

THE MOSAIC

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
275 STATE STREET
ALBANY, NY 12210

Office: (518) 465-5161

emmanuelalbany@juno.com

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Pastoral Ponderings



As I write this, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg lies in repose at the Supreme Court. Thousands of people wait in long lines to pay their respects, many having travelled many miles to be there. Vigils have been held in several other cities as well.

This week, the American death toll from COVID-19 surpassed 200,000 people. That number of deaths is equivalent to a 9/11 attack every day for 66 days or the effects of 109 Hurricane Katrinas. It is roughly equivalent to the population of Salt Lake City or Huntsville, Alabama. It surpasses the number of American combat deaths in the five most recent wars -- Persian Gulf, Aghanistan, Iraq, Korea and Vietnam. (Source: CNN, September 22, 2020) It is a staggering number and hard for me to wrap my head around.

Even more staggering is the reality that each person who died was a living, breathing human being with their own personality and idiosyncrasies, their own circle of relationships. Each death created deep sorrow and grief rippling out into its community. Whether or not we personally know anyone who has died, we are all affected by the deep communal suffering.

The Biblical response to this kind of suffering is lament. To lament is to express deep sorrow, grief or regret, to share your pain with God. The Book of Lamentations weeps over the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus lamented in his last days and hours "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Over one-third of the psalms are individual or communal laments.

Parts of Psalm 42 resonate with those of us who are yearning for in-person worship again, *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?" These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.*

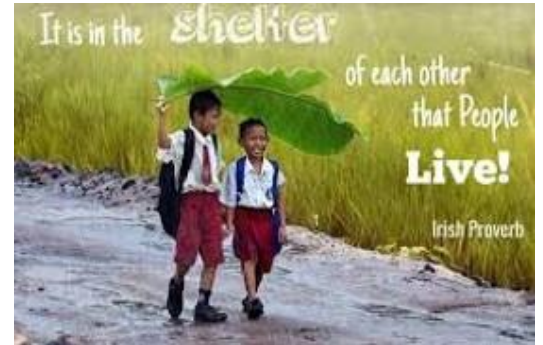
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We are cut off from many of the usual rituals of grief. Funerals may be outdoors or limited to a few persons. Travelling to be with family and friends, sharing meals and memories together, are curtailed. But still many of us are weighed down. This might be a good time to memorize a psalm of lament and to speak it aloud to God, sharing your pain with God on a daily basis.

Lament is good and appropriate, but we do not need to impose on ourselves an obligation to carry this grief all the time or to carry it alone. Laughter is healing and so is music or a letter or a phone call from a friend. While we are memorizing psalms, we might remember *“Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” Psalm 30:5*

I am grateful for you, the community of Emmanuel, who continue to weep with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh. It is in the shelter of each other that we live.

Peace,
Kathy



World Mission Offering

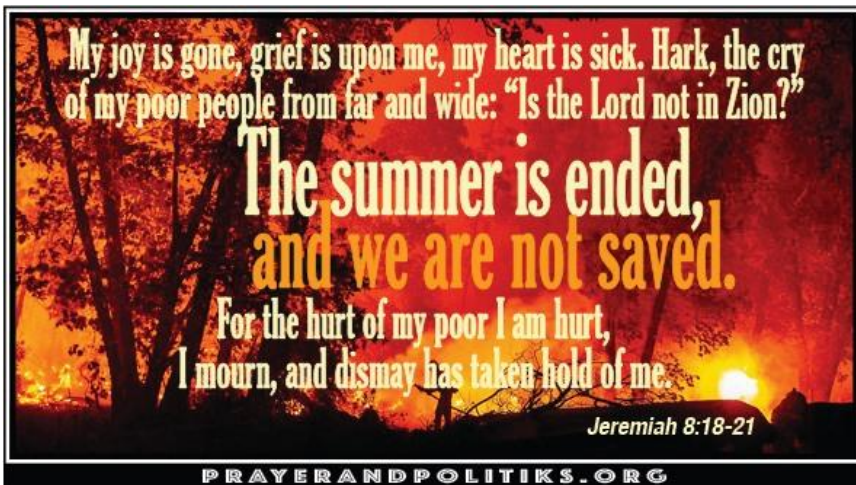
Every September and October, individuals and congregations come together for a time of awareness, advocacy, and action for global mission. Thousands across the country celebrate and support the ministries that God is using to transform the world. This is the World Mission Offering and gifts can be received every month.



