

# THE ENVOY

A Newsletter of Emmanuel Friedens Church  
American Baptist and United Church of Christ Congregation  
218 Nott Terrace, Schenectady, NY 12307  
Rev. Dr. Kathryn Stenta, Pastor

Contact Us:  
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Director of Music  
(Music Minister)  
Dianna Parisi

Worship Hours  
Sunday @ 10 am

Sunday Classes  
(Sept-June)  
11:15 am

Office Hours  
9:30 am-3:30 pm M-F  
9:30 am-1:30 pm M-F  
(SUMMER HOURS)



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Walking Towards Lent

Dear Jesus  
You are the God of the Cross  
Journeying with Us  
Suffering Amongst Us  
You do not Proscribe Suffering  
But Walk,  
Thirsty in the desert with us  
Sweet Jesus  
You do not make demands  
But call us, and listen, when we spill our whole selves to you by the well  
Compassionate Friend  
You wait for us on the Cross  
And tell us, it is not too late to apologize, even then, and You will be there on the other side  
How beautiful is the whole testimony of the Cross:  
We are not alone, We do not have to suffer, We can be our full self  
And we do not have to double down  
Because it's never, ever too late to apologize  
Jesus is waiting for us  
Our theology is not ultimately about debates  
But about love, and to see the humanity of each other  
And Jesus  
On the Cross  
How beautiful is the Body of Christ,  
Thank you for being the God of the Cross. Amen



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## From the Pastor (continued)

Dear Emmanuel Friedens,

Don't look now, but Lent is barreling toward us on February 18th. It will be a momentous week starting with Presidents' Day on Monday, the Lunar New Year on Tuesday, and Ash Wednesday on the 18th. It always makes me pensive when holidays line up like this—a decidedly United States celebration, a day that is big for Chinese culture and new beginnings, and then Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of a period of contemplative journeying for Christians.

This Lent we will be contemplating Jesus' journey toward the cross as it unfolds, in order through John. As it does, we will pair it with *The Lord's Prayer*. I love this, because *The Lord's Prayer* is a heart's prayer. It is the kind of prayer to have in your back pocket when words fail, and you need to pray something, but you do not necessarily know what. In this way, it fits the feeling of Lent, and probably most of our feelings about the world right now.

Prayer is a very dear topic for me. I ended up writing an entire doctoral thesis and semi-book-like thing on it. I feel like prayer is about processing your way through things the best that you can. As such prayer is many things. When you look at the Psalms especially, you realize that there are many types, tones and pieces to praying. It can be something you read that is pre-written. It can be an activity, it can be extemporaneous, it can be a conversation between people, it can be music or song, it can be a protest, it can be sweet contemplative silence, or it can be one of the Christian originals, *The Lord's Prayer*.

When we ask "Lord Teach Me to Pray?" I think about what is behind the question. We are asking to walk closer to Jesus, to get to know our Divine made selves better, to understand the movements of the Holy Spirit in our lives better. Prayer is less about having the right words, and more about a way of being. To be prayerful, is to live into the promises from Lent to Easter, to understand that temptations and debts will give way to forgiveness and the kin(g)dom of God. This is why I feel especially blessed that we will be doing Sunday School activities after worship each week to live into the Worship that we have experienced together—because praying with your feet is one of the best ways to pray. Frederick Douglas said "Praying for Freedom never did me any good til I started praying with my feet." Thus, as we journey into Lent together, I look forward to praying in all the ways with you.

Pastor Katy

## Upcoming Worship

(Live in –person, Zoom link or online) Rev. Dr. Katy Stenta will lead worship and preach.

**February 8:** Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Readings: John 2:13-25 Psalm 17:1-2

Sermon: Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Fellowship Meal following the worship service.

**February 15:** Transfiguration Sunday

Readings: John 9:1-41, Psalm 27:1-4

Sermon: The Man Born Blind

**February 18: Ash Wednesday**

Beginning of the Lenten season

Worship service @ 7 pm-First United Methodist Church

**February 22: First Sunday in Lent**

Theme: Jesus Raises Lazarus

Readings: John 11:1-44, Psalm 104:27-30

Sermon: *Hallowed Be Your Name*

**March 1: Second Sunday in Lent**

Theme: Jesus Washes Feet

Readings: John 12:1-17, Psalm 51:7-12

Sermon: *Thy Will Be Done, On Earth as it is In Heaven*

**March 8: Third Sunday in Lent**

Theme: Peter's Denial

Readings: John 18:12-27, Psalm 17: 1-7

Sermon: *Forgive Us*

Fellowship Meal following the worship service.

**March 15: Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Theme: Jesus and Pilate

Readings: John 18:28-40, Psalm 18: 40

Sermon: *Thy Kingdom Come*

## Lenten Season (February 18-April 4)



*Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the Lenten season, is Wednesday, February 18. We will worship with our friends from First United Methodist Church (FUMC) at 7 pm. The service will be held at FUMC.*



### **Journeying With Jesus Through Lent**

Members and friends, after worship, you are invited to the Board Room for coffee and snacks, followed by experiences of journeying with Jesus through Lent on our way to Easter Sunday. Discussions/activities will center around the scriptures and sermon for that Sunday. **Please join us— starting Sunday, February 22!**

## Emmanuel Friedens Church Leadership – 2026 Voting Results

The church's annual business meeting was held on Sunday, February 1 (rescheduled from January 25 due to weather concerns). We voted on 2026 officers and committee members (refer below) as well as the annual budget (**Passed unanimously**). Thanks to Deb Lent for providing a delicious lunch. And thank you to the many volunteers who continue to give their time on behalf of the church and its mission.

