



Emmanuel Models the “Givingness” of St. Brigid

Emmanuel Episcopal Church—157th Annual Meeting

January 28, 2024

As I reflected on what I would write for this Annual Report, St. Brigid of Kildare came into my prayer, and in her inimitable way, refused to be set aside. Brigid must have been a force in her time on earth.

Inside this issue:

Sujanna Raj	2
Caring Committee	3
Isaiah 58	3
Women of Emmanuel	3
Jerre Birdsong	4
Diocesan Involvement	4
Feeding & Caring	4
EarthLove	5
Justice & Equity	5
Music Ministry	6
Children’s Music	7
Confirmation	7
Families & Youth	8
Backpack Blessings	8
Pet Blessing	9
Pumpkin Carving	9
ECW Scholarship	9
PreSchool	10
Rainbow Room	10
Altar Guild	11
Worship Committee	11
Food Ministry	12
Rise Against Hunger	13
VBS Service Circus	13
Ministry Fair	14
Senior Recognition	14
March/Gun Violence	15
Vestry/Ministry Chairs	16

She’s certainly been a force in my prayer life.

Growing up with two vastly different spiritual cultures in my home, Latina and Celtic, I was blessed by both. My Celtic family loved Patrick and Brigid and often shared stories about them. You may also know that I wrote an icon of Brigid (pictured) in which I incorporated images of some of my favorite legends about her: the St. Brigid’s cross, the sacred fire, her bishop’s staff and chasuble, and a lake of lager (every drop a prayer, she is said to have prayed). Each has a meaning I’m happy to discuss, but not here. (Maybe a future Christian formation series on some of our favorite saints?)

The one legend that I couldn’t incorporate as an image in this icon is the very characteristic she shares with our beloved parish: “givingness.” This term is taken from one of my favorite poems about St. Brigid and you can read it [here](#). Brigid apparently exasperated her family with her generosity to the poor, taking their food and treasures and sharing them with those in need. All who witnessed it, however, saw the presence of God motivating her.

In our second year together, I have seen God powerfully and undeniably present in our community, especially through the

generosity that pours forth along many pathways here: our worship, ministries, friendships, and financial support. I have the privilege of witnessing the process by which decisions get made in various areas of our church life. I wish everyone could see the generosity that guides these decisions.

Your vestry has guided us so generously this past year, especially our Executive Committee: Allison Williams, Sr. Warden, Charlie Walch, Jr. Warden, Maryann Vognild, Treasurer, and Lynn Stephenson, Secretary. Please take another look at the [Vestry Stewardship Covenant](#), which is your elected leadership’s commitment to the church on how they are guided to make decisions about money. They have been icons of “givingness” for our community and I thank them sincerely.

I also thank the finance and foundation committees for their commitment to stewarding the financial resources God has given us, making recommendations to our vestry that will enable us to continue serving faithfully for generations to come.

Emmanuel has a superb staff, as you know. Their commitment to the relationships among us as well as the needs of each person in our parish and beyond, is a



blessing. Every decision, from what music and prayers to use in worship, to an awareness of the impact on creation of our use of paper for Sunday bulletins, to serving a person in need who walks in, is made with a generosity of spirit and balance of priorities. It’s a beautiful thing to behold and I thank them for their extraordinary “givingness.”

Our clergy are also “givingness” personified. Sujanna+ heard and readily answered God’s call to her to serve through her many pastoral care ministries, especially Emmanuel Prays and the international student ministry called A Light to the Nations. Deacon Jerre has been a stalwart advocate of the poor, gives of his financial and organizational wisdom to our ministries, and provides prayers for our worship that deeply move and motivate us to serve. Warren+ is an endless source of wisdom and grace to us all, and Paul+ is a gentle presence of love and experience among us. I give thanks for our clergy.

(Continued on page 2)

Sujanna Raj: Ministry to Seniors, Students, & All In Between



team, which includes the Eucharistic Visitor ministry, prayer shawl ministry, and Martha's Meals ministry.

A recent addition to Emmanuel's existing ministries is Sunrise Senior Assisted Living. I conduct non-denominational services every alternate month for residents who are also members of our congregation.

One of those epiphany moments: God showed up through the Webster University students. Their need and desperation inspired me to do something for them, even though I felt limited. For a few months, I engaged in Mall ministry, counseling, bible studies, and culture shock talks, and helped students understand their identities and status.

I believed I could better serve the wider student community with more funds. Fortunately, the Diocese announced the New Ventures grant at the perfect time. With the help of Valori+ and Peg Cooper, I submitted a proposal that was approved at the convention. This grant of \$25,000.00 will be of great assistance in serving the inter-faith international student community.

I'm grateful to Valori+, who supported and stood by me all along, encouraging and guiding me in the right direction. It's a joy and blessing to serve with her.

I thank everyone, especially Vestry, Staff, and all those who supported me and accepted the change by embracing my presence and ministry.

