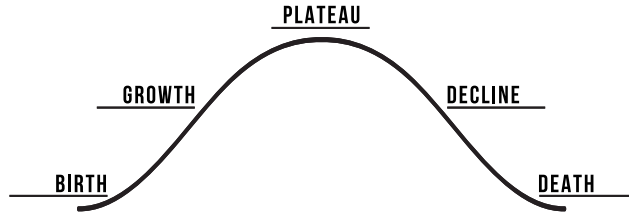




There is great value in looking back.

1. We should feel a deep appreciation.



2. We should feel an appropriate smallness.

3. We should feel encouraged.

The First Church exploded on the scene.

Those who believed what Peter **said** were baptized and added to the church that day-about 3,000 in all. *Acts 2:41*

And **each day** the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being **saved**. *Acts 2:47*

But many of the people who heard their **message** believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about **5,000** men, not counting women and children. *Acts 4:4*

So God's **message** continued to spread. The number of believers **greatly increased** in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too. *Acts 6:7*

After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, "You know, dear brother, how **many thousands** of Jews have also believed..." *Acts 21:20*

You and I get to play a role in the story God is telling.

For Group Discussion

Answer these questions prior to your Small Group meeting this week.

Introduction

Emmanuel Church began ministering to people on Easter Sunday in 1977. As we complete 40 years of ministry, we want to look back to celebrate what God has done, and look forward to what God will continue to do through His people – of Emmanuel Church.

Discussion Questions

1. For 40 years, Emmanuel has been connecting people to God and to each other. Tell the group about your first experience with Emmanuel. What first attracted you?

2. Read Acts 2:41 & 46-47, 4:4, and 21:20. When you think about the incredible history of God's Church, what is the first emotion you feel? Why?

One exciting benefit of being a part of Emmanuel is that you get to play a small role in the grand story God is telling. What are some of the ways you have been able to participate in that grand story during your time with Emmanuel Church? What roles have you played?

3. What we experience today through Emmanuel is, in large part, a result of the faithfulness of those who came before us. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 1 Corinthians 16:15-16. What are some ways we can show our appreciation for the work, sacrifice, and devotion of past generations?

Emmanuel is a growing church – over the last 3 years we have experienced over 15% growth. What do you believe are the contributing factors to the continual growth of Emmanuel?

4. We've all been encouraged in the past. In what ways has God used the people of Emmanuel to encourage you?

God is putting courage in your heart to do His work. Emmanuel has grown because the people have consistently taken the message of Jesus to those who are far from God. What steps can you take this week to invest in and invite someone you know who is far from God?

OUTREACH: GROUPS IN ACTION

Help support two of our local mission partners, The Refuge or The Haven, and engage in a fun event at the same time. Register for the Rock the Block 5K or 10K Walk/Run on April 22 and indicate which of the local mission partners you wish to support. A percentage of all of the registration money received for the race will go to benefit each of the local non-profits chosen by the participants. Register to run, walk, volunteer, or even "sleep-in" at RocktheBlockRun.org.

As we approach Easter, we will need extra hands for each of our services at all three campuses. If your group or any of the individual members would like to volunteer for that weekend, email Leah Torrison at ltorrison@eclife.org for more information.

Action Step

Fill in the blanks below for this upcoming week.

My action steps are _____

I'm accountable for _____, and their action steps are _____

My memory verse is _____

This coming week, I'm praying for: _____