

THE MOSAIC

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pastoral Ponderings



Every newly-minted pastor has a list of things they didn't learn in seminary, but really wish they had. My long-ago list included the peculiarities of opening the windows in the campus center when I was a campus minister and the protocols for where to stand and what to say at the graveside during a committal service. I haven't added anything to the list in a long time. Truthfully, I even forgot there was a list, until last week when to my version of *Things They Didn't Teach in Seminary* I added "how to pastor during a pandemic." We are all living with a lot of uncertainty and making it up as we go along. Thank you for your patience as I figure out my role. More importantly, I want to encourage you to help us figure out how to be the

church during a pandemic. If there are ways you believe our faith community could or should be supporting each other over the next days and weeks, please talk with me about that. I'm hearing from some of you and that is very welcome. This is a time when we need to risk over-communicating rather than under-communicating. What is becoming very clear is that the church is not the building. The church is the people who embody Christ together through our prayers and service, our love and actions.

Remember when Christmas fell on a Sunday and we invited people to come to church in their pajamas and a lot of people had fun doing that? Now you can do that again, and it's not even Christmas! Last Sunday, we met for our first-ever Zoom worship service. Zoom is the internet website that enabled us to come together. Some were on computers or cell phones with cameras which enabled us to hear and see each other. Some were on regular phones which enabled them to hear and to be heard by everyone else. This new way of connecting was a little bumpy, but it was joyful to see and hear each other after so much time apart in our own spaces. If you surmounted technological challenges to join the group, thank you! If you didn't try last week, but you will try next week, thank you! There are other ways of live-streaming worship. We chose this one, because it offers the most possibilities for interaction. It wouldn't be worship at Emmanuel if there wasn't some level of interaction. To get zoom meeting instructions for the week, please go to our website emmanuelalbany.net. For friendly tech help, contact Kathy Moore, Judy Henningson, Curtis Klope or me.



Very few of us were ever taught how to do our jobs or live our lives in the midst of pandemic. Being in this uncharted territory may raise our anxiety about the possibility of getting sick or seemingly unrelated concerns. Please know that you are in my heart and daily prayers. With you, I am holding on to the repeated refrain of Scripture "Do not be afraid."

