



The Emmaus Encounter

The Newsletter of Emmaus Lutheran Church

January, 2024

Emmaus Friends in Christ,

I hope you all had a blessed Christmas and holiday season! As we move into the new calendar year, we also shift from the church calendar period of Advent and waiting to the Epiphany, or manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world. The word Epiphany is from the Koine Greek work ἐπιφάνεια which translates into English as manifestation or appearance. (As part of my seminary studies I was required to take ancient Greek and biblical Hebrew – not easy classes as you can imagine. But I digress...) Christians celebrate Epiphany as both a season and specific day of festival.

Epiphany is a time of joy for Christians because God's promise of salvation has become revealed to us in the birth of Jesus Christ. The season of Epiphany traditionally encompasses three key biblical events: God's Son

and word incarnate born as Jesus, the confirmation of his birth by three magi (wise men) who traveled to see him following a star, and the transformative baptism of Jesus. The Christmas carol "We Three Kings of Orient Are" was written as a celebratory song for Epiphany.



During this season, we are reminded that like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people. Who will you share your light with this season of Epiphany?

Yours in a Christ that heals,

Amy

Happy New Year!

Time Marches On



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. ~Ecclesiastes 3:1

From the first days of creation, the Creator has given us tools to measure days, years, and even seasons. Though throughout history we have changed the way in which we mark the passing of time, the reason for doing so remains the same. No story is complete without understanding the order of events—you cannot have a story without order and time. And so for centuries, the Church has used a rhythm of seasons and festivals to teach the story of Christ and order her days. As it is now, as we are hanging up our new years' calendars to contemplate the passing of time and to look forward. In this new year we can all experience an epiphany through Jesus in sharing the good news of God's love to all people. And through Jesus the good news is revealed for believers and sinners alike...throughout this season of Epiphany and for all time.

Three Kings and A Star

Epiphany begins with evening prayer on January 5th and ends the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. Epiphany is one of the oldest seasons in the Christian Church Year, second only to the Easter season. This season of lights emphasizes Jesus' indwelling (or epiphany) as God and human. The earliest Christians called the Feast of the Epiphany the Theophany ("Revelation of God"). When the Gentile Magi come to worship Jesus, they show that everyone now has access to God. Now all people, Jew and Gentile, can come to God's temple to worship, because Jesus is the new temple: God in the flesh. The Epiphany of Our Lord marks the celebration of the visit of the Magi.

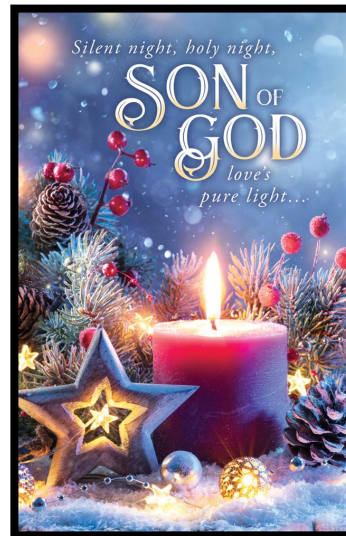
The Season of Epiphany may include as many as nine Sundays depending on the date of Easter (this year there are only 6 Sundays). The season is marked at its beginning and at its end by two important feasts of Christ, the Baptism of our Lord and the Transfiguration of Our Lord. During Epiphany, we worship Jesus, who has given all humankind access to God through Himself.

New Worship Bulletin in January

In this year's Epiphany Season, our Order of Worship will feature a return to the Confession and Forgiveness as well as the familiar Hymn of Praise. We will also recite the Apostles' Creed. Our worship services will continue to be led by our pastoral team, Pastors Marian, Mary Beth, Anne, and Seminararian Amy. Also, Sunday School is in full-swing with a few Family Sundays (where the kids remain in church with their parents) observed on January 14 and February 18. Join us during this "Season of Lights" and experience a worship service where God centers us and welcomes all who seek Jesus.

