

Prayer Guide and Devotion Book



IN ALL GENERATIONS

Weekly prayer suggestions for



October 18-24:

Dear Father God, may this school building serve as a beacon of Light to all who attend. Amen.

October 25-31:

Heavenly Father, may there not only be physical growth in this building but also spiritual growth. Amen.

November 1-7:

Lord, bless the families whose loved one is working tirelessly on the details of the school. Amen.

November 8-14:

Gracious Father, refresh and give the team members strength to pursue their calling. Amen.

November 15-21:

Dear Lord, keep us mindful of the need to be in the Word and to share Your Good News to our household. Amen.

November 22-28:

Heavenly Father, we bring our offerings of time, talents and money as gratitude for all You have given us. Amen.

November 29-December 5:

Heavenly Father, we communicate with You in prayer, let our communication with members of our congregation be pleasing to You. Amen.

December 6-12:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, enable us to shine your light today that others will see Your glory. Amen.

December 13-19:

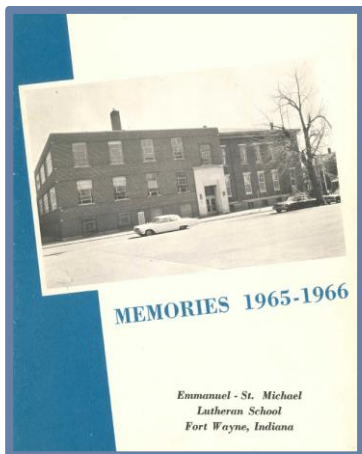
Father God, You have no greater joy than to know that Your children walk Your truth. Help us to walk in Your truth. Amen.

December 20-26:

Lord, we thank You that we have the special purpose from You as we age to proclaim Your message of salvation to the next generation. Amen.

IN ALL GENERATIONS

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Psalm 90:1



Bringing this campaign theme “IN ALL GENERATIONS” to life takes all sorts of words and pictures. And one way that our leaders have sought to animate this campaign is through pictures and memories from past yearbooks. While not everyone of us may know the people in every picture, we do know the school that stands behind them, Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School. Even though the building has changed through the years, the God at work within those walls remains the same.

The way we look at the names from the yearbooks of this school down through the years actually gives a great lens for how we see those lists of genealogies in the Bible. While these lists of generations might be some of the hardest parts of the Bible to read, the truth is that these are the Bible’s yearbooks! We might not recognize all the people listed, but that doesn’t change the fact that they existed. While their settings and experiences might be different from ours, the God who stood before and behind them, is the same God who is with us now, Emmanuel.

Whether we’re looking at ESM’s yearbooks or the genealogies of the Bible, these are people for whom Jesus died and rose. They are people whom God has sought to make a part of His Story, His everlasting yearbook, desiring to inscribe them on the palms of His hands, into His Book of Life. There is great comfort here, knowing that unlike us, our God doesn’t struggle to remember His people as the years go by. For the sake of Jesus, He remembers His people, stands before and behind them, and because of Jesus, that most definitely includes us, as well!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for remembering us in Your kingdom. Use us to show others that You remember them as well. Amen.

Pastor Dan Sheaffer

“Always and Forever”



“...from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.” Psalm 90:2

Psalm 90 is a prayer to the everlasting God to have compassion on his servants. “The psalm does not name any specific event or crisis, so this psalm is suited for any time of lament, when the frailty of life stands in stark contrast to God’s eternal strength” (The Lutheran Study Bible, pg. 935).

Moses begins this psalm with an admission of God’s greatness and

consistency. God created time and stands outside it. From eternity, He will continue to watch over His people forever. God has called the world into existence and is our dwelling place. The living God sees and is with us at all times.

In our everlasting, mighty God, the congregation of the Lord is secure. This is reflected in the title of our capital campaign which is “In All Generations.”

The mission statement of our school is, “Emmanuel - St. Michael exists to nurture children in Christian faith within the context of sound academic instruction and to reflect Christ in all relationships.” It has long been recognized that Lutheran Schools are the most effective means of nurturing children. Here, the living and timeless Word of God is shared on a daily basis. It is an education for eternity.

