



Emanuel Lutheran Church

366 Cohansey-Friesburg Road
P. O. Box 363
Elmer, NJ 08318
Phone: 856-451-5669

Sunday Opportunities:

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
in-person and via *Facebook Live*
The Rev. Mark A. Werner, Pastor

Emanuel Lutheran Church is a community of faith, leading people to Christ

JANUARY ACTIVITIES AT EMANUEL

Jan 2 – Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Social Hall
Jan 3 – Bible Study 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Jan 7 – Sunday School 9 a.m.
Jan 7 – Worship 10 a.m.
Jan 9 – Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Social Hall
Jan 10 – Bible Study 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Jan 13 – Alloway Twp Prayer Breakfast, 7 a.m., Aldine UMC
Jan 13 – Elmer Area Men’s Group – 9 a.m., Aldine UMC
Jan 14 – Sunday School 9 a.m.
Jan 14 – Worship 10 a.m., Baptism during service
Jan 16 – Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Social Hall
Jan 16 – Anniversary Comm., 6 p.m., Social Hall
Jan 17 – Bible Study 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Jan 21 - Sunday School 9 a.m.
Jan 21 – Worship 10 a.m.
Jan 22 – Council, 6 p.m.
Jan 23 – Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Social Hall
Jan 23 – Worship & Music Comm., 6 p.m., via Zoom
Jan 24 – Bible Study 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Jan 28 – Sunday School 9 a.m.
Jan 28 – Worship 10 a.m.
Jan 30 – Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Social Hall
Jan 31 – Bible Study 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

STEWARDSHIP

Financials as of November 2023:
YTD Income: \$174,784.39
YTD Expense: \$147,759.36
YTD Net Income: \$27,025.03
Total yearly budgeted income/expense: \$182,672.00

JANUARY ALTAR GUILD

Dawn Clarke

JANUARY USHERS

Cindy Cairone
Brenda Mace

JANUARY LECTORS

January 7 Mike Clarke
January 14 Susan Shields
January 21 Annabelle Cobb
January 28 Mike Clarke

JANUARY SOUP KITCHEN

Karen Wirsing
Julian Kidd
Pam Casella
Nancy Cobb

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Happy New Year and Happy Birthday to all celebrating in January:

1 Donald Bell	28 Sam Manno
15 Parker Smith	29 Ellenore Cobb
15 Jordan Werner	30 Dorothy Hitchner
19 Courtney Pilling	31 Pr. David McGettigan
26 Cindy Plummer	

Many blessings are wished for the year to come.

Friesburg Filisophy

Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most.

LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN

Fourteen of the LCW ladies celebrated Christmas at their luncheon on Sunday, December 10. A good time was had by all.



THANK YOU

Pastor Mark, Amy and Jordan extend our thanks and appreciation for the Christmas blessing you have given us. It is a joy to be with you in ministry here at Emanuel. May the Lord bless you in this Christmas season as you celebrate the birth of Jesus and grant to you a joy filled new year.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the Christmas gift! It is a joy to assist Emanuel in its worship and ministry!

Lora Sweeney

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, January 28th immediately following worship. The snow date is Sunday, February 4th. Please remember that to vote at the congregational meeting one must have made a contribution of record and communed three times in the previous 18 months. This was adopted in our most recent change to the constitution.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Please submit all annual reports to Lora Sweeney at office@emanuelmer.church by January 22, 2024 in preparation for the Congregational Meeting on January 28th.

CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTORY

The Congregational Directory will be updated for 2024. Please submit any additions or changes of address, phone number, email address, birthdays or anniversaries to Lora Sweeney at office@emanuelmer.church.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE LIAISONS

Anniversary Committee - Kyle Knerr
Christian Education - Wayne Knerr
Fellowship - Brenda Mace, Chrissy Smith, Kathy Willis
Finance – Steve Kennedy
Mutual Ministry - Steve Kennedy, Chrissy Smith
Property - Jimmy Cobb
Safety & Security – Kyle Knerr
Stewardship - Wayne Knerr
Witness/Outreach/Evangelism - Chrissy Smith
Worship& Music - Wayne Knerr



GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

By Pr. Brian Triller

After the sin of Adam and Eve, God promised He would work through His chosen people, the Jews, by sending a Messiah to save humankind from sin. And then, about 2,000 years ago, Jesus, the Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. God kept His promise.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus always obeyed His Father's will. This led to Jesus' death on a cross to pay for all human sin. God the Father had promised to raise Jesus from the dead (Psalm 16:8-11, Isaiah 53:9-11), and Jesus trusted His Father's promise. After Jesus died on that cross on Good Friday, His lifeless body was buried. But three days later, Jesus was raised from the dead. God kept His promise.

