



Published monthly by
EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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January 2024

Volume XL No. 1

Pilgrimage as Spiritual Practice

by Mark Chaffin

Being a Pilgrim

To journey without being changed is to be a nomad.

To change without journeying is to be a chameleon.

To journey and to be transformed by the journey is to be a pilgrim.

“A highway will be there, called the holy way; No one unclean may pass over it, nor fools go astray on it.... It is for those with a journey to make.” (Is 35: 8-10)

The act and intention to begin pilgrimage is to embark on a sacred journey, whether actual or with the imagination. Either may lead to spiritual growth and union with the divine mystery when approached contemplatively under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Members of Emmanuel who plan to join the Civil Rights Pilgrimage in February as well as those remaining home have the opportunity to engage in the spiritual practice of pilgrimage. This opportunity is an invitation to journey toward a deeper understanding of self, world and God who is at work in the world and calls us to transformation.

Though early church pilgrims to the Holy Land and medieval pilgrims visiting the sacred sites of martyrs and saints may come to mind when speaking of pilgrimage, contemporaries also do pilgrimage. The rise in popularity of the millions today who journey the Camino de Santiago to its terminus in Santiago, Spain featured in The Way, starring Martin Sheen, speaks to the calling and transformation of many. It is as we now say, “A thing.” Indeed, a sacred thing.

Among the 10 kinds of pilgrimage listed by Lacy Clark Ellman are journeys of discovery which are made to important sites of historical sacrifice and significance such as the Civil Rights Pilgrimage. These inevitably lead to the synonymous journey she identifies as the journey to engage the True Self as well as a sacred encounter with the Divine. Led by and with openness of heart and soul to the Spirit, this is where life change may happen. Frequently, people say after returning from pilgrimage that it changed their life forever.

continued...

There is no one way to do pilgrimage, but it requires dedication to the physical journey, if one is making one as well as the spiritual. In this way Emmanuel members may all participate. The path of prayer and decision to set aside all expectations allow the Spirit to present new opportunities, learnings, relationships, and surprises that could not have been anticipated. Those staying in New York can follow the progress and postings of the participants and imagine the sites, scenes and sounds which meet our friends. The reports and testimonies on their return will inspire new imaginings, commitments, and perhaps the desire to take part in the next pilgrimage.

Such a profound undertaking itself awakens the sense that we are always on our pilgrimage home, “*For this world is not our home.*” (Heb. 13:14) As followers of Jesus this may be our spiritual practice as we dedicate ourselves to follow *this holy way* to God’s presence of which Isaiah speaks.

Pilgrim’s Prayer
by Nineveh Murray

Dear God,
We ask your blessing as we travel today in spirit;
guide our minds as we learn
of those who came before us,
traversing the pilgrim way.

Give us a hunger to seek your face
in paths through fields,
along roads trod by many
seeking the blessing of your presence.
Nurture our fellowship and help us
to see each other as a brother or sister,
sharing the journey to your blessed kingdom. Amen.



COMING SOON: SELMA
EBC MOVIE NIGHT
Friday, February 2

6:00 p.m.

\$5 suggested donation for pizza

In anticipation of EBC’s Racial Justice Pilgrimage which will journey to both Selma and Montgomery, we are showing the movie *Selma*. Nominated for Best Picture in 2014, it tells the story of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Although the South was legally desegregated, discrimination was still rampant. Selma, Alabama became the battleground in the fight for voting rights. Despite violent opposition, Dr. King and many others pressed forward in an epic march from Selma to Montgomery. This movie is rated PG-13 for brief strong language, a suggestive moment, and violence. Please rsvp by email to Pastor Kathy or by signing up on the clipboard in Fellowship Hall by January 30.



Adult Forum with Special Guest Nathaniel Gray January 14

Nathaniel Gray (he/him/his) is the Executive Director of the Pride Center. He has accepted our invitation to be with us following worship on January 14. He will share some of his own painful experiences with Christian churches because of his sexual orientation as well as the current work of the Pride Center.

