

## PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Greetings Friends,

We have celebrated a beautiful Christmas season and I am reminded that the humble manger was the first dwelling place for Jesus on earth. It was where he chose to begin his reign as Immanuel, God with us. Maybe that's why the manger is often used as a metaphor for the human heart... it is the humble place God loves so much he longs to make it his home. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul takes up that image of the heart as Christ's home. And he describes the essential connection between Christ dwelling within us and our ability to both understand and experience the love of God.

*"I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to fully understand. Then you will be made complete with the fullness of life and power that comes from God." (Ephesians 3: 16-19 NLT).*

"The story of our faith is the story of God's relentless love for us." Max Lucado writes. "Let him love you." As foundational as the love of God is to the Christian faith, many of us still struggle to fully receive it. In fact, many Christians find it easier to believe that God exists than that God loves them. We lay the foundation for receiving God's love when we welcome Christ and allow him to be at home in our hearts. We continue to receive God's love when we learn to trust God, spend time with God, and look expectantly each day for signs of his love. As we start this New Year, let's commit to continue to opening our hearts by seeking to recognize and receive God's love.

Maybe you'll join me in trying to look, each day, for signs of how much God loves you. Remember... God's love is infinitely creative and it often shows up in unexpected ways and places. In addition to looking for signs of God's love in experiences of natural beauty, in provision, protection, or consolation, look for signs of God's love in the places and people where you might least expect to find it. Maybe you'll find it helpful to have a reminder... set a daily alert on your phone or laptop or write the following, one sentence prayer on a post-it note and place it where you will see it often: *"Lord, how can I let you love me in this moment?"*

Let's join together to commit to making 2017, our 50<sup>th</sup> year of ministry here in Camillus, our BEST YEAR EVER! I continue to be blessed to be here serving among you!

**Pastor Jack Keating**



PS... A word of THANKS... for all the yummy gifts, the beautiful cards, the monetary gift, and the offering of yourselves.... that you give to Becky and I each day! Your care, concern, and thoughtfulness helped to make our Christmas season a joyous one. Thanks for being such a wonderful Church family!

## INSIDE...

Youth/ Family News  
Missions  
Words of Thanks  
Calendar

## Youth/Family

I love the start of a new year. It's a time to reflect upon the past, make plans for the future and to begin again. One of the first things I do in the new year is to get a new calendar. Now, I am very particular about choosing a calendar. It has to be a monthly one; I like to see the whole month mapped out in one picture. And I like one that has a lot of color to it. In fact, I use different colored pens to put in my entries. A blank calendar is full of opportunity. So many blank squares to fill in. **Anything is possible.** That will be the mantra for the Christian Ed Team in 2017. Anything is possible. As long as we remember that anything is possible, through Christ who strengthens us.

In November, Pastor Jack and the Christian Ed Team took a look at our existing programs and reflected upon what was working and what was not. We spent time dreaming about what we wanted Christian Education to look like not only at Immanuel UMC but in our community. I would like to invite you on this journey. If you have some ideas about what you would like Christian Ed to look like at Immanuel or the community, let's sit down and chat. Remember, we can do anything through Christ!

## CALENDAR

- 1/1 No Sunday School
- 1/8 Sunday School classes resume  
First confirmation class  
JR/SR HI meets at 11:30am
- 1/15 Confirmation lunch with confirmands, parents & mentors @ 11:30am
- 1/22 SR HI meets at 11:30am; JR HI meets at 6:30pm
- 2/9 SR HI @ Newsboys Concert @ 7pm

Shalom,  
*Carol A. Doucette*  
Christian Education Coordinator



## IMMANUEL CARD PARTY NIGHT

SATURDAY JANUARY 28- FELLOWSHIP HALL  
6:30 PM- 9:00 PM

Come learn a new and fun card game, played in teams of four. We will organize teams, or form your own team of four. The game is appropriate for adults and kids old enough to enjoy games like pinochle, pitch, bridge. If you don't know any of those games but want to learn, it is not that hard- we will teach you, it's a lot of fun!

