

2025 Annual Report

January 26th, 2025



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Annual Report of The Priest In Charge

The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer

Dream on, Emmanuel. Dream until our dreams come true

As many of you know, I have been a Spiritual Director for over 30 years. Spiritual Direction, a ministry of discernment, involves a unique relationship in which the director companions the directee into a closer, deeper relationship with God and others, while noticing and sharing with them observations about what barriers they face and offering support on how to find their way through them.



I halted this ministry three years ago to devote my time to my ministry here at Emmanuel and in the Diocese of Missouri. In the absence of my ministry of Spiritual Direction, God provided me a whole parish with this gift! Can I tell you how rare that is? The diocese noticed it too, sending us as many persons as we could manage who were entering or in the discernment process toward ordination. This is a vitally important kind of discernment, and you all do it naturally.

What I noticed each time Emmanuel entered into one of these relationships, was how quickly and abundantly your love flowed to the person in discernment. Then I realized - this was nothing new - this is how Emmanuel loves: quickly and abundantly. I experienced the same flow of love from you all from the start of my ministry here, even in the midst of your pain. I continue to see it and hear about it every time a new person or family visits us. Also, nothing could restrain your joy - not COVID, not conflict, nothing. Your joy happens almost defiantly. Maybe I should say, God's joy in you is defiantly present in all the circumstances of life at and around Emmanuel... also a rare gift.

I feel so blessed that God led me here to serve with and among you. As many of you have heard me say, this is the most inspiring, most fun parish I've ever served as a priest. Ministry with you is a joy. I also thank God for the clergy and staff at Emmanuel - a team of gifted, hard-working, faithful people. Together with your vestry - your elected servant-leaders - Emmanuel is a richly blessed community of faith ready to answer God's call.



Where we go in 2025 is our current discernment. Your Wardens and Vestry have inaugurated a process by which you are invited to DREAM about the path ahead for Emmanuel. God has promised in Scripture to speak to us in our dreams. So, dream on, Emmanuel! Dream until our dreams come true. (H/T to Aerosmith)

You are trustworthy. You discern faithfully, love abundantly, and emanate joy. It's who you are. And I am grateful to be here with you, enjoying every minute of ministry with and among you.

Annual Report of The Associate Priest

The Rev. Sujanna Raj

A Year of Growth, Service, and Joy at Emmanuel

As we move through another year, I am deeply grateful for the many ways God continues to challenge and surprise me in my role at Emmanuel. It has been a year of personal and spiritual growth, and I have been blessed to walk alongside each of you in this vibrant community of faith. My work here has been multifaceted, with each aspect of my ministry bringing new insights, opportunities, and joys. In addition to my preaching, teaching, and leading our seasonal liturgies and HE services, I have been privileged to engage in many other vital ministries supporting and strengthening our congregation. Whether it's through the Eucharist services at Bethesda, Martha Meals, prayer shawls knit with love and warmth for those, grieving and sick. Emmanuel prays ministry and Eucharist visitors ministry, my experiences with these ministries continue to remind me of the power of prayer, community, and the simple, sacred act of being present with one another.

I always think for a time like this God got me here prepared and equipped me to meet the needs of international students who are the lost sheep among us. Although I did my part in translating to the language of immigrant international undocumented students to find some resources to help them sustain. It is the Emmanuel community responded to their needs and participated actively through the winter coat drive, and groceries, giving opportunities for them to serve in the church and making them feel welcomed in showing God's love. Light to the Nations committee helped me so much in finding ways and ideas to better serve our neighbors.

Every encounter, every conversation, and every question along the way has been an opportunity for me to grow in my faith and service. It is my hope that, together, we continue to find new ways to embody Christ's love and joy in our lives and to share that light with others.

I Thank Valori+, Deacon Jerre, Vestry, Staff, and Light to the Nations committee for your continued support, and prayers, and for allowing me to serve with you all. I look forward to another year of surprises, challenges, and above all, joy in this sacred work we do together in the name of Christ.



