

The Emmanuel Way

A monthly publication of
Emmanuel Episcopal
Church, Greenwood, Virginia

January 2015

Your gifts brought tears

By Jim Crosby

Our Emmanuel Family has reached out to touch the hearts of a group of wonderful souls. Our Christmas outreach to the residents of Mountainside Senior Living through our Angel Tree program has generated an overwhelming response as reported by their Activities Manager, Penny Goldman.

Ms. Goldman reported to us just a few of the responses from the residents when they opened the gifts you provided. She stated, "One man said he hadn't received gifts like that in 60 years – in fact, he was moved to tears. Another (who never participates in activities or parties) said he hadn't had a Christmas like this since he was a kid. One of our ladies (whose gifts I delivered after the party) was in her room going through one of her gift bags. I brought in the rest of it, and she whispered, 'Are you sure these are for me? There is so much. I don't know what to say!' She got teary, which got ME teary, and we shared a hug, kiss, and a Merry Christmas."

Her story goes on with, "One fellow, who really needed some clothes, couldn't wait to tell me this morning that he got everything he wanted and needed. He couldn't imagine how someone knew just what those things were."



These angel's voices filled the hearts of Emmanuel parishioners during their performance Christmas Eve. The three Christmas Eve services and Christmas Day over over 530 brought around 500 to worship in Emmanuel's beautifully decorated church. (Photo by Jamie Bourque)

Ms. Goldman finished her feedback with, "Thank you just seems so inadequate for everything you, the kids, and your remarkable congregation have done for Mountainside and its residents. We are grateful beyond what I'm capable of communicating. From the bottom of our hearts – ALL of our hearts, thank you for giving a building filled with wonderful souls a Christmas they won't forget."

Mountainside Administrator, Sharon Britt, offered to Amy Blundin and Cathy Boyd, "Words cannot begin to describe how grateful we at Mountainside are for all of the wonderful gifts the residents received. Ladies, you've outdone yourselves in organizing this! Some of our residents were so tearful when they received the gifts. One of our newest members cried and cried. When we attempted to comfort him, he told us, "This is the first time in 60 years that I have gotten Christmas gifts". Another resident said he hadn't gotten this many gifts since he was a kid! I think that speaks for itself."

Many thanks to our youth group and Amy Blundin for taking on the challenge of adopting Mountainside for Christmas.

Rector's Reflections



The Rev. Christopher M. Garcia
Rector

What will Emmanuel's story be in 2015? What role will you play?

Our 2015 pledge campaign is well on its way to being the best ever. (We are not quite there yet – we still need to hear from about 20% of our pledgers – so if you are in that group, please submit your pledge as soon as possible, and please be as generous as you can.) But finances are only part of the story. Even more important are how we spend our *selves* – our time and our talents, our gifts and abilities.

At each baptismal liturgy, we all promise, with God's help, to "continue

in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" and to "seek and serve Christ in all persons," loving our neighbors as ourselves. Some ministries focus inwards, on our worship and our church family. Some ministries and missions focus outward, carrying the Good News to the world around us. There is a role to play for everyone. How will you take part in 2015?

Worship and formation on Sunday calls on the abilities and contributions of an impressive list of participants: greeters, altar guild and ushers, nursery attendants and coffee hour hosts, Children's Chapel leaders, flower guild, Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, and adult formation teachers, acolytes, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, intercessors, our choir, and greeters, and more. Once a month, others host our FIRE program – fellowship, intergenerational religious education, and worship on Saturday nights.

Behind the scenes, counters help account for offerings. Another volunteer regularly collates and folds our worship bulletins. Several groups help plan the formation programs and coordinate worship ministries. Our buildings and grounds committee helps keep our physical plant ready to support all of this. A cemetery committee keeps records of that part of our grounds. Others follow up with newcomers, visit shut-ins, and take Holy Communion those who can't come to church.

Throughout the week, Emmanuel **Connections** helps volunteers connect with those who need help, and helps those who need help find it. Two women's Bible study groups meet. We host two recovery groups (a third is on the way) and a Brownie Girl Scout troop. Parishioners knit prayer shawls as a tangible expression of our love for those who are ill. Others take meals to those who need a little help, and help plan our parish retreat at Shrine Mont.