My journey at Emmanuel continues with a sense of wonder and willingness to serve.

Shanthi,
Sujanna+

Dear Emmanuel!

My journey at Emmanuel has been unfolding in many ways, adding new chapters every year. I thank Almighty God for the opportunity to serve, preach, learn, and adapt to the congregation's evolving needs. My role at Emmanuel has been multifaceted, encompassing Eucharist services, seasonal liturgies, Eucharist services at Bethesda, and supporting the pastoral care



Thanksgiving Ministry at Isaiah 58

Many thanks go to the Emmanuelites who helped make Thanksgiving a day worthy of thanks at Isaiah 58.



St. Brigid & "Givingness"

(Continued from page 1)

The leadership and participants of our ministries from Altar Guild to acolytes, ushers, and Faith In Action (to name just a few), have moved, adapted, dreamed, and served in ways new and old, with grace and enthusiasm. It's inspiring, but not just to me. It is also a witness to our local community of Emmanuel's commitment to heal a broken world and preserve God's creation, as we strive toward justice and equity (see our [Divine Purpose statement](#)). These aren't just words. This is what we've actually done even as viruses, political, and economic changes have swirled around us. It is "givingness" in action, and I am truly grateful to all who make this a reality for us at Emmanuel.

As we walk together into 2024, I pray this portion of the Collect for St. Brigid's day (Feb 1) for our parish family (adapted): *Inspire us, Everliving God, with life and light, and give us perseverance to serve and glorify you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, world without end. Amen.*

Caring Committee: Meals, Flowers, Ministry, Shawls & Prayers

Ministry at Bethesda:

- 225 Communion

37+ Martha's Meals:

Thinking of You Cards:

- 204 cards
- 135 Birthdays
- 19 50th Anniversaries
- 24 Bereavement
- 26 Thinking of You

11+ Prayer Shawls

Flower Ministry:

- 55 Spring Flowers
- 62 Poinsettias

The Caring Ministries Committee of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, originally formed to oversee the needs of older adult parishioners, broadened its focus to include all members of the parish several years ago. Eucharist at Bethesda which began in 2022 under the direction of Rev. Sujanna Raj has continued on the first and third Thursdays of the month. Eucharist is celebrated with the residents of Bethesda at Old Orchard Retirement Community. There are quite a

few Emmanuel members who live there. Rev. Sujanna celebrates most of the time and Rev. Jerre Birdsong comes when she is not available. In 2023, 225 communions have been served with an average attendance of 5.9 residents and 5.3 facilitators (clergy + musicians + Caring Committee members) at each service. Having Susan Shillito provide music for the service each time is a delight as well as her cohort Bob Shillito.

Martha's Meals: Delivery of meals continues to provide meals for individuals and families during a difficult time under the leadership of Lisa Liss. In 2023, over 37 meals were taken by volunteers to individuals and families.

The card ministry: Parishioners aged 70 or older received a special birthday card from Emmanuel. Couples celebrating 50 years of marriage or more, as well as those couples celebrating their 25th anniversary, received a special anniversary card. Parishioners who lost a

loved one received a bereavement card. Thinking of You Cards were sent to individuals who were ill, had surgery, or were just in need of a cheerful greeting. All cards were designed by Committee members and signed by the chair of the committee for the clergy and the committee. Individuals who received a prayer shawl also received a card. A total of 204 cards were sent out in 2023 including 135 birthday cards, 19 fiftieth anniversary cards, 0 twenty-fifth anniversary cards, 24 bereavement cards and 26 thinking of you cards. Pat Wiltse and Peg Cooper prepared the cards each month.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: The members of this ministry continued to knit or crochet prayer shawls either at home or at church on the 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons. Eleven plus shawls were given to individuals experiencing illness, bereavement or

other crisis situations. The shawls represent Emmanuel wrapping around individuals in their time of need.

55 Spring flowers and 62 Christmas Poinsettias were delivered to individuals in 2023 prior to Easter and Christmas so their season would be brightened. The Caring Committee coordinated the delivery of both the spring flowers and poinsettias.

Caring Ministries Committee Members:

Peg Cooper, Chair
Shari Kelts
Debby Martin
Lisa Liss
Katherine Ziegler, Parish Nurse



Women of Emmanuel Gather to Renew Ministries and Friendships

The Women of Emmanuel gathered on September 6 to share fellowship and enjoy Donna Erickson's "Mental Blocks."



Jerre Birdsong: Leading the 4 Pillars of Faith in Action

Having been ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons in 2014, I have been assigned by Bishop Deon Johnson to serve Emmanuel as its Deacon. Deacons are to help ALL congregants in living into their baptismal covenant. Specifically, we are to assist all parishioners in

- Proclaiming by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
- Seeking and serving Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself;
- Striving for justice and peace

among all people and respecting the dignity of every human being.

