

# THE MOSAIC

Published monthly by  
**EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**

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At this time last year, people were setting up grills for backyard picnics and families were taking a final weekend away before the start of school. At this time last year, I was returning from sabbatical and Emmanuel was hosting the September FOCUS Worship service. No one expected that September 2020 would be so very different from September 2019.

In March, some pastors thought that church buildings might be open by Pentecost which was in June. Some proposed holding back a bit on the Easter festivities, as they worshipped on-line, so that the first Sunday of in-person worship would be a vibrant celebration of Resurrection. As we now know most church buildings were not open in June. A blow-out in-person Easter celebration will likely not happen until there is a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, maybe in 2021?

A year ago, we had certain general expectations. We expected students returning to school in September, apple and pumpkin picking in October, and celebrating Thanksgiving in our customary ways in November. We thought the year would unfold pretty much like previous ones, albeit with the good and bad surprises that keep things interesting.

One of the challenges of this time is the constant need to re-adjust our expectations. I keep hearing people talk about a “new normal”. I don’t know what that is. It doesn’t seem that any pattern has really settled in enough to warrant that label. We humans like patterns. We like to think we have some control over our lives. Many Emmanuel people especially work this way – we use calendars and spread sheets and color coded charts to organize our lives. Very few of our usual tools are helping right now.

What is helping? Many of you resonated with our August worship series, particularly with the ideas of being aware of daily beauty and blessing in the midst of adversity. Many

*continued...*

of you resonated with Anne Lamott’s prayers – help, thanks, and wow. Many of you are using music – the old familiar songs and new ones for this time – as an instrument of healing or an outlet for pain. Some of you are journaling. All of these are faithful ways to seek God’s presence.

We are resilient people, finding ways to cope, but there is no disputing the disruption and hardship this is causing. Many of you are helping yourselves and each other – with phone calls and texts and emails. You are showing up in Zoom spaces to participate in worship and meetings. You are venturing out to physically-distanced outdoor events. We are bearing the uncertainty together and that is making a difference.

What shall we expect between now and the end of the year? We do not know. Speculation and what-if’s will probably only increase our anxiety. What we can trust is that in all things God is at work for good. What we can trust is that the Spirit is within us and among us. Do not lose hope, beloved ones, but, as it says in the book of Hebrews, “let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, . . . but encouraging one another.”

Peace,  
*Kathy*



## Journey with Jeremiah

**Sundays, beginning September 13**

Heartache, displacement, violence, helplessness, and homesickness are part of the ongoing human story. Our faith invites us to deal openly and honestly with these things. Our worship series will explore the ways that the community of Judah and the prophet Jeremiah sought to restore their collapsed social world around at the time of exile.

One of our companions on this journey is Kathleen O’Connor, a Biblical scholar who brings to the text an understanding of trauma theory. She suggests that Jeremiah provides language to articulate disaster, and



*Jeremiah on the ruins of Jerusalem*  
Horace Vernet (1844)

characterizes God as suffering trauma along with the people. Taking our cues from this ancient book, we will worship together with lament and hope.

## Worship Design Teams Forming

Emmanuel values worship that is authentic and corporate and participatory. Our worship experiences are richer when they represent the varied experiences and faith stories and theologies that comprise our community. Especially now that gathering for worship is the main way we connect with each other, we need all the participation we can get. If you have not joined a worship design team in the past, this invitation is especially for you. (Yes, really, I mean you!) If you are a veteran worship designer, your contributions are also very much wanted as well. Please consider one of these three possibilities and contact Pastor Kathy soon to join your team.



**World Communion Sunday October 4** – This annual service coincides with the World Mission Offering. We will celebrate Holy Communion in a spirit of hope and concern for those all over the world. This team will meet in early September.

**All Saints Day November 1** – This day, near the end of the liturgical year, provides an opportunity to give solemn thanks for the lives of those who have gone ahead of us. We affirm resurrection and celebrate communion, aware of the presence of the great cloud of witnesses. This team will meet in early October.

**Advent/Christmas – November 29 through December 24** -- Advent and Christmas are always special in our community; this year we will face the challenges of observing this holy season in the midst of pandemic. This team will meet multiple times, beginning in October.



