

The Royal Messenger

From the desk of Pastor Olsen:

Eternal Comfort

I don't know if it is the Lenten season and the preparation for Holy Week or of a recent funeral for a dear member of Emmaus or interactions with the children in the school or maybe a confluence of them all, but it has me thinking more specifically about the children growing up in homes that do not have Jesus. **I am talking about parents that are non-believers, atheists even, who have no god whatsoever.**

How are these children given the security, the peace, and the comfort they need as they grow up without a god, let alone The One True God! Where do you go as a parent when questions arise that you have no answer? Maybe more specifically, how do you comfort a child at funeral when their mother or grandmother has died?

This truly gets me thinking because, first, by the grace of God, I never knew what this was like myself. I was Baptized as a baby, raised

in a Lutheran Church by Christian parents and went to a Lutheran school early on throughout my formative years. Even in my public high school in Florida, my friends were Christians, though Lutherans were very hard to come by. There was one girl that was in our "friend group" who was atheist, as were her parents, but honestly, religion never came up much and we never really discussed it. (Sadly, I had a chance, and I let it pass me by.)

But what happened in that family when they were faced with tragedy or loss? My parents always pointed us to Christ. We had Jesus as our fallback, if you will, knowing that He was there as our Good Shepherd. There was never a lack of hope, even though there were some desperate times putting food on the table. There was never a loss of love for our neighbor even though my parents had trouble feeding us they welcomed another family under our roof and helped to feed and care for them. We always had Jesus to look towards and know that He was always caring for us, never leaving and never forsaking us, being with us always, even to the end of the age.

So, what happens in those homes where Jesus is not present? Where do the conversations go when things get tough? "Will we be ok?" "But daddy how do you know?" What is the answer to that question? Whatever it may be, without Jesus it will always be left with uncertainty. It will be met with doubt. Imagine for a moment that those of us



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who have faith, who sometimes doubt, what would that be like for those parents and their children who have no faith, no Savior, no Good Shepherd, no God who created the universe and sustains it, no one who lived and died and lived again for them, no Holy Spirit to have that comfort of the Gospel placed safe and securely in you through Word and Sacrament. What is the answer to that question, "Daddy, how do you know?"

What does a parent say at the funeral of a beloved family member, and you are trying to console your child? We know from Scripture telling us that we do not mourn as those who have no hope. We know that by grace through faith apart from works one attains eternal life. How do you tell your child that grandma is in heaven when you don't believe it yourself? What do you tell your child when they ask where they go when they die? I honestly do not know the answer to that question; praise be to God!

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness," the old hymn comforts us. "Now in Christ, death cannot slay me, Though it might, Day and night, Trouble and dismay me. Christ has made my death a portal From strife Of this life. To His joy immortal!" They don't have these words from a 17th century Lutheran by the name of Paul Gerhard. Another hymn declares "Yet she on earth has union With God the Three in One, And mystic sweet communion With those whose rest is won. O blessed heav'nly chorus! Lord, save us by Your grace That we like saints before us, May see you face to face."

They don't have the sure and certain work of Christ in your Baptism to fall back upon where all the gifts of Christ were given and the promises and the inheritance in His work. They don't have this wonderful Good News of those who have gone before us and that we shall be together with again. They don't have the wonderful gift of the Apostles' Creed, hopefully memorized, internalized, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."



Yes, I could go on and on, but I pray, (oh yeah, that's another one they don't have either) you understand where I am going. If all you are left with is yourself in these times of uncertainty, of trouble, of tragedy, of pain and suffering, you are only left with doubt and nothing to stave off the impending despair that is coming your way.

Here we are blessed beyond measure! You know what to say to your children or grandchildren. You know who to point them to. You know where your hope resides, where

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joy exists, and you know that they have it in Christ. You can cast out their fears and their doubts so that they never have despair through the gifts of Christ, Word and Sacrament, hymnody, liturgy, Creeds, Small Catechism - you get the point. What about this statement during the part of the service with the Sacrament of the Altar, "...with angels and arch angels and **ALL THE COMPANY OF HEAVEN...**" What does this teach us? How is this comforting?

