From the Pastor’s Desk...

Dear Emmanuel Friedens Friends,

A friend recently reminded me that the missing ingredient in many of our lives is gratitude. As a private therapeutic step, she had taken on a month-long exercise for re-centering in gratitude: a daily journal, including some entries that were just a quick list and others that grew into longer narratives. But every day, she journaled details of what she was grateful for.

In the beginning, it was a hard exercise. But by the end of the month, her life had been transformed. And she has no intention of going back.

It is popular to give up candy for Lent. Taking up gratitude (and taking a break from bitterness) is surely every bit as challenging, and potentially even more rewarding! The effort is worth it, whether the method that works for you or me is a daily journal, or just remembering to include one item of gratitude in evening prayer, or even wordlessly summoning the faces of people we are grateful for, as we rise in the morning.

As Sunday worship began recently, I felt fresh gratitude for this church! Looking at one of you I said silently: “Thank you for her honesty, God.” As I looked at another face, as the prelude concluded, I thought: “What a wonderful and dependable presence, God.” As a family came in (a bit later in the service) after a long absence due to health issues, gratitude took the form of a simple, “Thanks, God.”

There are many things that aren’t good items for the gratitude list. But often something close by, or some one’s response to the bad thing, is worthy of thanks.

In the face of all-too-common hatred, I am grateful for each individual who speaks up for love and justice. In a day when it would be easy to become indifferent, I am grateful for every act of compassion I see you commit.

Real and honest gratitude is NOT a case of rose-tinted glasses. It IS giving ourselves permission to look closely and see what is good in our lives and in our neighbors’. It is holding up those often hidden, often taken-for-granted gestures and deeds: holding them in the light of God.

Does gratitude make us hopeless optimists? No, because we still see a world of suffering and unfairness! We just don’t give up on it. We just refuse to dismiss goodness as irrelevant. We gain strength from the integrity, the mercy, the quiet words and actions of our neighbors and friends.

Allowing ourselves to give thanks to the Source from whom we come can transform our lives! Gratitude to the Creator can re-make us. Gratitude to the Spirit who draws us together can break through personal paralysis and fear. Gratitude to the liberating Christ can—and will—open our eyes to a surprising call.

In joy and justice,
Peter
**Sabbatical Notes**

**Just What is this Lilly Grant?**  
**Pastor Carman and our Congregation Embarking on a Journey of Renewal! By Jan Grigsby**

Pastor Carman’s upcoming sabbatical leave (July through September) is funded by a Lilly Grant, but what is that exactly?  The program’s full name is The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program. And, yes, the Lilly Endowment is funded by the same people who make all those pharmaceuticals many of us take.  It is a completely separate foundation, however.  Each year the Endowment funds about 30 grants in Indiana [its home state] and another 150 around the country.  This year we are the lucky recipients of one, to the tune of almost $50,000.

Dr. Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion notes: “Pastors play an important role in nourishing the spiritual lives of individuals and in guiding the work of the Christian congregations they serve.  Through these grants we seek to honor pastors for their extraordinary service and enable them to engage in a brief period of rest and renewal.  We have learned that such experiences invigorate the leadership of pastors and bring new vitality to their congregations as well.”

Together, our pastor and congregation will be doing exactly that this over the next several months!  Throughout the Summer, Peter will travel to Mexico, Brazil and Colombia, spending time with peace workers to better understand the joy that these folks share in the work they do.  At home, we tend to think of peace work as a serious business, but in previous travels Peter has found these activists share a deep joy.  He seeks to learn more about this and to bring the excitement of that learning home to us at Emmanuel Friedens.

Jonathan Tejada and Lynn will join Peter in Cali, Columbia in mid-July to attend the Global Baptist Peace Conference.  Towards the end of his sabbatical, when Peter and Lynn walk parts of the Way of St. James (the Camino de Santiago) in Europe, we will join them in spirit by learning about this famous pilgrimage.

While Peter is on sabbatical, our congregation will be on our own learning journey, including visits from guest speakers such as Colombian native Jazmin Puicón, and Ray Schellinger of the International Ministries of the Baptist Church of America, who has recently returned from a ministry at the Mexico/US border.  We will also study Gracias! a book by Henri Nouwen about his travels in Latin America during the Adult Sunday School time.  The sabbatical team is currently securing solid office, pastoral care and worship coverage for the entire sabbatical period.

On June 30, Peter’s last Sunday, our congregation will send him off with a very special going away party.  And, after he returns in October, we’ll have a similarly festive welcome home celebration.  During the weeks and months that follow, Pastor Carman will be sharing with us much of what he learned, including visits from some of the people he met on his journey – and his excitement.

Our watchword for 2019 is surely, “To Joy and Justice!”  And, many thanks to the Lilly Endowment for their support!

