

# Emmanuel *Living*



## *Emmanuel Exists*

to glorify God through the prayerful nurturing and sending of disciplined believers to present Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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## **The Bird Cave**

**By: Alyson Lauber**

**M**arch 9th marks the beginning of the season of Lent: a season of soul-searching and repentance, a season for reflecting and taking stock of our lives. It's a preparatory time for Easter, and reflects back to the various times of preparation through prayer and fasting experienced by Moses, Isaiah, and Jesus Himself. It invites us to know the joy of our salvation more fully at Easter because we've allowed ourselves to feel our need for a Saviour more fully during Lent. With that in mind, we offer this invitation into Lent written by Alyson Lauber, a recent Regent College graduate living in Saskatoon:

Call it barbarous if you will, but I love forcing educational television programming on my children. When the four of them can't agree on a movie to stick in the DVD player, I choose Planet Earth for them. My favourite episode is on caves in Borneo: deep, dark caves where creatures live that never see the sun, creatures with no pigment and no sight. Caves with dripping stalactites and mounded stalagmites. Caves inhabited with bats and oozing with alkalis. These are mysterious and otherworldly places: places of unknown, alien to

eyes and light.

Mostly, I have walked through life without an awareness of these deep and lonely places. They are the stories of more exotic locales and not of the simple prairies where I live out my life, where the land goes on and on and the skies fill the expanse of my vision from periphery to periphery. I am a woman of the air, of the sky, of what can be seen and understood. I have no experience of, no need for, the dark spaces underneath. There is too much to keep me busy on the surface.

But it is the interior that shapes what I can see. There are rumblings and groaning. These give way to heaves and sighs, and finally, earthquakes and lava flows. In time, new lands are made and what was slips forgotten under deep water. I would do well to pay attention to the interior.

Lent is meant for the exploration of the interior. The interior of our selves. There are dark and foreboding things waiting for us there, as well. We quiet the distractions of the exterior world for a little while, in order to focus on what God might be saying to us in our inner beings. We delve into the darkness of our own hearts and find that this is where formation really happens.

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## The Bird Cave *(continued)*

My life on the surface distracts me from the rumblings and groanings of my own dark places that attempt to remind me to attend, to descend, to go to where the foundations are built. Life on the surface might provide me with space and light and air but if everything is collapsing deep down, the space, light and air become illusion. I need to go down, where the formation is happening.

Anne Lamott writes that *“a fixation can keep you nicely defined and give you the illusion that your life has not fallen apart. But since your life may indeed have fallen apart, the illusion won't hold up forever.”*

Lent is a time to subvert the illusions of our lives, to hold controlled demolition of shaky ground before it collapses out from underneath our feet. It's a purposeful stilling of surface activity to pay attention to the noises underneath. By doing this, we become aware of the ways that we have been participating in the illusion, and building our lives on shaky foundations.

Paying attention to these interior rumblings takes a great deal of courage. We are treading obscure pathways and may well encounter things that are foreign and unsettling to us. But these are indeed the places we must go in order to experience freedom from the lie that says “all is well” when in actuality, our life is slipping under.

Psalm 49 says that “The ransom of life is costly, and can never suffice, that one should go on forever and never see the grave.” We are all on the journey toward death; our lives will one day lead at least six feet under. Sam Roberts, that handsome troubadour, sums it up nicely, “Been dying since the day I was born, ‘cause there's no road that ain't a hard road to travel on.”

The stripping away that happens in Lent is painful work. Descending forces us to confess that our lives do indeed lead to death. Whether

Simon carrying the cross on Good Friday or Abraham leading Isaac to sacrifice, it is a heart-breaking journey.

Descent is not “surface” activity. We do not blithely twitter or facebook status our journeys under. Thus, the road to Golgotha, the path to Moria, is not well worn. But it is on that path that we become familiar with the foundations of our lives and lose our fear of the rumblings and groanings that sound so eerie from the surface. Miraculously, breathtakingly, when we reach the end of the journey down, and arrive at Good Friday, we find that God has provided the Lamb!

Along the walls of the deep caves of Borneo, swallows nest. I have often seen a muddy prairie swallow's nest protruding from the quonset's walls on my farmland and the cave swallow's nests look much the same. But unlike the muddy nests of the prairie swallows, the cave swallows build their nests of their own saliva. They work slowly and steadily, weaving nests with their beaks that, once completed, look like opaque glass. They are as lovely as grandmother's bone china.

