



60 Church Street
Manchester, CT 06040

(860) 643-1193

website: www.emanuelmanchester.org

December 2025

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

"The story of Christmas is as much about comfort and joy as it is about how messed up our world actually is."

—*Accidental Saints*, Nadia Bolz-Weber (pg. 76)

Throughout the book *Accidental Saints*, by Nadia Bolz-Weber, we hear stories where Nadia is surprised by God's grace. Sometimes it's that she doesn't feel deserving of the grace extended to her. Other times, she doesn't want to extend grace to someone, but then someone comes along who reminds her of how we are to extend God's love to one another even when we sometimes do not like one another. It's a reminder that God's grace doesn't follow our plans or our roles. It simply meets us where we are.

Christmas tells the same truth. God enters the world not through ideal circumstances, but through a young couple far from home. The birth of Jesus teaches us that God is still showing up in the places we might hurry past—humble, ordinary, sometimes inconvenient places that don't look sacred at first glance.

During this season, when our calendars fill quickly, it might help to remember that God doesn't wait for everything to be calm and bright. Grace doesn't require a perfect mood or a spotless house. Sometimes the holiest moments come during a difficult conversation, a messy kitchen, a long line at the store, or a tired hug at the end of a stressful day. God loves to work with real life—our real life—not the idealized version we imagine we're supposed to offer.

As we move toward Christmas, perhaps we can practice looking twice. When someone interrupts us, when a conversation takes unexpected depth, when we're surprised by kindness or convicted by honesty—this is God's grace meeting us where we are.

May this season open our eyes to the small miracles around us. May we find warmth in unlikely places and the presence of God in moments that don't look the least bit "churchy." For that is the heart of Christmas: God comes close, right in the middle of our ordinary lives, and calls it holy.

Peace to you and yours, Pastor Joanna

Epiphany, Sunday, January 4, 2026

We will celebrate Epiphany on Sunday, January 4, 2026. Last Epiphany, we received star words to see how that word would take shape for us in 2025. We will be looking for people to share short stories about their star word during worship on January 4. If you're willing to tell a story, please reach out to Pastor Joanna.

Ministerio Nueva Creacion will have a worship service at Emanuel in the Chapel/Community Room on Sunday, 12/7 at noon.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

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Messiah Holiday Carol Sing

Insert:

November Events at Emanuel—
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Church Office Hours:
Monday, Wednesday, Friday:
10 AM—2 PM

Emanuel Seminarian—Thanks and Update, Flowers for Worship

People of Emanuel,

Thank you so much for the generous financial support you have provided during my seminary education over the past few years. Most recently with monies from the Designated Giving and Christian Education Endowment funds. It has been greatly appreciated and helpful to cover the multiple expenses I have had throughout the period of formation thus far. In addition, I'd like to share a brief update with the congregation regarding my life as of late. It has been a busy and exciting year!

This spring I finished my year of ministerial fieldwork, serving on Sundays at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Mechanicsburg, PA before serving as a CPE intern (student chaplain) at Havenwood Heritage Heights retirement community in Concord, NH this past summer. Both of these experiences helped assist in my formation of vital skills for ministry, and I am deeply grateful for how I have grown through these avenues of formation.

I'm also excited to share that I became engaged early this summer to my fiancée Noelle, who is a fellow seminarian. We will be getting married at her home congregation on December 5th and are looking forward to our life together!

Currently, I am finishing my final semester of seminary coursework before embarking on internship. I am taking a full courseload which includes classes on church administration, liberation theology, intersectional leadership, the Gospel of John, and rural and small church ministry.

I am also proud to say that this year I was chosen to receive the ELCA Fund for Leaders Mission Developer Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded yearly for up to seven ELCA seminarians across the country who have been identified as having the gifts to serve in mission development. Rostered leaders in mission development are responsible for organizing and creating new ministries and communities in the ELCA. For more information on the ELCA Fund for Leaders or to read the 2025 FFL Annual Report, please visit: <https://www.elca.org/our-work/leadership/elca-fund-for-leaders>.

Earlier this month, I am also pleased to share that I received a positive "Endorsement" decision from the synod's candidacy committee. This is the second of the three steps toward ordained ministry in the ELCA. This affirmation from the committee allows me to move forward in the candidacy process and begin my yearlong internship.

In January, I will begin serving as Vicar at Trinity Lutheran Church in Chelmsford, MA before sitting for approval for ordination about a year from now. I am grateful for all the ways I have been formed for ministry so far and look forward to serving in this new role and seeing how the Holy Spirit continues to call.

God's Peace,

Campfield Heinrich

The Flower Chart is posted in the office hallway and available online!

You can sign-up for Altar or Lectern Flowers to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion.

