

Published monthly by

**EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**

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**December 2022**

**Volume XXXVIII No. 8**



## **Advent through Epiphany November 27 - January 8**

This season, we seek a clear, chronological storyline of the events leading up to and following Jesus's birth (or as clear a timeline as the Scriptures provide). We hone in on the human characters involved in the story. We

will read from the gospels of Matthew, Luke and John to tell the full scope of the Christmas story. Most weeks, there will also be a reading from the prophet Isaiah from Year A in the lectionary.

*From Generation to Generation...* reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. In the midst of narratives, policies, and rhetoric designed to divide us, what does it look like to practice belonging to one another? The work of God is always unfolding—in and through us. This Advent season, how will we carry it forth?

**November 27**

**10 a.m.**

**There's Room for Every Story**

Isaiah 2:1-5 | Matthew 1:1-17

**December 4**

**10 a.m.**

**God Meets Us in our Fear**

Isaiah 11:1-10 | Luke 1:26-38

**December 11**

**10 a.m.**

**We Can Choose a Better Way**

Isaiah 35:1-10 | Matthew 1:18-25

**December 18**

**10 a.m.**

**We See God in Each Other**

Luke 1:39-45, 56-58 | Luke 1:46-55

**December 24**

**7 p.m.**

**We Tell This Story**

Luke 2:1-20

**January 8**

**10 a.m.**

**We Keep Seeking**

Matthew 2:1-12 | Matthew 2:13-23

*Join us for unique worship experiences on Christmas Day and New Year's Day at 10:00 a.m. Services will be more interactive and informal than usual. Watch for more information in Sunday bulletins as it becomes available.*



## *Pastoral Ponderings*

The message of Christmas is that God shows up in a human baby. Because of the arrival of that baby, people come together. Mary's family and Joseph's are joined. Grandparents, aunts and uncles are formed. Shepherds arrive. So do the magi. News of this birth even reaches the palace in Jerusalem.

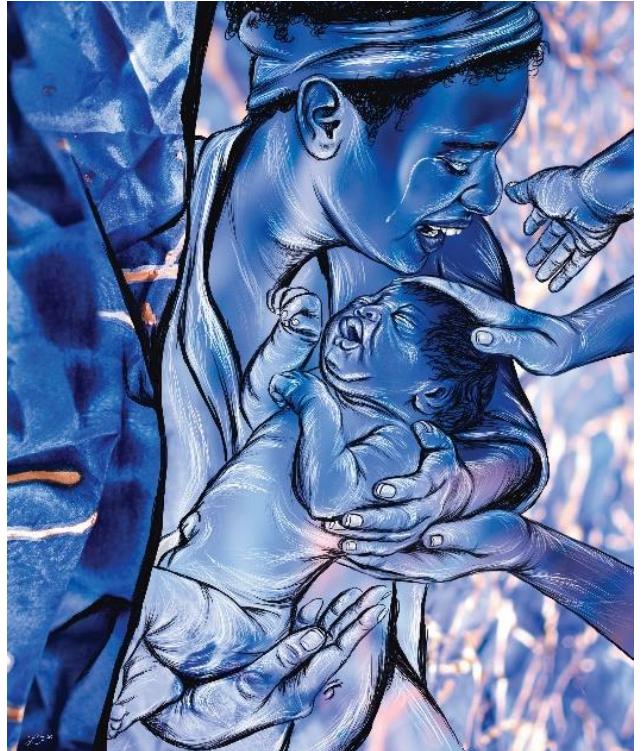
The message of Christmas is that God shows up in a human baby. When the baby grows up, he brings people together. Some are threatened by him and join together to oppose and destroy him, but more join his mission -- bringing good news to the poor and proclaiming release to the captives and embodying the reign of God on earth.

The message of Christmas passes from one generation to the next to the next until now. Brought together by Jesus, we are here, recognizing God who became flesh and dwelt among us, and whom we now sometimes glimpse in each other.