These nests are harvested by locals for a delicacy known as “bird's soup”. Ounce for ounce, they are as valuable as silver.

Indeed, the dark places yield treasure far greater than the muddy replicas found on the surface. Descend.

If you're interested in intentionally creating more space in your life for Christ during these weeks leading up to Easter, please feel free to refer to the sermon notes in the bulletin each week where Pastor Terry will have ideas to guide you through the season.

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## Chicago Team Day Launches the Mission

By: Kent Martens

**E**mmanuel's ministry with senior high students plans a mission trip every two years. We do this as part of our efforts to invite, challenge, and encourage high school students to pursue a personally owned, active faith in Jesus Christ.

The Emmanuel Senior High Mission to Chicago is officially underway after the team spent most of the day together on Sunday, February 27. We are excited to serve this summer [July 9-18] in the inner-city of Chicago with an organization called Center for Student Missions. You can check them out at [csm.org](http://csm.org). The team day we just had was a great start to our mission.

We ate a pizza lunch together, played games and hung out. We also worked on several projects including a Bible study on justice, the poor, discipleship, and servanthood. We worked through a process to create a team covenant to remind us of what kind of team we will be, how we will speak to each other, resolve conflict and how treat each other. We went through our trip itinerary and made some decisions together. Our fundraising plan includes writing personal letters and we are going to host a lunch on Sunday, May 1st. We took time to pray in small groups for various aspects of the mission. We also hit each other with pool noodles at the end of everything....for fun. [you should try it].

Our team will be led by Janna Penner [Chicago veteran], Harv Friesen, Kali and Ira

Dyck [Chicago veteran], Angela Plett, and Kent Martens [Chicago veteran].

Here's our student list in no particular order: Brooke Friesen, Janelle Heier, Mitchell Martens, Laurel Rempel, Lauren Penner, Taylor Martens, Carlee Hildebrand, Lucas Pappel, Chelsey Lehman, Sarah Pries, Colin Thiessen, Dana Doerksen [Chicago veteran], Caleb Dickey, Elizabeth Grauer, Caleb Doerksen, and Jori Schalla.

Please pray for two 12-15 seat vans for us to use for this trip. Please pray for our fundraising letters and lunch!



**Kali & Ira Dyck - Chicago 2009**

## Coming Up

March 19th: Men's Ministry Breakfast

March 20th: Baby Dedication

March 25th: 2nd Chapter (Emmanuel's 55+ group) Potluck Supper

March 28th—April 1st: Spring Break (Youth & Awana Events resume April 4th)

April 17th: Palm Sunday with Kidz Printz Presentation

April 22nd: Good Friday

April 24th: Easter Sunday with Kidz Printz Presentation

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## Missionary Highlights

Focus on Short Term Trips

### Daryl & Cindi Kroeker and family traveled to the Dominican Republic:

A trip like no other, this was a humbling and perspective-changing experience! We were so blessed to be able to visit 3 of the children we sponsor in Dominican Republic through Compassion Canada. We drove to each Project in the morning, interacted with the children there, and met our sponsored child. After a short visit to each of their humble homes, I was reminded of all the luxuries we enjoy and expect and think we need. We were privileged to take each child and some family members out for lunch in the area. For some, that may have been their only meal that day. Holding a baby who, at 10 months old, was as fragile as a newborn opened my eyes to what malnutrition can do to a child. These people are hard-working, yet the poorest of the poor.

Two of the three families we met are believers – a tremendous encouragement as their hope to escape poverty rests in Jesus. It is clear to see that Jesus is the primary focus of each Compassion project as they devote much time to Bible reading and studying with the children. Compassion is truly making an eternal difference in children's lives around the world!!

