

## THE MESSENGER, FEBRUARY 2026

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

Tara and I just came back from New York City, where we had the chance to spend time with two other married couples who went to seminary with us. From 2003-2006, we all lived and studied together in a small town outside of Pittsburgh, PA. Our lives had been connected over twenty years ago by our faith, pursuing a common goal, and enduring struggles, and we remain connected today.

In our reading from Ecclesiastes, we have the teacher, traditionally Solomon, but in the book, the author is identified only as the “Teacher.” Ecclesiastes is an unflinching look at the world and gives advice, both practical and spiritual, for how to live. Our passage is found in a larger section about the importance of friendship. It identifies for us the significance of having people with you who you love and trust. This advice is both practical and spiritual. We need people with us as companions in this journey through life, and we need people to encourage us in our faith. It is so easy to get lost on this journey or to lose our passion, and good friends can help us to hold fast when times are hard. It is in particular this last line that speaks to me, “If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.” Our lives are filled with falls. When we are knocked down or trip over our own feet, a good friend helps us get up. This is especially true of our faith. Jesus is there to lift us when we fall, and our friends are often that living embodiment of the grace of Christ in our lives.

It was so wonderful to see our friends. It had been decades since we had all been together at the same time, yet here we were, immediately close and filled with joy. Seminary had been hard; there were theological disagreements, babies lost in miscarriage, and strained relationships, yet we stuck it out together in prayer and love by the grace of God. The result of this was a beautiful closeness and love. That is the hope of the church. That we will become closer through our faith, through our unified hope and purpose, but also through our laboring through the struggles of life. I am thankful for these last sixteen years. For the way that they have caused us to become close and I am filled with confidence and hope as we journey into the future together, that God will continue to unite us as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Love,

*Seth*

### ANNUAL MEETING

Mark the page on your calendar. Emmanuel's Annual Meeting will be held on February 1, 2026 following the 10 o'clock service.

### ST. CATHERINE'S GUILD



All ladies are invited to the guild meeting on February 10th at noon in Frank Buck Hall. Chris Shelton will be presenting LOVE IS A FEELING. Save the date and come to hear what she will share ♥

Wear your red and pink... it's almost St. Valentine's Day! Carey Daly, President (530)277-5970 or [jimdaly@comcast.net](mailto:jimdaly@comcast.net)

### NEW PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Beginning January 1st, the secretary's office hours will change to Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is due to budgetary adjustments and changing staffing needs to support the mission of the church. Emmanuel Church Vestry

### THE MESSENGER IS GOING ELECTRONIC

Beginning in February, Emmanuel's monthly newsletter will be sent electronically using the Saturday E-Newsletter distribution list.

From this time forward you will only receive the Saturday E-News from Fr. Seth by email AND The Messenger monthly newsletter by email. If you want to receive information about upcoming events and activities at Emmanuel Church, you need to send your current email address to the church office now, or contact Millie at 530-265-3112 at any time.

In the future, *please make sure that you inform the church office of a change in your email address, a change in your telephone number(s), and a change in address. Also, if you move from the area or move to a different church.*

If you are new to the church, fill out a Visitor's Card found in the pews. Drop it in the plate during the offering. You can also phone the church office at 530-273-7876 or send your information through the mail to Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 235 South Church Street, Grass Valley CA 95945.

This change is part of the Vestry's effort to reduce annual expenses in 2026. - Emmanuel Church Vestry

**From Millie** – During the past few weeks I have helped our church secretary, Debbie, update the membership roster. Even though it has taken time connecting with everyone, this has been a labor of love. I have enjoyed talking with you. It has given me a chance to get to know some of you better. I have been uplifted by my conversations with you and hope that we will all get to know each other better in the future. We are a wonderful church family!

### DECEMBER 2025

Actual December Revenue	73,685.11
Budgeted December Revenue	35,730.00
Actual December Expenses	64,136.80
Budgeted December Expenses	35,730.00
December Net	9,548.31
2025 Total Revenue	440,883.72
2025 Total Expenses	450,766.05
2025 Year-To-Date Net	(9,882.33)

High revenue and expenditures in December reflect two things: 1.The transfer of Emmanuel's 2025 outreach revenue (\$33,051) and corresponding expense into church operations, and 2. Very generous year-end giving by the congregation (Special Christmas offerings alone were \$6,707). God loves a cheerful giver! 2 Corinthians 9:7.

