

Published monthly by

**EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**

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**December 2019**

**Volume XXXVI No. 11**

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## *Pastoral Ponderings*

The last Sunday of the liturgical year was also the Sunday before Thanksgiving and worship was focused on gratitude. In my sermon I said that we are so surrounded with abundant goodness and beauty, that we often fail to notice it. I suggested that what we are accustomed to, we don't notice and what we don't notice, we won't be grateful for. If we want gratitude to play a bigger part in our lives, perhaps we can start by making a habit of noticing. We are entering what is for many, the busiest month of the year. It coincides with Advent, the beginning of the church year and a meaningful season in its own right. But it often happens that we rush through it preoccupied and overscheduled. In our busyness, we fail to notice the goodness, the surprises, the moments of wonder, which could bring joy, and we miss it.



On that Sunday, we spent some time together in reflection. Some listed current blessings, what we are grateful for right now. Others anticipated the upcoming season and noted those things we especially want to be present for, the things we don't want to pass by unnoticed. Taken together, these represent our intentions to notice with joy and gratitude what is beautiful and true and lovely and good. This month, we present not just the pastor's ponderings, but the congregation's ponderings. May the following lists serve as reminders and inspiration as we journey through this holy season together.

### **We are grateful for**

Warm home, animals and birds to feed, beautiful area to live in, salvation, abundance of food, financial security, job, great family and even better friends, health, children and grandchildren, friends and neighbors, my sister's leg feeling better, our home given to us when we needed it, life, support of loved ones, husband, faith, warmth on cold days, meaningful employment, anticipation, nature, the presence of granddaughters and great-grandchildren on Thanksgiving, beautiful birds to watch at my feeders, new friends, eyesight, my boyfriend, being able to sew and bake creative gifts for kids in need at a nearby school and food pantry, a return of health and energy, work that helps to improve life for others, health of my family, the ability to give back . . .

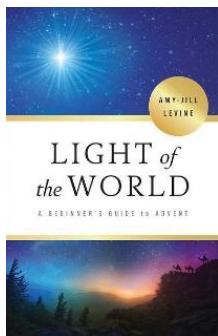
*continued...*

## We want to be present and notice

joy on the faces of others, being alone in front of the fire, trying out a new cookie press, sharing things we love with others, the great library known as the Bible, listening more than talking to friends and strangers, thinking of surprises for family, children in church, decorating a new home, relationships at Friday Night Lights, cousins, listening to good music, connecting with friends at work, the image of God in ourselves and in others, cutting a fresh balsam fir tree and bringing that scent indoors, an opportunity to make a difference for someone having a tough time, taking good photos, the image of God in ourselves and in others, clear skies and sunshine, old Christmas movies, ice skating at the plaza, window-shopping, Christmas foods we don't have all the time, wondering about life, a new baby in the family, the presence of love, joy and peace, Breakfast Club community, the first December snow, the presence of people who might not be here next year (and that could be anyone), community Christmas decorations, quiet moments of peace, the wonderful meetings and gatherings at church with the people I have fun with, other people's kindness, how happy small things can make someone feel, what family members are doing and feeling, playing in the snow, lights on my Christmas tree, serving dinner at the Rescue Mission, eating around a big table full of family, school concerts, baking cookies, beauty of snow and bare trees and the lack of forest undergrowth, conversations and snuggles, a winter bird count on Christmas Day, the way my heart stirs when we sing, *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, . . .