We commit ourselves to the support of this educational agency at each baptism in the baptismal liturgy which says, “Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as members of the faith community into which _____ will be Baptized, do you promise through the mission and ministry activities of this congregation, to provide _____ and (his/her) family with the support necessary to nurture (his/her) in (his/her) Baptismal faith. If so please answer, ‘Yes, by the power of the Holy Spirit.’”

We answer, “Yes, by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

This same Holy Spirit is also with us as we do our part to fulfill the promise we make at each baptism in our congregation. It is the same Holy Spirit who will also be with us to open our hearts and treasures to support the renovation, improvement and maintenance of our Emmanuel-St. Michael school campus.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for Your constant presence in our lives. Help us to see the treasure we have in our midst in ESM. Guide us by Your Holy Spirit to respond to the needs of our school campus with generous hearts and treasures. Amen.

Rev. Gene Brunow

"Teach These Words to Your Children"



"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." Deuteronomy 6:6-7

One of my most vivid memories of my Lutheran school education occurred in first grade. Just after Thanksgiving, two artistic eighth grade girls came to our classroom and took over most of the room's blackboards to draw the story of Christ's birth in chalk. One scene showed Mary and Joseph coming to Bethlehem. Another was a depiction of Mary and Joseph with Jesus in the manger. A third scene showed the

angels and the shepherds, and the fourth drawing featured the Wise Men and their gifts. We first-graders were allowed, with careful supervision, to fill in the outlined drawings with the appropriate colors. For me, that was the time when I really saw and took in the full story of Jesus' birth.

This is what a Lutheran school education is all about: the teaching of God's Word about Jesus to the next generations - children and grandchildren and more. Of course, telling children about Jesus always begins at home with the parents, but the Lutheran school is a crucial and important part of this instruction.

Christian Stewardship can be defined as "the careful and conscientious management of all God's blessings." The greatest blessing God gives us is our children. But this wonderful blessing comes with a command. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses addresses the Israelites after he had restated the Ten Commandments to them: "...these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children..."

Our Lutheran school exists for two purposes. One is to diligently teach our children about God's love for them in Christ. The second is to educate and prepare them to take their place in the world as Christian adults, fully using all the gifts and talents God has given them. Both are to glorify God.

You and I, whether we are parents, grandparents, or brothers or sisters of the Body of Christ, have a vital part in the ongoing ministry of our Lutheran school. God calls us to ensure that the work of educating our children in the way of the Lord continues. He calls us to assure that this ministry is well-equipped and provisioned so that our children can be Christian leaders in their future families, careers and in society. The good news is that this is what is happening now at Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School. As God's people, our joyous privilege is to continue this education ministry by providing all the resources needed for this holy task. Our God will bless us and our children in this work. All glory be to God!

Prayer: Dear Father who has taught us all things and given us life in Your Son Jesus, lead us to teach our children in all knowledge and wisdom according to Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Rev. Manfred Fremder

“Passing Our Faith to the Next Generation”



“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.” 2 Timothy 1:5

We like to pass down our treasured family heirlooms to the next generation. Perhaps it is a family Bible from our grandparents, a valuable piece of jewelry, coins, stamps, clothing, furniture – all these earthly treasures mean something to us so we take great care to pass them along to the next generation. We want these pieces of family history to provide great memories for the next generation.

What about our Christian faith? Do we have plans to pass that on to the next generation? Certainly, we do this by raising our children within the church. We bring them to the services of God’s house, take them to Sunday

School, read the Bible to them, pray with them and have family devotions. All these are great ways to pass on the Christian faith to our children and grandchildren. Part of this passing down of the Christian faith could also include Christian day school – maybe even Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School. Having our children and grandchildren attend a Lutheran school enables them to be exposed to the Christian faith every day through their teachers, friends and Christian learning materials.

Often the Christian faith is propagated not so much by an academic enterprise as it is by the Christian character and example provided by those we look up to as leaders and guides. In 2 Timothy 1:5, the apostle Paul connects the dots of how Timothy’s faith in Christ was passed down from his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. Paul, of course, is not leaving out the necessary work of the Holy Spirit who uses God’s Word and Holy Sacraments to create and sustain faith. But he does make the case that godly people tend to have their faith “rub off” on those around them, especially young children entrusted to their care.

