

Greetings Saints of Emmanuel:

We heard, this past Sunday, the beloved parable of the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine in search of the one lost sheep, and the parable of the woman diligently searching her home for her one lost coin. As we heard:

"The meaning is absolutely straightforward — the Lord Jesus will find his lost sheep; the Lord Jesus will diligently find the lost coin. We need not have anxiety or fear about whether the lost will be found, because the parable describes who Jesus is — the Shepherd who seeks out the lost."

These parables were for the tax collectors and sinners gathering, crowding in, to hear Jesus. But they are also for the scribes and Pharisees. For Jesus does not have a favorite brand of sinner — his mission is to call and find all his lost sheep.

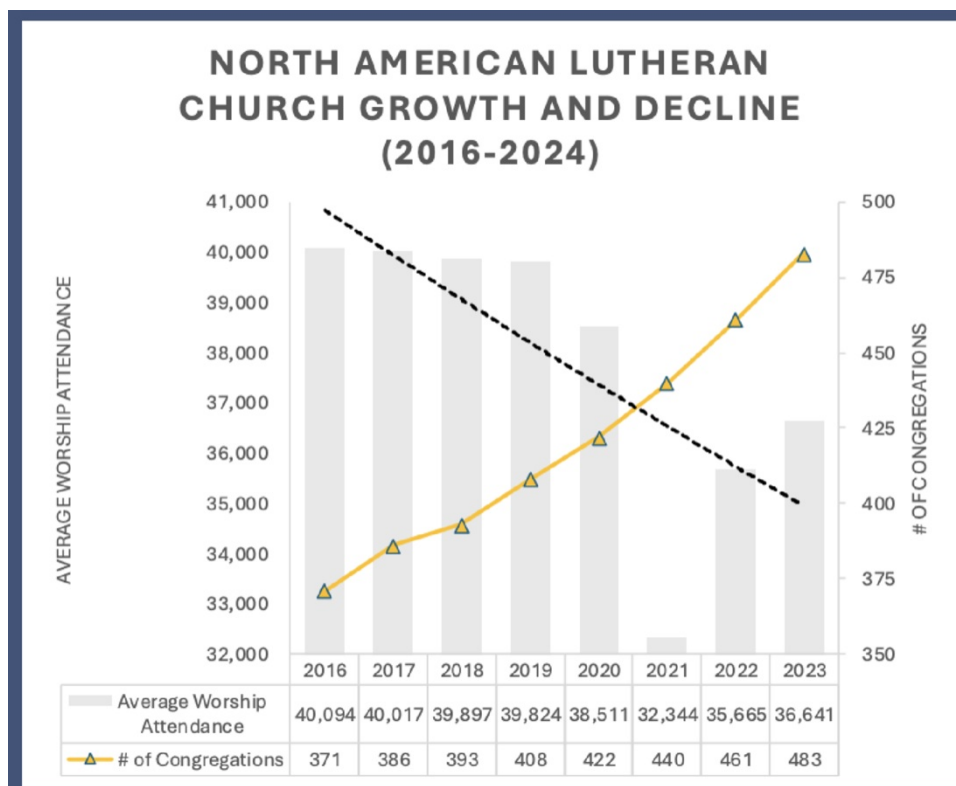
We also heard, that with the murder of Charlie Kirk, lost sheep are picking up their Bibles, looking for churches, and beginning to realize that atheism or lapsed Christianity simply does not provide any real answer to the evils we witnessed last week.

Finally, we wondered what Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is up to in this congregation and in our denomination. Our denomination has, since 2016, gained more than a hundred congregations, while at the same *declining* in average worship attendance by several thousand. (See the chart below.)

To reflect further, read the devotional I gave on *renewal* to the NALC at Lutheran Week just below this.

Watch this past Sunday's sermon [here](#) or read it [here](#).

In Christ our Lord,
+ Pastor Justin Baker



I share the following devotional which I gave to fellow pastors and delegates during Lutheran Week, carrying the theme of *renewal*:

Renewal.

Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

We have a clear prerogative to be the kinds of disciples who are devoted to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. This prerogative is our duty and our delight.

And yet, as we minister — as we proclaim the faith we have received; as we receive the faith that has been proclaimed — the reality of the challenge of ministry surfaces.

When I think of renewal, it's true that there are congregations entering the NALC and even forming within the NALC. But it's also the case that many of our congregations may seem not near renewal.

Sunday after Sunday, church year after church year, we may not see a visitor; we may not receive a new member; we may not get to baptize a new Christian; and so — questions surface.

