

# THE MOSAIC

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**EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**

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## *Pastoral Ponderings*

It was late on an overcast November afternoon. I was lying on my back on Dove Street. The sheet over my face cut off my sense of sight, but I was very aware of the cold asphalt underneath me, the presence of a crowd of people, some of whom were milling around near my head, and the sounds of motors and sirens on nearby streets.

Her voice amplified by a microphone, a woman slowly intoned the names and ages of Palestinian children who have died in the current war between Israel and Hamas. The children's ages began at one-year-old. Names and ages were recited for 12 minutes, maybe longer. "One-year-old, one-year-old, one-year-old, three-years-old, three-years-old." She kept going. I could hear open weeping from two people close by. Anguish. Personal grief. Heartbreak. The woman kept speaking into the microphone. When she got to the names of the fourteen-year-olds, her voice began to quaver. She was also weeping. She kept reading through the sixteen-year-olds.



Photo by Jon Flanders, Albany, NY

An older male voice took over. I listened to the names of middle-aged and older people. For 15 minutes, he read "fifty-two years old, fifty-seven years old, seventy-three years old . . ." the oldest age I heard was 91 years. "This is just a small fraction of the names of the dead," they said. They kept reading.

One more reader stepped up to the microphone. He started with the young adults, ages 19 and up. He read only 6 names and then stopped. He said "I am Palestinian. I can't do this. These are my family names. I thought I could, but I can't. I'm sorry." Another young man took over for him. When he reached "thirty-six years old" he paused. "That is my age," he said. Another 15 minutes went by as the names went on and on.



Photo by Jon Flanders.

Someone touched my knee through the sheet. I uncovered my eyes to see a child who was laying flowers on each body in the street. I smiled at her and went back to being dead. After her flower task was done, she came back to stand near me with a woman who might have been her mother or her aunt. Every so often, she would ask "Why can't we touch her?" or "What is she doing?" I strained to hear the whispered answer.

*continued...*

Sometimes it was “She is protesting.” One time, the adult said, “She is praying.” And I wondered if there was another “She” under discussion, someone who I couldn’t see who was in a more traditional posture of prayer.

What *was* I doing? Good question. I was part of a vigil and Die-In at Representative Paul Tonko’s office. The group was there to encourage Mr. Tonko to support a congressional call for a ceasefire in Israel-Palestine. I believe that a ceasefire must happen now to halt the slaughter of innocents in Gaza. It is a necessary step if there is ever to be lasting peace in that region. So I was there to demonstrate the importance of a ceasefire, in an attempt to persuade an elected official to exercise his power in support of it.

But, the little girl kept asking “What is she doing?” When I accepted the sheet, I didn’t know how long I would lie there. I was dressed in thermal layers, but had forgotten my gloves and hat. Yes, I was protesting, on multiple levels. I lay on the street in a posture of death to protest the death and destruction raining down on Gaza, but after the first half-hour, my body was protesting the cold to which I was subjecting it.

I was protesting for sure. Was I also praying? I hope so. I was lamenting unspeakable violence and heartbreak, expressing to God my absolute outrage. I was also numb, overwhelmed by the magnitude of the suffering in a far-off place and the never-ending list of unfamiliar names. Perhaps I had entered that space described in Romans 8, that place of sighs too deep for words.

This is the threshold of Advent, the liminal space of lament and hope. We protest all that is wrong and unjust. We trouble heaven with our own deep pain and in solidarity with others who are suffering. Paradoxically, lament is also an expression of hope. It would be futile to protest that which cannot possibly change. Lament is therefore an act of faithful resistance.

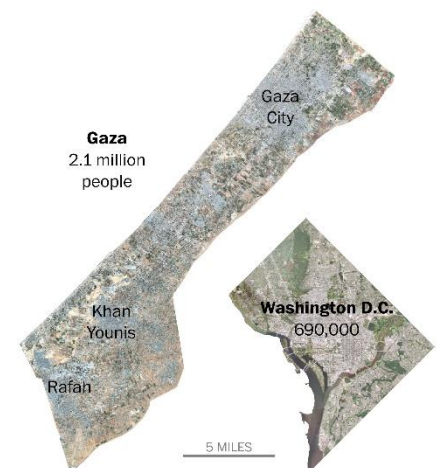
This season we return to ancient Palestine, to remember the story of a people who were resisting occupation and longing for peace, even as we watch a contemporary version of that story playing out in our time. May we be those who actively hope, those who dream, even those who engage God’s dreams for the world.

