

# EMMANUEL

## *Reformed Church*

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 2023

1150 Maple Hill Rd. Castleton, New York 12033

[www.EncounterERC.com](http://www.EncounterERC.com)

518-732-7766

## The Feeling of Family

I started to get to know ERC ten years ago and one theme came up repeatedly—ERC is like family. Family is often messy, and for those who have experienced more disfunction than function in their upbringing, a church being like family could be a scary idea. But it is possible to be a healthy family. As a church we want to help families be healthy, and we strive to be a healthy and vibrant spiritual family.

I was talking to someone new to ERC a few days ago and they were so positive about the fact that coming to church felt like connecting to a family. In a nation of loneliness and isolation this is a good thing. I also talked to a member who has been part of ERC for over 30 years, but hasn't been able to worship in person for the past few months. Recently she was able to here on a Sunday, and with tears in her eyes she shared how good it felt to be in the sanctuary, and to reconnect with her spiritual family. What a blessing!

I have no delusions that ERC is the perfect church family - there is no such thing - but I do pray that we continue to be a place of connection, support, encouragement, activity, and service as together we follow Jesus Christ. It is Christ who bonds us together as brothers and sisters in faith. Only when we keep our eyes on him and our priority on glorifying God that we can come close to the being the church that we should be. But when we do, it is truly a blessing.

As we have been focusing on over the past month, we are blessed to be a blessing. The blessing of being part of a church family, bound together by Jesus, is a blessing to share. This blessing is extended when you welcome back a family member who has been gone for a long time, and when you make room at the table for someone new. It happens when you invite someone to come to worship, or when you share about the true meaning of Christmas. I pray that we continue to strive to a be a church that is a family, and as such, bless others with our open arms.

Check out ways to be a blessing in this newsletter.

In Christ  
*Pastor Dirk*

## Church Events

- Nov 12<sup>th</sup> - Shoebox Collection Day
- Nov 16<sup>th</sup> - Movie Night
- Nov 18<sup>th</sup> - Roast Pork
- Nov 26<sup>th</sup> - Decorating & Wreath Making
- Dec 1<sup>st</sup> - Jesse Tree Devo
- Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> - Advent Start
- Dec 7<sup>th</sup> - God Squad
- Dec 17<sup>th</sup> - St. Paul's Gifts
- Dec 17<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Party
- Dec 21<sup>st</sup> - Movie Night
- Dec 24<sup>th</sup> - Sunday Worship & Christmas Eve
- Dec 31<sup>st</sup> - Last Worship '23

**Blessed  
to be a  
Blessing**





# Beebouts Leaving Niger

At the beginning of the Summer the Beebout family packed a few suitcases to spend two months in Iowa. While they were here in the USA there was a coup in Niger, their home for over 15 years. In the span of a week the entire situation in Niger changed. While the ministry of the two medical clinics has been able to continue, it has become clear that God is closing this chapter in the Beebout's ministry. It has been hard for them, but they also can see God's hand in it.

They have been provided with a place to stay in Iowa and opportunities for temporary work while they adjust to life in the USA and discern what God has for them as they look toward their future. In October the mission team was able to meet with Susan via Zoom and express our support and pray with her.

Jeremey and Susan plan on returning to Niger one last time to sell all their belongings, and bring closure to their incredible time serving the Lord in a predominantly Muslim country. ERC is committed to supporting them financially during this time of transition. If God calls them to return to the mission field in another country, we will hopefully be a continued partner in their ministry.

Please keep them in your prayers.

# Chile Mission

*Caring for Orphans — April 1-8, 2024*

God has brought together a wonderful team to reach out on behalf of ERC to orphans in Chile next spring. Seven people are taking the bold step out of their comfort zones to see what God will do. The team currently is:

Dave Ewert—team leader  
Judy Auger, Karen Longworth, Sarah Harris,  
Jennifer Gieser, David Spink and Kyleigh Seaburg

Over the coming months they will be learning more about the House of Hope and Vision for Children, preparing spiritually and relationally for this work, and building a support team that will make this mission trip a great success. Stay aware of opportunities for you to come alongside this great group.

## Trip to India

Pastor Dirk has been invited to travel to Likabali to support the work of our mission partner Pastor Steward. It looks like this trip will take place at the end of January and Jashton will be able to go to teach and encourage as well.

# Boiler and Roof

*Sometimes we have major expenses...*

Over the coming months we are looking at two major expenses here at ERC. The immediate need is a new boiler. Our high efficiency natural gas boiler has a bad circuit board, and it is old enough that replacement parts are not available. The best option is a complete replacement. We have committed to a competitive bid, and should be getting a new boiler before mid-December. The cost is \$15,000.

Additionally, we only have one section of roof that is old (the road side of the Fellowship Hall), and to avoid problems we need to have the roof replaced. The work will happen in the spring, and we are in the process of getting quotes. Initial quotes are just above \$15,000.

