

THE ENVOY

A Newsletter of Emmanuel Friedens Church
American Baptist and United Church of Christ Congregation
218 Nott Terrace, Schenectady, NY 12307
Rev. Peter J.B. Carman, Pastor

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear Emmanuel Friedens Friends,

Many years ago Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. placed in our consciousness words from an even earlier day. In the years before the Civil War, Theodore Parker, a Unitarian minister and abolitionist preacher who before the Civil War gave voice to the struggle to abolish slavery and liberate those in its bonds, had preached: "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe, the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways. I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. But from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice." More than a century later, picking up the struggle for racial justice, and uttering the words in the context of a new day, Dr. King spoke again and with fresh conviction: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

The word "Advent" means simply **Beginning**. For many of us, because Advent concludes with Christmas day, the word suggests simply the season of expectation and preparation for the Christmas holiday. And yet the **beginning** to which the word Advent refers has a broader meaning as well. Advent is a season of expectation and longing: the **longing** we have as people of faith for a day when ancient injustice has been put right; the **expectation** that by the grace of God, and the struggle of people of good will, the world will somehow at last be healed of the fear and violence that so often dominate human affairs.

As we engage Advent of 2015, to claim that we are in a time of fresh beginnings may take a fresh decision of faith. To insist publicly that there even *is* a moral arc to the universe requires both clarity of conscience and the ability to glimpse light even "just before midnight."

Recently some of us joined with members of Emmanuel Baptist Church in a Saturday together for "faithing up to racism." We acknowledged that each of us has at some time or another in our personal journey has encountered the institutional realities of racism. More than half a century after Dr. King was assassinated, the realities of structural injustice and violence against the most vulnerable continue. And even as we soberly consider the work left to be done in regard to racism, so many other recent events may also tempt us to abandon any sense of an advent of a new era of justice and mercy among humans.

So we need this season, this year, to reclaim our convictions, and to strengthen one another in conscience and faith. We need it not simply to prepare for the joy of a Christmas holiday, but also to rediscover our personal roadmaps into God's uncertain future. We need it, if we are to reclaim the profound hope that together God and humanity will indeed someday turn things around.

I invite you to join us this week and in the weeks to come, as we light candles in the night. May we together rekindle the flame, not of naïve optimism, but of persistent Hope. May we seek and share a little light for the sake of Christ's Peace, rooted in justice. May we insist together on the shining star of Joy. And may we once more reflect the bright deep light of Love, flickering here and there where it is least seen and most needed.

In Expectation,
Peter
Peter JB Carman, Pastor



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Minister of Music
Michael P. Harrison
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Worship Hours
Sunday @ 10 am

Sunday Classes
(Sept-June)
11:15 am

Office Hours
9 am-3 pm M-F



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Issue 332

December 2015

Advent Season Schedule

Our theme is A Candle in the Night

November 29 : First Sunday in Advent
Lighting of the First Advent Candle-Hope
Gift Tags Taken by Congregation
Parents' Day Out, 12-4 pm

Sunday, December 6: Second Sunday in Advent
Lighting of the Second Advent Candle-Peace
Communion, Gift Tags Taken by Congregation

Saturday, December 12:
Decorating the church

Sunday, December 13: Third Sunday in Advent
Lighting of the Third Advent Candle-Joy
Hanging of the Greens, Gifts Returned

Saturday, December 19:
Decorating the church-hanging the roping

Sunday, December 20: Fourth Sunday in Advent
Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle-Love
Poinsettias are in the Sanctuary

Christmas Reception and Dinner following worship
December 24: Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service @ 8 pm

Wednesday Advent Services
@ Emmanuel Friedens Church
Wednesday, December 2, 9 and 16, 7 pm

Music Notes and Announcements

We welcome Michael Harrison, our new Minister of Music, who began working at our church in November. Michael Harrison is a native of Scotia who has recently moved back to this area from Nashville, TN. He currently resides in Saratoga Springs. He earned degrees in music theory from SUNY Albany and choral conducting at the University of Iowa, and also did doctoral studies in historical performance practice at Washington University in St. Louis and choral music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

For many years, Michael was a part-time professional chorister in Washington, D.C. He sang in several professional church choirs as well as with some of the best chamber choirs in the D.C. area. He founded the Palestrina Choir of Washington, D.C. in 1986 and directed it until 2006. The Washington Post called it "unquestionably one of the finest choral groups in our area." Michael also composes, and his choral works have been performed by a variety of church, community and college choirs throughout the country, including locally by the Albany Pro Musica and, coming up this December 19th, by the Auriel Camerata at the Immaculate Conception Church in Glenville.