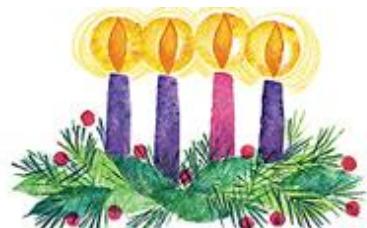
## *Where I Saw God last*

The dimple in your right cheek,  
the child playing peek-a-boo from his stroller,  
the abuelita who spends her afternoons  
in the park by 86th; the teenagers on the subway  
who cannot control their laughter; Neil, my neighbor,  
who always asks about you, the mother who whispers  
a dozen times a day, "*thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus*"; the saxophone player at  
42nd street, the poets,  
the artists, the garden volunteers; the metro car driver  
who sticks his head out the window to make sure we're all aboard; the man who gave up his seat on  
the subway, the kid in the  
dinosaur pajamas who cannot be convinced they're not  
school attire; the teachers, the nurses, the taxi cab drivers;  
the woman at the end of the block with her yappy dogs and her  
books in the window, the lovers that lay sprawled out on park blankets,  
the runners, the daydreamers, the sidewalk chalk artists;  
John from upstairs whose favorite flowers are yellow tulips, the Persian man at the grocery who tells  
me to be safe when I leave,  
my grandmother in Georgia; my neighbor, the stranger; *thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus*.

by Rev. Sarah Speed |  
A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)



how God Shows up  
by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity





We appreciate the work of Karen Green and Marilyn Malone in stitching the season's logo into this banner currently hanging in the sanctuary. You may see this graphic several times this season.

To some people, it looks like a rose. Others immediately see the people in a circle. The artist, Lauren Wright Pittman says "I knew I wanted to emphasize the particularity of each person while imagining how their story fits into a larger narrative—one in line with the generative work of God. I drew simplified silhouettes of people in a radial fashion, positioned around a center point. At once this imagery took on a depth of meaning: the lineage of Christ centered around his light, the nativity scene centered around the manger, and the larger

movement of God through each and every created being—radiating and growing like a flower.

Ultimately, the image represents how we are all connected, our stories are woven together, and each of us has a purpose in the beauty of God's continued unfolding creation."



## *FOCUS Blue Christmas Service*

**Wednesday, December 14**

**6:30 p.m.**

**First Church in Albany**

**110 N Pearl Street**

*A time of remembrance and hope  
in a season that is sometimes difficult.*

Short homily by the Rev. Dr. Christopher Hill of Morning Star Baptist Church

Candle-lighting for those we grieve personally

Lament for victims of gun violence, including the mass shooting in Buffalo in May 2022

Zoom link can be found on [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)

Face masks and social distancing are encouraged

Parking is free, in the main parking lot off Sheridan Avenue

First Church is offering public lament for the evil of gun violence. Stars inscribed with names of those killed by guns and prayers are on the fence near the church. Contact the church office, at 518-463-4449, for information on how to contribute names or prayers.

## **December 18, a Special Celebration**

10:00: Worship

11:45: Lunch Provided

1:00: Concert of Sacred Music for Christmas

*Emmanuel Singers will present "Hope!", a gospel music inspired cantata.  
There will be additional choral and solo selections as well.*

2:00: Cookie Reception

**All are welcome!**



## Recent Fellowship Events:

Halloween Party



Apple Picking





## Advent Preparation Party



## Calling All Singers... and Bakers!

Last year Emmanuel folks sang to many homebound members and brought smiles to their faces at Christmas time. On December 10, we will once again go caroling and deliver plants, luminaries and homemade treats to homebound members. Please consider being part of this exciting ministry. All ages are invited!

Please sign up at church or by calling the church office. We will meet at the church to organize routes and deliveries and to pick up the gifts that will be delivered. Questions? Contact Karen Green. (KG)



Last year's carolers who sang to Pat Campbell.



**We need your help in the cookies and candies department!** If you can donate some of your homemade goodies, please contact Edith Leet at 518-482-6612. We ask that you put your cookies in bags of three and bring them to church by December 4. If you can help put together the packages during the week before December 10, please let Edith know that also. We are looking forward to a joyous time of fellowship that you won't want to miss. (el)

## Can You Pass "The Christmas Quiz"?

We all know "the Christmas Story," right? Well, the scriptures tell a story we may not be as familiar with as we think. Only the Gospels of Matthew and Luke mention details about the birth of Jesus. And the two versions are VERY different.

Much of what we think of when we say "the Christmas story" isn't in the Bible at all. What are we missing? If the scripture stories aren't historically true, can they still contain Truth? Are the stories of the birth of Jesus still relevant?

According to the scriptures:

- Q: How many sheep were in the stable with baby Jesus?  
A: *How many preschoolers are in a children's Christmas pageant?*
- Q: How many kings brought gifts to the baby Jesus?  
A: *None. The Bible doesn't call them kings, and it never says how many there were.*
- Q: Who got there first the night Jesus was born, the shepherds or the wise men (magi)?  
A: *Only Matthew mentions wise men (magi). Only Luke mentions shepherds. They were never depicted as together at the manger in scripture. Extra credit if you re-read Matthew 2 and identify the location where the wise men brought their gifts.*



On Sunday mornings, Nov. 27 and Dec. 4 and 11, at 11:30 a.m. in the parlor, Rev. Jim Ketcham will help us learn the Biblical answers to "The Christmas Quiz." (But we can still put the wise men in our nativity scenes if we want to.)





