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December 2023

Emanuel Lutheran Church



A Member of the New England Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
a "Reconciling In Christ" Congregation



Visitor

From the Pastor

"Light dawns on a weary world when eyes begin to see all people's dignity.
Light dawns on weary world: the promised day of justice comes."

— *Light Dawns on a Weary World*—ELW 726

We sang this hymn on Sunday, November 19, and I thought to myself—if there was ever a time when the world felt weary, it's now. As the news is filled with images of war, news of hostages, premature babies needing to be transferred to another hospital because their early days are caught in the middle of warfare: the world feels weary. As tensions rise, as our two political parties debate, as we anticipate the presidential election in 2024: the world feels weary. As we hear about the effects of climate change, how the most vulnerable are feeling the impacts the most: the world feels weary.

And yet, in the midst of a weary world, we proclaim hope. This Advent, we'll focus on a sermon series called "How does a weary world rejoice?" taken from A Sanctified Art. And so, how does a weary world rejoice? We acknowledge our weariness. We find joy in connection. We allow ourselves to be amazed. We sing stories of hope, and we make room. Listen for how the Biblical readings we will read in worship in Advent will focus on those things.

My prayer for you in the weary season is that you'll acknowledge that it's ok to feel weary—and that you see glimpses of the hope, joy, and peace that only comes for the one we wait for this season—Jesus Christ our Lord. As the hymn continues:

*The trees shall clap their hands;
The dry lands, gush with spring;
The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out with joy,
And be led forth in peace,
As all the world in wonder echoes shalom.*

ELW 726—*Light Dawns on a Weary World*

Peace to you and yours,
Pastor Joanna Hertzog Betkoski



Seasonal Sharing in December will once again feature an
Online Giving Tree that will support local MACC families.
Be on the lookout for an email in early December with all the details!

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Thrivent Choice

From Ray Purtell

THRIVENT CHOICE...Time to ACT NOW

Did you know that Americans do most of their charitable giving at year end? Did you know that the month with the highest rate on giving to congregations is December? Well, it's that time of year.

There is nothing easier than THRIVENT CHOICE when it comes to getting free money to help Emanuel and over 40,000 other nonprofit organizations. Eligible Thrivent members include those with benefit membership who have \$750 or more in annual premiums of qualifying life and health insurance products OR have \$20,000 or more in contract value of qualifying life insurance and annuity products. Qualifying members are able to direct some of Thrivent's charitable outreach funds each year.

It can be done one of two ways described below.

BY PHONE

- Simply call Thrivent at **800-847-4836** and when prompted, **press 6** for Thrivent Choice.
- Then **Press 2** to speak to a representative who will help you direct Choice Dollars. It's that easy!

ONLINE-DO IT YOURSELF

- Visit **Thrivent.com**
- Log in by entering your user ID and password.
(If you haven't yet registered on Thrivent.com, click **"Register for Account Access"**.)
- From the "Account Overview" page, select the "Generosity" tab.
- Scroll down to Thrivent Choice and select "Direct Choice Dollars".
- Follow the prompts to select your charity and finish at "Direct Now".



You have the power to recommend where Thrivent gives back!

Now that you know how to do it, it's time to act! It only takes a few minutes to make a real difference. Emanuel, like other worthy non-profits, has a real need to increase revenues in support of its mission. We have several upcoming projects that need additional funding including sending kids to camp, our youth ministry initiative, MACC's seasonal sharing, and our church budget. **Thrivent Choice dollars can help! PLEASE make the time. It will make a meaningful difference. You'll be glad you did.**

If you'd like help registering your account online, please let me know. I'd be happy to assist. Just either give me a call at 860 228-2788 or email me at Purt1015@gmail.com.

Instant Church Directory App UPDATE Now Available in App Stores

Download the latest version of the app to unlock the latest features for our Online Member Pictorial Directory! Do you ever receive a text message or get included in a group text message but don't know who sent it? Now members can search families using phone numbers to find out the sender! This is also a great way to validate any potential spam messages asking for money or gift cards. Have you updated your family tab name? The app now supports custom labels.

What's Also New:

Members can delete their app account from the app.