This ministry at Emmanuel is primarily undertaken through Faith in Action. At the heart of Emmanuel is a commitment to serve, and our Faith in Action is evidence of that commitment. It is the largest ministry at Emmanuel and comprises many, many ways we serve our neighbors in Jesus' name. We have divided these many ministries into four Pillars: Feeding and Caring, Justice and Equity, EarthLove, and Diocesan Minis-

tries. A report for each of these Pillars follows. Kathleen Martin and Tom Smith serve as co-chairs of Faith in Action.

Jesus is calling us to connect up our talents and passions with the needs of the world. What is Jesus calling you to do? We think you will find the answer in one of our four Pillars. If you want to address a need, but don't know how to do it, talk to your deacon. If you want to do something to help, but don't know what ministry to get involved in, talk to your deacon. And if you think that service



ministry is not for you, expect to be gently nudged by your deacon. That's what we do!

In Christ,

The Rev. Deacon Jerre Birdsong

Emmanuel Connects with the Diocese: ECM, UTO, and More

Emmanuel continues to support the ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. Emmanuel sponsors birthday parties at the city and county Juvenile Detention Centers as part of Episcopal City Mission (ECM). We also collected gift cards for ECM through our Advent Giving Tree and hosted the gift-wrapping party. Many individuals from Emmanuel support the ministry with financial support and by attending Moment in Time, the annual fundraising gala.

We encourage supporting the ministry of United Thank Offering (UTO) and Episcopal Relief and Development, both programs of the National Church.

Currently the program at Deaconess Anne House is being reviewed so we are on pause until that is back up and running.

Grace Hill, a very old ministry of the diocese, is being re-imagined. Stay tuned! If you would like to know more, please talk to Mary Jane Kuhn, a member of the Grace Hill Task Force.



Many hands made joyful work at the Annual ECM Gift Wrapping Event.

Feeding & Caring Ministry Brings Sustenance to a Wide Community

The Feeding & Caring Pillar embraces many ministries whose reports may be found throughout this magazine. Our ministries include:

Emmanuel Food Ministry began in 1973 as an Emergency Food Center for St. Louis County. Today, we still operate a food center that is open Monday-Friday 9 am to 2 pm. In addition to the food center, we donate non-perishable food and funds for food to various organizations such as Webster-Rock Hill Ministries and Isaiah 58 Ministries. Our food center receives referrals from other churches, from Webster-Rock Hill Ministries, Webster University and others in our community.

Webster-Rock Hill Ministries is a social service agency located in 63119 zip code. They provide food, clothing and support to anyone in need.

LifeWise STL

St. John's Peace Meal

Rise Against Hunger

Camp SunSplash

Isaiah 58

Sew Hope

Refugee Resettlement

Alcoholics Anonymous

EarthLove Team Hits the Ground Running: Sustainability, Gardens & Bees, Oh my!

EarthLove, a Faith-in-Action pillar, began organizing and meeting in mid-2023. We have begun with a dynamic and talented team that is always ready to share their ideas and happy to volunteer their time. The EarthLove team has begun by focusing on how we can make our Emmanuel property more sustainable and supportive of the native plants and insects that are challenged by climate and human activities and to help educate our parish and our neighbors on how they can take steps to sustain native plants and animals. Our current projects include the on-going maintenance of the apple orchard, removing invasive plants from our grounds, and the creation of a native garden at the corner of Jones Hall.

One very exciting project that began in 2023 was the alliance of Emmanuel with Webster University's professor of Biology, Nicole Miller Struttmann. Dr. Miller-Struttmann is an expert in bees/pollinators and how they are responding to long-term climate change and has been studying the local bee population that visits our orchard. She also spoke at the 9 am formation on October 29th to share her research of what she has learned about our Emmanuel native bees and her other research projects. We are hoping that schedules will align and we can host her at another one of our 9 am formations in 2024.



In November, Earth Love combined forces with the Emmanuel Facilities team to host a fall clean up. Emmanuelites young and old gathered together to remove the invasive honeysuckle and winter creeper on the Emmanuel grounds near the orchard and parking lot. The group also removed a few years of built up of limbs and yard waste and accumulated fall leaves so they could be recycled into mulch. Also started at that event was the preparation of the new Jones Hall native garden. This garden has been designed by our own Phil Egart in collaboration with Missouri Botanical Garden's Tyler Prestien as part of Phil's master gardener training. We will be inviting all interested Emmanuelites to join us in creating this garden in Spring. We will be planting, painting rocks to create a "river," and building bee hotels to encourage our pollinators to visit the new plants.



We invite anyone who is interested to contact us or join in on one of the upcoming events. Everyone is welcome.

We invite anyone who is interested to contact us or join in on one of the upcoming events. Everyone is welcome.