Caring Committee

By Peg Cooper

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 is celebrated with the residents of Bethesda at Old Orchard Retirement Community. There are several Emmanuel members who live there. In 2024, 142 communions were received. The average attendance was 6.5 residents and 5.9 facilitators (clergy + musicians + Caring Committee members) per month. Having Susan Shillito provide music for the service each time is a delight as well as her cohort Bob Shilito.

In 2024, 142 communions were received. The average attendance was 6.5 residents and 5.9 facilitators (clergy + musicians + Caring Committee members) per month. Having Susan Shillito provide music for the service each time is a delight as well as her cohort Bob Shilito. **Martha's Meals:** provide meals for individuals and families during a difficult time under the leadership of Lisa Liss. In 2024 over 49 meals were been taken by volunteers to 11 different 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 in need of a cheerful greeting. All cards were designed by Committee members. A total of 236 cards, prepared by Pat Wiltse and Peg Cooper, were sent out in 2024: 151 birthday cards, 19 fiftieth anniversary cards, 18 bereavement cards, 23 thinking of you cards and 25 prayer shawl cards. **Prayer Shawl Ministry** on the 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons. Twenty five shawls along with a special card were given to individuals experiencing illness, bereavement or other crisis situations. The shawls represent Emmanuel wrapping around individuals in their time of need. Fifty five spring **flowers** and 62 Christmas Poinsettias were delivered to individuals in 2024 prior to Easter and Christmas so their season would be brightened. The Caring Committee coordinated the delivery of both the spring flowers and poinsettias. **Eucharistic ministers ministry:** The Eucharistic ministers take communion after the main Sunday service to older individuals who are unable to attend. The number of Eucharistic ministers is 14 and the number receiving communion is 13. The number of visits in 2024 was 4 to 8 per month. **50+ wedding anniversary celebration:** In October, 2024 the Committee held a 50+ wedding anniversary celebration for the nineteen couples of the parish who celebrated 50 or more years of marriage in 2024. Twelve of the 19 couples and their families attended. The celebration included a renewal of marriage vows during the service and a lovely reception afterwards with wedding pictures shown with everyone guessing who the couple was.

Caring Ministries Committee Members: Peg Cooper, Chair Shari Kelts, Betsy Lindner, Debby Martin Lisa Liss, Katherine Ziegler, Parish Nurse

Annual Report of The Deacon

The Rev. Jerre Birdsong



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. I serve at Emmanuel on the first and third Sundays of every month, but I am available to you every weekday. 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 (FIA). 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 Partnership. 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!

Annual FIA Meeting



Diocesan Involvement

By *Mary Jane Kuhn*

The Diocesan Involvement pillar is committed to supporting the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. It primarily supports three ministries: Episcopal City Mission (ECM), United Thank Offering (UTO), and Grace Hill:

ECM is not a mission and it is not only working in the city. ECM chaplains have been serving youth in the Juvenile Justice System for 70 years, at both the city and county detention centers. We host birthday parties at each center once a year. Kathy Tate is our Parish Ambassador and can tell you more about the chaplains, you can also visit their website, ecitymission.org. There are opportunities to volunteer and to donate. ECM needs donations to fund the chaplains and their programs.

United Thank Offering (UTO) is a national ministry of thanksgiving and granting. UTO is centered around small blue boxes where you put a coin or paper money in as a thanksgiving for something that day. Those coins add up and once a year they are collected and turned into the diocese to be joined with the donations from across the diocese. Eventually all donations go to the UTO board. The board receives grant requests and they work to make the decision of which grants can be fulfilled. Since 1883 5,500 grants have been given totaling 102 million dollars.

Currently **Grace Hill** is being used by St. Patrick's to house folks that need to find permanent housing. Men of Emmanuel make snack bags and deliver them once a month. The Grace Hill Task Force is working on plans to renovate and bring in new programs.

Feeding & Caring

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.