**Invite your friends, neighbors, colleagues to participate...all are welcome**

Important! **Participants need to sign up** (in the narthex) so we can organize teams and game tables in advance.

**Come enjoy  
\*\*\*\*Ice cream sundaes\*\*\*\***

**Fellowship  
Snacks and fun!**

Sponsored by the Immanuel membership/evangelism team. Questions? Contact Barb Merckel 488-9607



The Knit-n-Stitch group primarily makes prayer shawls and lap robes infused with our prayers for the recipients. However, we go knit and crochet such extras as hats, scarves, shawls, blankets, scrubbies, dish cloths, ornaments, etc. which we sell at the craft sale or donate.

We have donated to the following organizations this Christmas:

- A family in need \$100.00
- Heifer Project-5 flocks of chickens \$100.00
- Samaritan Center \$100.00
- Food Bank of CNY \$50.00
- Rescue Mission \$50.00
- World Vision \$100.00

Which provides \$1,200 worth of clothing to needy people in the USA with donation matches.

We would love to have you join us on Mondays at 10am.

~ Judy Bachman Owens & Doris Henderson



thank you!

**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 little tree was covered with socks, mittens, hats, scarves and gloves. And under the tree were gently used boots and coats. The children of the Onondaga Indian Nation will be warmer this winter because of your generosity. Our goal was 100 items and this year an amazing 178 items were donated!

*Shelley Dawson Smith*



- > Thanks to Bruce and Gerrie Yaw owners of Big Tree Farm in Moravia for donating the greens.
- > Thanks to Mike Block, Ed Owens, Jerry Sabattis and Dave Russell for cutting and picking up the greens.
- > Thanks to Ed Owens, Sherry Molatch and Robin Polge who helped assemble the door sprays. Thanks to Joan Archambeau, Angie Keida, Julie DeOrdio, Robin Polge and Barb Merckel who did a wonderful job decorating the sprays.
- > Thanks to the people who purchased the door sprays.
- > Through this cooperative effort we made 51 door sprays and as everything is donated we were able to contribute \$1,020.00 to the Mission Team.

*Shelley Dawson Smith*



**Thank you to everyone** who generously supported the Mission Team's Angel Tree Project. Through our angel gifts, we share God's love with children from the Big Brother, Big Sister Program in Syracuse and with children from the Methodist Church on the Onondaga Nation. This year we had double the angel tree tags and every single tag was returned!



**Human Relations Day is Sunday, Jan. 15.** This is one of 6 special offerings during the year. Gifts to Human Relations day support community advocacy and programs for at risk teens through the larger Methodist church. Special offering envelopes will be in the bulletins Jan. 15.



The church office will be closed Monday, Jan. 16.

Getting to know your  
*STAFF/PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE*  
(AKA S/PPRC)

The ministry of the committee lies in its name: **RELATIONS.** In every size congregation, the S/PPRC's main focus is on building strong relationships between the staff and the congregation, and between the congregation and the District Superintendent (DS). Finding the balance between building relationships and handling administrative/management related tasks is challenging but crucial in developing a vital and effective congregation that can successfully move the mission of the church forward.

As far as administrative/management related tasks are concerned, the "Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church" lists the following specific tasks for the S/PPRC:

- Encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor and staff and their families, including advocating for a healthy work/life balance
- Promote unity in the church
- Confer with the staff on the effectiveness of their ministry and impediments to effectiveness, including conflicts of interest, and sexual misconduct.
- Confer with the staff about effective use of their gifts, skills, time and priorities
- Conduct annual staff evaluations.
- Teach the congregation about itinerancy, steps into ordained ministry, the value of diversity in staffing, and the ministerial education fund.
- Write job descriptions for staff
- Confer with staff about continuing education and spiritual formation
- Confer with the district superintendent about clergy leadership for the congregation
- Recommend staff positions to the church council
- Create written personnel policies and sexual misconduct policies for the congregation
- Consult on matters of staff support including housing, vacation, insurance, pension, and other matters outlined in the Book of Discipline.
- Our S/PPRC is comprised of the following individuals : Gary C. Merckel (Chairperson) , Linda O'Brien, Mike Conway, Helen Druce, Bryan Barner, Ashley Davis, Mike Myer, Brian Amidon, and Steve Forward. If you have any questions, concerns or issues that you believe the S/PPRC should be aware of, please feel free to contact me at (315) 488-9607.