When my mother died a number of years ago, the funeral was on a day that would follow the Sunday service. So, I went with my dad to the Sunday morning service at his LCMS church. For me on that Sunday, for a person who grew up in an LCMS church with page five and fifteen and later what is now Divine Service I and III that Emmaus uses, I was so looking forward to hearing those wonderful Gospel words spoken to remind me of the angels and arch angels and all the company of heaven, which for me personally was now my mom. It was going to strike me in a way that it had not before. But there was one problem. This was their "contemporary service" or their "service of praise" not entirely sure of the actual title, but you understand. There was no Proper Preface with those words and no Santus to follow. They had stripped the service of those parts along with many others and I was robbed! Of all the times I had said those words as a pastor or heard them as a congregant and just not paying that much attention, the one Sunday I needed to hear those words of comfort of the promises of Christ, they were not there!

This was the one Sunday that Heather Olsen's son needed to hear those words that he heard every Sunday since birth only now they would ring home like no other time had in the past... and they were gone. These are no simple words to throw away like yesterday's news or deleted like a post from a blog or YouTube video or passed by as some Tik Tok short. These words ARE the comforting truth of the Gospel, of the promises of Christ that we are united as one in Him, coming together with those who have gone before, the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, gathered around the gifts of Christ where He has promised to be. This is Christ connecting us in our Baptism as one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all and these words were removed. For what reason I do not know and still do not understand to this day. Did it save us a few seconds or a minute or two in the worship? Sure, I guess, but I have to tell you I would gladly give those minutes to hear those words spoken by the pastor, that my ears would hear them, my troubled heart comforted and my spirit lifted by the promises of Christ.

Maybe, just maybe, there is someone each Sunday, even just one person, who hears those short yet precious words, "...with angels and arch angels and all the company of heaven..." and is comforted by the promises of Christ fulfilled for those in heaven and awaited for those of us here on earth.

Such a small simple phrase repeated week after week and yet heard in the ears of our children convey such great hope and peace, maybe not today or tomorrow, but one day those words, hopefully, will come back to them when they need them. For those of us who are in Christ, for those of us who have the blessed gifts of Word and Sacrament, for those of us who have even memorized the hymns and liturgy and the creeds, and yes,

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even the Small Catechism, we have these treasures to answer the doubts that come in the death of a loved one. There are literally a hundred ways to answer that child who cries and wonders what happened to a loved one for those who have faith in Christ ultimately, they all lead to the same place; the cross and empty tomb, death and resurrection, body and blood given and shed. It all leads back to Christ and His work.

Praise be to God that we can pass this on to the next generations at Emmaus and have for 126 years! But there are those out there who have no answer for their children or for themselves. The adults may have left the faith or denied Christ if they once had faith, but those children are being denied a peace and comfort because they are not being taught by their parents or brought to God's House to hear His Word. Lord, have mercy upon them. These people are not as far away as you think. They live right next door or maybe in your own family.

May the God of all grace and mercy use us to bring that gift that we have to others, adult or child, so they would not just know the right answer to give when grieving, but that they would know of the One and believe in Christ Jesus who prepared a place for them and is coming back to take them with Him.

Through His grace alone,



Pastor Olsen



Deo Gratias

THANKS BE TO GOD

Board of Finance Update

Happy spring! As we enter the final quarter of our fiscal year, we continue to be on track with our budget and tithing continues to improve over last year. We thank everyone for all you are doing for Emmaus Lutheran Church, School and Pre-School.

In this issue of our newsletter, we want to feature a special giving opportunity which includes a match. **As we continue to move forward with the bell tower, we have an individual that has stepped up to help with final installation costs. The individual has offered to match up to \$17,500 in contributions towards the installation of the bells on the tower.**

Please note, this is in addition to a \$15,000 contribution made last year. So, if you have funds available over and above your usual tithing, please consider this opportunity to double your contribution towards making these 100+ year old bells again a part of Emmaus.

However, if this opportunity is not a good fit for you, there are other special giving opportunities available, and we will be happy to discuss them with you.

Finally, in addition to financial support, there are service opportunities that need support starting with mowing. Please let us know if you can help with this and more information is in the weekly News and Notes section of the bulletin. Same as with giving opportunities, if mowing is not a good fit for you, there are other volunteer opportunities, and we would be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you!