Certainly, this is a valuable lesson for Christian parents and grandparents to learn when dealing with the next generation of the family. However, it is also a good thing for a congregation to remember this when it comes time to look at the valuable work that a Christian school does on behalf of the church. Lutheran school teachers provide a Christian environment where their faith can “rub off” onto the children in their care. Providing the proper school space and good instructional environment for those teachers to do their job is an excellent way to keep the Christian faith continuing on for the next generation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to teach the way of salvation to the people of this world, enable us to provide ways for Lutheran school teachers to pass on the Christian faith to the students of our school. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Rev. Mark C. Sheafer

“No Handles”

“Just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

2 Corinthians 8:7

Fifty years ago, the camp where I served as director launched a capital campaign to expand the camp’s facilities. A board member volunteered to speak at my church to encourage member participation in the fund-raising effort. He was a salt-of-the-earth farmer who knew the meaning of hard work and was a deeply committed man of God.

The appointed Sunday came for him to address the congregation, and he began by proclaiming, “If God had meant for us to hold onto our money, He would have created it with handles.” This comment brought chuckles from the congregation, but he made the point.

All we have comes from God. He asks us to be stewards of the resources He has given and to use them, including our finances, to build His Kingdom, reaching children and adults with the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Over the past century and a half, many are now in heaven and many souls are currently being readied for heaven through the ministry of Emmanuel and Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School.

As we embark on the extension of our physical school facilities, let’s unite to give joyfully of our resources to this effort. We remember with thanksgiving our Savior’s sacrifice for our sins. St. Paul tells us, “For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Prayer: Dear Lord, You have given us a ministry of the building of Your Kingdom through our church and school. Bless the continuing efforts of our congregation to reach and teach the saving message of the Gospel to many youth and families. You have blessed us to provide for the Christian Education of future generations. Guide us to give to this campaign as we are able. I thank You for Your eternal love shown in the Cross of Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.

Rev. Tom E. Eggold



“Promises We Make/Promises We Keep”



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20a

What’s the best day of your life? The most wonderful and important day in my life came when I was less than two weeks old! On that day Pastor Schwan said, “Daniel Paul May, I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit!” On that day, the Holy Spirit created faith in my infant heart and my parents and the congregation made a

promise to nurture that Spirit-given faith.

When we celebrate baptism at Emmanuel, we often sing, “See this wonder in the making; God Himself this child is taking, As a lamb safe in His keeping, His to be, awake or sleeping” (Luth. Service Book #593, stz. 1).

As we celebrate with parents and sponsors, God creates faith as parents and sponsors promise to nurture the faith God creates. Parents make sacrifices out of love for their children and we partner with the parents in nourishing that faith. We pray that the Lord will be the dwelling place for these children all the days of their lives! We take this task and promise to heart! In 1867 we began a Lutheran school with the promise to feed and nourish our children. Our school is a critical and vital part of our ministry! We provide teachers, school equipment and of course a place (building) for this ministry.

Our school building has served us well, but now it needs improvement, updating and modernizing to make it a facility for today’s children and children yet to be born! Each day at ESM, students continue to grow in their baptismal faith! Also, each year we baptize students through our school ministry. Jesus calls the church to baptize and to continue *“...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28:20a). What a joy to keep our promise to these students. We make promises to our children and we keep the promises we make! Joyfully we look forward to nurturing faith as we teach children for years to come!

The eternal value of the Gospel empowers our ministry! We honor, respect and thank God for the generous commitments of our Emmanuel family. Joyfully we add our gifts to those of previous generations in order to bless future generations. *“Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands”* (Psalm 90:17)!

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I thank You for my baptism, and I rejoice in the baptisms we celebrate at Emmanuel. May my prayers and gifts serve to nurture our children as they are nourished through our children’s ministries. Please bless our efforts to provide what is needed for this ministry. Guide us as we seek to provide the staff and facilities to nurture faith. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Dan May

“Faithful Love and 1,000 ft. Drops”



We all know that if we live long enough, we will likely experience our fair share of challenges. You can probably think of any number of them during your own life. This year was like that for my wife, Jeanette and me. In addition to COVID fears, various “nail biter” experiences with children and grandchildren, Jeanette broke her leg, required surgery to repair it, and struggled through several months of recovery. Add to that my recent procedure to remove

skin cancer on my scalp and you have a “wakeup call” year for us!

