



Emmanuel United Methodist Church
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The Lamplighter

The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church

SEPTEMBER BLESSINGS

#IlovePsalms

Hello September,
Thanks for the
reminder
that change
can be beautiful!

God is in control.
Angels have been
assigned to our case.
His miracle is coming.
Do not worry and Do
not give up!

The Lamplighter

The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church!

Welcome September

New month, new chapter, new page and new wishes.

May the month give you courage, strength, Confidence, patience, self-love & inner peace. May everyday in September fill your days with Hope, love, sunshine and energy. Let there be Joy, Fun and Laughter.

SEPTEMBER 2021

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Got News?

Do you have something for our newsletter? Send items to the editor, Rick Bergmann at lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com



From the
Pastor's
Desk...

Calling All History Makers!

Beginning in September and through the year, Emmanuel will be commemorating its 185th Anniversary!

Those who were members of the church and of the Beltsville community likely recall the 175th Church Anniversary, which was recognized by churchgoers and business owners alike, memorialized in the pages of the 175th Anniversary church directory.

We would like to recapture that sense of nostalgia by chronicling the important events in the lives of Emmanuel-Beltsville. Please share your photos and stories of the last 10 years so that we may include them in the 185th EUMC Anniversary directory. You can also write short articles or we can interview you about something you found memorable. Let us capture the memories and make history together! Send photos, videos, articles or requests for interviews to lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com today!

185 Years!

Update from the Re-Entry Team



The Reopening Committee met on August 5 to discuss a return to in-person worship. There were 27 members in attendance.

We opened the meeting with a discussion about what it will look like when we return for worship.

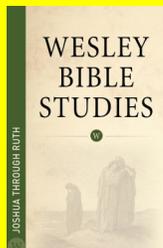
- 1. When we return, everyone regardless of vaccination status will be required to be masked.*
- 2. Seating will be 3 feet apart unless you are with your family group. There will be tape on the pews to mark the distance.*
- 3. For now, there will be no coffee or donuts and the water fountain will be turned off.*
- 4. You will be required to sign in during each visit for contact tracing purposes.*
- 5. Tithing will take place in a drop box as you enter the sanctuary.*
- 6. We will need greeters, scripture readers, and monitors to help during service.*
- 7. For those who don't feel comfortable returning, our service will be streamed on our Facebook page live and posted on our website on Sunday afternoons.*
- 8. Our goal is to keep everyone as safe as possible.*

After sharing these ideas, we opened up the floor for discussion. Our goal was to return on September 5, but the prevalence of the Delta Variant has people worried and was the main topic of discussion. A poll was taken about returning on Sept. 5 or delaying our return until it was safer. 60% voted to delay opening until we have more information, while knowing that when we decide to open we have guidelines in place to do so. A new re-opening date was not discussed.

We also discussed whether or not we should require people to prove they were vaccinated, but no decision was made.

The final topic of discussion was whether we should allow outside groups to resume use of our building. It was decided that yes we should and that the re-opening committee, the Pastor, and the Trustees will come up with guidelines to allow the groups to safely use our buildings once again.

Bible Study returns to Wednesdays



Our midweek bible study will return to Wednesdays at 7 pm this fall. Because of the ongoing pandemic, we will continue to meet virtually, beginning September 8. Our first session will focus on the books of Joshua through Ruth. If you would like a copy of the book, please email Rick Bergmann at rick.bergmann@eumcbeltsville.com The Zoom Meeting details are below! We hope you can join us!

EUMC Wednesday Bible Study Time: 7pm beginning September 8

<https://zoom.us/j/92932842856?pwd=N0NOUIRKK1JSdVFoK1o3c3NWb0tpdz09>

Meeting ID: 929 3284 2856

Passcode: bible

THANK YOU!

Thank you to Rick Bergmann, Mike Hatton, Abel Martin, and Andy Onukwubiri for moving all of the papers, bibles, and hymnals from the pews in the Sanctuary to the Powell Parlor for the time being. It was removed as a precaution during Covid.



At Home Pizza!

2 Ingredient Pizza Sauce:

Combine one 28 oz can of peeled whole tomatoes with 1/2 stick butter (up to one full stick if you'd like). Simmer for at least 30 minutes. Leftover sauce is great marinara sauce.