You can sign-up for altar or lectern flowers in one of three ways:

- ◆ On the paper sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Church Office hallway. Please be sure to fill out a flower order form (located next to the sign-up sheet), and leave the form for Anne in the Church Office. *On the order form, you can even designate the type and/or color of flowers that you prefer in the arrangement.*
- ◆ Through the online sign-up sheet:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1N7YC_4StAVRRQGedU4_xUewyRK4VnsT1elyJR9GKL4/edit?usp=sharing
- ◆ Call or email Anne in the Church Office: 860-643-1193 or ahenrich@emanuelmanchester.org

Anne will order the flowers, and Park Hill Joyce Florist will send the bill directly to your mailing address. *Altar flowers (two arrangements) are \$50, and the Lectern flowers (one arrangement) are \$35.*

You may also sponsor the Sunday bulletins. Each Sunday is \$20.

Please send payment to the Church Office. You can sign-up for bulletins in the ways noted above.

The online link is: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BtdtsMiKUnTFv_xz4Gh5iBsH71H0j4sF_JQ8P02_mik/edit?usp=sharing

ELC 2025 Annual Report, Camp Calumet Camperships

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 2025 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 in the Church Office

(ahenrich@emanuelmanchester.org), **NO LATER THAN Monday, January 5, 2026.**

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!

Camp Calumet Camper Registration for Summer 2026

If your child is between the ages of 8-15, it is time to sign them up for a camp experience that will make this the best summer ever! Calumet offers one-week and two-week sessions at its overnight camp on the shores of Lake Ossipee in Freedom, NH.

Please note that Calumet uses a tiered pricing system, plus a \$50 application fee. Visit: calumet.org for registration information.

To register, visit: <https://calumet.org/summercamp/residentcamp>

Camper Referral discount: Recommend Calumet's Resident Camp to friends and

family and receive \$100 off your fee for each first-time camper (non-sibling) who registers for camp based on your recommendation. Not only will you save money, but you will share the wonders of Calumet's overnight camp with others.



Once again, Emanuel will offer camperships for children attending Calumet Resident or Day Camp!

To secure a Calumet Campership from Emanuel, please email Anne in the Church Office

(ahenrich@emanuelmanchester.org) along with your child(ren)'s name(s) and the following information.

In your email, please specify the rate that best applies to your family situation.

Rate 1: \$1105/week (This rate reflects the true cost of camp.)

Rate 2: \$980/week (Rate for families for whom the full cost of camp is out of reach. Rate is subsidized by generous donors.)

Rate 3: \$855/week (This rate covers a portion of the true cost and is subsidized by generous donations by individuals and congregations.)

Then indicate the amount of campership that will meet your needs.

Emanuel will apply the campership to the rate selected above.

☐ 100% ☐ 75% ☐ 50% ☐ 25%

Each camper's registration fee, \$50, will be covered by Emanuel and added to each campership award.

Don't delay! Let us know your plans now so that we can help send kids to camp.

Please let us know your plans ASAP but not later than December 31, 2025.

Reminder to Members and Friends of Emanuel

Emanuel will be closing its financial books for the year on Wednesday, December 31, 2025.

If you want your donation to be credited to your account and included on your giving statement for this year, **we need to receive it by Sunday, December 28th.** Any donations received after this date will be posted in 2026.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

WINTER IS COMING SOON

We want you to know that if we get a big storm or have severe weather conditions, Emanuel will have the cancellation of our Sunday worship service on the television on WVIT – NBC 30 and WFSB–CBS 3.

Please check before you come to the church.

We want everyone to be safe.



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

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 available to take after worship. Personal healing prayer is offered to people who wish to receive it at the altar immediately following the postlude.



Emanuel has an AED (Automated external defibrillator) which is used to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. It's a sophisticated, yet also 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, and the AED is on the wall directly in front of you.**

Emanuel's Church Office Hours

The Church Office is OPEN on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 AM—2 PM.

The Church Office is CLOSED on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If you need to come to the church outside of office hours, please contact Pastor Joanna at pastorjoanna@emanuelmanchester.org to make an appointment.

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 volunteer, please use the electronic sign-up. All Sundays through December 2025 are accessible through one link.

If you have difficulty signing up for a particular Sunday, email Anne at aheinrich@emanuelmanchester.org and let her know what date and what volunteer position you would like. If you would like to try something new, training is provided!

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

Everyone is welcome! Contact Pastor Joanna with questions or for more information.

You are invited to help decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas on Sunday, December 7th after worship! Come and decorate our 12 ft. Christmas tree, set up the Nativity scene and add other decorations throughout our worship space. All ages are welcome!



