



# THE EMMAUS ENCOUNTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF EMMAUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

FALMOUTH, ME



*Dear Siblings in Christ,*

Did you know that every year, without fail, we do something a little strange in the church? At the beginning of Lent, we take a word—a single, joyful, ancient word—and we eliminate it from our worship services.

That word is “ALLELUIA”.

For forty days, it disappears—we don’t sing it, or say it, at all.

Why?

Because Lent is a season that invites us into reflection, repentance, and the naming of what is broken—in the world and in ourselves. It is a season that resists easy joy.

And so we fast from Alleluia.

Here’s a little history of the word itself. “Alleluia” comes from the Hebrew Hallelu Yah, which means “Praise the Lord.” It is used heavily in the psalms, especially the psalms sung during Jewish festivals like Passover. These psalms were songs sung by a people who knew exile, oppression, deliverance, and hope. A people who praised God, because God was faithful throughout their tumultuous journey from captivity to freedom.

So, when we refrain from saying or singing Alleluia during Lent, we are not eliminating praise—we are simply letting it deepen. We’re remembering that true praise is not to be forced...it is not shallow. It is something that can pass through intense sorrow. And it can be absent for a while. It is something that can be buried—and still live.

At my internship church in Massachusetts, we would literally bury the Alleluia. We’d pack away our banner in box and place it at the foot of the cross for the entire season of Lent. And then on Easter Sunday, the kids would come up and help “un-bury” the Alleluia—it was a joyful, playful thing for all!

Easter is a season of praise and joy! The stone is rolled away! The tomb is empty and Alleluia returns in our words and hymns! But it doesn’t sound quite like it did before. Now it’s fuller. Deeper. And somehow more meaningful.

When we sing “Alleluia,” we’re celebrating renewal, rebirth, and resurrection in our church, in our homes and in ourselves. We have been called out of whatever tombs have held us and into Christ’s new, abundant life! ALLELUIA!

*Pastor Gail*

# Spring is Here!



## The Holy Hikers

Dust off those hiking boots! The Holy Hikers are hitting the trail again on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. Please note the change of start time. This month, we'll be exploring the North Falmouth Community Forest Loop. This is a great, moderate trail perfect for all skill levels to enjoy the first signs of spring.

## Camp Calument



Are you ready for campfires, lake swims, and making friendships that last a lifetime? We are checking in to see which of our Emmaus youth are interested in heading to Camp Calumet this summer! Whether you're a seasoned camper or thinking about your very first sleepaway experience, Calumet offers a beautiful space to explore faith and nature in the heart of New Hampshire.

Interested? Please let Pastor Gail or the church office know if your child is thinking about attending. We'd love to coordinate and see if we can get a group of Emmaus kids together for the same week!

## HOLY WEEK

- ✳ **Palm Sunday**  
Sunday, March 29th  
Worship 9:00 a.m.
- ✳ **Maundy Thursday**  
Thursday, April 2nd  
Worship 7:00 p.m.
- ✳ **Good Friday**  
Friday, April 3rd  
Worship 7:00 p.m.
- ✳ **Easter**  
Sunday, April 5th  
Worship 9:00 a.m.  
Brunch after worship

## Pastor Gail at Camp Calument!

Long before she was our Pastor, Gail was a camper at Camp Calumet. This photo is a wonderful reminder of the deep roots our leaders have in the outdoor ministries of the ELCA. Take a close look; can you pick her out of the crowd?

**Circa  
1970**



## Join the Staff Support Committee

Interested in helping our church leadership thrive? We're looking for new members to join our Staff Support Committee. No professional HR background is required, but is helpful if you have it. Reach out to Pastor Gail to learn how you can get involved.

Social Ministry

## Making Blankets

On March 15<sup>th</sup> after worship, the Social Ministry team set up materials to make no-sew blankets to donate to Project Linus. Project Linus is a non-profit organization that provides new, handmade blankets to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need. Thanks to everyone who participated in making these blankets!



## Yard Sale!

Get ready to hunt for your next favorite find! Emmaus is hosting our annual Yard Sale on Saturday, May 2nd. From household essentials to unique hidden gems, there's something for everyone. Best of all, every purchase helps our youth head to Camp Calumet this summer! We need your help: We are looking for volunteers to assist with clean-up after the sale. If you can lend a hand, please contact the church office. See you there!



## “Accompaniment:” Near and Far

Join us Thursday, April 9th at 9:30 a.m. at the Preble Street Food Security Hub (75 Darling Ave, South Portland) to learn about our local and global impact. We'll explore the vital work of Preble Street, Greater Portland Family Promise, and ELCA World Hunger in providing nutritious meals, housing support for immigrants, and sustainable global change.