Members can update their password in-app.

We've made bug fixes and added performance boosts.

You won't see these enhancements until you update the app on your devices.



You can access the directory on your laptop or desktop computer or on your phone (through the *Instant Church Directory* app). You'll need to create an account using the email listed for your family's profile in the directory and create your own password.

To access the directory please go to: members.instantchurchdirectory.com. If you need assistance setting up your account, please email Anne: aheinrich@emanuelmanchester.org

MACC Charities

MACC's Community Emergency Food Pantry continually needs community support to keep their shelves stocked so they may always provide families with the important staple items they need. Check out the need list for the best items to donate. All products must be unopened and within expiration dates.

Donations can be dropped off at the Community Food Pantry, 460 Main Street in Manchester. Monday through Thursday 9 AM—4 PM and Friday 9 AM—2 PM or donations can be left in the designated baskets located in the Narthex at Emanuel on Sunday morning.

Shampoo	Instant potatoes	Mayonnaise	Fresh fruit & veggies
Deodorant	Chili	Cake & Brownie mix	Dish detergent
Razors	Beef stew	Paper towels	Laundry Detergent
Shaving cream	Soup	Sugar	Baby wipes
Body soap	Canned veggies	Flour	Toilet paper
Body wash (liquid)	Jelly		

Advent Devotional Booklets

Come, *Emmanuel*, devotions for Advent are available to pick-up in the Narthex in preparation for the season of Advent which begins on December 3, 2023.



Emanuel has an AED (Automated external defibrillator) which is used to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. It's a sophisticated, yet easy-to-use, medical device that can deliver an electrical shock, or defibrillation, to help the heart reestablish an effective rhythm. **Our AED is located in the office hallway, just outside of the church office. Proceed down the ramp in the sanctuary, exit, and it is on the wall directly in front of you.**

Reminder to the Members and Friends of Emanuel

Emanuel will be closing its financial books for the year on Sunday, December 31, 2023. If you want your donation to be credited to your account and included on your giving statement for this year, we will need to receive it by December 31st. Any donations received after this date will be posted in 2024. Thank you for your generosity and support!

Would you like to serve on Altar Guild?

Altar Guild members are those who set-up and clean up for Holy Communion. Training is offered and work is "behind the scenes" either Saturday mornings or Sunday after worship services. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact: Kim Boerner-Mercier: johnkim4@aol.com

Archived copies of all 2022 & 2023 Visitor newsletters are available on the website under the password protected **MEMBER ACCESS** tab (pull down to "VISITOR NEWSLETTERS").

ANNUAL REPORT



Are you the Chairperson of a Committee at Emanuel?

If so, this is an early reminder that it's almost time to write your report for inclusion in Emanuel's 2023 annual report to the congregation! We would love to include your report this year to highlight the ministries of Emanuel.

Please submit your report by email to Anne Heinrich (aheinrich2@emanuelmanchester.org), NO LATER THAN Friday, January 5, 2023. Please do everything you can to meet this deadline. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Anne Heinrich in the church office. Thanks to each and every one of you for your leadership and enthusiasm towards the ministries at Emanuel!

Emanuel's Emergency Procedures

Are you new to Emanuel or have you been around for a while and would like to refresh yourself on what steps to take if an emergency happens at Emanuel? A few years ago, Emanuel created *Emergency Procedures* for many different situations that may happen inside Emanuel's building. Anything from a fire, flood, electrical power outage, medical emergency, etc. is covered in the manual. If you would like to take a look through the procedure manual, you can find the blue and orange binders hanging on the wall in various areas of the church building.

If you have any questions, please contact Anne in the Church Office by email to: aheinrich@emanuelmanchester.org.

Events and Items of Interest

Healing Prayer Sundays are held on the first Sunday of every month at Emanuel.

On Healing Prayer Sundays we bless our prayer shawls. If you would like to bring one to someone in need, they are made available to take after worship. Personal healing prayer is offered to people who wish to receive it at the altar immediately following the postlude.