The Hem Hangout with Alexa **on the first Wednesday of each month (12/3/25)** **from 6:30 – 8:30 PM in Luther Hall**

New to sewing? Join us for lessons to get started on sewing anything from satchels to clothing. Working on a project? Come join for community as we sew together. **Please bring a sewing machine that is functioning.** We will have small projects for practice, but feel free to bring any pattern or project you would like to learn to make. Questions? Please contact Alexa: jagianinio@gmail.com

This is just a reminder for all members of Emanuel that we have an Online Member Pictorial Directory.

You can access the directory on your laptop, 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

Historian/Archivist Wanted

Are you interested in History? Are you interested in preserving documents, photographs and other objects? Would you like to learn more about the history of Emanuel Lutheran Church?

If you answered yes to these questions, you could become the Historian/Archivist of Emanuel.

In January, Matt Heinrich will step away from that position after 21 years of service to Emanuel, and we would like to find someone to take on that role. Much of the history of Emanuel has been organized and cataloged; Matt will describe the documentation and artifacts to you and will assist in the transition. If you are interested in serving in this role, please contact Kathy Rusch in person or by email to: krusch2@comcast.net.

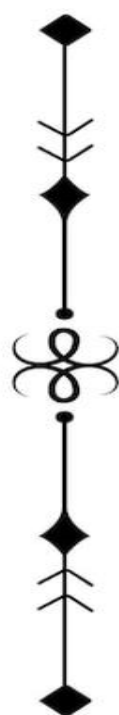
December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 <i>Assisting Minister - Adela Garmendia</i> 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	1 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 10:00am Music From the Heart Band rehearsal - MR	2 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 7:00pm Finance Committee meeting - Luther Hall and via Zoom	3 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 6:30pm The Hem Hangout - LH	4 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 10:00am Bible Study - Library 5:45pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:00pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	5 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 8:30am Health Collective - LH/MR	6 9:00am Grow With Me Music - Community Room 11:00am Ruth Circle Christmas Luncheon - Georgina's Restaurant in Bolton, CT
7 <i>Assisting Minister - Kim Boerner-Mercier</i> <i>Decorate the Church Sanctuary for Christmas (after worship)</i> 10:00am Sunday School - Youth Room 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	8 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 10:00am Music From the Heart Band rehearsal - MR 7:00pm Property Committee Meeting - LH	9 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 7:00pm Executive Committee Meeting via Zoom	10 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM	11 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 10:00am Bible Study - Library 5:45pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:00pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	12 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM 8:30am Health Collective - LH/MR	13 9:00am Grow With Me Music - Community Room
14 <i>Assisting Minister - Ben Hogue</i> <i>John Bear Wilhelm Baptism During Worship</i> <i>Saint Lucia Processional During Worship</i> 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Worship Service at Evergreen Crossings in South Windsor 4:00pm FME Chamber Music Concert Series - New England Chamber Choir	15 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM Visitor newsletter deadline 10:00am Music From the Heart Band rehearsal - MR	16 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 7:00pm Council Meeting - LH	17 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM	18 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 10:00am Bible Study - Library 5:45pm New Day Singers Rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:00pm Anthem Choir Rehearsal - Music Room	19 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM 8:30am Health Collective - LH/MR	20 9:00am Grow With Me Music - Community Room
21 <i>Assisting Minister - Kathy Rusch</i> 10:00am Sunday School - Youth Room 10:00am Worship Service in the Sanctuary 1:30pm Christ Church Worship Service in the Sanctuary	22 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM Visitor newsletter mailing 10:00am Music From the Heart Band rehearsal - MR	23 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED 7:00pm Emanuel Housing Corp. Meeting - LH	24 OFFICE CLOSED - CHRISTMAS EVE	25 CHRISTMAS DAY CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED - DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS 8:30am Health Collective - LH/MR	27
28 <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	29 OFFICE CLOSED - CHRISTMAS WEEK 10:00am Music From the Heart Band rehearsal - MR	30 OFFICE CLOSED - CHRISTMAS WEEK	31 OFFICE CLOSED - CHRISTMAS WEEK	1 CHURCH OFFICE - CLOSED NEW YEARS DAY	2 CHURCH OFFICE: OPEN 10 AM - 2 PM 8:30am Health Collective - LH/MR	3

For the most current calendar that updates in real time, please visit our website: emanuelmanchester.org and click on the "Latest News" tab where you will see the highlighted link to the MONTHLY CALENDAR.

Coffee Hours—You can sign-up to host coffee hour in one of three ways:

- ◆ On the paper sign-up sheet in the narthex
- ◆ Through the online sign-up sheet:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uFDDtVaSqBAxWhfcOeNICaNBfsM6oeYYcdt7IMOD_ZE/edit?usp=sharing
- ◆ Call or email Anne in the Church Office: 860-643-1193 or ahleinrich@emanuelmanchester.org



November at Emanuel was filled with great celebration!

