

THE MOSAIC

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pastoral Ponderings



Several months into the pandemic, I read an article about how church and clergy life may change in the 2020's. The author listed ten things, but the one that stuck with me said "Clear boundaries between work and home/family for ministers are increasingly blurred and can lead to an unhealthy loss of life and work balance." Now this article was written for clergy, but ministers are by no means the only people who started working from home during the pandemic. I think that the caution about the blurring of boundaries between work and home applies across many vocations right now. It also may apply for those of us who are worshipping from home.

Some of us had the privilege of returning to the church sanctuary for worship this summer. Simply being in that holy space was a gift. It is a space that matters to us because we have encountered God there – in music, in spoken word, in the faces of each other, and relationships formed over time. There are sounds and smells and sights specific to that space which we associate with goodness and love and with God. Many of those associations may be subconscious, but our bodies recognize them. Entering the sanctuary becomes a way that some of us physically re-set. That physical re-set coincides with a spiritual one because our entire being is engaged when we worship at our best.

I'm thinking about the blurring of the boundary between church and home. When we worship on Zoom, we may be physically located in a living room or at the kitchen table or in a home office where the computer is. Any space can be holy space because God is present everywhere – this is absolutely true. However, when we worship in the same space where we fold the laundry or pay the bills, we may need to attend to worship with more intention. Our bodies may not get the same signals as when we enter a sanctuary that has only one primary association, which is worship. So, I am inviting us to consider ways in which we might mark our worship space and time as holy.

What habits might you adopt to create a worship space in your own home? When we meet in the sanctuary, there are candles on the communion table. You might light a candle in your home worship space. When we celebrate communion, there are particular objects on the table – a chalice and plate and a tablecloth, among them. If your home worship space includes a table, you might put on a special

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tablecloth every Sunday. You might designate special dishes to use on communion Sundays. Perhaps preparing for worship at home means arriving five minutes early and centering yourself before you login and greet others on Zoom. Maybe it means having a picture of a place that is sacred to you in your worship space.

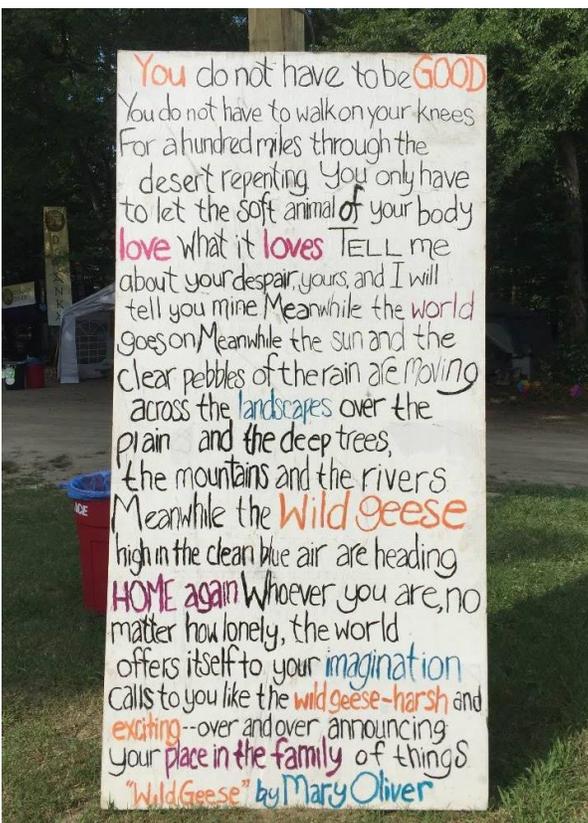


The spiritual discipline required is doing whatever it takes to remind yourself (body and soul) to set aside the distractions that come with being in your own home in order to be fully engaged in worship. When we worship on Zoom, we don't share physical space, but we share holy time. Some of us benefit from physical objects, like tablecloths and candles, which remind us of what time it is.

Sharing holy time in corporate worship also means that we share it with each other. We are not worshipping alone, but in the presence of each other. Thanks to Zoom, we can see each other. At certain points, we hear each other. We can put messages into the chat to encourage each other. As we anticipate another season of Covid distancing, let me say again that we are all in this together. One way that we can keep one another's courage up is to show up as often and as completely as possible. If you are technically capable of turning on your camera and letting your precious and unique face be visible, please do that. I realize that not everyone can. I realize that some of us are attending worship even when we are ill and there may be other good reasons to keep your camera turned off. But if you can do it, please consider doing it as a gift to everyone else.

Peace,
Kathy

PS For the curious church nerds among us, the article I referenced at the beginning is [here](#)



Jim and I are attending the Wild Goose Festival in Hot Springs, North Carolina this month. It will be our fourth time at this art, music, and story-driven festival. You have heard me mention this event in sermons. It is named for the Celtic image of the un-tameable Holy Spirit. It is one of the ways where I most frequently encounter that restless Spirit of God who is on the move beyond the established church seeking out those who have been left out or kicked out or left behind. The Wild Goose Festival describes itself as a transformational community grounded in faith-inspired social justice.

For those who are concerned about our safety because of Covid – this year the Goose is requiring all adults in attendance to be vaccinated. And Jim and I are not camping with the other 2000 attendees. We will be driving back and forth every day from our Airbnb about 30 minutes away.

UNRAVELED

SEEKING GOD WHEN OUR PLANS FALL APART

Emmanuel's identity statement describes us as "a diverse and growing tapestry of faith, woven together in our common commitment to follow Christ." This metaphor has resonated with us for a long time and will undoubtedly continue to do so. But, lately, it may feel like there we are fraying around the edges.

Our worship theme for this season invites us to consider how we might press on when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads. Sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love and hope – with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed. This series explores Biblical accounts of unraveled identity, shame, grief, dreams and expectations. These are stories where God meets us in the exhaustion of trying desperately to hold everything together.