Ruth Circle Christmas Luncheon
Saturday, December 2nd at 11:30 AM
Evergreen Crossings, South Windsor



Reservations are required to attend.
Cost is \$15 for a lunch buffet.
Wine is available at no additional cost.

Shannon Baldassario, CEO of MACC Charities will be the guest. Layette items will be collected to benefit MACC families.

If you would like to attend, please contact Lynne Gustafson at cgustafson01@snet.net by Wednesday, 11/29. (Checks should be made out to Lynne Gustafson).

Weekly Bible Study meets on Thursdays at 10 AM in the library.

If you are a Communion Assistant or the Assisting Minister during Sunday morning worship, please note that wearing a face mask is required when serving the communion elements.

Women's Breakfast
Wednesday, December 20th at 8:30 AM
Evergreen Crossings, 900 Hemlock Avenue in South Windsor

Cost per person is \$8.

An RSVP to Lynne Gustafson: cgustafson01@snet.net is required by Tuesday, December 19th.

Church Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday: 10 AM—4 PM
and Friday: 10 AM—2 PM

Worship volunteers are needed for our Sunday morning 10 AM worship service.

We continue to need the following worship volunteers each Sunday: two Communion Assistants, one Lector, and four Ushers.

A sign-up link is emailed out weekly (if volunteers are needed). If you are able and willing to volunteer, please use the electronic sign up. All Sundays from now through January 2024 are accessible through the one link.

If you have difficulty signing up for a particular Sunday, Anne can sign you up. Just email Anne at ahenrich@emanuelmanchester.org and let her know what date and what volunteer position you would like.

The new Flower Chart for 2024 is now posted in the Office Hallway.

You can sign up for Altar or LECTERN Flowers to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion. You may also call the Church Office at 860-643-1193 to check if a particular date is available. Please be sure to fill out a flower order form (located next to the sign up sheet). *On the order form, you can even designate the type and/or color of flowers that you prefer in the arrangement.* Leave the form for Anne in the Church Office. She will order the flowers and Park Hill Joyce will send the bill directly to your mailing address.

Altar flowers are \$50 and LECTERN flowers are \$35.

FME

FRIENDS OF MUSIC AT EMANUEL
CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES 2023 - 2024



Sunday
Dec. 17, 2023
at 7 pm



Project Choir ONE

Celebrate Christmas
with music from the past and the
present, directed by Dr. Jun Lee