Justice and Equity: Striving for Justice and Peace Among All People

Metropolitan Congregations United

- Participation in getting signatures for ballot initiative to raise minimum wage and mandate paid sick leave
- Participation in fund-raising gala and on-going operations for advocacy



Churches Together for Justice

- Every Friday night—BLM vigil at 6 pm on Lockwood for racial justice
- June 2023—Co-sponsored march and rally addressing gun violence
- October 2023—Emmanuel hosted Julie Burchett from WGPC/CTFJ to adult formation to explain where our two churches can work together.
- October 2023—Hosted training for affordable housing canvassing

Emmanuel

August 2023 through the Weekly E-News—introduced parishioners to the opportunities of **The Episcopal Church Office of Government Affairs**. (From Pews to Public Square)

Ballot initiative re: minimum wage and paid sick leave

At homecoming in September—collected signatures for MCU initiative for minimum wage & paid sick leave

Gun Violence Awareness

December 2023—participated in letter writing campaign to Missouri House Speaker and Missouri State Senator to encourage gun violence prevention



Immigration

Provided pre-school scholarship for 3-year-old from Afghanistan

Emmanuel's Music Program Expands with Voices and Instruments

The music ministry is comprised of the Emmanuel (adult) choir, the children's choir, and the many gifts and talents from the wider congregation. The adult choir, which has expanded to about 20 lay and professional vocalists, rehearses Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm and sings every Sunday during the choir season, which runs from Labor Day to Memorial Day. The children's choir joyfully sings in worship once a month and takes its cue and exuberance from Lauren Romano, Emmanuel's Children's Choir Director entering her 10th year.

2023 marked a particularly strong year for the music program. The Emmanuel Choir rose to the challenge and succeeded in rendering several difficult anthems, notably by C. V. Stanford, Britten, and Holst. These milestones have strengthened the vocal quality, unity, and receptivity of the choir. The children's choir and their rambunctious energy continue to bring smiles and laughter to worship. The Clarion Brass quintet made its Emmanuel debut at the Bishop's Visitation over the summer and has made Emmanuel its home venue for Christmas Eve. The quintet's professionalism and exceptional caliber have profoundly enriched our worship.

Also over the summer, we said our goodbyes to Anthony Murgo for his brief time as the

tenor section leader, who relocated to Kirksville with his wife Natalie. We wish them well in their respective careers. His vacancy was filled by Patrick Zelaya, who comes from Christ Church Cathedral and possesses deep knowledge and experience in choral singing. Patrick has also begun taking organ lessons at Emmanuel. He has already played in worship a few times with great success, and we look forward to continuing his interest and growth in organ playing.

Music in worship in 2023 would not have been possible without the time, talent, and commitment from each and every member of the Emmanuel Choir whom I have the utmost honor, privilege, and joy of directing. Week in and week out, the following individuals tirelessly join in one voice in praise and glory to our God in the highest:

Sopranos:

Penny Allen †
Jen Dunn
Nancy Grow ‡
Lynn Stephenson

Altos:

Kim Bleyer
Kimberly Buchholz †
Alison Dunn ‡
Shari Kelts
Lauren Romano *
Katherine Ziegler



Jae has a devoted fan base of all ages who gather at the end of the service to marvel at his hands and watch his feet as they make beautiful music.

Tenors:

Sue Clauss
Ann Marie Ruhlin
Patrick Zelaya * †

Basses:

Davis Allen
Lou Clauss
Phil Egart †
Al Ludwig
Brian Stephenson †
Charlie Walch

* paid section leader
† new/returning/incoming member
‡ whenever local

Music at Emmanuel is further enhanced by the many gifts and talents from the congregation. The following individuals have deepened our worship experience and the meaning of liturgy:

Mary Bleyer, voice
Susan Clauss, recorder/flute & arranger
Phoebe Dunn, piano
Cheryl Foster, organ
Sam Garrett, cello
Silas Garrett, cello
Patrick Stephenson, voice
Adalyn Wilson, violin
Lachlan Wilson, violin
Sophia Wilson, violin
Patrick Zelaya, organ
Bob Ziegler, trumpet

Respectfully submitted,



Homecoming Sunday 2023 with harpist Sonja Westberg

Children's Music Thrives with Joy, Love & Bells Under Lauren Romano

The Emmanuel Children's Choir has been under the direction of Lauren Romano for nine years. The return of Wednesday night fellowship dinners have positively increased participation in Emmanuel's Children's Choir since the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of participants still hasn't been consistent enough to split into Cherub and Junior Choir, but I am hopeful to return to separated age-group rehearsals next year. In 2023, we had anywhere from 5-15 kids (ages 4-10) in attendance during Wednesday rehearsals, and they sang at least once a month during the 10:00 am Sunday morning service. In the fall of 2023, the church purchased a set of

children's handbells from the Krystal Bell Method, which was a big hit at the 3:00 pm Children's Christmas Eve Service. I look forward to using the bells as a way to include the children's involvement in our Sunday worship.

