

December, 2022

The deadline to submit newsletter articles for the next newsletter is December 15, 2022.

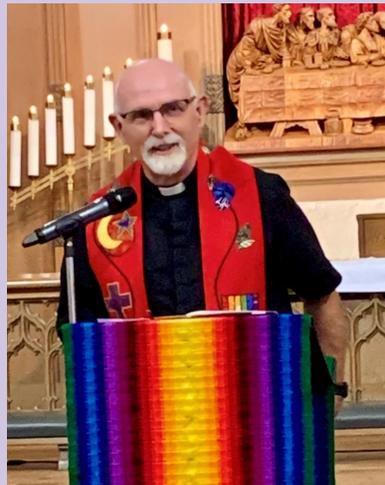
Dear Catherine,

Emmanuel's message comes from a passion for searching and studying sacred scriptures. Wisdom and inspiration is also drawn from a variety of other traditions, prophets, and all women and men who have a deeply personal and intimate relationship with God.

Everyone is welcome at Emmanuel.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE TO EMMANUEL](#)

Pastor Frank Langholf



Shalom,

"Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God." Luke 6:12

***To know the dark**

Wendell Berry

To go into the dark with a light
Is to know the light
To know the dark, go dark
Go without sight

And find that the dark, too,
Blooms and sings
and is traveled by dark feet
and dark wings

This is the season of Advent. This is nature's season of ever-increasing darkness of the night. There is a link between the rhythm of nature and the rhythm of Advent. **Nature deepens into night and moves toward the Solstice. Likewise, Advent deepens into our yearning for the Christ and moves toward Christmas. Embracing darkness and night is our theme for Advent this year.** We will be exploring differing aspects of embracing the darkness in our hope for the coming of the Christ. We are letting go of the dominate use of darkness as a metaphor for difficulties and even of evil. Instead, **we are embracing the darkness as a metaphor for the formation of life.** The following are our themes for Advent in the ReFresh Service. **Luminous Darkness** was the theme for Sunday November 27. This was the invitation to embrace or enter the dark without a light assured that both Soul and Spirit are present in the dark. The **theme for Dec. 4 is Weeping in the Night** as we acknowledge the grief that folks experience in this season. The **theme of December 11 is Joy in the Night** as we discover wonder in the depth of night. We will complete Advent on **December 18 with theme of Waiting in the Dark** as we continue to await the coming of the Christ.

I would encourage you to adopt several Advent practices during these days. These practices enable us to embrace darkness.

* **Consider reading** a book about darkness. **The Luminous Darkness** was written by Howard Thurman amid the work of civil rights. **Learning to Walk in the Dark** was written by Barbara Brown Taylor to reflect on embrace darkness. **Luminous Darkness: An Engaged Buddhist Approach to Embracing the Unknown** is written by Deborah Eden Tull.

- **Journal** what comes to your mind and imagination when you think of the night and darkness. Do this throughout Advent. Are there any changes as you move through Advent?
- **Set aside a night** in which you can turn off electric lights from dusk until dawn, and experience what the nighttime is like without artificial light. You, like me, may wonder if you can make this work with the rest of life. After all dusk comes at around 4:30 and dawn is around 6 am. I am planning on finding a night I can set aside. Be okay with sleeping when you feel tired, awakening in the middle of the night, and returning to sleep when you are ready. Consider writing or creating art or music during the night.
- If you are not able to do the entire night, **consider setting aside an evening beginning at dusk.** Perhaps, spend that time outside watching the light dim in the west and the increasing darkness. Sit beneath the canopy of the night sky. If you are not able to go outside consider turning off the lights sit as the darkness of night descends. Consider what comes to your imagination as you rest in the darkness, and write about it, create art, create music, or some other expression of your experience.

You are invited to participate in two other experiences during this season.

- Jim Roberts is leading the celebration of **Rumi's Wedding Night** on Saturday December 17 at 7 PM
- Sally Roberts is a leading a **Solstice Celebration** on Tuesday December 20 gathering at 7 PM and celebration begins at 7:30.

