THE MOSAIC

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pastoral Ponderings

In my first post-election sermon, I shared Carrie Newcomer's song "Sanctuary". When she sings,

In a state of true believers / On streets called Us and Them /
It's gonna take some time 'Til the world feels safe again. . . ./
Will you keep the embers warm / when my fire's all but gone/
be my sanctuary / 'til I can carry on /

it seems like she is singing of things that just happened, even though the song was written months ago.

Poets, musicians and artists can speak in special ways to the times in which we live. I am trying to pay particular attention to their voices right now. I often resonate with the poetry of Warsan Shire. One poem, written in November 2015, is called "what they did yesterday afternoon". The last stanza says*:*

i held an atlas in my lap/ran my fingers across the whole world/and whispered
/where does it hurt?/ it answered/everywhere/everywhere/everywhere.

There are many songs we only sing at this time of year. We may associate them with the festivities of holidays, but many of those songs reflect struggles and sorrows in the experiences of those who wrote them. One striking example is "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day". The words were written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. His wife, Fanny, was fatally burned in a fire in July 1861. Trying to save her, Henry suffered burns so severe that he did not attend her funeral. The first Christmas after her death, Longfellow wrote, "How inexpressibly sad are all holidays." A year after the incident he wrote, "I can make no record of these days. Better leave them wrapped in silence. Perhaps someday God will give me peace." In December 1863, he received word that his son Charles, a Union soldier, had been severely wounded and might not live. There is no entry in his journal for that Christmas. Charles escaped being paralyzed by inches and he did eventually recover from his war wounds. On Christmas Day, 1864, Longfellow wrote 7 stanzas of his poem "Christmas Bells". Two of the stanzas contained specific references to the Civil War and did not make it into the song which evolved from the poem. His anguish over a country divided, a continent rent in two, led to the lines,

And in despair I bowed my head; / "There is no peace on earth," I said;
/"For hate is strong, And mocks the song / Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Continued…

The words of Holy Scripture also come from real-life, real-time experiences. Some passages are as poetic as any contemporary poet. Many texts have been set to music. The passages specified for this season in the Revised Common Lectionary are often about turmoil or apocalypse or splitting the fabric of the known world. Sometimes these are texts about the coming of the Messiah. Sometimes they anticipate the consummation of creation. I often avoid preaching these passages during Advent, but this year I think they may resonate in a new way. Join in Sunday morning worship as we wait and listen for the proclamation that Jesus is coming again to turn despair into hope, violence into peace, sorrow into joy and hatred into love.

Blessings,
Kathy

The Weeks Ahead in Worship:

November 27 Advent 1
Isaiah 2:1-5
Matthew 24:36-44

December 4 Advent 2
Isaiah 11:1-10
Matthew 3:1-12

December 11 Advent 3
Isaiah 35:1-10
Matthew 11:2-11

December 18 Advent 4
Isaiah 7:10-16
Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 Christmas Eve Worship
7:00 pm

December 25 Christmas Day
Lessons & Carols
10:00 am

January 1 New Year's Brunch
Worship with Communion 10:00 a.m.

Join us for a Christmas party at the pastor's home on December 2 from 6:30-9:00. p.m. Kathy and Jim will provide chili and other soups 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.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Magnificat in D Major

presented by the Emmanuel Choir and Guests

directed and accompanied by Michael Clement

Sunday, December 4, at 4 pm

Admission free/donations appreciated

ADVENT MOVIE NIGHT
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9
6:30 p.m.
$5 suggested donation

Our Advent movie, showing on the EBC sanctuary big screen, is *Joyeux Noel*. *Joyeux Noel* is a fictionalized account of the World War I Christmas truce of December 1914. The story is told through the eyes of French, British and German soldiers. It is rated PG-13 for some war violence and brief scene of sexuality/nudity. Please come and bring a friend. Pizza will be available. Please sign up to let us know how much pizza to order.

Following worship on December 4, we will decorate the Chrismon tree in the sanctuary. Chrismons are Christian symbols which take their name from a contraction of Christ monograms. Our Chrismons have been made by EBC children. After the tree is done, we will move to fellowship hall to pack gift bags of cookies to share with our neighbors at Breakfast Club. We need several dozen batches of cookies for this outreach project. EBC bakers, please start baking and freezing now. If you are contributing cookies, please indicate that on the list in fellowship hall.

From Service to Others…

Dinner Deliveries to Resume

During the winter months, Emmanuel supports both the Emergency Overflow Shelter at First Lutheran Church and the Shelter at Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless by occasionally providing home cooked dinners for their guests.

On December 14 we will deliver food to the Emergency Overflow Shelter. Karen Kendall is organizing the supper so please let her know if you wish to help. Guests are always sincerely grateful for these special meals.

During Advent we will be 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.

The Membership and Evangelism commission is looking for someone, with computer skills and creativity to be responsible for keeping posters in the sign boxes on the outside of the building updated. M&E will work on content, graphics and design of posters with whomever is willing to take this over. Electronic files are sent to Accuprint for printing. See Ruth Pushee or Andrea Carver if you think you might be this person.

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

Statistical Report on Consecration Sunday Results

- A total of **40** giving units completed Estimate of Giving Cards today (for 2017)

- A total of **20** of these giving units increased their financial commitment above their last year's amount and **3** new units filled out Estimate of Giving Cards.

- A total of **40** giving units present to fill out Estimate of Giving Cards today committed a total of $**117,940**.

