

THE MOSAIC

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Pastoral Ponderings



Advent is known as the season of waiting – for the Christ child to be born anew in our hearts, for God to create a new heaven and a new earth, and for Christ to come again and the reign of God to be completely realized.

But the waiting theme can have problems. As Rhonda Britten writes in her book *Fearless Living*, “when we passively wait, we are living in fear.” What she is referring to is that when we wait for circumstances outside of ourselves to change in order to feel hope, peace, joy, or love or to live our lives more fully, we rob ourselves of the chance to have those things right now.

Cultivating those things means we accept and claim our agency to make our lives our own and move freely into the future no matter what the circumstances of our lives or the world around us. And when we do that, we are living fully into who God calls us to be because we have the power to make a difference – to help shift circumstances – rather than live in fear of them.

Thus, the waiting in Advent cannot be a passive waiting – the kind of waiting that believes that God doesn’t need us in order to make the world a safer, better place for all people. This is the message brought by the angels who appear to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. They bring news, yes. But they also invite participation in the story. The message is “God is doing thus-and-such and you are a part of it.” Get over your fear because God is in need of you.

To use the stories of the angels can also be dangerous. We can easily fall into the greeting card version, which is really the Medieval Christian version when cherubs were trending. Angels in scripture, to the contrary, seem to elicit anything but cute reactions. Angels always said “do not be afraid” because their very appearance was terrifying. “Do not be afraid” meant at least two things: 1) Don’t be afraid right now while you’re quaking in your boots because I’m here and 2) Don’t be afraid as you set out to fulfill what God is calling you to do and be.

The English word “Angel” comes from the Latin *angelus* which was derived from the Greek translation. The term initially only pointed to the function of a messenger. But gradually

continued...

“angel” came to signify a class of beings existing between God and humanity and thus began a whole lot of angelology and theological speculation through the ages. But our Advent series harkens (pun intended) back to the original meaning – one who has a message, an envoy or one who announces. Angels are the symbols of messages that we need to hear, that we need to wake up to. The hope is that by taking in and taking on the messages, we become the “angels among us” sharing the good news in our spheres of influence.

In this holy season, we will seek to fly in the face of fear to share more hope, more peace, more joy and more love. Be part of it and invite a friend to come along too.

Blessings,
Kathy



ADVENT – CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

#DoNotBeAfraid:

Flying in the Face of Fear

December 4
10 a.m.

Advent 1
Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

Make Ready A People #morehope



December 10
10 a.m.

Advent 2
Luke 1:26-56

Nothing Is Impossible #morepeace

December 17
10 a.m.

Advent 3
Matthew 1:18-25

Do Not Be Afraid #morejoy

December 24
10 a.m.

Advent 4
Luke 2:1-20

This Will Be A Sign #morelove



December 24
7 p.m.

Christmas Eve

Carols and Candles to Welcome the Christ Child



December 31

New Year's Brunch
Worship Around Tables
10:00 a.m.



Why Children Need To Be In Church on Christmas Eve

by Carolyn C. Brown

In most families Christmas Eve and Day are busy, chaotic times. It is not easy to get a family that includes overly-excited children to church. But, it is worth the effort. Children (and their parents) actually need it. The church helps when it articulates for parents clear reasons to make the effort. Here is my starter list of reasons.

To hear the story read or told in an important way on the “night it happened” – Children like hearing the story of their birth on their birthday and celebrating other big events on “the very day it happened.” So, the story which may have been acted out in a pageant and discussed in church school and read at home, feels more “real” when read on Christmas Eve or Day in the sanctuary.

To go to church at night – These days children are at church most often during the day. To go at night to a decorated, even candle-lit church is almost magical. When the family makes this an important part of Christmas – even in the middle of the chaos – just being there reminds children what is most important about Christmas.

To be with a crowd telling the story – Joining church friends in a packed sanctuary reminds children that this story is something bigger than just their family traditions. They are part of a huge family of families who celebrate Jesus’ birth.

To sing the carols at least one more time – Not many families sing together at home and not many children’s groups sing religious carols any more. That means we need to be intentional about singing with the carols with the children. And, who would want to miss singing “Silent Night” in the Christmas Eve sanctuary while hugging your child!

To create a context in which to discover the truth about Santa – If Santa is all there is to Christmas Eve once children learn “the truth,” Christmas is just a greedy gift grab. But, if Christmas Eve has always circled around the story of Jesus told in the sanctuary, the truth about Santa can be fit into that context and the Christmas celebration gets richer.

To create memories - Worshiping on Christmas Eve or Day as a family creates over the years a treasure trove of memories. Some of them shine with wonder. Others make for eye-rolling stories that are retold every Christmas. These memories are precious for both the children as they mature and the parents as they age.

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Join us for a Christmas party at the pastor's home, 29 Joy Drive in Loudonville, on December 8 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Kathy and Jim will provide chili and other soups and beverages. You are invited to bring side dishes or desserts. Feel free just to drop in for as long as your schedule allows or to relax and stay a while. This is an event for all ages. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall so we know how many people to expect.

Please Note:

We do not own the parking lot behind the church building. We are fortunate that the Realtor's Association and the Fort Orange Club allow us to park there on most Sundays. There are two Sundays in December when events at Fort Orange mean that they are claiming the right to use it. **Therefore, we cannot park behind the church on either December 10 or December 17.**

If you have mobility limitations, please park in the small lot on the East side of the church or look for street parking. If you are able to walk, consider parking down by the Capital building or perhaps on Washington Avenue when the construction is completed. If the parking situation creates difficulty for you, please please let Pastor Kathy know and we will do our best to arrange a car pool. On any Sunday, if you arrive at church and the Fort Orange parking attendant indicates that you may not park there, please do not vent your frustration on him. He is only doing his job.



