Worship 10:40 Sunday School	14 	15 TWC (The Women's Council) 9:00 a.m.	16 <u>Confirmation</u> 4:30 p.m. <u>Advent Service</u> (virtual) 6:30 p.m.	17 Bible Study 9:30 a.m.	18 	19 
20 4 th Sunday of Advent "Just a Little Christmas" Children's Program 9:30 Worship (SS Program) No Sunday School	21 	22 	23 <u>No Confirmation</u> <u>Advent Service</u> (virtual) 6:30 p.m.	24 Christmas Eve Services 4 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m. (Online by 8:30 pm)	25 Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion 9:30 a.m. (No virtual service)	26 
27 1 st Sunday of Christmas 9:30 Worship No Sunday School	28 	29 	30  No Confirmation	31  No Bible Study	1 New Year's Day 	2 

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December 2020

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

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Address Service Requested

<u>November</u>	<u>Acolytes</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Organist</u>
Sunday, December 6th <i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i>	Weston Paulson	Jane Dalluge	Marena Henkle
Sunday, December 13th <i>Contemporary Service</i>	Emma Hicken	*****	Donna Schilling
Sunday, December 20th <i>SS Christmas Program</i>	Ryan Cole	Larry Diedrich	Charlotte Cole
Christmas Eve Services <i>4pm, 6 pm, & 10 pm</i>	TBA	*****	Marena Henkle
Christmas Day Service <i>With Holy Communion</i>	Zach Badker	*****	Charlotte Cole
Sunday, December 27th <i>1st Sunday of Christmas</i>	Jaxon Edwards	Duaine & Myra Dierks	Donna Schilling

No Fellowship after worship

Counters: Connie Rosenberg, Belinda Borchardt, and Michael Cole

Ushers: Michael Cole, Dave & Candi Feldt, Cole Feldt, and Corrie Kuntz

Altar Guild: Candi Feldt

PA Operator: Darren Marsh

Lay Ministry: Lisa Bartz