Yours in Christ,

Gary C. Merckel - Committee Chair (2017)



Hi Sherry!

Just wanted to let you know we had our party yesterday and the students had a great time and loved their gifts. I've attached some pictures for you to look at and share if you would like. The girl who got the pink boots, hat, and gloves absolutely loved her boots and said she was going to wear them everyday. In her words: "I love everything I got but I love these boots the most!"

Thank you so much for blessing these students and sharing the love of God with them. Have a very happy Christmas!  
Melissa Big Brother/Big Sister Program



Thank you

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you Dear Friends!  
The wonderfully warm coats, hats, scarves and mittens will be so very treasured as the winter winds begin to blow! Thank you so much for always sharing your hearts, warmth and love!  
Best to you all!

The Entire Samaritan Center Family

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous contribution to the free Brown Bag Lunch Program. Your support allows us to continue providing nutritious lunches to all who come. Our 2016 goal was to serve 7,400 lunches, yet we were able to give away 8,031 lunches. Fifty-four volunteers from all areas and community giving made this ministry a reality. Together we make a difference in the lives of others showing God's love in a very practical way.

Blessings to you,

Jean Whipple

Program Coordinator

Camillus First, UMC

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the families served by St. Paul's Westside Food Pantry, I would like to thank you for your recent donation of hams and \$750 for our holiday baskets. Your gift will help us to provide a package for small families that are not eligible to receive one from the Christmas Bureau.

We truly appreciate your ongoing support of our ministry. It is only with the ongoing support of friends like you, that we can continue to provide assistance for the families we serve.

Blessings,

Judy Eyer, Pantry Coordinator

Rejoice

Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We thank you for your generous contribution to help our youth to attend our Christian Education Conference. Your loving dedication to help us in our time of need has truly been a blessing! We pray that the love of Christ continues to shine from your church as a beacon of light for all to see and emulate.

Love in Christ,

Rev. Paris Price

Director of Christian Education

People's AME Zion Church

Blessings

Dear Parishioners and Staff,  
Thank you so much for the large food donation for St. Joseph's Church Food Pantry. We are very grateful for this generous donation!

St. Joseph's Church is blessed to be in a position to reach out and help those in our community who are in need. What you have done will ensure that there will always be help available whenever it is needed.

We thank you and pray for God's bountiful blessings for you.

Sincerely,

Vanessa McCrea

Food Pantry Coordinator

Michael Block,  
Thank you so much for coming and helping us rebuild homes for families who were affected by the disasters. The hope that was given to the families is unreal.

Thank you,

Sara McCutchen

UMCSC Disaster Recovery

Return Service Requested

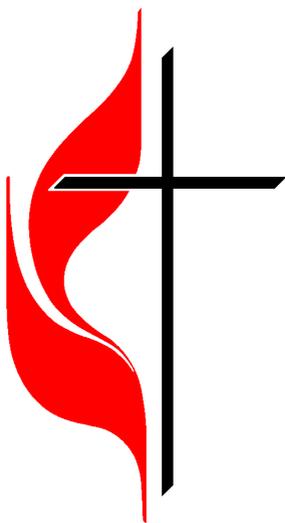
*Our Mission*

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



## *January/February 2017*

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](mailto:churchofthebells@gmail.com) and request removal.



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Pastor Jack Keating

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Worship

8:30 am and 10 am

Sunday School

During 10 am worship

Handicapped accessible

*Please join us!*