

THE ENVOY

Built on tradition • Living in the spirit • Celebrating our future

Issue 304

May 2013

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Rev. David Gregory

Interim Associate Pastor

For Pastoral Care

Rev. Jo Page

**Director of
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Office Hours

9am-3pm M-F



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During the months of February and March, we held a series of "cottage" meetings or opportunities for members and friends of Emmanuel Friedens Church to join in casual conversation. Our aim was to obtain a "snapshot" of our life and ministry together in this place. We did not take time to celebrate the past. Our purpose was to describe and perhaps to interpret the present moment, and to the almost seventy folks who participated, you are excellent communicators. Many thanks!

Over the last six weeks, I have been taking some extra time to think my way through the things I saw and heard during those gatherings. We spoke at length about what we are doing well. We thought together about the things that we might do better. We looked at our greatest opportunities for progress as well as the specific challenges we face. It was easy and fun to talk about what we do well. It is always less fun to talk about the challenges we face.

It is essential that we view our challenges in context. They are not unique to Emmanuel Baptist-Friedens UCC. They are the challenges faced by anyone trying to do ministry in the post-Christian landscape of the northeastern U.S. As a new church planter, I am in constant contact with other people who do what I do all over the country, and I am convinced (as are they) that church renewal in the northeast is a particularly difficult challenge, but only when we fail to open our minds to new ways of being "church."

In this respect, this faith community is actually has a big advantage. Visionary and forward-thinking leadership over the space of three decades has created the kind of ministry that is known for peace, justice, and inclusion. Anyone who feels disenfranchised or marginalized for any reason will know that they can find a home with us. Families with children who struggle to find a place to support progressive spiritual values will find that place right here. Those who want to engage with the needs of the wider community will find countless opportunities to do so. This is a great place.

If I had to summarize in a single idea an area to consider for improvement I would say that as a spiritual community we need to become known for our permission. Successful churches in the 21st century are known for the "yes." Let me explain what I mean by that.

Those of us with more experience behind us (a polite way of saying that we have a slightly longer history) look at all the work we've done, the sacrifices that have

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been made over multiple decades to develop the bricks and mortar accompanied by organizational and educational structures. We look at our tastes and styles of worship and find that the church we knew might be slipping away from us. Our first response is to add more controls to the system so that we can be sure of the outcome. It is an understandable reaction, but it is also one that will eventually kill the heart and spirit of who we are.

Younger generations see things differently, just as we once did. They are not wrong. They come from a different culture. They have strong values, many that we share and some that we do not, but that matters little right now. If we answer the call of God by preserving our own ways of ministry at the expense of their vision, then the church will die with us. We see that very thing happening in many of our sister denominations all around us.

Our young people will step up to the plate if we truly want them to. It won't always be in the ways that we expect, but if we offer them our transcendent experiences of God, our progressive spiritual values, and most of all our trust, then this church will lead the way for many others. As an interim minister, this is indeed my prayer.

David

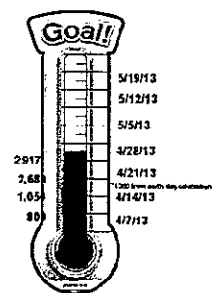
A copy of Rev. Gregory's full report on the "cottage" meetings is available.
Pick-up your copy at the church or request a copy via e-mail.

*From the Desk of Marcia Tolman
Director of Christian Education...*



Emmanuel Friedens is halfway to our goal for Mission 4/1 Earth. The Youth spent a day at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 20th in Central Park. They read stories to children, participated in bicycling for energy and talked with people about earth care. We had time cards of over 1,000 hours filled in by participants. Our church members are adding up the hours, too, as they rethink ways to simply and care for the earth.

live



The Emmanuel Friedens Church knitters have been meeting on Wednesday nights to make rainbow scarves for the 2013 UCC SYNOD. The scarves are on display on the metal railing in back of the sanctuary. These scarves will be blessed and sent on June 2 to Long Beach, California. They will become part of a anti-violence/bullying booth to raise awareness for domestic violence and youth bullying. It's been great fun to gather together and a real honor to be a part of this justice campaign. Thanks to Alice Rozek for coordinating this effort.



Christian Education News

Adult Sunday School Topics

May 5 "In the Beginning"

This was the opening lecture (DVD) in a series by Amy-Jill Levine, professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School. "...introduces not only the content of the Old Testament (Tanach) but also the historical, theological and ethical issues in its interpretation." Presenter: Rev. Marian Shearer

May 12 "Being Part of a Visitation Team"

Several members of our congregation already know that paying visits to home-bound and hospitalized members of Emmanuel-Friedens is a great way to extend congregational hospitality to those no longer able to gather together with us on Sunday mornings and other special events. If you're interested in becoming a part of a Visitation Team that provides care and nurture to those restricted by illness or disabilities, **please join us at Adult Sunday School on May 12th**. Rev. Jo Page will be leading a class covering techniques and practices involved in home visits and discussing ways in which we can keep current with each other on the needs of the home-bound and hospitalized.

