

Welcome to worship! We welcome you in Christ's name and are glad you can share this time with us. *Today is the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany.*

As you may notice...the bulletin is from last **Sunday, January 14th**. Since we did not have service due to weather, we chose to reuse the bulletin and keep the service the same, with Holy Communion scheduled and Pastor's sermon based on all of the readings. **Landon Hillman** is the acolyte this morning. **This insert has the latest schedule of events and announcements.** (and Sharon appreciated having the extra time to work on the Annual Report!)

Noisy offering...will be collected today.

We now offer...gluten free communion wafers. They are individually packaged for convenience. If you need one, please let the usher know as you enter the altar area and they can give it to you to carry in before kneeling to receive communion.

Our Annual Meeting...is today, following worship, in the Fellowship Hall. Please come down, grab a cup of coffee and a snack and join us in our discussion of the last year and the coming one. Those that are being nominated and those that will continue serving on the various boards are encouraged to attend and meet afterwards briefly, to choose a chairperson and Council representative. **Copies of the resolution to establish bylaws for the Endowment Fund...** of Emmanuel Lutheran Church are available on the table in the narthex. We will be voting on approving this during the meeting. **Copies of the Grafton Cemetery Financial report for 2023...**are available in the narthex and will be distributed prior to the meeting.

End of the year financial statements...can be found in your bulletin boxes. For any questions, please contact Belinda Borchardt. We thank her for her service as financial recording secretary.

Thank you very much...for the most generous Christmas gift. It was greatly appreciated!
- Charlotte Cole

For Pastoral Care... please contact Pastor Weeg at 641-381-0675 or the church office or Sharon Hulshizer at 641-425-7775.

The following is the pastoral report for Annual report, provided by Pastor Weeg:

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of my majors at St. Olaf in the late 60's was history. The older I get the more I appreciate the value of historical knowledge. In the present, phrases such as "History repeats itself" and "There's nothing new under the sun" continue to be universal truths. The broader our historical context, the better able we are to understand our present age in both Church and state. And the better we understand our present age historically, the better equipped we are to act wisely.

In 1883, Immanuel Lutheran was founded in Grafton, Iowa. Not long after, the spelling was changed to Emmanuel. It became part of the Iowa Synod, a product of mergers with the Ohio Synod, Texas Synod and others. By 1897 Church records show 708 "souls" affiliated with Emmanuel. This number was broken down as 110 "members" defined as males, 14 years and older, confirmed and therefore allowed to vote. There were 406 communicants, which included women and children. If numbers are crunched correctly, there were 192 children!

In 1930 the Iowa Synod merged with more German synods to form the ALC. In 1960 the ELC was formed when "a bunch of Norwegian" synods joined. In 1987 Emmanuel became part of the ELCA when "a bunch of Swedish & English synods merged." Now, since 2011, Emmanuel is part of the North American Lutheran Church, the NALC. This is the first time in history we have split off rather than merged.

For several generations, it was said of Lutherans that we were good at "merging". No more, sadly. I wrote a dear sister-in-law, who is a very devout orthodox Catholic, in angst over her deep dismay with the present state of the Papacy. I wrote her that "I empathize with you Catholics in that you can't separate yourselves and start fresh like we protestants can and do (albeit not without some difficulties)."

Back to history! . . . In 1936 the Depression was on; 1935 - 1936 experienced a heat wave that frequently registered 110 degrees through the summer months. Not all of Iowa was spared the effects of the Dust Bowl. Small drifts of soil would daily accumulate in farm homes blown through cracks in doors and windows. It was the worst draught ever recorded in Iowa. Most crops dried up and many animals died of starvation and dehydration. Many farmers had the ability to raise and grow most all of their food and store it, unlike city people. However, taxes still had to be paid. With little cash, many farms were lost.

Ironically, 1936 - 1937 was described as the winter of "one long blizzard". The snow drifts were 10 to 15 feet high. Rail lines were often impassable. So many homes, rural and town, heated only a few rooms with rationed coal supplies. YET! . . . YET! . . . YET! . . . in those days our present-day sanctuary was built and dedicated! Deuteronomy 31:8 comes to mind. "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." This is Moses's word to Joshua, who will be given the task of leading Israel into the promised land which historical forces had kept them from for 400 years.

Moses's words still ring true for God's Son's body, the Church Universal, and each local expression of it, such as Emmanuel. There are all kinds of hopeful signs here: strong attendance, a growing Sunday School, new families, healthy stewardship, growing numbers of lay-led ministry, respect for our Creator and Redeemer reflected in continued efforts to maintain and restore our sanctuary and facilities . . . (In reference to the last part of my previous statement, we have some ceiling tile issues. I thought, out loud, that we may have a new "line" to share about our church . . . "Join us in Christ at Emmanuel where you will always be encouraged to look up!")

*During this "between-pastors time", look up in faith. "Do not fear or be dismayed." Our world, our nation, our Church, have gone through many tumultuous times. YET! . . . YET! . . . YET! . . . here we are . . . here is our Lord and God. Here we will always be until the Lord comes again on the day of the Resurrection, in all His glory, and the promised new Heavens and new Earth is begun!! In Christ, your Part-Time Interim Pastor, for the future Full-Time Interim Pastor, for the future Full-Time Called Pastor, **Pastor Warren Paul Weeg***

This Week at Emmanuel January 22nd-28th

Tuesday, 9 a.m. TWC (The Women's Council)	Wednesday: 1 p.m. Connection group
Sunday, Jan 28 th 9:30 Worship	4:30 p.m. Confirmation
10:40 Fellowship/SS	5:30-7 p.m. AWANA club