



THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2026

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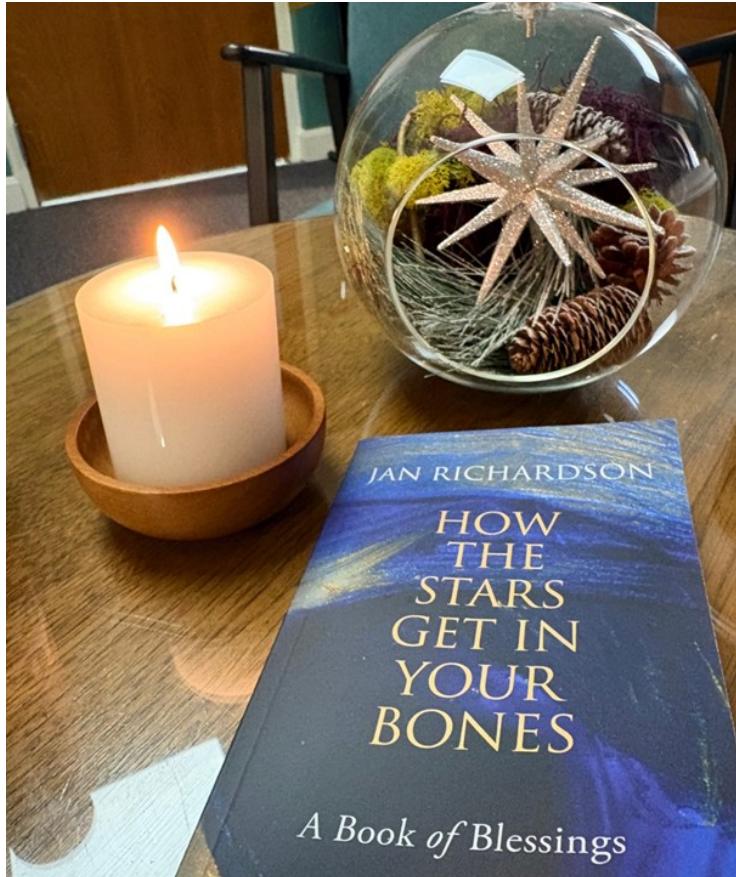


KEYS TO BIBLE CLASS

(in-person):
SUNDAY AT 11:15 AM

BIBLE STUDY (virtual):
TUESDAY AT 7:30 PM

Pastor's Post



A Spirituality of Stars

My spirituality has been shifting in the last couple of years. It has become seasonal. I mean this literally: it has become shaped by the seasons of the year. In the spring, I turn towards green things shooting up from the earth, looking for a flowering in my spirit. In the summer, I turn towards play and delight, showing the inner child we all have within us that grown-ups get to have fun, too. In the autumn, my spirit longs to turn gold, to let go of that which is not meant to last, to see change as a gift and not a threat. In the winter, I seek out the gifts of both warmth and cold: of coziness and rest like great slumbering animals, and also the whimsy of birds best seen on bare branches while the cold air swirls around me.

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I have started slowly collecting some companions for these seasons of spirituality, and this season – winter's – gift is from one of my favorite dreamers and poets, Jan Richardson. It is called *How the Stars Get in Your Bones*. It details her own journey of grief, and home, and yearning for the light. One poem in this gem of a book is what the book is named for. Some of my favorite verses are:

*I tell you, this blazing in you—
it does not come by choosing
the most difficult way, the most daunting;
it does not come by sheer force
of your will.
It comes from the helpless place in you
that, despite all, cannot help but hope,
the part of you that does not know
how not to keep turning
toward this world,
toward this sky,
to keep turning your heart
toward this unendurable earth,
knowing your heart will break
but turning it still.
I tell you,
this is how the stars
get in your bones.*

We have stars in our bones. Scientists know this. But we also have stars in the bones of our faith, and they shine through struggle, through trusting God and each other with our own helplessness; our need. In our helplessness, we find space for hope. And hope is, as Jan Richardson reminds us, the stuff of stars. The stuff of God. The stuff of us.

I cannot predict what shape your spirituality will take in this coming year. But this I do know: there will be stars. Yes, we will give star words in worship January 4 for Epiphany. That star may be a guide to your spirit. And also: everywhere we practice vulnerability with each other, turning toward one another and God, another star will be born in our spirits, and in this place called Emmanuel. Let's shine.