Other Ministries:

LifeWise STL

St. John's Peace Meal

Rise Against Hunger

Camp SunSplash

Isaiah 58

Refugee Resettlement

Alcoholics Anonymous

Food Center Annual Report

By Charlotte A. Martin

Feeding our Community

The Food Center served 1061 households in 2024 which included 892 children and 2044 adults. This is an increase of 50% or 353 households compared with last year. For comparison purposes we had served an average of 1300 clients per year from 2014-2022. It appears that the area's social workers have found us and are referring their clients to us and many times they are picking up the food for the clients with no transportation. 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 with 163 this year versus 43 in 2023. 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 our Food Center. We have all had to adjust to an increase in clients as well as changing many of our procedures to better serve them and to conserve our resources as best we can, while working within the confines of the existing physical space. 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 by recruiting new volunteers and organizations for food drives and monetary support. She is also my backup for inventory and sourcing of food.

We continued to get great support from our friends and neighbors who held food drives: The College School who had a record year of collecting and donating over 8000 pieces of food (average had been around 6000 pieces). PolyCon, who has a local facility in WG stepped up their game and brought in over 1000 pieces of food. Our own parishioner, John Long continues to hold virtual Facebook food drives amongst his family and friends!! Other food donations came from neighbors of our church like Holy Redeemer's St Vincent Society and many others who hear about our mission and want to help. Pam and Dale Penrose have scoured all the local Aldi's pretty much weekly to find the food we need. Many of our parishioners have stepped up to help with the monthly shopping The little red wagon that is used to bring the food donations to the altar during service has provided 1733 pieces of food this year, up from 1366 in 2023. Our parishioners were so generous in their continued donations of over 2900 food items as well as \$42,000 in monetary donations. But we fear all this won't be enough to support our expanded client base.

We will have a monetary shortfall in 2025. As happened last year, we have spent down our previous surplus and will need to find ways to either increase food items donated or monetary support. A bright spot in this picture is the \$5800 we received from the Christmas collections. We spent over \$36,000 on food items in 2024 versus \$21,000 in 2023.

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 15,000 food items donated in 2024 in addition to a number of monetary gifts provided in honor of or in memory of loved ones.

2024 Financial Report:

Beginning Balance \$6,967.43

Money Received \$42,947.89

Food purchases \$36,322.58

Ending Balance \$11,139.83



Thanksgiving Came Early to Emmanuel with The College School Ingathering!

Before Ingathering



After Ingathering



Expanded Rise Against Hunger Event Packaged 25,000 Meals By Mark Rackers

At the 2024 Rise Against Hunger event, volunteers packaged 25,000 meals! This level was achieved by expanding the effort to include two shifts in the church dining hall on Sunday, April 24th. Members of Emmanuel were joined by volunteers from St. Mark's, Church of the Advent and Holy Redeemer, together totaling over 125 participants. The Rise Against Hunger organization seeks to improve access to nutrition, clean water, quality education and agricultural training to help ensure long-term food security for families worldwide. The meals that were packaged at the 2024 event supported their mission in Africa and the Philippines. The funds required to sponsor this event, \$10,000, were provided by commitments from Emmanuel Ministries, donations from individuals and other churches, and through fundraising.

The date for the 2025 Rise Against Hunger food packaging event has been scheduled for May 4th. Mark Rackers, the chairman for the event, and the planning committee are grateful to all who participated in 2024 and look forward to another great effort this year.



Justice and Equity

By Tricia Copeland and Mimi Shipp

VOTE
faithfully
SUNDAY

In 2024 the Justice & Equity Pillar reassessed our involvement and impact on the various organizations and work we have been doing and made some changes. First we acknowledged that our work is guided by our baptismal covenant. Second, we decided to concentrate on “doing” things and finding opportunities for others to engage in justice work v. engaging in advocacy work. We acknowledge that justice asks us to repair or transform structures that inhibit equity and equity asks us to advocate for those who are underserved by and in those structures. There is nothing easy or simple about doing justice or equity work, and it's even harder to tell you how or what to do! We will continue to share opportunities for you as individuals to engage in this work and we will continue to explore ways our parish can engage in project work.