For the 2020 World Mission Offering, we are highlighting the Ministry Priorities of Discipleship, Theological Education, Peace and Justice, Education, Health and Wellness, and Economic Development. While these represent only a fraction of IM’s ministries, they provide a window into what God is doing worldwide through our 125 global servants, 900+ volunteers, home staff, and 250+ international partners.

Emmanuel will be collecting donations for the World Mission Offering in the month of October. We will have the opportunity to give in person at our outdoor service on October 4th and either online through the website or by check sent to Emmanuel. Please remember our brothers and sisters across the world and give generously. (A.M.)





Journey with Jeremiah through October 25

Worship in October continues the theme we started in September. Journeying with Jeremiah brings us

face-to-face with the suffering, confusion and despair of traumatized people who believe themselves abandoned by God, but also with the power of hope and resilience that can enable people of faith to survive.

September 13	Jeremiah 1:4-10
September 20	Jeremiah 2:4-13
September 27	Jeremiah 8:18-9:1
October 4	Jeremiah 31:27-34
October 18	Jeremiah 20:7-13& 38:4-10
October 25	Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15



Jeremiah by Michelangelo Buonarroto

A disaster is marked by what it takes away. It takes away nearly everything. The nation of Judah underwent a series of unfolding disasters in the sixth century BCE. The Babylonian Empire invaded Judah three times, occupied it for close to fifty years, and with each invasion deported some of the nation's leading citizens to Babylon. These events brought Judah to the brink of extinction...

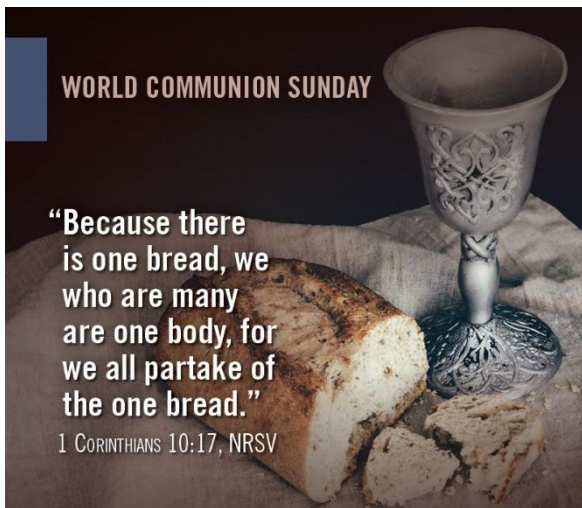
Jeremiah: Pain and Promise by Kathleen O'Connor

100-mile Virtual Potluck October 9, 2020

I'd like to honor and celebrate the bounty of the "Season of Creation" with a 100-mile virtual potluck on Friday October 9 2020 at 6 PM This will be an informal event where we eat a meal "together" online, using Zoom. Prepare as much of your meal as you can using ingredients that were produced by local farms and gardens. I will provide a list of farmer's markets and on-farm purchase locations, where you can get ingredients, if you aren't aware of places to obtain them. Please email or phone me if you would like to participate, and I will email you the Zoom connection information as well as seasonal recipes and other useful information.



Since it is Zoom, feel free to invite people who live far away—we could learn some things about what is available in other places. We can share recipes in advance, and also at the event. That's it! Let's celebrate! Contact Kathy Moore (contact info in directory, or contact church office)



It is our first opportunity to gather for in-person worship in 6 months. We are celebrating World Communion Sunday outdoors, with safety protocols in place, on October 4. We will gather in the yard at Tom and Barb Lahut's home at 288 New Road, Nassau, NY where there is ample room for each household to spread out at least 6 feet from the next nearest household.

Please bring communion elements to share with members of your household. You will also want to bring lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on. Dress warmly. If you are not able to join in-person, there will be an on-line opportunity. Watch for details about how to access that in advance of that Sunday morning.

ADVENT WORSHIP DESIGN TEAM

OCTOBER 21



We have observed Advent and Christmas in some special ways in recent years. Do you remember a living Advent wreath and stars over our heads in the sanctuary? Or angel's wings in fellowship hall? Or the evidence of the presence of angels in the feathers Little Man found? Or the back drop of Bethlehem the spanned the time of Ruth and the time of Jesus? Each of those memories and many more were brought to us by the Advent Worship Design Team.