The risen Lord Jesus promised that everyone who believes in Him and is baptized will be saved from their sins. (See Mark 16:16 and Luke 24:46-47.)

He also promised He would be with His disciples, saying, "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20 ESV) He kept that promise for His first disciples, and He has kept it for all who have followed Him up until the present day. (e.g., see Mark 16:20). How has He done this? By bestowing the Holy Spirit upon all who believe in Jesus and are baptized.

Based on God's perfect record of keeping promises in the past, we can trust Him to keep all of His promises that are yet to be fulfilled. As we read in Romans 8:32 (ESV), "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" All of God's pending promises will be fulfilled by the Day of the Lord when Jesus returns as He promised, to judge the living and the dead. On that Day, each of us who belongs to the communion of saints will be given a resurrection body and will live forever in God's presence!

Prayer: Dear God—Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, please help us to trust in Your promises yet to be fulfilled. Give us hope when we are faced with troubles and suffering. By the promises You have already fulfilled, we are assured that You are always faithful. May we keep our trust in You always. Amen!

SHOULD WE PUT A LOVED ONE OUT OF HER MISERY?

Imagine a scenario where an elderly loved one is suffering from an incurable condition. Disease has wracked her body, and she is experiencing unimaginable pain. And yet, the antiquated laws on the books have prevented her from finding peace once and for all. Shouldn't such laws be changed to allow a medical professional to compassionately put her out of her misery?

This is the argument posed by physician-assisted suicide (PAS) advocates, and it has proved successful in changing numerous laws in the United States and around the world. But is it true? Is death the only sure remedy for ending pain? And do laws which allow PAS only affect people in the scenario described above, or are others affected in unexpected ways as well? Furthermore, could the legalization of PAS be abused?

Well, first let's take a look at the facts. Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) is legal in many westernized countries today, such as Luxembourg, Switzerland, Belgium, the U.K., Columbia, and Japan. But the country with the most data on PAS is the Netherlands, since it was one of the first countries to legalize the practice. Shockingly, over four percent of all deaths in the Netherlands today are by means of PAS, and the percentage is probably larger, since many such deaths going unreported. Furthermore, many of those euthanized were either unaware or incompetent to make this decision for themselves. Even children as young as twelve can be euthanized under the law. People can even be euthanized for depression in the Netherlands, and eighty-three people were put to death for psychiatric conditions in 2017. Because of these facts, many Dutch citizens worry about being euthanized against their wishes. In fact, it is estimated that 10,000 Dutch citizens carry a "do not euthanize me" card, just in case they become incapacitated and are taken to the hospital.

Sadly, the United States and Canada are following in Holland's footsteps. Already ten states in the US: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia, have all legalized the practice of physician-assisted suicide, and the number of states which will legalize PAS in the future is expected to grow.

In Canada, PAS (called medical assistance in dying – MAiD) was legalized in 2016. Tragically, ten thousand people died from the practice in 2021 alone. MAiD has come under scrutiny by human rights advocates who criticize the law’s lack of safeguards and the fact that it targets the most vulnerable member of society: the disabled and the poor. Critics also believe that health care providers are given incentives to suggest euthanasia to people who would normally not consider it.

But what are the risks of legalizing PAS? Physician bias is always an issue. One only needs to find one unscrupulous and agenda-driven doctor who is willing to approve nearly any request for euthanasia, and numerous unneeded deaths will be the result. Furthermore, as the price of health care increases, the possibility for coercion grows. Families will decide, often for economic reasons, that it’s best to end a loved one’s life rather than pay for long-term treatments which might result in financial collapse.

