

# THE MOSAIC

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**EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**

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## *Pastoral Ponderings*



Christianity has sometimes been described as a very wide river containing diverse currents and streams. It is also a river that has been flowing for centuries. We are separated into our own stream and our time, knowing little of what happened upriver or at the level of the undercurrent.

Thanks to the ecumenical movement, we might be aware of other American Protestant traditions and have cordial relationships with Roman Catholic Christians, but most of us still are unfamiliar with Eastern Christianity or the Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox recognize the vocation of Holy Fools. These are people whose lives are at odds with the rules of normal society to the extent that even other Christians find them troubling. Holy Fools undeniably manifest the Christ-like qualities of humility, obedience and compassion, often in ways that call attention to injustice or abuse.

Basil the Blessed was born near Moscow around 1469. He went naked in summer and winter as a statement that all human beings are equal at the skin level. The stories about Basil marvel at his relationship with Tsar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) who was greatly feared by most people. Legend says that Basil gave Ivan a piece of raw meat during Lent, when all Orthodox Christians were fasting. The Tsar, claiming to be devout, refused the meat. Basil responded by asking why he followed the rules of Lent while he spilled the blood of Christians. Remarkably, Ivan did not have Basil arrested or beheaded, but sent him gifts and assured him of his protection. St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square in Moscow is named in his memory.



*continued...*

Pondering our Lenten theme of Foolish Love, I found myself wanting to know more about this Christian tradition. I discovered the book *Jesus the Holy Fool* by Elizabeth Anne-Stewart. I have not yet read it, but I have discovered that it contains the provocative thoughts like these:

*"Following Jesus is a radically different proposition for example, than following 'my buddy Jesus' and practicing a Christianity which can only be described as self-indulgent. Precisely because contemporary Western Christianity has become disconnected from the Holy Foolishness of Christ and from the Dionysian elements of religion, the person of Jesus has been 'tamed' into a marketable construct far removed from the gospel Jesus or from the living Christ who can still be encountered in Third World nations. ... [The Western church] cower[s] in dread before the figure of the Dionysian Christ because he is too passionate, too alive, and too challenging to be attractive."*

*"Those who tame Christmas into a birthday party for children or who reduce Easter to a celebration of the rites of Spring are following a Jesus who bears little resemblance to the Jesus of the Gospels. In their Christianity, there is no place for Jesus the Clown, or Jesus the Jester or Jesus the Trickster; such a Jesus is too demanding, too disturbing, too ridiculous. And yet this Jesus, vested as 'a personification of festivity and fantasy,' in an age which has lost both, and wearing both grease paint and halo, 'is able to touch our jaded modern consciousness as other images of Christ cannot.'"*

And so the season begins, offering strong love and a Jesus who will not be domesticated and the foolishness of the cross. The Body of Christ is strongest when we are together. If you are considering taking on a spiritual practice for Lent, perhaps the best discipline we might engage together is the habit of showing up and being fully present as often as possible.

Blessings,  
Kathy

# Save the Dates...

## Details Coming Soon:

- March 2 – Make-Your-Own-Retreat  
Labyrinth and prayer stations in our sanctuary
- March 17 – EBC's Third Annual St. Patrick's Day Party
- March 23 – Lenten Movie Night #2



Deadline for the March  
**MOSAIC** is February 18



# Foolish

# Love

*For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom*  
I Corinthians 1:25a

The secular and liturgical calendars aligned this year in an exceptional way, with the result that the season of Lent begins on Valentine's Day and ends with Easter Sunday on April Fool's Day. What Lenten Committee could resist the obvious theme of Foolish Love? Perhaps some could, but not ours.

Within these six weeks, our communal life will seriously and playfully explore the notion of God's love for the world which is paradoxically wise and foolish. Sunday morning worship will engage Biblical texts about God's covenant love established with human beings and with creation, as well as reflections on some of those who were willing to be "fools for Christ's sake" as the apostle Paul described in his letter to the church at Corinth. Listen for our choir's rendition of the Prayer of St. Francis. Francis of Assisi is one of the best known Holy Fools. Beyond Sunday morning, there will be other opportunities for some serious foolishness, including movie nights and a St. Patrick's Day Party and Sunday School. Watch the bulletin, the church Facebook page and EBC-Announce for more information.



Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day this year. Join us on February 14 at 6:00 pm for a simple supper of soup and bread with heart cookies for dessert. A time of worship will follow in which we will begin to reflect on God's foolish love for us. Ashes will be provided in the worship service, but whether or not to receive them is always your option. For the sake of those providing supper, please use the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall or call the church office to let us know if you will attend.