A Service of Lessons and Carols

Can't get enough of the beautiful carols from Advent and Christmastime? On Sunday, December 31st, Emmaus will participate in the Service of Lessons and Carols with Pastor Bill Barter presiding. This special worship service pairs various bible readings with traditional Christmas hymns. It's a warm, contemplative service with a final chance to sing those



familiar hymns that we all love!

Emmaus Sunday School Sharing Their Light

The kids at Sunday School made Christmas Cards for members of the congregation that are unable to make it to church in person. A few cards are shown here. What a great example of community outreach!

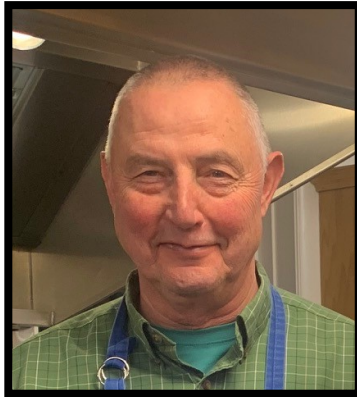


www.emmausfalmouth.org

A Message from Our Council President

Dear Emmaus Family,

This past year has been a year of change for Emmaus. We became a Reconciling In Christ Congregation and unexpectedly said goodbye to Pastor Andy. We have worked through another call process and we joyfully look towards the start of a new year. We are full of optimistic hope as the Call Committee starts its search for a new pastor to lead our church.



We are so grateful for Pastor Anne, Pastor Mary Beth, Pastor Marian, Seminarian Amy, and David. They have led our worship and church as we work through the call process. I am so thankful that they are part of our church family.

I am also thankful that there are so many of you who are willing to serve on committees and volunteer time to keep our church running. I especially want to thank the Congregation Council members, Jencie, Sarah Hallen, Sarah Jacobs, Kelly, Suanne, Marian, June, Scott, and our Treasurer Erik Svenson. It is such a pleasure to work with such a dedicated, talented group.

Every Sunday I am so amazed at our congregation. We are so blessed to have a congregation that serves. A special thanks to our Sunday School teachers, Altar Guild, Ushers, Lectors, and The Roadies. My thanks also goes out to all who have created fellowship by hosting Coffee Hour. Thank you all!

We worship God together and we support each other as we continue to reach out into our community and do important social ministry work.

I would like to report that our church is sound and strong.

We do not know where 2024 will take us but I am certain with God's help and guidance, Emmaus Lutheran Church will be a part of this community for many more years.

Tom Duchesneau

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place after worship on Sunday, January 28th. We



encourage those who can to attend in person, and there will also be a Zoom link available for those at home. We will hear from Council President Tom Duchesneau, our committee chairpersons, and get an update from the Call Committee. We will be voting to approve the proposed 2024 budget (copies of the proposed budget are available in the church office). We will also be voting to approve new council members and acknowledge those who have faithfully served these past three years. The Annual Report will be published and made available for everyone on January 21st. Please pick up a copy of the Annual Report and read and consider all of the reports before the meeting.

Committee Reports Due to the Secretary

With the Annual Meeting of the Congregation taking place on January 28th, Beverly, our Church Secretary, will need to compile the Annual Report. Our Constitution states that the Annual Report needs to be published and made available to the members of Emmaus at least one week before the meeting. So in order to include reports from each of the Committee Chairpersons, please submit your annual report to Beverly by Friday, January 12th.

It was with much anticipation that each candle on the Advent Wreath was lit on each of the four Sundays in Advent. On Christmas Eve, we lit the Christ Candle and celebrated together the birth of Christ.



Ministry Site Profile-The Final Steps



The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) has been approved by the Congregation Council and will be ready for publication after the first of the year. The new and improved MSP includes information from our 2019 MSP, the 2019 History Day, the 2019 CAT survey, the 2023 CAT survey, input from the Call Town Hall meeting in November, and ELCA Synod information. The

MSP Committee will be meeting with the Call Committee in mid-January to review the MSP document in preparation of the interview process. Please thank Sarah Hallen, Kelly Chadbourne, Jencie Gerwig, and Debbie Breton for the hours invested in this important endeavor.

