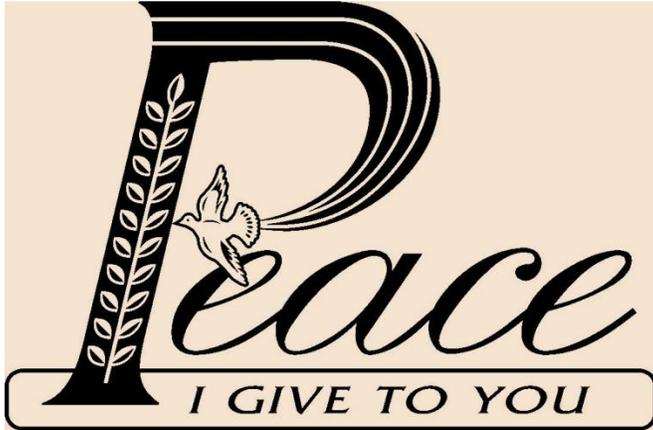




Emmanuel Lutheran Church

*Making Christ known through worship,
service, nurture and outreach*



Sixth Sunday after Easter

May 26, 2019 – 10:00 AM

Welcome to Emmanuel !

It is wonderful to worship with you today!

All are welcome regardless of your faith affiliation.

If you are a visitor worshipping today, we are blessed by your presence. Please sign the guest book in the Gathering Space, so we can keep in touch.

All parts of today's worship service are printed in this bulletin. Words to all songs are provided. If you would like to use the hymnals to sing with music, each song is noted with the hymnal color and song number for easy look up.

This is a service of Holy Communion. All God's people are invited to the table by our Lord Jesus Christ. You will find instructions for Holy Communion later in the bulletin.

Assistive hearing devices are available in the Gathering Space.

Restrooms are located in the hall off the Gathering Space immediately to the left.

Parents with children are welcome to use the children's activity bags, located by the entrance to the Sanctuary. If needed, our nursery room is at the end of the hall off the Gathering Space.

Please silence your phones, but feel free to post pictures, videos, tweets or texts to social media. Help us share the word of God!

Introduction to the Day

Visions abound in the readings for the sixth Sunday of Easter. Paul has a vision about what to do.

John has a vision of what will be. The risen Lord Jesus provides visions of peace that passes human understanding and power beyond human imagination.

Worship the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

THE SERVICE

PRELUDE

“Partita on Hymn to Joy” *(Callahan)*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

EASTER ACCLAMATION

(The acclamation is spoken three times)

The Lord is Risen!

The Lord is Risen Indeed. Alleluia!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of Jesus Christ †, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (Green 551)

**1 Joyful, joyful we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.**

**2 All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heav'n reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird, and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in thee.**

**3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine!**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be will you all.

And also, with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Now the Feast and Celebration (Blue 789)

Refrain

**Now the feast and celebration,
all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom;
praise and glory forevermore!**

**1 Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain,
whose blood has freed and united us
to be one great people of God. *Refrain***

**2 Power and riches, wisdom and might,
all honor and glory to Christ forever. *Refrain***

**3 For God has come to dwell with us,
to make us people of God;
to make all things new. *Refrain***

PRAAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

**Bountiful God, you gather your people into
your realm, and you promise us food from
your tree of life. Nourish us with your word,
that empowered by your Spirit we may love
one another and the world you have made,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

Amen.

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: Acts 16:9-15

A reading from Acts.

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days.

On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth.

The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 67

(read responsively)

May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.

**Let your way be known upon earth, your
saving health among all nations.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for
you judge the peoples with equity and guide
all the nations on earth.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

**The earth has brought forth its increase; God,
our own God, has blessed us.**

May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

Amen!



**May God continue to
bless us; let all the
ends of the earth
revere him.**

SECOND READING:

Revelation 21:10, 22:1-5

A reading from Revelation.

And in the spirit [one of the angels] carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.

On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Green 235)

(please sing verses 1-2)

**1 Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as once you broke the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord;
my spirit waits for you, O living Word.**

**2 Bless your own truth, dear Lord, to me, to me,
as when you blest the bread by Galilee.
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
and I shall find my peace, my All-in-All!**

GOSPEL: John 14:23-29

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus answered [Judas (not Iscariot),] “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.”

