



The Heart of Emmanuel

At the end of October we celebrate Halloween. It has become the second most celebrated holiday in the U.S. just behind Christmas. I don't begrudge it. It is a reflection of our current culture. We need to pay attention to it and understand why it is so appealing to our community.

The reason I mention it is that it didn't start off as Halloween. As you know, that term is a contraction of "All Hallows Eve", the day before "All Saints Day" on November 1st. All Hallows Eve is a vigil (a day of prayer and fasting) that the church holds to honor the "saints" who have gone before us. Our congregation used to do a reading of all those who had died in the previous year as a way of honoring their service to Christ and the church. Much of the Christian Church has found different ways to honor those who have gone before us. None of us have arrived here on our own and we are simply carrying on the "ministry of reconciliation" that Jesus gave to those who have gone before us.

This fall our theme in worship is "The Heart of Emmanuel". We are endeavoring to communicate the very heart of who Emmanuel Presbyterian Church has been from its earliest days to now. The "Way Forward" process has identified four aspects of our character or "code" that I've been writing about and now we are preaching about. We are a people: Experiencing the Grace of Jesus; Caring Deeply; Bridging Differences; Moving Beyond Church. When these characteristics are present in healthy ways, we are being our true and best

elves. Those involved in The Way Forward consulting gatherings know that this doesn't completely define us, but that these are things that must continue for us to align ourselves with the mission God gave us years ago.

So why did I start off with Halloween and All Hallows Eve? I believe that the way we honor the past is by taking the resources others have given us and continue the mission and ministry that God has given us for the Conejo Valley and to the ends of the earth. Much of what we do will be to continue various aspects of the ministry we've always done, welcoming others, showing mercy and grace, being generous with our gifts. Much of what needs to be done is to find new ways, like the saints who went before us, to extend God's grace to those who don't know it is available to them.

Let's consider how to stir each other up to good works and so honor those who have served Christ faithfully through this congregation. Each week you will hear about past and present servants who are demonstrating the Heart of Emmanuel. We hope that inspires each of us to do our part as well.

Faithfully yours,
Craig



Halloween at Home

Scary! It is time for Halloween! Many times people think of Halloween as something only for children (to collect free candy) and young adults (to take part in wild parties). But it is also a great time for all of us to love and care for our community.

A few years ago, I lived in a house next to a high school and across the street from a suspected drug dealer. Halloween meant loud noises in the street and smashed pumpkins all over. So my roommates and I decided to spend the next Halloween in our front yard. We set up tables with food and lots of pumpkins, brought a bunch of lamps out, and collected all the knives we owned. We invited friends to join us in a pumpkin carving party.



Continued on Page 2

The Heart of Emmanuel in Action!

On Sunday we heard from Jill Postma, the U.S. Executive Director for the Esther School. She shared with us the wonderful work happening in Zambia around the Esther School. It desires to enrich the lives of the children being taught and the surrounding community.

Jill brought 21 sponsor cards with her on Sunday. We had the opportunity to sponsor as many as 21 children on Sunday. During the sermon I encouraged you to operate out of the grace you've been receiving in Jesus and to continue Emmanuel's narrative of deeply caring for the educational, spiritual, and health needs of children not just in our community but in Zambia too.

Well, guess what? By the time Jill was sharing about the Esther School to our children's ministry, 20 out of the 21 children had a sponsor from Emmanuel. I was floored when I heard about it. It is no real surprise though really; extending grace is part of our values, our DNA, our code at Emmanuel. It is at the heart of who you are. We are our best selves when we extend grace to others. You've done it in the past. You are doing it now, and I am confident Jesus will continue to create good works before us in our future together!

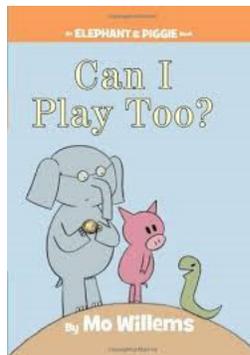
If you would like to sponsor a child, or continue to support the Esther School, please contact Dan VanGent directly at dtvangent@gmail.com

With Hope and Joy,

David Anderson

Preschool Book Drive

We would love to add some new books to the Preschooler's little library. These books will be used during Sunday school to support our teaching about who God is, and how we can reflect his image to those around us. Children this age love illustrations and would really enjoy the books. Come by the preschool room (Room 1) after service during October to check out our "Book Wish List Tree" and see if you would like to donate one of the books we are looking for!



VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE!
emmanuelthousandoaks.org!

Halloween at Home - Continued from Page 1

During that evening we had conversations with kids and teens who kept returning to the only house on the street with lights on and candy to give out. And for some reason, the next morning our carved pumpkins were still pumpkin shaped.

It was a simple experiment. My friends and I had a great time, we met some of our reclusive neighbors, and it became a tradition for our little group. We have all moved on to other places now, but it left me wondering what good might happen in our communities if more of us spent Halloween in the streets or our front yards instead of at church events or hiding in darkened homes. Halloween is a time when people are more willing to interact with each other. Let's take advantage of this great opportunity to meet them and celebrate with them. Buy the good candy, invite your neighbors, make hot cider, put on a silly costume, (or do your amazing idea), and enjoy!

Debbie Barber

Senior Luncheon, Wed., October 18, Starts at 12:00 Noon

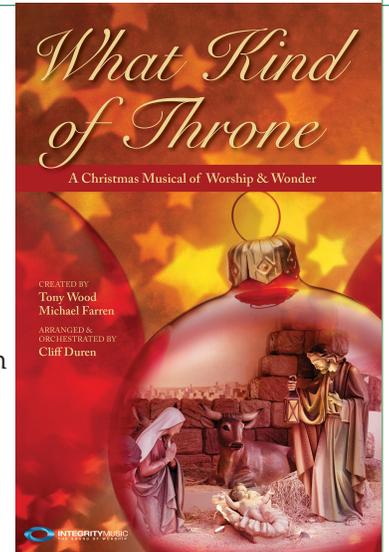
Travel the paths of memory and reminisce with the HUMDINGERS, the choral group from the Goebel Center, led by our own Pat Hufschmidt. They'll be singing the "old stuff" we grew up on. Who is eligible to attend? You are, if you consider yourself a senior (no "cards" here!), and you'd like to share our good time of food and fellowship. Our musician guests will be joining us for the luncheon, so please bring a generous quantity of salad or other dish to share and your own table service. Beverage and dessert will be provided and other guests are welcome.

Christmas Holidays - A Time for Singing

Psalm 108 says, "I will sing and make music with all my soul... I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples". Christmastime is the perfect time to sing and praise God among the peoples. That is exactly what Emmanuel's Christmas Choir will do when the Elation Series presents "What Kind of Throne" on Sunday, December 10, at 5pm in the sanctuary.

The entire congregation is invited to participate. If you like to sing and would like to be a part of this special Christmas musical of worship and wonder, come sing with the choir. All are welcome and encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to join in the fun as well. Rehearsals are from 7-8pm on Thursday evenings. The Christmas choir will be singing artful arrangements of some well-loved carols and seasonal anthems.

For those who don't sing but would like to be a part of this magical event, they are encouraged to talk with Lance Merrill, Emmanuel's Director of Music Ministry. Speaking parts are available, and people with writing and production talent are also needed. Contact Lance weekdays through the church office.



An Inch Wide and a Mile Deep

As we are going through our fall series on Emmanuel's code, Craig thought it would be a good idea to share how it has played out in my area. It was very intriguing to go through the process with the consultants and to realize why certain things have clicked and why some youth have decided to invest at Emmanuel. The strands of the code that I see play out the most with the youth, are in relation to "Caring Deeply" and "Bridging Differences".

If you have read my articles in the past or have heard me talk about the youth, you might be familiar with my phrase *an inch wide and a mile deep*. As a matter of fact, if you check out the youth page on our new website, this is the title of the page! I have never been concerned about how many kids show up. Rather, I have tried to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and cared for. This has resulted in a group that, to no surprise, welcomes, values, and cares for others.

The group is a great picture of differences having been bridged. Not only are they quite diverse themselves, but their hearts are for others. While I

could go on and on about their volunteering and the trips they have been on, one example is

indicative of both strands of this code. Every year the high school students attend the Mission Conference that our Presbytery hosts. During the past two years there has been a seminar offered on improving relationships between Christians and Muslims, and both years the entire group of students have gone to these on their own (I went to a different session both times).