## THRIVE Program to Promote Work of Antiracism

The Alliance of Baptists, which created the THRIVE project that Emmanuel is part of, will present a webcast on December 6 from 7-8:30 p.m. called “Knowing Your Church’s Past—Bringing Justice: What are the next steps for your church?” It is designed to help churches make the work of antiracism a fundamental part of their identity and outreach.

A presentation by Dr. Andrew Gardner will be followed by small-group discussions.

Dr. Gardner is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Baylor University and is on the board of the Alliance of Baptists. He is the author of *Reimagining Zion: A History of the Alliance of Baptists* and *Binkley: A Congregational History* (2022).

To register for the program, go to the Alliance of Baptists website at

<https://allianceofbaptists-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvcO2uqT0iGNxl9nChR1q90McEEsaxkQ0>

## Nominating Committee Seeks Volunteers

Emmanuel’s Nominating Committee is currently at work finding people to be on our Executive Team and committeees for the next year. Please let us know if you are interested.

The Executive Team is 12-16 people who meet once a month to oversee the church’s programs and services and to handle any questions or issues that arise. Each member of the ET is asked to take leadership in a particular area of church activity, including the categories of Connections & Sharing, Hospitality, Lifelong Faith Formation, Mission, Property & Financial Management, and Worship. Members are expected to recruit people from the congregation to carry out specific programs such as the recent Pre-Advent Party or Christmas Caroling.

The Executive Team’s work also includes looking ahead to envision what Emmanuel might be and do in future years and to take the steps now that will enable Emmanuel to make those visions a reality. If you enjoy planning, creating, exploring new possibilities, and seeing “the big picture,” you might be just the person we need on our Executive Team. If you are happier working on a specific project or cannot commit to a year-round responsibility, please let us know. You would be very valuable as one of the “recruits” that make things happen.

To let us know what interests you and how you would like to take part, please contact Karen Green at 518-436-1876, Nancy Horan at 518-605-5763, Edith Leet at 518-482-6612, or Maria Townes-Covington at 781-710-7675. You can also leave a note in the church office. We look forward to hearing from you. (EL)

## Civil Rights Memorial

### Civil Rights Pilgrimage Postponed

The Civil Rights Pilgrimage planned for February has been postponed. We are disappointed in the delay, but still very enthusiastic about taking the trip. The projected itinerary includes a week of travel with visits to significant sites in Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, Selma and Tuskegee. We want to go in-person because books and movies are not the same as being there. We want to go together because this trip has the potential to make transformative impressions of our racial history and the potential to bond the participants in lasting ways.

One of the reasons for the postponement is to make sure the opportunity is offered to as many participants as possible. The trip will happen either in August 2023 (one of the first two weeks) or February 17-24, 2024. The delay gives us more time to raise funds as well as to lock-in lower airfare. We are seeking some grant funds and other creative financing. If you want to go, please do not let the financial cost be a barrier. Talk with one of us about what is possible. **If you are interested in going, please speak with Jean Burton or Jim Wilkerson or Pastor Kathy as soon as possible, no later than January 1, 2023.**





AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA  
BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT  
JUNE 23-25, 2023 | SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

responsible for your own travel expenses. Emmanuel is entitled to 5 voting delegates with no limit on the number of total attendees. If you plan to go, please inform moderator Tony Malone as soon as possible. **To learn more about the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit as registration and other information becomes available, please continue to visit [www.americanbaptists2023.com](http://www.americanbaptists2023.com).**



Facebook users – please watch for daily postings on our Advent theme. Your engagement with those posts helps to make our page more personal and gives newcomers a sense of who we are. Please  or  and comment often.  
<https://www.facebook.com/EmmanuelBaptistChurchAlbany>

*Remember the  
Food Pantry...  
bar soap*

*Happy Birthday...  
December*

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



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

8<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
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14<sup>th</sup>  
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26<sup>th</sup>  
28<sup>th</sup>



**December 18: Deadline for  
January MOSAIC**

**December 30:  
Annual Reports are due.**

*winter begins  
December 21*

Emmanuel Baptist Church  
275 State St.  
Albany, NY 12210

