

Emmanuel Episcopal Church

2026 Annual Report

January 25th, 2025



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Annual Report of Rector

The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer

Small things done with great love



Mother Theresa once said, “Not all of us can do great things, but we all can do small things with great love.”

As I have been gathering my thoughts for this report my companion from the company of heaven has been St. Veronica, an unknown woman who did a small thing with great love: wiping the face of Jesus as he carried his cross along the Via Dolorosa (Road of Sorrow) on his way to crucifixion at Calvary.

“Veronica” is not the woman’s name. It means Vera (true) Icon (image) and it refers to the imprint of Jesus’ face on the cloth she used. Nothing is actually known about this woman, but what she is remembered and honored for is her compassionate response and the lasting legacy of her small act of kindness.

Every week at Emmanuel, we greet and serve precious children, hungry neighbors, and hurting souls – all in the name of God. Small things done with great love.

We are abundantly blessed at Emmanuel. We are possessed of generations of people who enjoy fabulous, meaningful worship, a gorgeous building and campus, a sacred Memorial Garden, a healthy budget, competent and loving staff and clergy, and a generous body of ministries that serve our neighbors in Christ’s name.

Each year I have been with you, I’ve witnessed an increase in abundance of all kinds at Emmanuel. I celebrate with you how much the face of God has been made known through your faithfulness thus far, and I look forward to walking on in love with you into the future. As I am wont to say:

“En 2026, caminemos juntos en el amor como Cristo nos amo, y se entregó a sí mismo por nosotros ofrenda y sacrificio a Dios.”



In 2026, let us walk together in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God.

Valori +

Annual Report of The Associate Priest

The Rev. Susanna Clive



As I enter my fifth year at Emmanuel, I do so with deep gratitude and a humbled heart. Again and again, God has met me here challenging, surprising, and shaping my calling through this shared ministry. This past year has been one of profound spiritual growth, and I am deeply thankful for the privilege of serving among you.

Ministry at Emmanuel has taken place not only within the church with word, sacraments and pastoral care but also representing the church through quiet, holy moments in the breaking of bread at Bethesda,

shared meals through Martha Meals, prayer shawls wrapped around the grieving and the sick, and the faithful work of Emmanuel Prays and the Eucharist Visitors ministry. In these moments, I have witnessed the living presence of Christ.

I have often felt that God placed me here for such a time as this. Identifying with the international students in their fears and uncertainties has become my main force and sacred ground to help translate and advocate for them. It has been the Emmanuel community that revealed Christ's heart, through winter coats, shared food, open arms, and the simple message you belong, compassion became action.



This year with the help of grants from The Episcopal church and the Diocese, we're able to provide groceries and snacks, samosas and cookies for 1500 international students. 30 students received rental assistance. From April this year, with the support of the food center, on Fridays we started giving groceries to the students. In July with the help of an Evangelism grant we're able to take 25 students to Branson. In December month we distributed 100 blankets and groceries to 100 students.

I give thanks to Valori+, Dn. Jerre, clergy, the Vestry, the staff, Caring committee, Light to the Nations Committee, student volunteers, food center committee, for your help, support, trust and prayers. I look ahead with hope to the holy work still unfolding, and to the deep joy of continuing this ministry together in the name of Christ.

Shanthi,
Susanna+



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. Susanna Clive has continued on the first Thursday of the month. Eucharist is celebrated with the residents of Bethesda at Old Orchard Retirement Community. There are several Emmanuel members who live there. Rev. Susanna celebrated each Eucharist. In 2025, 142 communions were received. The average attendance was 3.9 residents and 3 facilitators (clergy+ Caring Committee members) per month.