This code is embedded deeply in this place. I have discovered it multiple times, since I started looking for it. How about you? When have you experienced differences being bridged or someone being cared for when they were at their lowest?

Love,
Jared Del Dosso



Deacons' Corner: We Bid Adieu to Our Dear Friend

David Schooley has been a Deacon since May 2015. He's served as part of the Hospitality Ministry, and last year he was the vice moderator. This year he's been serving as the moderator of the Deacons. However, he was recently offered a promotion at his work and has accepted the position. Unfortunately for Emmanuel, his new position takes him to Akron, Ohio, where he'll be overseeing a major project for a couple of years. Then he will be transferred to France where he and his wife, Claudine, originally met. So, for the Schooleys, it's a wonderful opportunity for new adventures in this new season of their lives.

We shall miss the Schooleys at Emmanuel, and the Deacons will definitely miss David as our moderator. David became a Deacon because he had been involved in the coffee ministry, but he wanted to get more involved in the church and do something more significant. So, he was delighted when he was asked to serve as a Deacon. David played on the church softball team, and the family went on the Navajo Mission Trip over spring break a few years ago. The family has also participated in Carp, camping on the beach for the weekend while fellowshiping with their fellow Emmanuelites.

David's wife, Claudine, is Buddy Break's organizer, and their girls grew up in Emmanuel's youth program. Jordane was active in the Puppet Ministry, and she could often be seen playing the cajon at Sunday morning services. Both Rachele and Jordane also helped out with VBS as well, and they both have worked in the Emmanuel Office.

David said that accepting the promotion was a difficult decision



to make because they didn't want to leave everyone here. But they hope to come back and visit when they can. David wished he could say goodbye in person. Unfortunately, the way things fell, he wasn't able to do that because it happened so fast, and when the offer was extended, they had family at the house and vacation scheduled. Then he was needed in Ohio.

One of the things David will miss the most as a Deacon is serving communion to Emmanuel's shut-ins. He said, "I really enjoyed serving offsite communion. It gave me a happiness and appreciation that I can serve God by serving these people."

David enjoyed getting to know different people in his role as a Deacon, and he liked supporting the church in that capacity. When asked what advice he would give the Deacons, David said, "Stay active. Stay involved. Remember that it's not up to you to do all the ministries. It's about coordinating and getting others involved. Lots of people want to get involved, so don't be afraid to ask. Tasks may seem daunting, but they are not meant to be. It's supposed to be a team effort, and when the team is involved, it's not hard at all!"

David has already left for Akron, but Claudine will be here through the end of the year. Thank you, Schooleys, for your service to Emmanuel, and we wish you all the best. You have our love as you begin this new season of your life.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 10/7 Buddy Break, EPC Campus
9am arrival for volunteers
10am-1pm, Kids Here
- 10/18 Senior Potluck Luncheon
Humdingers Perform
12 Noon, Fireside Room

Coming in November

- 11/4 Buddy Break, EPC Campus
9am arrival for volunteers
10am-1pm, Kids Here
- 11/5 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 11/5 One Intergenerational Svc.
10am, Sanctuary
Congregational Meeting
following the service
- 11/15 Senior Potluck Luncheon
12 Noon, Fireside Room
- 11/22 Thanksgiving Eve Service
7pm, Sanctuary

Groups Meeting at EPC

Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays at 10am, Room 6

Men's Bible Study

Fridays at 6:30am, Youth Room

MOPS & Mom's Next - Mother's of

Preschoolers & Elementary age,

2nd & 4th Wednesdays

MOTS - Moms of Teens & Beyond,

1st & 3rd Wednesdays-12pm, Youth Rm

ROMEOS - (Retired older men

eating out), Thursdays 8am at

the Newbury Park Denny's

Wendy Off Ramp from 101 Fwy



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Buddy Break Needs Your Help!

Buddy Break is a growing ministry at Emmanuel. Families that have kids with disabilities, are given a few hours or respite on the first Saturday of each month. Currently, we are looking for a new co-coordinator, an administrative person and additional buddies to partner with our VIP Kids. Please prayerfully consider volunteering. For information email buddybreak.epc@gmail.com