



Welcome to ReFresh at Emmanuel

(Restoring Energy, Faith, and Relevance to Every Soul's Heart)

October 18, 2026

Welcome to ReFresh at Emmanuel

Welcome Visitors! We extend a special welcome to our visitors. Thank you for worshiping with us. We strive to live as a Safe and Healing Spiritual Community for all who come, regardless of socio-economic status, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or spiritual path. All are welcome in this holy space.

We invite you to worship with us on Sundays at our 8:30 am Emmanuel Traditional Worship Service in the chapel or our ReFresh 10:30 am Service either in person or on ZOOM. The Recorded Service is available on Facebook after the service.

To gather online by computer, tablet, or smartphone, use the following link.

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/82726742888?pwd=WFEwOVBXZGd3OHFzSXQ1WXIVTHppZz09>

Don't forget to sign the greeting cards for our Emmanuel Family Members.

The cards are on the table in front of the Celebration Room.

Assisting in Worship Today

Presider and Speaker: Kelli Luebke

Altar Guild: Susan & Dave Whitacre

Lector: Fox Noble and Alvin Enrique

Consultant: Bill Houtkamp

Coordinator of Music Ministry: Tim Fenelon

Sound: Andrew Ehrhardt

Special Music: Emmanuel Choir

Greeting Cards: Taj Guzzardo

Accompanist: Clea Arbogast

Cardio Drumming, Mondays at 4:00 pm, Call Beth, (815) 742-0548, to join

Spiritual Journey's on Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 am on Zoom

Bible Study on Wednesdays at Noon on zoom.

Dial 312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 893 5688 8344 Passcode: 11999

To join by a land line or cell phone, dial the number above and then enter the meeting ID and passcode when prompted.

Silent meditation practice in the Benson Room:

Thursdays from 5:30 – 6:15pm. All are welcome. Enter by parking lot entrance. Questions or text Sara 815-742-0581.

Date: October 18, 2026

Theme: River

Prelude: Selection by Clea Arbogast

Welcome Kelli Luebke

Meditation : “The river speaks of a moment-to-moment journey of life.”

— Jayita Bhattacharjeeir

Our Community Declaration:

**Guided by Spirit’s Wisdom, Inspired by Creator’s Imagination,
Centered in Christ's Love, and knowing that God is our Source,
Emmanuel is a Spiritual Community that is progressive, inclusive, creative, and
called to serve.**

Opening of the Heart

Drawn by God’s presence. . .

. . .**we gather**

Inspired by God’s spirit. . .

. . .**we worship**

Empowered by God’s grace. . .

. . .**we live**

Opened by God’s love. . .

. . .**we share**

Proclamation of Grace:

Presider: The Good News is we are beloved children of God. We live in the
promise of Christ, and NOTHING can ever separate us from God’s love.

Gathering Song: Down in the River to Pray (Gather)

The musical score is written on six staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff begins with a 4/4 time signature, which changes to 2/4 for the second measure, and then returns to 4/4. The melody is simple and folk-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: 'As I went down to the riv - er to pray, stud - y - ing a - bout that good old way. And who shall wear the star - ry crown, good Lord, show me the way. Oh *broth - er let's go down, come on down, don't you want to go down? Oh broth - er, let's go down, down to the riv - er to pray.'

As I went down to the riv - er to pray,
stud - y - ing a - bout that good old way. And who shall wear the
star - ry crown, good Lord, show me the way.
Oh *broth - er let's go down, come on down, don't you
want to go down? Oh broth - er, let's go down,
down to the riv - er to pray.

**Sister, father, mother.*

Reading from **At the River Clarion**—by Mary Oliver

1. I don't know who God is exactly.

But I'll tell you this.

I was sitting in the river named Clarion, on a water splashed stone
and all afternoon I listened to the voices of the river talking.

Whenever the water struck a stone it had something to say,
and the water itself, and even the mosses trailing under the water.

And slowly, very slowly, it became clear to me what they were saying.

Said the river I am part of holiness.

And I too, said the stone. And I too, whispered the moss beneath the water.

