

THE MOSAIC

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Pastoral Ponderings

“Emmanuel is a beacon for social justice.” I’ve heard that twice from national denominational staff in the last 10 years. You let your light shine and it has been seen by those at a distance. Well-done!

Our Lenten theme **Roll Down Justice!** reflects our communal conviction that we place our trust in a God who is intimately concerned with all of God’s good creation and therefore, our actions in the world cannot be separated from our faith in and worship of that God. Individuals at Emmanuel are passionate about many concerns, including poverty, racism, the rights of people with disabilities, child abuse, climate change, the world-wide immigration crisis, and many others. We educate ourselves and those within our spheres of influence on the issues we care about most. We pray, vote, write letters, participate in rallies, and take whatever steps we can to bend the moral arc of the universe towards justice.



It is no secret that the justice concern which has captured my passion in recent years is the world-wide immigration crisis. As I shared in last month’s newsletter, the latest engagement with this passion is a trip to Brownsville/Matamoros which I feel the Holy Spirit is compelling me to make. I am going to this part of the border to bear witness. I am not going with a sense that my presence will change anything, at least not in the short term. Many other Americans from across the country are going there, and to other places along the 1954 miles of border, to lament and

protest and observe. Perhaps in the long term, our actions will have some effect. For now, our primary task is to show up and pay attention.

Current US policy requires asylum-seekers to remain on the Mexican side of the border while waiting to be processed. There are about 2,500 people living in tent cities in Matamoros. Matamoros is in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, which the U.S. State Department has classified as a level 4 threat because of frequent kidnappings, extortion and murders. For comparison, Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq also are considered Level 4 threats. Families in the tent cities have no protection from that violence, nor from the disease which comes from living in close quarters with woefully inadequate sanitation.

continued...

I am going with 7 other people from Albany. We are all part of Capital District Border Watch, a group which came together a year ago around a shared concern about what is happening on our southern border. The group's mission statement is: "We are committed to a powerful local response to injustice against refugees and immigrants both at the border and here in the Capital District."

Our delegation will join Witness at the Border, a grass-roots group started by Joshua Rubin who spent several months observing and reporting what he saw at a child-detention center in Tornillo Texas in 2018. With Witness at the Border, we will demonstrate at Xeriscape Park in Brownsville and attend initial immigration hearings which are held in tent courts where the judges are present only on video screens. The public is not allowed into later hearings where the decision is almost always deportation. We will rise early to go to the Brownsville airport to watch busloads of people transferred, in shackles, to planes, which some call "boxcars in the sky." Current agreements between Guatemala and Honduras and the United States allow the USA to deport asylum seekers to those two countries, regardless of the home countries of the deportees. Plane loads of people are arriving in countries in which they never lived, with only the clothes on their backs and no social support network.

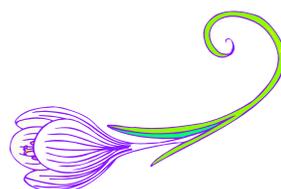
We will also work with Team Brownsville, which was started by a local group of retired educators almost two years ago as the tent city began to form. Every day, Team Brownsville prepares and serves an evening meal. It is prepared in a church in Brownsville and delivered on wagons which are walked across the border bridge by volunteers. Our group will have that privilege on three evenings. In early 2020, the World Central Kitchen joined Team Brownsville in this effort, which has been a huge blessing.

On Sunday, while Emmanuelites are at worship, my group will be part of *La Escuelita*, a weekly school organized by Team Brownsville for the children in the tent city. We have been asked to prepare a 15-minute educational exercise for "about 100 children, ages 6-17." Fortunately for me, there are a couple of retired teachers in our group – more power to them!



It is hard to pull myself away from Emmanuel during Lent. It is not necessarily when I would have chosen to go. On the other hand, taking this trip at this time will certainly bring a distinctive focus to my Lenten journey as we pursue justice together. I will much appreciate your prayers.

Blessings,
Kathy



Capital District Border Watch “Keeping the Border Crisis in View” Celebration, Fundraiser, and Albany Delegation Sendoff



Dinner and Program

Saturday March 7, 6:30 pm

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

405 Washington Ave—Albany

Join us to celebrate the first anniversary of CDBW's founding, learn more about the humanitarian crisis on our southern border, and send off a delegation of CDBW members to Brownsville, Texas to witness, resist the insanity, help alleviate suffering, and bring back eyewitness accounts.

Tickets: \$25 (more if you can, less if you can't)

Reserve by calling Victor at (207) 590-5148.

A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

Payment may be made by cash or check

(Proceeds will be donated to Team Brownsville to help feed, cloth and school more than 2,000 asylum seekers trapped at the border and living in makeshift camps in Matamoros, Mexico.)



Emmanuel has always valued active participation in worship by the whole congregation. Some people actively participate by singing enthusiastically and listening intently. Some show up early to welcome newcomers and greet old friends. Some serve as worship leaders. Some serve communion. Some provide child-care.