Two realities are undeniable: God is Almighty, and we are not. Psalm 90 presents both truths. The first two verses remind us that “from eternity to eternity” our Lord is God. He is never burdened by the past or anxious about the future. He holds both securely in his hands. But, a positive faith can hardly deny the second truth: human life is both brief, but also beyond our knowing (Psalm 90:3-12). Our lives are like a “whisper” (Psalm 90: 9), limited in longevity, and followed by our departure from this life. Even the happiest and most successful of us know what it means to be acquainted with “struggle and sorrow” (Psalm 90: 10).

Some people look at this reality and give up in despair. The Psalmist knows a better way. “Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days” (Psalm 90: 14). This prayer asks for a recognition of God’s “faithful love,” using a word that one scholar calls “truly untranslatable love. No-holds-barred mercy.”

Those of us who have experienced this covenant faithfulness of our Lord, realize that He has already paid an immense cost in putting His beating heart of love on full cosmic display on the cross of Christ as He made satisfaction for our sin. That kind of love “chases us to the ends of the earth, picks us up, places us atop divine shoulders, and dances all the way home.” It does not eliminate life’s unknowns, but it assures us that our God will stick with us through them all.

Realizing that truth gives you a very different perspective on life in the here and now. Without the overwhelming fear of future dangers, life’s challenges no longer appear as 1,000 ft. drops. Even the worst that we can imagine cannot separate us from our Lord’s relentlessly faithful love. This frees us to make decisions about how to invest our time, talents, and treasures in the here and now. We can dare to orient our resources in order to further the purposes of God during the time on earth that we do have. The “In All Generations” campaign presents an exciting opportunity to do just that!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, “establish for us the work of our hands . . . yes, establish the work of our hands!” (Psalm 90: 17). Amen.

Rev. Dr. Dennis McFadden

“First Things First”

“... they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.” 2 Corinthians 8:5

When we joined Emmanuel in 2014, the congregation had just completed Ebenezer Hall at a cost of over \$2 million. Within a year, the project to renovate the original church building began with an estimated cost of more than \$3 million. Today, Emmanuel has paid off those loans. From my experience in ministry, such a level of giving is extraordinary. Some may say it is possible because Emmanuel is a large congregation. Others may opine it is because of wealthy members. Those reasons may be true.

The Apostle Paul gives another reason in 2 Corinthians. There he writes to encourage the believers in Corinth to generously contribute to the relief of the saints in Jerusalem. He holds up to them the example of the churches in Macedonia. Paul writes, “for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part” (2 Corinthians 8:2). In spite of their own hardships, they “[begged] us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints” (2 Corinthians 8:4). What motivated the Macedonians to act this way? Here is the key: *“...they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.”*

“They gave themselves first to the Lord....” This is the real reason why believers give. We know that God generously bestows various gifts to His people so that they may use those gifts to serve others. We know this because God sent His greatest gift, Jesus, to rescue us from the just punishment we deserve for our sinful self-centeredness. We like to think that our possessions are for us to use as we please. That’s rebellion against God’s will. But God sent Jesus to make clear to us how He wants us to use His gifts. Jesus willingly helped others – to fulfill God’s will for us. Jesus willingly offered Himself to suffer the death we deserved – forsaken by His heavenly Father. Then He rose to life again to prove He had accomplished what He came to do – to save us from eternal death and give us new life as God’s redeemed children.

Because they knew that God had first given Himself for their salvation, the Macedonians responded by giving themselves first to the Lord Jesus. By the power of the Holy Spirit, they used their gifts to help those in need.

A major emphasis of Emmanuel’s ministry has been to teach the truths of God’s Word to our children and our children’s children. Major societal changes in the last decades make this ministry all the more essential. ESM has been blessed with Christian teachers who recognize their skills are gifts from God to use in helping their students develop their God-given skills. It is up to Emmanuel’s members to provide the physical learning environment that encourages the students to do their best, so that God is glorified in their lives, too.

“They gave themselves first to the Lord” because Jesus gave Himself first for them. That’s the most important lesson that can be taught to all generations.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, the children’s friend, to each of them Your presence send; call them by name and keep them true in loving faith, dear Lord, to You. Amen (Lutheran Service Book #866, stanza 1).

