In the past few weeks, Dave Pluhar and Sara Loyet have spoken eloquently

about the treasures we have *within* this building and our need to be intentional and faithful in caring for these gifts **and** the physical structures in which we worship and gather.

I've been given a few minutes to speak with you about Emmanuels history of supporting our ministries ***beyond*** **these walls.** I was specifically asked to speak about our 30 years of working on the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota - and I could - but it would take WAAYY longer than 3-5 minutes.

So, with your indulgence, I'm going to zoom out to a larger picture.

Emmanuel has always had a strong sense of call to serve those beyond our immediate geographic community.

Those little churches we pass for the Food Center?
They were originally made to collect funds to support an orphanage in Haiti. They were then repurposed to collect funds for Gods Child, a project we supported in Guatemala.

At Emmanuel, we've been blessed with clergy who have reminded us, again and again, that we are beloved by God … and the strange thing is that when you deeply trust that you ***are*** precious in God's eyes, you are able to recognize the preciousness of **others** and their own unique place in Gods heart.

We live in a broken world - that's not new… that's been true since this church was consecrated in 1867 in the aftermath of a Civil War that tore the country apart.

There is no end to the work we can do in nudging the world a bit closer to the vision of life God intended for **all** His children.

Emmanuel has always taken seriously the Deacons dismissal - **"*The worship is over, the Service begins*".**

We aren't just called to worship in this place, to socialize, share meals, and build community among ourselves … those are all vital parts of being church - but we're called to take that sense of belonging, of being loved by God, out into the world - to people who, because of their current circumstances, have forgotten they **too** are deeply loved; to remind them that **they've** not been forgotten.

We've been blessed with members, both adults and children- who have responded to this call to serve beyond these walls - through the Food Center, Rise against Hunger and mission trips to the Heifer Project, New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, Chicago, Guatemala, Tallequah, OK, Denver, Paducah, Sikeston, Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota, Kansas City, North St Louis, Joplin, Big Creek People in Action in War, West Virginia,- and, of course, Rosebud.

On NONE of those trips were we trying to convert people to Christianity.
No matter where we went, we have always known that God and the Holy Spirit were already there; present and working in ways we couldn't begin to understand.
Our job was to simply join them in the work.
If you felt called to join us on a mission trip, we assumed God would find a way to use you.

And He did, over 60 adults and literally hundreds of youth have gone on mission trips - and for every person who was able to go, there were so many more back here in the congregation providing prayers and financial support.

Btw, If you'd like more information specifically about Rosebud, you can go to the Emmanuel website; it's found by clicking on the Ministry beyond our walls tab and looking under the Justice and Equity heading.

While I have no doubt that our relationship with Rosebud will continue, in some form, the reality is that calls to serve change, physical abilities to respond to that call change and the urgency of the needs in the world can change priorities.

I'm excited to see in what ways and in what communities Emmanuel will serve beyond these walls in the next 30 years.

I trust that, as a faith community, we will continue to respond in ways that honor both God and the spirit of the work done by generations of our parishioners.

Gods work isn't done.
Which means ours isn't either.

Thank you for responding generously when you turn in your pledge cards - those funds support not only our needs here - but our responses to Gods call to reach **beyond ourselves** to a hurting world.