

THE MOSAIC

Published monthly by
EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
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December 2015

Volume XXXVI No. 11

Pastoral Ponderings



I was ordained in December 1995. Most of you already know that because you were part of the wonderful surprise celebration, which I thought was just another church potluck on November 21. It was a celebration with so many layers, from the initial surprise to the invited guests (Rev. Karen and Alan Selig, co-pastors of my first post-seminary ministry, Rev. Peter Carman from Emmanuel-Friedens Church, and my own parents) to music by our wonderful choir and Michael and a duet by Judy Henningson and Richard Horan to gifts (a beautiful memory book assembled by Edie Simpson, and a prayer jar with contributions from many of you solicited by Marilyn Malone). All the festive touches were there – banner and balloons, beautiful homemade cake from Edith Leet, and the evening’s bulletin, made by Bien Baez, which kept us on track and will be a cherished memento of the occasion. Thank you to every one of you for sharing the surprise and contributing to my joy. Thanks especially to Barbara Lahut and members of the Pastoral Relations Committee for months of planning and to Jim Wilkerson for bearing the weight of keeping a good secret for so well and so long.

One of the layers of celebration was a compilation of video greetings which we were not able to watch together due to a computer meltdown. (Thanks to Tony Malone for putting the video together and trying his best to make it happen.) I am grateful to those who took the time to record a message, including my theology professor Dr. Molly Marshall, members of the first church I pastored, and some from more recent churches. As my family and I watched and listened, there was the joy of seeing faces we haven’t seen in many years and the blessing of being remembered even after long absence. I heard from some who were present at my ordination, including some who were students involved with me in campus ministry at Kansas State University. One student said that surely that couldn’t have been twenty years ago, that she must be remembering some other event. Of course, I still imagine those students as 18-22 years old.

What struck me most about the remarks were the very specific memories people shared. Some were incidents related to life events like weddings and funerals, but some were highly individual,



Continued...



one memory plucked from a seemingly routine day, some words that I once said, the value of ordinary interactions over a period of time. I have to confess that some of the events were things I don't remember or didn't remember until prodded. And so I am reminded that we never really know what we might mean to each other or how the Spirit might use us to care for or nurture another person.

This is a significant milestone, and I am grateful for the efforts you made to mark it with me. In the last year, I also reached the

equally important point of 5 years of ministry in this good place. I was shaped by many people, many faith communities, many life experiences before my arrival in Albany, but now you and I are companions for each other on this journey of faith, and so in the words of the apostle Paul writing to the church at Philippi *"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."* Philippians 1:3-6

*Blessings,
Kathy*



Almost 60 people spent a day of retreat "Faithing Up to Racism" on November 21. Several of our children enjoyed crafts, listening to books, and outdoor activities as they made new friends. In the morning, Pastor Kathy and the youth watched the movie *42*, which tells the story of Jackie Robinson becoming the first African-American person to play major league baseball. The adult morning session included Bible study and role play and individual life maps. After lunch, the youth joined the adults for storytelling and

conversation about places of structural racism in our communities. We were charged with identifying one action step against racism which we will take in the near future. We closed with a time of worship, to which each small group made a contribution, offering a prayer, a song, a scripture reading. The benediction was given by our moderator Barbara Lahut who quoted a four-fold Benedictine blessing:

*May God bless you with a restless discomfort
about easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.
May God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.
May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed for those*

*who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.*

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really can make a difference in this world,

so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

by Sister Ruth Marlene Fox, OSB (1985)



Deadline for the January issue of the MOSAIC is December 18.



Please join us for a Christmas party at the pastor's home on December 4 from 6:00-9:00. p.m. Kathy and Jim will provide chili and roasted red pepper soup and beverages. You are invited to bring side dishes or desserts. Feel free just to drop in for as long as your schedule allows or to relax and stay a while. This is an event for all ages. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall so we know how many people to expect.

Farewell Reception

Wednesday, December 9

4:00-6:00 p.m.

The Albany Pump Station

19 Quackenbush Square

The Rev. Deb Jameson became the FOCUS Community Minister in 1999. After 16 years of faithful service to and with our community, she is moving on to the next chapter of her life. Her last day in the FOCUS office will be December 9. Between now and then, you may want to let her know how much you appreciate her ministry and wish her well. The FOCUS Board of Directors invites you to this reception in her honor. Hors d'oeuvres will be served and there will be a cash bar.