2 Ingredient Pizza Crust:

2 cups of self-rising flour (regular or gluten free)

2 cups Greek yogurt

Mix ingredients together in a large bowl until a ball forms then place ball on a floured surface (I add a little corn meal). Make sure your hands are either oiled (vegetable oil or shortening) or well floured before pressing the ball into a round (square or oval shape). This recipe can easily be increased (1 cup flour per 1 cup of yogurt). Top with your (new) favorite sauce and toppings. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 20-25 minutes.



Christians Around The World

Christians around the world will be an ongoing series in the Lamplighter that will talk about how Christians in different parts of the world live and are treated. It's not always a happy story. This month, we are going to look at Christians in Somalia.

Somalia is almost totally Muslim. Azzam Mubarak lives in a small village south of Mogadishu. His father was a warlord, his mother a secret Christian. His father found out, killed her, and shipped her body to Azzam where he thought he was hiding from his father. He knew what he had to do. He started secret church groups in this small town. People send secret signs to each other on the street to let people know there is a meeting. No one comes through the front door. They climb in windows.

Azzam decided to get Bibles from Kenya. Superstitious Muslims will not touch dead bodies, so Azzam decided to hide under a corpse in a coffin in Kenya. Azzam used to be a pirate, so he was used to taking risks. The Kenyans had collected Bibles for him. He put them in the bottom of the coffin, got in and had the corpse put on top of him.

He was able to get back to Somalia with the Bibles for his study group. Several people made similar trips, some died. Azzam was lucky or blessed because he survived his trips.



The Somalian Flag



**Keep up with the all the latest info on our
Facebook page [www.facebook.com/groups/
EUMCBeltsville](http://www.facebook.com/groups/EUMCBeltsville)**

Churches mask up, close doors as virus spikes

By Heather Hahn



New mask recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the rise in the delta variant of the coronavirus affect churches' decisions on in-person worship and safety protocols. Pews image by Andrew Seaman, courtesy of Unsplash; mask image courtesy of Pixabay; graphic by Laurens Glass, UM News.

The Rev. Hammett Evans knew his Arkansas church needed to make a change after five fully vaccinated worshippers tested positive for COVID-19.

The five experienced mild symptoms or none at all, said Evans, senior pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas.

“The message they want to get out is that the vaccines work,” he stressed.

However, he and his congregation weren’t taking any chances. For the week of July 11, Asbury went back to online-only services to ensure the outbreak did not spread further. When in-person services resumed in mid-July, the church required worshippers to wear masks and keep physically distanced. The church youth group also began meeting outside again.

“I think we just want to be as cautious as possible, especially since we have children with us,” Evans said. The under-12 youngsters in the church and its pre-school are not yet eligible for the vaccines. “We want to take care of the kids.” Asbury turned out to be ahead of the curve.

With the more-contagious delta variant of COVID-19 surging across the United States, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now urge even vaccinated people to mask up again in high-and substantial-transmission areas.

Many United Methodist congregations are following that advice, with encouragement from their bishops. Some churches have gone even further: opting to return to online-only activities. Whatever extra precautions they are taking, church leaders also are working to get more shots in arms. Preachers are trying to ease fears and correct misinformation. Congregations are organizing clinics and offering gift certificates as incentives for vaccine holdouts.

The current United Methodist efforts are part of a long tradition. People called Methodists have championed public health going back to John Wesley, who established London’s first free medical clinic.

Asbury is among the churches planning its own clinic.

“I hope more people will get the vaccine,” Evans said. “That’s really the way through it.”

For now, Dellrose United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas, is one church that’s going back to being mostly online.

Dellrose had resumed in-person worship on Mother’s Day. But on Aug. 1, the church with hundreds of members limited attendance in worship to 50 and the choir did not sing.

The Rev. Kevass J. Harding, the pastor, said it was a tough decision but congregants received the change well. “They know it’s real,” he said. “They’ve seen it affect their friends and families. They appreciate that we are erring on the side of caution.”

Dellrose also is applying for a grant from the Kansas Leadership Center to provide vaccine recipients with gift cards.