The church ended the fiscal year 2025 in the "red" - \$9,882.33, requiring transfer of this amount from the Operating Fund reserve into church operations in order to balance the budget. The Operating Fund is a cash reserve of approximately 3-months operating expenses (\$90,000). The transfer reduces the cash reserve - \$9,882.33 and increases revenue in church operations \$9,882.33 to balance fiscal year 2025. Final church accounting for the 2025 fiscal year is shown below. The Operating Fund reserve is now reduced to \$80,117.67. Compliments to our Rector, Fr. Seth, and the Vestry for their foresight to establish and maintain a sufficient reserve to meet Emmanuel's current and future operational needs.

YEAR END 2025 – including the transfer from Operating Fund:

Final December Revenue	83,567.44
Final December Expenses	64,136.80
Final December Net	19,430.64
2025 Total Revenue	450,766.05
2025 Total Expenses	450,766.05
2025	
Year End Net	0

Please call or email me if you have any questions. Thank you! Roxanna Parker, 530-559-3106 or [roxparker4@gmail.com](mailto:roxparker4@gmail.com)

## SHROVE TUESDAY WAFFLE SALE

*Sign up in in the foyer in Buck Hall between services to help with the waffle sale.*



- Sign up to help set up the kitchen and dining hall on Sunday, February 15 at 12:15 p.m.

- Sign up to work a shift, or both shifts, on Tuesday, February 17. The shifts are 10:30 to 1:30 and 4:30 – 7:30.

Sign up to help clean up and put things away at 7:30 p.m. after customers leave on February 17. We are all tired by that time and need fresh recruitments.

Remember, if you plan to eat waffles at the beginning or end of your shift, please fill out an Order Form and give it to the cashier or Millie or Barbara Boyer with your payment. No one eats for free!

It has been the custom since 1916 that each family or parish member makes a donation toward expenses. ***We ask that each family, as they are able, donate \$5.00.*** Please leave your donation with the person behind the desk in the foyer of Buck Hall for the next few weeks.

***Money raised from this event helps fund local nonprofit organizations including:***

Booth Family House, Bright Futures for Youth, Community Beyond Violence, Foothills Compassionate Care, Habitat for Humanity, Helping Hands Nurturing Center, Hospitality House, Interfaith Food Ministry, National Alliance on Mental Illness, and Welcome Home Vets.

It also supports Emmanuel's Mexico Mission Trip, and internal needs including the General Fund, Emmanuel utilities, Gratuity Fund (secretary and sexton), High School graduate gifts, supplies and postage, and emergency needs including a Kitchen Fund and/or special needs, as they arise.

When you offer four hours (or a little more or less) of you time and talent, you help fund these important needs. You are helping countless people in our community and our church. But the benefit is two-fold. Yes, the money earned helps fund local nonprofit organizations and Emmanuel's needs, but it also gives you, as a volunteer, the opportunity to get to know fellow parishioners. When you work side by side with someone you didn't previously know, you become more of a church family, and less a stranger. Most importantly, you will have fun!

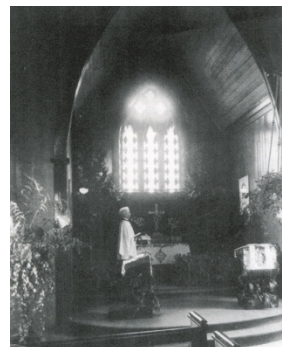
Please invite your family and friends to the waffle sale that is celebrating a 110-year anniversary this year. How many churches or community organizations can say they have continued an event that long?

Reservations are requested for parities of 6 or more not later than Friday, February 14. Please phone

Toni at 530-432-3904. If there is no answer, please leave a message and your name and phone number. Speak slowly and clearly

If you have questions, please contact Millie at 530-265-3112 or email at [themadhouse86@gmail.com](mailto:themadhouse86@gmail.com).

### Notes from Emmanuel's History:



From 1895 to 1898 The Rev. E. Van Deerlin served our church. The salary for a Rector at that time was still \$50 per month. During the next few years, the economy was prospering and many improvements were realized including a new furnace, a gravel walkway, a new woodshed, the church was painted, and much-needed repairs were attained. St. Catherine's, St. Agnes, and St. Margaret's guilds helped supply the necessary monies to help finance these upgrades.

The guilds began to put aside ten percent of their earnings for outreach, and under Rev. Van Deerlin's direction, they sponsored the Good Shepard Episcopal Mission in Colfax.