What we did in 2024

- The Black Lives Matter vigil continues at 6 pm on Fridays. At this point it is primarily supported by Churches Together for Justice. It is something we would like to encourage more people to experience and dialog around.
- We continued having a presence with Churches Together for Justice.
- In April we supported WRHM Trivia Night by purchasing a table for Emmanuelites to join.
- In June we once again participated in the Gun Violence Prevention March and Rally. This year there was much less participation by the larger community but still a great event.
- In June we donated to the WG Freestyle Swim Pass program that allows free passes to kids for the pool.
- In late June, thanks to Kathleen Martin, we contributed to Camp SunSplash in the city by renting hand-washing stations and portable potties for the kids that was closer to their camp area. Kate Gregston also provided VBS type materials to camp.
- In July Tricia Copeland agreed to replace Lee Nelsen as co-chair.
- We asked Rev. Canon Dr. Lauren Stanley from the Diocese of South Dakota to be here in November 24, 2024 and she also preached on November 26 at the community Thanksgiving service.
- We showed our commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community by contributing to three organizations by becoming members or providing financial support. Those organizations are St. Louis Queer Support and Healing (SQSH), Pride StL and PFLAG of Greater St. Louis.
- We continued as a dues paying member of Metropolitan Churches United to support their work with the School to Prison Pipeline and support for Ex-incarcerated individuals.



LOVE ONE ANOTHER

EVERY. SINGLE. OTHER

ALL LIVES CAN'T MATTER UNTIL

**BLACK LIVES
MATTER**

EarthLove

By Lynn Stephenson

The Earth Love Pillar supports activities to make our Emmanuel grounds more sustainable and supportive of native plants and animals and to educate our parish and community on how they can bring conservation to their lives and homes. Key areas of focus for the Earth Love ministry are the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the Emmanuel Apple Orchard, the burgeoning butterfly and pollinator gardens, and the annual fall Environmental Stewardship work day.

In 2024, we installed native pollinator gardens in front of the church and at the Jones Hall entrance. These pollinator gardens include a wide variety of plants that provide nectar and seeds for native pollinators and birds and also butterfly and moth host plants including milkweed for the imperiled Monarch Butterfly. Within the garden we installed a Bee Hotel to support our native bee populations. In April we hosted a “hands-on” Environmentally Focused formation hour with crafts and activities. This included rock painting and everyone in the parish was invited to paint a rock to express their hopes and dreams. The painted rocks were used to create a “dream river” in the Jones Garden. In August we found three large Monarch caterpillars on the milkweed we planted in spring.

In Fall, we collaborated with the Facilities team to host the annual Environmental Stewardship clean up and work day. All generations of Emmanulites gathered together in fellowship to care for the trees, clear leaves from traffic areas, perform garden maintenance, remove invasive plants, and other activities to care for and beautify our grounds.

In 2025, we will continue our work to care for our beautiful campus. Emmanuel is blessed with a large campus containing many open spaces, gardens, and beautiful mature trees. In 2025, one focus will be on developing a long-term conservation plan for the entirety of our property that takes into account caring for our current trees and opportunities to further develop other areas of the campus.

EarthLove Clean Up Day



End Gun Violence March and Rally



Pet Blessing



Altar Guild

By JoAnne Warren



One very important ministry at Emmanuel and most churches is that of the Altar Guild. Many of us have been doing this ministry for years. I had a solemn reminder while celebrating the new year, when asked who would be taking the reins when no current members were no longer able to keep up with this ministry? I've been pondering about that for about a week. This is a plea of sorts to ask again if anyone would be interested in learning to prepare our beautiful church for worship?