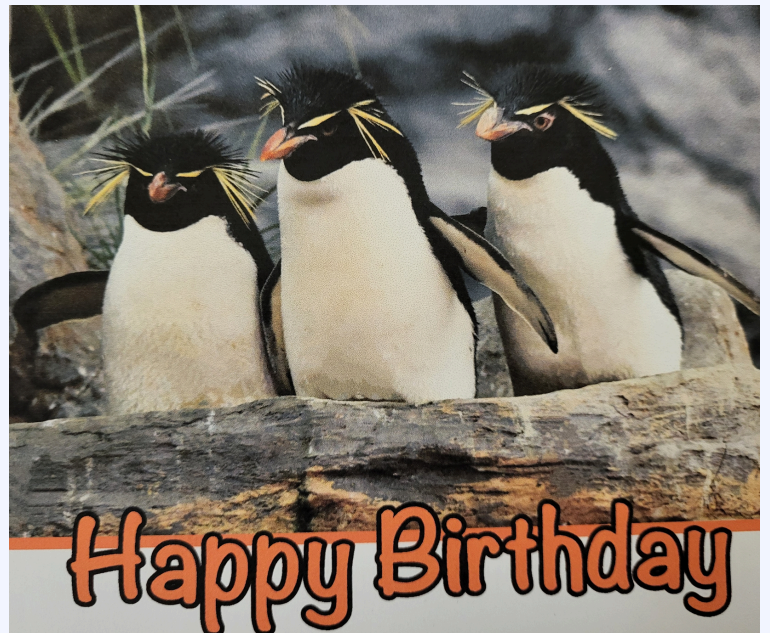
Martha's Meals: Delivery of meals continues to provide meals for individuals and families during a difficult time under the leadership of Lisa Liss. In 2025 over 56 meals were been taken by volunteers to .20 different individuals.

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 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. A total of 195 cards were sent out in 2025 including 134 birthday cards, 24 fiftieth anniversary cards, 7 twenty-fifth anniversary cards, 8 bereavement cards, 23 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 or at church on the 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons. Twenty shawls were given to individuals experiencing illness, bereavement or other crisis situations. The shawls represent Emmanuel wrapping around individuals in their time of need.

Flowers: Fifty two spring flowers and 65 Christmas Poinsettias were delivered to individuals in 2025 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 10. The number of visits in 2025 was .6 per month.



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. 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: Outreach (formerly known as Feeding and Caring), Justice and Equity, EarthLove, and Diocesan Partnership. A report for each of these Pillars is included in this Annual Report. 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

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) and United Thank Offering (UTO).

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.

Outreach By Laura McLaughlin

The Outreach pillar (formally known as Feeding and Caring) 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.

In collaboration with Isaiah 58, 314Oasis and Centennial Christian Church we provided nutritious meals to residents of the Fountain Park neighborhood who were impacted by the spring tornado.

Other Ministries:

Doorways	Isaiah 58
St. John's Peace Meal	Refugee Resettlement
Rise Against Hunger	Alcoholics Anonymous
Camp SunSplash	



Food Center Annual Report

By Charlotte A. Martin

The Food Center served 2063 households in 2025 which included 1366 children and 2948 adults. This is an increase of 96% or 1021 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 who have 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 893 visits this year versus 163 visits in 2024.

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, especially during October when SNAP benefits were paused. November and December seem to have calmed down. 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 17,500 pieces of food versus 8000 in 2024 (average had been around 6000 pieces). PolyCon, who has a local facility in WG, continued their support by bringing in over 200 pieces of food. Our own parishioner, John Long, continues to hold virtual Facebook food drives amongst his family and friends and is almost wholly responsible for providing all of the cooking oil for the international students!! We appreciate Tim and John doing the hard work of purchasing and bringing countless bottles of oil to the Food Center. 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 over 2000 pieces of food this year, up from 1700 in 2024. Our parishioners were so generous in their continued donations of over 2600 food items as well as \$41,825.86 in monetary donations. For much of the year the Food Center has been the beneficiary of the donations collected through the "little churches" during services.

We did not have the predicted (by me) monetary shortfall in 2025!!! Due to the generosity of many wonderful people, we ended 2025 with \$23,643. We spent over \$29,323 on food items in 2025 versus \$36,000 in 2024.

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 over 26,000 food items donated in 2025 in addition to a number of monetary gifts provided in honor of or in memory of loved ones.

2025 Financial Report:

Beginning Balance \$11,140	Money Received \$41,825.86.
Food purchases \$29,323.04	Ending Balance \$23,643



2026 Food Center Ingathering with the College School



Expanded Rise Against Hunger Event Packaged 25,000 Meals

By Mark Rackers

At the 2025 Rise Against Hunger event, volunteers again packaged 25,000 meals! Two shifts were held on May 4th in the church dining hall. Over 100 volunteers from Emmanuel, St. Mark's, Church of the Advent and Sts. Clare and Francis participated in the event. The Rise Against Hunger organization works to improve access to food, clean water, quality education and agricultural training to help ensure long-term food security for families worldwide. The meals that were packaged at the 2025 event supported their mission in Africa and the Philippines. The funds required to sponsor this event were provided by commitments from Emmanuel Ministries, donations from individuals and other churches, and through fundraising.