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Green 235)

(Please sing verses 3-4)

**3 You are the bread of life, O Lord, to me,
your holy word the truth that rescues me.
Give me to eat and live with you above;
teach me to love your truth, for you are love.**

**4 Oh, send your Spirit, Lord, now unto me,
that he may touch my eyes and make me see.
Show me the truth concealed within your word,
and in your book revealed I see my Lord.**

(please be seated)

SERMON

The Rev. John Heidgerd

After the conclusion of the Sermon, please stand as you are able for the Hymn of the Day.

HYMN OF THE DAY

My Life Flows On in Endless Song (Blue 781)

**1 My life flows on in endless song;
above earth's lamentation,
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation.**

Refrain

**No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?**

**2 Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing? *Refrain***

**3 What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth. *Refrain***

**4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing? *Refrain***

Please be seated

THE APOSTLES CREED

Let us profess our faith in the words of the Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*At the end of each petition, the minister will say
"Hear us, O God."*

The congregation responds:

"Your mercy is great."

SHARING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us now share a sign of God's peace with each other.

OFFERING

Please be seated as we make our offerings to God.

OFFERTORY

Choir Anthem – "Let There be Peace on Earth"

(S. Miller & J. Jackson)

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERING SONG

As the Grains of Wheat (Blue 705)

Refrain

**As the grains of wheat once scattered on
the hill were gathered into one
to become our bread;**

**so may all your people from all the ends of
earth be gathered into one in you.**

**1 As this cup of blessing is shared within our
midst, may we share the presence of your love.**

Refrain

**2 Let this be a foretaste of all that is to come
when all creation shares this feast with you.**

Refrain

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you...

O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim together the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died;
Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus Christ, risen from the dead,
gives everyone a place at the welcome table.

Alleluia! Come to the feast.

LAMB OF GOD (*sung by congregation*)

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin
of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save
have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin
of all the world away;
you set us free from guilt and grave:
have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin
of all the world away;
eternal peace with God you made:
give us your peace, we pray.**

Please be seated.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

All God's people are invited by our Lord Jesus Christ to receive Holy Communion. We receive these gifts of bread and wine, of Christ's body and blood in faith, trusting that in this meal our Lord comes to us, forgives our sins, renews us in faith and leads us into new life.

Emmanuel's tradition is that communion is distributed continuously. After the sacraments are consecrated, the ushers will direct those in the congregation by row to proceed down the center aisle toward the pastor or assisting minister who will distribute the bread.

If you prefer gluten-free bread, please signal to the pastor or assisting minister as you approach.

As you walk down the aisle on the left or right side, there are tables on which there are trays holding individual cups. If you wish to receive wine, please take an empty cup with you prior to receiving the bread. If you prefer grape juice, please take a pre-filled cup as you pass.

After receiving the bread turn to the left or right where an assistant will pour wine into the empty cup. After you have consumed the bread and wine (or juice), please return to your seat via the side aisle, placing the empty cup in the receptacle provided on your way to your seat.

If you do not wish to receive Holy Communion, you are invited to come forward and receive a blessing. Please come forward with your arms folded across your chest in the form of the St. Andrew's cross. (X)

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Life-giving God...

In the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.



SENDING HYMN

Oh, Praise the Gracious Power (Blue 750)

**1 Oh, praise the gracious pow'r
that tumbles walls of fear
and gathers in one house of faith
all strangers far and near:**

Refrain

**We praise you, Christ!
Your cross has made us one!**

**2 Oh, praise persistent truth
that opens fisted minds
and eases from their anxious clutch
the prejudice that blinds: *Refrain***

**3 Oh, praise inclusive love,
encircling ev'ry race,
oblivious to gender, wealth,
to social rank or place: *Refrain***

**4 Oh, praise the word of faith
that claims us as God's own,
a living temple built on Christ,
our rock and cornerstone: *Refrain***

**5 Oh, praise the tide of grace
that laps at ev'ry shore
with visions of a world at peace,
no longer bled by war: *Refrain***

**6 Oh, praise the pow'r, the truth,
the love, the word, the tide.
Yet more than these, oh, praise their source,
praise Christ the crucified: *Refrain***

**7 Oh, praise the living Christ
with faith's bright songful voice!
Announce the gospel to the world
and with these words rejoice: *Refrain***