A second option on this date: Casual Parents' Discussion Group
Facilitated by Danielle O'Brien

May 19 "Adam and Eve"

Continuing the DVD lecture series by Amy-Jill Levine. "The garden of Eden, like the rest of the primeval history (Genesis 1-11), is a foundational story that undergirds cultural norms and explains communal identity." Presenter: Rev. Marian Shearer

May 26 To Be Announced

June 2 Outreach & Mission Committee—Bread for the World

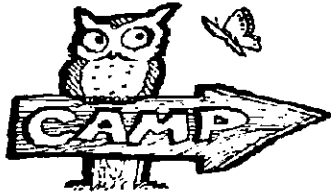
Give from the Heart

The School of Wonder and Mystery (SWM) will receive a matching grant this year to use for program resources. This grant comes from the Capital Region Theological Center Congregational Resourcing. We will still need to cover staff salaries with our own funds and that requires another \$800. With your generosity, we are sure to reach that goal.

The Carnival will be coming soon (June 29) and to make it a success, we need to raise \$200 for the Bouncy Bounces that everyone loves. Your donations will provide an afternoon of fun for our community.

Please be sure to designate the School of Wonder & Mystery or Carnival on your check or envelope, so the correct account is credited. Thank you.

Christian Education News (Continued)



Camp Websites to Get You Connected

Pathfinder—Cooperstown, NY—American Baptist
<http://vpccministries.org/>

Camp Vick, - Sandusky, NY—American Baptist- same website
 as Pathfinder

Camp Fowler—Speculator, NY—Reformed Church of America
<http://www.campfowler.org/>

Mission News—

Where Do We Go From Here?

John Detwyler and Sandy George

As we wrote in the last ENVOY, the relationship between our sister church in Nicaragua, (Getsemani Baptist Church) and Emmanuel Friedens Church is at a crossroads after 26 years. At the church school class on Sunday, April 28, we presented a history of that relationship and asked: "Where do we go from here?"

Emmanuel Friedens Church (EFC) no longer has an Outreach and Mission line item for the preschool/ kindergarten program because the Nicaraguan government incorporated the school into the public school system in 2010. This is good as it shows a renewed interest on the part of the government to invest in elementary schools located in poor rural areas, something that has been lacking since 1991. But with the absence of a line item in the budget our church is no longer reminded that we have a sister church in Nicaragua. The question is: does EFC want to continue this ministry?

We (Sandy and John) are no longer able to make annual trips to our sister church, but we do know bilingual people in Nicaragua working for church-based non-profits who would assist anyone in planning a trip of personal ministry and friendship to visit Getsemani Baptist Church in the village of Los Gutierrez Norte. Would anyone or any group of people be interested in a mission trip if funds could be raised to help with expenses?

Would anyone be interested in communicating via e-mail with Rev. Jose Garcia, the new young pastor of Getsemani Baptist Church? Pastor Jose understands how to communicate via social media, even though he has to take a bus to find the nearest internet site.

Through Pastor Jose, Getsemani Baptist Church has made a request for funding to help support plans for a youth camp and chapel, for their church and others in Nicaragua's southwest region. The churches are located in poor rural villages of mostly subsistence farming. The property they are currently renting for their outdoor camp is located near the beach and they now have an opportunity to purchase the land. Outreach and Mission received a request for \$2,000 for this ministry. Pastor Jose presented a written plan on how the funds would be spent. He understands the importance of accountability.

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Mission News—**Where Do We Go From Here?**

John Detwyler and Sandy George

Your comments and ideas are welcome. The questions are: (1) Does EFC want to continue the sister church relationship? (2) If so, are there volunteers willing to continue as ambassador(s) from EFC to Getsemani Baptist Church either through e-mail or in person? (3) Is there interest in providing all or part of the funds for land near the beach for an outdoor camp and chapel to serve several poor rural churches in Nicaragua's southwest region? Your comments and ideas are welcome. Please share them with members of Outreach and Mission or with Sandy and John.

Church News and Notes**Soup Kitchen Service**

The Salvation Army has provided us with the dates for our next Soup Kitchen staffing. Please contact Faye Bailey, 374-2114, if you are willing to work on any or all of these days (always on Tuesdays). We meet at Emmanuel Friedens Church at 9:30 am to car pool there and return to the church shortly before 2:00 pm.. It is rewarding work and an opportunity to spend some quality time with each other, so please consider joining us! ... Faye Bailey

Our dates:

6/13/2013	1/14/2014
7/9/2013	2/14/2014
8/6/2013	3/11/2014
9/10/2013	5/13/2014
10/8/2013	6/17/2014
11/12/2013	

Thank you to the many soup kitchen volunteers this last year especially Karen Salmon, James Brown, Jennifer Andersons, Ria Soellner, Don Brightman, John Detwyler, and the Youth Group.

And many thanks to Faye Bailey for her dedication and work to this ministry!

