

THE MOSAIC

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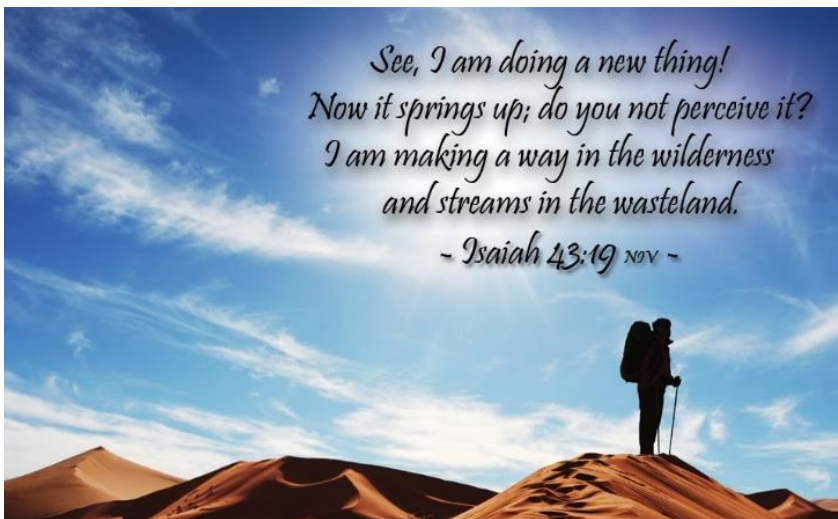
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Pastoral Ponderings



I wonder how we will remember 2019? It might be the *Year of Great Experiments*. It might be *Let's Never Try That Again Year*. Maybe we'll call it *No Pain, No Gain* or *You Win Some, You Lose Some*. All right, I will stop with the clichés now. Standing on the threshold of a bright shiny new year is always an experiment, always a wondering about what the next circuit around the sun will hold. This year is

just like that, but also different. This year we are intentionally changing some rules, setting up some new expectations, experimenting with the ways we have come to order ourselves as a congregation.

When I first arrived here, you told me two dominant truths about yourselves. You told me that you were creative risk-takers – that was what I heard every time you told the story about removing the pews from the sanctuary. And you told me that you had left behind a church model where the pastor was the CEO of the congregation and the church members rubber-stamped his (or her, but really mostly his) directions. You said you wanted to do ministry yourselves, in partnership with a pastor who would help to lead, equip and encourage you. I believed you then and I still believe you, which is why I think this year of experiments may be one of our best yet.

The change in our governance structure is something to which EBC was moving before I arrived. For the last 8 years, every Coordinating Council has discussed either rewriting the by-laws or re-imagining the structure in some way. Finally, last year, we suspended our current by-laws so that we could move forward. Our hope is that after a year of living into a new

continued...

structure, we will be able to describe it in strong, clear language that will form new by-laws. Our old structure was too large and was not working for us, which is what drove us to seek change. However, the new structure is not intended to be a simplified version of the old.

The goal of the new structure is to enable more people to be more involved in hands-on ministry and less tied-up in business meetings. In the new structure, there are two people elected to each of six ministry areas. Two people alone cannot do the work of any of these ministry areas. It will require all of us, sharing our gifts and creativity and strength of purpose, to accomplish what we discern God calling us to do. Translation – **everyone needs to be listening for God’s call carefully and stepping up to serve.**

A second goal of the new structure is to build in a long-range, forward-looking component to our leadership. This is the major work of the Executive Board. The hope is that new leadership group will work together in a way that is more proactive and less reactive, in a process that allows us to set aside administrative urgencies in order to take time for deeper conversations about our hopes and dreams.

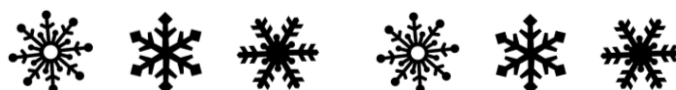
The new governance structure is one big experiment in 2019. A second big experiment is a pastoral renewal leave. To my knowledge, none of Emmanuel’s previous pastors have had the opportunity for a paid sabbatical leave. I am grateful and intend to make good use of the time. I will share more detailed information about my plans in a future newsletter. For now, let me simply say that I will be gone from May 6 through August 25. A Sabbatical Committee is working even now on pastoral supply and policies during my absence. Please offer your comments or concerns to one of them: Mark Chaffin, Judy Henningson, Curtis Klope, Edith Leet, or Tony Malone. They meet again on January 14.

I am beginning this year with a sense of expectancy and hope. It will be complicated and will require more communication than ever, which is saying a great deal because good communication has always been essential to the health of the community. We will need to be generous and extend grace to together each other as we learn new ways together. It will be messy, just like the mess you made when you removed the pews. It might be risky. That will be part of the fun. May we begin 2019 together united in trust and hope, looking forward to the great experiments we will perform together.

*Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, . . .
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

Isaiah 43:16, 19

*Blessings,
Kathy*





Advent 2018 TESTIFY TO LOVE

Emmanuel's observance of Advent and Christmas was largely brought to you by the Advent Worship Design team: Ellen Corcoran, Andrea Carver, Jean Burton, Marilyn Malone, Tony Malone. If you particularly appreciated an event or idea, please share your gratitude with them. If you have ideas for themes or activities to include in Advent 2019, please share them with Pastor Kathy now, while they are fresh in your mind.

We also want to send a special thank you to our Baptist monks for their silent performances of "The Hallelujah Chorus". They are: Jean

Burton, Barbara Lahut, Hannah Scheu, Gretchen Scheu, Ken Carnes, Judy Henningson, Kathy Moore, Marilyn Malone, Lianne DeMieri (December 9), David Malone (December 24), Bien Baez, Jim Wilkerson, Bob Green, Tony Malone and Karen Green.

If you managed to miss both performances, or just want to enjoy it all again, a video may be found on our website <https://www.emmanuelalbany.net/news/>



While Kathy and Jim are attending the *Strategic Pastoral Excellence* annual conference in January, the Rev. John Paarlberg will be our guest preacher on January 13. Rev. Paarlberg retired in 2017, after serving as pastor at the First Church in Albany for 14 years. In that capacity, he was also a member of the FOCUS Board of Directors and is known to many of us through that connection. He previously served congregations in Syracuse, NY and Holland, Michigan and was on the national staff for the Reformed Church in America.

Lent 2019 – Coming Soon

The season of Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 6, and culminate on Easter, April 21. The Lenten Worship Design Team includes Jan Curtis, Lianne DeMieri, Judy Henningson, Becca Leet, Edith Leet, and Kathy Moore. If you want to be part of planning our communal worship life for the season, it is not too late. Join us in the parlor on January 21 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting... January 27

Our Annual Meeting on January 27 will set the tone for a year of living into a new governance structure. Just as our new structure depends on participation from everyone, so does our lunch preparation and the conversation to follow. We need your contributions of food, money, energy, and time in addition to your presence that day. Please contact Marilyn Malone, annual meeting luncheon organizer, to let her know how you will help.



From Service to Others...

Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering to be Received

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) will be taken on Sundays, January 20 & 27. This American Baptist Churches offering provides “thank you” to people who have spent their lives serving God as ministers, missionaries, and their widowed spouses. The money received is also used to help in emergency circumstances. This year’s theme, *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors* illustrates the importance of being there for one another and remembering we are stronger together than on our own. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this offering. Envelopes will be provided for your convenience.



“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

“Justice, Only Justice You Shall Pursue”

Merriam-Webster’s word of the year for 2018 is *justice*. Its website notes that the word was looked up 74% more than in 2017. *Justice* is also the theme of the international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is celebrated January 18-25. In Albany, it will be celebrated with an ecumenical service of worship on Wednesday, January 23, at the Roman *Catholic Diocese of Albany* Offices at 40 North Main Avenue from noon to 12:30 p.m. The service is sponsored by the Capital District Ecumenical Organization. All are welcome to attend.

The theme of *justice* comes from Deuteronomy 16:18-20, which directs the Hebrew people to “...judge the people fairly...not pervert justice (or) accept bribes... and follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.” • The word *justice* itself does not appear in the New Testament, but the concept is foundational to Jesus’ teachings. (EL)

Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Interfaith Memorial Service

January 15

7:00 pm

Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church

(105 Second St., Albany)



FOCUS Annual Worship

February 3

10:00 a.m.

Emmanuel Baptist Church

We are hosting the winter worship of FOCUS Churches this year.

Save the date. Plan to be here that morning. More information coming soon.



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.



Capital Area Council

of Churches

Annual Meeting &

Farewell to Executive Director,

Deb Ritano

February 4

St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church

Registration at 5:30; Dinner follows

RSVP by January 31!



Please Note...

January 2 ~ Coordinating Council 5:30 at Donley's

January 18 ~ Deadline: February MOSAIC

January 27 ~ Annual Meeting

Church Office Closed:

January 1

Happy New Year!

January 21

Martin Luther King, Jr. observance



A Note from Elaine Spoor...

"Dear Friends:

I was so surprised

to have Bob Hunziker visit me. Thank you for the lovely plant and the nice cozy blanket. Sorry I missed service today."

Remember the Food Pantry...

January:

razors and deodorant



Be sure to get a copy of the new church directory.

Happy Birthday...

Ellen Corcoran
Kathy Donley
Marjorie Fuller
Michael Clement
Rosemary Koonce
Monica Scheerer
Lucas Silverman
Jean Burton
Samuel Koonce
Chelah Collins
Erica Edwards
Hunter Spann
Gretchen Scheu
Veronica Torian



3rd
4th
4th
11th
14th
15th
15th
21st
24th
25th
25th
25th
26th
28th

If you have not yet submitted your Annual Report, please do so as soon as possible. We wish to distribute the Book of Reports on Sunday, January 20.

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