



The Emmaus Encounter

The Newsletter of Emmaus Lutheran Church

December, 2023

Emmaus Friends,

Welcome to the Advent Season! We are in that point in the liturgical calendar where we wait expectantly for the birth of Jesus. This period also starts the beginning of the next church calendar year. During this four-week period, we have an opportunity as Christians to pray, meditate and anticipate the coming of Christ. Each year, Emmaus displays an Advent wreath with four candles that represent the four Sundays of Advent. Traditionally the candles symbolize hope, peace, joy, and love. With all that is going on in today's world, Advent is a reminder of the hope of salvation, the peace and joy faith can provide and the love we receive freely from God. We are blessed this season to have different parishioners light the Advent wreath candles every week.

The overarching theme for this year's Advent season at Emmaus is "What really matters?". You'll see this question on our Advent bulletin cover starting December 3rd. We were graced with Elizabeth Chadbourne's artistic talents again this year in designing our Advent artwork. The angel you'll see trumpeting the question "What really matters?" is designed to prompt us to reflect this season on what is important to us. These may

be people, aspects of ourselves like good health, or ways in which we strive to be.

In thinking about this question for myself, here is what really matters to me this holiday season and what I've been working on: having my actions flow from a foundation of faith, finding opportunities where I can be of service to others, being present in the moment, enjoying what blessings I already have versus wanting more, loving who I am at this moment, imperfections and all. Lofty? Well, I'd say aspirational and a work in progress on some points. That being said, I would encourage all of you to make a list – silent or otherwise – on what's important to you this holiday season.



Yours in a healing Christ,

Amy

In Advent, We Wait

Wait, Watch, and Prepare for Advent



Advent always begins the fourth Sunday before December 25th, this year that date is December 3rd. Of note this year is that the Fourth Sunday in Advent is also Christmas Eve.

The Savior's birth is second in importance only to His resurrection on Easter Sunday. During the Time of Christmas, Christians reflect on God's great and gracious gift of Emmanuel.

A new Church Year begins with Advent (from Latin *adventus*, which means "coming into"), a four-week period of preparation and meditation before Christmas. The story of Jesus during Advent is the story of hope coming into the world. When the time was just right, God sent Jesus into the world. The Advent season teaches us to prepare to receive Jesus, the hope of the world.

In Advent, we wait for our coming King.

Advent Traditions and Practices

- The color for Advent is blue, which symbolizes anticipation and hope in our coming King. Violet can also be used during Advent as a symbol of our repentance in preparation for our coming King.
- We do not sing the Gloria in Excelsis in the Divine Service during Advent. This is the angels' song at Christmas, so during Advent, we pass over this traditional Hymn of



Praise in silent anticipation.

- It has become common to use an Advent wreath to mark the season. This wreath has four candles—one for each week in Advent. As these candles are lit each week, our anticipation mounts as we look forward to Jesus' coming.

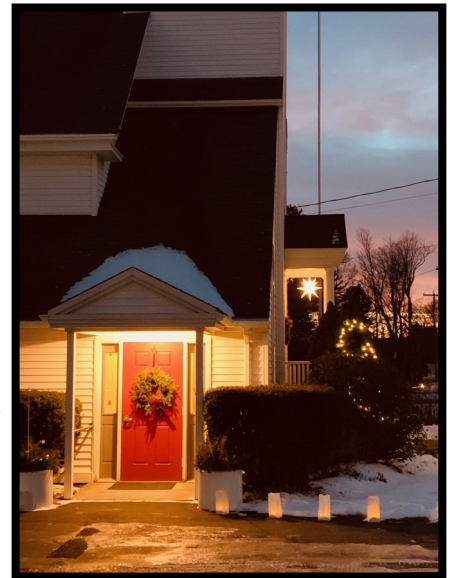
New Worship Bulletin for Advent

What Really Matters? In this year's Advent Season, our Order of Worship will feature special music including a centering hymn by *The Emmaus Roadies*, the Gospel Acclamation and the Prayers of the People will include a sung response featuring a *Taizé* verse, and we also will return to the traditional Doxology. At the beginning of the service each week a family will light a candle on the Advent wreath and the Pastor will share a blessing. Join us during the Season of Advent and experience a worship service where God centers us and welcomes all who await the coming of Jesus.

In Advent, we wait for our coming King.