## April Bean Supper

Join in for Bean Supper on April 11th at 5:00 p.m.! This month, guest speaker Kristen Peterson will guide us through the world of online safety, teaching us how to spot phishing and scams. It's the perfect blend of delicious food and essential info. We'll see you there!

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## Seeking Justice for Marco



The following information is from a friend and neighbor of Julie Mueller from Pennsylvania, Brenda Egolf. She has shared this with her church family and has been asking friends to do the same:

Marco and Felipe Loaiza Fallu are two brothers who came to the United States over two years ago with their mother and sister seeking asylum from Ecuador. After a few days in confinement while their backgrounds were checked, they were released and allowed to travel to Pennsylvania, where they had family members. There they found jobs and were gainfully employed and strove to make a new life for their family.

Since arriving in the U.S., Marco has gotten a GED and an ESL certificate from a program sponsored by Project Easton, and he was studying to get his real estate license. While in the Lehigh Valley, he met Megan. Megan and I have known each other for about ten years. Last spring she introduced me to Marco, and I now consider Marco to be a friend of mine. He and Megan have spent time at my lake house, helped me put up my Christmas tree, and have been great companions since my husband passed away during Covid. Marco even wrote me a thank you letter from Moshannon calling the three of us "a good team". I am impressed with Marco's industry, willingness to learn English, kindness, consideration, helpfulness, and politeness.

A requirement for Marco's and Felipe's pending asylum case was to have yearly check-ins with immigration authorities in Philadelphia. In 2024 the first check-in went smoothly with no problems. The second appointment in 2025 on December 2<sup>nd</sup> did not go as planned. Marco and Felipe were detained at the federal prison in Philadelphia, while their mother and sister were free to go back to Easton.

After a few days in the federal prison, they were moved to Moshannon Valley processing center in central Pennsylvania. Moshannon is known for delaying lawyer visits and has drawn national attention in the news. It took three weeks for Marco's lawyer to be able to contact him. The legal system for immigration is extremely complex and confusing. While Felipe and Marco were detained, their family asylum case was spilt, causing complications with their court dates. When their lawyer failed to appear for Felipe's court date, they had to scramble to find a new lawyer. After finding a new lawyer, they filed a petition for release since they have no criminal records. Unfortunately, the missed court date by the lawyer forced Felipe to have to go back to Ecuador while waiting for the petition. Megan and her cousin took the three-hour trip to Moshannon to visit the young men last Saturday. Felipe was removed from Moshannon and sent to Louisiana that evening. Marco is still at Moshannon.

My father was seventeen and did not know any English when he came to New York from Sweden. My mother's parents were also teenagers when they immigrated from Aland and Finland without knowing English. So I know about the difficulties that young immigrants have when settling in this country. I grew up living on top of the Palisades in New Jersey looking at the Hudson River and New York. A few miles down the river stands the Statue of Liberty. Engraved at the base it says "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

I firmly believe that as Christians, we all need to show love toward one another. I am asking you for your prayers for this situation, and that the petition will have a positive outcome and release Marco. I am also asking for prayers for the thousands of similar stories that I have been discovering of ordinary people who are not criminals being incarcerated and brutalized.

If you are interested in contacting your members of Congress about this issue, you can do so via the ELCA here: [ELCA ACTION ALERT: Tell Congress to Welcome People Seeking Safety](https://act.elca.org/page/92140/action/1?chain)

URL: <https://act.elca.org/page/92140/action/1?chain>

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## Emmaus Open Arms Team (EAOT)

The Emmaus Open Arms Team (EOAT) is ramping up our effort for 2026! As our committee begins its work, we are planning to undertake 4 projects in 2026:



### Inside Emmaus

Knowledge is power. As part of our work, we will add a brochure rack in the church and stock it with materials so members and visitors can learn more about what it means to be a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation, and how we can support and welcome members of the LGBTQIA+ and immigrant communities to full participation within our church family.

### Bringing All Area Lutherans Together

We will organize and run one book group this fall and invite our fellow Lutherans in the greater Portland area to join. The first book, which has yet to be chosen, will be grounded in theology and focus on one of several areas: racial justice, bias in our lives and ministries, the history of the Church and inclusiveness, diversity and intercultural competence, and contemporary issues facing transgender youth, immigrants, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Whatever the final pick, it's sure to be thought-provoking and educational!



### Connecting with a Local Immigrant Nonprofit

Churches can play a vital role in supporting local immigrant groups by providing resources and advocacy as well as fostering integration within the Lutheran church and the community at large. One of our projects is to make this connection not only to see what we can provide to meet the needs of immigrant families, but also as a learning and growth opportunity for our congregation and a chance to advocate for change on behalf of immigrants.

