

THE EMMAUS ENCOUNTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF EMMAUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

FALMOUTH, ME

It's August Already??!!

Summer is winding down, and yet it feels like we are standing on the verge of new things.

The world's ongoing chaos can feel overwhelming, and yet we believe that God is here—with us, still creating hope.

Emmaus is alive with possibility, ready to respond to whatever God places before us. As we look toward fall, I'm filled with anticipation for what lies ahead. Some familiar traditions are returning, and some new opportunities are beginning to take shape. Together, they invite us to grow in faith, deepen relationships, and discover fresh ways of participating in God's work among us.



This fall we'll begin a weekly Bible study, likely on Monday evenings, following the lectionary readings for the coming Sunday. Whether you've studied scripture your whole life or are simply curious, I hope you'll join us. We'll share details as soon as the plans are finalized.

Another new offering being considered is **Creative Contemplations**—a series of evenings exploring spirituality through art, meditation, imagination, and creativity. My hope is that these gatherings will help us discover new ways of noticing God's presence in ourselves, one another, and the world. We will be sure to keep everyone posted on the development.

Kristen and I have also been spending many hours organizing, preserving, and digitizing decades of Emmaus' history. We hope to unveil the completed **History of Emmaus Project** this fall during a Bean Supper, where we'll celebrate not only where we've been, but where God is leading us next.

Speaking of Bean Suppers—they're coming back! Once again, we'll gather around the table each month because sharing a meal has always been one of God's favorite ways of forming community.

And yes, our beloved Outdoor Worship Service returns in September. It has become one of my favorite Sundays of the year as we gather beneath God's open sky, reminded that all creation joins our song of praise.

In the coming months, we'll also gather around the baptismal font as we welcome new members into Christ's family. Every baptism reminds us that God's first word is grace. We are named and claimed as beloved children of God, and everything we do as a congregation flows from that promise.

That promise also sends us into the world.

There is a wonderful energy beginning to grow—I believe God is inviting us to become an even more connected, curious, and courageous community.

As Lutherans, we believe faith is never meant to stay inside these walls. We are called to care for our neighbors, seek justice, tend creation, welcome those who have been left out, and trust that even small acts of compassion become signs of God's kingdom.

Thinking about this coming season, I find I am filled with hope.

I hope for conversations that keep going...long after coffee hour.

I hope for questions.

I hope for new ideas.

I hope you'll invite a friend.

I hope you'll discover a ministry you never imagined yourself doing.

I hope you'll help shape what Emmaus is becoming.

The church has never been built by one pastor or one council. It has always been built by ordinary people responding to an extraordinary invitation.

The Spirit is always moving among us. The invitation is still being spoken. My prayer is that all of us will have the courage to answer it.

I can't wait to discover what God will do among us.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Gail



The Emmaus Ship: Help Us Restore Our History

Our Nautical Heritage

This beautiful model of a tall ship was recently returned to Emmaus. Many years ago, it was handcrafted and gifted to our church by Scandinavian sailors as a heartfelt thank-you for the support Emmaus provided to them and their families.

A Sacred Tradition

In coastal communities, hanging a ship model in a sanctuary is a centuries-old tradition. The boat is an ancient symbol of the Christian faith: just as a vessel carries its crew, the church travels together, guided by

the winds of the Holy Spirit. Since the early days of Christianity, the boat has served as a powerful metaphor for carrying believers safely through the storms of life.

"Restore the Ship" Fundraiser

While our ship is structurally sound, it requires professional care to restore it to its original glory. Once restored, it will be proudly and permanently displayed in our church. The cost of the restoration will be approximately \$4,000. The council does not feel that these funds should come out of the church budget, however we would like to try and raise these funds to restore the ship. If we can raise the funds needed, the work would be done by White's Nautical Antiques in North Yarmouth, Maine.

How You Can Help

If you would like to support this project, please place your contribution in the blue donation box located right here next to the ship.

- Checks & Cash are gladly accepted.
- If giving cash: Please place it in an envelope marked with your name so we can track it.

Thank you for helping us preserve this beautiful piece of our church's history!

If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with any Congregation Council member.

Front Deck Renovation

Our front entrance deck was showing its age and needed attention. A big thank you to the property committee for stepping up and completing this renovation so quickly, what a transformation!