In 1916 it was Rev. Foster who told the women of St. Catherine's Guild about the pancake sales held in England on Shrove Tuesday before Lent. He suggested that it might be a great fundraiser at Emmanuel. One woman had a waffle iron that could be used over the wood stove in the Guild Hall. Eight ladies gathered to make waffles and enjoy a game of cards. They earned \$2.00 that first year in 1916 and were thrilled!

### ATTENTION SPD MARKET SHOPPERS

#### 2025 Year-Ending Results



Thank you to all who participated in the Community Card Program fundraising program at SPD Markets. We ended the year totaling \$1,320. Last year it was \$1,207. This is an increase of \$113 (9%).

How does this simple program impact the church? Last year's increase could cover the 2026 budget for coffee hour supplies (\$1,000) and youth Ministry (\$200).

If you would like to participate in this program that pays the Emmanuel Church 3% for most purchases, just fill out a short form and hand it to the cashier. They will provide you a Community Card. All you have to do is have the cashier scan the card each time you shop at the Grass Valley or Nevada City SPD Market. You may also just give them your phone number. Your information is

in their file so you don't need your card. Just type in your phone number.

The short forms are available at the Connect Center table in Buck Hall or you can get a form from the SPD Market cashier. If you have questions, please contact me, Spence Strickley at 530-205-0937 or email me at srstric14@gmail.com.

**2026 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN REPORT  
170 Years – Celebrating Our Rich History**

We are pleased to report a successful 2026 stewardship campaign resulting in 74 pledges totaling \$284,780. This is an increase in pledges of 2 (+3%). The pledge amount increased by \$2,738 (+1%). The commitment toward the Endowment Loan Repayment totals \$34,085.

Thank you to all parishioners continued dedication and generosity to Emmanuel Church.  
In Christ, Spence Strickley and Al Lehmkuhl,  
2026 Stewardship Co-Chairs

**SENIOR WARDEN REPORT**

It is a busy time of year for the Administration & Finance Committee and the Vestry - trying to close out year 2025 and planning on what to expect in 2026.

Roxanna, our treasurer, after all her hard work and hours of time spent, has everything in control and ready for Vestry approval before being presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on February 1st. Be sure to attend the meeting after the 10 a.m. service.

The Men's Club is planning a Crab Feed in Buck Hall on March 21<sup>st</sup>. More details will follow. Watch the Sunday bulletins, The Messenger, the Saturday E-News, and the church website for further information. Mark your calendar with the date now!

**170<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOKS**

There are still a few cookbooks for sale celebrating the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our church. There are 2 cookbooks with Breakfast and Lunch recipes, and only a few of the cookbook with Appetizer, Tea Party entrees, Beverages and Dessert recipes.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS & ASSISTANTS  
NEEDED AND WELCOME!**

Emmanuel Sunday School is available every Sunday from 10 a.m. to around 10:40 a.m. with a story, lesson, and program. We invite children, visiting grandchildren, nieces, nephews and others to participate in the Sunday School time, which is held downstairs in Buck Hall. The children return to the Church service at

the "Passing of the Peace" to join their parents, grandparents, etc.

Please consider being a Sunday School instructor or helper once a month or once a quarter! The time commitment is limited and fun!

Contact: Tara Kellermann or Gloryanne Bryant

*"Dear LORD,  
Thank You for this food we share,  
For love and kindness everywhere.  
In winter's chill, keep hearts warm too,  
With joy and peace in all we do.  
Bless our friends and family near,  
And fill our month with love and cheer.  
Amen."*

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA**



"A huge thank you to all of the parishioners who donated wreaths or their time to our Wreaths Across America project in 2025. We laid 1800+ wreaths on veterans

graves.

On January 10th, we took up all of the wreaths and flags and disposed of them. We have closed the book on 2025's campaign. Thank you all for helping to make this a very successful project. I hope you will be involved again in 2026. With gratitude, Sally Knutson

**SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP TIME**

Coffee and Fellowship Hour is a time enjoyed by all parishioners. There is a coffee hour after the 8:00 o'clock service and a coffee hour after the 10:00 o'clock service in Buck Hall with lots of goodies to enjoy. If you would like to participate, there is a list of group leaders and their phone numbers on the bulletin board in Buck Hall. Just give them a call. Or, if you are interested in starting your own group, please call Adrienne Ybarrondo at 530-913-1773 for the 8:00 a.m. service and Pam Hall at 530-305-0569 for the 10:00 a.m. service. Thank you.



