

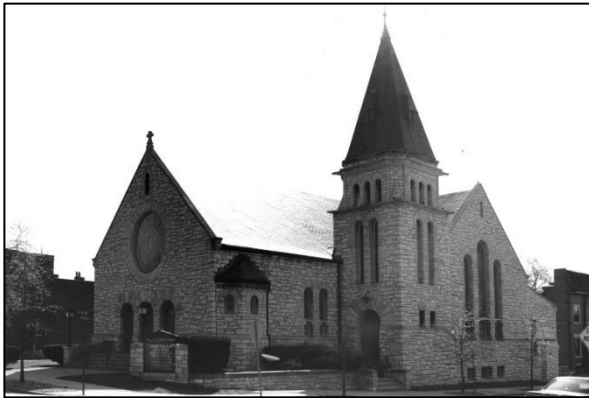


Emmaus Evangelical Lutheran Church U.A.C.

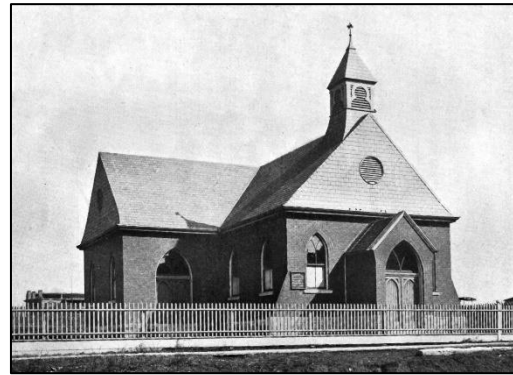
The Emmaus Lutheran

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:27



2600 Armand Pl, circa 1894–1902. © St. Louis Genealogical Society used this photo with permission. Photo courtesy of Landmarks Association.



Jefferson Ave. and Armand Pl, circa 1889–1894. © St. Louis Genealogical Society used this photo with permission. Photo courtesy of Eden Theological Seminary Archives

Do Not Be Afraid

Rev. Scot Kinnaman, on behalf of the Emmaus Council

All in attendance at Emmaus' voter's meeting on July 30 unanimously voted to suspend Divine Services held by the Emmaus congregation. This will take effect after the Divine Service on September 3, 2017. Arriving at this decision came after hearing the report from Congregation President Justin Ohmie and joining in group conversation. Justin shared more about discussions that have taken place over the last several months with our South St. Louis Circuit Visitor Rev. Bill Wilson, area clergy, the Missouri District President Rev. Lee Hagan, and the Emmaus Council. **Details of these evolving discussions are found on page three.**

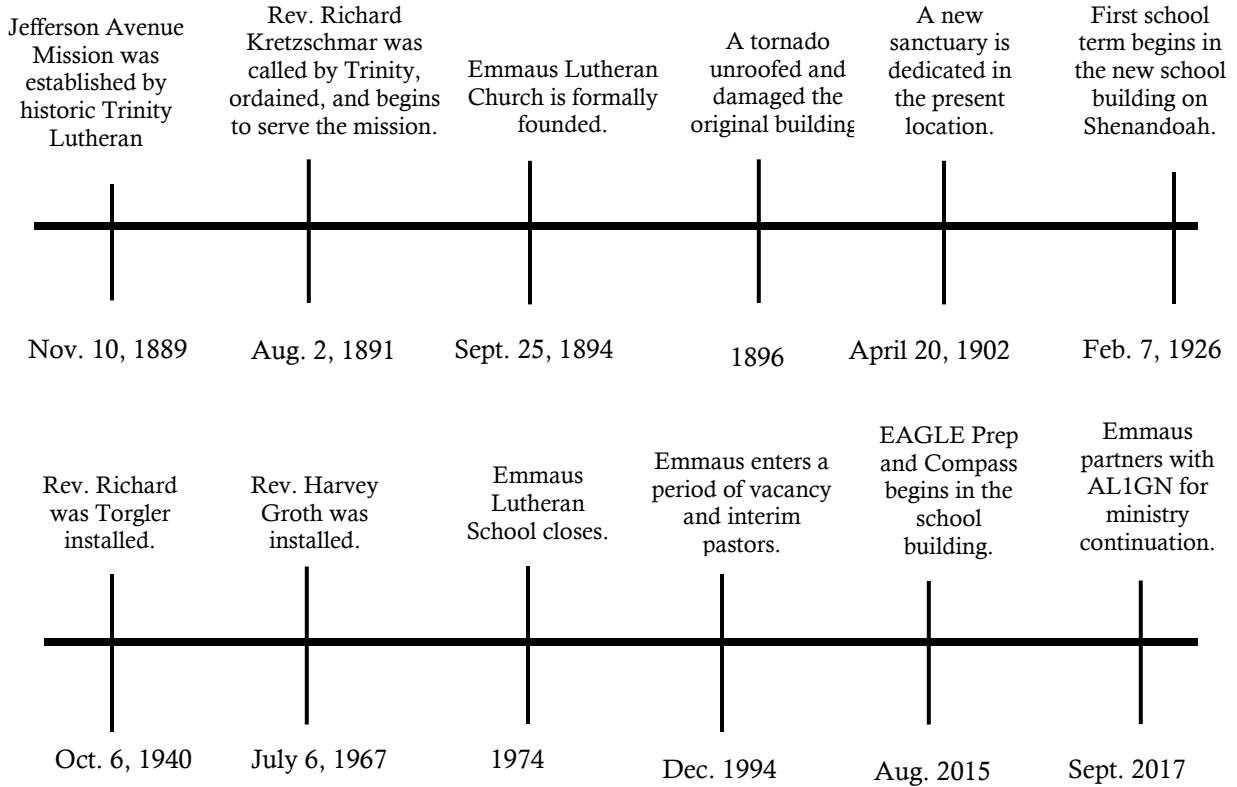
As baptized children of God, change is nothing for us to fear. Just as a seed must die to bear much fruit, so change and death can lead to abundant life. This can be just as true for the life of a congregation as it is