The detail may look daunting, but it is simply setting the table for the Eucharist. The details can be learned over time. The time commitment has relaxed over the last 30 years as people's lives have gotten busier. Our routine set-up takes place on Saturday mornings. Sunday requires one or two people to reset the altar after the early service and one to two people to clean up after the second service each week. There are times during the year, especially at Christmas and Easter, that a larger effort is required. And we do have fun working together making worship beautiful!

We would welcome new members! It could be a wonderful, shared experience for a mom or dad and a teenage daughter or son to learn together. Teenagers who might be interested are certainly welcome! The priests and deacons are truly grateful for our support. The job of setting the table would be theirs if there was no Altar Guild.

If you would like to see if this ministry might be meaningful to you, please talk to JoAnne Warren or any Altar Guild member.



Tech Ministry

By Nick Romano

Last year was exciting for the Tech Ministry. Our primary focus remains on providing high-quality live streams of our Sunday services, allowing everyone (whether attending in person or virtually) to participate in worship.

In December, we implemented a major upgrade to our tech setup. New cameras, audio equipment, and software have enhanced the quality of our live streams. I'd like to extend my gratitude to Elliot Belloli for his hard work and expertise in bringing this upgrade to life.

The Tech Ministry thrives because of the dedication of our volunteer team: Cayleigh Thalmann, Tom Jones, Dave Powers, Alex Hughey, and Robert Tate. Their time, effort, and expertise have been invaluable.

Goals for 2025:

- Build on the improvements made last year to further enhance the live-streaming experience.
- Expand the volunteer team to strengthen our long-term sustainability.
- Share more insights into the work of the Tech Ministry.

It's been an honor to serve in this role and contribute to keeping our congregation connected. I appreciate everyone who has supported and encouraged this ministry throughout the year.

Worship Committee

By Janet Dobbs



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 2024 for three meetings and one meeting in person. Our mission has remained the same: how can we enhance the worship experience for Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

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

50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration



Bishop Deon's Visit

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson visited Emmanuel on November 10th. Besides giving a wonderful sermon, Bishop Deon also confirmed 12 parishioners and received another 7:

Confirmed:

Gavin Bleyer
Kimberly Buchholz
Elizabeth Dowdall
Stanley Husi
Alan Jeude
Beatrix Ragan
Abraham Ryan
Ava Weiland
Lachlan Wilson
Cayleigh Thalmann
Emery Gregston
Katherine Gregston

Received:

Steven Donaubauer
Aaron Dowdall
Michael Mancini
Annette Markham
James Markham
Georgia Rheinhardt
Samuel Rheinhardt

The Rev. Mandi Rice's Ordination

The Rev. Mandi Rice was ordained as a priest on December 7th. She then presided over her first Eucharist the next day at Emmanuel. She is now an priest affiliate at Emmanuel and we are happy to have her!



Music and Choir

By Jae Park

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 with a roster of about 20 lay and professional vocalists rehearses Wednesday evenings at 7:05 pm and sings every Sunday during the choir season, which runs from Labor Day to Memorial Day. The children's choir is under the leadership of Lauren Romano, Emmanuel's Children's Choir Director.

Building off of a particularly strong year in 2023 as I noted in last year's report, 2024 demonstrated the mainstay of the music program. The caliber and tenacity of the Emmanuel Choir are evident on Sunday mornings, yet the choir continues to improve by rising to the challenge of rendering difficult anthems. The children's choir has increased its frequency of joyfully singing in worship to about twice a month.

New in 2024 was the formation of a quartet vocal group drawn from the adult choir. The quartet prepares and sings an additional choral anthem in worship, primarily during communion from the rear balcony. I thank the following choir members who have sung in the quartet for their additional time and offering of their refined talents: Alison Dunn, Jen Dunn, Shari Kelts, Lauren Romano, and Patrick Zelaya.