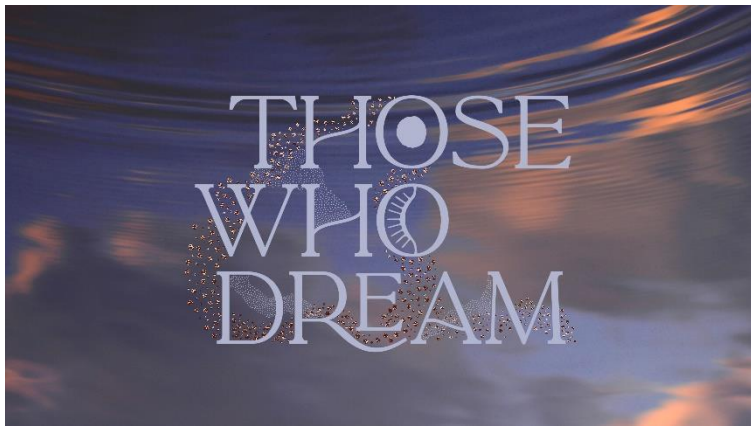
Peace,  
*Kathy*

### **Adult Forum: War and Peace in the Middle East**

The Gaza Strip: called by many “the world’s largest open-air prison,” has been home to 2.2 million Arabs and is now the center of a war that has taken more than 10,000 lives and shows no signs of stopping. What is behind this terrible loss of life? What can we do about it? **On Nov. 19 at 11:30 a.m.,** we will have a chance to look more closely at the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank. Our discussion will be led by the Rev. John Paarlberg, former Senior Minister of First Church in Albany and a person who has worked for peace in the Middle East for many years. He has personally witnessed the effects of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and has talked with many leaders who are searching for ways to bring permanent peace to the region. Now retired, he is a member of the Social Justice Commission of the NY State Council of Churches.

A documentary, ["The Law and the Prophets,"](#) is available on YouTube. It is made by the Rev. Joshua Vis of the Reformed Church in America, who has lived in Palestine and Israel and conducts tours there frequently. It presents a clear picture of what life is like under the occupation and tells the stories of those, both Palestinians and Israelis, who are resisting. It would be helpful for you to watch this prior to our discussion on November 19.





**Advent  
through  
Epiphany**

**November 26 ~ January 7**

*Those Who Dream* comes from the opening lines from Psalm 126, “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.” What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality.

This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world.

**November 26**                      **10 a.m.**  
**Those Who Dream . . . Keep Awake**  
Isaiah 64:1-9 | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

**December 3**                      **10 a.m.**  
**Those Who Dream . . . Prepare the Way**  
Isaiah 40:1-11 | Mark 1:1-8

**December 10**                      **10 a.m.**  
**Those Who Dream . . . Sow Joy**  
Luke 1:46-55

**December 17**                      **10 a.m.**  
**Those Who Dream . . . Are not Alone**  
Luke 1:26-45

**December 24**                      **7 p.m.**  
**We are Those Who Dream**  
John 1:1-14

**December 31**                      **10 a.m.**  
**Those Who Dream . . . Persevere**  
Isaiah 60:1-6 | Matthew 2:1-12

**January 7, 10 a.m.**  
**Those Who Dream . . . Will Not Keep Silent**  
Isaiah 61:10-62:3 | Luke 2:22-240

*Worship on December 31 will include brunch! More details coming soon.*

*These worship experiences are being planned with creative love by the Advent Worship Team:  
Karen Green, Edith Leet, Jim Ketcham, Marilyn Malone,  
Maria Townes-Covington and Pastor Kathy.*





**Caroling on December 9... Save the date for this popular activity!**

**Saturday, December 9, departing from EBC at 1:00**

We will divide into groups to deliver poinsettias and carol to 3-4 of our homebound members. Friends, kids, singers of any ability are welcome. Enjoy sharing your smile to brighten someone's day! To enable us to arrange groups, please sign up at church or contact Marilyn (518-312-8761)

or Karen Green (518-322-7494) if you can participate.



**FOCUS Churches of Albany**

***Blue Christmas Worship***

**Wednesday, December 13**

**6:30 p.m.**

**First Church in Albany**

**110 N. Pearl Street**

**Speaker: Rev. William Hamilton,  
Pastor Friendship Baptist Church, Schenectady**

Zoom link can be found on [www.firstchurchinalbany.org](http://www.firstchurchinalbany.org)  
Parking is free, in the main parking lot off Sheridan Ave.

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



**December 17, a Special Celebration**

10:00: Worship

11:45: Potluck Lunch

1:00: **The Emmanuel Singers present  
"The Soul of Christmas Song"**  
**a program of seasonal choral and solo selections**

2:00: Cookie Reception



A tradition at Emmanuel is to decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias at Christmas and to deliver them to our homebound and ill members. Cost this year is \$15 per plant. Please fill out this form and give it to Karen Green along with your payment.