Michael is divorced and has one daughter, Hannah, who is a freshman at Mount Holyoke College. When not doing things musical, he spends time reading (fiction, and non-fiction on an eclectic range of subjects) and enjoys walking to downtown Saratoga Springs to visit the library and the book stores. During the warmer months he spends as much time as he can at Galway Lake, where his family has had a camp for fifty years.



Make a Joyful Noise!

If you sing or play an instrument don't "hide your light under a basket." Emmanuel Friedens Church can use your talents. There is always room for more choir members (especially men) --- if you can carry a tune please consider visiting a Sunday morning choir rehearsal (9:00 am) to see if you might like to join us. We would also like to hear from congregation members who may be willing and able to sing solos or play instruments.

So, if you'd be interested in adding your voice (or instrument) to the musical life of your church, please email Minister of Music, Michael Harrison, at mpharrison@comcast.net or speak with him after a Sunday service.

An Auriel Christmas

Let the wonder of the Christmas season envelop you as the Auriel Camerata sings exquisite choral arrangements of traditional holiday classics. The concert will also feature three works by Scotia-born composer [and new Emmanuel Friedens Church minister of music], Michael Harrison, including the world premiere of his carol "The World's Desire". The concert is Saturday, December 19 at 7:30 pm at Immaculate Conception Church, 600 Saratoga Road, Glenville. For more information, visit the website, aurielcamerata.org.

Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday, November 29, First Sunday in Advent

We Light the Candle of Hope

Readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16, Luke 21:25-36,
Sermon: *A Candle in the Night*
Peter JB Carman preaching

Sunday, December 6, Second Sunday in Advent

We Light the Candle of Peace

We Share at Christ's Table: Communion Sunday
Readings: Luke 1:68-79, Luke 3:1-6
Communion Meditation: *Guide Our Feet*
Peter JB Carman preaching

Sunday, December 13, Third Sunday in Advent

We Light the Candle of Joy

Hanging of the Greens will be a part of the service.

Readings: Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7
Sermon: *Water from the Wells*
Peter JB Carman preaching

Sunday, December 20, Fourth Sunday in Advent

We Light the Candle of Love

Readings: Micah 5:2-5a, Luke 1:39-55
A special enactment of the Christmas Story,
led by Emmanuel Friedens children/youth
Christmas Reception and Dinner

Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve

Worship @ 8 pm, *A Service of Readings and Carols*

Sunday, December 27

The First Sunday after Christmas Day

Reading: Colossians 3:12-17
Sermon: *Putting On the Sunday Clothes*
Peter JB Carman preaching

Sunday, January 3

The Second Sunday after Christmas Day

We Share at Christ's Table: Communion Sunday
Reading: John 1:1-18
Communion Meditation: *Grace Upon Grace*
Peter JB Carman preaching

Advent Services on Wednesdays,
December 2, 9 and 16, 7 pm @ the Church

January 2016

At A Glance

Special Offering
Through the Month of January
Retired Ministers and Missionaries
(American Baptist) and
the Christmas Fund for the
Veterans of the Cross and
Emergency Fund
(United Church of Christ)

Tuesday, January 12
Soup Kitchen Service
@ 9:30 am

Sunday, January 17
Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday
Celebration and Program, 2:30 pm
@ Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
Park Avenue, Schenectady

Sunday, January 31
Annual Business Meeting

The January issue of the Envoy will be available the week of January 4, 2016. The deadline to submit articles, committee news, announcements, etc. is Monday, January 4. Thank you.



To order poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary and to have for the holiday season, please use the order form (insert). The cost is \$11/plant. Please return the form **by December 13** with your payment to the church by either dropping it in the collection plate, or mailing it in. If you have any questions, please call the office.



An Invitation to You to Join Us For Our Church Christmas Celebration



Sunday, December 20, will be a very special, fun day for our Church to gather together and celebrate Jesus' birth. Following our worship service, there will be a small reception in the Board Room, with a Christmas dinner to follow in Fellowship Hall.

The dinner will feature a baked turkey dinner prepared by Shop Rite chefs. Please let us know if you will attend and which food item you will bring by completing the reservation slip (look for it in the bulletins) and placing it in the collection plate or in the basket which will be located in the office. Family and friends are always welcome to join us. If unable to prepare a side dish, you may wish to contribute to the turkey preparation costs.

For this year's dinner, we ask that you bring an ingredient card with your homemade food item. This will be helpful for those individuals with dietary needs. We also ask that you please bring a non-perishable food item to the Christmas dinner. As we celebrate the gifts of the season and share dinner together as a church family, let us give to those in need by giving to the community

These changes were made to allow everyone the opportunity to share Christmas Eve dinner with family and friends. The Christmas Eve Worship Service will continue to be at 8.00 pm.