During Wednesday rehearsals, we practice songs for the upcoming services, play musical games, and learn about basic elements of music. We discuss how to express the lyrics and glorify the Lord with our voices and instruments. Each week, I work to create a loving atmosphere of vocal learning, faith growth, and mutual care. This congregation has been so wonderful, and I couldn't be happier

worshipping with you and teaching the Children's Choir every week. The kids are incredibly enthusiastic, and I love that our church encourages them to participate throughout the worship service. Thank you to Katie

and Jae for their help and support of the Children's Choir. The constant encouragement from everyone at Emmanuel is tremendously appreciated.

Lauren Romano



Bishop Deon Visits for Confirmations and Reception

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson visited Emmanuel on Sunday, July 9, to confirm **Catherine Mary (Cate) Fear** and **Joseph Delaney (Joe) Ryan**, and to receive **Stephen Mark Rackers**. Of course it wouldn't be a celebration without one of Bishop Deon's famous selfies!



Family Ministries Abound: Katie Gregston Leads Children, Youth and All

Children and Youth Learn That Service, Worship, and Study Can Also Be Fun

As we enter a new year, and I look back at 2023, I am thrilled to report that our Emmanuel kids are thriving. Our children and youth continue to amaze me with their kindness, creativity, integrity, and courage. They have navigated a pandemic, balanced academic rigor with extracurricular activities, handled pressure from social media, and, most importantly, found the time to make this world a better place. They're amazing, and I'm grateful everyday for the adults at Emmanuel who support them.

Our youngest members have enjoyed time in the Prayground (aka the quiet area in the chapel) and in the nursery where they're cared for by Alex Hughey and Nicholas Williams.

Pam Penrose leads our Faith-Quest program for kids in pre-school and elementary school. The group meets on the first and

third Sundays at 9:00 am, and enjoy crafts, snacks, and games all while learning more about the Bible and our Episcopal faith.



Working on a craft project for children in detention.

We began offering Children's Chapel during our 10:00 am service, thanks to Aaron Dowdall, Libby Dowdall, Beth Knapp, Rachael Ludwig, Julie Smith, and Margo Smith.

Our middle and high school kids have enjoyed Youth Group sessions with our fearless leader Mimi Shipp. We meet to share a meal, have a Bible study, and

complete a service project. Davis Allen and Ann Marie Ruhlin have helped us lead our Bible studies. We also enjoy support from Amy Ryan, Brian and Tessa Weiland, and Matthew and Molly Wilson.

The kids have a passion for service, and we are always happy to help support them. They have baked and sold dog treats to support Second Chance Ranch, painted Emmanuel's donation carts, helped install the Giving Tree, organized the Holiday Market at LifeWise StL, made goody bags for youth in juvenile detention, and more.



Youth offer service to Lifewise STL.

This year, we've enjoyed our traditional family events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Pentecost Picnic, Backpack Blessing, Homecoming, Pumpkin Carving,

and Advent Celebration. While our adult leadership is strong, we are always looking for more helping hands.

Our children and youth programs exist because of our amazing team of leaders. If I've missed anyone, please know it's unintentional, and accept my sincerest apologies. There are many adults in this congregation who see a need, step in without hesitating, and may be subsequently missed in recognition. I'm honored and grateful that Emmanuel kids have a group of adults they can count on to help them navigate childhood. Emmanuel gives our kids a "safe place to land" where they know they will be loved and accepted without conditions. That means more than anything in the life of a child today.

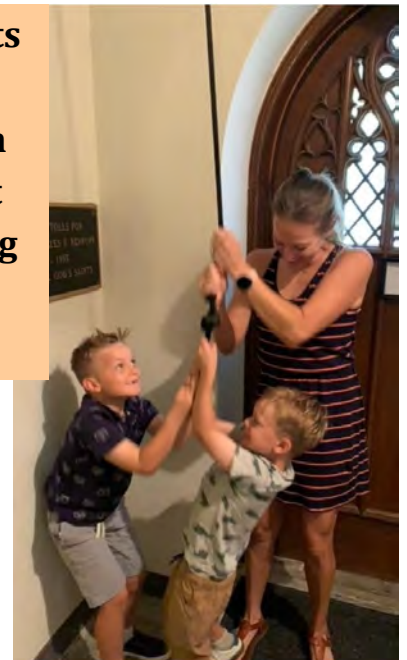


Youth attend worship service

Backpack and Briefcase Blessings:



Nothing gets the school year off to a better start than ringing the steeple bell!