Before Renovation



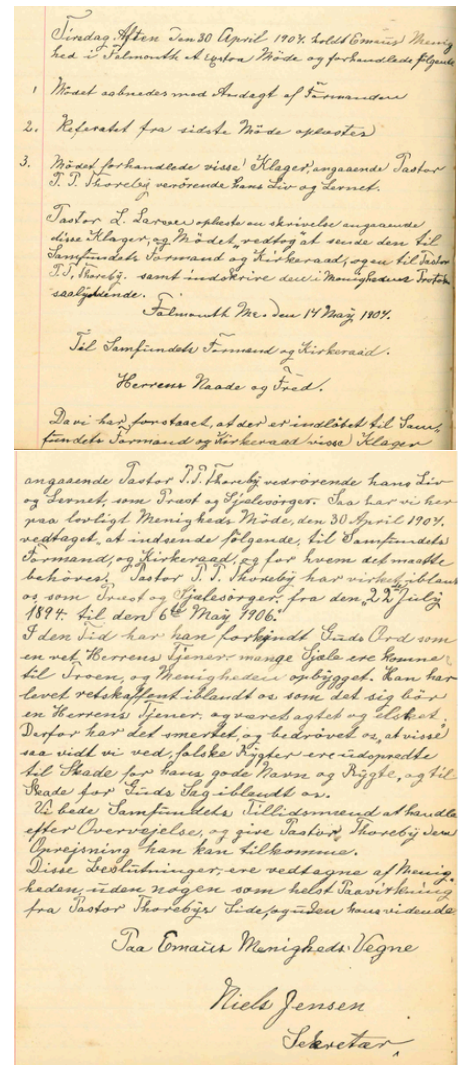
History Spotlight: Early Church Rumors and Challenges

Since our church was established long before the internet, early communication had its challenges as the congregation worked to thrive. Like any new community, there were a few bumps along the way.

In July of 1895, the congregation voted that its members would build the church themselves at a total cost of \$900.00 (equivalent to roughly \$36,000 in 2026). Shortly after, in August of 1895, an attempt was made to officially incorporate the church. A letter was sent to a judge requesting a warrant to meet and assign officers. Unfortunately, in his reply, the judge mistakenly recorded the meeting date as 1896 instead of 1895. Because the document was official and could not be altered, the request had to be scrapped entirely. This error caused significant confusion—the members were unaware that the church had not been successfully incorporated, leading to complications in the years that followed before the issue was eventually resolved.

Administering leadership across distances also presented unique hurdles. Church record books spanning from 1893 to 1913 reveal that a congregational meeting took place on April 30, 1904. During this meeting, the council shared a letter from the Synod detailing complaints against Pastor Storli, the pastor from First Lutheran Church of Portland who helped establish our church, and Pastor P. P. Thoreby. While the exact nature of the complaints remains unknown, the records document the congregation's strong defense of their leaders:

"As we have understood that it has been submitted to the President of the Synod and the Church Council regarding certain complaints regarding Pastor Storli, and the present have found a lawful resolution at the Congregational Meeting on April 30, 1904, the following is adopted and submitted to the President of the Synod and Church Council; 'To whom it may concern, Pastor P. P. Thoreby has ministered among us as pastor and shepherd of souls from June 22, 1894 until May 6, 1906. During that time, he has preached God's Word purely and clearly, children in many places have looked to him, and he has built up the wounded and sorrowful. He was promised sustenance, meals, and what is fitting for a servant of the Lord and has received \$212.00. Therefore, it has grieved us to note that such words have been cast upon him, and we must strive for his good name and reputation, and for the best advancements of God's Kingdom.' We let the Synod's trustees handle this after deliberation; May four men, Thoreby, as well as the reunion, receive what is due. These decisions are adopted by the congregation, without any reservations whatsoever, so that Pastor Thoreby's obligations must be demonstrated. On behalf of the Emmaus Congregation, Niels Jensen, Secretary"



Despite these early administrative blunders, clerical errors, and external misunderstandings, the spirit of the congregation never wavered. The early members of Emmaus demonstrated remarkable resilience—whether physically building their sanctuary with their own hands, navigating legal setbacks, or standing steadfast in support of the pastors who faithfully served them. These foundational trials did not weaken the church; instead, they forged a deeply devoted, self-reliant community bound together by faith, mutual trust, and a shared commitment to carrying God's work forward into generations to come.

Social Ministry

Outreach to ELCA World Hunger and Greater Portland Family Promise

Throughout the month of July, the Emmaus community joined forces with Doreen Rinas of ELCA World Hunger and Greater Portland Family Promise to collect essential bedding and bath linens for local families in need. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, we collected an impressive total of 27 items—including nine pillows, seven sheet sets, two mattress pads, two pillowcases, a blanket, and eight bath towels and towel sets.

A special thank you to Gisela Jones for taking the initiative to deliver all of these items directly to Family Promise, as well as to Jencie Gerwig and Pastor Gail for their leadership. Your kindness and support are truly making a difference for families transitioning into stable homes!