How to Share the Advent Season with Your Friends Or How to Be an Angel 101

- Go to the Emmanuel Facebook page. Find this week's Advent invitation. Share it on your own Facebook page or in a personal message. Do this every week of Advent.
 - Take a picture during worship and share it on Twitter, Instagram or your favorite social media platform, using the hashtag #DoNotBeAfraid
 - Make an Advent gift with a box of colored pencils and our Advent calendar and/or devotional book and deliver it with your own personal invitation.
 - Invite a music lover to the Christmas Concert
 - Invite a party-goer to the Pastor's Open House.
- Invite anyone seeking #morehope, #more peace, #morejoy, and #more love to participate in worship.

From Service to Others...



Dinner Delivery to Shelter

During the winter months, Emmanuel supports both the Emergency Overflow Shelter at First Lutheran Church and the Shelter at Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless by occasionally providing home cooked dinners for their guests.

On December 10 we will deliver food to the Interfaith Shelter. The menu will include meatloaf, carrots/green beans and rolls. Please let Karen Kendall know if you can provide one of the dishes. Guests are always sincerely grateful for these special meals, and the staff appreciates the church's support of their ministry.



During Advent we will be collecting laundry detergent for the Interfaith Shelter and for the Overflow Shelter. They welcome your contributions. Donations may be placed in the laundry hamper that you will find in the sanctuary.



Special Request from FOCUS Food Pantry

Emmanuel has been asked to collect cake mixes and prepared frosting during the month of December. The items will be included in special holiday bags and distributed to food pantry guests. Your donations may be placed in the basket in the sanctuary. Thank you.

Volunteers Needed for Family Promise Program

The Delmar Reformed Church will host families from the Family Promise program from December 17-23 and they invite you to help. Can you prepare a dinner to feed 10 people? Are you able to chaperone an overnight from 8 pm to 7 am? Karen Kendall has more information about this ministry. Let her know how you can help.

**Remember the
Food Pantry...**

**December:
razors, toilet paper, and deodorant**



Part of the Celebration Luncheon that concluded our Stewardship Campaign on Nov. 4 was a survey of fun facts about us. Forty-two people were surveyed. The results show that everyone can ride a bicycle, but only one person has been to Israel. The full results are shown below:



- Of the 42 people who took the survey:
- 42 Can ride a bicycle
- 38 Have served on a commission
- 34 Have helped cook or serve a church meal
- 33 Have been to an Easter Sunrise service
- 31 Have been to Pathfinder
- 31 Have been in a play or pageant at Emmanuel
- 29 Have been an usher or worship leader
- 29 Know how many sheep in Jesus' parable were NOT lost (*ans. 99*)
- 27 Can name four former pastors
- 25 Can play a musical instrument (*kazoos count*)
- 24 Have been on a CROP Walk
- 23 Were baptized as an adult
- 22 Have sung in the choir
- 22 Have played volleyball at Church or at a church picnic
- 17 Have volunteered in the Food Pantry
- 17 Have volunteered in the Breakfast Program
- 17 Have gone on a mission trip
- 15 Have NOT ever been in Emmanuel's basement
- 14 Can speak more than one language
- 13 Have marched in a Pride Parade
- 8.5 Can recite the books of the Bible * *Some people know only one of the Testaments*
- 8 Are/were in Sunday School at Emmanuel as children
- 6 Have climbed to the top of the tower
- 5 Have been to South America
- 1 Has been to Jerusalem

} *Not necessarily the same people*

How about the rest of us? If you didn't take part in the survey before, you can add yourself to the numbers now. Just email Edith Leet at edith.leet@outlook.com or send her a note telling her which of the items above you can do or have done. Everyone is invited to participate, young and old, members and friends. We'll publish the results at a later date.



The tradition at Emmanuel has been to decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias at Christmas and to deliver them to our homebound and ill members on Christmas Eve. If you wish to purchase a plant, please check the appropriate box(s) below and indicate if the plant is in honor or in memory of a loved one. Cost is \$12 per plant. The poinsettias will be available on Christmas Eve. Please fill out this form and give it to Karen Green or Gretchen Scheu along with your payment.

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

- I would like the plant donated to a church member.
- I would like the plant for myself.



NAME: _____



Ladies' Lunch Scheduled

Emmanuel ladies will gather to have lunch together at Scarborough's on **Thursday, December 7** (11:30 a.m.) To assure adequate seating, please let Pat Hunziker or Betty Mallory know if you can join us

Men, You're Invited Too!

Emmanuel men will also meet for lunch on Thursday, December 7 at Scarborough's. Please let Bob Hunziker know if you plan to attend. We hope to see you there!

Happy Birthday...

December

Kathy Moore	8 th
Michele Calvin	9 th
Brian Hughes	11 th
Matthew Lahut	12 th
Dwight Smith	12 th
Tom Lahut	14 th
Jennie DeFlavii	15 th
Tammy Skinner	18 th
Molly Wilkerson	20 th



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



"A Great and Mighty Wonder"

December 16, 5 pm

Emmanuel Choir and Friends
Michael Clement, director & pianist
Admission free; donations appreciated



**Deadline for the January
MOSAIC: December 18**

winter begins December 21



**Church Office Closed:
December 25
Merry Christmas!
January 1
Happy New Year!**

**Annual Reports are due
December 31!
Annual Meeting:
January 28**

Emmanuel Baptist Church
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