The good news is that we are able to cover these expenses, the other side is that they will use a significant percentage of our reserves. If you are able to make a donation to help with these important property needs, mark your special offering "building fund." Thank you.

## Financial Update

When those who are part of Emmanuel Reformed do their part in giving faithfully to the work of the church, our financial needs are always met. This is a reminder that inflation and unexpected expenses (noted above) are part of the church's financial reality. Giving is currently about 3% behind where we projected to be at this point. Please consider how God is calling you to financially support ERC on a regular basis. Your giving in an important part of our \$279,000 annual budget.



# Thank You!

Great things happen at Emmanuel because people Engage



*On the first and third Thursdays of each month we have meaningful fun planned for kids and families.*

*The 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday is Youth Night - 6:30pm  
The 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday is Movie Night - 5:30pm*

*On movie nights there is a kid friendly dinner for families to enjoy together before the show.*

*Sunday School teachers prepare lessons each week.  
The worship team practices and leads the music Sunday morning.  
Men and women mowed the grass and weeded beds all summer.  
A small crew sets up and cleans up refreshments faithfully.  
Kids Connection has a rotation that ensures younger kids have a great time during worship. These groups are so important for each week. And then there are individuals who have specific roles which are vital to the functioning of ERC.*

*In addition to the normal patterns, our special events are special because of so many people stepping up and getting involved. Thank you to each one who has sought out your place to engage in the life, joy, and work of church—You are a blessing!*

## Roast Pork Dinner November 18

Come eat a great meal at ERC and support our mission work around the world. Make your reservation for either 4:30 or 6:00 PM.

Adults \$15, Kids age 6-12 \$5

**Reserve your seat today:**

518-732-7766 x11

[info@encounterERC.com](mailto:info@encounterERC.com)





# Jesse Tree

Advent Devotional and Sermon Series

For Advent we will be using a Jesse Tree to guide us from Genesis to Jesus. The prophet Isaiah gives the imagery of a new branch springing to life from an old stump. The picture points to Jesus, who was of the line of King David, the son of Jesse. It looked like all hope was lost, the kingdom was destroyed, there was no reason for hope, but the prophet says something amazing is yet to come—something which will transform the world.

There will be a devotional book available later this month which will take you through the Old Testament as we see how God works everything together for His redemptive purpose—centered around Jesus who was born in Bethlehem. The Jesse Tree devotional will have a reading for each day from December 1 to 25, and Sunday sermons will lift up important lessons from this powerful way to read the Bible.

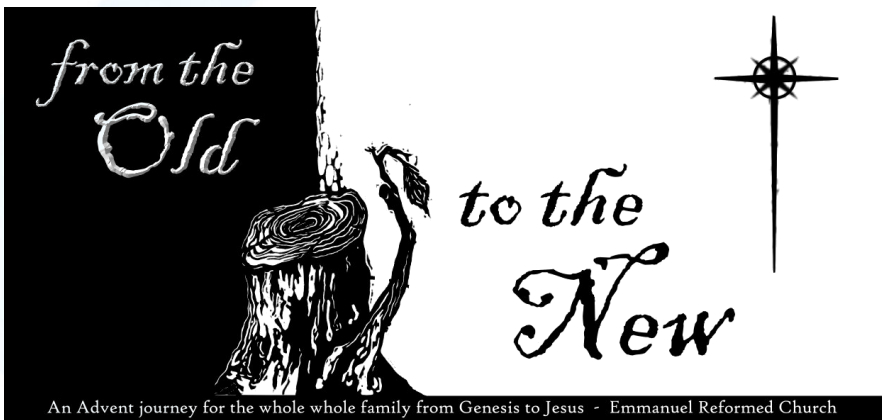


## ST. PAUL'S CHRISTMAS

ERC is “adopting” families from St. Paul’s Center and fulfilling their Christmas wishes. St. Paul’s Center operates a shelter and rehousing program in Rensselaer County for homeless mothers and their children. This year we are adopting 7 children and 3 mothers from the Center to brighten their Christmases.

In November you’ll see a Giving Tree in our church narthex with tags indicating their Christmas wishes. Please help the mothers and children by selecting a tag, purchasing and wrapping the items, taping the tag on the gift, and returning the wrapped items to the church. We can find shoppers for you and wrap gifts if you need the help. Wrapped items should be returned to the church by December 17.

Contact: Candy Shyer 518-461-6731



## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS!

### DECORATING & WREATHES

We will be decorating the church for Christmas on Sunday, Nov 26 after worship and Sunday School. Please plan on joining in the fun. Also you can make an ADVENT WREATH to take home. Michele Warner will be providing guidance and support.

### CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday, Dec 17, 5pm we are planning a Church Christmas Party with acting out the nativity as part of the evening. This party will include food, fun and a high dose of Christmas spirit! Know you have someplace great to be that evening—mark your calendars! It is a family celebration, don't miss it.

### CHRISTMAS EVE

The 24th is a Sunday. We will have morning worship at 9:30am AND Christmas Eve services at 5pm and 11pm.

