

### **PASTOR'S PONDERINGS**

March and April promise to be some wonderful months in our church year. We start out moving into and through Lent... as we turn our hearts to prayer and contemplation. As we think about the "boxes" that exist all around us, we have the opportunity to purposely slow down our busy lives so that we can simply reflect on our own individual relationship with God. We remember that, despite all our attempts, we are still imperfect people in need of God's grace.

And this entire journey through Lent brings us to Holy Week, that week just prior to Easter. It begins on Maundy Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, which just might be the day with the most confusing name in the church calendar. The word, Maundy, however refers to the religious ritual when we remember that Last Supper, as Jesus first shared the meal of loaf and cup with his disciples. And this is the same practice that we continue today whenever we gather around the Lord's Table.

Maundy Thursday is followed by Good Friday, during which we remember the crucifixion of Jesus. And we remember this event each year because it is so central to our faith as Christians. This is the day when we pause to reflect that God cares so much for us that God came to earth as Jesus to teach and heal us. But since Jesus' actions greatly upset the people around him, the path eventually led him to the cross. I think we should always try to remember how radical this message truly is. Imagine God coming to us as a human being, teaching us how to live and love, and then dying for our sakes!

But as you know, the message of Jesus doesn't stop there! Three days after his death, Jesus' tomb is opened and he is resurrected. What an image to keep in mind... the empty tomb containing nothing but the burial bandages that had once wrapped Jesus earthly body. Christ has conquered death, and because of this we know that death no longer has a hold over us! And just as Jesus has been resurrected, we have God's promises that we too will be resurrected. That's the joyful message of Easter, friends... we are saved by an act of God's power, grace, and love!

So join us over the next several weeks as we move from contemplation to celebration! Sure we'll recall our own sinfulness, but more importantly, we will remember the God who loves us despite it all. So I invite you to walk through each of these stories, to hear them and to experience them. And through them we will celebrate the amazing message of God's grace!

I can't wait to see you in worship,

***Pastor Jack Keating***

### **INSIDE...**

Youth/ Family News  
Missions  
Holy Week information  
Calendar



One of the most common questions raised at our cottage meetings this past fall was "Where are all the children?" The congregation has noticed that the number of children attending on any given Sunday has decreased over the past several years. At our last Christian Education meeting, we talked about how we could improve the attendance in our Sunday school program. The team spent a great deal of time discussing the situation and how to best use our resources and teachers. Several of the team members talked about how difficult it has been to get the children excited about coming to church.

My friends, I am excited to announce that we are tackling this issue head on. The Administrative Council has agreed to allow the Christian Ed Team to work with consultant, David Black, who will come in and evaluate our current Christian Education programs and make recommendations to help us better engage the children and their families as well as help us to reach out to the community to make disciples for Jesus. Mr. Black will be spending time with us over the next three months, bringing his passion and expertise in the field of discipleship building. David is from the Binghamton area and has a degree in theatre and psychology from Binghamton University. David is also a licensed local pastor. He has spent the last 28 years working in Christian Education at Tabernacle UMC and Sarah Jane Johnson Memorial UMC. He has served as the Director of Day Camp at Skye Lake for 13 years. I met David at a District Training event last month and felt an immediate connection to him and his ministry. He has a true passion for children and I am excited to be working with him.

David will be meeting with the staff and the Christian Ed Team first. He will also spend a Sunday worshipping with us and meeting the children. Then, David will come back and spend some time with the congregation talking with them about our current programs and how we can better engage them and their children. I hope you will welcome David and share your concerns, along with your hopes and dreams for our church, with him. If anyone has any questions or would like to talk more about David's background, please come and see me. I am incredibly excited about the journey we are about to take and feel that God has put David in our path for a reason. I can't wait to find out what God has in store for us.

Shalom,

~Carol

Carol A. Doucette, Christian Education Coordinator

## Chili-Chowder Cook- Off

Please join us for a luncheon on Sunday March 19<sup>th</sup> after our 10:00am worship service.



Some of our members will be preparing a crock pot of either chili or chowder for us to enjoy and allow us to enter a vote for our favorite. There will be a first and second place prize awarded in each division and all are welcome to join in this friendly competition.

If you would like to attend and enjoy, you can bring cornbread, cookies or a go-along side condiment as shown on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Sign up as soon as possible and no later than 3/15/17, so we will have enough places set at our bountiful tables in the fellowship hall.