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

"In Thee is Gladness"

(Bach)

*THE BULLETINS TODAY ARE GIVEN TO THE
GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF
CARRIE A. MYERS & JOSEPH MYERS, SR.
~BY MELINDA FERRARA*



Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

Contact Us:

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Office Hours:

Mon – Thu: 9 AM – 2 PM
Fri: 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Other Times By Appointment

E-mail:

Emmanuel@emmanuelchurch.net

Web site: www.emmanuelchurch.net

Social Media:

[Facebook.com/EmmanuelSouderton](https://www.facebook.com/EmmanuelSouderton)
[Twitter.com/EmmLuthSouderton](https://twitter.com/EmmLuthSouderton)

Church Staff

Reverend John T. Heidgerd, Pastor
Mobile Phone: 914-275-3106
Email Address: jheidgerd@gmail.com

Marlene H. Natali, Parish Deacon
Dcn. Ethel Geist, Interim Director of Music
Michael B. Geiger, Facilities Manager
Richelle L. Jones, Parish Administrator

Attendance for last Sunday, 5/19/19: 75

Assisting in Worship Today

Ministers: All God's people gathered
Acolytes: Jacob Gilbert, Dylan Drissel, Cole Pifer
Assisting Minister: Brian Pifer
Altar Guild: Fran Hunsicker, Gerry Blaich, Liesl Stroup, Kathleen Coll
CD Delivery: Rich Landis
Communion Assts: Chris Harubin, Carole Darragh
Counters: Team 5: Melinda Ferrara, Bob Renner, Co-captains.
Greeters: Gerry & Gloria Heckler
Lector: Teresa Drissel
Ushers: Team 3, Bill Morral, Capt.

+++++

Assisting in Worship Sunday 6/2

Ministers: All God's people gathered
Acolytes: Hannah Vasey, Julia Bealer, Lily Pifer
Assisting Minister: Marlene Natali
Altar Guild: Becky Hartman, Melinda Ferrara, Blythe Bealer, Mary Ann Morral
CD Delivery: Brenda Nace
Communion Assts: John Wellington, Barry Gibson
Counters: Team 6: Julie & Evan Freed, Co-captains.
Greeters: Barry & Fran Hunsicker
Lector: Carole Darragh
Ushers: Team 4, David Natali, Capt.

From sundaysandseasons.com.
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Worship with us every Sunday:

Adult Forum and Sunday School – 9 AM
Worship with Holy Communion – 10 AM
Fellowship Time – 11 AM

This Week at Emmanuel 5/26 – 6/2

Sun 11:30 AM Confirmation Class
1:00 PM Brunch with Pastor John

Mon **Memorial Day**
Office Closed
7:30 PM AA Group

Tue 5:30 PM Bushi Karate
7:30 PM AA Step Group

Wed 5:30 PM Bushi Karate

Thu 5:30 PM Bushi Karate

Sat 9:00 AM Bushi Karate

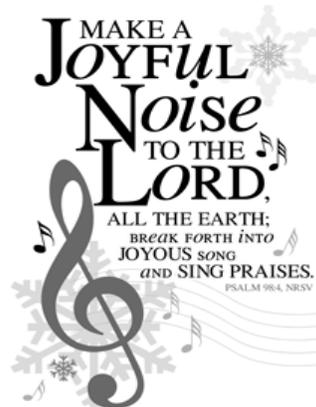
Sun See Worship Schedule Above
11:30 AM Confirmation Class
Outing

Pastor Miller to be honored

In recognition of his long history of serving Emmanuel, the Rev. Richard Miller will be given the honorific title of **Pastor Emeritus**. Pastor Miller served Emmanuel as its Pastor from 1977-1999, and has continued to serve in many ways, even after retirement. We will bestow this honor on Pastor Miller during Pastor John’s Installation Service on June 8 at 3PM.

News You Can Use!

Come and Sing!



**Songs of Joy
from Around
the World!**

*Sunday June 2
10 AM*

Join us in worship as we travel all the earth to make a joyful noise.

Learn new songs!

Sing old favorites!

Lift your voices to God!

And Rejoice!

SOUDERTON ALIVE!

