

Message from Deacon Dee Schleutker:

Henri J.M. Nouwen states in *The Living Reminder*, “as long as we have stories we have hope.” During this time of social distancing, I have found and seen hope in the people I have met at Emmanuel Community Park. I have seen families and friends gather together to fish, take a walk, play soccer and football, and simply enjoy God’s beautiful creation.

I would like to share a few of their stories with you:

Hector and his family took the opportunity to gather together as a family at the Park to enjoy their lunch they picked up at the local school. Although schools have closed due to the current pandemic, they continue to provide many families with school-aged children free lunch. Emmanuel Park provided this family with a place to enjoy their meal together while still practicing social distancing. They expressed their gratitude several times during our conversation. This family was grateful to Emmanuel for providing this community setting. “There was nothing out here (in the estates), nowhere for us to go as a family.” His daughters expressed their excitement about the playground and looked forward to our Opening Day!

Jade had organized a gender reveal gathering for her brother and his expecting wife, only to find out that the park they had reserved was no longer open due to current events. She decided to change the location to Emmanuel Community Park. As they maintained social distancing with less than ten people, blue confetti was revealed, and loved ones rejoiced! You may be asking, “what happened with all that confetti?” You will be happy to know that every piece was collected and properly disposed. Yes, this family cared for God’s creation! As in prior conversations with our Park visitors, words of gratitude were expressed.

These are only a couple of stories from the past few weeks, and there will be plenty more that we will be sure to share. With each person we meet, we can share our story as we share *His story*.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13