You may remember that when we worked with the consultant, Joy Skjegstad in 2021-2022, one of the recommendations was that we would strengthen our outreach to the LGBTQ+ community. This event is one of our first steps in that direction. Please plan to stay after worship for this important conversation.

Annual Meeting Dinner Sunday, January 28, Noon

All who would like to know more about the February Civil Rights Pilgrimage and wish to support the effort are invited to attend this fundraiser.

Displays and information about the trip and the participants will be shared.

THE MENU

Tastes of the South

Appetizers - Crackers, Veggie sticks, Dips
Baked Ham
BBQ Meatballs
Corn Pudding
Southern Style Greens
Sweet Potatoes
Rolls & butter
Banana Pudding Parfait
Sweet tea, coffee, hot tea

Suggested donation - \$20, more if you can, less if you can't!



Wandering Heart

The Season After Epiphany
January 14 ~ February 11

Epiphany means revelation. The season emphasizes the ways that God is revealed in Jesus Christ. We are focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples, Simon who is called Peter. We consider his relationship with Jesus and what it reveals to us about God and about ourselves. In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us.

In this series, we want to affirm that faith is a constant journey of steadfast pursuit, one that ebbs and flows. We want to affirm that wandering is exploration, not necessarily distance from God. We want to affirm the ways Peter keeps going: he drops his nets, he walks on water, he keeps searching and yearning and loving, even after missteps or mistakes. Ultimately, in Peter's story, we are reminded that

God loves imperfect people. Between now and February 11, we're joining Peter in figuring out faith. We're not idolizing or vilifying him; instead, we're hoping to wander alongside him, open to what we might learn about Jesus (and ourselves) by stepping in his shoes.

January 14 **10 a.m.**
Jesus sought me
Luke 5:1-11

January 21 **10 a.m.**
Rescued me from danger
Matthew 14:22-33

January 28 **10 a.m.**
And I hope
Matthew 16:13-20

February 11 **10 a.m.**
Here's my heart
Mark 9:2-9



Annual FOCUS Worship Service **February 4 at 10:00 a.m.**

Delmar Reformed Church
386 Delaware Avenue, Delmar

Be present to worship with the wider
FOCUS Community.

There is no service at Emmanuel.

❖ **Annual Reports are Past Due!**
 ❖ **A new directory is coming soon.**
 If there are changes to your contact information, please let Dorothy know by January 17. Thank you.

*Happy Birthday...
 January*

Axel Collins	2 nd
Ellen Corcoran	3 rd
Kathy Donley	4 th
Niala Johnson	5 th
Michelle Williams	6 th
Michael Clement	11 th
Natalie Brown	12 th
Aidan Chaffin	12 th
Rosemary Koonce	14 th
Monica Scheerer	15 th
Lucas Silverman	15 th
Jean Burton	21 st
Shayera Asala	23 rd
Samuel Koonce	24 th
Chelah Collins	25 th
Erica Silverman	25 th
Hunter Spann	25 th
Gretchen Scheu	26 th
Veronica Torian	28 th



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

**Martin Luther King, Jr.
 Interfaith Memorial Service
 January 15, 7 pm
 First Church in Albany
 (Reformed)**



**Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston,
 Sr. Minister of First Church**

- Music by The Festival Celebration Choir, the ecumenical choir of the Capital Region.
- There will be participation from Christian, Jewish and Islamic faith traditions.
- The celebration will be livestreamed. Information to stream the service will be available on First Churches' website and CACC website on the 15th.

**Remember the
 Food Pantry...
 razors & deodorant**



**Church Office Closed
 January 15**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance

Come
and
walk

All are welcome!



THE
LABYRINTH
at First
Presbyterian
Church

362 STATE ST
ALBANY

WWW.FIRSTPRESALBANY.ORG

Monthly
every
3rd Thursday

11am-2pm
& 5-7pm*

* Parking is available in the church
parking lot until 6pm - after 6pm
please park on the street

Emmanuel Baptist Church
275 State St.
Albany, NY 12210