This year is unique in its challenges – what an understatement! That will continue to be true through the seasons of Advent and Christmas. This year's worship design team has its work cut out for it. Fortunately, we have access to an incredible resource created for this very time. Marcia McFee's theme *Fill the Night with Music and Light* focuses on music in ways that heighten our music appreciation, at a time when we cannot safely sing together. It will focus on the poetry of music and carols of resistance written in times of oppression. It includes ideas for events that enhance the meaning of the season beyond Sunday worship. The materials offer rich possibilities for the peace, love, hope and joy we all long for.

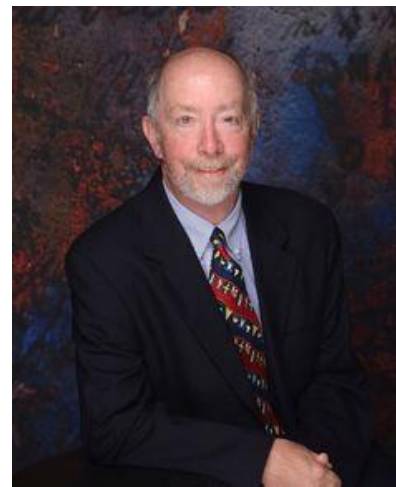
If you are willing and able to help us fill the night with music and light, to contribute your ideas and energy to making this a most memorable Advent season, please let Pastor Kathy know immediately. Our first meeting will be on Wednesday, October 21, time to be determined.



Deadline for the November MOSAIC is October 18.

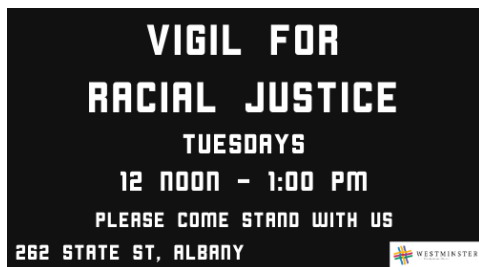
The Rev. Dr. Jim Kelsey will preach on October 11 while Pastor Kathy is on vacation. His sermon, “Mercy Not Merit--That's Going to Take a While” is based on Matthew 20: 1-16.

Jim serves as the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of New York State and has been with us at Emmanuel on several other occasions. Before coming to New York in 2012, Jim and his wife Debbie served as missionaries in Europe with International Ministries. They worked with Dutch-language churches in Flanders and then moved to Italy where they served primarily with churches of African immigrants. Debbie worked extensively with young women who had been trafficked into the country, and Jim provided theological training for immigrant pastors.



Jim’s priority for the Region is to add value to the ministries being practiced by Region churches. In addition, Jim is committed to helping churches develop the competencies to assess and minister to their communities as those communities and our culture change and to offer international and in-state mission experiences for members of our churches.

Jim studied accounting in college and received an M.Div. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in New Testament from that same institution in 1990 under the seminary presidency of Dr. Roy Honeycutt.



Led by Elizabeth McMillan, an 84-year-old peace activist, our friends at Westminster are initiating a public Vigil for Racial Justice to be held Tuesdays, 12 noon – 1:00 pm on State Street in front of the church. The first meetings will be on 4 Tuesdays: September 22 and 29; October 6 and 13. You are invited to participate -- to pray, hold signs, and witness the need for racial justice in our city, our country, and our world.

A large sign will read VIGIL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE. A leader will start each vigil with prayer. The remainder of the time, participants will stand with signs to pray for justice. Bring a sign along with wording of your choice if you are able. Basically a silent vigil, each person is asked to think carefully about “Why am I doing this,” so if asked by a passerby they can answer. All participants will wear face coverings and keep 6 feet apart from others. If you are able to join us (1 hour or 1/2 hour shift), please email the church office at: office@wpcalbany.org Leave your name, date(s) you will attend, return phone number and email address.

Happy Birthday...

Chris Moaton
MarilynMalone
Warren Burton
Bien Baez
Julie Shaw
Taylor Stroebel
Madeline Green



1st
6th
6th
11th
13th
16th
23rd





Coming soon (date TBA)...

“To Your Health, a COVID Cabaret!”

Michael Clement presents the Emmanuel Singers and Friends in a virtual performance of songs to lift your spirit, provoke your thoughts, and provide some comfort in these troubled times.

There will be links to YouTube and Facebook for viewing. We are hoping to complete the project towards the end of October.
Stay tuned!



Emmanuel Baptist Church
275 State St.
Albany, NY 12210