Over the summer, we celebrated Lauren Romano for her 10 year anniversary as Emmanuel's Children Choir Director, a position she has held and blessed Emmanuel with her teaching vocation since 2015. Lauren concurrently serves as an alto section leader in the adult choir and lends her rich mezzo-soprano voice as well as her shining heart and character. Patrick Zelaya, Emmanuel's tenor section leader now in his 2nd year, brings a singing voice that is experienced, resonant, and vivid in tonality. In addition to singing, Patrick is a talented pianist and organist. Now with several successful service playing experiences at Emmanuel under his belt, Patrick is on my short list for subs to be entrusted to carry out the organist's duties whenever I'm away on Sundays.



2024 Community Thanksgiving Chorus

Some noteworthy events in 2024:

- On October 13, Emmanuel hosted a 50th wedding anniversary celebration service in honor of couples celebrating 50 years or more together. Couples were invited to submit music requests from their own wedding ceremonies to be played during the service. I had the distinct joy of playing covers by Al Green, The Carpenters, and Elton John during a church service.
- At the Bishop's Visitation on November 10, the Emmanuel Choir sang from memory "Walk Together, Children," a traditional spiritual arrangement by Moses Hogan. Their rendition was well received with a boisterous applause.
- The Community Thanksgiving Service on November 26 invited choir members from neighboring churches and hosted a community chorus of 40-50 singers. Congregational hymn singing that evening was exceptional.
- At Advent 4 on December 22, the children, youth, and music ministry of Emmanuel presented "What Are We Waiting For?," an Advent play about hope and waiting, including from a Native American perspective. Written and directed by Ann Marie Ruhlin, the play was last performed at Emmanuel in 2013, and it was dusted off the shelves for 2024's successful liturgical production.

Music in worship in 2024 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

<u>Sopranos</u>	<u>Tenors</u>	<u>Altos</u>	<u>Basses</u>
Penny Allen	Sue Clauss	Kim Bleyer	Davis Allen
Jen Dunn	Ann Marie Ruhlin	Kimberly Buchholz	Lou Clauss
Nancy Grow ‡	Patrick Zelaya *	Alison Dunn ‡	Phil Egart §
Lynn Stephenson		Shari Kelts	Alan Jeude †
		Lauren Romano *	Al Ludwig
		Patrick Stephenson †	Brian Stephenson
		Katherine Ziegler	Charlie Walch

* paid section leader

† new/returning/incoming member

‡ whenever local

§ outgoing member/leave of absence

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:

Deacon Jerre Birdsong, piano	Dave Powers, piano
Mary Bleyer, voice	Susan Shillito, piano
Sue Clauss, arranger, guitar, recorder/flute & organ	Ava Weiland, voice
Phoebe Dunn, piano	Adalyn Wilson, violin
Cheryl Foster, organ	Lachlan Wilson, violin
Sam Garrett, cello	Patrick Zelaya, guitar, organ & piano
Cate Ludwig, voice	Bob Ziegler, trumpet
Ben Powers, tenor saxophone	

Children's Choir

By *Lauren Romano*

The Emmanuel Children's Choir has been under the direction of Lauren Romano for 10 years. The rehearsal time remained 6:30-7:00 pm on Wednesday nights during the fellowship dinner. In 2024, there were between 5-12 kids (ages ranging from 3-11) participating, and they sang at least once a month during the 10:00/9:30 am Sunday morning service. At the start of the 2024-2025 program year, three new members joined, and one singer has "graduated" and will be joining the adult choir.

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. Incorporating the handbells, chimes, and/or percussion instruments helps with interest and engagement in the music-making. Each week, I work to create a loving atmosphere of vocal learning, faith growth, and mutual care. The kids are incredibly enthusiastic, and I love that our church encourages them to participate throughout the worship service.

In December of 2024, the Advent play returned under the leadership of Ann Marie Ruhlin, and the Children's Choir took part by singing during the performance. Witnessing the older-aged children participate in the Advent Play has given me the goal of bringing back the separated Junior and Cherub Choirs in order to provide more opportunities for engagement of all ages next year. 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.