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**The Weeks Ahead in Worship**

**Sunday, April 7:**  Fifth Sunday in Lent, Communion Sunday, Readings: Psalm 126, Isaiah 43: 16-21; Communion Meditation: God of the Wild Things

**Sunday, April 14:**  Palm Sunday, Procession of the Palms. We gather at 9:50 am in the parking lot to process into the sanctuary singing hymns with palms in hand!  Reading: Luke 19:28-40; Sermon: When Stones Shout

**Thursday, April 18:**  Maundy Thursday  
Service of Remembrance of the Last Supper with Schenectady First United Methodist Church at Emmanuel Friedens Church, 7 pm

**Sunday, April 21:**  Easter  

**Sunday, April 28:**  Second Sunday of Easter  
Readings: Psalm 150-Call to Worship, John 20:19-31; Sermon: Beyond Doubt

**Sunday, May 5:**  Third Sunday of Easter, Communion Sunday, Reading: John 21:1-19; Communion Meditation: Love is a Choice

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**Emmanuel Friedens Church Concert Series**

Sunday, April 28 @ 3 pm  
We are pleased to welcome KEITH REAS in concert at our church.

A New York State native, he holds degrees in organ performance from Oberlin College, the University of Oregon and the Eastman School of Music.  He recently retired as Director of Music at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Chattanooga, TN, culminating a 40+ year career which also included church appointments in Washington D.C., Phoenix, AZ and Rochester, NY.

In addition, Dr. Reas has enjoyed an active career as organist, accompanist and conductor.  Hailed as “an organists’ organist” (Tucson Daily Star), he has performed across the United States and in England, Germany and Italy.

He will present an organ recital which includes works by Sweelinck, J.S. Bach, Vierne, Reger, Widor, and contemporaries Simon Preston, Calvin Hampton & David Hurd.

The concert is free and open to the public.  A reception will follow his performance.

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**Quarterly Business Meeting**  
April 7 following worship in the sanctuary

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Sunday, June 2 @ 3 pm:  
Folk Singer, Dan Berggren returns in concert to EFC
April 7: There will be a Children's Sunday planning session for all children and youth following the Quarterly business meeting. If your child would like to participate and you cannot attend the planning session, please contact Charlie Reyes (518-694-6589 or clloves21@hotmail.com).

April 14 & 28: Children Worship Service

Children's Easter Egg Hunt and Party will be held during the Sunday School hour on Palm Sunday (April 14). There will be food, arts and crafts and the egg hunt will be on the front lawn (weather permitting).

And just maybe the Easter Bunny will visit a week early!

It has been the policy of the Christian Education & Activities Committee to pay ½ of one week’s tuition for a summer camp. Funding can be provided in advance or as a refund, whichever you prefer. The church office handles the requests for payment. Funding will be available for the following camps: Pathfinder, Camp Vick, Camp Fowler and Camp Scully. There are some materials available hanging on the door next to the church office. However, we encourage you to visit the websites listed below for more specific information on camp programs.

In addition, the Capital Area Baptist Association (CABA) offers scholarships for Pathfinder and Camp Vick; the UCC (Camp Medusa Legacy Fund) will also offer scholarships. When available, the church office will be sending out scholarship forms to parents, as well as having forms available on the door next to the office.

However, we encourage you to visit the websites listed below for more specific information on camp programs.

- PATHFINDER/VICK: www.vpccministries.org
- CAMP FOWLER: www.campfowler.org
- AMP SCULLY: http://campscully.squarespace.com

Sunday Adult Classes in April

Adult: Lenten classes: A discussion of the scriptures used during worship throughout Lent, with the theme, “Turning to the Wilderness” Individuals and /or families will lead the class based upon their personal reflections of the scripture for that Sunday.

April 7: No class—Quarterly business meeting following worship
April 14: Luke 19:28-40; class led by Debbie Gehman
April 21: No Class—Easter Sunday, reception following worship

(continued on page 7)
To order a spring plant, a lily or chrysanthemum, or both, to decorate the sanctuary on Easter and have for the Easter season, please complete the form below and return it by April 15. Please make checks payable to Emmanuel Friedens Church, memo note, “Easter Plants.”

Easter Plant Order Form

Purchased by: ___________________________________________________________________

In memory of: ________________________________________________________________ OR ___________________________________________________________________

In celebration of: ___________________________________________________________________

Plant Choice: ___ Lily  Cost: $12/each  Number of plants: _____  ___ Mum*  Cost: $12/each  Number of plants: _____

*Color of mum: __ white  __ yellow  ___ lavender/purple (please check a color choice)

OR

___ I would like to donate to the purchases of Easter Plants (either for the sanctuary or homebound member)

Total Amount: _______ Cash _______ Check (made payable to Emmanuel Friedens Church)

____ Will pick up plant(s) after the service  ____ Will leave the plant(s) after the Easter service

____ Would be available to deliver a plant to a homebound congregation member

Please return the form by April 15.