Emmanuel's Pet Blessing Gives a Glimpse of God's Unconditional Love

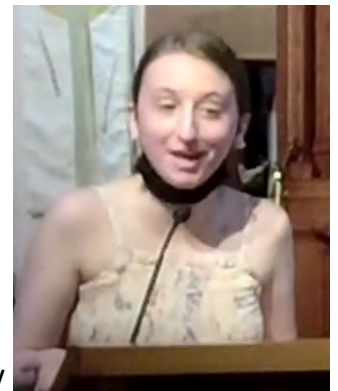


Pumpkin Carving Brings Fun for All Ages



Alison Dunn Wins ECW Scholarship

On August 13, Alison Dunn was presented with the Episcopal Church Women Scholarship for 2023. This scholarship honors a woman who is a member of an Episcopal congregation in the diocese and is studying toward a degree in a field of service to others. Alison is currently in her second year at Truman State University working towards a B.S. in Chemistry and a Master's degree in secondary education, with the goal of becoming a high school chemistry teacher. In Kirksville, Alison attends Trinity Episcopal Church and serves as the Peer Minister for campus ministry. When she's home, Alison sings with the Emmanuel Choir, including as a soloist and featured singer.



Emmanuel Preschool Celebrates 75 Years of Caring for Children

Since 1949, Emmanuel Preschool has been proudly providing three-, four- and five-year-old children in our community with a caring and creative early childhood education. We operate a half-day program (9-11:45 a.m.) with opportunities for children to stay for extended days until 2:30 p.m.

Our preschool will be celebrating its 75th year in 2024! This is a testament to the wonderful educators that have shared their time and talent to make Emmanuel Preschool a recognized name for excellent early-childhood care and education in the Webster Groves community. Emmanuel Center for the Young Years began as a business venture by Charlotte

Goode in 1949. In 1972, we organized as a non-profit organization under the directorship of Liz Burst who dedicated herself to educating children for many joyful years. In 1983, Rita Rundquist became director, after helping in the office since 1974, and continued the good reputation of the preschool for 36 years! JoAn MacBryde taught and helped in the office from 1982-2008 and was co-director from 2008-2010. In 2010, Mrs. Rundquist and Mrs. MacBryde retired, and Angie MacBryde became director. After 5 years, our second Mrs. MacBryde took another position and passed the position on to Rachael Ludwig.

Preschool families come from across the area including Web-

ster Groves, Kirkwood, Shrewsbury, Maplewood and St. Louis. Emmanuel Preschool is a community preschool; of the 55 families we serve, only 5 are members of Emmanuel Parish.

Emmanuel Preschool's teachers, Preschool Board and I continue to be grateful to the community and our parish for allowing us to offer an outstanding preschool experience for children. I would like to offer special thanks this year to the dedication of my Preschool Board.

2023-2024 Emmanuel Preschool Board of Directors:

Betsy Lindner, President
Katie Franke, Vice President
Cathi Boyd, Secretary
Marissa Yoder, Treasurer
Penny Allen
Bethany Keller
Rogene Nelsen
Margo Smith

Respectfully submitted,
Rachael Ludwig
Managing Director



The Rainbow Room: Joy and Learning for Our Youngest Children



The Parents' Day Out program continues to evolve and is now called the Emmanuel Rainbow Room. The Rainbow Room is in its third year operating as such and has two new teachers, Mrs. Ginger Garrett and Mrs. Lucy Parker. Both teachers have had children attend Emmanuel and

their commitment to the growth and development of our youngest learners can be seen every day. The children in our care come from various families and backgrounds; our room truly resembles a rainbow. We are working with these young learners by introducing them to basic classroom manners, such as sitting for snack and walking in a line. Children are encour-

aged to socialize, create, read and dance. The structure is limited but the play and creativity are boundless! Our real joy and teaching come from practicing kindness and sharing. We enjoy sharing the message of God's love with all our families and hope they leave us filled with joy! Rainbow Room operates from 9-12 pm Monday-Thursday. We hope to have 20

children enrolled, 10 in each of our 2-day classes.

For parish families interested in enrolling their 3-5 year old children in Emmanuel Preschool or 2-year-old children in Emmanuel Rainbow Room/PDO please contact me anytime at 314-680-1042 (cell) or (314) 961-2393, ext. 123 (office), or email rachael@emmanuelpreschool.org

Altar Guild: Silver, Linens, Flowers, and Tons of Dedication

Do you notice the color of the banners on each side of the reredos (the ornamental wall covering behind the altar) when you enter the church on Sunday mornings? They change depending on which of the six liturgical seasons we're observing: Advent, Christmas, ordinary time after Epiphany, Lent, Easter and ordinary time after Easter.

We set the Table (Altar) so that the bread and wine are set out to be blessed by the priests so

we may all share in the sacramental body and blood of Christ together in the Eucharist on Sunday morning. The Altar Guild refreshes the altar between services on Sunday mornings. We prepare the kits for the Eucharistic visitors to take to those parishioners who cannot join us in person, as well as preparing the kit for the priest or deacon to take weekday communion to parishioners at Bethesda. We mark readings,

set out the silver chalices and patens and work closely with the clergy so that the services run smoothly. The Altar Guild at Emmanuel tends to these changes every Saturday morning.