I'd been to the river before, a few times.

Don't blame the river that nothing happened quickly.

You don't hear such voices in an hour or a day.

You don't hear them at all if selfhood has stuffed your ears.

And it's difficult to hear anything anyway, through all the traffic, the ambition.

2.

If God exists he isn't just butter and good luck.

He's also the tick that killed my wonderful dog Luke.

Said the river: imagine everything you can imagine, then keep on going.

Imagine how the lily (who may also be a part of God) would sing to you if it could sing,

if you would pause to hear it.

And how are you so certain anyway that it doesn't sing?

If God exists he isn't just churches and mathematics.

He's the forest, He's the desert.

He's the ice caps, that are dying.

He's the ghetto and the Museum of Fine Arts.

He's van Gogh and Allen Ginsberg and Robert Motherwell.

He's the many desperate hands, cleaning and preparing their weapons.

He's every one of us, potentially.

The leaf of grass, the genius, the politician, the poet.

And if this is true, isn't it something very important?

Yes, it could be that I am a tiny piece of God, and each of you too, or at least of his intention and his hope.

Which is a delight beyond measure.

I don't know how you get to suspect such an idea.

I only know that the river kept singing.

It wasn't a persuasion, it was all the river's own constant joy

which was better by far than a lecture, which was comfortable, exciting, unforgettable.

3.

Of course for each of us, there is the daily life.

Let us live it, gesture by gesture.

When we cut the ripe melon, should we not give it thanks?

And should we not thank the knife also?

We do not live in a simple world.

Continued...

4.

There was someone I loved who grew old and ill
One by one I watched the fires go out.
There was nothing I could do
except to remember
that we receive
then we give back.

5.

My dog Luke lies in a grave in the forest, she is given back.
But the river Clarion still flows from wherever it comes from
to where it has been told to go.
I pray for the desperate earth.
I pray for the desperate world.
I do the little each person can do, it isn't much.
Sometimes the river murmurs, sometimes it raves.

6.

Along its shores were, may I say, very intense cardinal flowers.
And trees, and birds that have wings to uphold them, for heaven's sakes—
the lucky ones: they have such deep natures,
they are so happily obedient.
While I sit here in a house filled with books,
ideas, doubts, hesitations.

7.

And still, pressed deep into my mind, the river
keeps coming, touching me, passing by on its
long journey, its pale, infallible voice
singing.

Scripture/Meditation Song: As the Deer Pants For the Water



As the deer pants for the wa-ter, so my soul longs af - ter you;



you a - lone are my heart's de - sire and I long to wor - ship you.

Refrain



You a-lone are my strength and shield; to you a-lone may my spir-it yield.



You a - lone are my heart's de - sire and I long to wor - ship you.

Scripture: Selected readings from Revelation

"See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Then the angel[a] showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Presider: This is the witness of an early Christian community.

All: **May we find wisdom for our living.**

Sermon: Reading by Aidan Chambers and Reflection

“I thought how lovely and how strange a river is. A river is a river, always there, and yet the water flowing through it is never the same water and is never still. It’s always changing and is always on the move. And over time the river itself changes too. It widens and deepens as it rubs and scours, gnaws and kneads, eats and bores its way through the land. Even the greatest rivers- the Nile and the Ganges, the Yangtze and the Mississippi, the Amazon and the great grey-green greasy Limpopo all set about with fever trees-must have been no more than trickles and flickering streams before they grew into mighty rivers.

Are people like that? I wondered. Am I like that? Always me, like the river itself, always flowing but always different, like the water flowing in the river, sometimes walking steadily along andante, sometimes surging over rapids furioso, sometimes meandering with hardly any visible movement tranquilo, lento, ppp pianissimo, sometimes gurgling giacoso with pleasure, sometimes sparkling brillante in the sun, sometimes lacrimoso, sometimes appassionato, sometimes misterioso, sometimes pesante, sometimes legato, sometimes staccato, sometimes sospirando, sometimes vivace, and always, I hope, amoroso.

