

Dear Emmaus Family,

October 9, 2021

*There is **one** body and **one** Spirit,
just as you were called to the **one** hope of your calling,
one Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.
(Ephesians 4:4-6)*

The words written here remind us of our commonality. What unites us as people of God is at the very core of our being. We are united by our God: Father – Son – and Holy Spirit. We are bound together through the water of Baptism. We are joined through the witness of our faith as we live into the fullness of our calling.

The Florida-Bahamas Synod of the ELCA will be meeting on Friday and Saturday of this week to conduct important business for the church. The Assembly was originally scheduled to be held in person, but with COVID variants, climbing positivity rates and the uncertainty of mass gatherings, this annual meeting for clergy and laypeople was postponed and rescheduled as a Zoom event. It's less than ideal, but the Synod takes the Coronavirus, and the potential for transmission of the disease very seriously.

We find strength *in* and *with* one another. This is why we are better together than when we are isolated and alone. The world pandemic has stolen yet another occasion to gather and celebrate as we will now gather around computer screens, tablets and smart phones to conduct God's work in the church.

Representing Emmaus Lutheran at Synod Assembly with me this year are Russell and Nancy Grant, and Annette Fuller, our Council President. We are planning to meet at the church to support one another and to share thoughts as the business of the Synod is determined. I ask for your prayers for the Synod and for the voting Assembly members – for wisdom, vision, and compassion for all.

This week at Emmaus:

Sat., Oct. 9

5 p.m. – Sanctuary Worship

6:30 p.m. – Portico Worship (outside – bring your lawn chair)

Sun., Oct. 10

10 a.m. – Sanctuary Worship

11 a.m. – Adult Study: 1 Maccabees (Fellowship Hall or via Zoom)

Mon., Oct. 11

Noon – AA meeting

7 p.m. – Cub Scouts

Tue., Oct. 12

10 a.m. to noon – Food Pantry distribution

10 a.m. – Worship and Music meeting (via Zoom conferencing)

Noon – AA meeting

2 p.m. – Finance meeting (via Zoom conferencing)

6:30 p.m. – Boy Scouts

Wed., Oct. 13

Noon – AA meeting

Thur., Oct. 14

Noon – AA meeting

6:30 p.m. – Boy Scouts: planning meeting

Fri., Oct. 15

Noon – AA meeting

Noon to 6:30 p.m. – Synod Assembly (via Zoom conferencing)

Sat., Oct. 16

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – Synod Assembly (Zoom)

5 p.m. – Sanctuary Worship

6:30 p.m. – Portico Worship

COVID-19 numbers have dropped again slightly. It is my sincere hope to be able to sing together next week.

I receive calls weekly from individuals who are struggling with the stresses of life, now exacerbated by the Coronavirus. Many have found it much more difficult to find their center and strength.

First of all, I remind you that when you suffer from the challenges of life – and the additional challenges that come with separation from the pandemic – you are not alone. Others are going through the same thing as you are.

Secondly, I remind you of our Stephen Ministers who are prepared to share the load of your suffering with you. You may receive more information about our Stephen Ministry by calling my cell phone: 386-682-7926

Thirdly, I look to the scriptures for hope and help. The scripture at the beginning of this email is a good text for us as we look for something to ground us and give us

strength. The passage reminds us that we are all a part of God's creation. It reminds us that we all belong to the one body. It reminds us that God is in everything and in every one.

May the God of our salvation be upon you this week, giving to you every good gift and blessing you abundantly.

Grace upon grace,
~Pastor Mark