* Thanks to Linda Aldana for sharing the Wendell Berry poem.

Blessings on our Advent journey in the dark,
Pastor Frank



Pictured: 2019 St. Nicholas Gathering

Dawson says "Get me out of here, fast!"

**St Nicholas Potluck
Sunday, December 11, 2022
11:30 a.m. in the Celebration Room**

Everyone is welcome to join us for the St. Nicholas Potluck. Santa, our special guest, will be here with surprises for the children and fun Christmas crafts. Sign up at the table near the Celebration room as to how many are attending and what you would like to bring, or call the church office at 815-963-4815.

Families with children are encouraged to sign up by December 4th.

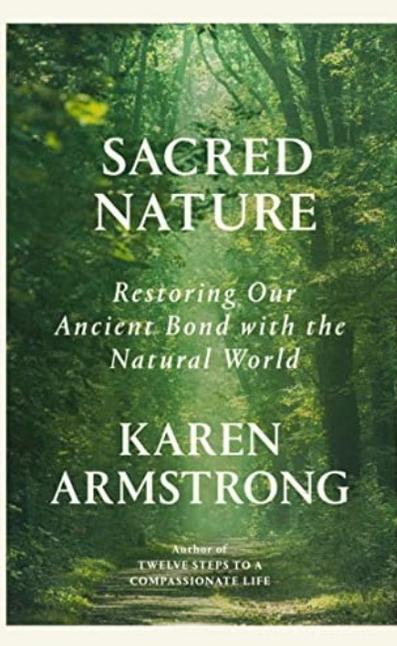
Katie's Cup Advent Concerts

Wednesday - December 7, 2022, at Noon
JODI BEACH

Wednesday - December 14, 2022, at Noon
THREE GUITARIST

Wednesday - December 21, 2022, at Noon
BEERT STRING TRIO

Free admission. Katie's Cup coffeebar is open from 8am-2pm.



Dear Spiritual Journeymen,

We have chosen our next book, ***Sacred Nature: Restoring our Ancient Bond with the Natural World***, by Karen Armstrong and plan to start reading it on December 13. Any problem or needs getting the next book, please let me know. It is available on Amazon.com in a variety of formats, or from other vendors you might use. Everyone is welcome to join the Spiritual Journeys group. Questions - contact Karen at karenvanhowe@gmail.com

While we finished Jane Goodall's "Book of Joy," there were only 4 people present last week, Nov. 22, so we thought we would read over the part that was read at that session, since it is of a deeper spiritual nature. We will re-read pages 201–223.

Karen

Rumi's Wedding Night

**Saturday Dec.17, at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary
Emmanuel, 920 Third Ave. Rockford**

Rumi, the greatest spiritual poet, died Dec.17, 1273. He called it the "night of union...his wedding night".

We will celebrate his life with his poetry, zikr (verse with rocking rhythm), chant, and candlelight procession.

Memorize a Rumi poem, and share it, bring a percussion instrument (if you wish), and festive wear.

Bring a friend for a rare experience on the 26th year of our celebration at Emmanuel.

No cost, just a loss of numbness. For more, contact Jim at 779-537-0328.

"Jars of spring water are not enough anymore, take us down to the River!"

"Like the child that dies at their mother's breast, I will die at the breast of the mercy and bounty

Winter Solstice

The Winter Solstice is recognized on the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Emmanuel Lutheran will celebrate this event on **Tuesday, December 20th**.

We will gather at 7PM to share stories of this sacred and mysterious dark night and what it means to enter this darkness with love and awareness. At 7:30 we will begin a ceremony to bring us into harmony with the quiet embrace of this time. If you would like to join us be aware the doors will be locked at 7:15.

If you have questions please call Sally Roberts at 815-566-2776.



THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATIONS

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church
920 Third Avenue, Rockford, IL**

Dec. 24: 3:00pm

Christmas Eve Calvary/Emmanuel Family Candlelight Service

Christmas Eve Message: Pastor Chuck Olson

Special Music: Calvary Praise Band

Organist/Accompanist: Mark Calvert, Clea Arbogast

Dec. 24:

10:30pm Christmas Concert

11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Christmas Eve Message: Pastor Frank Langholf

**Music by Special Vocalists and Musicians, Emmanuel Choir
Piano/Organ Accompaniment: Clea Arbogast**

The 10:30pm concert, 11:00pm service, and January 1st service will also be on zoom.

To gather online by computer, tablet, or smartphone use the following link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82726742888?
pwd=WFEwOVbXZGd3OHFzSXQ1WXIVTHppZz09

To gather by phone- landline or cell- dial the following number, and then enter the meeting ID and passcode when prompted. Remember you can use *6 to mute and unmute yourself.

+1 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 827 2674 2888 Passcode: 830753

Sunday, Dec. 25: NO SERVICE

Sunday, Jan 1: 10:00am Service of Lessons and Carols
Musicians: Clea Arbogast and Mark Calvert

Emmanuel Lutheran Food Pantry - Holiday Hours

Friday, December 23, Christmas Eve - Open
Monday, December 26, The Day after Christmas - Closed
Friday, December 30, New Year's Eve. - Open
Monday, January 2, 2023, The Day after New Year's - Closed

PLEASE NOTE: As of January 1st, the Emmanuel Lutheran Food Pantry will no longer be open on Mondays. We will continue to be open 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. on all Fridays, except holidays as posted.



Poinsettia Garden

If you would like a poinsettia in the Poinsettia Garden,
please complete the Poinsettia form and mail it to
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, P. O. Box 4362, Rockford, IL 61110
or bring it to the church office, or place in the offering plate.
Plants are \$11.00.

Poinsettia order forms are on the table outside of the Celebration room or in the church office.

If you are unable to come to church to pick up an order form, please call the church office and we will fill one out for you. 815-963-4815

All poinsettias are to be picked up after the Christmas Eve. or January 1st service. No names will be listed on the plants. If you wish to give a poinsettia to a shut-in, Please make arrangements for delivery.

If you choose, you may make a memorial donation in lieu of a plant.
All donations will be given to Emmanuel's general fund in memory or in honor
of Loved Ones. Please make checks payable to Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

DEADLINE FOR POINSETTIA ORDERS IS DECEMBER 5TH

Winnebago County Forest Preserves Interest Hikes

Emmanuel Soul Garden has been experiencing Winnebago County's 44 Forest Preserves this past summer and fall. Join us with the opportunity to continue the hikes extending through the end of fall and into winter! We will take hikes that are easier to navigate and no longer than 2 miles. Dress for the weather for your comfort and safety! I will meet hikers at the forest preserve entrances. On the selected week you would like to hike, please text me your name and say "hiking this week" so I know who is coming!

Below is a link to the 44 forest preserves in Winnebago County with pictures and descriptions for you to view. I am looking forward to taking many more hikes with you through the seasons. All hikes start at 9:00am. If weather is bad, the hike will be cancelled on that date.

I am looking forward to more adventures in the forest preserves with you!

Holly Blair-Cascio 815-543-1191

Link to Descriptions of all 44 Forest Preserves

<https://www.winnebagoforest.org/items>

Saturday, December 10th 9:00am

Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve - 7901 Kishwaukee Road, Stillman Valley, IL 61084

Tuesday, December 27 9:00am

J. Norman Jensen Forest Preserve - 14400 S. Bluff, Rockton, IL 61072

Saturday, January 14th 9:00am

Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve

6303 Mulford Road & 5757 Blackhawk Road, Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Wednesday, January 25th 9:00am

Rockford Rotary Forest Preserve - 5390 Rotary Road, Cherry Valley, IL 61063

Saturday, February 11. 9:00am

Roland Olson Forest Preserve - 9669 Atwood Road, Roscoe, IL 61073

Thursday, Feb 23. 9:00am - Severson Dells Forest Preserve

8786 Montague Road, Rockford, IL 61102



Arts@Emmanuel has reconvened!