Blessings,

*Kathy*

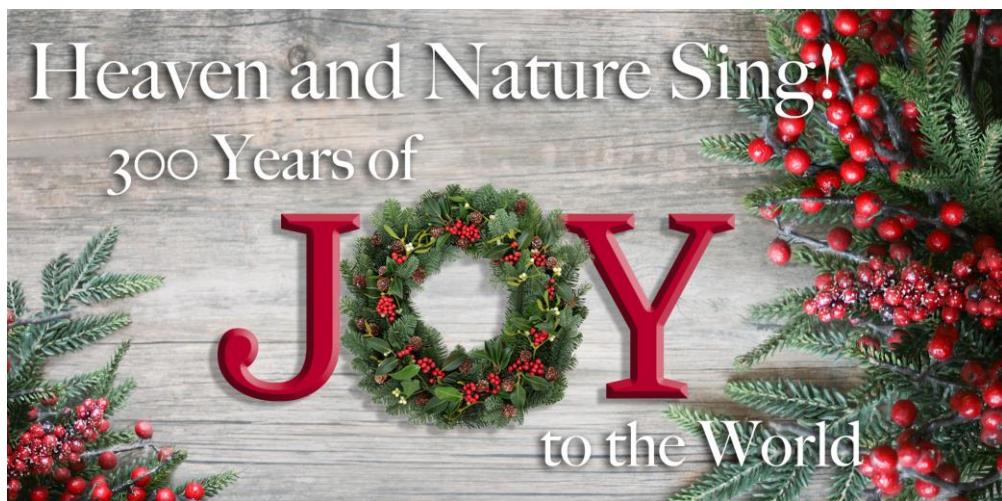


Advent includes three opportunities for adult Sunday School this year. We will devote those to a deeper dive into the Biblical texts that surround the birth of Jesus. Amy-Jill Levine, professor of New Testament at Vanderbilt Divinity School will be our guide, appearing via video-tape each week. Dr. Levine describes herself as "a Yankee Jewish feminist who teaches in a predominantly Protestant divinity school in the buckle of the Bible Belt." In *Light of the World*, she shows how the Gospel narratives connect to the Old Testament; highlights the role of women in first-century Jewish culture; and emphasizes the importance of Mary's visitation, the census, the stable, the star of Bethlehem, and the flight to Egypt. Join us in the parlor after coffee hour on December 1 for "The Promise of Potential", on December 8 for "The Journey to Joy" and on December 15 for "The Gifts of the Gentiles".

We celebrate communion on the first Sunday of every month. The table is not ours, but Christ's, and all are welcome there. We are called to serve God by serving each other and the wider world. Those who distribute the bread and the cup in worship embody the varieties of acts of service in which we each engage in other realms of life. We invite you to take a turn at the table as an act of worship and a sign of mutual service. We usually need 4 servers each month, and we would like to see wide participation by the congregation. Please consider this request and sign up in fellowship hall for to serve between now and June.



## ADVENT – CHRISTMAS WORSHIP



“Joy to the World,” a beloved Christmas classic, turns 300 this year. Composer Isaac Watt’s interpretation of Psalm 98 invites us to sing a “new song”—and it is a powerful cosmic performance of all creation being renewed and freed. Rather than “joy” being yet another word for “happiness,” we will discover that the depths of joy can be found especially in the midst of suffering, the work of justice, and the presence of compassion—all part of the coming of Jesus to this world and a message the world still so desperately needs.

December 1  
10 a.m.

Advent 1 – Hopeful Joy  
Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14

December 8  
10 a.m.

Advent 2 – Loving Joy  
Isaiah 11:1-0, Matthew 3:1-12



December 15  
10 a.m.

Advent 3 – Unabashed Joy  
Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 1:46-55



December 23  
10 a.m.

Advent 4 – Peaceful Joy  
Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:18-25

December 24  
7 p.m.

Christmas Eve – Incarnate Joy  
Isaiah 52:7-10, Isaiah 2:1-20

December 29  
10 a.m.

First Sunday After Christmas – Compassionate Joy  
Isaiah 63:7-9



*“Make a joyful noise to the Beloved all the earth;  
break forth into grateful song and sing praises!  
Yes, sing songs of praise extolling Love’s way;  
lift up your hearts with gratitude and joy!”*

Psalm 98 (translation, Nan C. Merrill)



# *“Christmas, Again, Oh Joy!”*

## *A concert of songs of the season*

Saturday, December 7 at 11 am  
presented by  
the Emmanuel Baptist Choir and Soloists  
directed by Michael Clement

**Van Cortlandt Room at the Beverwyck**  
*40 Autumn Drive in Slingerlands*



## CAPITAL PRIDE SINGERS SILVER ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

DECEMBER 7, 7:30 PM  
EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Tickets at [www.capitalpridesingers.org](http://www.capitalpridesingers.org): \$12 in advance; \$15 at the door



Join us for a Christmas party at the pastor's home, 29 Joy Drive in Loudonville, on December 15 from 6:00-9:00 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

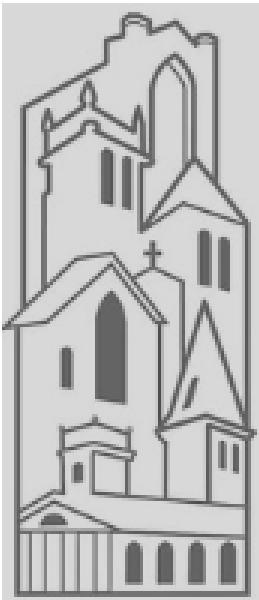
the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall or rsvp to Kathy at [pastorkathy@emmanuelalbany.org](mailto:pastorkathy@emmanuelalbany.org) so we know how many people to expect.

### **Where is EBC Going? – An Invitation**

At the congregational meeting of October 20<sup>th</sup>, the congregation approved a suggestion by the Executive Team to form a committee tasked with imagining what EBC might look like in the future and what missions we might begin. This Visioning Committee will meet twice monthly for 6 months. They will be reading two to three books in that time, including, but not limited to, Scripture. There may be other research required. They will report to the Executive Team, who will pass the findings on to the Congregation. They will have no governing authority.

The Visioning Committee is open to anyone, but joining the committee requires a strong, firm commitment to its work and to the intense schedule required. An organizational/informational meeting will be held in January and the committee itself will begin work the first week in February. Please prayerfully consider serving on the Visioning Committee.