Why has **this** church dwindled? When will my congregation grow? Will I see fruit?

What are we doing — pastor and parishioners — if what we're doing, day by day, week by week, church year by church year — doesn't seem to bear fruit?

Will God act? When will God act? If this is you; if this is your congregation, I have something encouraging for you. And the first piece of news is this — if you're having trouble discerning the fruit of your ministry, of your congregation — you are not the first.

Consider our good friend Jeremiah. It's true that we have one of the most wonderful reminders of God's favor in him: "Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I knew you." But his lot in ministry was tough. Jeremiah was given an extraordinarily challenging Word to give to Israel. It would not have been fun to deliver those words. And so, prophetic word after prophetic word, exhortation after exhortation, warning after warning, Jeremiah delivered the Word of God faithfully — and became worn down to his bones.

Listen to what Jeremiah comes to say:

[14] Cursed be the day
on which I was born!

The day when my mother bore me,
let it not be blessed!

[15] Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father,
"A son is born to you,"
making him very glad.

[16] Let that man be like the cities
that the LORD overthrew without pity;
let him hear a cry in the morning
and an alarm at noon,

[17] because he did not kill me in the womb;
so my mother would have been my grave,
and her womb forever great.
[18] Why did I come out from the womb
to see toil and sorrow,
and spend my days in shame? (Jeremiah 20:14–18, ESV)

Through the years, in the thick of his ministry, in the constant rejection by those to whom he ministered, Jeremiah was unable to see what fruit his ministry could or would yield. Indeed, nothing about his ministry looked successful. It would have seemed like constant, consistent failure.

And yet, many centuries later, our Lord Jesus asked his disciples who people thought *Jesus, the Son of Man*, was. One of the names that the people put forward was Jeremiah. I suggest that nothing could be more beautiful, more rich, more successful than this metric — Jeremiah was found worthy of being uttered in relation to Christ.

What could be more beautiful than having our ministry worthy of the name of Jesus? Jeremiah, by God's metric, was extraordinarily successful, because he was faithful to the Word of God.

What made his success difficult to see is the time horizon. The same is true for us. The question:
When will God make this ministry fruitful? is not a negative one, but a positive one. It is not a discouraging question, but an encouraging one.

For God will make effective his Word. That is a promise. We stake our lives and ministry on his Word — his Son, crucified, buried, risen, ascended, reigning.

When will God make this ministry fruitful? is encouraging because it comes with God's promise. It is something to ask not in discouragement, but in wonder and awe and anticipation.
Indeed, when will God visit and make your ministry fruitful? When will you see the fruits?

Perhaps never. If so, then you have joined the great company of saints in Hebrews 11, about whom we'll hear in the lectionary this Sunday:

13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

If it is our lot to not see the fruit, so be it. Let us be faithful anyway.

Let us look out among and in the midst of our congregation — as disciples who are devoted to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers — and let us give thanks that God will make our ministry fruitful.

The question is simply *When will he do it?* When indeed.
Amen.

Today, Wednesday, September 17

10AM, Music Room

Discipleship Committee Meeting

11:30 AM, Music Room

Council Meeting

More This Week

Wednesday, September 17

10:00 - 11:00am

Discipleship Committee Meeting

11:30am - 1:30pm

Council Meeting

6:00 - 7:30pm

Troop 53155

7:00 - 8:00pm

Steps and Stories

Thursday, September 18

7:00 - 8:00pm

Chancel Choir

7:00 - 9:00pm

Troop 208

7:30 - 9:00pm

Al-Anon

Friday, September 19

6:00 - 8:00pm

Troop 50327

6:00 - 7:30pm

Troop 22123

Saturday, September 20

10:00 - 11:00am

Mission District Meeting

Sunday, September 21

9:00 - 10:00am

LH - Sunday School

10:15 - 11:15am

Worship Service

[Click to View More](#)

Newsworthy

Candlelight Vigil in Memory of Tay Foltz

There will be a Candlelight Vigil in memory of Tay Foltz on Thursday, September 18th, at 7pm. It will take place at Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church (4600 Old Wm Penn Hwy, Murrysville, PA 15668).

Walking Help for Deb

As you may remember, Deb has severe dementia and is living in a nursing home.

She walks but her walking ability is poor. She has fallen many times in the last six weeks. Three falls have required hospitalization or ER care.

I am hoping for walking help volunteers for Deb. The helper would spend an hour or so with Deb, holding her hand and walking. The helper would need to be strong enough to break her fall so that she would not hit her head.

Help would be most beneficial in the time periods from 10 to 12 am and from 3 to 5 pm. Any help, no matter how small, may save an injury.