Emanuel Lutheran Church

60 Church Street
Manchester, CT 06040
860-643-1193

FREE ADMISSION

DONATIONS WELCOME

FriendsOfMusicatEmanuel@gmail.com
www.FriendsOfMusicatEmanuel.org



December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 <i>Assisting Minister - Ray Purtell</i> <i>Children's Sermon during Worship Service</i> CHRIST THE KING 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 11:30am Confirmation Class - Youth Room 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	27	28 Visitor newsletter mailing 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting - LH 7:00pm Emanuel Housing Corp. Meeting - LH	29 <i>Deadline for Ordering Poinsettia Plants for Christmas Eve</i> 1:00pm Staff Meeting	30 10:00am Bible Study - Library 6:00pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:30pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	1 7:00am HGLHC - LH/MR	2 8:45am Music Together Class - CR 11:30am Ruth Circle Christmas Luncheon at Evergreen Crossings in South Windsor
3 <i>Assisting Minister - Kim Boerner-Mercier</i> <i>Healing Prayer following worship at the Altar</i> 10:00am Sunday School - Youth Room 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	4	5 7:00pm Ad Hoc Committee - Library	6 11:00am Staff Meeting	7 10:00am Bible Study - Library 6:00pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:30pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	8 7:00am HGLHC - LH/MR	9 11:00am Funeral Service for Doris Schoenfeld (tentative) 12:00pm Funeral Reception for Doris Schoenfeld - LH (tentative) 3:00pm Funeral Reception for Martha Eddy - LH
10 <i>Assisting Minister - Ben Hogue</i> <i>St. Lucia Procession during worship service</i> 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 11:30am Confirmation Class - Youth Room 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	11 7:00pm Property Committee Meeting - LH	12 7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting - LH	13 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Project Choir ONE Rehearsal - SA	14 10:00am Bible Study - Library 6:00pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Music Room 6:00pm Project Choir ONE Rehearsal - SA 7:30pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	15 Visitor newsletter deadline 7:00am HGLHC - LH/MR 6:00pm Project Choir ONE Rehearsal - SA	16 10:00am Project Choir ONE Rehearsal - SA 2:00pm Tracey Christmas Party - LH
17 <i>Assisting Minister - Beverly Niemann</i> 10:00am Sunday School - Youth Room 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary 7:00pm FME Chamber Music Concert Series - Project Choir One - SA	18	19 7:00pm Council Meeting - via Zoom	20 8:30am Women's Breakfast - Evergreen Crossings in South Windsor 11:00am Staff Meeting	21 CHP - Holiday Break 10:00am Bible Study - Library 6:00pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:30pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	22 CHP - Holiday Break Visitor newsletter mailing 7:00am HGLHC - LH/MR	23
24 <i>Assisting Minister - Kim Boerner-Mercier</i> <i>Children's Sermon during 4:00 PM Worship Service</i> CHRISTMAS EVE <i>No Sunday School</i> 11:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 4:00pm Worship Service in the Sanctuary	25 CHP - Holiday Break CHRISTMAS DAY - OFFICE CLOSED	26 CHP - Holiday Break CHRISTMAS WEEK - OFFICE CLOSED 7:00pm Emanuel Housing Corp. Meeting - LH	27 CHP - Holiday Break CHRISTMAS WEEK - OFFICE CLOSED	28 CHP - Holiday Break CHRISTMAS WEEK - OFFICE CLOSED	29 CHP - Holiday Break CHRISTMAS WEEK - OFFICE CLOSED 7:00am HGLHC - LH/MR	30
31 <i>Assisting Minister - Kathy Rusch</i> <i>No Sunday School</i> 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	1 CHP - Holiday Break NEW YEAR'S DAY - OFFICE CLOSED	2 CHP - Holiday Break	3 CHP - Holiday Break	4 CHP - Holiday Break	5 CHP - Holiday Break	6 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Financial News You Can Use

From Ray Purtell

Did you know that 30% of all charitable giving happens between Thanksgiving and the end of the year? Did you know that people in their 70s have an awesome tax advantaged way to make charitable contributions? Did you know that Emanuel accepts these tax advantaged distributions?

The following article “Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)” is taken from the Fidelity Investments web site. Some members of Emanuel are eligible to make QCDs directly to qualified charities (Emanuel is a qualified charity). Doing so allows the members to realize tax benefits that increase income. Some use their increased income to grow in their generosity. If you want to learn more, read the article below.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)

When planning your IRA withdrawal strategy, you may want to consider making charitable donations through a QCD.

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year, as long as certain rules are met.

In addition to the benefits of giving to charity, a QCD excludes the amount donated from taxable income, which is unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA. Keeping your taxable income lower may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare.

Also, QCDs don't require that you itemize, which due to the recent tax law changes, means you may decide to take advantage of the higher standard deduction, but still use a QCD for charitable giving.

Can I make a QCD?

While many IRAs are eligible for QCDs—Traditional, Rollover, Inherited, SEP (inactive plans only), and SIMPLE (inactive plans only)*—there are requirements:

- You must be 70½ or older to be eligible to make a QCD.
- QCDs are limited to the amount that would otherwise be taxed as ordinary income. This excludes non-deductible contributions.
- The maximum annual amount that can qualify for a QCD is \$100,000.00 (Indexed starting in 2024). This applies to the sum of QCDs made to one or more charities in a calendar year. (If, however, you file taxes jointly, your spouse can also make a QCD from his or her own IRA within the same tax year for up to \$100,000.)
- For a QCD to count towards your current year's RMD, the funds must come out of your IRA by your RMD deadline, generally December 31.
- Contributing to an IRA may result in a reduction of the QCD amount you can deduct. (The aggregate amount of deductible IRA contributions you make to your IRA after you turn 70½ will reduce the amount of the QCD that is not includible in your gross income.)

Any amount donated above your RMD does not count toward satisfying a future year's RMD.