Peace,
Pastor Whitney

YOUR CALENDARS

(visit our website
www.emmanuelpc.org for
more calendar listing)

REPAIR CAFE

Saturday, January 10

10am-12 pm

Installation and Ordination of Officers

Sunday, January 11

during Sunday service
at 10 am

CONCERTS ON HARWOOD 2026

Piano Quartet

Saturday, May 9

4pm-6pm

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday January 25

After worship

(Reports are due by
January 12)

SHRED DAY

Saturday, March 21

10am-12pm

SIPS 'N TIDBITS

EPC Building Maintenance Fund

January 18, 2026

This offering provides funds for overall building maintenance, often which is more than our General Fund can cover. Your support of this offering helps meet this important need.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

New directories will now be printed
in January 2026 instead of Fall.

Future announcement will be sent out when printing
is completed.

CONCERTS ON HARWOOD 2026

*A Classical Music Concert Series
Sharing the Joy of Classical Music with our Neighbors*

• **Piano Quartet**

Swang Lin, violin | Desiree Elsevier, viola
Craig Leffer, cello | TakYan Yeung, piano
Saturday, January 17 at 4 pm

• **Flutissimo! Flute Choir**

Saturday, May 9 at 4 pm

• **Piano Duet**

Michael Schneider and Tak Yan Yeung
Saturday, September 12 at 4 pm

• **Flute Recital**

Mary-Christine Stingley
Saturday, December 5 at 4 pm

These events will take place at 2701 Harwood Road, Bedford TX inside the sanctuary. Admission is free to the public. Donations are appreciated.

Visit our website for more information.

[https://emmanuelpc.org/concerts-on-harwood/](http://www.emmanuelpc.org/concerts-on-harwood/)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Book Mavens – Sixth Years of Exploring Books in Community

Emmanuel's Youth and Adult Book Club, the Book Mavens, is in its sixth year, as they organized to meet online during the pandemic in 2020! The group reads and discusses a different book each month, choosing from two choices provided by the month's leader that are appropriate for the ages of youth involved. Check out their 2025 Book Recap display in Emmanuel's narthex or online via the summary in the weekly email.

Book Mavens welcome both monthly visitors and longer-term participants. For January 2026, they are reading the middle-grade book *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel* by Firoozeh Dumas, led by Caroline Loy. For more information or to participate, contact [Leah Wyckoff](#).

Group Gatherings Schedule for January

Emmanuel group gatherings take place both in-person and online. Online meeting links are included each week in the Emmanuel Weekly Email and are also available by contacting the church office (office@emmanuelpc.org). For more information on how to participate, [contact the church office](#).

January's weekly group gathering schedule is:

Sunday's

11:15 AM:

- **Keys to the Bible Class** (in-person). Meets weekly in Room 4 and is studying the Book of Acts. Contact [John Stocking](#) for more information.

Youth Check-ins Sunday afternoons:

- **Sunday, January 11 at 4 PM (on-line)** Youth Check-in devotional and prayer.
- **Sunday, January 25 3 PM - 5 PM.** In-person meeting at Emmanuel with activity TBD.

6:45 PM: Book Mavens Youth and Adult Book Club (virtual) are reading *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*, by Firoozeh Dumas , with Caroline Loy leading. To participate, contact [Leah Wyckoff](#).

Tuesday's

7:30-8:30 PM Lectionary Bible Study: Sunday worship scriptures (virtual). Online discussion of the scriptures for Sunday's worship, with leadership rotating among participants. Contact Leah Wyckoff (<mailto:klh@sbcglobal.net>) to receive the study emails and meeting link.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Session Committee Report

