

THE MOSAIC

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pastoral Ponderings



We made a big decision in July. It certainly felt big. We decided to alter the pattern of Sunday morning worship. Beginning this month, worship on the first and third Sundays will look very much as it always has with hymns, prayers, scripture reading, choir music and a sermon. On the second and fourth Sundays, there will still be hymns, prayers, scripture and choir music, but in place of the sermon, there will be a different element. For hundreds of years, most (but not all) Protestant worship has been built around a monologue delivered by one person, usually the pastor. Eliminating the sermon from about half of our worship services is quite a break with long-standing tradition.

Change is always hard, but especially right now when we've lived through the upheaval brought by the pandemic. Change is hard because change is loss. Even when a change is positive – a better job, a more comfortable place to live – we may grieve the good, familiar stuff that we give up in the transition. Some of us are grieving the changes to church that have happened over time, especially those revealed in the last few years. Some of you have shared that you mourn this change in rhythm which deprives you of a weekly sermon, because that is of particular spiritual value to you. Others are concerned that this shift will hasten the demise of the church. The grief is real and deserves to be acknowledged. I appreciate the honest sharing that has occurred as this decision was being made.

Despite these valid concerns, the congregation voted to make this change. I want to affirm your courage. Yes, it is a risk. Yes, it is possible that it won't achieve what we hope. If so, we will try something else. Taking bold action in the face of uncertainty is the definition of courage.

This is something Emmanuel is already familiar with. Remember when you removed the pews? Many of you have told me how scared you were on the day you gathered to pull out the nails and lift the pews from the places they had been for more than 100 years. Remember when you declared yourselves to be Welcoming and Affirming? Remember when the projection screen was added to the sanctuary and became one more way that our worship is enhanced? All of those decisions were accompanied by risk and loss. Some Emmanuelites questioned each of those changes, but today each one is woven into our identity and accepted without question by those who join us.



continued...

You did not seek this change, but it is a sacrifice you are willing to make for the benefit of others. It is predicated on a re-allocation of my hours. It frees up time to devote to outreach, time that I would have spent on sermon preparation. I am seeking to lead in an area that is not my strength. I am prepared to try various things until something works, which means that I am expecting failure before success. And I am not looking to do this by myself. I have begun working with a few volunteers to reach out in specific ways, but more efforts are needed. If you have a vision for a kind of outreach that you are willing to pursue with one or two others, please share that. Some training is also available through Fresh Expressions.



The new element on the second and fourth Sundays will vary from season to season. It might include lectio divina or a group dialogue or prayer stations or even a prepared response to the previous week's sermon. You can lean into EBC's creativity and courage by showing up for worship and participating with enthusiasm every Sunday. You can be even more supportive by joining one of the Second and Fourth Sunday Teams. There are openings on the teams planning for October and November right now.

Summer is coming to an end. I hope that you enjoyed many of the Summer Sabbath experiences and are finding yourself in a rested, renewed state of mind. If you were missing Emmanuel friends – the good news is now we'll be together every week! Keep reading for more opportunities for service and celebration.

Peace,
Kathy

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind.
1 Timothy 1:7 Phillips Translation*



A Weekend of Apples

Saturday, September 16 – Meet at 1 p.m. at Riverview Orchard in Rexford, 660 Riverview Road. Friends of many ages are invited to come and help pick all the apples needed for the next day.

Sunday, September 17 – a crew of bakers and assistants will be making lots and lots of apples pies. The pies will be frozen and available for purchase,





*“...when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I’ll be there.”
— Matthew 18:20
(The Message)*

We launch our new worship pattern with attention to the call to dine with Jesus, an invitation that means much more than a simple eating experience. The table was the place where Jesus fed people and also challenged them to acts of hospitality and inclusivity.. Let us celebrate the depth of communion to which we are called.

Sept. 3 The Table of Hospitality
Romans 12: 9-12, Matthew 16: 21-28
FOCUS Churches Worship Service
Extend hospitality to our FOCUS friends during Coffee Hour where you will also have the opportunity to purchase pottery, houseplants and order apple pies. All proceeds from the sale go to support the Civil Rights Pilgrimage in February.