The Jesse Tree is an old Advent/Christmas tradition which started in the Middle Ages. The name refers to Jesse, the father of King David of Israel and by extension, to Jesus of Nazareth, his descendant.

Isaiah 11:1-4 says

*A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.*

*He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;*



For the last few weeks, our children have been creating ornaments for a Jesse Tree. These ornaments recall some of Jesus' ancestors and significant Bible stories. Jesse trees are often used in homes with one ornament placed on the tree for each day of Advent. At Emmanuel, we will place sets of 6 ornaments on the tree on each of the four Sundays of Advent. During the children's time in worship, we will be reminded of the stories of God and God's people through the Bible. We begin on November 29.

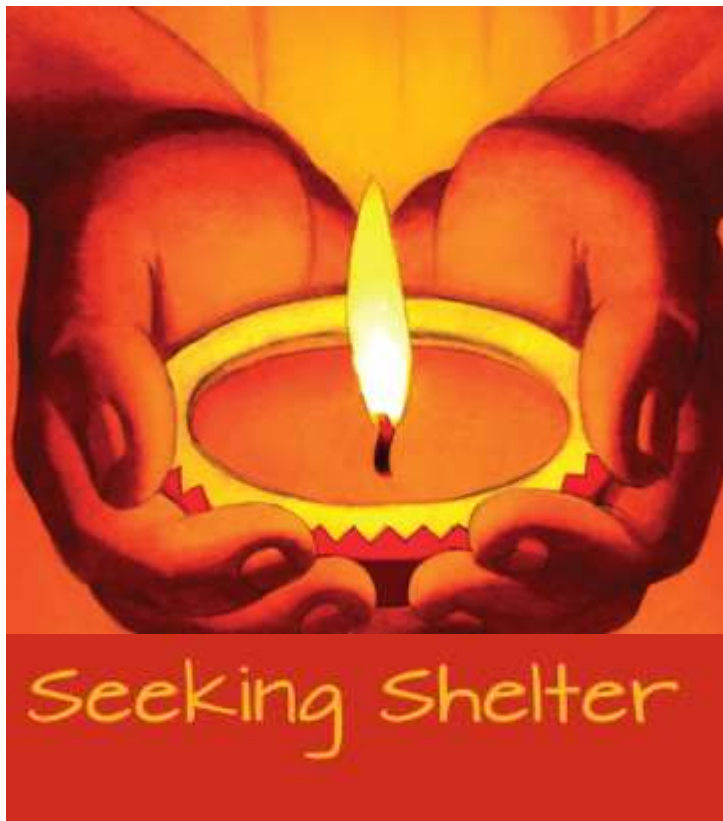


Following worship on November 29, join us in the fellowship hall to pack gift bags of cookies to share with our neighbors who may enjoy a seasonal pick-up. We need several dozen batches of cookies for this outreach project. If you are contributing cookies, please inform Andrea Carver.



Breathing Space Wednesdays 6:00 p.m. December 2, 9, 16

Take time this Advent to reflect, to savor the season and to breathe deeply. Let hope overwhelm despair. Prepare for peace to stomp out war. Wait for the joy that comes in the morning. Join us on three Wednesday nights for a simple meal followed by worship that will engage your senses. Each 45-minute worship experience will offer music, prayer, Scripture and story on an Advent theme of hope, peace, or joy. Each service will be different. Anticipate an inspiring video clip one week and a beautiful liturgical dance another time. Be there and bring a friend.



"Las Posadas" is a Central American and Mexican Advent tradition that is practiced and adapted in many locations, including parts of the United States and Canada. The ceremony and celebration take place December 16-24. In the Posadas, which means "the inns" or "the shelters", Mary and Joseph walk through town searching for shelter. They are accompanied on their journey by local church and community members singing and carrying lanterns; their way may be also by lit by stationary bag lanterns. They stop at various places and ask to be let in. Often the plea is sung rather than spoken by their accompaniers. At each location, the "innkeeper" tells them to go away. Turned away again and again, they finally find one group who welcome them in and everyone rejoices. Often the liturgy wraps up on December 24, with a community meal, hot chocolate, pinatas and more singing.