We hope everyone will make a special effort to participate.



Lighting of the Advent Wreath

"What has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." John 1:3,4

When individuals or families light the advent wreath this year they will speak briefly but on a personal level on what the candle (hope, peace, joy or love) has meant to them this year.

- November 29: Cassidy and Chuck Lent
- December 6: Shirley and Dale Hedman
- December 13: Keith Lewis and daughter
- December 20: The Andersons' Family
- December 24: Jan and Rev. Phil Grigsby



Thanks to Faye Bailey, Debi Lent and Maria Puccio for getting our Giving Tree together. Members and friends were able to choose a gift tag for a child or a resident of the Glendale Home serviced by the Schenectady Christmas Bureau.
Last day to choose a gift tag— December 6

Christian Education & Activities

Adult Sunday Classes

Advent Series: "A Candle in the Night" is our theme.

How are people of faith a light to the community? Our guests from other faith communities will speak in a personal way on hope, peace and love. What lights their candle and do how they keep it lit? Our guests will include Rev. Robert Long (on December 6), retired United Methodist Pastor and President of the Interfaith Community of Schenectady and Rev. Vicki Brooks, (on December 13), Director of Religious and Spiritual Life and Campus Protestant Minister, Union College

December 20 and 27: No classes
Classes resume on Sunday, January 3

January 3, 10 and 17: There will be three lectures from the DVD, "How Jesus Became God" and a 15 minute response/discussion. Dale Hedman will lead each class.

January 24: Guest speaker— to be determined

January 31: No class-Annual Business Meeting



The Youth Group will again "pay it forward" this Advent season by adopting a struggling family serviced through Catholic Charities Aide Services. All the gifts have been purchased, wrapped and are ready to be delivered to the Agency.

Thank you Note

*Nancy and the Youth from EFC Church:
I very much appreciate your taking the time to help get the elders to church at Ellis.. You brought joy to all of us. In Peace, Rev. Tony Green*

Child and Youth
On Sunday December 13,
following worship, Sunday school classes will meet in the sanctuary to rehearse the Christmas program which will be presented during worship on December 20.



Happenings at EFC

Breaking Bread Together

Many thanks to those who hosted, and the many who took part in, three "Breaking Bread Together" dinners in Emmanuel Friedens homes this November! These dinners were an initiative organized by our Worship and Nurture team, to provide an opportunity for Emmanuel Friedens members and friends to get to know each other better and develop a deeper community. Dinners were held in the homes of Jocelyn McKinney, Jan and Phil Grigsby, and Mary Lou Chotkowski.

"... and a good time was had by all!!

Just before Thanksgiving a group of us gathered at my home for an evening of "getting to know you." I had planned a couple of ice breakers to get us started and at 9:30 pm we still hadn't gotten around to the ice breakers. We thoroughly enjoyed sitting around with table, relaxing and covering topics both deep and frivolous. It was great! Our ages ranged from thirty something to eighty something and we all had one common denominator; our caring for others-both in our own families, the community, and the world. I thank you all for the opportunity to discover who you are beneath the Sunday morning formality and to welcome you into my home. I hope we can do this again-soon. Mary Lou Chotkowski

"A good time was had by all. I greatly enjoyed the fellowship and food at the dinner I hosted on 11/5/15. I especially enjoyed getting to know Pat Bumbarger and Eric Detwyler better and as always enjoying the company of the Lindenfelser family. We shared stories and memories and lots of laughs. I look forward to the next opportunity to break bread together with my friends." Jocelyn McKinney

"Phil and I had a great time entertaining friends from EFC. It was a great chance to get to know people that we usually just see at worship or in meetings. Great to have people in for casual conversation! I'd love to do this again." Jan Grigsby

The gatherings were such a success that the Worship and Nurture Committee has decided to organize a second round in the first part of 2016. If you are interested in hosting a meal in your home, or would like to help host in another location, please speak to one of the Committee members: Jan Grigsby, Ruth Lindenfelser or Jocelyn McKinney.



On Sunday, November 15, we bid farewell to Jim and Marian Shearer, beloved church members who are moving to Pennsylvania. We will miss them greatly.



Emmanuel Friedens Church
218 Nott Terrace
Schenectady, NY 12307

May the spirit of Christmas bring you blessings and joy.

~ Merry Christmas and Happy New Year ~

Pastor Peter, Michael, Maria and Dave



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.

STAY CONNECTED



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A Vision for Our Journey

*Captivated by Jesus' life and teaching,
Committed to
Growing hearts and minds;
Learning openness, courage and love;
Serving with our neighbors;
Pursuing God's justice and peace;
Inviting others to share the journey!*