If you cannot help, please pray.

~Irv

Missionary Support During September | Raising \$4500

During the month of September -- finishing on Oktoberfest -- we'll support the three mission workers who visited this year -- The Omars, Dure Negassa & her Kenyan missionary partners, and the Thorstads.

Support Raised So Far:

Week 1: \$1150

Week 2: \$2,976.50

\$4,126.5

Still to raise: \$373.50 and beyond. Anything given above \$4500 will go to the Thorstads.

Please use one of the "Missionary Support" envelopes, or mark your check or memo with "Missionary Support."

From our Bible Study in Acts | Acts 5:1-11

Notes

A fissure seems on the verge of forming in the foundation of the Church. Yet as we heard, the Holy Spirit will not let the foundation rupture.

We should keep two things in mind as we reflect on Ananias and Sapphira. (1) We note how they were of one mind and heart together ("with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself"), which is a departure of the one mind and heart with the whole body of believers (recall 4:32). And so, though they were among the faithful, and yet, deceit, desire, sin, evil, satan crept into their hearts, and rather than resisting this evil, they fell into it. (2) Luke also wants us to contrast Ananias with Barnabas, who freely gave the whole of his proceeds and who came to be known by the apostles as "the son of encouragement." Neither Barnabas nor Ananias were required to give all the proceeds for the needy (5:4). But Barnabas does give all, just as others had done, freely for the sake of those who were in need. The motivation for Ananias is clearly different, and a departure from what the disciples had been doing, "kept back for himself."

Just as the Parable of the Sower teaches: Ananias and Sapphira were among those who heard the Word, received it, and then allowed the Word to be suffocated, being instead "filled" (5:3) by Satan. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira are the work of the Holy Spirit. Note the ways in which Luke draws this out: (1) the chief sin is "lying to the Holy Spirit," and (2) they die by falling down and breathing their last. When we are reminded that "breath" and "spirit" are the same Hebrew word, and when we remember that in Creation God breathed life into man, then we see the full connection being made: Just as God breathed into man, made him a living being, and so he rose, so, too, God takes the breath out of man, removing his life, so that he falls. Falling down before God is, dead or alive, the right posture before him. Only he can make us upright.

We heard about the actions of Ananias and Sapphira in context of the Parable of the Sower, and reflected on these questions:

- What is so wrong about what Ananias and Sapphira have done?
- What warning do their deaths reveal?
- Have we seen ourselves, or others, go wrong?
- What lesson is here for us?

[View Last Week's Lesson Here](#)

Sunday School, 9AM Study on Philemon & Study on the Apostles' Creed

About the Philemon Class

Join MaryAnn and company to read through *Philemon*, a one-chapter letter from Paul to Philemon. The class began last Sunday and continues this week.

About the Apostles' Creed Class

Join the confirmation crew to continue learning about the Apostles' Creed, a rock-solid foundation of our faith *that in some form* likely was developing during the time of the apostles. This past Sunday, we noted that by confessing we believe in "God, the Father almighty, creator of the heaven and earth," we are *also* confessing the Biblical account of Creation of Genesis 1-2. In other words, we are confessing that God made the heavens, made male and female, and made marriage for the man and woman and for children.

A Possible Sunday School Class for October-November

Live Not By Lies

A Four Part-Docuseries based on Rod Dreher's [book](#), which itself was based

on Alexander Solzhenitsyn's [essay](#), all of the same title.
This will be either a four-week or eight-week class. [Watch the Trailer Here.](#)

Major Upcoming Events

Mission District Meeting

Saturday, September 20th, Heritage Hall, 10AM

OKTOBERFEAST

Saturday, September 27th, Outside, 11AM-2PM

Congregational Budget Meeting

Sunday, October 12th, Sanctuary, Immediately Following Service

Mission District Convocation

Saturday, October 18th, ~8AM-3PM

More About Our Major Upcoming Events!

Oktoberfeast, September 27, 11AM-2PM

Please sign up to volunteer. We'll need help with grilling, with drinks, with setup and cleanup, and, of course, for potluck of German-style food. Signup is 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). Bishop Dan Selbo will be the guest speaker for the convocation and will be preaching the following Sunday here at Emmanuel.

As hosts, we'll need help grilling, greeting, serving. Signup to help is posted in the Narthex. See the flyer at the end (and posted around the church) for more information!

United Together, We Pray

Prayers for Mission Workers

- For the Omars and their ministry among Muslims in the Atlanta region; for the Thorstads in their work in Laos & Thailand; and for Dure Negassa the Rev. Gemachu in their ministry in Kenya among the Oromos.