But is physician-assisted suicide even needed to control pain? One of the positive movements in recent decades has been the growth of the hospice movement and its effort to provide palliative pain care in the last months of life. The truth is that the vast majority of pain conditions caused by life-threatening disease can be alleviated through the use of analgesic medications, including opioids. Indeed, proper hospice care has been able to *extend* life in many cases, even above the expected longevity of undergoing additional treatment.

Now we’ve been discussing the need for, and the possible abuses related to legalizing PAS, but ultimately, as Christians, we need to understand how PAS does, or does not, fit into God’s plan for our lives. And as with any moral issue, Gods’ Word has to be our final guide.

One of the problems with today’s society is that there is no perceived value in suffering. Everything is solved with a pill and if that doesn’t work, we may think it’s time to cash it in. But God’s Word tells us otherwise. In [2 Corinthians 12:9-10](#), Paul reflects on how the Lord told him that, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Paul writes, “Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with

difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.” You see, in a somewhat counterintuitive way, our illnesses teach us about the kind of humility we need to embrace in order to have an honest relationship with the living God.

As to the question of *why* disease and even death afflict us, we can’t know for certain. But we must leave the power of life and death in the Lord’s hands. After his entire family was killed, Job writes, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” As hard as it is to do, especially in times of calamity, we need to leave our mortality in the hands of God. Because we have a bright and shining future waiting for us - even *after* we die. At the end of time, “[God] will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

Rev. Dr. Dennis Di Mauro is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church (NALC) in Warrenton, VA. He also teaches at St. Paul Lutheran Seminary and the North American Lutheran Seminary.

Pastor's Perspective

"And Jesus spoke to them saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" John 8:12

Can you recall a time when you just didn't understand something. Maybe you didn't catch the punchline of a joke, or you struggled to understand a problem at school or work. Then, suddenly, the proverbial light comes on akin to the picture of a lit bulb over your head. You get it. You understand. You are no longer left in the dark.

Welcome to the season of Epiphany in the liturgical calendar. Earlier in December we celebrated the new year of the church with the season of Advent. You may very well be reading this article during the Christmas season (which by the way **starts** on December 25th and continues for a full 12 days). It is on January 6th that we begin the season of Epiphany. It is the realization that the baby whose birth we just celebrated is the one who John stated was the coming light. *"The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."* John 1:9-12.

The ah ha of Epiphany is the good news that Jesus has come to fulfill what has been foretold by the prophets and angels, *"...for he will save his people from their sins."* Matthew 1:21b. In saving us from our sins, Jesus *"...has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* Colossians 1:12.

In doing this, Jesus has made us to be light in the world, in the communities where we live and work, among the people with whom we interact no matter how frequently or infrequently. So it is in the tangible acts of kindness, generosity, helpfulness, service, and so forth, we not only shine, but we point to the source of our light. As we hear with each baptism that occurs, a candle is given to the newly baptized with this charge that actually comes from Jesus himself, *"Let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* Matthew 5:16

As we move into this new season, and as we move into 2024, consider how it might be that you can let your light shine before others. How can we let our light shine in our homes, among our families, where we work, where we go to school, where we shop and any other places we will go?

To let one's light shine is to be a disciple of Jesus. Following him, walking with him is to let the true source of our light keep our flame from growing dim.

A pastor stopped in to visit a gentleman who had not been to church in some time. During their visit they were sitting in the living room where the fire in the fireplace was keeping the house warm. The gentleman asked the pastor to put another piece of wood in the fire. The pastor did, but he also took a small chunk of glowing hot wood and set it aside from the flames. Sure enough, the light from that wood dimmed. It began to cool. All that was left was a small, charred block. The pastor then got up and with a nudge from the fire poker pushed that block back into the fire. Guess what? In going back into the fire that block began to glow again.

That is how it is with us. Our light shines brightly when we are in the word, when we let God's Word enlighten us, fuel us for service. And yes, we go out shining brightly. Nonetheless, let us never forget that we need to continue to dwell in the source of the true light, let the ember of our lives grow dim and we find ourselves back in circumstances of darkness, from which our Lord has delivered us.

God bless,
Pastor Mark