At Emmanuel this year, we will use this tradition to remember the story of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter in Bethlehem as well as the later story when they fled to Egypt, as refugees from King Herod. On the first three Sundays of Advent (November 29, December 6 and December 13) we will begin worship with a re-enactment of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter and being turned away. Then on December 20, we will become the place where they are made welcome. All children are invited to be part of this enacted liturgy. To participate, please gather at the back of the sanctuary no later than 9:55 on Sunday morning and instructions will be given.

The search for shelter and open doors of welcome is a reality for many people in our world. The shelter being sought might be the companionship and encouragement on our own spiritual journeys, fair wages, clean water, land rights or a safe haven by those fleeing war and violence. Who are the Mary and Joseph today? Who is seeking shelter, safety and justice in our world? As Christians, what is our response when they knock on our doors?



Christmas Eve Worship

7:00 pm



From Service to Others...

The STO Commission has begun coordinating a springtime intergenerational mission trip. We will visit either "The Place" in Norwich, NY or Community Resources in the Niagara Frontier. Watch for details!

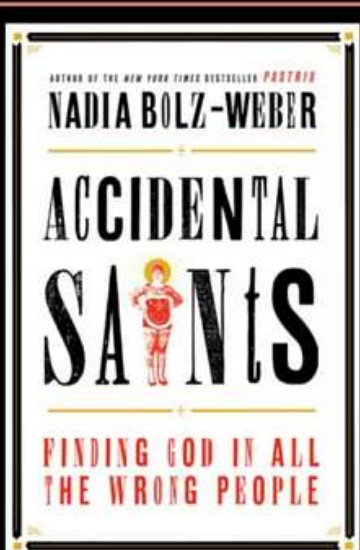


During Advent the Junior and Youth Sunday School classes are collecting laundry detergent for the Interfaith Shelter and for the Overflow Shelter. They welcome your contributions. Donations may be placed in the laundry hamper that you will find in the sanctuary.





Request from Interfaith Food Pantry

Each year the Food Pantry prepares holiday bags with supplies for holiday dinners. Needed are gravy, canned or packaged but not in glass containers. Also, cake mixes of all flavors will be appreciated. (no frosting). You may drop donations off at the Pantry through December 15th.



**A DAY OF
LEARNING WITH
NADIA BOLZ-WEBER**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2015,
9:00 AM-4:00 PM
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ALBANY
181 WESTERN AVENUE

 FOCUS is co-sponsoring this event and has a few tickets. Please call the office if you are interested. You can also purchase a ticket by calling CRTC at 462-2470 

A Special Invitation to FOCUS Churches

Please save the date for the Capital District Raise the Wage Coalition's holiday party on Sunday, Dec. 13, 5-7pm. Come and meet the brave men and women who went on strike on November 10, hang out with Santa, and share some holiday cheer with local justice advocates and friends. Location TBD

Questions or to RSVP, contact Joanna Nadeau - (928)503-4049



Congregational Meeting Scheduled

There will be a special congregational meeting following worship on December 13 to adopt the 2016 budget. At the quarterly meeting in October, we decided to unify our budget. Beginning in January 2016, we will have one budget for Current Expense and Benevolence. Drafts of the 2016 budget will be available in advance of the meeting. The report below from Consecration Sunday on November 1 offers some good news about our anticipated giving in the next year.

- A total of 46 giving units completed *Estimate of Giving Cards* today for 2016. (Note: This number has been corrected from an earlier version of this report.)
- A total of 16 of these giving units increased their financial commitment above their last year's amount.
- The 64 giving units present to fill out *Estimate of Giving Cards* today committed a total of \$123,567
- Based on last year's giving records, we can expect to receive \$ 7,000 during the coming year from people who have consistent giving patterns during the past twelve months but are not present today.
- This is a total of \$130,567 in pledge income/tracked giving income.
- The total tracked giving for our Current Expense and Benevolence Budgets during the last twelve months was \$ 113,375 .
- Next year, we can expect our Unified Budget tracked giving income to increase by \$ 17,192
- This is a 15% increase in total giving above last year.
- Based on the average total of loose offerings during the past three years, we can expect to receive \$ 2500 during the coming year from that source.
- Church income from non-donor sources such as interest, rentals, and fees is \$ 77,601
- This gives us a grand total of \$210,668 anticipated income for 2016.