Funds distributed directly to you, the IRA owner, and which you then give to charity do not qualify as a QCD.

Under certain circumstances, a QCD may be made from a Roth IRA. Roth IRAs are not subject to RMDs during your lifetime, and distributions are generally tax-free. Consult a tax advisor to determine if making a QCD from a Roth is appropriate for your situation.

What kind of charities qualify?

The charity must be a 501(c)(3) organization, eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.

Some charities **may not** qualify for QCDs. Consult a tax advisor or the charity for its applicability.

- Private foundations
- Supporting organizations: i.e., charities carrying out exempt purposes by supporting other exempt organizations, usually other public charities
- Donor-advised funds, which public charities manage on behalf of organizations, families, or individuals
- Beginning in 2023, a QCD may be taken to fund a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust, or Charitable Gift Annuity up to a maximum one-time amount of \$50,000.

Tax reporting

A QCD is reported as a normal distribution on IRS Form 1099-R for any non-Inherited IRAs. For Inherited IRAs or Inherited Roth IRAs, the QCD will be reported as a death distribution. Itemization is not required to make a QCD. While the QCD amount is not taxed, you may not then claim the distribution as a charitable tax deduction.

A QCD is not subject to withholding. State tax rules may vary, so for guidance, consult a tax advisor.

When making a QCD, you must receive the same type of acknowledgement of the donation that you would need to claim a deduction for a charitable contribution.

A tax advisor can help you determine if both your IRA and charity qualify for QCDs.

Source: “Qualified Charitable Distributions”, Fidelity website, April 24, 2023

Caring

December Birthdays

William Braithwaite	12/4	Carol Kohl	12/25
Vilma Anderson	12/5	George Brown	12/26
Susan Plese	12/6	Michael Carroll	12/26

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms

Olivia Sullivan

Luna DiBenedetto

Graveside Services

Shirley Cowles

Clifford Peterson

Vesta Jean Peterson

Dear Emanuel Lutheran Church Members,
Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$686.74 to MACC Charities through your monthly contribution as well as the parishioners' donations. May your hearts and minds be open to a new crisp month and your voice flow in such a way that others love to listen to you. This month I give thanks for unknown blessings already on their way to us all. As the best gift we can give is sharing ourselves with others.

Many Blessings,
Shannon Baldassario – CEO

If you have a key to Emanuel's Building and you let yourself (or others in), please make sure the door is locked when you leave the building. If you come in the Community Room door, please leave by the same door and check it on your way out. The same goes for any of the three exterior doors you may come in. Thank you!

St. Lucia Festival at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Hartford

The 110th annual St. Lucia Festival will be held on Friday, December 15th at 7 PM at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 311 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT. Parking is available in the state lot on Capitol Avenue right across from the State Capitol, about 100 yards from the church. Emanuel is handicapped accessible, and all are welcome! Advance tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for children.

Tickets may be purchased online <https://www.onthestage.tickets/show/emanuel-lutheran-church/lucia-festival-emanuel-lutheran-church-11284>.

Walk-in ticket prices for the night of the performance are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

Non-perishable food donations for Emanuel's food pantry are welcomed and appreciated. Come and see this wonderful tradition brought to life by the young people of Emanuel, Hartford.



Coffee Hour

Coffee Hours are only be held on Sundays if someone signs up to host. The sign-up sheet is on the table in the NARTHEX. Coffee Hour is held on Sundays in Luther Hall immediately following the 10 AM worship service. The host is responsible for making the coffee and providing the food, half & half, milk, or cream as well as juice.



Emanuel Staff

(860) 643-1193

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Lynne Gustafson
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Berk Little and Kathy Rusch
Worship Support Specialists





Christmas Eve Worship Services

11 AM and 4 PM

*Both Christmas Eve services are being planned
with families in mind.*

This year, both services will include many
familiar Christmas hymns and carols.

The 11:00 AM service will feature a
string orchestra with brass and choral music.

The 4:00 PM service will feature guitars, drums,
and contemporary Christian music.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Emanuel Lutheran Church
60 Church Street
Manchester, CT 06040