We beautify with seasonal lilies and poinsettias and weekly donated altar flowers. There is the opportunity for parishioners to donate money for the flowers that are on the altar 'in memory of' or 'in Thanksgiving for'. This can be done on line or by check with Altar Flowers in the memo line.



If you feel called to this ministry, we would love to have you join us. We now have 15 members and would welcome new members.

Worship Committee: Putting it All Together!

The Worship Committee helps coordinate the various ministries involved in the worship experience at Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The mission of the Worship Committee is: to seek to enhance the worship experience at Emmanuel by developing excellence in execution and to minister to those

who serve at worship services by providing an opportunity to review and plan training for the various roles.

Members of this committee include representatives from the Clergy, Music Department, Altar Guild, Ushers, Ministers of Ceremonies, Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes, Lectors and Intercessors.

The Worship Committee meets four times per year, generally prior to one of the main liturgical seasons of

the Church. The primary goal is to focus and coordinate the efforts of these various groups to make worship a unified and positive experience for the congregation and visitors. Since the members of the committee come from all parts of the congregation, they are able to get and give feedback from the worship community at large. This helps the Worship Committee to work toward providing a worship experience that is increasingly meaningful and engaging to all who attend.

The Worship Committee continued to meet virtually during 2023 until the last meeting of the year when we gathered for a



"Spooky Halloween" dinner. Undeterred by a virus and whatever else is sent our way, we continued our work as the Worship Committee to enhance worship at Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

Thanks to the Committee members for their talents, wisdom, and dedication!

Janet Dobbs, chair



The Food Center Met Increased Need of 16% and 99 Households in 2023

The Food Center served 708 households in 2023 which included 718 children and 1250 adults. This is an increase of 16% and 99 households compared with last year. The trend continues of being very busy!! It seems that the area’s social workers have found us and are referring their clients to us and sometimes coming with them to pick up the food. As in previous years, most of the clients were referred by Webster-Rock Hill Ministries (WRHM) and many are coming from outside the 63119 zip code. We are seeing many more Webster University students, mostly international students. The Food Center continued to extend its outreach committing \$2,400 in support to WRHM for the purchase of fresh vegetables, dairy and meat.

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who continue to serve not only the Food Center but recently trained to use the new security system to screen visitors to the building. Gail Range continues her service as

Volunteer Coordinator: developing, distributing, and posting monthly volunteer work schedules, maintaining and changing Food Center procedures, and providing orientation of new volunteers. Christi Maginn has also continued her outreach in support of our ministry and organizing continuing education for our volunteers and is my backup for inventory and sourcing.

We continued to get great support from our friends and neighbors who held food drives: The College School, PolyCon, and our own parishioner, John Long, who held multiple food drives amongst his family and friends!! Other food donations came from our personal angel, Dorothea Bean, as well as neighbors of our church like Holy Redeemer’s St Vincent Society. Pam and Dale Penrose have scoured all the local Aldi’s every month to find the food we need. Many of our parishioners have stepped up to help with the monthly

shopping as well as trying to obtain some of the food that isn’t available at the time of the shopping trips. The little red wagon that is used to bring the food donations to the altar during service has provided 1366 pieces of food this year. Our parishioners were so generous in their continued donations of over 2600 food items as well as \$15,000.00 in monetary donations.

We will have a monetary shortfall in 2024. We have spent down our previous surplus and will need to find ways to either increase food items donated or monetary support. We spent over \$21,000.00 on food items in 2023. We recently received coverage by the Webster Kirkwood Times in a lengthy article about our mission and

how the community can support our efforts. Our hope is that we not only generated some local awareness but also opened doors for other resources to step forward and support our fundraising and food donation activities.

Without your support throughout the year and the much needed donations the Food Center receives from the parish and the community we could not provide the requisite nourishment to improve the quality of life for many throughout the community. Through God’s grace, the Food Center was the recipient of 11,000 food items donated in 2023 in addition to a number of monetary gifts provided in honor or in memory of loved ones.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte A. Martin
Food Center Administrative Coordinator

2023 Financial Report:	
Beginning Balance	\$15,387.04
Money Received	\$15,210.58
Food purchases	\$21,306.39
Ending Balance	\$ 6,967.43

College School’s “Wagon Train” Supports Increased Community Need



Rise Against Hunger” Packages Over 15,000 Meals

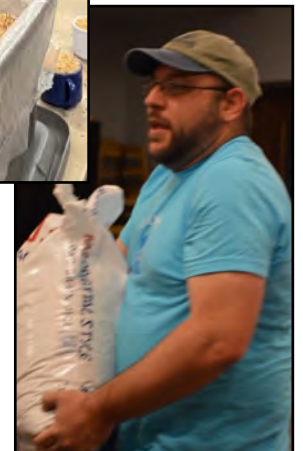


Emmanuel’s Food Ministry sponsored an encore performance of 2022’s very successful Rise Against Hunger food packaging event, which will now be an annual event. Over 100 volunteers participated in the event in the dining room on Sunday, April 30. Emmanuel participants were joined by volunteers from St. Mark’s and Church of the Advent.

