

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS



John Wesley was a tangible hope-bearer to the people in England who were oppressed by the iniquities of their kingdom. He was an agent of altogether hope. He witnessed pain all around him, but instead of going to the king or the queen, he went directly to those who suffered right where they were – in the streets and the fields. When he and his brother Charles faced challenges from naysayers and institutions, they persevered. Who were these guys? Radicals for sure!

Wesley didn't say, "Come to us in our big church! Bring a dish to our potluck!" Wesley did what God always does – he showed up and he brought hope to the people! It's just like God tells us, "I'm going to come to you! And here I am – Jesus!" It wasn't about showing up to the potluck or the fancy church with the beautiful windows (although I am sure they were beautiful) or being clean and dressed nicely. These poor folks were simply trying to survive, so instead, he carried hope to them. This is, I think, the difference between almost hope and altogether hope. One stands at a distance while the other relentlessly pursues; one offer platitudes while the other dives deep into the hopelessness of the situation and offers light in the darkness –light that grows and grows and grows.

People living in poverty often don't have time or the luxury to go take showers and get fancy for church. They often don't have enough to feed their own families, so how could they bring food to a potluck? They don't have transportation, so how are they going to get to the church? In contrast God tells US to "GO!" This is what hope looks like close-up. We carry it with us. The hope of Christ moves through us so that he is born again and again in every moment of every day. In every moment of every day... not just Sunday mornings.

None of this altogether hope is easy. None of it. Each time hope is carried to those who are struggling, our hands get dirty. Our hearts get overwhelmed. We enter unfamiliar spaces knowing it would be much easier to have stayed home.

But God calls is to bring this lively hope to all of God's children no matter where they are. God breathes new life and hope into us so that hope becomes something people don't have to just be told about; they can actually see it.

Hope shows up even when it feels like the work never ends. All the bits and pieces of life, the struggles and the despair, the uncertainty and the chaos – well, maybe they are the things that provide enough contrast for us to see that it was there all along – the Hope of God. The altogether hope that makes sense of it all. We were just too busy to notice.

Will you join me in making 2025 a year of hope, here at Immanuel, throughout our community, and the world? Because the world desperately needs to feel the hope we have to offer!
And that hope's name is Jesus! Amen.

Pastor Jack Keating

hope

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THIS AND THAT FROM PASTOR JACK.....



Here are some things to think about and maybe even mark your calendar to attend...

1. OUR 2024 STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM.... Was a great success! Thanks to all who made a financial commitment for our 2025 ministry year!
2. WE CONTINUE TO DELIVER a meal once each month to our shut-ins and those who could use reminding that their church loves and cares about them. If you know of someone who could use a meal delivery and visit, please talk to the church office!
3. Did you know we have a great group of dedicated folks here who serve as FAITHFUL FRIENDS? These wonderful people maintain contact with their assigned "friends" each month and are so important to help keep all our congregation connected. If you'd like to become a FAITHFUL FRIEND speak with Pastor Jack today.
4. OUR ADVENT THEME WAS... The Word Made Flesh! During Advent we were reminded that Jesus came to us in the flesh and revealed his divine nature to us through the physical substances we experience on earth. It was a wonderful and spirit-filled time! Thanks to all who decorated, studied, baked, sang, taught, and Christmas caroled to make Advent and Christmas so wonderful!
5. DON'T FORGET TO WEAR your church name tag! This way everyone can be called by their name here in the family of Immanuel.
6. IN JANUARY we will celebrate Human Relations Day on Sunday, January 19th. On this day we will receive one of our 6 special offerings which are requested by our General Church. This offering supports the work of community organizers, lay people and pastors who work daily to build bridges between God's people. Look for the special offering envelopes as you enter the Sanctuary on Sunday, January 19th! Thanks!
7. OUR SECOND SUNDAY LUNCHEON in January is being held on Sunday, January 12th! This will be our annual Chili, Chowder, Soup Cook-off! Dust off your favorite recipe and enter this fun competition so we can all taste your cooking talents! Please make sure to sign up outside the Fireside Room so we are sure to have a healthy assortment of soups, chowders and chilis for all that day!



***** Pastor Jack* ****



A Word of Thanks!

Just a quick note to thank you all for the wonderful gifts presented to the church staff at Christmas! We received many gifts of delicious baked goods, beautiful cards, and the special offering gifts presented at Christmas! Immanuel is supported by a talented and dedicated staff and your gifts continue to remind us how truly blessed we are to serve here in Camillus! Thank you once again from all of us!