Rev. Herb Schumm

“For Such a Time as This”

“Here I am! Send me.” Isaiah 6:8

Who among us does not know a somewhat eccentric older person who, when frustrated with current world events will quip, *“Everything’s going to hell in a handbasket?”* Truth be told, in today’s world, we might even find ourselves commenting under our breath, *“Amen to that.”* Truth be told, and I am now referring to the people whose stories are recorded in the Bible, we are certainly not alone in feeling overwhelmed, and even ready to *“throw in the towel.”*

Like the two God chose to encourage Jesus and his disciples at his Transfiguration before he turned onto the path leading to the cross of Good Friday, both Moses and Elijah, during their time on earth, had decided that they were deficient servants of God. However, God assisted and restored each of them (Exodus 3:1-12; 1 Kings 19:1-18). Then there was Queen Esther, who wished to remain silent, but was encouraged by her trusted confidant with his inspired proposal: “If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this” (Esther 4:14)?

Not long before Evangelist Billy Graham died, a friend asked him, “Who do you think God will raise up in your place?” Pastor Graham’s response was most unexpected. He stated: “The times are so evil, that one person would easily be brought down by the Evil One.” Instead, he believed God would raise up people, one-by-one, to become a mighty army for the Lord. I was reminded of this story while reading James 4:10, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

How true this will be, as with so many people in Bible times, when we humble ourselves before the Lord and pray, “Here I am! Send me” (Isaiah 6:8). With the Lord’s help, we now are raising up children of faith, in our homes and in our Christian day schools, for time and eternity! Even more, this comes with a special blessing: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me, welcomes not just me but also him who sent me” (Mark 9:37).

Prayer: I am trusting You, Lord Jesus, that with a servant’s heart You have also generously endowed me with all the gifts and talents to grow Your Kingdom, even in a time such as this. “Here I am! Send me.” Amen.

Rev. Tim Anderson



“Homecoming”

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, ³and many peoples shall come, and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.” Isaiah 2:2-5

Homecomings are a big deal. They conjure up so many memories. What do homecomings look like to you? They can be times for renewing friendships. They can help fulfill a need to belong. Homecomings can offer that place where everyone knows our name, where we can put down our burdens and finally relax. Homecomings offer a place of security.

Isaiah presents us with a vivid depiction of homecoming to Zion. This is a homecoming unlike any other. There is a mountain, the place where heaven and earth meet. Everyone comes to this homecoming because they know God. Everyone belongs. Everyone encounters the forgiving Savior who makes even the outsider belong. Everyone belongs because God’s Word is proclaimed on this mountain. Everyone is there because of what God has done and what He proclaims through His Word.

The results are astounding. Isaiah says in 2:4, “He will judge between the nations. He will settle the disputes of many nations. They will beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning hooks.” Homecomings look to a sense of belonging in community, but none of our homecomings ever live up to this. Yet, where God is, so is God’s community.

What is Isaiah talking about here? He looks to the time in which all people come home to be gathered around God’s Word. Isaiah describes where you are right now. You have come on your own journey to hear God’s Word tell you, “You are my child. You belong.” We also see Isaiah’s Zion in the life of our church and school. What makes Emmanuel-St. Michael unique is more than educational excellence. What makes ESM unique is that it is Isaiah’s Zion. It is a place where people come from many different places for many different reasons and hear God’s Word of hope proclaimed to them.

Still, we can only see this Zion through faith. We see where God’s Word is proclaimed. We see the community, but we are also waiting. We hear God’s Word of hope because it points us to the coming of the greater Zion. It points us also to the time when Christ will come and gather us all together where we will see this by sight, and not by faith. We will live in perfect community with Jesus and each other forever. Until then, we come continually to where God’s Word is. We rejoice in the ministry of our school. We cling to these promises.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for coming to us with Your Word of hope. Keep us in the faith until we see You face to face. In Jesus name, Amen.

Rev. Dr. Ryan Tietz

“The Lord Is Our Dwelling Place”

*“Lord you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”
Psalm 90:1*

How comforting are these words, to know that God is our home, and that we “are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household” (Ephesians 2:19). Martin Luther’s favorite Psalm offers a similar description of who God is: “God is our refuge and strength” (Psalm 46:1) and “the God of Jacob is our fortress” (Psalm 46:7). These are helpful descriptions that the authors in Scripture use to assure us of a place where we can go in times of trouble, sorrow and affliction: God is our shelter, comfort, refuge and protection. Those of us who have been caught unexpectedly in a rainstorm while taking a walk, know how good it is to seek immediate shelter. So too, it is with our life, both physically and spiritually. It is in God’s hands. To Him we go for everything and to Him we submit ourselves.