The date for the 2026 Rise Against Hunger food packaging event has been scheduled for April 26th. Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2025 event.





The Old Testament text of Amos 5:24 "But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" calls us into the work of being the church. 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! The Justice & Equity pillar is committed to the work of racial/indigenous equity, gun violence prevention, acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community, and equity in opportunities such as education and housing.

In November, the diocese of Missouri created mochristian.org a website dedicated to Missouri Christian: Progressive Voice for the Teachings of Jesus Christ. There one can find detailed information on political and policy issues. This is a good source for advocacy work

What we did In 2025:

- In February, to kick off Black History Month, we hosted adult formation speaker, Marcel Hagens from Action StL. Marcel led us in a discussion about why we are still talking about racism.
- In April we sponsored a table at Webster Rock Hill Ministries Trivia Night, their main fundraiser.
- June 1 we organized Wear Orange Sunday for Gun Violence Prevention
- During June, through Together StL, we were a sponsor of Racial Unity Week, which included a walk/run, movie screening of Vision and a Maafa (Great Tragedy) event.
- In June we contributed to the WG Pool Pass program
- In June we held an LGBTQIA+ prayer service and picnic
- In June we contributed funds for a portable restroom for Camp SunSplash
- In June we participated in Gun Violence Prevention Sunday
- In October there were opportunities to sign petitions for state ballots in 2026. One for Citizens' Veto Gerrymandering and another strengthening voters ability to continue using petitions for ballot initiatives.
- In October we sponsored a racial history bus tour that was presented by the great, great granddaughter of Dred Scott.
- We continue to participate in the diocesan Gun Violence Prevention meetings
- We also continue as participants with Together StL meetings on racial unity

Organizations we support financially or with volunteers:

Action StL	Camp SunSplash
Churches Together for Justice	
DioMO -Gun Violence Prevention	
Together StL	LifeWiseStL
Isaiah 58	Rosebud Reservation
WRHM	



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 workday.

In 2025, assisted by our Faith Quest children, we planted a butterfly garden on the south side of the church. 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. Last year (2024) we found three large Monarch caterpillars on the milkweed we planted in spring. This year our pre-school teachers reported seeing dozens of caterpillars. We also saw quite a few Monarch butterflies around our area.

In Fall, we collaborated with the Facilities team to host the annual Environmental Stewardship clean up and workday. 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. We also had the Audubon Society walk our property. Several recommendations were made and we hope to implement them in 2026. Emmanuel is blessed with a large campus containing many open spaces, gardens, and beautiful mature trees





Altar Guild

By JoAnne Warren

The Altar Guild is one of the most active ministries of Emmanuel Church. Most of our work is behind the scenes. We have guidance from the clergy about what needs to be achieved and how they want things to be presented, then we 'do our thing'. This attention to detail usually helps the services run seamlessly.

At the heart of this ministry is the simple act of setting 'the table' for the holy meal that is offered each week. We have several members that launder and iron the smaller linens called corporals (table clothes) and purificators (napkins) that we use while setting the table. We also wash (after each service) and polish the silver items (occasionally as needed) which includes the chalices and patens that are used for the bread and wine.

The colors of the banners and garments change as we move through the church year. We receive the regular altar flowers on Saturday morning, adorn the church with poinsettias at Christmas time and with lilies at Easter.

We not only prepare the church for worship services each week, but we also have special services. This past year we had 4 baptisms, 5 funerals and 1 wedding. The Bishop visited Emmanuel twice in 2025 for confirmations and receptions.

The Altar Guild also prepares, cleans and refreshes the small communion kits for the Eucharistic Visitors who take communion to those who cannot attend services in person. There are usually 1 or 2 visits per week.

If this sounds like a lot of work, I would say that we also find fun and joy doing this ministry! If you think you might be interested in helping or learning about this ministry, please see Valori + or me. We need new members and would love to have you join us!





Tech Ministry

By Nick Romano

This past year has been one of consistency, growth, and refinement for the Tech Ministry at Emmanuel. Our mission remains the same: to support worship by providing reliable, high-quality audio and video for online participation; ensuring all members of our congregation stay connected.

Following the major technology upgrades implemented at the end of 2024, 2025 allowed us to focus on stabilization, training, and maximizing the tools we now have in place. Our live streams have remained dependable week to week.

The Tech Ministry continues to be powered by a dedicated group of people who serve behind the scenes. I am deeply grateful for the ongoing commitment of Cayleigh Thalmann, whose willingness to adapt, and serve makes this ministry possible.