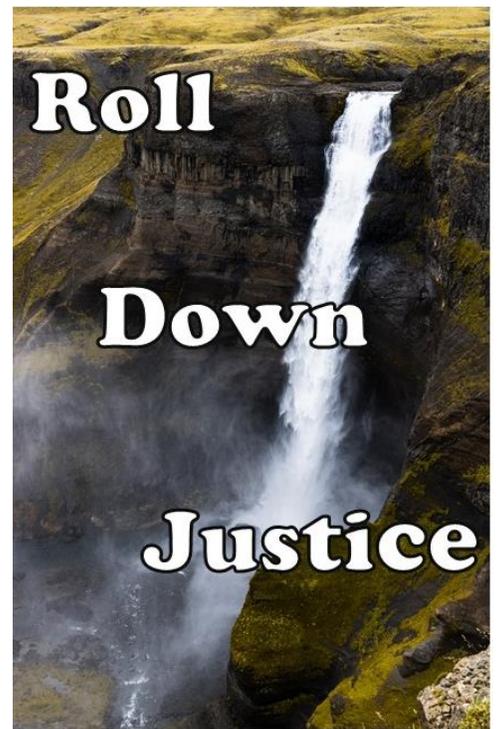
In our new governance structure, we depend on each other more than ever. There are schedules for worship leadership and communion serving on clipboards in fellowship hall. **Please sign up in advance for those roles.** When those slots are not filled, it often falls to the pastor or the Worship Ministry Team (which is currently one person) to find someone on short notice. We are also looking for more people to serve as ushers/greeters. The most important part of this role is greeting newcomers. If you want the opportunity to make the best first impression on behalf of Emmanuel, please contact Jan Curtis, Ruth Pushee or Curtis Klope. We are all in this together!

Lenten Theme: Roll Down Justice!

Ash Wednesday, February 26 --

Easter Sunday, April 12

This Lent, the season of forty days before Easter, we will be inspired by Amos, a prophet who calls us to let justice roll down like waters. Worship without justice is not acceptable, rather our songs and prayers must move us to action on behalf of the oppressed. In a time of hatred, division, violence and humanitarian crises, we will remember the heart of the Gospel – God’s reconciling love for all. The social justice songs of Mark Miller and Ken Medema will undergird our weekly worship. Across the season, together, we will build a piece of liturgical art – our own ever-flowing stream of love and justice. Join us as we practice a Holy Lent.



February 26 6:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Amos 5:21-24,
March 1 10:00 a.m.	Lent 1 (Communion) Romans 8:31-39
March 8 10:00 a.m.	Lent 2 Psalm 13, Ephesians 2:13-20
March 15 10:00 a.m.	Lent 3 Isaiah 58:6-12
March 22 10:00 a.m.	Lent 4 Matthew 25:31-40
March 29 10:00 a.m.	Lent 5 Luke 23:32-43
April 5 10:00 a.m.	Lent 6 (Communion) Matthew 21:1-11

April 9
6:00 pm
Maundy Thursday
starts with a light Middle Eastern meal

April 12
10:00 a.m.
Easter Sunday
Jeremiah 31:1-6, Matthew 28:1-10

But let justice roll
down
like waters,
and righteousness
like an
ever-flowing stream.
- Amos 5:24



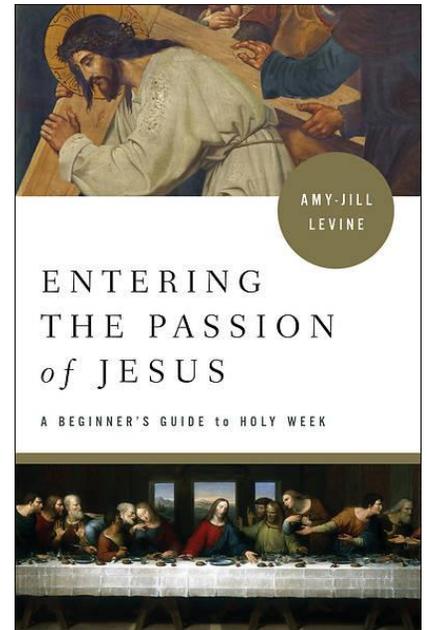


We welcome the Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden to Emmanuel's pulpit on Sunday, March 15. Lynn is an Intentional Interim Minister, serving nineteen transitional ministries over the course of 30 years, the most recent of which was at The First Church in Albany. Ordained in the United Church of Christ, she is a member of Emmanuel Friedens Church in Schenectady (ABC/UCC), where her husband, Peter JB Carman, serves as pastor. Lynn has been fortunate to serve congregations in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, North Carolina and Connecticut, which identify as UCC, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian (PCUSA), Quaker and Reformed Church in America. Lynn is a member of the Interim Ministry Network faculty and serves as a member of the IMN Board of Directors; she participates in the work of Schenectady Clergy Against Hate. This past fall, Lynn was fortunate to be a pilgrim along the Camino de Santiago, a trip curtailed by an injury. The mother of two married sons who are both urban educators, she and Peter recently became grandparents of Ida, who lives in Durham, NC.