Church Work Day: Thank you to everyone that came out to work at the church on Saturday, 20.

Jeanne, Ray and Michael Andersons,
Freddie Anderson, Bart Bisgrove, John Detwyler,
Evelyn Kauffman, Chuck and Cassidy Lent,
and Jocelyn McKinney

Pancake Breakfast: The Outreach and Mission Committee will sponsor a pancake breakfast at the church on Sunday, June 2 from 8-10 am. Adults: \$5.00, children, 5-12 yrs: \$3.50 and children under 5 are free. Proceeds will help the Committee to better serve the community. So, come early for worship and enjoy a homemade breakfast and fellowship!

In the Month of JuneSunday, June 9

Capital Pride Parade
Washington Park, Albany, NY

Sunday, June 16

Children's Worship Service

Saturday, June 29

EFC's Community Carnival

Sunday, June 30

Gay Pride Worship Service

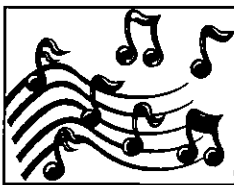
Church News and Notes (Continued)

Bloggers at Emmanuel Friedens Church

Many of you may know that Sandra George published a novel based upon the experiences of John and her in Nicaragua, focusing on the years from 1986 through 1991. The story includes a fictional account of a church sister relationship drawn from the sister relationship between our church and Getsemani Baptist Church. It is available on Amazon.com, can be ordered through bookstores or obtained from Sandy or John.

On her book website, thegoodadventurers.com, Sandy has started writing a blog. (Access info can also be found on the Sandra George Facebook page). The first article, published last week, discusses the tragic events in Boston and the visit to Schenectady of Dr. Belinda Forbes, Methodist medical missionary supported by First United Methodist Church and assigned to Nicaragua. You are invited to take a look. Did you know that our Associate Interim Pastor Jo Page also writes a bi-weekly blog (www.jo-page.com). Are there any other bloggers out there?

Emmanuel Friedens raised \$1,718 for the CROP Walk.
We exceeded our goal by \$92.
Thank you to all who donated this year.



On a Musical Note... The late Canon Winfred Douglas was a leading authority on church music and the editor of *The Hymnal 1940*. One Sunday, as he was leaving his church, he observed two women having a loud and heated argument on the steps. As he passed by them, one called out, "Oh, Canon Douglas, you can settle a great question for us—should the hymns be fast or slow?" "My dear ladies," Canon Douglas replied, "the fast hymns should be fast and the slow hymns should be slow."

Community News

Capital Pride March, Sunday, June 9:

We invite everyone to participate in the annual Capital Pride March, which will be held in downtown Albany (State and Lark Streets, and Madison Ave.). Our church will be walking as a group. The parade steps off at 12 pm in Washington Park. After the parade, take time to check out all the ongoing activities throughout the park in the afternoon, especially our exhibitor table (located under the tent near the State Street side of the park). The parade and festival will be held rain or shine.

"A Place at the Table" - May 16 @ 6 pm & May 19 @ 2 pm, Emmanuel Friedens Church

We invite you to the showing of this acclaimed documentary. This movie examines the issue of hunger in America through the lens of three people struggling with food insecurity. This event is sponsored by Schenectady Inner City Ministry and area churches. A discussion will follow on how the local community can be involved with ending hunger.

Denominational News

Emmanuel Friedens Church shared its sanctuary, Saturday, April 27, for the installation of the UCC NY Conference Minister, Rev. David Gaewski. It was a glorious celebration and how wonderful the worship was. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time as ushers, greeters, technology, worship and anything else that was needed. We were honored to share our space and hospitality for this auspicious occasion. Well done EFC!



Reverends Marian Shearer, David Gaewski, & David Gregory

Our Own Productions Presents *Periphery* (an original play by Ed Simpson)

The February 1960 sit-in by four young college freshmen at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, galvanized the civil rights movement in the United States. In the process, ordinary citizens from both the black and white communities in Greensboro—and across America—were forced to grapple with their beliefs about race and justice. Periphery focuses on ordinary citizens—particularly two families, one black and one white—whose lives are touched by the changing world around them. The central stories in Periphery instead include those who stand witness to the historic events in this Southern city—those on the periphery of the sit-in demonstration—who must choose between continuing the injustices of the past or moving forward toward a more just America.

Performances: May 31-June 1, June 7-9
(Evenings @ 8 pm and matinee @ 2 pm)
@ Emmanuel Friedens Church

The annual meeting of the New York Conference UCC will be held from June 7-9

Emmanuel Friedens Church
218 Nott Terrace
Schenectady, New York 12307

As a Welcoming and Affirming/
Open and Affirming
Church, Emmanuel
Baptist Church and
Friedens United
Church of Christ
welcomes and affirms
all persons without
regard to sex, marital
status, age, race,
sexual orientation, or
abilities, inviting all
into membership,
mission, and
leadership.



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