Pastor Jack



Thank you

I would like to thank my Immanuel family for their prayers, cards, prayer shawl, phone calls, kind words, and delicious food that helped me as I recover from knee replacement surgery. Immanuel members are the best!

~Shelley Dawson Smith



The Kidz Club kids have been busy during the month of December.

We have been learning about the candles on the advent wreath each Sunday in Advent. We have also been hanging ornaments on the Jesse Tree in our room that symbolize different Bible stories. Come and take a look!

Each Sunday we have also been very busy making 80+ Christmas cards that were brought with the group that went to Brookdale Summerfield and Brookdale Bellevue Senior facilities caroling and bell ringing. The kids that were there sang, rang bells and helped the residents follow along and do their own bell ringing. At the end of the time spent with them we gave every resident that attended a Christmas card and even had some left over to be distributed to residents that were not there at the time.

We also had quite a few kids participating in the living nativity which was a wonderful time. We enjoyed singing, lessons, live animals and hot cocoa and snacks. In January we will be working on getting our painting project going. Hopefully next time we will have pictures of this project to share.

Lorlie Wood
Faith Formation Leader





DOOR SPRAYS

- > Thanks to Dan Martini owner of Syracuse Christmas Tree Farm in Syracuse for donating the greens.
 - > Thanks to Mike & Julie DeOrdio, Jerry & Denise Sabattis, Mike Block and Warren & Janet Robinson for cutting the greens. > Thanks to Warren Robinson, Jim Vanelli & Jerry Sabattis who helped set up the tables in the fellowship hall.
 - > Thanks to Denise Sabattis, Ed Owens and Mile DeOrdio who helped assemble the door sprays.
 - > Thanks to Julie Deordio, Denise Sabattis, Angie Keida, Kristin & Kayla Short, Melanie & Kaylee Blackledge, Judy Owens, Karen Picconi, Barb Merckel, Ruth McConnelee, Sherry Molatch, Shirl Cruickshank, Betty Block & Lynne Hessney who did an outstanding job decorating the sprays.
 - > Thanks to the people who purchased the door sprays.
 - > Through this cooperative effort we made 50 door sprays (sold 48, donated 2 for the church) and as everything is donated we were able to contribute \$980.00 to the Mission Team for Disaster Recovery.
- ~Shelley Dawson Smith



Heifer Project

We would like to thank everyone who gave and supported Heifer International this past Christmas season. Together we raised \$1,045.00. These funds will be used by Heifer International to help families around the world become self-sufficient and escape poverty by providing life stock, educational training and business support. Again, thank you for your generous giving.

~Helen and Sara Forward



Shoe Ministry



Immanuel supports the shoe ministry that was started by "Ralph the Shoe Guy" owner of Discount Shoe Repair in downtown Syracuse. Ralph refurbishes the shoes which may involve some polish or replacing the laces or putting on new soles and he then gives the shoes to the Rescue Mission. Ralph started this ministry in 2011 with a donation of 35 pairs of shoes and it has grown to a record 43,120 pairs of shoes in 2024! Ralph donates his time and the supplies however he also accepts cash to help defray the cost of the supplies. Immanuel donated approximately 100 pairs of shoes in 2024. Let's continue to help Ralph and the Rescue Mission!
The donation box is in the Narthex under the coat hangers. Any questions ask Shelley Dawson Smith 315- 727-0671.

Mitten Tree

On behalf of the Mission Team a heartfelt thank you is extended to everyone who donated to this project. Every branch of our tree was covered with socks, mittens, hats, scarves and gloves. And under the tree were gently used boots and coats.
The smaller size children's items were given to East Hill Elementary School in Camillus.
The larger size children's items were given to the Solvay Geddes Community Youth Center,
The children of our community will be warmer this winter because of your generosity. Our goal was 100 items and this year 125 items were donated!
~Shelley Dawson Smith



Mission Trip to Hardwick, VT

We are planning on supporting a team of Skilled, Semi-Skilled and those wishing to become Skilled to work on Home Rebuilding Projects. This session will run 1 week of work with daily travel or overnight available all days
The work week is **May 18th to the 24th, 2025**. All skill levels welcomed.
There will be a meeting at Immanuel UMC on **April 14th at 7PM** (for those close enough to be there). For information or questions please call or email Mike Block (Zoom info will be shared upon request).
It is important to submit all required forms by the posted date. Any questions regarding this trip please contact the persons named below. Submit forms before April 14th, 2025.
Trip Details and Questions - Mike Block (315) 491-0497 or mrb2065@gmail.com
Fund Raising Guidance – Betty Jane Block (315) 491-8256 or bblock4938@gmail.com



Ministries News



SPRC News

We ended 2024 by celebrating Dan Miller as he officially begins retirement! Dan was involved in church music ministry for over 40 years! We are glad that Dan, Lisa and Annie will continue to sing in the choir and be a part of our music ministry.