Do I change like a river, widening and deepening, eddying back on myself sometimes, bursting my banks sometimes when there’s too much water, too much life in me, and sometimes dried up from lack of rain? Will the I that is me grow and widen and deepen? Or will I stagnate and become an arid riverbed? Will I allow people to dam me up and confine me to wall so that I flow only where they want? Will I allow them to turn me into a canal to use for their own purposes? Or will I make sure I flow freely, coursing my way through the land and ploughing a valley of my own?”

Offering

Presider: We take this time now to offer our gifts and intentions.

Special Music: **For the Autumn Sky**—by Ruth Elaine Schram
 Emmanuel Choir

Time for Gratitude

Prayer Song and Response: Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying (ELW 752)



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;

Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

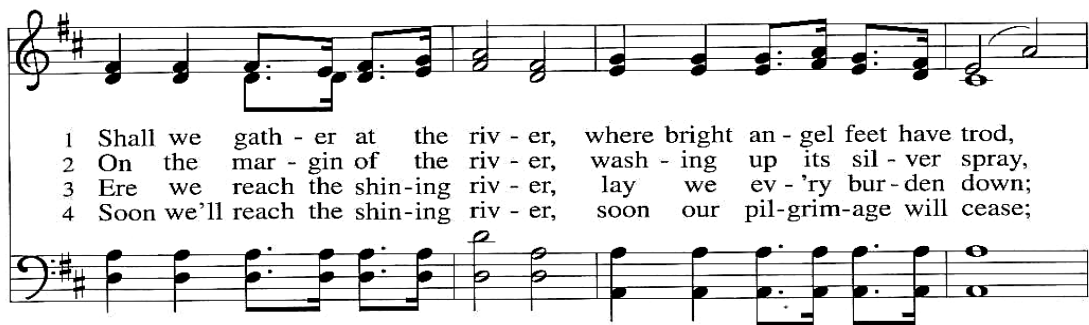
Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer interpreted by Parker J. Palmer

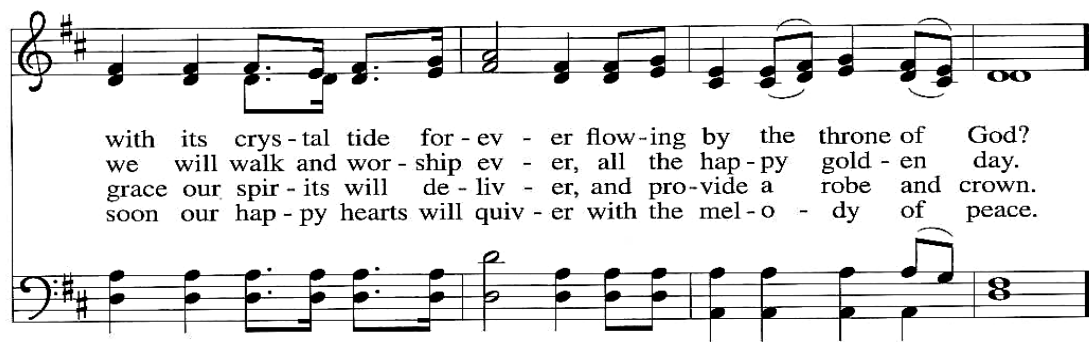
Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come,
We pray that your good will be done,
Let heaven and earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need,
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,
From each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence
Beyond the evil of our days —
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One.

Announcements

Sending Song: Shall We Gather at the River (ELW 423)

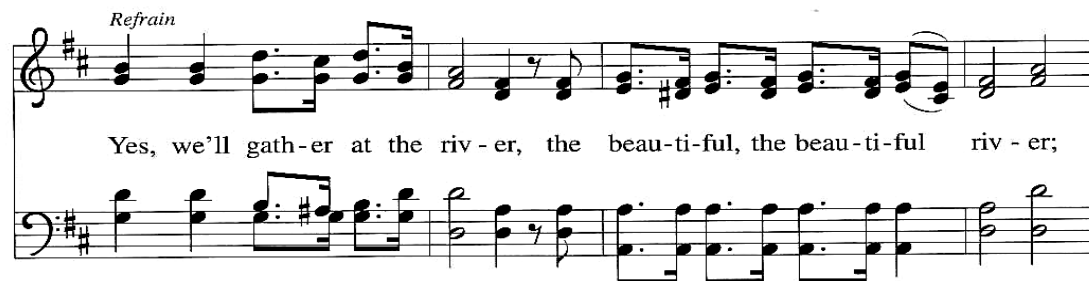


1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;