On November 9th we celebrated the culmination of our 2026 Stewardship campaign with a festive worship service followed by an enhanced coffee hour and food packing event for MACC Charities. We packed 94 emergency food bags for Manchester families in need.



Noah was confirmed during worship on Reformation Sunday, October 26th.



On November 16th we packed cookie care packages for our homebound members. Members of the congregation baked an abundance of cookies, and made extras for the children (and adults!) to decorate with frosting and candy.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

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

- ♦ Call Thrivent at **800-847-4836**. When prompted, say "**Thrivent Choice**", then press 1.
- ♦ Speak to a representative who will help you direct Choice Dollars. It's that easy!
- ♦ Call between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. (Central Standard Time); Monday-Friday.

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 "Shortcuts" on the home page, select the "Direct Choice Dollars".
- ♦ In the search box, type "Emanuel Lutheran Church, Manchester, CT" or
- ♦ Follow the prompts to select your charity and finish at "Direct".

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, 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.

Please note that Thrivent advises that between January 15 and March 30, all undesignated accrued Choice Dollars for 2025 will be posted to your account. After January 15, you can designate your remaining balance all at once!

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.

Ray Purtell



**On November 23rd,
the Church Council
hosted a Special
Congregation
Appreciation
Coffee Hour.**



Caring

December Birthdays (Emanuel Members 75+ yrs.)

Vilma Anderson	12/5	Carol Kohl	12/25
Susan Plese	12/6	George Brown	12/26
Charles Sack, Jr.	12/6	Michael Carroll	12/26



*Dear Emanuel Lutheran Church Members,
Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$931.60 to MACC Charities.
Please know your gift comes at a crucial time economically. Thank you!
And all at once, summer collapsed into fall. The summer's heat, now a
distant memory, and now the golden leaves of autumn promise a world
full of beautiful adventures.*

Many Blessings, Shannon Baldassario—CEO



Emanuel Staff

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Jodi Eskin
Financial Secretary
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Berk Little and Kathy Rusch
Worship Support Specialists

Christmas Eve Services

Emanuel Lutheran Church
60 Church Street, Manchester
www.emanuelmanchester.org

11 AM Family-friendly Worship Service
with Children's Sermon and Holy Communion

4 PM Family-friendly Worship Service
with Children's Sermon and Holy Communion

*Both worship services will include exceptional, joyous
music featuring our choirs, along with many familiar
Christmas hymns and carols.*

 *Please join us. All are welcome!* 

Special Offering Envelopes

Folks who contribute their offering online, and folks who do not receive offering envelopes do not receive the "Special Offering" envelopes that come in the box each year.

Special Offering envelope for December: Christmas

If you would like to give to this special offering, you can drop your check in the offering plate (or mail your check to the church office), made out to Emanuel Lutheran Church with the specific special offering listed on the memo line. You may also give online through the secure donation page at www.emanuelmanchester.org.



MANCHESTER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA &
CHORALE

HANDEL'S

MESSIAH

HOLIDAY CAROL SING

PERFORMANCE BY THE ILLING MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIR

7:30 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025

BAILEY AUDITORIUM
MANCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL

CAROLINA FLORES - CHORALE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JEFFREY A. SPENNER - ORCHESTRA ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

TICKETS: \$20
STUDENTS & VETERANS
ARE FREE

MSOC RECEIVES FUNDING FROM

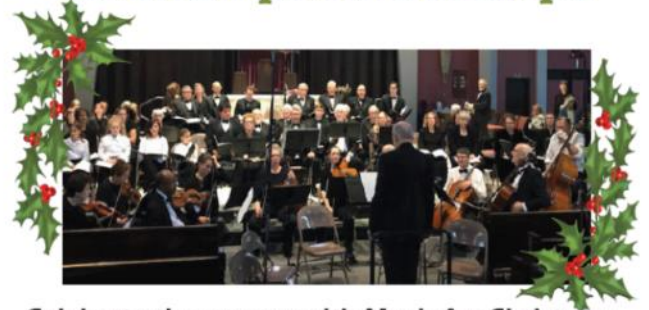
SBM Charitable Foundation

FME

FRIENDS OF MUSIC AT EMANUEL
CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES 2025 - 2026

Sunday, December 14, at 4 pm

Instrumental pre-concert at 3:30 pm



Celebrate the season with Music for Christmas
performed by the NECC singers under the direction
of Richard Donohue, founder and director.

New England Chamber Choir

FREE ADMISSION

DONATIONS WELCOMED

EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

60 Church Street, Manchester, CT 06040

FriendsofMusicatEmanuel@gmail.com

www.FriendsOfMusicAtEmanuel.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
60 Church Street
Manchester, CT 06040