We support a number of mission partners outside of our own congregation. Many parishioners help out with Bread Fund, packing food or giving out food parcels at Holy Cross Church, Batesville. Others are

regulars in the Disciples Kitchen feeding ministries in Waynesboro, volunteer at the Mountainside Senior Living Center Tea Party every other week, or at the new Mountainside Men's Movie group (do you like westerns?).

Our Endowment Board administers the proceeds from our endowment, and last year gave away over \$100,000 (None of our endowment proceeds are used for operating expenses; all are given away, as stipulated by our donors). These mission partners want our hands-on involvement. So consider helping out with the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program, the Alliance for Interfaith Ministries, Brownsville Elective Education, Camp Holiday Trails, Casa de Amistad, The Haven, Elk Hill Farm, Habitat for Humanity, Hospice of the Piedmont, Jefferson Area Board for the Aging, Meals on Wheels, Ministry with the Aging, the Senior Center, or Service Dogs of Virginia. If you want to travel, consider our international mission partners in Haiti, El Hogar's ministries in Honduras, or Emanuel Youth Mission in Taura, El Salvador (despite the similar name, it's an independent ministry).

What other ways to serve are on your heart? All of the ministries and missions listed above got started because someone in the parish cared enough to get involved and make a difference. Have a new idea? We can help you make it a reality. I know that parishioners are interested in a men's group and a chapter of Daughters of the King (a women's devotional and service organization), for example.

All of these ministries welcome your involvement. If you are looking for a way to "walk in love, as Christ loved us," contact me. I will be happy to connect you, make introductions, and generally get you started. Our ministries and our missions need your active participation. Let 2015 be the year you try something new. What role will you play in 2015?

Yours in Christ,

Fr Christopher +

Rev. Stacy's Message



The Rev. Stacy Williams-Duncan

Dear Members of Emmanuel,

It has been a pleasure and blessing for Joel and me to be part of the Emmanuel community. Over the last two months, I spent significant time praying about what God was calling me to do at this point in my ministry and what I thought was best for the parish.

In October, my doctoral committee approved a timeline for me to graduate in May 2016. My call is to improve theological education by helping faculty members integrate research-based practices of teaching and learning while using educational technology more effectively. To do this and achieve my goal of graduating in 18 months, I must refocus all my energies in this direction.

Christopher and I have discussed several times our concern that my presence on Sunday mornings masks the need for a full-time associate. Just a few weeks ago during coffee hour, three regular attendees told me they did not know I was also a doctoral student. This interaction helped me see my presence might prevent a realistic understanding of the current staffing at Emmanuel.

My last Sunday as the priest associate at Emmanuel will be January 18, 2015. One of the blessings of the

last two months has been Christopher's willingness to help me with this discernment, and I look forward to being his go-to supply priest when he needs one. Emmanuel will continue to be in my prayers, and I will always be proud to have served this parish.

May God's peace be with you,

The Rev. Gary Williams-Dune

Our Senior Warden's Report

By Doug Connell

**Who Are We? Who Are Our
Neighbors? What is God Calling
Us to Do?**

Catching our breath, and looking at the opportunities ahead. January marks the completion of a calendar year full of ministry and community development at Emmanuel. It also marks the beginning of a new year of opportunity to serve the Lord as we live out our mission in this special place.

We'll examine our efforts at the Annual Congregational Meeting next month. As that date approaches, it is clear that we have much to be thankful for.

- For the birth of Christ, celebrated so vibrantly at Christmas, and His enduring presence in our congregation and neighbors.
- Many newcomers who bring energy and new ideas into our community.
- Many who committed, or re-committed to a pledge commitment to support the work of the parish.
- Newly renovated classroom and meeting spaces that support Christian Formation activities across the congregation.

- For our new Brownie Troop and their adult leaders.
- Enhancements to our historic buildings that provide both creature comforts to our worship, and longevity and safety improvements over the expected life of our physical plant.
- Our energetic new rector, and part-time priest associate, and the inspiring service of our deacon.
- The spiritual growth of our postulant, as he moves into field work in his path to ordination to the vocational diaconate.

Blessings,
Doug

Our Junior Warden's Report

By George Lindroth

I hope that you had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The Christmas presents for our church include the following items, which have just been completed or will be within the next week or so:

- Repair of the first light in our parking lot behind the church
- Replacement of five broken slate on the Parish Hall roof
- Installation of a new air handler with a steam coil in the basement of the church. Unfortunately, the steam coil has required special manufacturing from the factory and has delayed this work for over two months.
- Survey of our trees for dead limbs which could be hazardous to parishioners, our cars, and building structures.