### Dora Penner traveled to Haiti:

I was at God's Littlest Angels Orphanage for two weeks from January 24 to February 6. G.L.A. has 2 homes for orphaned children; one being a home for newborns to age 2, there were 33 babies in this one, and the other being a toddler house from age 2 and up, there were 25 children here. Since I was there they've had around 30 more children brought to them. Two little brothers Jamesly, age 3 and Wadley, 18 months, were brought to G.L.A. by their mother while we were

there. This woman had 4 children and could not provide for them so she brought her youngest two children to G.L.A. They were very malnourished. Their tummies were large, their arms and legs so skinny! Their beautiful dark curly hair had almost all fallen out and what was left had turned reddish blond. The whites of their beautiful eyes were not white, but yellow. They both did not walk upright but with their little bums on the floor for support and their knees, fully bent would make their way across the room. They did not seem to know what to do with teddy graham snacks but downed a bottle of milk in short order. It took a few days of nourishment, love and care till we got a smile out of either one of them. They seemed sad; and I could only imagine that possibly above all, they missed their mommy. I can't imagine how their mommy felt walking away without her two babies and the anguish she must have gone through to come to this point. This is only one of many sadnesses that I saw and experienced. My tears still come easy as I remember and pray for all those sweet little ones.



**Jamesly (age 3) & Wadley (18 months)**

## Small Groups ~ Big Impact

By: Myra Gerbrandt

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”

Here are some of the ways that small groups are making an impact at Emmanuel and in our community:

- ◆ Taking their group night to make and deliver pizzas to families within our church
- ◆ Gathering clothes, money and food for a troubled teenager
- ◆ Adopting” a church ministry to pray for regularly
- ◆ Dedicating every second small group meeting to some kind of ministry/need in the church or community
- ◆ Regularly volunteering at Helping Hands
- ◆ Making and serving free hot chocolate to shoppers at Clearspring mall
- ◆ Spending a day as small group families at Helping Hands, wrapping gifts for the community Christmas
- ◆ Opening up their groups to colleagues and friends that are un-churched, de-churched, or brand new Christians
- ◆ Small group members stepping out into leadership of new groups order to minister to more people
- ◆ Putting together care packages for needy kids to send to a bible camp up North
- ◆ Taking a Saturday to make freezer meals and write cards for a recent widower

*Connecting*

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*Emmanuel Small Groups*

*Creating environments for godly community to grow*

## Children's Ministries ~ Partnering Page

### Worldview - Part 3

By: Rob Reimer

Hello parents! Well here it is folks - Part 3 of a 4 part series on instilling a Biblical worldview in your children. I am taking a little different approach than I expected to with this article and it is probably different than you expected as well. I am proceeding under the premise that the worldview our kids pick up from us is both intentional and unintentional. This article will help us with both. We often think that our kids only learn when we are sitting down with them at the supper table or at bedtime. As important as these times there are, many other opportunities throughout our day for us to leave impressions on our children just by deliberately taking advantage of teachable moments. I found this help from Tim Kimmel in his book *Raising Kids For True Greatness* and thought it was worth sharing with you. It gives us some good starter ideas on how to teach our children who we believe God to be and how He is relevant to our everyday lives. It deals primarily with how to teach our young children about God. Next month we plan to share something on how to make a difference in our teen's minds and hearts.

### Ten Ways to Teach Your Young Children to Put God First

1. Consistently read them stories at bedtime that tell about God's mighty power and love.
2. When a frightening or troubling situation comes up, gather them around and show them how to put themselves in God's hands through prayer.
3. Show them how to pray for those they love, as well as those who need God's love, every night at bedtime.

4. Welcome them each morning with a positive reminder of God's love and design for their lives. (An example: "This is another great day that God has given us to shine for Him. You have a wonderful personality, and it's going to be fun to see how God enables you to use it for Him today.")

5. Allow God's presence to become second nature in your everyday activities [such as praying at mealtime, pointing out wonders in nature, observing how God works in people around you, singing songs to Him, etc.).

6. Avoid evoking God's name in an intimidating manner to express displeasure with disobedience

7. Make going to church and Sunday school a fun, happy, and nonnegotiable part of your family life.

8. Help your children hide God's Word in their hearts by memorizing key Scriptures that tell of God's love, mercy, grace, protection, and power.

9. Make kindness, sharing, and consideration for every member of the family a natural outgrowth of your love for God,

10. Avoid strong-arming your children to accept Christ as their Saviour. Treat them the way God treats you (with grace), and let the Holy Spirit draw them to Himself on His timetable.

**Pastor Rob Reimer** is the husband to Sylvia, father to Mandy & Jessica, and has been the Children's Ministries Pastor here at Emmanuel since September 2000.



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