Christmas Services

This year the Fourth Sunday of Advent is December 24th, and we will be lighting the fourth candle of Advent at our worship service at 9:00 a.m. At 4:00 p.m., join Emmaus on Christmas Eve for a Candlelight Service including special music, singing of carols, sermon by Pastor Marian, and Holy Communion. These services will be held in-person and also virtually on Zoom. On Monday, Christmas Day, there will be no morning worship service. On the first Sunday after Christmas, December 31st, Emmaus will have our traditional service of Lessons & Carols at 9:00 a.m. with Pastor Bill Barter. Bring your friends and family in celebration of the birth of the Messiah!



www.emmausfalmouth.org

Deck the Halls—Dec. 17th



The Christmas Tree will be in place soon but we need the help of many Christmas Elves to put up the lights and decorate the tree. Plan on staying after worship on

Sunday, December 17th to help the Worship & Music Team and the Sunday School kiddos adorn our sanctuary and further prepare for and await the birth of Jesus!

In Advent, we wait for our coming King.

The Christmas Star Flower

Help brighten Emmaus' Christmas celebration by providing a poinsettia (or two!) to decorate the church. Once again these beautiful poinsettias will be provided by Skillins and are only \$17. You may also bring your own poinsettia and drop it off at church. You may offer a special notation, for example, in memory of or in honor of, etc. We will acknowledge all the donors and honorees in the bulletin on Christmas Eve. You can fill out the form found inside your bulletin and drop the form off in the narthex. If you need assistance from our church secretary, just call the office at 781-4820 on Tuesdays or Thursdays.



Cheers Amy!

Congratulations to Amy Dunckelmann, who has received her official endorsement from the New England ELCA Synod as part of the pastoral candidacy process. Following this critical step, Amy now must only complete the remaining coursework and her current internship before she is eligible



for ordination as a Lutheran minister. Receiving the ELCA's endorsement is an official declaration that the seminarian is in good standing, has a relationship of clear accountability and has met the ethical, competency standards and qualifications to serve in ministry. We are very fortunate to have Amy currently serving in so many critical roles here at Emmaus during this time of transition, and we look forward to her continued contributions to the spiritual life of our congregation.

Breakfast for All—Dec. 4th

Ever come to church on an empty stomach? Join us at Emmaus on Sunday, December 3rd beginning around 8:15 for the monthly "Breakfast for All." This time breakfast will include pancakes in addition to eggs, sausages, and fruit. 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!

A Sprucing Up Party—Dec. 11th

Come help give our church a good dusting as we prepare for the reason of the season! Since our cleaning service does not do this task, it would be great to have this done before we Deck the Halls and decorate the sanctuary. Join Suanne Williams-Lindgren on Monday, December 11th at 1:00 p.m.

Altar Guild Needs Help!

We are looking for volunteers to take part in Altar Guild, a vital part of the Emmaus worship service. No training is necessary, and your commitment would be part of a one-month rotating schedule. Please contact Amy Dunckelmann if you can help.

2024 Flower Chart

The 2024 Flower Chart will soon be hanging up in the narthex. If you have a special occasion or commemoration that you would like to sponsor Altar flowers for, please sign up on the chart and let us know what the occasion is. Flowers are still only \$20 and you can bring the flowers home with you right after worship. Special thanks to Phyllis and Sandra Johnson for continuing their ministry to Emmaus by delivering the flowers from Skillins each week.



Stewardship Committee Update

The Fall Stewardship Campaign, *We Are Called*, culminated with the offering of our 2024 Pledge Cards to God. That Sunday we shared time and a wonderful meal together celebrating our good gifts. As part of the campaign, we gave you a couple of activities for prayerful reflection to complete. One of them was to answer *“If money were not an issue, what one thing would you want to see Emmaus do?”* We wanted to share with you some of the responses (some are abbreviated):

- Do something for the homeless population in Portland
- Host free Community Dinners to which we can invite our neighbors
- Open a child care center for ages up to kindergarten
- Hire a Youth Pastor
- Gather the homeless children and bring them to church, feed them, and clothe them, teach them, love them
- Re-roof the top of the bell tower, new doors, windows & trim, and siding
- Hire a pastor with a family
- Adopt a family seeking asylum who needs companionship, transportation, meals, and interaction with us
- Become a food resource center offering meals once a month
- Be much more involved meeting new people, and creating opportunities to attract people to our church

- Have an active community outreach team with focus on connecting with young families
- Get Emmaus off the septic system and connected to the town sewer which would allow larger groups to use the building
- Provide fun activities for all ages and mixed groups including singing, music, movies, board games, yoga, etc.
- Purchase a solar array that would make our church and parsonage power self-sufficient
- Reach out to families with children
- Rent/own a building in Portland where we can provide warming/cooling spaces for homeless folks with access to water, bathrooms, washers, and provide rooms until apartments can be found

Wow! We were impressed with the thoughtfulness and detail of your responses. We see from your responses a deeper picture of how our congregation wishes to see how our gifts serve others, not only here in this moment and place, but also in our community and in our outreach ministries.