- Sept. 12** **Sarah Laughs || Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7**
Unexpected Joy and Surprise
- Sept. 19** **Peter Sinks in the Water || Matthew 14:22-33**
Unraveled by Uncertainty
- Sept. 26** **Rizpah Mourns Her Sons || 2 Samuel 3:7, 21:1-14**
Public Grief That Inspires Action
- Oct. 3** **Pharoah Hardens His Heart || Exodus 7:8-23**
When Humans Unravel God's Plan for Justice

*Gracious God, we bring you the broken parts of ourselves. Hem us in before and behind.
We bring you the joyful parts of ourselves. Weave us together in hope and praise. We bring
you doubt and faith knotted up in our hearts.
Unravel our doubt. Weave faith into our hearts. Draw us together and point us toward you.
In hope and faith we pray. In hope and faith we worship. Amen.*

"Prayer" by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

**Deadline for October MOSAIC:
September 18**



September 11 20th Anniversary Commemoration

Lament . . . Confession. . . Hope
Ecumenical Worship on the Occasion of the
20th Anniversary of September 11, 2001

Delmar Presbyterian Church

Sunday, September 12

3:00 p.m.

On Facebook Live and In-Person

Reservations and masks required for in-person attendees

FOCUS News...

Final Summer Service at Trinity UMC



Trinity United Methodist Church will be hosting the FOCUS Worship Service on September 5 at 10:00 AM. *If you are attending in-person masks and reservations will be required.*

To RSVP please email rebeccaarichards@gmail.com or call the church office 518-463-1293 by September 1.

Online worship will be available on the Trinity facebook page or by following the link https://youtube.com/channel/UCbeZM7ERDj-LXyP6gWXT_3Q

We will be serving communion so if you are joining online please provide your own elements.

Congratulation to FOCUS Churches of Albany on receiving the Capital Area Council of Churches Pearl & James Campbell Peace & Justice Award!

CACC Fall Celebration Awards Dinner

The Capital Area Council of Churches Fall Awards Celebration will be held on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at the Italian American Community Center. Below are the 2021 Award Recipients. Celebrate these outstanding individuals by [joining the dinner Honorary Committee](#). Donating to the Committee includes dinner and your name or names in the dinner program.

- Miranda Rand – Rev. Carlyle Adams Ecumenical & Interfaith Award
- Dr. Peter Zaas – Rev. Carlyle Adams Ecumenical & Interfaith Award
- Pearl & James Campbell Peace & Justice Award
- FOCUS Churches – Pearl & James Campbell Peace & Justice Award
- Rev. Leonard D. Comithier, Jr. – Rev. Joyce Steinkraus Giles Award
- Karen Pass – Micah 6:8 Award

Housing Needed

The withdrawal of US troops in Afghanistan has led to what many of us consider a moral imperative to welcome vulnerable Afghan refugees, particularly those who supported the United States in tangible ways over the last 20 years. As you've likely seen in the news, many are in extreme danger and are desperately trying to flee. USCRI-Albany (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants) is expecting to receive hundreds of these immigrants and other refugees in the coming months. Right now, the most overwhelming and urgent need is housing. Afghan families have already started arriving, and the lack of affordable housing exacerbated by COVID constraints has become a crisis.

USCRI-Albany is looking for apartments, in-law units, and other creative solutions. Housing in Albany and near a bus line is ideal, unless the housing comes with a volunteer driver willing to undergo a USCRI background check.

Multiple apartments will be needed in September, such as:

3-bedroom apartment on first floor for \$900-1100

4-bedroom house, maximum rent \$1200

1-bedroom in-law apartment for \$700 or less

Rooms to rent – for either single male or female, or married

Might someone have unused space (on a temporary basis) or know of some possible leads? Please spread the word to any landlords you know, especially those willing to reduce their rent to accommodate newly arriving refugees from Afghanistan and other places. They can call USCRI Director, Jill Peckenpaugh and leave a message 518-459-1790 x8010 or 203-877-7529, or email info@uscric-albany.org.

CABA Women's Group Fall Retreat **SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2021** **CHRIST THE KING SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER**

A time of renewal, reflection, and reconnecting with friends from whom we have been too long apart. To respect the safety of all present, we will be observing CDC guidelines in regards to Covid-19.



Bible Study Leader

Pastor Pamela Bolton

Keynote Speaker

Marie Monville



**Remember the
Food Pantry...** *toilet tissue*



Wednesday Bible study is moving into the fall when our alternative lectionary passages are for the Season of Creation. We will also spend some sessions joining in the church-wide Thrive project, studying anti-racism. But usually we talk about the lectionary passages for each week.

We are a small group of individuals who join together in the presence of God to reflect on God's word in our lives today. If you've been on vacation (from Bible study group) or haven't attended in a long time - or ever - this is a great time to try us out! EVERYONE is welcome!!

Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00

Zoom link will be provided soon

Contact Marilyn Malone if you have questions



*The meaning of the Sabbath is
To celebrate time
rather than space.
Six days a week
we live under the tyranny
of things of space;
on the Sabbath
we try to become attuned
to holiness in time.*

~ Abraham Joshua Heschel



Happy Birthday...

Ruth Pushee
Dorothy Wilburn
Judah Appe
Ariana Paul
Gillian Horan
Pickett Tait Simpson
Madison Stroebel
Nathan LaBarge
Veronica Smith
Marion Dickinson
Julianna Palm
Pat Hunziker
Frank Scheu
Mark Chaffin



1st
4th
4th
5th
14th
16th
17th
17th
18th
20th
21st
26th
27th
29th

Emmanuel Baptist Church
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