But do we really do that? Do we seek out God in all times, good and bad? That is something we always need to think about. What seems to speak against this is that we are afraid of God. We do not flee *to* Him, but rather *from* Him, fearing His anger and judgment over who we are and what we have done. The Psalmist knows this well: “We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence” (Psalm 90:7-8). Thus, would it not seem ironic to our logic, if a thief flees into a court building and seeks protection from the judge?! However, common human wisdom must bow to God’s wisdom. Though the Psalmist speaks of a broken relationship with God, of God as judge and who is wrathful (Ps. 90:11), he knows that God looks at him differently. That knowledge is divine wisdom coming to us from above (James 3:17) as a gift. It says something like this:

God is our dwelling place. Yes, we may come to God and live a life under Him. We may do what’s counterintuitive and against common human wisdom, and actually go to Him, because what He has done surpasses all understanding. He has delivered us from sin and made His Son bear the burden and wrath of God on our behalf. His Son died so that we may live, for His sake we have been declared free and forgiven in His presence. That is why God is our dwelling place. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). True, the days of our earthly life are counted and limited, and “we finish our years with a moan” (Psalm 90:6), but that moan is short lived and soon to be replaced by an eternal, heavenly joy.

Prayer: Lord God, You are our dwelling place. We thank You that we can come to You because You have eternal life. We do not have to flee from You, but in You we find refuge, help, comfort and wisdom. Forgive us for not turning to You when we should. Strengthen us in our faith in You and draw us to You when we go astray. Though we deserve Your wrath and judgment, we know that Your Son has taken it all upon Himself on our behalf. We give You thanks, and ask on behalf of others, that they too may find in You a dwelling place. In the name Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

“It’s All His!”



“The earth is the LORD’S and the fullness thereof, the world, and those who dwell therein.” Psalm 24:1

When our sons were little, and there was a battle for toys, one of them would inevitably yell, “Mine!” Then, one would grab the toy away from his brother,

even if he wasn’t playing with it at the time. He made it clear to his brother that the toy was “His!” This was always a great opportunity for us to show them how to give and share with a grateful heart what the Lord had given to them.

Do you ever find yourself in a similar position? When it comes to giving the resources with which God has blessed you, do you ever feel like a child with a clenched fist proclaiming, “Mine?” King David says everything in life, including the breath of life itself, is a gift from God. *“The earth is the LORD’S and the fullness thereof, the world, and those who dwell therein”* (Psalm 24:1). King David refocuses our vision off ourselves, and the things of the earth we think are “Mine,” to things above (Colossians 3:2). Life, family, and eternal salvation are all gifts from God’s hands. We are thoroughly rich because of what we have inherited by Christ’s poverty on the cross for us (2 Corinthians 8:9). The price God paid to save you and me was the precious blood of His own Son, spilling forth from His hands, feet, and side!

When you recall who really owns everything, who marvelously made you in your mother’s womb (Psalm 139), and who dearly redeems and loves you now and forever, you live life with open hands. Emmanuel Lutheran Church places before all of us an opportunity to think how we will invest in a capital project to sustain, beautify, and modify the Emmanuel Lutheran School campus. The goal is to make the ESM space better, safer, and more attractive for years to come, keeping Jesus Christ front and center in the eyes and ears of children.

Prayer: Dear Almighty and merciful Father, when You looked upon us in love before the foundation of the world, You chose us to be Your children, created us, and adopted us through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Help us to remember that everything You have placed before us are gifts from Your hands to share and bless others around us. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Rev. Dr. Timothy R. Puls

“Our Faithful, Unchanging Lord ‘In All Generations’”

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8

I've been reading about change. Alvin Toffler, in his book *Future Shock*, talked about the “shattering stress and disorientation” that comes from “too much change in too short a period of time” and from “information overload.” Thomas Friedman, in his book *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*, has shown how cultural adaptation has lagged behind the rate of technological development. More recently, Aneel Chima and Ron Gutman have noted that “conditions for accelerating change have been building for years. . . Covid-19 and its derivatives laid bare a ‘new normal’ of change, marked by three dimensions” (“What It Takes to Lead Through an Era of Exponential Change,” *Harvard Business Review*). Their conclusions are striking:

- “Change is *perpetual* – occurring all the time in an ongoing way.
- Change is *pervasive* – unfolding in multiple areas of life at once.
- Change is *exponential* – accelerating at an increasingly rapid rate.”