Worship



IN THE PARK

Worship In The Park – June 16

Emmanuel will be joining in worship with Souderton churches as part of the annual “Souderton Alive” weekend. We will have an information table at the worship service. The celebration committee is asking for donations of baked goods to give away.

Please sign up in the Gathering Space.

We appreciate your donations!

Come and Sing !



Join the Celebration
Choir for Pastor
John's Installation
Service.

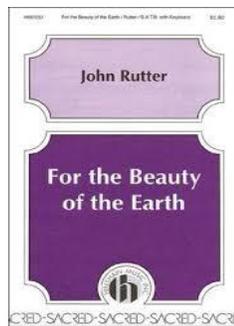
All Singers Welcome!

Lift your voice in praise to God for this
special day in the life of Emmanuel!

The choir will be singing:

**"For the Beauty
of the Earth."**

One of the most beautiful
chorales ever put together by the
great composer John Rutter – and
a favorite of Pastor John's



Rehearsal Opportunities.

Sundays: May 26 & June 2
11:30 am -12:00 pm
and

Wednesdays: May 29 & June 5
7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

****You are not required to attend
all rehearsals.***

All choir members should arrive at
Emmanuel on **June 8th at 2 PM** for a full
choir warm-up before the Installation
Please contact Ethel Geist if you are interested



Last Chance – Sign Up Today!

Forms are in the Gathering Space

Only a few dates left !



Vacation Bible Camp Comes to Souderton

Emmanuel will join with our friends at
Zwingli UCC for an exciting summer
program for children in our communities

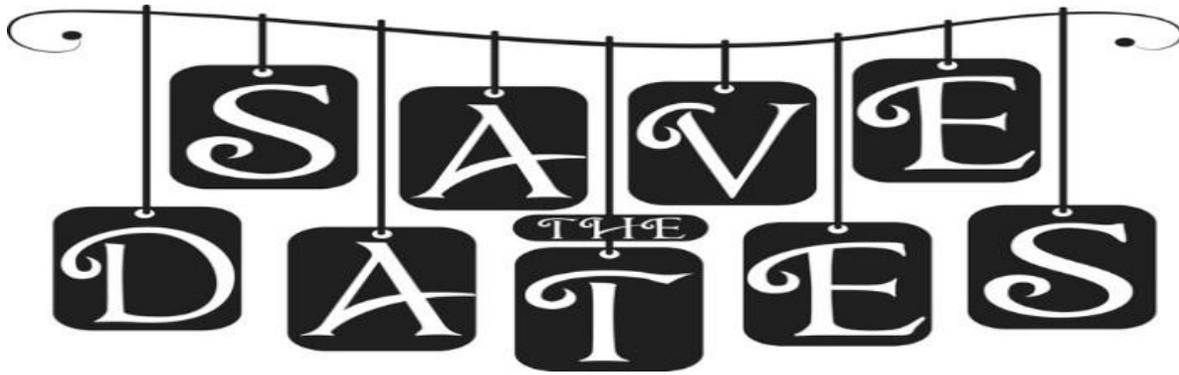
Dates: July 29 – August 2

9:00 AM – Noon

Ages: 3 – 5th Grade

Volunteers Needed

Please see Cindy Crouthamel or Ann
Marie Heidgerd if you are interested.



Don't miss these special events!

Sunday, June 16th

Holy Trinity – Father's Day

Two Worship Services!

- ◆ 10:00 AM - At Emmanuel
*With Pastor Richard Miller
preaching and leading worship.*

SOUDERTON ALIVE!



- ◆ 10:00 AM – In the Park
*Joint Worship
with Souderton Churches
Part of Souderton Alive! Weekend*

Sunday, August 10th

Indian Valley Cluster
Joint Worship Service
hosted by Emmanuel At 10 AM!

Stay tuned for more details!

***Pentecost Weekend
June 8th-9th
Join in Celebration
Invite a Friend!***

Saturday, June 8th:

Pastor John's Installation Service
3PM (*festive reception to follow*)

Special Guest Preacher:

The Rev. Christopher Mietlowski
Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church

New York, NY

Pentecost Sunday, June 9th

Confirmation Service
10 AM (*with reception to follow*)
***Come and Celebrate our Young
People!***

Don't forget to wear RED!