## Hospitality in the Age of Zoom

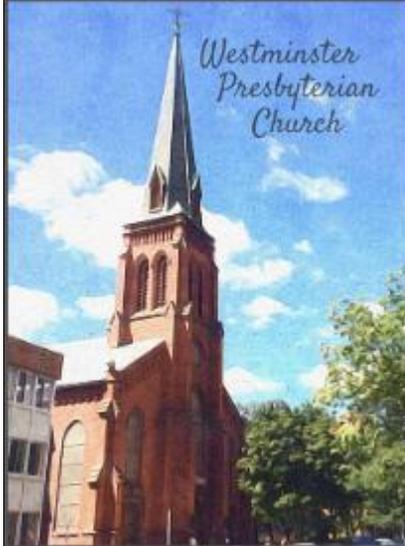
Every church thinks it is friendly, but many newcomers have actually offered the feedback that they experienced genuine welcome from their very first time at Emmanuel.

Many among us have gifts for hospitality. We know how to greet visitors and form important connections. This is a significant part of our ministry.

Hospitality is different in digital space. Approaches that are well received in person may have a different outcome on-line. Some people join our Zoom worship every week with their video and audio off. They can see and hear everything, but they remain mostly anonymous, by choice. Some join infrequently, with their video on, and we do not necessarily recognize them on sight. It takes a certain courage to show up in a Zoom space, especially if you are not well known to the community. This fall, we hope to find ways to engage new people, even in cyberspace. Please consider how we might best extend the hospitality that Emmanuel is known for, in our current circumstances. Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Remember that if your microphone is unmuted, anything you say can, and likely will, be heard. If you are making an aside to someone in your living room, you might want to mute your microphone first.
- 2) In the Emmanuel sanctuary, you might greet someone by walking over and speaking to them one-on-one. If you speak to them in Zoom space, it is more like yelling across the sanctuary and incidentally including everyone in your conversation. Some people will not appreciate that kind of group attention being paid to them.
- 3) One-on-one conversations are generally more welcoming. One way to have a one-on-one conversation in Zoom space is to use the chat function. You can send a private message to anyone. Just find their name in the participants' list, introduce yourself and say that you're glad they're here.
- 4) Chat conversations during worship have been happening spontaneously. There have been comments about personal experiences that relate to something happening in worship or prayer requests or stream of consciousness thoughts flowing within the sermon. All of these are welcome. They help to foster the sense of community and togetherness that is Emmanuel's strength. This is also hospitality.

## FOCUS News...



Westminster  
Presbyterian  
Church

# FOCUS

CHURCHES OF ALBANY

*Summer Worship Service*  
*Sunday, Sept 6*

**ONLINE ONLY**  
**Westminster Presbyterian**  
10:00 am

details at:  
[www.wpcalbany.org/upcoming-events](http://www.wpcalbany.org/upcoming-events)  
[www.focuschurches.net](http://www.focuschurches.net)

**Please visit our website for service details: <https://www.wpcalbany.org/upcoming-events>**

This will be a live worship service available on the Zoom video conferencing platform. If you miss the live service, we will post the recording on the [Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY](#) YouTube Channel.

### Service details:

**Preaching:** Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

**Message:** Called to Community•

**Scripture:** [Matthew 18:15-20](#)

We will celebrate communion together, each in our own homes. Please gather your own communion elements prior to the service--any kind of bread, any kind of drink in any kind of cup.



Click on the link below to join worship through a Zoom Meeting:  
<https://zoom.us/j/565789833?pwd=VHNBBdQyM0w2eUJXVDhzYndtQkpVQT09>

**Passcode (if prompted): 12210**



### Listening to the service on your phone:

If you are having trouble using Zoom to join the worship service, or would prefer to listen, you can call in and hear the service over your phone. Any phone number below should work.

- +1 646 558 8656
- +1 312 626 6799
- +1 669 900 9128
- +1 301 715 8592

**Meeting ID:** 565 789 833

**Passcode:** 12210

[Zoom Tips & Tutorials - on our website](#)



## ***FOCUS Churches of Albany Announce New Executive Director***

We are pleased to welcome **Fred Boehrer** who will begin his service with FOCUS on September 3. He and his family reside in Albany at Emmaus House, an Albany Catholic Worker Community, where they serve low-income families, immigrants, and their South End neighborhood. Their ministry there includes a small food pantry and converting vacant lots into thriving community gardens. Fred is also a lay leader and member of the Shrine Church of Our Lady of the Americas (*Iglesia Santuario de Nuestra Senora De las Americas*), a bilingual community in Albany. He truly lives a life of faith in the midst of those in need.

Fred comes to us with a wide range of administrative and ministerial experiences in church, college, and community settings. Most recently he was Director of Service Learning at the College of St. Rose, responsible for campus ministry, teaching, and community engagement. Fred has a quiet, comfortable sense of humor and a welcoming demeanor. He has experience with staff hiring and supervision and working with a volunteer force. When asked about working with and developing staff and volunteers in a supportive way, Fred presented a caring foundation and an approach to taking time to build trust and confidence through a “ministry of presence”. He exudes a sense of inner strength that will bend rather than break.