August Thankoffering

For our August Thankoffering, our congregation is coming together to support [Lutheran World Relief](#) by assembling School Kits for students in need around the world. These kits provide crucial educational tools that help children attend school, learn, and build a brighter future. We invite everyone to participate by donating the specific items listed below so we can pack as many complete kits as possible during this meaningful drive.

Items Included in Each Kit

- **Notebooks:** notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper (approx. 8" \times 10.5"; no loose-leaf paper).
- **Ruler:** centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other.
- **Pencil Sharpener**
- **Scissors:** blunt safety scissors (preferably with embedded steel blades).
- **Pencils:** unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers, secured together with a rubber band.
- **Pens:** black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink), secured together with a rubber band.
- **Crayons:** box of 16 or 24 crayons.
- **Eraser**
- **Bag:** sturdy drawstring backpack-style cloth bag (approx. 14" \times 17" with shoulder straps; no standard backpacks).

Important Donation Guidelines

- **Condition:** All items must be brand new.
- **Symbols & Text:** Do not donate items featuring religious symbols, religious messages, or group names.
- **Flags & Military Themes:** Avoid any items decorated with U.S. flags, patriotic/military symbols, camouflage, or references to the armed forces.

Brunch for All

Brunch for All is back after summer break! Our first gathering of the season will be Sunday, September 13th, right after worship. Come enjoy a delicious meal and wonderful fellowship with your church family. All are welcome!



Exciting News: The Community Supper is Back!

We are thrilled to announce that Emmaus is joining together with Falmouth's churches and faith communities to host the 12th Annual Community Supper! After being on hold since the pandemic, this wonderful tradition is finally returning.

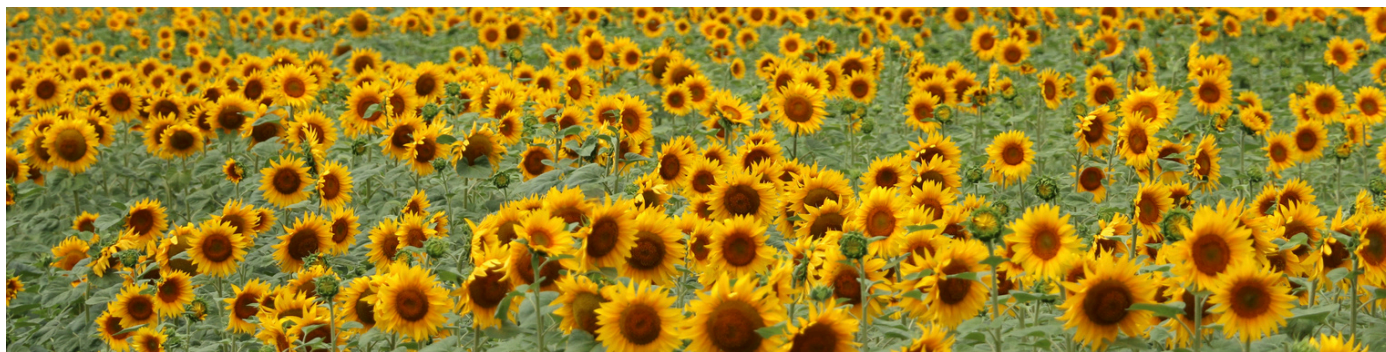
Mark your calendars:

- When: Thursday, October 22nd, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Where: Falmouth Congregational Church
- What: A completely FREE delicious dinner featuring roast turkey with all the fixings, veggies, and—of course—homemade apple crisp with ice cream!

While the supper is free, we will be collecting free-will donations to fully support the Falmouth Food Pantry. It's a beautiful opportunity to break bread with our neighbors and give back to our community.

Hymn Lotto will continue through August

Hymn Lotto made a comeback this summer due to popular demand! Choose your favorite hymn from the ELW hymnal located in the pews, write it down, and place it in the blue box found in the Narthex. Every Sunday during worship, a hymn will be drawn from the box and played. Join in the fun!



August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Worship 9am	3	4 Worship & Music Mtg 6:30pm	5	6	7	8
9 Worship 9am	10	11 Finance Mtg Council Mtg 6pm	12	13 Social Ministry Mtg 5pm	14	15
16 Worship 9am	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Worship 9am	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Worship 9am	31					

Did you know we have a Facebook page?

It's a great way to stay connected and informed about everything happening in our congregation. From event photos to special announcements, our page is filled with engaging content that celebrates our vibrant community. Join us online and be a part of our digital family!
@emmauslutheranchurch



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