Blessings,
Kathy

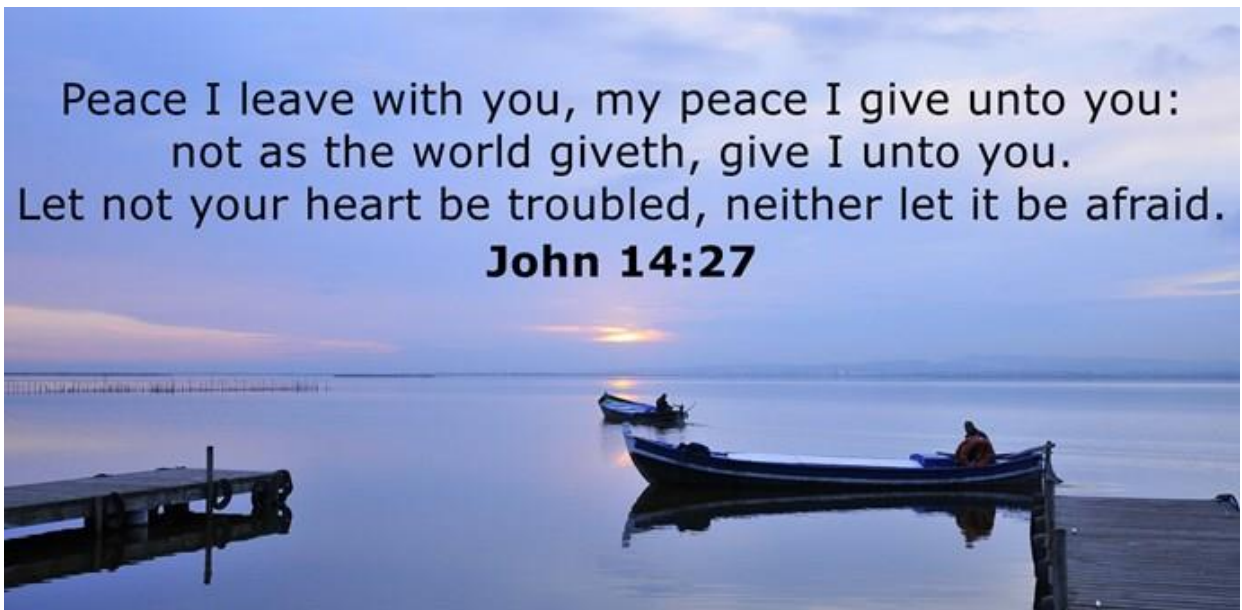
The Spirituality of Quarantine

Some suggested practices

- **The Psalms** have long been the prayer and song book of God's people. Try reading 5 psalms slowly and thoughtfully every day. See whether one of them offers words for your own prayer that day. If you do this every day for a month, you will read the entire Psalter in 30 days. Some people do this over and over again, every month. (Pro tip: Psalm 119 has 176 verses. You might want to read it by itself on the 31st day of the month.)
- **Journal** – record events of the day and your reactions to them. At the end of the week, review the record in conversation with God. Notice what merits confession, celebration or gratitude. Who knows, maybe some day your journal will be part of the recorded history of the pandemic of 2020.
- **Prayer walk** – get outdoors and appreciate the good gift of creation. Walk through your neighborhood with an attitude of prayer. Give thanks for what is cared for and lift up what is neglected. Pray for the people who live in the houses and for others who come in and out, like delivery people, plumbers, garbage collectors, etc. Think about what is missing (i.e. school buses) and hold that before God.
- **Breath Prayer** – The Greek word *pneuma* and the Hebrew word *ruach* both mean spirit and wind and breath. Breath prayers are a way of connecting the breathing of our bodies with the spirit of God. Breath prayers use a repeated short phrase. The first part is spoken or thought as you inhale, the second part on the exhale. A common form is “Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” If that is too long for your breaths, it can be shortened so that the inhalation and exhalation each have one word: “Jesus . . . Mercy”. Breath prayers can be repeated for a matter of minutes. You may find that slowing your breathing and praying this way will calm your body and your spirit. They can also be offered during everyday tasks, like washing the dishes or taking a walk.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:
not as the world giveth, give I unto you.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27



Report from the Border by Pastor Kathy

I was on the border at Brownsville, Texas, USA and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico from Thursday, March 12-16. We arrived just as the local agencies were turning away volunteers for fear of transmitting the corona virus to very vulnerable asylum-seekers living in the tent city in Matamoros. I came home two days early and have been in self-quarantine ever since.



We prepped two meals at the First United Methodist Church of Brownsville, under the guidance of World Central Kitchen. Ham and cheese sandwiches (300 of them) required quality control to provide appropriate calories. Gallons of ground beef stew was cooked inside the truck, powered by electricity with its own

meter at the church. We crossed into Matamoros to serve one time. Everything crosses on wagons in Cambros which maintain food temperature. Children are eager to help. They feed about 1000 people at the evening meal.





Team Brownsville has been providing a weekly educational experience. We were there on its very last day, sharing laughing yoga and an arts activity from the dual language program at Delaware Community School. Things were changing by the day as I was there and they have radically changed in the last week. Volunteers are no longer allowed to cross the border with food or supplies for those in the tent city. Team Brownsville continues to pay for water deliveries, for hand-washing stations and for some meals supplied by a local restaurant. World Central Kitchen has redeployed their staff to other

hot spots, including New York City to serve families who qualify for free and reduced lunches. The last picture is of our corona style group hug.





Celebrating Holy Week

We will have palms for Palm Sunday! We are looking for volunteers to deliver palms to some people's front doors after the palms arrive, probably April 2-4. There will be no contact between the delivery person and the recipient. If you are currently healthy and not in an at-risk category for the corona virus, your help will be greatly appreciated. Contact Pastor Kathy at 518-506-7642 or pastorkathy@emmanuelalbany.org

Your Lenten Worship Design Team is nothing if not flexible. They had made a lot of special plans for Holy Week, which have all suddenly evaporated. We are now revamping ideas about how we will celebrate Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday and Easter in the time of COVID-19. Please stay tuned and plan to be present (on your phone or computer) for those important observations.

FOCUS NEWS...

FOCUS Request for Help

Delivery trucks no longer run from the Regional Food Bank in Latham to the food programs. FOCUS Churches is seeking volunteers who can drive their own van or SUV or pick-up truck to get food orders. The Breakfast Program pick-up is needed every Monday before 11:00 a.m. The Pantry needs a pick-up two days per month. If you might be able to help, please call Lorraine or Belinda at FOCUS, 518-443-0460.



Remember the Food Pantry... toilet tissue

Effective Immediately: The *FOCUS Food Pantry* will only accept call-in orders for pick up. When guests arrive, they can call in orders which will then be placed outside the church doors, thus limiting staff and volunteer contact. (518- 443-0460)

The FOCUS Breakfast Program will be serving cold breakfast items to go on Tuesdays and Wednesdays effective immediately.

Our goal is to continue to provide services with minimal physical contact.

Happy Birthday...

Anthony Malone
Geoffrey Bray
Andrew Malone
Matthew Normile
Chris LaBarge
Ian Leet
Tenosha Ford
Hannah Scheu
Lillian Matejcek
Alyce Malone
Evie Garner
Jonathan Bray
Karen Green



5th
6th
6th
8th
11th
13th
16th
18th
20th
21st
22nd
23rd
27th

Deadline for the May
MOSAIC is April 18.



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