“We as a church have to be adaptable,” Harding said. “We live in a changing world.”

Halfway across the country, the Rev. Nicole Reilley is also contemplating whether her congregation — Valencia United Methodist Church in California — should also go online only. Like the rest of Los Angeles County, the church has been under an indoor mask mandate for weeks.

“We live in a very warm community so while we would like to consider going back outside for worship, we would need to consider how to make that happen,” she said. At this point, the church is taking a wait-and-see approach.

Crenshaw United Methodist Church, also in Los Angeles County, now meets online every Sunday and in-person every other Sunday.

The Rev. Royce Porter, the church’s lead pastor, said the summer heat and the delta variant’s rise have led many of the church’s “seasoned saints” to stay home.

“This setback does affect our attendance on Sunday, but it does not affect our ministry as the hands and feet of Jesus within our community,” he said. “We learned for over a year now to do church online.”

Even churches that have more fully reopened continue to see more attendance online than in person.

Continued on p. 7

Fare Well, Kathryn!

By Bobbie Deegan



“To everything there is a season,” (Ecclesiastes 3:1), and sadly, Kathryn Griffin’s time at Emmanuel has come to an end. I wasn’t able to attend her farewell party, so I am taking this opportunity to share with the congregation how much a part of Emmanuel Kathryn has been over the years.

Our newer congregants know Kathryn as our dedicated organist, Director of the Chancel Choir, and (when we have youth in the right age group who want to participate), Children’s Choir Director. But she is much more than that. Kathryn has been an integral part of almost every program we have had at Emmanuel “pre-COVID.” With her encouragement, Emmanuel’s Chancel Choir members were featured at Emory Grove’s summer Hymn Sing one Wednesday evening each year. A few years ago, the hymn sing accompanist unexpectedly was unable to attend, so Kathryn graciously agreed to fill that role as well, with no notice and no time to familiarize herself with the music. She led the congregation’s annual Christmas caroling to area shut-ins. When Rev. Daniel Mejia was pastor, Emmanuel had two “Community Days.” For the musical activity, Kathryn helped children create their own “musical instruments!” In my opinion, Kathryn’s finest hour came during Vacation Bible School each year. Every evening for a week, Kathryn taught each age group of children several songs (complete with motions) based on that year’s VBS theme. I taught just one age group a nightly lesson for a couple of years, and that was exhausting. I cannot imagine how much energy it took to work with dozens of children for two hours each evening! And she did a great job with them.

Kathryn’s biggest contribution was to the weekly church service, though. Kathryn tailored each Sunday’s anthem to the pastor’s message that week. Did you notice? When the church’s budget started getting tight, Kathryn began selecting individual pieces to create our own Easter and Christmas cantatas instead of purchasing new works, as had been done in more affluent times. She also wrote the text that connected the songs to the Lent and Advent seasons. She led the effort to commission an anthem in honor of Emmanuel’s 150th anniversary, too.

Besides being a staff member, Kathryn was a member of the congregation. Her children and grandchildren attended Emmanuel’s Sunday School. Kathryn participated in UMW activities such as the Mother-Daughter Communion Breakfast, and when church support for the ESOL program waned and we couldn’t get anyone to cover the Registration Table for an hour on Tuesday evenings, Kathryn stepped up and filled that role, too.

I am very happy that Kathryn now is free to enjoy her retirement without the demands of being at Emmanuel every Sunday. Emmanuel was blessed to have her leading our music program for as long as we did. But many of us (especially the choir members) will feel her absence very keenly!



Masking Up continued from p. 4

Among those congregations is Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church in Atlanta. Located within easy view of the CDC complex, the church never stopped wearing masks. However, congregational leaders are now seeing how cases progress to determine whether they can drop mask requirements in September, said the Rev. Mark Westmoreland, the church's senior pastor.

In the meantime, the church's online presence remains strong. COVID-19 lockdowns have forced the church to up its technological game, Westmoreland said. But like other pastors, he worries whether the church is losing the routine of being physically together on Sunday mornings.

"I believe strongly that gathering in person can never be fully replaced by an online experience," he said, "but I know also that online worship is here to stay."