There will be a free will offering for the benefit of the many mission projects that we do in our Christian Love.

Thank you in advance for your participation and generosity. I am available for more information and for you to offer to help set-up or clean up. ~Eleanor Dibble 315-378-4827



## Sunday March 26<sup>th</sup> is Camp Sunday!!

Casowasco Camp will offer a "Camp Moment" and Special Music during worship and have a fun filled Sunday School planned. There will also be an informational table set up in the Narthex following worship. All youth are encouraged to attend and find out what camp is all about. Bring a friend!!

A special collection will be taken for Camp Scholarships - if donating by check please note campership on memo line. Please give generously!

It may be cold outside but it's time to start thinking about summer camp. Registration is now open. If you register before May 1, there is a discount on the price. You can get more information at [www.casowasco.org](http://www.casowasco.org).

We have **camperships** available for all young people who wish to go to camp. For the last couple of years, we have been able to give each full time camper \$200 (part time campers are prorated depending on the cost of the camp). All you need to do, is give your camper's name, the camp he/she is attending and the dates attending to Pam in the church office. One check for all camperships will be sent to Casowasco, usually mid-June. If you have a greater financial need, please let Pastor Jack know and we will work with you. Immanuel is very dedicated to making sure all kids who want to attend camp are able to go.



2017 Spring Craft Show

Friday April 7th 4:00-8:00pm
Saturday April 8th 9:00-3:00pm

Wonderful "Handcrafted" Gifts
Birthdays, Baby Showers,
Mothers Day, Graduations & More
Bring a Non-Perishable Donation
You might win a Crafters Gift!

Interested in a space? Need more information?
Call/Text Betty Block: 315/491-8256



Box Tops and Labels

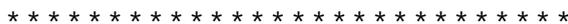
Thanks for still clipping box tops for education and
Campbell soup labels for the Red Bird Mission
located in Kentucky in a very poor area. I'm hoping
to receive a new list of all the products available.
Please remember to include bar codes on the labels.
All box tops and labels can be placed in the Red Box
in the Narthex. You can reach me at 315-218-6902
with any questions. ~Doris Henry



Please keep our Disaster Recovery Team in
prayer as they prepare for another trip to the Jersey
Shore to help with clean up after Hurricane Sandy.
The team will leave on April 17 and return on
April 23.

ACTS (Alliance of Communities Transforming
Syracuse) 2017 Annual Spring Banquet
ACTing for a Just Community

Tuesday April 25th 6-9pm at Drumlins Country Club.
Contact ACTS at 315-416-6363 for tickets and more
information. Helen Druce is Immanuel's
representative to ACTS, she can be reached at 315-
487-1739.



I want to thank the congregation for all their cards,
gifts, well wishes and visits while I was in St. Camillus
rehab. A special thanks to Pastor Jack for his visits
and for bringing communion. Thanks also to the
Junior High Youth Group for the beautiful card they
sent that brought tears to my eyes as I read it.

Jesus also loves all of you.
God bless you all for thinking of
me.
With love,
June Lawrence



ANNUAL GARAGE SALE INFO. 2016

Dates of garage sale are:

- Thurs. May 4th 9:00am - 6:00pm
Fri. May 5th 9:00am - 6:00pm
Sat. May 6th 9:00am - 12 Noon \$5.00 bag sale

Dates to bring in clean, saleable items:

- Sun. May 1st 9:00am - 7:00pm
Mon. May 2nd 9:00am - 7:00pm
Tues. May 3rd 9:00am - 7:00pm

Please DO NOT bring in any items on Wed. May 3

Please DO NOT bring in electronics of ANY kind
(ie. No computers, no TVs, no air conditioners)

If you have items to be picked up and brought to
the church, we will be glad to help you. However, we
would prefer to schedule these pickups on Tues.
May 2nd as this is when the Tues. morning
gentlemen are at your service. Please call John
Henderson at 315-468-2996 before April 26th to
schedule pick

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

Sign up sheets will be in the Narthex or ask Shelley
Dawson Smith how you can help 315-487-1290.



For those who may not be aware, our church has
a prayer chain ministry. It is a means of having
prayers for healing for loved ones and our own
church family members as needs arise. Simply
place your prayer concern through Pam in our office
and she will see that it gets on the prayer chain,
which is comprised of church members. Your
concern will be respectfully kept confidential
among this group. A call to Pam to follow up on the
person(s) condition is most appreciated if
possible.