Thanks, Ellen Wills (Chair)

Call Committee Chair Named



We are pleased to announce that Wayne Chadbourne has been named Chairperson of the Call Committee. The Call Committee, who have already begun their work, is comprised of Wayne Chadbourne, Emma Hallen, Beverly Hochberg, Judy Katzel, Elaine Lund, Lee Ruby, and Suanne Williams-Lindgren.

2023 Christmas Tree

Budgeting for 2024

The Congregation Council voted unanimously in December to send the 2024 proposed Church Budget to the congregation at the Annual Meeting for approval. After several meetings and discernment by the Finance Committee, the budget was decided upon at \$171,695.79. This represents a 2.7% increase over the 2023 budget amount. The budget will need to be unanimously approved by the whole congregation.

The specific details of the 2024 budget will be included in the Annual Report which will be available to everyone on January

21st. If you wish to review the budget before the Annual Report is ready, copies of the budget are available now in the church office. Please see Beverly if you wish to have a copy.

Notable this year is that the Congregation Council and Finance Committee together decided to keep the "Pastor's Salary & Benefits" section unchanged from 2023 amounts. That being said, if Emmaus calls a Pastor with more experience, the Pastor's Salary portion of the budget could need to be increased significantly. If you have any questions about the new church budget, please reach out to Tom, Beverly, or any church council member.

Breakfast Is Served!



Happy New Year! In celebration, join us at Emmaus on the first Sunday of the new year, January 7th, for "Breakfast for All." Breakfast starts at about 8:15 a.m. and includes eggs, potatoes, toast, sausage, juice and coffee. Thank you to our cooks and kitchen helpers, Tom Duchesneau, Bob Gerwig, Brandon Hallen, Wayne Chadbourne, and everyone who lends a hand in the kitchen!

Update on the Parsonage

The Property Committee is busy getting the parsonage ready for a new pastor. Ongoing projects include flashing for the chimney, repairing the ceiling in the living room and upstairs bedroom closet, painting walls and baseboards, installing an electric fireplace insert, installing additional rolled insulation in the attic, replacing smoke detectors, and doing a thorough cleaning in the kitchen. As for the roof, two estimates for full roof replacement will be obtained and presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 28th. If this expenditure is approved by the congregation, actual work on the roof can be done later in the year.



Overgrown shrubs out front were removed recently and new ones planted. In December, the parsonage was graced with swags of evergreens with bows for that "lived-in" look. Thank you Bob & Jencie Gerwig!

Bean Suppers Are Back!

The regular Bean Suppers will resume on Saturday, January 13th at 5:00 p.m. at Emmaus. We will kick off the new year with a hearty meal and afterwards a presentation by Suanne Williams-Lindgren. All armchair travelers are invited to travel virtually to Southeast Asia where you'll visit the exotic ancient kingdoms of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, and some of their UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Come see the 151 foot-long Reclining Buddha, lotus fields, alms giving monks in action, and so much more. We'll touch a bit on their troubling past, and what life is like in these countries today. Mark your calendar!



Mark your calendar!

"Dolls of Hope" Project



The Social Ministry team is sponsoring a new giving project starting January 1st and ending February 18th to coincide with Valentine's Day. Emmaus will be making stuffed dolls and bears to send to *Dolls Of Hope*. The patterns are fairly easy to make and are available either at church or online at www.dollsofhope.org.

Dolls of Hope started because a mother of 5 young children

believed that she could rally others to help her bring a little joy, hope and comfort into the lives of children living in a refugee camp in Northern Greece.

After hearing first hand accounts of children in refugee camps having nothing to play with, and knowing how much comfort stuffed animals bring to her own children she was inspired to start *Dolls of Hope* in May of 2016. The idea was simple, individuals could make handmade dolls and bears, send or drop them off to *Dolls of Hope*, and *Dolls of Hope* would send them to organizations serving children in refugee camps.