Gregg Kiess, Treasurer

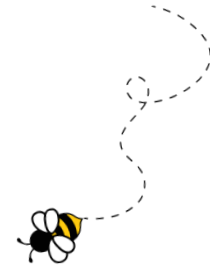
P.S. Watch News & Notes for the time and date of our next Finance Town Hall!



Letter from the President

The Three Bees

For those who missed the after-service announcements this past Sunday, I had to follow a delightful poetry presentation for LWML and an inspiring call to spend summer days helping care for our grounds. My mini *State of Emmaus* took on a spring-themed "Three Bees" update to share news on our efforts on Bylaws, the Bell tower, and Building our sanctuary. While these bees do not sting, we invite your prayerful consideration and support as we buzz faithfully along in the encore year following our 125th celebration.



Several members of our leadership team and staff attended a strategic planning workshop last fall. Emmaus had the largest turnout from the congregations in the region, and we arrived ready to roll up our sleeves! The series of conversations were both lively and direct as we discussed what we would truly like to accomplish as Emmaus, where we are not aligned, what our concerns and challenges are, as well as how we can set a unified path forward. We found an interesting twist to the exercise of identifying where our organization was in its life cycle which brought further clarity. We also were able to listen to what other congregations are contending with as well and came away with encouragement for being underway in the right direction. The conversation continued in Council as well as a few offsite gatherings to establish the framework for what we would like to accomplish.

To better align the governance of Emmaus with the congregation, school, and preschool that we are today and where we aspire to be in the future, the Council and various Boards are actively reviewing our existing by-laws. The overall structure for Emmaus was formed over 125 years ago when we had 1200 saints and lived in a simpler time with regard to the world outside our walls. To better fulfill our ministry goals, we are embarking on a prayerful examination to further improve the areas where we do well and shore up ones where we need to be more effective. Our boards and Council members are already a few months into the draft writing process. Next, we will convene small groups for particular areas to help us fill in any missing pieces. Following that will begin a public comment period within Emmaus along with a Voter's Assembly prior to adopting any changes where we can share our thought process on various changes and updates. Our goal is to align each board's function with an appropriate governance style (Does a given board perform a service, establish policies, or serve in an advisory capacity?). We also intend to make it easier for interested members to become involved at different levels based on the gifts and talents they have been blessed with by our Creator whether in service or leadership.

My second B pertained to the bell tower project. We successfully cleared two milestones in recent months as far as site review/ placement as well as the clean legal paperwork stage regarding titles and such. The next major milestone in the project will be zoning. Our new tower partner is very excited to share our story and design with



the city government. We will keep you posted on how you can support Emmaus as that time approaches. One final point I spoke about was that last year; a non-member neighbor shared in our excitement about restoring our bells to the greater Fort Wayne skyline with a generous donation as well as offering a matching gift opportunity of up to \$17,500 for 2026. If you are so moved, we appreciate your generosity in realizing this unexpected opportunity to help us to the finish line.

My final B addressed a question that regularly lands on the president's desk since we moved to our present site: "When are we going to build a dedicated sanctuary?"

While the Sanctnasion holds many a dear memory for our faithful, there are countless benefits to having a permanent place for worship services and spiritual care throughout the week. In the aforementioned strategic planning, this topic emerged as a challenge we need to address as soon as possible. As a result, the senior leadership team of Emmaus met with our representative from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in late January to begin a feasibility study for building a sanctuary. We shared the state of Emmaus as a group and individually what we see as hopes and challenges for a project of this undertaking. This "cart before the horse" approach will provide a number of alternatives for our voters to consider before we even get to sketches and blueprints. Some ideas will address affordability as well as how to approach the project - should we build it all at once, build in phases, and so on? Each proposal will have its merits and challenges, but having a concrete plan that everyone understands and can articulate will help us progress in constructive ways. Gregg and the Finance team submitted current year and financial information from previous years in February for LCEF to begin their analysis for us. As we receive the list from them to share with you, we will have some forums such as the Finance town hall meetings as well as in one or more Voters Meetings as this is ultimately our choice as congregation members for how to proceed and how soon that can be.



As always, we welcome your feedback and encourage you to talk with any member of Council.

