

THE MOSAIC

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

275 STATE STREET
ALBANY, NY 12210

Office: (518) 465-5161

emmanuelalbany@juno.com

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Pastoral Ponderings



Advent is the season at the beginning of the church calendar year. It has become primarily a season of preparation for Christmas, but originally, it had a broader purpose of its own. Bernard of Clairvaux, a preacher in the 1100's, described three comings of Christ: in the flesh in Bethlehem, in our hearts daily, and in glory at the end of time. Advent, therefore, has a past, present and future quality.

I imagine Christians in various times and circumstances seeking to follow Jesus in Advent seasons that were difficult and those that were joyful. I imagine them like us, considering the world they inhabited and the times they lived in, seeking the meaning of the Incarnation in such a world.

There is a poem by Warshan Shire in which she says
*i held an atlas in my lap/ran my fingers across the whole world/and whispered/
where does it hurt?/
it answered/everywhere/everywhere/everywhere.*

Our world hurts everywhere. By the end of last year, according to a recent United Nations report, there were 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world, including 25.4 million refugees. For six consecutive years, that number has surpassed peak WWII levels. The majority have come from Syria, where people are fleeing the violence of war, but many countries are involved including several in our hemisphere. A woman from Columbia participated in our Mexico Immigration Immersion trip because she is trying to find ways



Icon by Kelly Latimore

continued...

to minister to the one million Venezuelans who have poured into her country as they seek relief from the political and economic turmoil in their homeland. We have all watched the migrant exodus from Central America make its way to the U.S./Mexico border. In addition to violence and corruption, the world hurts from disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes and famine, from racism and misogyny and homophobic violence and from the wounds inflicted by poverty.

This world has been broken and violent and fearful from the time of Adam and Eve. It is to heal this brokenness that Christ came. We know that human contributions to climate change on one side of the globe affect the lives of people on the other. We recognize that economic policies and political actions enacted in the past contribute to the current context which is driving desperate people from their homes. Fear and evil threaten to overwhelm us. The problems are global, too large for us to solve alone. We cannot save ourselves; we need a Savior.

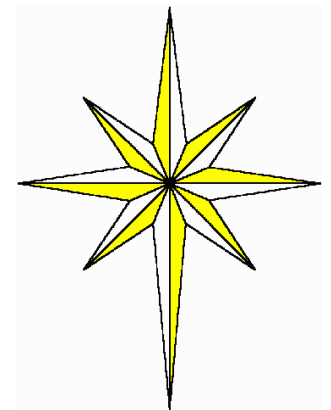
This is why we celebrate the past, present and future coming of a Loving Christ. We celebrate a baby born to poor parents who fled the genocide ordered by a violent ruler, because he understands what it is to be human in a broken world. We welcome the One who grew up in the shadow of Empire and observed its terroristic domination first-hand and refused to adopt its ways, because from him we understand the power of love.

We begin a new liturgical year, as generations have done before us, in celebration of the paradox that strength is found in vulnerability, that power is demonstrated in service, and that our wealth is measured in what we give rather than we hold. It is to that power which we testify this season. Therefore, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God. . . God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. “

(I John 4:7a, 9)

Love casts out fear. Please join me this season in singing boldly “for as long as I shall live, I will testify to love.”

*Blessings,
Kathy*



Mark your Calendars...

**Annual Reports are due December 30
2019 Annual Meeting: January 27**



“Testify to Love”
ADVENT – CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Our scriptures for the Advent/Christmas season allude to a powerful Love that we wait for, that we witness at the coming of the Christ child, and that we embody as children of God—the Body of Christ. The hymn *Love Came Down at Christmas* reminds us that God’s love lives among us and within us—our love is a token of the presence of God still working today. A more current anthem, *Testify to Love* (a song made popular on the TV series *Touched by an Angel*), is the inspiration for the theme. It will remind us throughout the season that God's call to us is to testify to this amazing love, giving thanks to God "with every breath we take!"

December 2
 10 a.m. Advent 1
 Jeremiah 33:14-16
 Righteous Love



December 9
 10 a.m. Advent 2
 Luke 3:1-6
 Unfettered Love

December 16
 10 a.m. Advent 3
 Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Luke 3:7-18
 Liberating Love



December 23
 10 a.m. Advent 4
 Micah 5:1-5a and Luke 1:39-46
 Transforming Love

December 24
 7 p.m. Christmas Eve
 Divine Love



December 30
 10 a.m. New Year’s Brunch
 Worship Around Tables



Join us for a Christmas party at the pastor's home, 29 Joy Drive in Loudonville, on **December 7 from 6:00-9:00 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 or rsvp to Kathy at ebcpastor@albany.twcbc.com so we know how many people to expect.