In addition to Sunday services, the Tech Ministry has supported special services and events throughout the church year, helping ensure that worship and parish life remain accessible to all.

Looking Ahead to 2026:

- Continue refining our live-stream workflow for consistency and ease of use
- Provide additional training and documentation to support volunteers
- Grow the volunteer team to build long-term sustainability
- Explore small improvements that enhance accessibility and reliability

It is a privilege to serve Emmanuel in this role. Thank you to the clergy, staff, volunteers, and congregation for your continued trust and support of the Tech Ministry.

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.

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



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.

I noted in last year's report that 2024 demonstrated the mainstay of Emmanuel's music program. 2025 surprised me as the music director the continued growth in musicianship and caliber of the Emmanuel Choir and brimming joy through engaging and creative use of instruments of the children's choir. The wide breadth of musical gifts and talents from the congregation is expressed as offertory in liturgy.

We see and hear the full utility of Emmanuel's treasures – our talents, our instruments, and our ever-expanding choral library with new works by both old Anglican masters and contemporary peoples of color. The strength of Emmanuel's music program is resounding.



Begun in 2024, a quartet vocal group drawn from the adult choir sang an additional choral anthem in worship, primarily during communion from the rear balcony. These pieces are some of the most difficult works in our choral library, challenging each singer to know it cold. In 2025, we expanded the quartet, now denoted “Emmanuel Small Ensemble” in worship bulletins.

Singers self-select to be part of the small ensemble by learning the piece on their own at home and staying after the regular choir rehearsal to work on phrasing, dynamics, balance, and color. The additional criteria when choosing to be part of the small ensemble is that singers will come prepared with the music learned, contribute musically to the group, and be receptive to directions and corrections for active music-making. This pattern resembles the experience of singing in professional ensembles, further engaging the invaluable time, talents, and ministry of the Emmanuel Choir.

Pictured:

Patrick Zelaya, Lauren Romano, Jae Park

Music and Choir, continued

By Jae Park



Lauren leading the children's choir

Now in her 11th year at Emmanuel, Lauren Romano delightfully leads our children in fun songs and creative use of percussive instruments. Lauren concurrently serves as an alto section leader in the adult choir and lends her rich mezzo-soprano voice. You may recall one particular memory of hearing Lauren's voice. In celebration of Pride month last June, Lauren drew upon her specialty in popular genres and offered the vocal solo song "Somewhere" from Bernstein's West Side Story, a timeless longing and hope for a better future.

Patrick Zelaya, Emmanuel's tenor section leader now in his 3rd year, enriches the choir with not only his professional pedigree but also his generous, considerate character. Patrick challenges himself as a musician by delivering on some of the most difficult vocal solos in the classical repertoire. He is also a rising organist and subs for me at Emmanuel's services with dedicated preparation and capability.

A couple of noteworthy events in 2025:

- While the choir was on summer break, every Sunday from June 15 to September 7 featured special music at the offertory. The genre, period, and instrumentation of offertory music varied extensively from the highly ornamented and cranial figuration of Baroque masters to the bluesy saxophone and jazz double bass classics. Not one Sunday was spared with an Offertory Hymn! This is the testament of Emmanuel's mantra "There is so much talent here."
- In September, Dr. Connor Scott of Christ Church Cathedral invited Emmanuel to join forces at an evensong service. It was an evening of highly spirited collaboration amongst the singers, clergy, and choirmaster/organist from both churches all sharing the liturgical duties.

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:

- Hayden Baker, violin
- Deacon Jerre Birdsong, piano
- Mary Bleyer, piano
- Sue Clauss, arranger, conductor, guitar, recorder/flute & organ
- Sam Garrett, cello
- Al Ludwig, double bass
- Ben Powers, tenor saxophone
- Dave Powers, piano
- Patrick Stephenson, piano
- Patrick Zelaya, organ
- Bob Ziegler, trumpet

Lastly, music in worship in 2025 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. They inspire each other to be better church musicians – including and especially me – creating a beautiful, positive-feedback ministry. 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

Tenors

Sue Clauss
Jason Owen †
Ann Marie Ruhlin
Patrick Zelaya *

Altos

Kimberly Buchholz
Alison Dunn ‡
Shari Kelts
Lauren Romano *
Patrick Stephenson
Katherine Ziegler