We will begin 2025 with Colin Keating as our music director and pianist/organist. Colin will lead the adult choir and he will be the contact person for special music. If you have an interest in being a part of the music ministry, please reach out to Colin! Immanuel is so fortunate to have such a wonderful, dedicated staff!



M2 Report:

October 2024 M2 Donations

Total Donated	\$1,705.00	
Missions	\$568.33	33.33%
Maintenance/Trustees	\$1,136.67	66.66%

November 2024 M2 Donations

Total Donated	\$4,081.00	
Missions	\$1,360.33	33.33%
Maintenance/Trustees	\$2,720.67	66.66%

Due to the congregation's generosity, M2 money was recently given in October & November to the following organizations:

- \$200.00 Solvay Geddes Youth Ctr Friday After School Meal Program
 - \$850.00 West Side Food Pantry/Thanksgiving Baskets
 - \$500.00 Camillus PBA/Thanksgiving Baskets
 - \$500.00 Valeria Burgos/Mission of Peace
- ~Any questions please ask Shelley Dawson Smith.



Knit-n-Stitch

The Knitting/Crochet group will meet during the winter months on Mondays at 10am as usual.....**UNLESS** schools are closed. We will **NOT** meet if West Genesee Schools are closed.

OUTSIDE LIVING NATIVITY



On December 14th the church's yard was transported back to the birth of our Savior. There was a stable, angels, shepherds, wonderful music and of course real animals! It was a wonderful and magical evening.

A heartfelt and sincere thank you is extended to the following people who helped tell the Christmas story and made it so special:

- Mary: Gillian Keating
- Joseph: Jack Keating
- Angel Gabriel: Elodie Ahl
- Baby Jesus: Daniel Cavallo
- Shepherds: Mason Ahl, Asa Kinsley, Sebastian Kowatch, Teddy Kowatch & Oscar Kowatch.
- Angels: Avery Ahl, Kaylee Blackledge, Harper Keating, Adie Kinsley, Aeryn Kondratowicz & Hailey Kondratowicz, Eve Kowatch & Kayla Short,
- Kings: Etta Davidheiser, Carly Kinsley & Brayden Short.
- Soloist: Annie Miller
- Narrator: Pastor Jack
- Rt 80 Stables: Ollie the donkey, Ben & Jerry, the mini horses & 2 adorable mini goats.
- Tori Stopen: Roosters Hei Stolen & Riot
- Members of the Candy Cuties & Camillus 4H clubs helped start the night by singing Go Tell It On The Mountain.

An event like this needs help from a number of behind-the-scenes people and my thanks to each and every one:

- Liz Kelsey-Gossard, Travis Clapper, Savannah Clapper: Bell Tower Ringers
- Sam Paventi, Denise Sabattis & Janet Robinson: Refreshments
- Warren Robinson, Larry McConnelee, Mike Block & Jerry Sabattis: Helped set up the stable & the star
- Lorlie Wood: Silent Night song sheet & candles
- Parents: Helped dress the children.

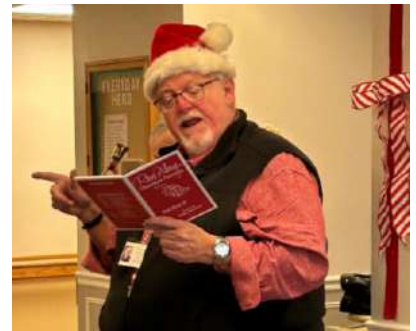
Thank you to all!
Shelley Dawson Smith





Living Nativity

Caroling



Immanuel United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 335
Camillus NY 13031
Electronic Service Requested

Our Mission

*"To make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world."*



*January
February
2025*

We wish to be good stewards of both financial and environmental resources. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email us at churchofthebells@gmail.com and request removal.



Pastor

Pastor Jack Keating

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Worship

Sundays at 8:30 & 10am

*Facebook Live during 10am

Kidz Club

During 10am service

Office Hours

Monday-Friday 9am – 3pm

Handicapped accessible

Please join us!