More information about our mission workers here: 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). Follow [this link](#) for more information about the Omars.

Prayers for those in need of Intercession:

Bob Jordan, Steve Cehovin, Jim Troxell, David Weihe, Linda Casper, Vince Berardinelli, George & Donna Campagna, Gary Kral, Mary Lou McDonald, Gayle

Wertz, June Ugen, Debbie Pritts, Dick & Sandy Lester, Lori, Aurelia, Rachael, Adam, Aria, Ray, Jeff, David, Cathy, Leila, Grace, Darin, Alice, Keith, Victoria, Zachary, Kevin, Levi, Mervin, Shawn, Lynn, Ginny, Roger, Betty, Zac, Les, Kenny, Gary, Linda, Michael, Missy, Jim, Bonnie, Tony, Sarah, Denise, Harry, Millicent, Stephanie, and Ruthie

Prayers of Bereavement

Most Blessed and Holy God, we implore you to remember the family of Rob Greenleaf and the family of Don. Fill all families who mourn with the strength to grieve, the comfort of your presence, and faith unto life everlasting.

Prayer for this Church

We pray that you will fill this congregation with the faith that endures unto life eternal. We pray that you make us one people united in prayer. We pray that you will send families, children, widows & widowers, the elderly, and any others into our midst, that they may also be filled with faith, encourage this congregation, and bring honor and glory and praise to your name.

Upcoming Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays:

9/16 Cherie Wolovich
9/17 Kathy Gustafson
9/22 Sandie Lee
9/22 Joshua Pelusi
9/25 Finley Baker
10/4 Denny Potter
10/7 Darryl Brednich
10/9 Dan Hunter
10/10 Linda Casper

Anniversaries:

9/23 Vince & Donna Berardinelli (58 years)
9/23 Jeff & Holly Pelusi (25 years)
9/25 Bob Jordan & MaryAnn Sinwell (20 years)
9/29 Lou & Michele Hiener (35 years)
10/2 Darryl & Elsie Brednich (60 Years)
10/10 Dana & Diana Hillman (55 Years)

EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

OKTOBERFEAST



SEPTEMBER 27, 11AM - 2PM

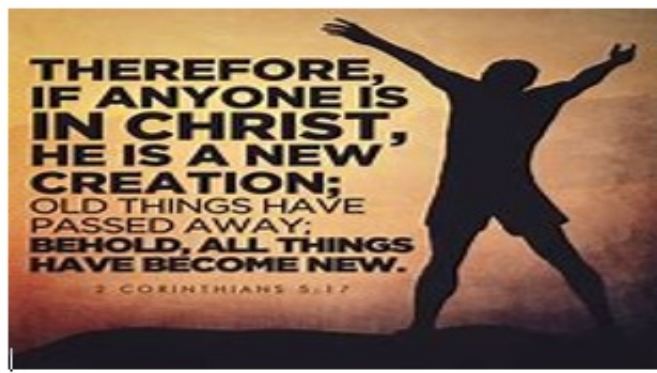
LIVE MUSIC - BRATS - GAMES

POTLUCK - BEER & ROOT BEER









MID NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT CONVOCATION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18th

At EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

5000 Old William Penn Highway, Export PA. 15632

8:15 REGISTRATION & STUFF THE TRUCK

9:00 Worship with Communion & Opening of the Convocation

Last Sunday's Service

The Event will go until 3:30 – Lunch will be included

[Click here to view the service.](#)

Keynote Speaker will be Bishop Dan Selbo

Also please note we will be Electing a new Dean and will be setting up our new 6 Mission Districts in our Mission Region
Have more pictures from any of our events?
Send them our way -- don't want to leave you out!

We will be collecting "HEALTH KITS" items to "Stuff the truck"

Altar Flowers
Please go to the NALC website (thenalc.org) under the Disaster Response to download a list of the items for Health kits, but all items are welcome

If you've signed up to provide altar flowers, please email the office a few weeks in advance to let us know what or who you would like the flowers to be dedicated to and how you would like the dedication to read!

Cost will be \$100 per congregation (including anyone who is interested!)

Send your registration sign up sheet & payment to:

Mission District Registration

C/O Connie Slope – 291 MacDonaldton Road –Berlin, PA 15530

It is always a great day of sharing our blessings with each other, seeing old friends, making new friends and getting involved in your Mission District.



Emmanuel Lutheran Church | 5000 Old William Penn Highway PO Box #396 | Export, PA 15632 US

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