Over 15,000 meals were packaged in support of Rise Against Hunger, an organization driven by the vision of a world without hunger. Their mission is to end hunger by providing food and life-changing aid to the world’s most vulnerable and create a global commitment to mobilize the necessary resources.

The funds to support the event, \$6,000, were donated or provided through fund raising. The Food Center contributed \$3,000 to the event, the Youth Group sponsored a plant sale, raising \$1,800, a donation was received from St. Mark’s and the remainder came from individual donations.

The date for the 2024 Rise Against Hunger food packaging event has been scheduled for April 28. Mark Rackers, the chairman for the event, and his team are planning to package even more meals this year.



“Service Circus” Brings Area Children Together

A “Service Circus” was hosted by Emmanuel and supported by 10 Youth leaders and our middle and high school youth as Jr. Shepherds. Forty children from Emmanuel, Christ Lutheran, and other local parishes attended. Complete with circus fun and decorations, the children completed service projects throughout the week: making cards for kids in hospitals via the Color a Smile project, decorating food center bags, collecting boxes of mac and cheese for the Food Center. The kids enjoyed outside play, special snacks (Pam Penrose), music sessions (Lauren Romano), STEM activities, and more!



Homecoming & Ministry Fair: Food, Fun & Service



Sign one up for EarthLove!



Alan & Stephanie enjoy the day!



Say “hi” to good friends!



Pam makes signing up for anything fun!



Valori greets parishioners at Ministry Fair

Youth Sunday Graduating Seniors

Bailey Allen

Luca Crang

Charley Crews

Owen Crews

Silas Garrett

Katie Lawless

Kathryn MacBryde

Will Peck

Kate Peck

Davis Ragan



Lifelong friends Bailey Allen and Kate MacBryde share the lectern on Youth Sunday.

Gun Violence Event Draws Over 300 to Emmanuel's Lawn

Through Churches Together for Justice, Emmanuel participated in Gun Violence Awareness Sunday, June 4, 2023. This community event included walking from WG Presbyterian Church to Emmanuel's side yard where approximately 300 people listened to informational speakers, survivors, and politicians.

On Sunday, December 10, at the request of the Diocese of Missouri Gun Violence Missioner, Emmanuel distributed packets to communicate with our State Senator and State Speaker of the House to support gun laws. Also, on December 9, 2023, a Guns to Gardens event was held at WG Presbyterian Church. Guns to Gardens takes back guns, then dismantles and repurposes them as garden tools. We anticipate continuing to be involved in these Gun Violence Awareness activities.



Vestry Members 2023



Allison Williams
Sr. Warden



Rev. Jerre Birdsong
Deacon



Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer
Priest-in-Charge



Rev. Sujanna Raj
Associate Priest



Charlie Walch
Jr. Warden



Kristyn Brennan



Maryann Vognild, Treasurer



Lynn Stephenson, Secretary



Peg Cooper



Lissa Johnson



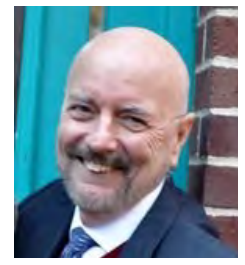
Elizabeth Kaul



Lee Nelsen



Joyce Pluhar



John Simon

Special Thanks to our Staff & Ministry Leaders:

- The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer, Priest in Charge
- The Rev. Sujanna Raj, Associate Priest
- The Rev. Jerre Birdsong, Deacon
- Mimi Shipp, Director of Communication & Invitation
- Jae Young Park, Organist and Director of Music
- Lauren Romano, Children's Choir Director
- Katie Gregston, Children & Youth Ministries Coordinator
- Rachael Ludwig, Managing Director, Emmanuel Preschool and Parents' Day Out
- Jeannie Keyes, Linda Schuchmann, JoAnne Warren, Altar Guild
- Peg Cooper, Caring Committee
- Charlotte A. Martin, Gail Range, Christi Maginn, Food Center Ministry
- Janet Dobbs, Worship Committee
- Faith In Action: Kathleen Martin, Tom Smith
- EarthLove: Lynn Stephenson, Dale Penrose
- Justice & Equity: Lee Nelsen, Mimi Shipp
- Diocesan Involvement: Mary Jane Kuhn, Donna Erickson
- Feeding & Caring: Peg Cooper, Charlotte Martin
- Tom Smith, Men of Emmanuel
- Donna Erickson, Mimi Shipp, Katie Gregston, Women of Emmanuel
- Joyce Pluhar, Peg Cooper, Steve Cunningham, Betsy Lindner, Ed Lindner, John Long, Laura McLaughlin and JoAnne Warren, Stewardship
- Jim Kern, Financial Assistant
- Philip Poke, Sexton
- Patricia Altemueller, Office Staff
- Ann Marie Ruhlin, Office Volunteer