First United Methodist Church in Bentonville, Arkansas, like Glenn Memorial, is also adjusting to the demand for online connection.

The Rev. Michelle Morris, the Northwest Arkansas congregation's lead pastor, emphasized that ministry continues amid the safety protocols.

"We continue to have an active food pantry, and we are gathering supplies such as hand sanitizer and wipes for teachers at the two schools we have relationships with," she said. "We are also working at converting many of our meeting and classroom spaces to accommodate our hybrid reality."

Still, pastors acknowledge many vaccinated people feel frustration that they must don their masks again.

Blame a very tricky virus that can mutate as it spreads. While infected vaccinated people were highly unlikely to transmit earlier disease variants, the delta variant's high viral loads substantially increase the risk. Masks reduce transmission.

The Rev. Michael Roberts, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Conway, Arkansas, said his message is: "We want to love one another well, and if the request is that all of us wear masks, then we want to be part of that as Christians."

His church already is adapting one of its best-attended services of the year — its blessing of the backpacks. At the service scheduled for Aug. 15, the church plans to have youngsters, teachers and school staff stand for the blessing rather than come forward, and everyone will need to wear masks.

Inoculations are ultimately the best way to fight the virus, giving it fewer places to take hold and infect others. Arkansas Conference Bishop Gary Mueller estimates that about 90% of eligible United Methodists in the state are fully vaccinated. However, Arkansas overall has one of the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the U.S., with only about 37% of the population fully vaccinated.

The conference maintains a dashboard that tracks the number of COVID-19 cases and vaccinations by county. United Methodists in the state monitor the dashboard closely.

Mueller said he hopes United Methodists also can find a way to reach people outside the church who are reluctant to get the jab.

"I am going to have a hard time reaching an 18-year-old in a rural area or a 20-year-old in the city who feels bullet-proof," the bishop said. "What we need are influencers in different communities."

The Rev. Maxine Allen, pastor of Saint Paul United Methodist Church in Maumelle, Arkansas, hopes to be one of those influencers. Her church in suburban Little Rock is hosting back-to-school clinics specifically targeting 12- to 17-year-olds.

"We're hoping that by targeting that age group, we'll also get some adults," she said. "We're most concerned about our kids going back to school."

Evans, the Little Rock pastor, sees God at work in the development and distribution of vaccines. Some vaccine reluctance reminds him of a story preachers like to tell about a man caught in the flood. As the waters rise, the man keeps refusing people's offers of help and instead says, "I have faith that God will save me." Ultimately, the man drowns. He asks God, "Where were you?"

God responds by pointing out all the ways God tried to save the man, sending him people with a canoe, a motorboat and even a helicopter.

"I think the vaccine is like that," Evans said. "God is saying I sent you this. Take advantage of it."

Simone Biles and St. Paul: Expectations vs. outcomes

Commentary by the Rev. Rich Peck



Simone Biles

If you read any of the predictions about Simone Biles' expected finishes in the Olympics, you would have been certain the GOAT (greatest of all time) would receive gold in two or more events.

She had an unblemished record and the support of teammates and coaches. In the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Biles won individual gold medals in the all-around, vault and floor.

Expectations were high, but she only received a bronze on the balance beam.

The talented gymnast says she experienced "the twisties," a phenomenon in which gymnasts lose the ability to keep track of their bodies at high speed.

Had we been present before St. Paul ventured to Athens, we would have heard high expectations regarding the possibility of his establishing a church in that home of the Olympics.

Paul had what we today might call a golden-buzzer opportunity on America's Got Talent.

He was invited to speak at the Areopagus on Mars Hill, the central meeting place where philosophy, religion and law were discussed. It was where Athenians and foreigners "spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21).

What an opportunity!

Well used to hearing about gods and goddesses, Paul was introduced as a person who would tell about the god, Jesus, and the goddess, Resurrection.

Paul does not experience the twisties. He knows exactly where he is.

A less talented preacher would have begun with a condemnation of the idols erected on the hill. Instead, Paul compliments them by noting they were all "very religious." He says he noticed an altar to an "unknown god." He uses that idol to say he wants to introduce them to the God for whom the statue was built. He proceeds to tell them about God as the creator and explains the closeness of God and their need to repent of their rebellion against Him. Paul concludes his sermon by introducing them to Jesus Christ, whom God had raised from the dead.