It is so easy for us to get caught up in the changing things of life, the day-to-day demands of caring for family, keeping to a budget, simply juggling all that needs to be addressed. It seems to be getting more challenging all the time to keep a good balance amongst everything. Consumer culture threatens at times to consume us!

Change, however, is a part of life. But amidst all of this change, we also give thanks for that which does not change, namely the love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus. In the midst of all the changes, challenges, and uncertainties, Christ is still Lord of His Church. He is our faithful and immovable Rock in the midst of the winds of change. *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever”* (Hebrews 13:8).

God has been faithful to Emmanuel's congregation and has been faithful to Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School. As we prepare to address needed changes in our campus for the future education of our children, I

pray that God will open your heart to support this crucial work, so that His Word may continue to go forth “In all Generations.”

Change is all around us. But we need not fear what the future holds. As we plan and prepare for what is to come—especially teaching the children who have been entrusted to our care—we do so in the firm conviction that our faithful, unchanging Lord will provide for all our needs of body, soul, and mind, so that we may continue to praise him both here and in eternity.

God’s promise to us is sure and certain: *“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed”* (Malachi 3:6).

Prayer: Lord, guide me by Your changeless Word. Move my heart to honor You with my earthly gifts, while keeping my eyes firmly fixed on Your eternal blessings. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.

“Life Is Short”

“For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. ⁵ You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: ⁶ in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. ⁷ For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. ⁹ For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. ¹⁰ The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.” Psalm 90:4-10

Life certainly didn’t feel short when I received a registered letter from Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, dated February 8, 1966 with the following opening words: “You have in your hands a call which we ask you to consider carefully and prayerfully. We are firmly convinced you have the necessary qualifications to meet the needs of our interparish school and to accept the challenges that are in store for you at Emmanuel.”

At that time, I had recently graduated from Concordia Teachers College and was serving in my first year as a Director of Christian Education at Zion Lutheran Church in Schenectady, New York. In addition, Susie and I were planning to be married in August of that year. We were both blessed to have attended Lutheran elementary schools, Lutheran high schools and a Lutheran college. Even though we were quickly moving through our first generation, our whole lengthy lives were ahead of us.

A year later, we accepted calls to teach at Emmanuel Christian Day School in Baltimore. Fast forward eleven years, and blessed with three beautiful young daughters, a second registered letter arrived from Emmanuel, Fort Wayne containing a call for me to serve as Minister of Christian Education. We accepted God’s call, moved to Fort Wayne, and enrolled our two oldest daughters at ESM. What a wonderful blessing that was for our

family as our daughters were educated and nurtured in the Christian faith by a loving and caring faculty.

Time moved quickly from 1977 through 1982, as my title changed from Minister of Christian Education to Vicar to Associate Pastor to Senior Pastor. I personally had the joy of working closely with the pastoral staff at St. Michael and the dedicated faculty of ESM through September of 1998. The second generation for Susie and me moved quickly and we were beginning to realize that life was indeed getting shorter, and in the midst of our second generation, we were also blessed with a son. Like his sisters, he too attended ESM and Concordia Lutheran High School.

Throughout our third and now fourth generations, we realize more and more how richly God has blessed us. With four children married to loving, Christian spouses and eleven grandchildren being raised in Christian homes and receiving instructions in God's Word, what more can we ask? Our lives are short now. The Psalmist gives us the perfect prayer with each passing year. "So, teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

There is a saying, "Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end of the roll, the faster it goes." Life is short. Life is also challenging, and every moment wells up challenging possibilities. No challenges in your life? Ask God for one that will give you the opportunity to grow, contribute and learn how dependable He is. Too many challenges? Pray before you move out the door to start a new day and ask God for the ability to see them as opportunities, not obstacles. Allow Him to help you enjoy each one.

Prayer: O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home. (Lutheran Service Book #733, stanza 1)

Rev. Art Klausmeier



“Lord, you have been our dwelling place

IN ALL GENERATIONS

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!”

Psalm 90:1, 17



EMMANUEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Building faith in the city

917 West Jefferson Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46802