We are excited to be welcoming friends back to Emmanuel for art shows, art workshops and other interests celebrating the Divine Creative Spirit which enlivens and enriches our lives. There is nothing like art to inspire, heal and bring people together.

Arts@Emmanuel is looking for more committee members. If you are interested we would love to hear from you. Meetings will be bi-monthly and our next meeting at Emmanuel will be

Sunday, January 8th at 11:30.

Please contact me if you are interested in the *Arts@Emmanuel* committee. Thanks!
Holly Blair-Cascio 815-543-1191 hollyblair@mac.com



We Pray for Healing

Elaine Reed
Cathy Schocker
Jeff Birch
Elliott Layman
Sally Susan
Ruth Ann Molyneaux
Meghan Baylor
Lois Ference
Roycealee Wood
Lucio Aldana
Lucille Dunphey
Deborah Lucas
Karen Johnson
Todd Anderson
Jerry Johnson
Larry R & Sons



Jeff Birch cutting the grass and chopping up the leaves before the winter snow.



Faith Community Nurse Notes

Tom Balhatchet
Emi, Isaiah-Sky and Emmanuel Grottke
Cherie Fleur
Joan Schuetz



December Birthdays

Dec. 6: Oliver Helge
Dec. 7: Linda Aldana
Drew Helge
Susan Schwenk
Dec. 11: Ann Douglas
Dec. 15: Allison Downie
Dec. 19: Abigail Carlson
Dec. 24: Lorraine Harding
Aiden Sanden
Dec. 29: Bronwyn Butler
Georgia Nygren
Dec. 31: Bobbie Walter
Eric Johnson

Emmanuel needs your financial support.

We are in the process of planning our budget for 2023. Just like you need an income to pay your electric, water and gas bills, the church has to pay its bills too.

You have received your 2023 Stewardship information in the mail. Please fill out your Stewardship Commitment Card and drop it in the offering plate or mail to Emmanuel. Extra cards are available on the table outside of the Celebration room.

Thank you for your support to your church! Questions, call 815-963-4815.

Jack Ream, Treasurer

After 28 years of monthly newsletter articles, I found myself at a loss for a relevant topic that wasn't just in the news or social media or your own google searching. And then last week, a new friend of mine's adult son died unexpectedly. The family is fully immersed in grief and the challenge of funeral expenses all while they wait for answers to this tragedy.

As I pray, I find my thoughts returning to Emmanuel, God with us:

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, which means 'God with us.'" Matthew 1:23 (NLT.)

Whatever season of life you find yourself in, whatever joys or sorrows you are walking through, my prayer for you is that Emmanuel, God with us, will be present for you...and me. May our eyes and ears be open to Divine love, peace, comfort, and joy.

Sincerely, Sue Scott,
your Faith Community Nurse



Breathe Come into the Silence

After two long years, we are finally ready to breathe together again!

Please mark your calendars for

5:00pm on January 21st

We will be offering our gathering on a quarterly basis, so you won't want to miss January.

And we don't want to miss you!



October 27th Hike in Pecatonica Forest Preserve



December MLP Newsletter

Check out our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/Midtown-Lutheran-Parish-101030175425386>

Opportunities in MLP—ALL ARE WELCOME!

Katie's Cup is open Tuesday thru Friday
8 am - 2 pm

Katie's Walking Club—Thursdays at
9:15 a.m.

Katie's Choice Book Club—No meeting
in December

Thursday Concert, sponsored by Katie's Cup—
donations welcome
(open at 6 pm, music at 7pm) December 8—
Trinadora Christmas

December 3—Holiday Festival and Market—
Katie's Cup 9-1 p.m.

December 6—Katie's Cup Sing-along at
6 p.m.