Family and Youth

By Katie Gregston

Our Emmanuel children and youth used 2024 to further explore their faith, strengthen our outreach efforts, and enjoy fellowship. With deep sadness, our program dealt with the heartache of losing one of our beloved youth members. Kelsey MacBryde was a shining light in our church, with a smile that could light up a room, and a heart that could care for anyone she met. In honor of Kelsey, our kids have bravely continued on, discussing their faith, exploring the Bible, and serving those in need. Kelsey's family and friends have asked that those who love her "look for the glimmers"; the silver lining, the sparkle of hope, in our church, in our neighborhood, in our world. The glimmers are there, and we are happy to share a few of them with you in this report.

- We have had many new families join our Emmanuel community. More than fifteen preschool/elementary children have found our Emmanuel programs, and a handful of new youth have also become engaged in Emmanuel.
- Tessa Weiland and Mimi Shipp generously lead our Youth Group, discussing the Bible and our Episcopal faith, planning a movie night, organizing an alumni gingerbread event, raising funds, and serving people and animals in our community.
- Pam Penrose selflessly leads our FaithQuest Program. Kids in preschool through early elementary school enjoy Bible lessons, snacks, and activities. The group talks often about God's love and how they can love others.
- Our Children's Chapel team lovingly provides a weekly opportunity for kids to discuss the Sunday service readings and traditions. Thank you to Aaron Dowdall, Libby Dowdall, Linnet Husi, Stanly Husi, Beth Knapp, Rachael Ludwig, Sofia Mancini, Becky Rogers, Julie Smith, Margo Smith, and Sarah Wade.
- We are excited to bring travel back to our Youth Group program. In early June, we will travel to western Kentucky to help serve a community in need. We will complete a variety of small scale construction projects. The youth worked hard to fundraise in 2024, and will continue their efforts in 2025, in order to help fund our trip.
- Children and youth helped celebrate the Feast of Saint Francis by packaging pet treats. All funds raised were donated to Second Chance Ranch, a facility housing senior dogs who need a home.
- Our Children's Choir, under the caring and capable direction of Lauren Romano and Jae Park, continues to bless us with their beautiful voices during our principle worship service.
- The goal of our Emmanuel children and youth programs remains the same. We want Emmanuel to be a place that our kids know is free from the daily pressures they face in school, extracurricular activities, and social circles. A place where kids can explore their faith, help others, and grow into loving, happy young adults. A place that welcomes them with open arms, regardless of what grade they earned on their chemistry test, how many likes they received on their social media post, whether or not they play select sports, or which friends wanted to play with them at recess. A place that cares for kids unconditionally as they explore and strengthen their relationship with God.
- A huge thank you to all who have helped our Emmanuel kids, including Pam Belloli, Peg Cooper, Steve Cunningham, Eric & Jen Dunn, Lissa Johnson, Jeannie Keyes, Olabisi Okuyemi, Dale Penrose, Dave Pluhar, Ann Marie Ruhlin, Amy Ryan, JoAnne Warren, Brian Weiland, and Bob Zagar. Thank you also to our amazing clergy and staff members who always have in their hearts the best interest of our kids. Emmanuel has many members who recognize a need, fill that need, and move along without looking for recognition. For this reason, I am certain that I inadvertently missed the opportunity to thank some of you. Please know it is unintentional, and I will be forever grateful for ALL of you who have helped our kids, including my own, have a safe and loving place to call their church.



Emmanuel Preschool Annual Report

By *Rachael Ludwig, Preschool Managing Director*



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 76th year in 2025! 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 Webster Groves, Kirkwood, Shrewsbury, Maplewood and St. Louis. Emmanuel Preschool is a community preschool, of the 55 families we serve, only 3 are members of Emmanuel Parish.

Emmanuel Preschool's teacher, 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.