## Special Election of Trustees February 11

***Important Notice***

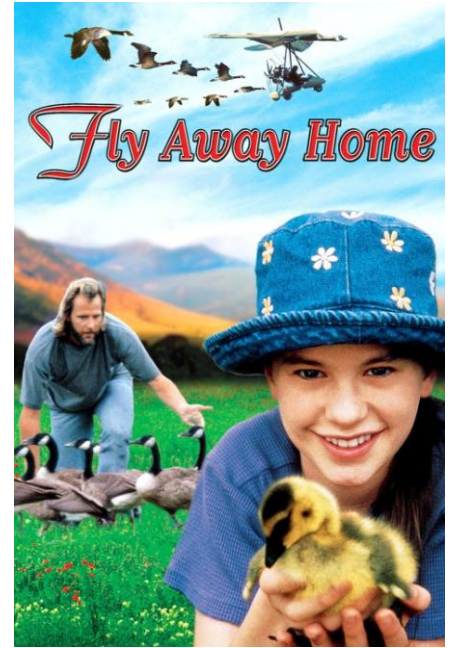
At the annual meeting on January 28, the congregation approved the motion of Coordinating Council to suspend our by-laws for 2018 with regard to the section on trustees. During the congregational information session after worship on February 11, the congregation will elect three members of the Coordinating Council who will serve as trustees for this year. Please plan to be there.

**All Ages Movie Night**  
*Fly Away Home*  
**Friday, February 23 6:00 p.m.**

This heart-warming movie gives another window into our Lenten theme of Foolish Love. *Fly Away Home* tells the story of an estranged father and daughter who bond as they train a flock of abandoned geese to follow their ultralight planes from Canada to a winter home in North Carolina.

Rated PG for a car accident scene at the beginning and some mild language. Appropriate for ages 7 and up.

Pizza will be available. Please sign up to let us know how much pizza to order. Donations requested to defray cost of pizza.



***From Christian Growth & Development...***

**Monday, February 26, 6:30-8:00**

**coffee, tea & dessert in the EBC parlor**

*A gathering for all Sunday School teachers and helpers*

And ... a special invitation to all who might be interested in helping, or would just like to know more about what is going on.

Discussion will center around:

A general introduction and sharing about children & youth programming

Sharing any needs or concerns

Brainstorming new ideas for Children's Day

(Plan is to celebrate our children during the month of May)

***Come join us!***

***Mark your Calendar...***

**Introducing: PEACE LAB:  
an EBC Retreat**

**August 2 - 5 at Pathfinder Lodge**

People who attended the retreat last summer found it to be fun and refreshing, so they recommended expanding it to include more days, more programming, and more participants. We are looking for folks, adults and youth, who would like to get in on the ground floor of planning.

We will meet on Sunday evening, March 4, at 5:00 at the home of Marilyn Malone (17 Fireside Lane, Latham). We'll munch on pizza and bat around some ideas.

Note: Attending this meeting does not mean you have to be on a planning committee, or even necessarily attend the retreat. Just come to share your ideas and catch the excitement.

# From Service to Others...



## Dinner Planned for Shelter

On Sunday, February 25 the Service to Others Commission will provide a meal for the Interfaith Shelter. Karen Kendall will supply the main dish, but donations of salad and Italian bread/rolls are requested. If you can help with this special ministry, please contact Karen. Thank you!

**Remember the Food Pantry...**

**February: feminine hygiene products**

*The FOCUS Food Pantry served 265 families in January, That's 8,910 meals! In addition, we delivered 25 non-perishable bags of groceries to shut-in's in two senior buildings.*

**Volunteer Help Wanted to drive to The Regional Food Bank in Latham on Thursday mornings to pick up small orders. SUV/truck needed. Round trip, job takes about 90 minutes. Call 443-0460.**

*FOCUS Breakfast Club averaged 123 guests each morning in January.*

## Help Provide "Love Kits"

Service to Others will be collecting *Love Kits* throughout February. Pick up a brown paper bag and fill it with travel size toiletries for guests at the Interfaith Shelter for the Homeless. Love Kits are easy to assemble (list of suggested items will be attached to the bag) and are very much appreciated by the people who receive them. A special treat such as a candy bar or granola bar is always welcome too. Look for the box in Fellowship Hall to pick up the list and return filled bags. See Nancy Horan if you have any questions.



Emmanuel Women are invited to meet for lunch at the Century House on February 1, at 11:45 a.m. Kindly let Pat Hunziker or

Betty Mallory know if you plan to join us. We hope to see you there!



**Church Office Closed:**  
**February 19**  
**Coordinating Council:**  
**February 6, 5:30**  
**at Malone's**

## Men... You're invited too... ✓

Emmanuel men will gather for lunch at the same time, same place as the women on February 1. Please let Bob Hunziker or Bob Green know if you can join us.

## Happy Birthday...

- Betty Mallory
- Aaron Johnson
- Wesley Kendall
- Becca Leet
- William Htoo
- David Green
- Tim Bray
- Cassandra Paul
- Samantha Paul
- Gail Hill



- 1<sup>st</sup>
- 9<sup>th</sup>
- 5<sup>th</sup>
- 15<sup>th</sup>
- 15<sup>th</sup>
- 16<sup>th</sup>
- 18<sup>th</sup>
- 18<sup>th</sup>
- 18<sup>th</sup>
- 28<sup>th</sup>

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



## Directory Correction:

Gillian Horan  
132 Old Lake Colby Rd. Apt 3  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

Emmanuel Baptist Church  
275 State St.  
Albany, NY 12210