Sept. 10 The Table of Love
Romans 13:8-14, Matthew 18:15-20
Today’s anchor image is the potluck table where love abounds. Linger after worship for the feast that we all provide. Bring your appetite, a story or two, and your favorite dish to share at the Homecoming Luncheon.



Sept. 17 The Table of Peace
Romans 14:1-12, Matthew 18:21-25

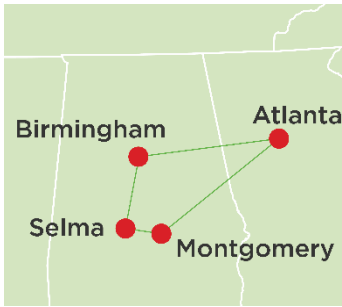
Sept. 24 The Table of Grace
Philippians 1:21-30, Matthew 20:1-16

Oct. 1 The Table of Joy
Philippians 2:1-13, Matthew 21:23-32
World Communion Sunday

**Church Office Closed
September 4**



Civil Rights Pilgrimage February 17-24, 2024



For the last two years, Emmanuel has been involved with the anti-racism project of the Alliance of Baptists called *Churches that THRIVE for Racial Justice*. We have read important books, watched significant movies, and engaged in heartfelt conversations. Now we are anticipating an **in-person pilgrimage to civil rights sites in Georgia and Alabama, February 17-24, 2024**. There is so much to see, to learn, to feel, both in terms of history and current events.

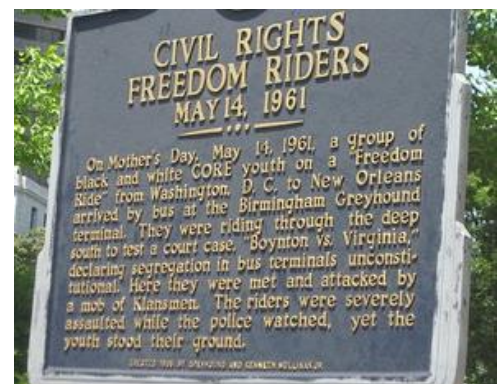
In Atlanta, we expect to visit the National Center for Human and Civil Rights. One highlight of that museum is an immersive lunch counter sit-in where you can put yourself into the seat of a demonstrator. We will also see the former Ebenezer Baptist Church where Martin Luther King Jr and his father were pastors, and worship in the new Ebenezer Baptist building where the Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock now serves as pastor. Rev. Warnock is also a United States Senator and the very first African-American to serve as a senator from the state of Georgia. From there, we will travel to Birmingham, Selma and Montgomery, Alabama. We will spend time with Joanna Bland who was an active participant on Bloody Sunday. Her fight for racial justice led to her being arrested 13 times by the time she was 11-years-old. Leaving Selma, we will drive the route of the March to Montgomery. Montgomery, once the Capital of the Confederacy, became the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement. There, we will stand on the sidewalk where Rosa Parks got on the bus and on the riverbank where enslaved people were bought and sold. The Legacy Museum, the National Memorial of Peace and Justice and the Rosa Parks Museum are only three of the compelling opportunities for exploration in Montgomery. On the way back to Atlanta for our return flight, we will stop at the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site.



The cost per person will be about \$1400. That covers air fare, ground transportation, admission to museums, lodging in hotels/motels and meals. Scholarships, grants and fund-raising will help defray those costs. Driving time should not exceed 2 hours at any one stretch. Participants should be prepared to walk a good bit every day. Those in fifth to eighth grade must be accompanied by a responsible adult. High schoolers and adults may participate on their own with an agreement to abide by the group expectations. Do not let financial concerns keep you from going. **If you want to go, please speak with Jean Burton, Jim Wilkerson or Pastor Kathy very soon. A deposit of \$200 and a commitment form are due no later than September 17.**

You Can Support the Pilgrimage

Watch for handmade pottery mugs and bowls, houseplants and other items which will be for sale in the coming weeks. Support Emmanuel's pilgrimage with a purchase, with a donation and with your prayers.