I would like the poinsettia designated in memory/honor of (*circle one*)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like the plant donated to a church member.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like the plant for myself.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mary

*Prayer by Sarah Are / A Sanctified Art LLC / sanctifiedart.org*

When I was young, my church hosted a Christmas pageant. Families would show up on Christmas Eve With diaper bags and children thrown over their shoulders. No amount of Silent Night could quiet that room. It was a holy and beautiful chaos.

What was special about that church Christmas pageant, Was we, the children, got to pick our character in the story. So for one night, we could be Magi in Burger King crowns. We could be angels with wings made of clothes hangers. We could be shepherds in bathrobes, protecting the flock. We could be Mary, beautiful and brave.



And the preacher would stand on the steps  
And tell us the Christmas story,  
And as our character entered the scene,  
We would run down the center aisle and assume our place at the manger.  
*(As an aside: Is there anything more holy than seeing a child  
Run down that center aisle, as if getting closer to God is all they have in mind?)*

And as the story progressed, the front steps would become crowded  
With dozens of Magi and a wide array of animals,  
But I would always choose Mary.

I would always choose Mary —

Mary the teen mom.  
Mary who said, “My soul magnifies the Lord.”  
Mary who sang.

For even at that age, even as a child,  
We could tell that Mary was afraid, and into that dark, Mary sang.

So I and most of the other little girls in the church that night,  
Would tighten the blue bed sheets draped around our shoulders,  
And run down the center aisle when our name was called.  
For in that moment, We  
were on our way. In that moment,  
We were those who dream.  
In that moment,  
We were all Mary. In  
that moment, We  
were brave.



## Civil Rights Pilgrimage

Twenty-two of us are headed for Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma in February. This represents significant involvement across the congregation. The pilgrims are wonderfully diverse. We are: 1 toddler, 5 youth and 16 adults. We range in age from 18-months to 11-years to 8-decades. Fifteen of us are white; seven are black. Many have been part of Emmanuel for a long time, but 5 are new to us within the last year. We represent the range of household incomes that exists within Emmanuel. It feels like a working of the Holy Spirit to gather this particular combination of folks to share this experience.



There is such potential for this to be a transformative event for the pilgrims, but also for all of Emmanuel. In addition to the racial justice learning which may be profound we hope to see the development and strengthening of relationships across generations and between long-time leaders and newer ones.

We covet your support. Please pray that we will be open to receiving all that we might receive spiritually, relationally and educationally from the sites on the trip and from each other. If you are able to support the trip financially, gifts of any size will be gratefully received.

The 2024 pilgrims include: Janet Appe, Judah Appe, Zechariah Bell, Jean Burton, Jan Curtis, Kathy Donley, Karen Green, Brian Hughes, Adella Johnson, Jim Ketcham, Edith Leet, Marilyn Malone, Tony Malone, Angela Neal, Spencer Neal, Makayla Smith, Veronica Smith, Veronica Torian, Eliza Townes-Covington, Maria Townes-Covington, Jim Wilkerson, and Camille Wing.



### **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)**

*Theme: Good will come from community, connection, caring.*

*Good will come from Giving.*

The RMMO funds are distributed as thank you checks to retired ordained ministers and missionaries who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCUSA, as well as to surviving spouses. A certain portion of the money is also allocated for direct emergency assistance. We will receive contributions to RMMO during the month of December.

*Deadline for the January issue of the MOSAIC is December 18.*

*Annual Reports should be submitted by December 31.*



Thank you for the delightful surprise of public appreciation on October 22. The words of affirmation and the flowers were just lovely. Jim and I are looking forward to some wonderful date nights, thanks to your generosity with the Lanie's gift certificate. We are all in this together and I am grateful to be in it with you!

~ Pastor Kathy

## Happy Birthday...

### November

Mary Asala  
Judith Henningson  
Donald Heintz  
Pat Campbell  
Rian Farrell



1<sup>st</sup>  
8<sup>th</sup>  
17<sup>th</sup>  
22<sup>nd</sup>  
27<sup>th</sup>



## Happy Thanksgiving!

### November 23

### December

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



8<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup>  
14<sup>th</sup>  
18<sup>th</sup>  
18<sup>th</sup>  
20<sup>th</sup>  
24<sup>th</sup>  
26<sup>th</sup>  
28<sup>th</sup>

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

**Worship Leaders & Communion Servers are needed.**

Won't you consider serving in this way?

Sign up sheet is available in Fellowship Hall.

If you have questions, you may speak with

Pastor Kathy.



# Winter begins December 22



### Calling All Bakers... Cookies Needed

We plan to offer homemade cookies and finger desserts after the choral concert on December

17. If you would like to donate some of your tasty *freezable* treats, you may bring them to the church any time prior to that event. Please be sure to label them, December 17. Thank you.

## Remember the Food Pantry... bar soap

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