### Continued Participation in the Portland Pride Parade

Last year was our first year to show our support in this highly visible way. In 2026, we will again march in the Pride Parade and invite area Lutheran churches to join in for the day.



Our plan is to have 1-2 team member(s) operate as the lead(s) on each of the 4 projects to organize and plan, with the rest of the team providing support as needed. Many hands make light work, so if you'd like to join us, our first meeting will be at the church on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 5 pm. Future meetings will mostly likely be on zoom, with some in-person meetings if needed.

For more information contact: Judy Katzell (email: [jkatzell@gmail.com](mailto:jkatzell@gmail.com) or cell: 207-838-0725)

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Property Committee

## Building Updates

### Spring Into Action: Property Updates

The Property Committee has been busy! We have successfully completed painting the walls and ceilings in the "Roadies" area. Next up, we'll be installing shelving in the new armoire and painting the registers, with a goal of wrapping those up by the time spring truly arrives.



In the Fellowship Hall, we'll begin painting the walls and trim later this March. Our aim is to finish by late April, just in time for the Annual Yard Sale. We are also exploring the addition of new speakers in the Fellowship Hall, kitchen, and the new nursery to ensure everyone, regardless of where they are in the building, can hear our services and Pastor Gail's wonderful sermons clearly.



### Looking Outdoors

As the weather warms, our focus shifts outside. Our first priority is repairing the front entrance, which includes replacing rotted deck boards, posts, and columns. Stay tuned for the date of our **Spring Cleanup Day in May!**

### Heartfelt Thanks A huge thank you to our dedicated volunteers:

- Bob Gerwig for managing our ice dam issues.
- Gerry Breton for hard-wiring the new garage door opener at the Parsonage.
- Scott Wiemer for sourcing and picking up all our painting supplies.
- Jim Mueller for researching and installing the new church camera mount.

If you'd like to join the Property Committee, please reach out to Bob, Jim, Gerry, Scott, or Wayne Chadbourne. We'd love to have you!

Special thanks to Pastor Gail and Kelly Chadbourne for picking out the paint colors, Jim Mueller for taking the lead on dismantling the organ in such an organized fashion, Gerry Breton for use of his (new) truck to pick up the armoire, Mary Beaudet (in Roadies) and her son for donating the armoire, and Scott Wiemer for patching the walls, picking up all the supplies and for the use of his trailer to haul the organ pieces to the transfer station.

Property Committee is...

Gerry Breton, Bob Gerwig, Jim Mueller, Scott Wiemer, and Wayne Chadbourne.

## Community Effort

For March, Emmaus focused our offerings to **The Florence House**, an organization dedicated to providing safe housing and support for women in the Portland area. Your generous contributions help provide not just a bed, but the essential resources and dignity these women need to transition toward permanent housing. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ in our local community.



# April

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Maundy Thursday Service 7pm	3 Good Friday Service 7pm	4
5 Easter Worship 9am Brunch	6	7	8	9 World Hunger Portland 9am	10	11 Holy Hikers 10am Bean Supper 5pm
12 Worship 9am	13	14 Finance & Council Meeting 6pm	15 EAOT Meeting	16	17	18
19 Worship 9am	20	21	22	23 Pr Gail Vacation	24	25
26 Worship 9am	27	28	29	30		

## Tech for Worship: Join the Team!

We are looking for additional help with our A/V operations for our Sunday Worship. Don't let the name scare you! You don't need to be an expert or a "techie" to help out. If you can use a tablet, you already have the skills we need. If you are interested, let Pastor Gail know!



**Please note that after Easter, Tammy Buchanan will be taking over the responsibility of Flower Ministry. Make your checks out to Tammy Buchanan.**

**Special Thanks to Dick Miller for creating a wooden box for our flower money!**

**Thank you to Phyllis and Sandy Johnson for their dedication over the years for Flower Ministry.**

### Ushers Needed!

The Worship and Music Team is looking for volunteers to serve as Ushers! You'll partner with a Safety Usher each Sunday to be a friendly face for our community, greeting guests and assisting where needed. Ready to help? Sign up in the Narthex today. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Sandy Halverson directly via email or text.

## Brunch for All

BRUNCH FOR ALL will be served on the first Sunday of the month, April 5th, Easter Sunday. We have decided to switch from serving breakfast before worship to serving brunch after worship in order to bolster the attendance. Plan to stay for Coffee Hour and brunch and enjoy a hot breakfast in fellowship and thanksgiving. A sign-up sheet is located in the narthex.

### Did you know we have a Facebook page?

It's a great way to stay connected and informed about everything happening in our congregation. From event photos to special announcements, our page is filled with engaging content that celebrates our vibrant community. Join us online and be a part of our digital family!



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