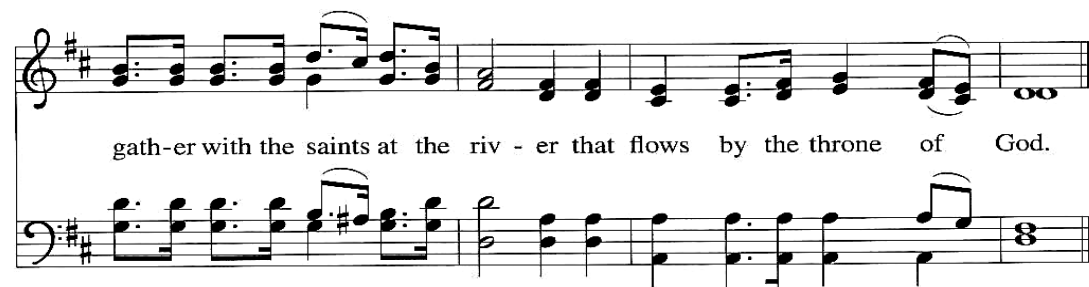


with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.

Refrain



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Benediction/Sharing of Peace

Women's Interfaith Potluck

All; women are invited to attend the interfaith potlucks, listed below, which start at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass. Plates, silverware, and beverages will be provided, but you are always welcome to bring your own plate and silverware if you wish.

- Monday, October 26, 2026, at Muslim Association of Greater Rockford, 5921 Darlene Dr., Rockford.

Soul Garden Forest Preserve Walks

Come hike for an hour in Winnebago Counties Forest preserves. Text Holly if you want to join the hikes: 815-543-1191. Meet at the Forest preserve entrances unless otherwise instructed.

Monday, October 19 10:00am
Deer Run - 5691 River Road,
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Halloween Hike! Ghosts and Goblins!
Saturday, October 31, 10:00am
Seward Bluffs – 16999 Comly Road,
Seward, IL

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Pantry

Hello from Emmanuel's Pantry,

Believe it or not, the Holidays are almost upon us and the pantry is gearing up to give out Holiday Food to our neighbors. If you can help us out, we are asking for stuffing, turkey gravy, dry mashed potatoes, hot cocoa mix, Jello, and instant pudding. If there is anything else you want to bring, we will be grateful. There will be a cart outside of the celebration room on Sundays and through the week for you to put your offering into. We will be collecting food through October, November, and December. Also, we can use plastic bags. If you shop at Woodman's, their plastic bags are the best for carrying a paper bag full of food, but any plastic grocery bags are welcome. Thank you for supporting the Food Pantry

Emmanuel Lutheran Spiritual Journeys Book Study

Tuesdays, 9:30-11 am. by Zoom. We read together and discuss, so no need to read ahead. We are reading Separation of Church and Hate, John Fugelsang.

Join Zoom Meeting.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89838350099?pwd=O4Hu08ruXp2VHLOZLm9lsHyRKypPv9.1>

The 2026 CROP HUNGER WALK is Sunday, October 18th.

We will gather at the Rockford Museum/Discovery Center at noon with step off at 1:00pm. There will be snacks and entertainment.

To donate on-line, go to 2026 Crop Hunger Walk enter "Rockford Area" and donate under my name "Kathlyn Wright" so the donation is credited to Emmanuel.

If you want to write a check, write it out to Emmanuel and put Crop Walk in the memo. Also, there will be a donation option on Emmanuel's web site.

Remember 25% of the money collected in Rockford will come back to the Greater Rockford Pantry Coalition and Emmanuel's pantry will benefit.

Thank you.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 920 Third Avenue, Rockford, IL 61104

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