Fred holds a PhD in Philosophy of Religion, a MA in Religion, and a BA in Philosophy and Religious Studies.

Welcome, Fred!

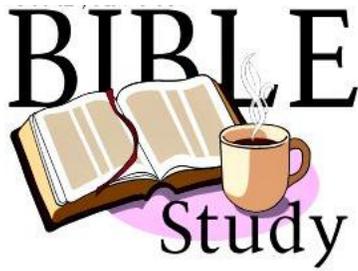
**Remember the  
Food Pantry...**

***toilet tissue***

**SEPTEMBER**

***Deadline for the October MOSAIC is  
September 18.***





## Bible Study Scheduled

Bible study continues on Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00, via Zoom. During this fall Season of Creation, we listen attentively to the voice, cries, and longings of forests, land, wild places and rivers. We look to our response to both the gift of these elements and creative crisis.

If you've been away for the summer, we welcome you back! If you haven't joined this Bible study before, WELCOME! Email Marilyn at [malonehome@aol.com](mailto:malonehome@aol.com) for the Zoom link.

## Kids, Check this out...

**Bible Club** is coming soon for children and youth. We have an exciting new curriculum designed to be used on Zoom. Each session is lively and short. Watch this space for the time of the first meeting.

If you would like to get more comfortable with the current discussions on race in the United States, consider joining a discussion of the book, How to be Less Stupid About Race by Dr. Crystal Fleming, a racism researcher and sociology professor at Stony Brook.



The book is a “deft mix of satire, memoir, and empirical evidence (Eduardo Bonilla-Silva)”. In other words, it’s fun, engaging, and informative.



We will begin the discussion in early October, so contact Jim Wilkerson by September 10 if you are interested. There are free and low cost copies available.



## A Prayer for Schools in September 2020

God our help in ages past and hope for years to come,  
we approach the beginning of this cycle of formal education with all the typical emotions:

excitement, uncertainty, disappointment at the end of summer, grief about the passage of time.

This year, though, that's not all.

Over this summer the Covid-19 infection rate has trended up.

So schools and school systems have pivoted and planned to the best of their abilities for the education and safety of their students.

So parents have debated the educational options and second-guessed their choices for their children.

So faculty and staff have asked hard, important questions - many of which remain unanswered - about adequate access to cleaning supplies and protocols if someone gets sick.

Now here we are on the precipice, hoping for the best but terrified to send our loved ones into potential outbreak incubators.

It is too much.

It is too much to ask of our educational institutions that they meet so many community needs that kids' attendance at them becomes essential for some families.

It is too much to ask of parents to give up income and calling to stay home with virtual learners to decrease exposure.

It is too much to ask of faculty and staff to overhaul their teaching approach or risk their lives (and potentially those of their loved ones) for not enough pay or respect.

And so we pray, fervently.

For good health, above all.

For peace with our hard-wrought decisions, whatever they are.

For compassion toward all, recognizing we're all doing the best we can.

For enough for those scraping by with less income.

For flexibility and resilience, which we'll all have opportunities to deepen.

For learning, whether or not it's of the "academic" variety.

For connection across the cloud and across physical distancing restrictions.

For an increased awareness of the struggles of those around us and ways we can safely help one another.

For a long-term commitment to change systems that don't serve us all equitably.

May we remember that you go with us wherever we go - or don't go.

May we grow our dependence on you through this time.

And may we yet wrestle a blessing out of this terrible mess, leaving us changed for the better.

We pray these things in the name of the Christ who hurts with us

and by the power of the Spirit who gives us courage. Amen.

~ Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed (shared with permission)

## Happy Birthday...

Ruth Pushee  
Dorothy Wilburn  
Judah Appe  
Ariana Paul  
Gillian Horan  
Pickett Tait Simpson  
Madison Stroebel



1<sup>st</sup>  
4<sup>th</sup>  
4<sup>th</sup>  
5<sup>th</sup>  
14<sup>th</sup>  
16<sup>th</sup>  
17<sup>th</sup>

Nathan LaBarge  
17<sup>th</sup>  
Veronica Smith  
18<sup>th</sup>  
Marion Dickinson  
20<sup>th</sup>  
Julianna Palm  
21<sup>st</sup>  
Pat Hunziker  
26<sup>th</sup>  
Frank Scheu  
27<sup>th</sup>  
Mark Chaffin  
29<sup>th</sup>  
*If your birthday is not published in our monthly listing, please notify Dorothy at 465-5161*

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