Believing that every child everywhere deserves to have a toy to cherish, in 2017 *Dolls of Hope* expanded their reach beyond just children living in refugee camps to any child in crisis in the United States or around the world.

Between its inception in June 2016 and the end of 2022, *Dolls of Hope* has sent 82,629 handmade dolls and bears (and also

Matchbox cars) to children in 46 countries.

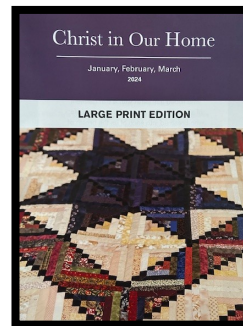
Make-A-Wish Foundation

Make-A-Wish traces its inspiration to Christopher James Greicius, an energetic 7-year-old boy battling leukemia who wishes to be a police officer. In 1980, his Phoenix community came toher to make his wish come true. Little did Chris know that his wish would create a movement that would transform millions of lives.

Today, Make-A-Wish has granted hundreds of thousands of life-changing wishes to children battling critical illnesses. Wishes that give families hope through dark times, strength to persevere and experiences that forever change their lives. A wish experience can be a game-changer for a child with a critical illness.

In the U.S. and its territories, a wish is granted every 34 minutes, in Maine, a wish is granted every 5 days. A wish can be that spark that helps these children believe that anything is possible and gives them the strength to fight harder against their illnesses. This one belief guides us and inspires us to grant wishes that change the lives of the kids we serve. Make your check out to Emmaus and note "Thankoffering" in the memo line.

Christ in Our Home



The quarterly edition of *Christ in Our Home* which offers daily devotionals and commentary is now available. This convenient booklet lists the upcoming festivals and commemorations as we move through the season of Epiphany towards Easter. You can pick up a copy from the church narthex. If you would like one mailed to your home, just call the church office (207) 781-4820. Large print editions are also available.

2023 Christmas Choir (below)

Beverly, Debbie, Julie, Dick, Mary Beth, Brandon, Stacey, Sarah, Ron, Monica, Rob, Beverly and David



In Our Prayers

Our prayers are with the family of Christel Savage on the passing of Christel's brother, Klaus Maerz. You may recall that Klaus, from Martinique, joined many of our worship services on Zoom when the church was closed due to the pandemic. We give thanks for the promise of the resurrection in which Klaus now rests, and we pray for God's comfort to be with the entire Maerz and Savage families.



Pastoral Concerns

Emmaus Lutheran Church is affiliated with the New England Synod of the ELCA and also a Reconciling in Christ congregation. Here we believe there is a place for EVERYONE. For pastoral care concerns, please contact Pastor Marian Marks at the church office at (207) 781-4820.



EMMAUS LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Falmouth, ME 04105
(207) 781-4820
www.emmausfalmouth.org

Contact Pastor—Rev. Marian E. Marks
Church Musician – David Hansen
Secretary – Beverly Lindahl



	<u>November</u>	<u>Year-to-Date*</u>
Regular Income	\$9,471	\$153,986
Expense	(\$7,739)	(\$145,862)
Net	\$1,732	\$8,124

**figures may differ slightly from Treasurer's Report*

Expenses are once again less than budgeted due to not paying a Pastor's Salary. We are, of course, continuing to pay our talented Pulpit Supply Pastors and also our Contact Pastor. We are ever grateful to Seminarian Amy Dunckelmann for her internship and devoted service to Emmaus.

Synod Sunday yielded \$595. The Finance Committee will soon be moving funds from the Checking Account into an investment fund (like the Mission Investment Fund) and/or into CDs for better investment returns.

You can give electronically with Vanco anytime (a one-time donation or even repeating donations) by clicking the Online Giving button below (you will need your routing number and account number—be sure to include any zeros that may begin your sequence of numbers). Most banks offer automatic bill pay (EFTs) at no cost.

