

Greetings Saints of Emmanuel:

It was great to have and see so many (ten!) of you giving of your time for Lutheran Week at the Omni in Pittsburgh.

Bishop Dan graciously chose four pastors within our first five years of call to serve as chaplains throughout the convocation. So, along with two friends of mine from seminary (Ray and Alliyah) and a newly minted friend (Darcy), I was one of the four chosen to serve. This meant that we assisted with the eucharist service, led a devotion, led prayers, and were available for private confession. It was great fun to serve. For those of you on Facebook, you can watch the devotional I led, beginning at about the 13th minute mark, [here](#). (Unfortunately, I don't have a non-Facebook link.) See below for a picture from one of the prayers from the "chaplains," as Dan called us.

This was, I think, a unifying conference, one in which Bishop Dan Selbo established a clear direction--towards the mission and ministry of the Church through and in Jesus Christ.

Carl Trueman, in *The Death of Mainline Protestantism* ([link here](#)), noted that the Presbyterian Church USA "closed its foreign missions agency." This is in line (among the mainline protestant traditions) with a marked shift *away* from the proclamation of redemption only through Jesus Christ and towards a therapeutic or feel-good or social gospel.

To be sure, we do *not* want to neglect the needy in our midst, which is why, as I [preached this past Sunday](#) on Luke 12, that there are needy in our midst who would benefit from our gifts -- a seminarian and one of our own. Hear Luke 12:33a again: "Sell your possessions, and give to the needy." That said, our mission and ministry does not end there. For Jesus continues by saying: "Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys (Luke 12:33b). Our goal is not to turn earth into heaven, but to share the glimpse of heaven we have in Christ Jesus and to proclaim that there is no other way to be with him other than through faith in him. We are called to proclaim Jesus in church, in our region, and in the world.

Therefore, it was refreshing that there were two clear emphases in the NALC: (1) to plant *new* churches and (2) to support in prayer, gifts, and action the mission work of the NALC. Against the grain, we will not be ending foreign mission, but rather increasing domestic and foreign mission.

Because of the strong emphasis on mission in the NALC, and because we are located not too far from where our national convocation was held, we were able to benefit from hearing from two mission workers, sponsored by the NALC: The Rev. Dr. Thomas Thorstad and his wife "Moon" of Laos (follow [this link](#) to learn more about the ministry of the Thorstads); and Dure Negassa, representing the ministry and work of the Rev. Dagaga Gemachu of Kenya (follow [this link](#) to learn more about the ministry of Dure Negassa and the Rev. Gemachu).

I invite for you to begin praying for (in addition to for the Omars and their ministry among Muslims in the Atlanta region) the Thorstads, for Dure, and for Rev. Gemachu. The ministry in Kenya has already begun to be very fruitful, making many new Christians. I was struck by how closely Dure's ministry in Kenya parallels the ministry we see taking place in our *Acts Bible Study*, where we have been seeing that a miracle take place for the purpose of making Jesus known to a group of people. This is exactly what has been happening in Kenya. And so, I invite you to pray that this fruitful ministry continues, and I invite you to pray that the Thorstads begin to see similar fruit take place in their ministry in Laos & Thailand.

Finally, it was brought to my attention that the phrase "in good standing with your home congregation" caused quite the stir. I want to commend the two people who brought this to my attention, because otherwise, it would have festered, and produced bitterness, left unaddressed. I'll address this directly in my sermon this week, where Jesus warns of division even amongst one's family, because of the cross. In the meantime, I want you to know that I took this very seriously, am extremely appreciative of the two who came to me, and that I worked with Bishop Dan to craft a much [clearer](#), much stronger, much better statement. The worship committee also give their assent to this statement, which I'll include below:

Our Practice of Holy Communion

St. Paul writes: *"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup."* (1 Corinthians 11:27-28, ESV)

Not one of us is worthy *on our own merit* to receive our Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, he bids us to come to him all the same (Matthew 11:28-30). And so, trusting his great mercy, *anyone* may come to him *in faith*, having examined oneself according to this confession:

All who are baptized in the name of the Triune God, believe in the real presence of Jesus in the bread and the wine of Holy Communion, and are repentant of their sins are welcome at the Lord's Table.

All others may come forward for a blessing, signaling this by crossing your arms over your chest.

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And so, reaching harmony on this statement, I look forward to seeing you all in worship this Sunday.

In Christ our Lord,
+ Pastor Justin Baker

Newsworthy

Our new secretary, Caroline Hall, has begun this Monday. Please do welcome her as you stop by the office, call, or email.

ELC women kindly ask for your monetary support for our graduate and youth for the quilting materials. Please mark "Quilts" on the check byline and on the envelope. The cash or checks can be made out to the Emmanuel Lutheran Church Women, the ELCW, or to the church. Thank you! ~ Jeanne Yargar

Bulletin for this Sunday

[Click here for this Sunday's bulletin.](#)

Upcoming

Sunday School resumes August 17 and August 30

Council meets August 20, 11:30AM

Final Outdoor Worship Service, August 24

Potluck to Follow Service

No Saturday setup. We'll begin setting up 8AM Sunday. Bring a potluck (brunch, lunch, etc.!) dish/item.

Today, August 27, 11AM, Zoom

Prayer Group

As it will be the fourth Wednesday of the month, join Zoom for *prayer group*, led by Julie.

Christianity on Film: Bonhoeffer, Saturday, August 30

The Bakers, 1-3PM

Signup was to be posted this past Sunday. It will be posted this week. [Click here to watch the trailer for the movie.](#)

Oktoberfest, September 27, 11AM-2PM

Please signup to volunteer. We'll need help with grilling, with drinks, with setup and cleanup, and, of course, for potluck of German-style food. Signup will be posted in the Narthex.

Mission District Convocation, October 18, ~8AM-3PM

We're hosting the mission district convocation. This will be a big one, because we're finalizing the mission district's constitution to move from being a mission district to a mission region (composed of four districts).

As hosts, we'll need help grilling, greeting, serving. Signup to help will be posted. There will be a Stuff the Truck. More details to come.

Last Sunday's Service

[Click here to watch.](#)

Thoughts on the text edition?

So far I have received *only* positive feedback on the text edition. If you have a different opinion, let me know.



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