**Spiritual Formation for Teens and Adults
“Entering the Passion of Jesus”
11:30-12:30 in the parlor**

- February 29 ~ Jerusalem: Risking Reputation
- March 1 ~ The Temple: Risking Righteous Anger
- March 15 ~ Teaching: Risking Challenge
- March 22 ~ The First Dinner: Risking Rejection
- March 29 ~ The Last Supper: Risking the Loss of Friends
- April 6 ~ Gethsemane: Risking Temptation

Jesus' final days were full of risk. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward. Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges. In our Lenten study, In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience. Dr. Levine describes herself as “a Yankee Jewish feminist who teaches in a predominantly Protestant divinity school in the buckle of the Bible Belt.”



From the Mission Team...



America for Christ Offering to be Received

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) provides resources for cultivating leaders, equipping disciples, and healing and transforming communities. Through ABHMS, we serve neighbors in Puerto Rico and other places in the United States. In 2019, gifts supported long-term recovery after natural disasters and the following ministries: Scholarships and Emerging Leaders, providing scholarships to students to help ease the debilitating effects of excessive student-loan debt; Immigration and Refugee Resettlement; and Rizpah's Children, providing support to children living in poverty. Other subsidized programs include Disaster Respons, Volunteer Mobilization, Prisoner Re-Entry and Community Outreach Ministries.

We will receive your contributions on **March 15 & 22**. Envelopes will be provided. Please prayerfully consider your gift as we partner with ABHMS to love our neighbors and share the gospel.



As you know, 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 during winter months. This ministry could not continue without the help of many people. We are grateful to the following Emmanuel parishoners for providing food for the dinners this season: Bien Baez, Theresa Beekley, Andrea Carver, Karen Green, Pat Hunziker, Barbara Lahut, Jim Wilkerson and our dessert maker, Edie Simpson. Karen Kendall coordinates this effort. "Thank you" to all!

FOCUS NEWS...



Empty Bowls Fundraiser

was a great time of fellowship as well as a financial success, raising over \$14,000 to support FOCUS Food Ministries. Thank You to all who participated!



Remember the Food Pantry... *toilet tissue*

Spring
Begins March 19!

Notice of Meetings:

Executive Team:

March 8, after worship

Visioning Team:

March 22, 6-8 pm

You're Invited!

Ladies, Let's Have Lunch!

We'll meet for lunch at Diner Time in Latham on **Thursday, March 5** at 11:45 a.m. If you plan to attend, please contact Pat Hunziker or Betty Mallory so that adequate seating can be arranged. We hope to see you there!

Emmanuel Men, We'll lunch too!

Same day... Same time... same place as the women. If you are joining us, please let Bob Hunziker or Bob Green know so we can reserve a seat for you.



Deadline for the April
MOSAIC is March 18

Happy Birthday...

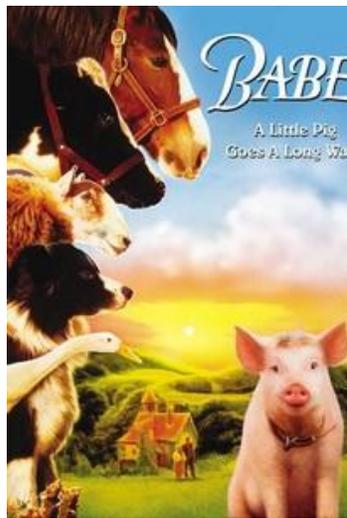
Sally Cole
Jasmine Osborne
Jonathan Malone
Rory Garner
Lucy Wong
Olivia LaBarge



2nd
5th
10th
13th
22nd
30th

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

Daylight Saving
Time begins
March 8!



Friday Night Lights Intergenerational Movie Night March 13

5:30 Light meal
6:30 showing of *Babe*
A young pig fights convention to become a sheep dog -- or, rather, sheep pig -- in this Australia film.

The title refers to the name bestowed on a piglet soon after his separation from his family, when he finds himself on a strange farm. Confused and sad, Babe is adopted by a friendly dog, Fly, and slowly adjusts to his new home. With Fly's help, and Farmer Hoggett's intuition, Babe embarks on a career in sheepherding with some surprising and spectacular results.

This movie offers a fun way to think about some issues related to our Lenten theme *Roll Down Justice!* We might talk about **welcoming** newcomers or how to include people (pigs) who have different ideas than we do, or how to respond when other people think we shouldn't do the things we are good at.

LENTEN MOVIE NIGHT FRIDAY, APRIL 3 6:30 P.M.

Based on the life of an iconic American freedom fighter, *HARRIET* tells the extraordinary tale of Harriet Tubman's escape from slavery and transformation into one of America's greatest heroes.



Her courage, ingenuity, and tenacity freed hundreds of slaves and changed the course of history. Invite a friend to join you for this compelling and inspiring movie. Stick around for conversation afterwards, as we consider the personal cost and sacrifice which is often necessary to make justice roll down. Pizza and popcorn will be provided. Reserve a spot on the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall. Donations requested to cover costs.

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