Blessings,

Paul Stockinger

Paul Stockinger

President, Emmaus Lutheran Church

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

MARCH 29

PALM SUNDAY 9 AM

APRIL 2

MAUNDY THURSDAY 7 PM

APRIL 3

GOOD FRIDAY 7 PM

APRIL 5

EASTER VIGIL 6:30 AM
BREAKFAST 7:45 - 9 AM
EASTER FESTIVAL 9:30 AM





EASTER *Sunday*

APRIL 5

6:30 AM VIGIL SERVICE

7:45 – 9 AM EASTER BREAKFAST

9:30 AM FESTIVAL SERVICE

Letter from the Principal

Dear Emmaus Lutheran Church Family,

As we enter the final quarter of the school year, we are grateful for the many blessings God continues to pour out on our school. Spring has arrived, bringing renewed energy, beautiful weather, and a sense of excitement as we finish this year strong.

While the end of the year is in sight, our students are still deeply engaged in learning. **This season is an important time to continue growing, building skills, and preparing for what comes next.** Even as distractions can increase in the spring months, this is a valuable opportunity for students to stay focused and finish well.

Along with meaningful learning, this time of year is filled with many special activities, events, and opportunities. Students will participate in class trips, hands-on projects, and celebrations that help bring their learning to life and create lasting memories. These experiences enrich their education and remind us of the joy found in learning together.

Most importantly, everything we do is centered in sharing the love of Jesus. Each day, our teachers faithfully guide students not only in academics, but in faith—modeling Christ’s love in the classroom and helping students grow in their relationship with Him.

We are excited to welcome new families through school tours, sharing the blessing of a Christ-centered education with those who are exploring Emmaus for their children. We look forward to celebrating a very special milestone—125 years of Emmaus Lutheran School—at our upcoming Gala. What a wonderful opportunity to reflect on God’s faithfulness through generations!

Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support. Your partnership makes a lasting difference in the lives of our students. As we enjoy this beautiful spring season, we rejoice in the opportunity to serve, teach, and share the love of Christ each and every day.

God’s Blessings,
Esther Spanos
Principal



Women's Guild Update

LWML We are winding down Mites month here at Emmaus. Lisa is still able to take any mites gifts yet, as they are mailed after April 1st. If you have not done so, and want to give to this worthy annual gathering, please see her.

Pizza Hut Cards are still here to buy. They make super gifts and are honored in many Indiana communities (see list below)! Using it one time almost pays for the \$10 cost with so many choices - and it doesn't expire until Aug. 31, 2026.

Easter Breakfast is Sunday, April 5th, from 7:45 until 9:00 am. If you did not get to put your name and number attending on the sign-up sheet, please call Barb Kanning at: 432-5228. Glad to add your names. Volunteers for food and help are already done, so all you have to do is come! Donation baskets will be out to help pay expenses and any other bills.

Meetings. There is no April Guild meeting as it is not needed. However, the Guild will meet on Wednesday, May 13th at 9:00am. There will be lots of discussion and planning ahead for upcoming events. Please read below and give any member your input on the following:

1. Church and School Picnic -- date? menu ideas? games, etc.? **Please give us your opinions and/or ideas on these topics.**
2. November Fundraiser before Thanksgiving - Dessert Choices - We will do one of these. **Let us know your pick:** Kringles, LaBraid Strudel, or Cake Rolls?
3. The Cookie Fair date has been set so get the word out. The office gets calls already from our community shoppers asking. It will be on Saturday, December 12th, from 9:00 am—Noon.

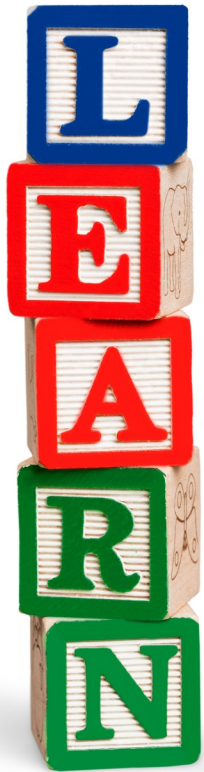
We have lots of events and work ahead, but the benefits help funding so much!

Once again, thank you for your support!

Barb Kanning, Secretary

P.S. We look forward to your feedback on the questions listed above—please feel free to share your input with any Guild member!