Wednesday Advent concerts at noon
at Katie's Cup

Dec. 7—Jodi Beach

Dec. 14—Pastor Guitar Trio (Scott Stoleberg,
Denver Bitner, Mike Thomas)

Dec. 21—Beert String Trio
(Michael Beert, Rachel Handlin, Aria Beert)

Bingo hosted by Oak Street Health 1st
Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm at
Katie's Cup.

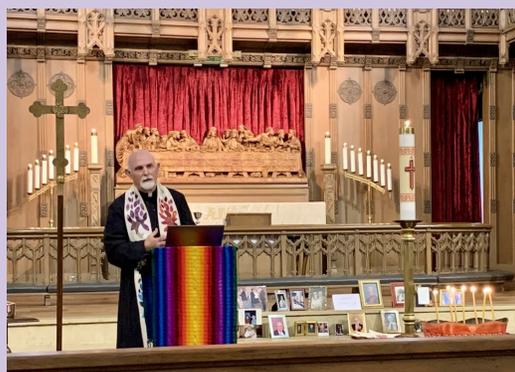
Game Time hosted by Oak Street Health 3rd
Wednesday of the month 1:00 p.m.

Midtown Lutheran Parish Meeting—Thursday,
December 1, 2022, 5:30 p.m., at Emmanuel
Lutheran Church and via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86915069091>
pwd=OGZaNWhPZmlaLzBUM3RHSWp
3cWFYUT09

Emmanuel Lutheran Pantry— Mondays and
Fridays 9:30-11:30 am

Emmanuel Lutheran Spiritual Journeys Book



All Saints Day - November 6, 2022

Remembering ALL the Saints. Family and
friends brought in pictures of those who
have passed and candles were lighted as
names were read of those who died in
the last year.



Thank you to Dan Vorsanger,
Gary Peterson, Taj Guzzardo, Chuck and
Dawn Johnson, Jeff Birch, Jack Ream,
Karen Van Howe, Marcia Terrill,
Catherine Rennert, Richard Lundin who
came to church on Saturday, November

5th and spiffed up the inside of the church to keep it looking beautiful and prepare it for the Messiah and Christmas Celebrations.



Norm Knott's Creative Workshop on Wearable Art Re-Design Saturday, November 5



Opening Reception in the Gallery at Emmanuel on Sunday, November 6th



Emmanuel Volunteer Outdoor Clean-up Crew

Study, Tuesdays, 9:30-11 am. by Zoom. We read together and discuss. Current book: The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times, Jane Goodall and Doug Abrams.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88225771321>

2022 Emmanuel Church Council

President - Karen Van Howe
Worship and Music

Vice President - Holly Blair Cascio
Soul Garden

Treasurer - Jack Ream
Recording Secretary - Rachel Johnson (not on Council)

Ann Downie - Caring Connections

Chuck Johnson - Building and Grounds

Eric Johnson - Finance

Gary Peterson - Caring

Connections/Membership/At Large

Kathlyn Wright - Outreach

Catherine Rennert – Center for the Arts and Spirituality

At large...

Sally Susan

Marcia Terrill

Dan Goldberg

“Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny.”

-Gandhi

Thanks to Dan Vorsanger, Jack Ream, Catherine Rennert, Christyn Rittenhouse, Taj Guzzardo, Jeff Birch, Rich Lundin, Randy Calvert, and Pastor Frank Langholf who helped with the raking, bagging, mowing, etc., on Thursday, November 11th.

Give Online

Support Emmanuel and its ministry by giving electronically



Scan this code using the QR reader app on your phone to make a secure electronic donation

Follow the instructions to setup a one-time or reoccurring payment

Thank you for giving.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, P. O. Box 4362, Rockford, IL 61110
815-963-4815 Fax: 815-963-4808
emmanuelchurch07@gmail.com elcrockford.org
Pastor Frank Langholf 309-509-5241 fslangholf@gmail.com



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