The result?

At best, a bronze medal. Only a few believed and unlike previous occasions, he did not establish a church in that city.

The New Testament contains no letter from Paul to the Church of Athens and there is no Book of Athenians.

Hundreds of scholars have debated the reasons for Paul's failure. They can find fault with neither his performance nor his opportunity.

The fault rests with the audience.

The Athenians were so used to debating academic issues, they treated Paul's message as just another academic exercise.

Perhaps they viewed him as a foreigner with an unfamiliar accent and unusual dress. He was not part of their group and was not a graduate of the University of Athens.

They never allowed his message to touch their hearts.

As the Athenians, we are likely to dismiss the message when the messenger comes from someone outside our familiar group.

Perhaps we need to guard ourselves against the same prejudices as the Athenians. We need to be cautious about how we judge people from outside our communities.

We need to avoid the twisties by opening our hearts and minds to people from other cultures, and to allow their messages to touch our hearts.

Both Paul and Simone were coping with unseen factors. They both taught us to look beyond the surface level and to adjust our expectations.

Perhaps we need to forgive ourselves when we fail to meet expectations. We are in good company.

How Can I Give?

Online: You can now give online through Emmanuel's website at www.eumcbeltsville.com/giving or scan the QR Code below. This is a great way to keep up with your giving if you are out of town, are sick or if you can't come to church. If you have any questions, contact Kemi Oluwafemi.

Through the Mail: You can mail your offering to the church. The address is 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705.



HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

1. Mary Ann Vaughan
4. Dottie Gilbert
6. Jody Hammond, Isaac Oluwafemi
7. Clay Kaufmann
8. Don Hammond
9. Jessica Leatherman
10. Charlie Deegan, Ester Hatton
11. James Mackey, Jr.
12. Tracy Fuller
15. Elsie Cline
18. Robert Galloway
21. Bob Miller, Carol Lee, Lois Schulze, Len Weston
22. Beverly Ward
23. Dela Martin, Chinasa Onukwubiri
29. Victoria Galloway, Ascenna Scotland
30. Kathryn Griffin, Jennifer Embrey

CAN YOU HELP?

Share your talents at Emmanuel by sharing the Word as a Scripture Reader during our Sunday Zoom Service! Help for a single Sunday or choose several. You choose how many Sundays you are able to help. Just email the office at office@eumcbeltsville.com and they will let you know which weeks are available! No experience needed! We will train you on the job!

Christian Love and Sympathy To:

- The family of Raymond William Jackson (friend of Tammy White) on his death
- Abel Martin and his family on the death of his cousin in Liberia.
- Augustine (client of John Claye) who lost his cousin, brother, and father.
- Family of Sue Tullis on her death, wife of John Tullis (friend of Rick Bergmann) on her death.
- Family of BJ Shaman (friend and colleague of Pastor King) on the death of her husband.
- Family of Brian Beach (husband of former member, Kimberly Beach) on his death.

HAPPY SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1. Carrie & Roy White
2. Don & Mary Ann Roberts
4. Donna & Jim Tock
5. Bobbie & Charlie Deegan
6. Barbara & Jim Butcher
8. Priscilla & Crispin Wray
27. Ann & Ted Ladd



Please pray for our sick and shut in

- Homebound
- Harry Cottman
- Norma Hall
- Carolyn Scarcia
- Dottie Gilbert
- Out of state
- Lil Mizzer



Virtual Worship at Emmanuel! (UPDATED INFORMATION)

Join us on Sunday mornings in virtual worship through Zoom. Join us for 30 minutes of fellowship from 9:30-10 am followed by worship at 10. Use this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/97839889289?pwd=YzUxZjJKTzUybTJnZEt4UC9qTkI4QT09>

or go to zoom.us and click join a meeting.

The meeting number is 978 3988 9289. The Password is EUMC

You can call in on any telephone (cell or landline) at 1-301-715-8592

If you're calling on the telephone the information is

Meeting ID: 978 3988 9289 Passcode: 479360