Preschool News

Preschool will be busy the next couple of months. **On Monday, April 13 we will be having Grandparent's Day!** Every year we have a couple of children who do not have grandparents in the area and need an "adopted" grandparent for the morning. **If you would be interested in being an "adopted" grandparent that morning, please see me and I will match you up with a child. The time commitment that day would be from 8:30-11:00 a.m.**

On Tuesday, April 21 all three Pre K classes will be joining the other Lutheran School Pre Ks for a fun morning of activities at Concordia Lutheran High School as we celebrate the Week of the Young Child.

On Monday, May 4 we will celebrate our Mommy and Me Morning. Our moms will join us for a special snack and some activities that will celebrate them!

Tuesday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m. will be our Preschool Closing program with PreK graduation! We wear caps and gowns, and it is the cutest thing ever and the congregation is welcome to come enjoy the graduation!

Wednesday May 27 is our traditional end of the year trip to the Ft. Wayne Children's Zoo. We spend the morning with our friends at the zoo! It's always a fun way to end the school year!

Thank you for always supporting the Preschool with your prayers, paper towel rolls, and other craft items!

In Christ,

Joann Olsen
Preschool Director

News from LWML

First, thank you for all of your Mites donations!

Fort Wayne 3 Zone Rally : All ladies of the congregation are encouraged to attend!

Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026

Theme: Power and Glory through Christ (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Location: St. Michael Lutheran Church

Address: 2131 Getz Road, Fort Wayne, IN

Registration and Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Begins: 9:00 a.m.

Registration Fee: \$7.00

Speakers: Rev. Jeffrey and Deaconess Gina Teeple

Gifts from the Heart In-Gathering: Monetary Gift in support of Rev. Jeffrey and Deaconess Gina Teeple's mission work in Eurasia and small Biblical children's books, (such as the ARCH books) and Biblical activity and coloring books for use in Missionary Care Packages.



Please RSVP to Lisa Kanning (260)-446-6700, or email me at kanninglisa@gmail.com by April 3, 2026.

Thrivent Reminder

If you have not done so already, please contact Thrivent for your 2025 Choice Dollars. Be sure to designate **Emmaus Fort Wayne**, as there are two other Indiana congregations that share our name!

If you have an online account, contact thrivent.com/tthriventchoice. If you do not, call 1-800-847-4836 and say, "Thrivent Choice" at the phone prompt. A representative will direct your earned dollars. Remember, the product(s) you own earn you this money, so don't let it go to waste!

Thank you!

Barb Kanning

Congregational Advocate

Questions? 260-432-5228



Make your own

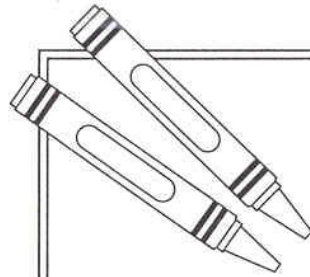


You will need:

- ⇒ a piece of cardboard cut from a cereal box
- ⇒ solid color contact paper (a little larger than the cardboard)
- ⇒ yarn
- ⇒ paper punch
- ⇒ watercolor marker (non-permanent)
- ⇒ scissors

What to do:

1. Cover the cardboard with contact paper.
2. Punch 2 holes in the top.
3. Tie a piece of yarn in the holes to hang it.
4. Tie a piece of yarn around a watercolor/washable marker. Hang it from one of the holes also.
5. Write an Easter message for your family!



Just for KIDS

Springtime Messages

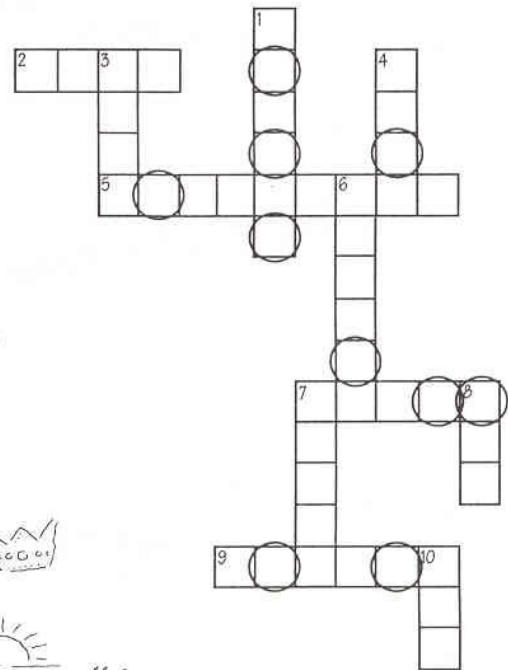
We see many Christian symbols and signs during Lent and Easter. Write the name of each picture in the boxes. Unscramble the letters that are circled to find the message that these symbols and signs bring us each spring.