for individuals. ***Do not be afraid.*** Be strong and courageous. God has led you this far, and God has led Emmaus for one hundred twenty-eight years. While we don't know exactly what He has in mind for you, or for Emmaus, we are reminded that God will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5).

The purpose of the council's discussions was never to close Emmaus. However, we have had to acknowledge our mortality and the physical limitations we have as a very small congregation in order to think through options and to understand that in some situations, ending one chapter in life can be a faithful and life-giving decision.

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A Walk Through Time—Key Events at Emmaus



Interested in historical records from Emmaus?

The St. Louis Genealogical Society recently indexed our church records. Their website includes these records in the date ranges suggested by the state of Missouri. The site's "search" function provides some information, and a membership allows you to access a scan of the church record book.

<https://stlgs.org/research-2/congregations/lutheran/lutheran-churches/emmaus-lutheran-church>

Passing on the Legacy of Emmaus Lutheran Church

Justin Ohmie, Emmaus Council President

The Emmaus Council had a very productive meeting on Wednesday, August 16. We had representation of Emmaus, the Missouri District, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, EAGLE schools, AL1GN, and the Lutheran Foundation.

Rev. Bill Geis, Assistant to the President for Congregational and Mission Services, expressed the MO district's desire that ministry continue in some new fashion at Emmaus. Emmaus will pause, not disband. His hope and plan is that the church remains legally chartered and in Synod to preserve Emmaus for a future congregation restart/reboot. He believes that a "Sabbath rest" or time to "lay fallow" for about a year would be an important step in this process.

The vision presented is that Emmaus-appointed officers work with AL1GN, a group of pastors and lay people in the South City area (currently headed by Rev. David Lewis), that works together on plans and action items for ministry reboots and new formations. AL1GN has volunteered to take on much of the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the church building. During the next year or so, they will formulate and execute a plan for a new ministry at Emmaus. Emmaus would only need a few officers during this time. Once the new ministry is established, Emmaus officers would step down in involvement and transfer the building's care over to them.

Members of Emmaus are encouraged to find spiritual care at LCMS sister congregations even if they would like to be involved with this new ministry when it is established. Feel free to speak with me (justin.ohmie@gmail.com) or Rev. Scot Kinnaman (prkinnaman@gmail.com; 314.608.6842) if you would like to know more about this Emmaus transition or desire help finding a congregation for you to attend.

I am excited that we were able to find an organization that would like to take over maintenance of the church and has plans to see that ministry stays in the neighborhood. This is our best opportunity to ensure the legacy of Emmaus lives on.



What is AL1GN?

- ❖ AL1GN began at the initiative of the Missouri District in 2012 as a model for developing an urban mission strategy for St. Louis.
- ❖ The group provides connections among LCMS congregations, ministries, and the missional leaders who serve them in the greater St. Louis area so that more can be accomplished *together*.
- ❖ They seek to identify possible strengths that could be shared and areas of challenge that might be addressed in city churches, meet with key leaders to assess possible places of mission engagement, gather lists of needs and possible serving opportunities to share with others, and develop a directory of non-profit partner ministries for St. Louis LCMS congregations.