Join us on Sunday, December 27th at 10:00 a.m. for worship and breakfast/brunch in the Fellowship Hall. Please plan to bring your favorite continental breakfast or brunch item to share as we celebrate worship together. Juices and milk will be provided.

Mark Your Calendar and don't miss Emmanuel's holiday concert on Sunday, December 6 at 4 pm. Details forthcoming.



winter begins
December 21

From Corporate Management Commission...

Dear Emmanuel Friends and Family:

Can you recall images of church? Church as the One Body of Christ; church as the People of God; church as the Bride of Christ are all familiar and vivid images that we know from our reading of the Bible (Romans 12:5; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelations 21:9-11).

Church originally was not a building. But having a place for worship, teaching, supporting and serving one another, prayer and sharing our faith is certainly more effective in a church building. And it offers us the space to welcome everyone who wants to come. Two thousand years after the New Testament, Emmanuel Baptist Church works to fulfill all those different concepts of church.

Emmanuel had emergency needs in 2013, with physical instabilities and potential dangers to the public. Work we completed together generated great anxiety at the time. Struggles involved quality and finances, time and responsibilities, communication and transparency. It was hard work to help our building, but we completed those emergency repairs as a church, together!

Looking back, we rightfully should be proud of that project. Significant and effective repairs, with appropriate stewardship of our many different resources, have strengthened our church and our congregation.

Work remains.

Debt to SEFCU has been reduced to almost half, since Emmanuel assumed more than a quarter million dollars of indebtedness in 2013. But we need to complete our obligation for the mortgage we took with SEFCU.

Angels are willing to help in our difficulties, some offering “matching funds” for your contributions in the month of December. The more we can pay now, the more debt we eliminate and the less interest we have to pay. December is an important month.

Can you help? December 2015 contributions to reduce the debt to SEFCU will have multiple financial benefits for Emmanuel. (Specific details are upcoming in a letter to you soon!) Your end-of-the-year financial contribution may also have tax and legal benefits for you.

We enjoy a beautiful church. Our church represents the people of God and the One Body of Christ. Advent reminds us of God’s gift of grace. Please feel moved to help our church with your generous gifts.

Sincerely,

Corporate Management Commission





Ladies Lunch Scheduled

Emmanuel ladies will enjoy lunch together at Normanside Country Club on **Thursday, December 3** (11:30 a.m.) Please let Pat Hunziker or Betty Mallory know if you will be joining us.



Work Day Scheduled December 12

Mark your calendar and join us from 9 a.m. to Noon as we combine our energies to do a variety of projects and tasks around the church building. There is a job for every skill level! Lunch will be served. If you have questions, contact Tom Lahut.



Please Note...

December 1 ~ Coordinating Council
5:30 at Donley's

December 13 ~ Diaconate
~ Budget Hearing

December 20 ~ Christmas Reception

Church Office Closed:

December 24 & 25

Merry Christmas!

Remember the Food Pantry...

*December:
bar soap*

Happy Birthday...

December

Kathy Moore	8 th
Michele Calvin	9 th
Brian Hughes	11 th
Matthew Lahut	12 th
Dwight Smith	12 th
Tom Lahut	14 th
Jennie DeFlaviis	15 th
Tammy Skinner	18 th
Molly Wilkerson	20 th



If your birthday is not published in our monthly listing, please notify Dorothy at 465-5161.

Nursing Home Visits Continue

The Choir will share holiday music at the Beverwyck on Saturday, December 5; rehearsal at 9:30, program at 10:30. This special ministry brings joy to residents and staff alike. If you have questions, you may contact Michael Clement or Pat Hunziker.



The tradition at Emmanuel has been to decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias at Christmas and to deliver them to our homebound and ill members on Christmas Eve. If you wish to purchase a plant, please check the appropriate box(s) below and indicate if the plant is in honor or in memory of a loved one. Cost is \$12 per plant. The poinsettias will be available on Christmas Eve. Please fill out this form and give it to Karen Green along with your payment.

I would like the poinsettia designated in memory/honor (circle one) of _____

I would like the plant donated to a church member.

I would like the plant for myself.

NAME: _____

Emmanuel Baptist Church

275 State St.

Albany, NY 12210