Basses

Davis Allen
Lou Clauss
Al Ludwig
Brian Stephenson
Charlie Walch

* paid section leader

† new/returning/incoming member

‡ whenever local



Children's Choir

By Lauren Romano

The Emmanuel Children's Choir continues under the direction of Lauren Romano, now marking over a decade of leadership. Rehearsals were held on Wednesday evenings from 6:30–7:00 pm during the fellowship dinner, maintaining a consistent and accessible schedule for families. Throughout 2025, participation ranged from approximately 6–12 children, ages 3–10. The choir shared their music regularly, singing about every other week during the Sunday morning worship services. At the beginning of the 2025–2026 program year, we welcomed several returning singers and celebrated the addition of new members. The Children's Choir has adopted a more flexible, come-as-you-can format, welcoming children to participate whenever their schedules permit.

Weekly rehearsals focused on preparing music for upcoming services while also incorporating musical games and age-appropriate instruction in foundational music skills. We spent time discussing how to communicate meaning through song and how our music can be an act of worship. The use of handbells, chimes, and various percussion instruments continued to spark enthusiasm and keep rehearsals engaging. Creating a nurturing environment that supports musical development, spiritual growth, and community remains a top priority. The children's excitement and willingness to participate are a joy, and their involvement throughout the worship service is strongly supported by the congregation.

Many thanks to Katie and Jae for their continued assistance and encouragement, as well as to the entire Emmanuel community for their ongoing support of the Children's Choir. Your affirmation and enthusiasm make this ministry both meaningful and rewarding.



Children and Youth

By Katie Gregston

Throughout 2025, Emmanuel's Children and Youth program has grown—not only in numbers, but in faith, fellowship, and outreach. I am in continuous awe of the resiliency shown by our kids and the adults who love them, as this group has yet again had to navigate the heartwrenching loss of one of our “Emmanuel kids”. Tyson Knapp was a precious alum of our Emmanuel Youth Group, whose contagious smirk made others smile and feel immediately welcomed into Ty's huge circle of friends. As our sweet Tyson would have us do, our kids and leaders have bravely continued discussing their faith, sharing laughter, and serving those in need. These last two years have been unimaginably difficult, but they have also shown us just how strong our kids are.

We are overjoyed to have welcomed fourteen new families whose children have engaged in our nursery, FaithQuest program, Children's Chapel, and Youth Group.

The children and youth of Emmanuel have stepped up in powerful ways to serve others. These kids are passionate about helping others, protecting the environment, and standing up for what they know is fair and right. The clergy, staff, and members of Emmanuel are immensely proud of them every day.

None of this growth would be possible without dedicated parent and volunteer leaders. We are deeply grateful to all who invest their time, heart, and prayer into this ministry. Their dedication creates the environment where our children and youth feel safe, supported, and spiritually nurtured. Our goal at Emmanuel is for kids to know they are seen, valued, and loved unconditionally.

Please join me in thanking each and every person who has supported our children and youth, including these fantastic volunteer leaders:

Elliot Belloli	Pam Penrose
Brittany Catalanotti	Olabisi Okuyemi
Linnet Husi	Georgia Rheinhardt
Stanley Husi	Becky Rogers
William Husi	Mimi Shipp
Julie Lawless	Margo Smith
Rachael Ludwig	Sarah Wade
Michael Mancini	Tessa Weiland
Sofia Mancini	



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 77th year in 2026! 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 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. EPS is hoping to spread the joy and inclusion of our parish with our preschool families. All are invited to attend Fellowship Dinners, Sunday Worship and all our special events throughout the year. In addition, we love having our Parish community join us for our very special Kid's Carnival on the first Saturday in May.

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.

2025-2026 Emmanuel Preschool Board of Directors:

Penny Allen, President	Marc Kurlander
Lisa Liss, Vice President	Sarah Wade
Rogene Nelson, Secretary	Katie Gregston
Debbie Hadley, Treasurer	





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 5th year operating as such. The Rainbow Room is very blessed to have Mrs. Ginger Garrett and Mrs. Lucy Parker returning for a fourth 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 rachael@emmanuelpreschool.org

Clergy and Vestry Members 2025



The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer
Rector



The Rev. Susanna Clive
Associate Priest



The Rev. Jerre Birdsong
Deacon



Lissa Johnson
Senior Warden



John Long
Junior Warden



Lynn Stephenson
Junior Warden/Secretary



Tricia Copeland
Treasurer/Vestry Member



Michael Mancini



Sandy Cooper



John Simon



Dolanimi Okuyemi



Maryjane Hotaling

Life at Emmanuel Photo Gallery