**Motion Presented:** We will waive all consecutive term limits outlined in the Articles of Federation, allowing several church members to be nominated for and assume/continue leadership roles at the conclusion of this vote. **Passed unanimously.**

Thank you to the Nominating Committee: Jeannie Andersons, Mary Lou Chotkowski, Patty Soellner, and Angela Keller.

**All nominees were voted in as proposed on the ballot\*.**

**Trustees:**

Chuck Lent  
Jonathan McKinney  
Artie Loftis  
Jody Radez  
Jennifer Andersons  
Sheila Freres

**Federated Council Chair:** Deb Lent

**Federated Council Chair Elect:** Jocelyn McKinney

**Church Clerk:** Janice Fiore

**Treasurer:** Jonathan McKinney

**Treasurer Elect:** Faye Bailey

**Financial Secretary:** Ray Andersons

**Assistant Financial Secretary:** Chuck Lent

**Christian Education Chair:** Charlie Reyes

**Christian Education Vice Chair:** Rich Soellner

**Church Staff Relations Committee:** Charlie Reyes, Jocelyn McKinney & Rich Soellner

**Outreach & Mission Chair:** Nancy Spencer

**Social Functions & Fellowship:** Jocelyn McKinney

**Worship Chair:** Jocelyn McKinney

**Congregational Support & Membership:** Jeanne Andersons

**Stewardship Chair:** Sandy George

**Safe Church Implementation Chairs:** Debbie Gehman & Jim Fitzgerald

\*Terms begin in February 2026 and expire in December of last year of term.

## Thank You

From the church staff:

Pastor Katy: Thank you so much Emmanuel Friedens for my Christmas Bonus. It is such a blessing to serve God and you all--so it is an extra joy to feel appreciated in the work that I do. I will carry it with me throughout the year. I truly am thankful.

Dianna: Many thanks to the church for the generous Christmas gift. I feel so blessed to be part of this wonderful community!

Maria Puccio: Thank you members/friends of the church for my generous Christmas gift. It is always very much appreciated.

Dave Snyder: Thank you for my Christmas gift. It was put to good use!

From Nancy Spencer: The last Community Brunch for the 2025 year was held on December 27, and our breakfast bag give-away was a big success! We gave away 30 bags and we were very happy to have included in the bag a voucher for eggs, milk, along with bacon, sausage, English muffins, coffee, sugar, pancake mix, syrup, butter and other treats. Thank you to all who donated items for the bags. A shout out goes to Deb Lent who secured the vouchers from Stewart's and for her many donations that filled those bags, to Albany Medical Interventional radiologist Dr. Anthony Sayegh, who donated 20 new winter coats (pictured below) and to the Return Bottle Club at Albany Medical Center, who donated \$200 which we used for food and toiletries.

And for brunch day, thank you to all who made the egg bakes.



## Community News

- New Breath Spirituality Center of Albany *is a place where you can learn and talk about connecting with God, spirituality, and prayer/spiritual practices. We long for that connection and relationship with God— and New Breath offers opportunities to help us do that. Through online gatherings and in-person events in the NY Capital Region and beyond, we experience God's presence together.* Executive Director and Founder: Rev. Dr. Becca Ehrlich, 362 State Street (located within First Presbyterian Church of Albany). Our Pastor Katy and Rev. Sara Baron (FUMC) are members of the Board of Directors

Upcoming activities at the center—for more information and to register for activities mentioned below and more, check out their website: [www.NewBreath.org](http://www.NewBreath.org)

- ⇒ **Group Spiritual Direction:** February 10 (7:30 pm) & 17 (8:30 pm) Attendees should plan on attending both sessions to build group connections. Suggested donation for both sessions: \$30. Registered participants will receive a Zoom link (via e-mail) before the first session.
- ⇒ **Finding Joy in Queer Spirituality:** March 1, from 2-6 pm, co-sponsored by New Breath Spirituality Center and the Spirit Committee of the Pride Center of the Capital Region! There will be a keynote address by Bex Mui of House of Our Queer, and a panel discussion about LGBTQIA+ topics with spiritual leaders in the NY Capital Region. Location and ticket information coming soon—check out the website!

## Black HISTORY MONTH

*This year marks a significant milestone for Black History Month, celebrating 100 years of honoring resilience, meaningful remembrance, and ensuring that Black voices are heard.*

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Happy Valentine's Day—  
Saturday, February 14

As a Welcoming and Affirming/ Open and Affirming Church, Emmanuel Baptist Church and Friedens United Church of Christ welcomes and affirms all persons without regard to sex, marital status, age, race, sexual orientation, or abilities, inviting all into membership, mission, and leadership.

### STAY CONNECTED



[www.facebook.com/  
emmanuelfriedenschurch](http://www.facebook.com/emmanuelfriedenschurch)

### A Vision for Our Journey

*Captivated by Jesus' life and teaching,  
Committed to  
Growing hearts and minds;  
Learning openness, courage and love;  
Serving with our neighbors;  
Pursuing God's justice and peace;  
Inviting others to share the journey!*