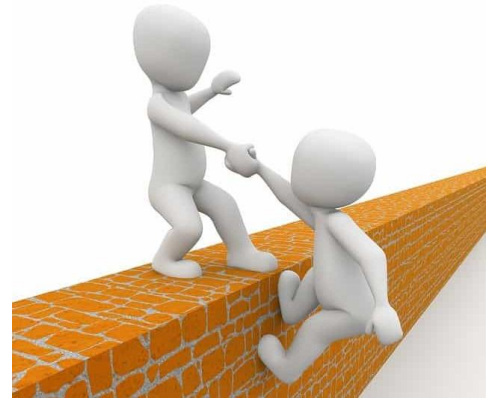


Fellowship Fund

The balance of the Fellowship Fund is getting low. Originally called the Coal Fund because it was used to pay for coal to heat peoples' homes, it has long been a way that Emmanuel provides financial resources to help those with urgent needs.

The Fellowship Fund is administered by the pastor and members of the Executive Team with checks being written by the Benevolence Treasurer. Specific disbursements are held in confidence, but the fund has accomplished many good things over the last few years.

Some examples include: the purchase of steel-toed boots for a person starting a new job, paying rent to keep a family from being evicted, providing a bus ticket to enable a man to attend a family funeral, and off-setting an emergency household repair. In every case, the recipients had exhausted their own resources and were very grateful for Emmanuel's tangible compassion.



Some Emmanuelites make it a habit to remember the Fellowship Fund on Communion Sundays, but contributions are welcome at any time. You may give via check with *Fellowship Fund* in the memo line or on the church website using the drop-down designation for the Fellowship Fund. Gifts of any size are gratefully received and will be put to use to do some good in the world. Thank you!

Capital Area Baptist Association Presents *PEAK – Parents of Estranged Adult Kids* WORKSHOP

Saturday, September 23, 9 am to 4 pm

Latham Community Baptist Church
(109 Forts Ferry Rd, Latham)

Guest Presenter: Dr. Keli Rugenstein

One in eight parents over the age of 50 is dealing with estrangement by an adult child. Along with many myths about parental estrangement, many people do not know how to minister to parents in this situation. The church can be a place of solace and understanding. This workshop is designed to inform clergy, church care givers, and interested parents about this growing phenomenon and to provide language and interventions that will provide a safe place for estranged parents to be in community with peers. If you have questions, please contact Rev. George Stefani at Stefani.George@gmail.com

Skeleton Crew

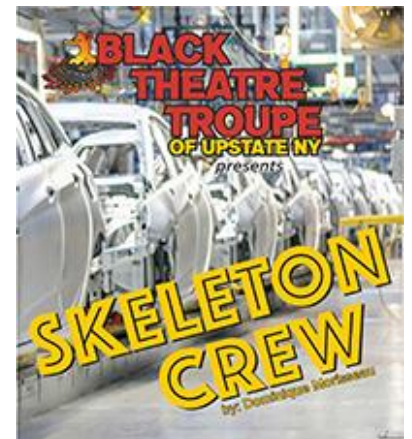
Capital Rep -- 251 North Pearl Street

Sunday, October 22

4:00 p.m.

EBC is going to a play! You come too! Tickets are **free** for the first 10 youth who sign up. Adult tickets are \$18 each. Barb Lahut is coordinating tickets. We will meet at the theatre at **3:30**. After the performance we will stop for dinner at a nearby restaurant, so bring some money for the meal.

The play: At the start of the Great Recession, one of the last auto stamping plants in Detroit is on shaky ground. Each of the workers has to make choices on how to move forward if the plant goes under. Shanita has to decide how she will support herself and her unborn child. Faye has to decide how and where she'll live and Dez wants to turn his ambitious dreams into reality. Their manager Reggie is torn between doing right by them and managing the red tape in his office.



“Dancing in the Street”

Emmanuel’s “*Summer Experience*” culminated with an evening of music and storytelling on the steps of the church on August 26. It was a lively fun-filled experience for all.



A Day at Pathfinder



Food...
Fun...
Fellowship...





To Emmanuel Family:

“My two little girls had such a great time at camp. We appreciate all the help that you gave to make it happen. They can’t wait until next year to go back!”