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

+ Martha Magargal +

On May 20, 2019, Martha Magargal was called home and is now at eternal rest with her Lord Jesus Christ. We mourn her loss with her family. A funeral service will be held graveside on Thu, May 30th – 11 AM at Jerusalem Union Cemetery in Sellersville.

For Health and Healing Members of Emmanuel

Joan Boyd	Cindy Hichens
Anthony Campolei	Craig Kulp
Elaine Cash	Betty Jane Lederach
Bill Darragh	Jane Niemczyk
Dominick DeSalvo	Kermit Schnable
Kevin Dietz	Anita Sykes
Keira Drissel	Faye Wetzal
Craig Freed	Robert Ziegler
Louella Gehringer	

Friends of Emmanuel

Donna Clemens (friend of Janel and Barry Gibson)
Luca Condo (friend of Ruth Miller)
Helen Freed (Craig Freed's Mom)
Sabrina Haap (Ruth Miller's Niece)
Donald Heller (Shirley's Brother-in-law)
Dixie Kephart (Darlene's Mother)
Samir Nowar (friend of Pastor John)
The Pellicciotti Family
Stewart Schrauger (Julie Freed's Brother)
Debbie Schweizerhof (Friend of Bob & June Kulp)
Michael Smith (friend of Cheryl Starke)
Kathryn Stover (Cindy Crouthamel's Mother)
Eric Sykes (Anita & Joe's Son)
Pam Valenti (Lou Gehringer's Sister)
Alexander & Sylvia Wagwicz (Friends of DeSalvos)
Andrea Walther (Blythe Bealer's Aunt)
Suzanne Willauer (Ed Cash's Sister)
David Miller (Pastor Miller's Brother)
James Derr (Pastor Miller's Brother-in-Law)
Alicia Ranberg (Friend of the Crouthamels)
Chase Ziegler (Christman's Great-Grandson)

While Away at School

David Henry Samantha Plinke	Abby Steinly
--------------------------------	--------------

Serving in the Armed Forces

Senior Airman Justin Lesko (grandson of Neal and Toni Quinn)
--

*In order to keep our Prayer List up to date,
names will remain for four weeks
unless otherwise notified*

For our Homebound Members

*Current addresses for our homebound are posted in
the Gathering Space*

Doris Alderfer	John Kemmerer
William & Helen De Turk	Kitty Kramer
Norma Detweiler	Joseph Sykes
Mary & Bill Frank	Dorothy Wohlgemuth
Rita Fritz	

*I urge that
supplications,
prayers,
intercessions,
and
thanksgivings,
be made
for everyone...
so that we may lead
a quiet and
peaceable
life...*

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2, NRSV

Southeast Penn Synod Vitality Team Offers New Vision

VITAL CONGREGATIONS ARE:

Communities of Jesus that nurture life-giving relationships with God, one another and the community.

We are church in an environment that is “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous,” Synod Vitality Team co-chair the Rev. Bryan Penman told the 2019 Synod Assembly.

But by working toward what research has shown are key marks of vital congregations, SEPA congregations can become more connected and relevant in their communities, he said.

The Vitality Team was organized late last year and charged with helping congregations fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and to help congregations cope with and bring about adaptive change in our current environment, Bishop Patricia A. Davenport told the Assembly.

The life-giving practices for the church include:

- Embody God's presence
- Invite and Welcome all
- Worship in Spirit and Truth
- Share Faith and Tell Stories
- Create change
- Grow and Connect Leaders
- Show Mercy, Do Justice and Serve All
- Promote Healing and Reconciliation
- Practice Radical Generosity in all things
- Are Grounded in Hope
- Are rooted in their community/neighborhood

The church's current metrics of attendance and offerings “are not working for where the church needs to go,” Penman said. The hallmarks of vitality offer a different kind of metrics that allow congregations to renew their mission and vitality, whether they gather 30 people or 1300.

A review prior to the 2018 election for bishop showed that 75 percent of SEPA congregations were showing declining attendance, “we as a Synod did not desire to keep it that way,” Penman said. “We desired to do something different.”

Synod leaders reported then that “success” for our Synod would include more growing and thriving congregations, more yoked and fewer at-risk congregations, more focus on diversity and social justice, and a cohesive Christian community working together. “Does that sound like the Beloved Community to you?” Penman asked.