AL1GN would like to reach out to friends of Emmaus with occasional updates. **If you are uninterested in receiving these communications, please call 641.373.4972 or email aliciamrolland@gmail.com by September 15, 2017. Thank you!**

Do Not Be Afraid: God Leads the Way

(Continued from page 1)

After acknowledging and accepting that our council is burnt out and cannot continue as we have with so few church members, we began to pray about options for the future. We have pondered and discussed what a sustainable mission and ministry at Emmaus might look like and what the next steps should be. At this time, the council doesn't have all the answers, but we are confident the Comforter will open doors and lead Emmaus into a future that will be a blessing to her community and to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

God's promise to Joshua as he faced an unknown future is still God's promise to us: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Joshua and The Promised Land

Israel became a great nation while in Egyptian captivity. Then God called Moses to lead them out of Egypt into the promised land of Canaan. Moses led the people through the wilderness for forty years. He led them to capture the land east of the Jordan. Then Moses died in sight of the promised land.

How could God allow this to happen? Why didn't God raise Moses from the dead? Moses had been the loyal leader of God's people for

forty years, and now, at the time of their deliverance, he was dead. The people of Israel were filled with fear and anxiety.

Joshua, who had served as Moses' assistant for years, was confused and caught in an extremely difficult situation. If Joshua was expecting consolation and sympathy from God, he was mistaken. God's response to Joshua: "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel." (Joshua 1:2).

God was proclaiming the end of an era but also the continuation of the promise He had made to Moses—the same promise of a place and a people that He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God's brutal honesty with Joshua can be a lesson for us today. God's people have always had great responsibilities. We do not have the same challenges or charge that God gave Joshua. But we do have a charge from God, and we will face challenges.

Like the people of Israel, we can also get discouraged and fearful, thinking that we cannot succeed. Nothing should be of greater encouragement, when we face these responsibilities, than the assurance that God will help us accomplish them.

As the council and the Missouri District talked, we encouraged each other to be honest about the realities of Emmaus. We mourn over a possible lost future, but we also have cause for celebration. Could God not only be proclaiming the end of one era, but also continuing His promise in a new way? The lessons Joshua received from God about tough times can be relevant for us today.

"Just as a seed must die to bear much fruit, so change and death can lead to abundant life."

Having received instructions and encouragement from the Lord, Joshua began to prepare to cross the Jordan into Canaan. He commanded the officers to instruct the people in the camp to prepare provisions and be ready in three days to cross the Jordan and go into the promised land. Joshua told his people to get prepared and be ready to move forward.

The Temptation of the Good Old Days

“The good old days!” How we humans long for the “good old days,” even though we know that they will never return, and that maybe they weren’t really all that good anyway. In our churches, we also reminisce about how wonderful it used to be back in the “good old days.” It is understandable that we would want to return to a more secure past. If only we could have more families, develop a new program, restart a Sunday school, or call a pastor, then maybe everything would be better. Many of us would rather long for the “good old days” than face difficult realities in the present.

God told Joshua, “Don’t live in the past. Prepare for the future. Move on.” God wanted the Israelites to look forward, not back. He also wants us to look forward, not back. He wants us to prepare for the future that we cannot see.

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan, Solomon eventually built the temple in Jerusalem. It didn’t last long, however. A conquering army destroyed the temple and took many Israelites into captivity. Generations later, returning Israelites began the process of rebuilding their lives, their city, and their temple.

As the new temple was being built, those who remembered the glory of Solomon’s temple wept. They wept because they felt that the new temple could never compare to Solomon’s temple. They wept, not realizing that their longing for the past had shaken their faith in the power of God and His ability to shape a new and glorious future.

We may also weep as we long for our past. The dream of reliving the “good old days” by returning to a period of growth and vitality is strong at Emmaus. Again, this is understandable,

for God has done wonderful things through our congregation’s one hundred twenty-eight years. Faith has been nurtured and mission has been accomplished through the life of this congregation. But the reality may be that God is telling us, just as he told the Israelites: “Don’t look back at the way things were, but look forward to see what I will do.”



Be Strong and Courageous

God instructed Joshua what to do and how to do it. He told him to observe the law as revealed to Moses, to study it diligently, and to obey it. It is much easier to be brave when you have received proper guidance and instruction. We often speak of people who act out of the “courage of their convictions.” But it is hard to act courageously when we’re not sure what is the right thing to do.

When we faced the reality that our congregation may be in crisis, we felt overwhelmed with guilt. When we faced the possibility that the ministry we knew may be ending, we begin to ask ourselves: What did we do wrong? Were we not diligent enough? Did we not work enough? What could we do to return us to the “good old days”?