- Met with Kirsten Smith, examined and received her as a member by transfer from Maryvale Drive Presbyterian Church, Cheektowaga, New York
- Learned that Whitney will be on vacation January 3rd - 9th, with Rev. Pepa Paniagua preaching on January 4th with Star Words for Epiphany
- Heard that ordination and installation of new officers would take place on January 11th
- Session expressed appreciation to the Class of 2025 session members Jayne Johnson, Neal Morris, Katie Phillips, and Mary Ann Reed and Whitney offered a prayer of gratitude
- Was informed that art donated from Wanda Asire's estate is being appraised by an appraiser in Dallas, with a couple of bids which would need session approval
- Learned that the December 11th Stated Presbytery Meeting on Zoom lasted 40 minutes, primarily including approval of the 2026 Presbytery budget and last-minute nominations to Presbytery structures
- Voted to call for the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 25, 2026
- Voted to approve the 2025 Membership Roll
- Elected Sheryl Taylor Clerk and Rick Thompson Treasurer for 2026
- Approved 2026 Stated Session Meetings
- Approved 2026 Communion Dates
- Approved 2026 Special Offering Dates
- Approved Cub Scouts taking a collection for Souper Bowl of Caring following worship on Scout Sunday, February 8th, for the Local Benevolence Fund
- Approved the 2026 Budget
- Learned that Frank LeCocq will chair Christian Education in 2026
- Was informed that Facilities is working to get a permit from the City of Bedford for the Scouts to store their trailers and equipment on church property
- Learned there will be a coffee taste testing following worship on January 11th and that the new water fountain has been installed opposite Rooms 4 and 5
- Finance reported a surplus year to date of \$15,359
- Outreach committee announced dates set for 2026

Shred Day	March 21st	10-noon
Blessing of the Animals	April 18th	10-11am
Trunk or Treat	Oct. 30th	5-7 pm
Craft Fair	Nov. 14th	9am - 3pm

- Session received updated announcement guidelines designed to save time during the service and learned that the usher/greeter booklet in the narthex would be updated and returned by end of 2025
- Heard that Personnel had interviewed an individual for the child care worker position.



Fellowship Opportunities

Lois Circle

(1st Thursday of each month, 1 pm)

For more information contact:

Donna R: xxx-xxx-5464 or
Denise K: xxx-xxx-8665



Ruth Fellowship

(3rd Monday of each month, 6:30 pm)

Monday, January 19, 2025
6:30 pm

BJs Brewhouse— North East Mall
952 NE Loop 820
Hurst TX

For more information contact:

Katie.: xxx-xxx-8254

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Subscribe to
stay-up-to date*



To submit newsletter articles, events or any other information,
please email office@emmanuelpc.org
by the fourth Sunday of the month.

BIRTHDAYS



John F 01/01

Whitney W A 01/04

Kyle W 01/06

Susan S 01/13

Courtney L 01/14

Felix K 01/16

Jeremy L 01/16

Joy T 01/23

Neal M 01/27

Val H 01/27

Barbara F 01/29

Claire M 01/29

Aaron W 01/31

O Lord, let my
New Year's resolution
be to ~~follow you~~
**follow you
more closely**
and to
**trust in your
loving guidance.**



We offer three ways to submit prayer requests at this time. Please choose one.

- ◆ You may scan the QR code on the right or on the church bulletin
- ◆ Write your prayers on the slips of paper provided in church service
- ◆ Send via email to prayer@emmanuelpc.org.

Be sure to designate in the email/form if the request is for the pastors only or if it can also be shared with the congregation. All prayers received by Sunday evening will be included in the weekly prayer list. Prayers may be edited for clarity and brevity, but the essence will still be there.

**Prayer requests received through texts are not recommended. **

Thank you for sharing prayer concerns and participating in the congregation's prayer life!

HOSPITALITY SUNDAYS

Do you have gifts for hospitality and welcoming people? Emmanuel's Deacons are looking for volunteers to host refreshments after worship on a Summer Sunday. Host by yourself or partner with a friend or family member, whatever works for you. Sunday Hospitality hosting involves about 20 minutes of setup before worship, then serving food after worship and cleaning up. We have some treats on-hand in the fellowship hall freezer and funds are available to reimburse you for food purchased.

To sign up, contact Helen S. or write your name on the Sunday Hospitality schedule in the narthex. Thank you for considering it!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The Christian Education is asking for people to volunteer occasionally in the Nursery on Sundays. Our Child Protection Policy requires no less than 2 adults in the nursery with the children. This does not have to be on a regular basis but will give most of you a chance to enjoy being with the children.

There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex and the CE committee would appreciate the extra help. What a wonderful way to use your talents at Emmanuel!

AUDIO VISUAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Would you like to help with the sound system and video streaming in worship? If so, please contact Ken R. to participate in a training session.

SUNDAY OFFERING COUNTERS NEEDED!

For Sunday Offering Counters, sign up at [Sign Up Genius](#). One of the counters should be an ELDER and the other person a Volunteer. Thank you for volunteering!!

EMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2701 Harwood Road
Bedford TX 76021

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