*The Spirit of Christmas in Song:
New Love! New Hope! New Joy!*

Sunday, December 2, at 3 pm

*Music at Emmanuel presents
the Emmanuel Baptist Choir and soloists
directed and accompanied by Michael Clement
with varied Christmas works
Admission free/Donations welcomed
Reception following.*



Adult Sunday School Class

December 16

Continuing discussion of

On the Brink of Everything by Parker Palmer

“*Work and Vocation: Writing a Life*” is about the voice that calls to many of us saying, “Whatever your paid work may be, *this* is what gives you life”. It’s important to get clear about the difference the jobs by which we make a living and the callings, or vocations, by which we make meaning. It’s possible to follow a calling to the end of life and continue to make meaning at a time when it’s much needed. Come and join the discussion!



Meeting Scheduled

The **Worship Design Team for Epiphany** will meet on Tuesday, December 4 at 6:00 p.m. in the parlor. This group will be planning worship for the season after Christmas and before Lent. We are looking for people with a desire to help build up the Body of Christ for our work in the world through encounter with the Holy Living God. That is a big task and we are more likely to come closer to accomplishing it with a diversity of people sharing the load. Please join us.



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. 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: _____



An update from Ray Schellinger, American Baptist Global Consultant for Immigrants and Refugees, on November 28:

"I wanted to let you all know I am heading to Tijuana this next week. I was set to participate with the civil society meetings before the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Morocco, but felt I could be a lot more useful in Tijuana. Things are rather chaotic there still, as the effort to house and provide for the caravan members has been piecemeal. There is very little government support, with the mayor and others openly hostile to the presence of these sojourners. This is quite a contrast to the reception in Mexico City, which was amazing and wonderful.

"When in Mexico City, I left my whatsapp contact info with several dozen caravan members, and it has been very interesting to keep receiving updates from them. I look forward to catching up with them this week, but also seeing how we can set up a larger network. Each of these asylum seekers has some limited understanding of where they want to end up if and when they are released into the US. Beyond that, they have few resources to get to their destinations or begin life anew. As we do pastoral care within the shelters, I am hoping to develop a larger database which will allow churches and community organizations in destination cities to begin now developing relationships in order to provide welcome for these asylum seekers as they move through the process and await their final hearings. In the short term every shelter and organization providing any kind of support is in need of \$. The fund I have begun with IM and One Great Hour of Sharing will enable me to get these resources out to the ministries immediately."

If you wish to contribute to this fund, you may make designated gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing. Place your gifts in the offering plate by December 16. Make checks out to Emmanuel. Label the envelope or memo line "Migrant Ministries". Every penny of these gifts goes directly to meet the designated needs. You may also give through the International Ministries portal. <https://portal.internationalministries.org/disaster-relief>
Select: Mexico Central America Migrant Ministries.



Just a few of the migrants from Honduras encountered by Ray Schellinger in Mexico City in November



During Advent and, the sanctuary is enhanced by beautiful decorations that help us prepare our heart and minds for worship. Every year poinsettias and lilies are part of those enhancements. There is no budget for these flowers, and therefore, we depend upon your generosity to help purchase them. Plants are generally given to shut-ins, the sick or to the people who have purchased the plant for themselves. Please consider being part of this important ministry.



Ladies Lunch

You are invited to meet for lunch at Diner Time in Latham on **Thursday, January 3** at 11:45 a.m. If you plan to attend, please contact Pat Hunziker or Betty Mallory so that adequate seating can be arranged. We hope to see you there!

Emmanuel Men, We'll lunch too!

We will meet at the Pointe the same day, same place as the women – January 3. If you are coming, please let Bob Hunziker or Bob Green know so we can reserve a seat for you.



If you have not already done so, be sure to pick up a copy of the FOCUS Advent Devotional.

Remember the Food Pantry...

bar soap



Please Note...

December 9 ~ Budget Meeting
 December 18 ~ Deadline: January MOSAIC
 December 23 ~ Christmas Reception & packing cookies for breakfast guests

Church Office Closed:
December 24 & 25
Merry Christmas!

Happy Birthday...