## FOCUS NEWS:

### Winter Breakfast Needs Volunteers

Prep Cook: Tuesdays at 6 am

Volunteers: Wednesdays at 6:30 am

*Call Belinda at 518-443-0460 if you can help.*

**Breakfast Club is preparing to restock items in anticipation of the winter season for our guests, and have the following needs:**

Men's tee-shirts (M, L, XL, XXL)

Men's boxers (M, L, XL, XXL)

Men's winter socks

Men's gloves

Men's hats

Women's hats

Women's gloves

Women's winter socks

Children's hats



**Congratulations to our very own  
Andrea Carver**

**FOCUS Churches  
Volunteer of the Year 2019**

She and other outstanding volunteers from across the region were recognized at the Ignite Volunteer Festival on Nov. 17

*Remember the Food Pantry...  
Cake mix & Frosting*



This December we will continue the tradition of providing cookies as a gift to our friends at the FOCUS Breakfast club. If you will bake cookies, please let Karen Green know. Cookies may be stored in the church refrigerator or freezer. Please label them for Breakfast Club. Individual bags of cookies will be assembled following worship on December 15, so all donations must be received by that morning.



We rejoice with **the Rev. Johnson Din** whose ordination has been recognized by the American Baptist Churches of New York State. This gives him full standing as an American Baptist minister. Johnson has also been certified as a



chaplain by the New York State Council of Churches, enabling him to seek employment as a prison chaplain.

## *Notes of Appreciation...*

*"To the Pastor and Members of Emmanuel Baptist Church:  
We thank you for your love, gifts, food, words of comfort, cards and monetary donations. Your gifts allowed us to give Audrey a beautiful funeral service as she would have wanted. Words cannot express our gratitude. You lifted a heavy burden with your help. You will always be a part of the Ford Family as we will always be a part of Emmanuel Baptist! We plan to visit soon and often. May God bless all of you."*

-- Peter and Sheleah



## *From Peter, James, Esther, Connie and family...*

*"We would like to express our heart felt gratitude for all that you have done for our family in the time of loss of our mother, Audrey Ford. Your generosity, love and words of comfort were so appreciated.*

*We thank you especially for always loving and taking care of Audrey. She loved each and every one of you and always spoke of her joy in being part of the Emmanuel Baptist family. Thank you for allowing her to come back to Emmanuel to be peacefully celebrated as she rests in Jesus. You have blessed us, helped us, and shown the love of God to us in this difficult time.*

*Love, Audrey's children and family"*





## AIRBAGS

(not in your car, but when you order packages!)

Emmanuel is looking to collect the small pillows of air used as packing material. We will fill large fabric sacks with the airbags to block air flow from the rooms under the balcony. This way we will keep the heat in those rooms during the winter and the cool air there during the hot weather. We have filled only two of the six sacks needed. If you have some of these airbags at home, don't puncture them. Bring them in to the church library and leave them on the table. Rolls of bubble wrap are less flexible and less effective. Please DO NOT bring in styrofoam "packing peanuts."

## ***Notice of Meeting:***

Executive Business Team Meeting:

December 2, 6:30 pm  
*in the church parlor*



## **Shelter Dinner Scheduled**

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 meals for their guests.

On December 15, we will deliver a warming supper of chili and corn bread to the Interfaith Shelter. Can you help by preparing a pot of chili that will serve ten people? Karen Kendall is organizing this effort so please let her know. Guests are always grateful for these special meals.

**Winter begins**  
**December 22**



**December 13**  
**5:30 - 7:30**  
**Light supper (provided)**  
**Light activities (for adults and children)**  
*We will bake cookies for FOCUS Breakfast guests.*  
**Light from the Word** (exploring together)  
**Lights out!! (7:30)**  
This is an opportunity for **multigenerational fellowship, learning and sharing**; a chance to invite friends & neighbors to experience Christian community. Bring a friend and join the fun!

**Deadline for January MOSAIC ~ Dec. 18**



**Happy Birthday...**

**December**



Kathy Moore  
Brian Hughes  
Matthew Lahut  
Dwight Smith  
Tom Lahut  
Tammy Skinner  
Molly Wilkerson  
Jack Perrin  
Johnson Din  
Mushel Din  
John Ketcham

8<sup>th</sup>  
11<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
14<sup>th</sup>  
18<sup>th</sup>  
20<sup>th</sup>  
24<sup>th</sup>  
24<sup>th</sup>  
26<sup>th</sup>  
28<sup>th</sup>

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

**Annual Reports are due December 31**

**Church Office Closed**

**December 24-26**

**Merry Christmas!**



Emmanuel Baptist Church  
275 State St.  
Albany, NY 12210



A tradition at Emmanuel is 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. Please fill out this form and give it to Karen Green along with your payment.

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

- 
- I would like the plant donated to a church member.  
 I would like the plant for myself.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_