Do Not Be Afraid: God Leads the Way

(Continued from page 5)

And we are still asking these questions today, even as you may be. But as we ask these questions, also consider: Was God's plan for the Israelites completed once Moses died? Or was God preparing for a new era, a different beginning?

God said to Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses" (Joshua 1:3). God promised that He would be with Joshua, just as he had been with Moses. He would not leave or forsake him. As with Joshua, we too need encouragement and assurance that we can succeed in God's work.

In struggling with the reality of Emmaus, we had to consider the possibility that God has accomplished everything He intended through Emmaus as it now exists. Could God be telling us that ministry as Emmaus has known it is done and that a new ministry is being formed?

The harsh reality is that individual congregations were not meant to last forever. The kingdom of God is forever, but earthly church bodies are not. Emmaus Lutheran Church is here because of the legacy of congregations that came before us. Through the council's discussions, it seems that it is time for us to pass the legacy forward in a new fashion, a new form, a new ministry. As God said to Joshua, "Don't live in the past. Prepare for the future. Move on."

Preparing for the future and moving on may mean letting go! Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:2). These words should remind us that preparing for the future may be difficult. Remember that the Church has faced tough times throughout its history.

In the life of a church, no issue can be tougher than considering the end of an era.

Will this present situation at Emmaus cause pain, anxiety, confusion, and doubt? Yes. Will you become discouraged and fearful, thinking that this new way cannot succeed? Possibly.

But as we travel through this process, remember to celebrate all that God has accomplished through Emmaus over the years. And remember that, as with Joshua, God will never forsake us. As the psalmist writes,

"God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the
earth gives way, though the mountains
be moved into the heart of the sea"
(Psalm 46:1-2).

Yes, we are planning to suspend our regular Divine Services. But Emmaus' future is not without hope. God still has a plan and a purpose for Emmaus, just as He has a purpose and a plan for you. The kingdom will prevail.

God's goal for Joshua was to lead the people into the land of Canaan. Joshua was filled with fear and anxiety over this goal. However, God promised Joshua that He would be with him. With hope and the promise of God's presence, Joshua was able to be strong and courageous.

What is God's goal for Emmaus? We don't yet fully know. We can face the tough times of our unknown future knowing that God has offered us the promised land of eternal life, and He has assured us that we can successfully reach it. This alone should make us strong and brave enough to face our future together. As Martin Luther penned in his famous hymn, "The Kingdom's ours forever."

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*Just a few notes from
Jefferson Avenue*



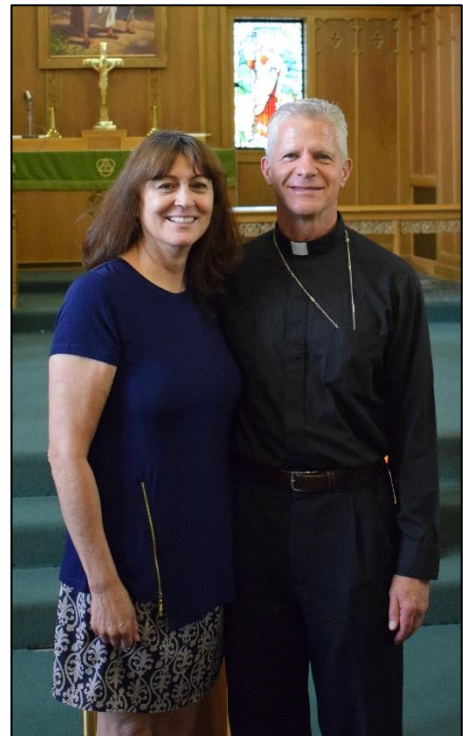
Farewell to the Golters!

On July 16, Pastor Randy Golter served Emmaus for a final time as vacancy pastor. Pastor and his wife, Elizabeth, became members at Emmaus in April 2014. Following Pastor John Hellwege's departure in late July 2015, Pastor Golter stepped in as vacancy pastor for nearly two years. Pastor and Elizabeth now reside in Davenport, IA, where he serves as the Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church.



Top: Emmaus Council President Justin Ohmie presents Pastor Golter with a card and gift from the congregation after the Divine Service on July 16. *Right:* Pastor and Elizabeth.

*We thank and praise
God for the gift of the
Golters among us!*



Emmaus Lutheran Church

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St. Louis, MO 63104

emmaus-stl.org

Emmaus Lutheran Church

Summer 2017

“Grant then, O God,
Your will be done,
That when the church
bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith
may come
Where Christ His
message is
bringing...”

Built on the Rock
LSB 645:5