ACROSS

- 2.
- 5.
- 7.
- 9.

DOWN

- 1.
- 3.
- 4.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 10.



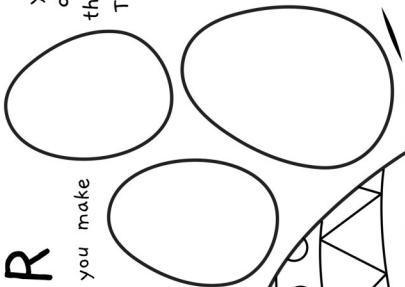
“J
I
!”

Missing phrase: Jesus is alive!
 Across: 2. Palm, 5. Butterfly, 7. Cross, 9. Candle
 Down: 1. Leaves, 3. Lamb, 4. Nail, 6. Flower, 7. Crown, 8. Sun, 10. Egg

EASTER

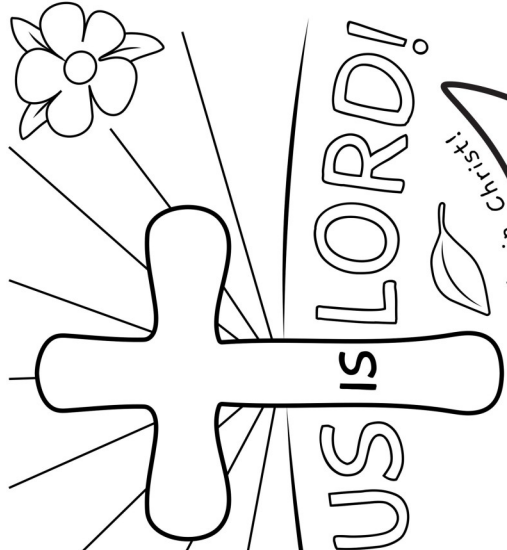
How many different words can you make using these letters?

Make your own design on these eggs. Then color them!



DID YOU KNOW?

Eggs are a sign of new life, just like our new life in Christ!



HAPPY EASTER!

You can have new life too! Use the alphabet code and your Bible to solve the puzzle and find out how.

Can you find 9 other symbols of new life on this page? Circle each one, then color them!

"IF YOU C _____ WITH YOUR
3 15 14 6 5 19 19

MOUTH THAT _____ IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN
10 5 19 21 19

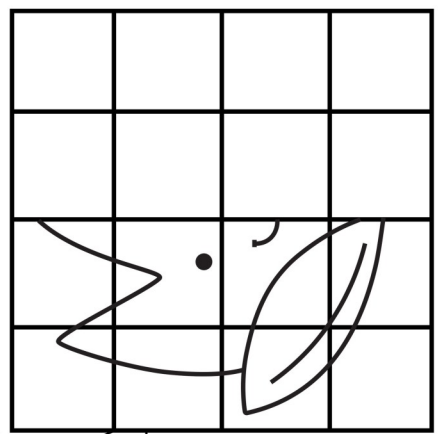
YOUR _____ THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE
8 5 1 18 20

DEAD, YOU WILL BE _____"
19 1 22 5 4

ROMANS 10:9, ESV

HE IS RISEN!

Matthew 28:6



Use the grid to draw the other side!



He is not here, for...



2025-2026 Officers, Board Chairmen & Head Elders of Emmaus Lutheran Church

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Bill Bradley

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Gregg Kiess

Board of Parish Publicity & Promotion:

Member-led

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{Vacant}

Emmaus School Board:

Paul Stockinger, Acting Chairman

Emmaus Lutheran Church

8626 Covington Road
Fort Wayne IN 46804

Phone: 260.459.7722

www.emmausfortwayne.org

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