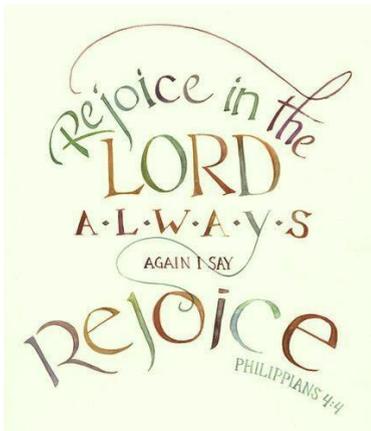
We are also looking for a few new members to
fill vacant spots on the current prayer chain. It is a
very easy, but meaningful, responsibility of
simply making a phone call to the next person on
the chain and then adding that request to your own
prayer time. If you are interested please contact
Sharon Beney at 315-672-3520 or Nancy Greenleaf
at 315-469-5860. Thank-you!



Return Service Requested

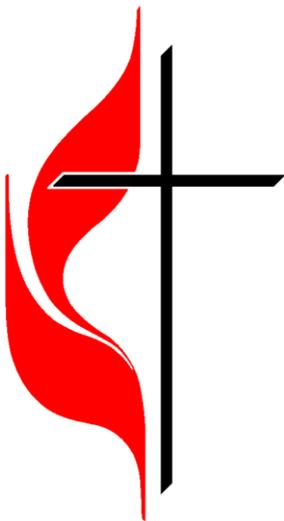
*Our Mission*

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



*March/April 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.



Pastor

Pastor Jack Keating

Phone

(315) 487-1171

Email

[churchofthebells@gmail.com](mailto:churchofthebells@gmail.com)

Website

[www.churchofthebells.org](http://www.churchofthebells.org)

Worship

8:30 am and 10 am

Sunday School

During 10 am worship

Handicapped accessible

*Please join us!*

## The BOXES of Lent

As you read this the first 3 boxes of Lent have been debuted. On Ash Wednesday we dedicated a BOX for receiving of our Lenten prayer requests. The Lenten Prayer box is now placed by the Altar and ready to accept your prayer petitions, and praises. On Easter Sunday, using the fire pit on the back patio, we will offer these requests to God once again and watch as our prayers are carried on the wind and smoke toward heaven. We also introduced two other BOXES on Ash Wednesday. These boxes will be used to support our community Food Pantry, located at St. Joseph's church. The small, coin boxes, will be used by many to make a financial gift to the pantry as a result of our individual self-denial efforts throughout Lent. Maybe cutting down on one cup of coffee per day and using those funds to feed the hungry of Camillus would fit in with your approach to Lent? Or enjoying one less meal out per week would certainly bless someone else's day with food they might desperately need. The larger BOXES will also support the work of the Food Pantry as individuals and families commit to adding one non-perishable food item per day for each of the 40 days of Lent. What a great family devotional project! All of these boxes will become part of our Easter offering and we'll have help available to help unload cars and gather your gifts on Easter Sunday. Please pray about supporting this mission project in whatever way you are comfortable. And watch for other BOXES as we move through Lent together!



### HOLY WEEK AT IMMANUEL

**Palm Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**--- We gather for our usual 8:30am and 10:00am worship services on this Sunday as we remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

**Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>** – Our young people will join together in our Walking with Jesus at 6:30pm. The Christian Ed team is organizing this evening program for our young people of all ages!

**Holy Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>** – Meet us in the Sanctuary at 7:00pm as we remember Jesus' final day with his disciples. This is the night he offered us the gift of Holy Communion and we will celebrate that meal once again this night.

**Good Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>** – Our Sanctuary will be open from 12:00noon until 3:00pm for personal prayer and devotion. I will be offering a meditation every 20 minutes based on one of the seven last words of Christ from the cross. Come when you can and leave when you must but try to spend some time at the foot of the Cross this afternoon.

**Resurrection Day, April 16<sup>th</sup>** – Both our 8:30am and 10:00am worship services will be celebrations of the Resurrection this morning. You'll hear special music, uplifting scripture readings and experience the joy as we celebrate Jesus' victory over the cold, dark tomb on Easter! Don't forget to return your BOXES during the offering this morning.