A report of this work will be presented to our vestry for prioritization and funding. There are

also numerous smaller projects which will also get started shortly. So please be patient as we are working down our priority list.

Bread Fund December Report

By Cindy Kirchner

K-Boom! Big day at Holy Cross!

We're very thankful for everyone who helped with the lifting, hauling, and paperwork today -- especially the Emmanuel Youth Group volunteers! We hope they'll come back again.....soon!

We distributed 8,769 lbs. of food including: 1,932 lbs. of turkeys serving 150 households with a total of 431 people consisting of 247 adults - (19-64), 129 children (under 18), and 55 seniors (over 65). For additional information or to volunteer assistance, contact Cindy Kirchner at 434-361-2553 or email: cink124@gmail.com.

Disciple's Kitchen

December's Disciples Kitchen chili lunch was enjoyed by 29 guests on Monday, Dec. 16. The great lunch was made even better by the Christmas carols played by Carolyn Rhondeau on a very out-of-tune piano. As always compliments were received on the food!

We look forward to breakfast on Saturday, January 17. This is a holiday weekend, so families may want to consider participating. Children over 12 may assist, but we can always find a job for younger ones as well. It is a Saturday morning, but a shorter time because there are no dishes to wash afterwards.

Thanks for all that you do and for the great participation in DK. For information, contact Steve Walsworth 434-409-1118 or Kaye Pietrowicz 434-361-9097.

Education Report

By Cathy Boyd
Director of Christian Education

The Adult Formation Committee met in December. Exciting topics are in the works for the new year. Here is a sneak preview:

For Epiphany:

- **Cafe Emmanuel:** will carry on in the Parish Hall at 10am. For those new to Emmanuel, Cafe Emmanuel is our "coffee hour" with a twist; shortly after 10am, we ring the bell, welcome everyone, and pose a question about the Bible, spirituality, your favorite church memories, and other topics. We discuss the answers in small groups for a while, then share in a large group if we wish. It's great way to learn more about Emmanuel people!
- **Bible and Theology:** *But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14 ESV).* This class (Bible and Theology) is intended to be an ongoing class in the thought of the classic Christian intellectual tradition. It will vary between different books of the Bible and different Christian thinkers, and is intended to provide a space for substantive and cumulative training in how to think as a Christian. We will begin with the earliest Gospel, Mark. Meet in Ledford House, led by David Barrett-Johnson & Father Christopher.
- **Dreams of the Bible and our own:** Walter Brueggemann wrote, "The ancient world and the biblical tradition knew about dreams. The ancients understood that the unbidden communication

in the night opens sleepers to a world different from the one they manage during the day. The ancients dared to imagine, moreover, that this unbidden communication is one venue in which the holy purposes of God, perplexing and unreasonable as they might be, come to us." We will review some of the dreams of the Bible, outline ways in which we can have access to our own dreams, and note some ways of finding meaning in them. Meet in Ledford House, led by Julie Shields.

For Lent:

- **Cafe Emmanuel** will carry on!
- **Bible and Theology** will be offered on a continual basis.
- **The Christ Walk Sessions** are adapted from Anna Fitch Courie's Christ Walk: A 40-Day Spiritual Fitness Program - a 40 day mind, body and spiritual wellness program for Lent. Walking is a very holy activity that almost anyone can do at any fitness level. We will meet in fellowship and concentrate on a different aspect of mind, body and spiritual health throughout Lent. The book is a great resource, but it is not necessary for participating! These sessions will start on the Sunday BEFORE Lent starts -15 February so that those people that want to start on Ash Wednesday may do so. Meet in Ledford House, led by M-E Via and Kimberlee Barrett-Johnson.

Stay tuned for updates in the *This Week at Emmanuel* weekly emails.



We offer many thanks to Larry Smith, our music director, for his wonderful work with the children to produce their Christmas play. It was well attended and well received on Christmas Eve. We also want to thank the children, their parents and all who pitched in to make Christmas Eve special at Emmanuel Church. (Photo by Jamie Bourque)

An important date is coming up in February

At our annual meeting on Sunday, February 8, we will elect three new members to three-year terms on the vestry. Please put this date on your calendar to participate in our annual meeting followed by a parish potluck luncheon.

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