Always, Tracy Collins IV

“Dear Friends at Emmanuel: Thank you for your generous support of VPCCMinistries by providing scholarships for nine children from Emmanuel. I am pleased to let you know that the number of campers attending Pathfinder this summer has increased more than 20% over last year. The financial support from Emmanuel has significantly impacted our ability to bring children and youth into closer relationships with God.

Please share my gratitude with all at our church. I am proud and honored to have Emmanuel’s support in our camping ministry.

*In Christ’s Service,
Marilyn Malone
VPCCM Interim CEO”*

**Remember the
Food Pantry...
shampoo**

A Concert and You’re Invited:



Night Song

**September 17
3:00 p.m.**

**Rosanne Hargrave, Soprano
Michael Clement, Piano**

Featuring works by
Debussy, Floyd, Backelet, Verdi, Porter,
Bernstein, Shumann and more
*Free Admission/donations appreciated
Dessert Reception*

Happy Birthday...

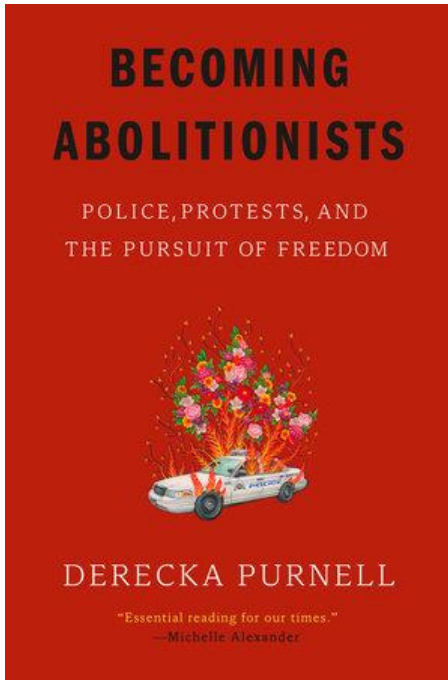
Ruth Pushee		1 st
Dorothy Wilburn		4 th
Judah Appe		4 th
Ariana Paul		5 th
Gillian Horan		14 th
Pickett Tait Simpson		16 th
Madison Stroebel		17 th
Veronica Smith		18 th
Marion Dickinson		20 th
Julianna Palm		21 st
Pat Hunziker	26 th	
Frank Scheu	27 th	
Mark Chaffin	29 th	

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



**Worship Leaders &
Readers are needed
for Sundays in
September and**

October. Won’t you consider serving in this way? A signup sheet is available in Fellowship Hall.



Becoming Abolitionists
Book Discussion led by Jim Wilkerson
October 16 following worship

In *Becoming Abolitionists*, Derecka Purnell draws from her experiences as a lawyer and organizer who was initially skeptical about police abolition. She saw too much sexual violence and buried too many friends to consider getting rid of police in her hometown of St. Louis, let alone the nation. But the police were a placebo. “Calling them felt like something, and something feels like everything when the other option seems like nothing.”

Purnell details how multi-racial social movements rooted in rebellion, risk-taking, and revolutionary love pushed her and a generation of activists toward abolition. The book travels across geography and time, and offers lessons that activists have learned from Ferguson to South Africa, from Reconstruction to contemporary protests against police shootings. Here, Purnell invites readers to envision new systems that work to address the root causes of violence. *Becoming Abolitionists* shows that abolition is not solely about getting rid of police, but a commitment to create and support different answers to the problem of harm in society, and, most excitingly, an opportunity to reduce and eliminate harm in the first place.

Start reading now and plan to join what is sure to be a lively conversation on October 16. Limited copies of the book are available at local libraries. It is also available for purchase in paperback, e-book, and audiobook formats.

Adult Forum on The Church Life Cycle
September 24 following worship
led by Pastor Kathy

There is a time to be born and a time to die, according to Ecclesiastes. People, animals, stars and even organizations come to the end of the life cycle. The churches were which planted by the apostles are no longer alive. Death is not all bad news for people of the Resurrection. For people of the Resurrection, death is not something to be avoided at all costs. However, there are ways to re-vitalize a church, to launch a new generative cycle, before death becomes inevitable. Pastor Kathy will share a church life cycle model developed by George Bullard and together, we will consider Emmanuel’s life stage and the implications of that for our current ministry and mission.



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