If you are celebrating a birthday, wedding anniversary, or other special event that you would like to share with your fellow parishioners, you are welcome to bring a cake, cupcakes, or other item to share at the Fellowship hour following the service that you attend.

**SPONSOR THE ALTAR FLOWERS**



Do you have a birthday or anniversary coming up that you would like to celebrate by donating to the flowers which grace the altar on Sundays? Our

Flower Ministry is committed to presenting beautiful bouquets each Sunday and they are funded by the donations which we make to sponsor flowers for each Sunday.

If you would like to sign up to have a loved one or a special event remembered in the church bulletin made visible with flowers, the sign-up sheet is on the wall in Frank Buck Hall. Choose your special date. The suggested donation is \$35 but you are welcome to offer more if you like. The additional money does not make a larger bouquet, but it helps to fill any empty days. Contact the church office (530-273-7876) with any questions or to sign up remotely. Thank you! - The Flower Guild

## ST. VALENTINE

On February 14 store windows suddenly bloom with red hearts. It will soon be St. Valentine's Day, the special time for us to express our love to those dear to us.

St. Valentine was a priest who was martyred in Rome on February 14 in about the year 270 during the terrible persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Claudius. Many legends about him developed through the centuries. During the Middle Ages, when large numbers of people went to Rome on pilgrimages, a church dedicated to St. Valentine stood near the great city gate leading into Rome from the Flaminian Way. It was the first sight that greeted the pilgrims as they entered the Eternal City and the last thing they saw as they started their journey home. This is the reason, some believe, for the spread of devotion to Valentine all through Europe.

What can be the connection between a third century martyr and declarations of love and gift giving? For the answer to that we have to look to folklore during the Middle Ages, particularly in England. There was a widespread belief that February 14 was the day on which birds selected their mates. Chaucer referred to the popular legend in *Parliament of Fowls*, written in 1382. "For this was on Saint Valentine's day, when every fowl cometh there to choose his mate." Shakespeare also knew of the legend and mentions it in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Since February 14 was a good day for birds to pair, then it was also a good day for boys and girls to pick a sweetheart. That was the popular thinking and, gradually, February 14 became the day on which young people exchanged love letters and gifts. Since the day was also the feast of St. Valentine, the celebrations became associated with his name. Over the centuries, Valentine became the patron of lovers of all ages.

Why a heart as the symbol of love, and why a red heart? The heart has long been considered the seat of the emotions and the source of love, joy, and courage. The Bible is filled with allusions to the heart. Proverbs tells us that, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine." 17:22 The

color red is a symbol of love and good luck in a number of cultures.

Before we put St. Valentine aside as just a pious legend, let us remember that the heart and the color red are also the symbols of martyrdom. St. Valentine, and so many others, died rather than renounce their faith in Jesus. After all, what does faith come down to in the end, except love. - From Thy Bounty, Cathedral Book Store

## FOR A VALENTINE'S DAY TREAT Red Velvet Cheesecake Brownies



*These over-the-top brownies make a great Valentine treat! These gorgeous red-and-white brownies are about as tasty as it gets. Make them to celebrate Valentine's Day with everyone you love, that means a special someone, your family, or your favorite friends!*

### For the Brownies:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (1-1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted, plus more for the pan  
1-1/2 cups granulated sugar  
2 large eggs, at room temperature  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon red gel food coloring plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon if needed  
1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled into the measuring cups  
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt

### For the Cheesecake Swirl:

1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, at room temperature  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup granulated sugar  
1 large egg white, at room temperature

Make the Brownies. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9x9-inch baking pan and line with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides.

Whisk together butter and sugar until combined. Add eggs and whisk until incorporated. Add vanilla and food coloring. Whisk until evenly distributed throughout. Add flour, cocoa powder, and salt. Stir until ingredients are just combined. Set aside.

Make the Cheesecake Swirl. Beat cream cheese and sugar with an electric mixer medium speed until combined, about 1 minute.

Transfer half of brownie batter into the prepared pan. Using a spoon, dollop half of cheesecake mixture over batter. Repeat layers one more time. Use a knife to swirl cream cheese mixture into batter.

Bake until edges and cheesecake swirl are set, tenting with foil halfway through baking to prevent over-browning, 45 – 50 minutes. Cool in pan for 20 minutes. Use parchment overhangs to transfer to a wire rack; cool completely. Remove parchment and cut into squares or bars. Store covered in the refrigerator up to 3 days.