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

December



- 8th
- 11th
- 12th
- 12th
- 14th
- 18th
- 20th
- 24th
- 24th
- 26th
- 28th

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

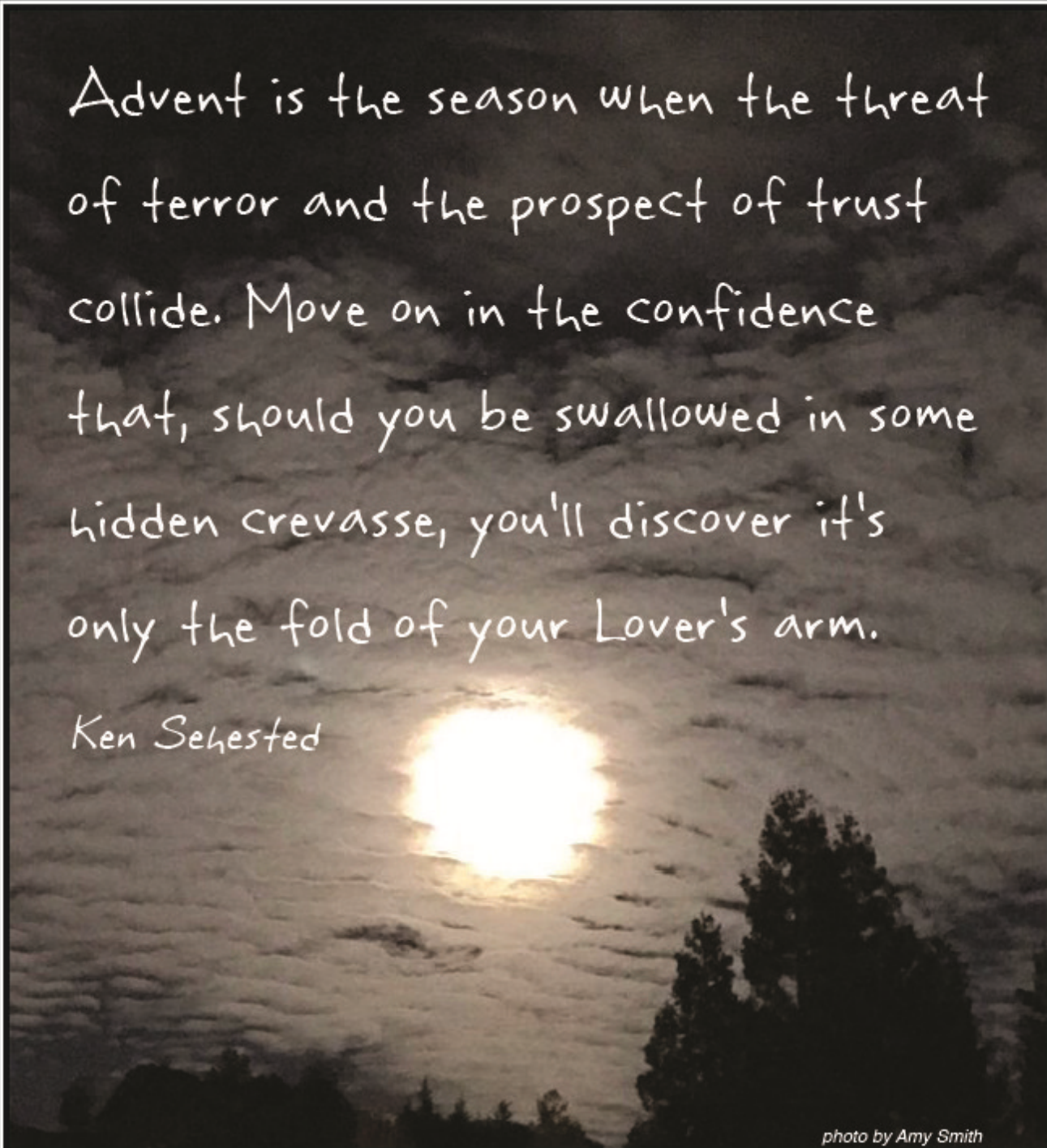


Continuing through December 16, we are

collecting laundry detergent for the Interfaith Shelter. They welcome

your contributions. Donations may be placed in the laundry hamper that you will find in the sanctuary. (KG)

Winter begins
December 21



Advent is the season when the threat of terror and the prospect of trust collide. Move on in the confidence that, should you be swallowed in some hidden crevasse, you'll discover it's only the fold of your Lover's arm.

Ken Sehested

photo by Amy Smith

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Emmanuel Baptist Church
275 State St.
Albany, NY 12210