2024-2025 Emmanuel Preschool Board of Directors:

Penny Allen, President

Bethany Keller

Margot Smith, Vice President

Lisa Liss

Cathi Boyd, Secretary

Sarah Wade

Debbie Hadley, Treasurer

Rogene Nelson





Rainbow Room Annual Report

By Rachael Ludwig, Preschool Managing Director



The Parents' Day Out program continues to evolve and is now called the Emmanuel Rainbow Room. The Rainbow Room is in its fourth year operating as such. The Rainbow Room is very blessed to have Mrs. Ginger Garrett and Mrs. Lucy Parker returning for a third year of team teaching. 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 a snack and walking in a line. Children are encouraged 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 them 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 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 rachael@emmanuelpreschool.org.

2024 Staffing Changes

Emmanuel had a few staffing changes in 2024. Mimi Shipp retired in August of this year ending her nine and a half year tenure at Emmanuel. Mimi helped shape Emmanuel into the church it is today and we will be forever grateful to her. Mimi is still involved at Emmanuel as the co-chair of the Justice and Equity pillar and a Youth Group leader. Patricia Altemueller and Jim Kern also retired this year. Patricia joined us during COVID and helped to keep the office together. Jim was our assistant treasurer.

We also welcomed two new staff members:



Elliot Belloli - Parish Administrator

Elliot is a Saint Louis native who grew up in Webster Groves. His family started attending Emmanuel in the early 1990s and are still active members of the church. After college he spent time in the IT field, later moving to more fulfilling work in the nonprofit sector. Elliot has spent the last 6 years at the Jewish Community Center. Elliot enjoys reading, swimming, and has recently tried his hand at writing (to mixed results...). He has been trying to find his way back to Emmanuel and God for some time. He hopes this job will help him rebuild his faith while also giving back to the community that helped him become the person he is today.



Katie Streicher - Office Assistant

Katie was born and raised in St. Louis, where she grew up in the Episcopal Church. It helped to shaped her values and sense of community. After college, she moved to Orlando, Florida, and had the opportunity to travel around from there, gaining new experiences along the way. Katie eventually returned to St. Louis to be closer to family and to establish deeper roots in the community. Outside of work, she love spending time with her cat and dog, horseback riding, and painting.

Mimi's Retirement Extravaganza



Clergy and Vestry Members 2024



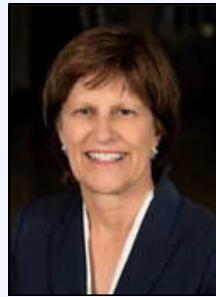
The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer
Priest in Charge



The Rev. Sujanna Raj
Associate Priest



The Rrv. Jerre Birdsong
Deacon



Lissa Johnson, Senior Warden



Charlie Walsh, Junior Warden



Maryann Vognild
Treasurer



Lynn Stephenson
Secretary/Clerk



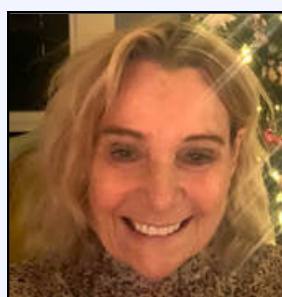
Michael Mancini



John Long



John Simon



Sandy Cooper



Joyce Pluhar



Lee Nelsen

2024 Photo Gallery



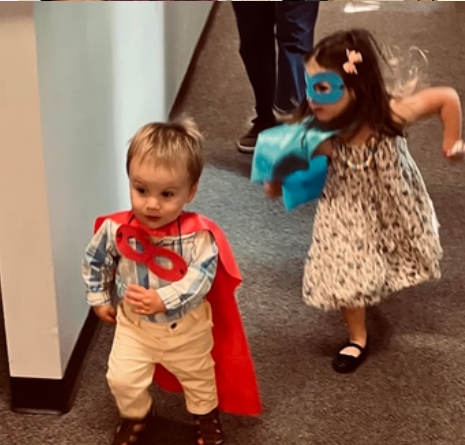
Christian Formation



Vespers



Rise Against Hunger



Super s/heroes for Jesus



Community Thanksgiving Service



Mimi's Retirement



Emmanuel family gathering



Peg's birthday - #80



Christmas: International Students & Youth Fund



Rise Against Hunger