- Based on last year's giving records, we can expect to receive $**18,146** during the coming year from people who have consistent giving patters during the past twelve months but are not present today.

- Based on the average total of loose offerings during the past three years, we can expect to receive **$3,200** during the coming year from that source.
    - *(includes Span the Gap, Loose, and Special Sundays)*

- Church income from non-donor sources such as interest, rentals and fees is **$75,000**.

- This gives us a grand total of $**214,286** anticipated income for the next twelve months. *($3200 + 75000+117940+18146)*

- The total income for our Unified Budget (Current Expense and Benevolence) during the last twelve months was **$211,576.**

- Next year, we can expect our Unified Budget income to increase by $**7,745**.

- This is a **6.03**% increase in total giving above last year.

Friends,

Ian and I are going on an Interfaith Peace Tour of Israel and Palestine next February. The tour is sponsored by the Reformed Church, and several people from our FOCUS partner First Church in Albany will be going. Christians, Jews, and Muslims will be traveling together. We have already started meeting to get to know each other and find out more about each other's faiths.

The 10-day trip will include visits to archeological and holy sites important to each of the three faiths. We will meet with people of the lands, and we will see some of the efforts being made to bring peace to the ongoing conflicts in the region. The goal is that when we return we will continue to be engaged in inter-faith dialogue and become better advocates for peace and reconciliation in our own homes, our faith communities, and around the world.

I would like to raise some of the cost of the trip by offering to make pies, breads, cookies, candies, and other good stuff for you in exchange for donations for the trip. Coordinating Council has agreed to support me by allowing donations to be made to Emmanuel Baptist Church and designated for the "Peace Tour—Leet." Donations given in this way will be tax-deductible. If you would like to order any goodies from me, please see me on a Sunday, e-mail me at edith.leet@outlook.com, or phone me at 518-482-6612. Thank you for your support.

Blessings,
Edith Leet

Sixty-seven Emmanuel members and friends signed this statement. In early November, it was sent to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the Baptist Peace Fellowship, President Obama, Senators Gillibrand and Schumer and Lt. General Semonite, Commanding General, US Army Corps of Engineers.

The Standing Rock Sioux people say that they are "Defending the Sacred" as they oppose the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline which would transport fracked oil from North Dakota to Illinois. They are engaged in prayerful protest and non-violent resistance to protect themselves, their water and their land.

As members and friends of Emmanuel Baptist Church and as Christians who seek to imitate the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, we stand in solidarity with our Lakota and Dakota brothers and sisters. Theirs is a movement for justice undergirded with prayer. We add our prayers for a just and peaceful outcome to this conflict as we also defend the sacred.

We affirm the sacredness of human life, believing that every person bears the image of the Divine. Therefore, we are troubled by the apparent devaluing of members of the Sioux nation whose legitimate needs and concerns are being disregarded. Law enforcement officers, charged with protecting the well-being of all citizens, are intimidating peaceful protestors with the use of road blocks, helicopters and armored vehicles. They are disrupting prayer ceremonies to arrest water protectors, journalists and legal observers and charge them with rioting. Those arrested are subjected to the indignities of strip searches and attempts to depersonalize them by requiring them to undo traditional hair braids. We decry these efforts to violate and dehumanize and shame persons of sacred worth.

We affirm the sacredness of land, remembering the declaration in the book of Genesis that the creation is very good and in the Psalms that the earth is the Lord's. Since 2014, Standing Rock leaders have actively opposed the pipeline, voicing their objections to the company and state and federal government agencies through all legal means available. On Labor Day weekend, before the court could rule on paperwork submitted that Friday, Dakota Access moved equipment from 20 miles away and bulldozed a sacred site and a grave site and deployed tear gas and dogs against the unarmed protectors. The presence of the tribe and the existence of tribal lands were omitted from the original maps used by Dakota Access in its environmental assessment, in direct violation of our nation's environmental policies.

We affirm the sacredness of water, which is necessary for all life. The pipeline route goes under the Missouri River within a half-mile of tribal lands. A break in the pipe would pollute the drinking water for the tribe and millions downstream. The possibility of contamination is a very real danger. The original pipeline route was closer to the city of Bismarck and was rejected for posing the very same kind of threat to its water. With the water protectors, we affirm "Water is Life." With the prophets of old, we proclaim "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a flowing stream."

In defense of the sacred and in solidarity with Jesus who identified with the oppressed, became incarnate on the earth and began his ministry in the baptismal waters of the Jordan River, we stand with Standing Rock.

Ladies Lunch Scheduled

Emmanuel ladies will gather to have lunch together at Normanside Country Club on **Thursday, December 1** (11:30 a.m.) To assure adequate seating, please let Pat Hunziker or Betty Mallory know if you can join us.

Please Note…

December 6 ~ Coordinating Council 5:30

December 11 ~ Diaconate

December 18 ~ Christmas Reception

Church Office Closed:

December 24 & 25

Merry Christmas!

Work Day Scheduled December 10

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.

GRATEFUL is when "you know what you have and you're glad about it."

Hannah, age 9

Remember the Food Pantry…

December:

razors, toilet paper, and deodorant

Join us on Sunday, January 1 at 10:00 a.m. for worship and brunch in the Fellowship Hall. Watch for a sign-up sheet for breakfast casseroles and fruit; beverages will be provided.

Happy Birthday…

December

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

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

Thank You

Bessie Gibson writes:

"I want to thank everyone at church for their love and support during this time. I was so happy to see my church family. Thank you."

Winter begins December 21

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