Pledge cards continue to trickle in by mail, and we thank you for returning them as this helps the Finance Committee formulate next year’s budget. Curious what the total pledged amount is so far? Find out by turning to page 6!

Calling All Creches!

The congregation has been bringing in their favored and unique creches to display during Advent. Many of these are from different cultures, and some hold special meaning. Each creche is identified with a card explaining the significance of it. Be sure to come downstairs during Coffee Hour each Sunday in Advent and take a look at the display.



This Creche Scene is from Alaska!

Update on the Parsonage



The Congregation Council recently voted to approve \$3,150 for the cost of wood floor refinishing at the parsonage. Initially the work was scheduled for January, but unexpectedly an opening appeared and the work commenced last week.

Jimmy's Express Floor Service is performing the work—the same company that refinished the floors in the sanctuary in 2021. The work will include sanding

and sealing the first floor, the stair treads, and also buffing and sealing the second floor. In addition to the floor project, Bob Gerwig, Wayne Chadbourne, and Scott Wiemer have been up on the roof repairing a leak near the flashing on the chimney. After the floors are done, the living room will need to be painted along with the baseboards. Stay tuned for ways the Property Committee could use your DIY skills!

Suggestion Box



The Congregation Council has reviewed all of the comment cards submitted over the past month. Thank you all for taking the time to let us know your questions and concerns! Here's what you said and the Council's replies.

1. The Pulpit- 6 of you said please return the pulpit. On June 5, 2022, the Congregation voted unanimously to keep the pulpit and to continue discussions as to where it should be placed. The Council agreed that it would be nice to move it to the front for special occasions however to table formalizing its home until we have a new Pastor in place. Given that the Pastor's primary role is in delivering Word and Sacrament, we feel it should be their call where they prefer to preach.

2. Get more youth involved in the service. Mentioned by 1 person. This has been brought to Worship and Music for action.

3. Sometimes it's difficult to see the speaker/pastor when they stand low in the center. Mentioned by 1 person. As you know it's the choice of the individual to decide where they think/feel is the best place for them to deliver their message. Another person mentioned how much they like the Pastor preaching closer to and among people. The prevailing view these days is for Pastors to deliver the word physically closer to Congre-

gants and not to distant themselves from the Congregation. Would you be open to sitting someplace where you'd have a better view??

4. We need more Altar Guild people and instruction. This has been brought to Worship and Music for action.

5. Thank you to all of our Pastors for sermons that are relevant and help me bring the Word into my everyday life!

Please continue to let us know what you are thinking. We appreciate it!

Ending Hunger in Maine

Our Thankoffering for December is *Preble Street Resource Center*. The mission of Preble Street is to provide accessible barrier-free services to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty and to advocate for solutions to those problems. From a nutritious meal to crisis intervention, from clean clothes to health care, from showers to a permanent home, Preble Street programs not only meet urgent needs but also create solutions to homelessness and hunger. Make your check out to Emmaus and note "Thankoffering" in the memo line.

Well Done, Emmaus!

In November, the Social Ministry Team asked Emmaus for the gift of coats, boots, and toys with their annual Angel Tree drive. Your gifts supported at least 12 families at *The Root Cellar* with 14 coats, 15 pairs of boots, and 19 toys! In conjunction with the Angel Tree, the Mitten Tree yielded 24 hats, 21 pairs of gloves, 16 pairs of winter socks, and 24 pairs of regular socks. These gifts were donated to those in need at *Maine Needs*. Thank you, Emmaus!



Stewardship Campaign Results



Last month our Stewardship Campaign, “*We Are Called*” concluded with praise and thanks for all those who offered a pledge card for 2024. Here are the results of the campaign to date:

2024 Cards Returned: 30

Annual 2024 Pledged Amount: **\$123,718**

If you haven’t had a chance to return your 2024 pledge card, it’s not too late! Please drop off your card in the offering plate, office, or mail it to Emmaus. Thank you, Good and Faithful Stewards!



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
265 Middle Road
Falmouth, ME 04105
(207) 781-4820
www.emmausfalmouth.org

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



	October	Year-to-Date*
Regular Income	\$13,452	\$144,515
Expense	(\$7,004)	(\$138,123)
Net	\$6,448	\$6,392

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

Expenses in October were considerably less than budgeted due to not paying out anything for “Pastor’s Salary and Benefits.” This puts Emmaus back in the black for the year. Salary and Benefits expenses will remain low for the remaining months of 2023, with the exception of the weekly Contact Pastor allowance.

The Finance Committee has been working to put together a proposed budget for 2024. The difficulty will be drawing up a budget that contemplates the cost of salary and benefits for a full-time pastor with possibly a family, or any of the other various scenarios involved with hiring a new pastor.

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.

