

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Some food for thought this month...

A real estate agent was showing a house. The potential buyer asked, "What are the people like around here?" The agent responded with his own question: "What are your current neighbors like?" "Oh, they're awful," the customer replied. "They're cold and selfish and unhelpful." "I'm sorry," the real estate agent said. "You'll find the same thing here."

A few days later, the same agent was showing the same house to another person who posed a similar question. After asking about the man's current neighbors, the agent was told, "They're great --- we get along beautifully." "Wonderful!" the real estate agent responded. "You'll find the same thing here."

That agent knew something about human nature: our relationships reflect our own personalities. Not in every case, but the way we view and treat others inevitably affects our own human interactions.

Our relationship with God definitely reflects the way we view and treat God. When we choose to pursue God, through God's Word and prayer and humble obedience, God shows God's faithfulness, blamelessness, and purity to us. But if we're "crooked" --- if we're skeptical, selfish, or sensual --- we'll find that God is shrewd. God immediately recognizes our deceit and deals with us accordingly.

So... isn't the right choice obvious?

I think Lent is the perfect time to stop and re-evaluate so many of the things in our own lives. From our relationship with God, to our choices for daily living... all the way to our relationships with others, we can use this 40-day period to re-examine our actions and intentions. How do you and how do we at Immanuel measure up to God's call on our lives?

If, after some self-examination, you realize that there are some areas of your faith life in which things are lacking, I hope that you will reach out to me and to the church family to help you on the journey.

It seems to me that a truly successful life is really only possible through strong adherence to God's precepts and a strong reliance on our sisters and brothers in the faith. You'll find love and compassion here in your church family and a strong plan to help keep us all on the path of faith with Jesus.

After all... isn't that what families are supposed to do for one another?

See you in church,
Pastor Jack



INSIDE...

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Ministries News



THIS AND THAT FROM PASTOR JACK...

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

1. **LENT CONTINUES** throughout March as we continue looking at our Lenten theme... Dying With Christ, Living with Christ. We are looking each week at how we are called by God to “die” to self so that we can live more fully with Christ. Be sure to join us and use the devotional materials available to enhance your Lenten journey.
2. **OFFICE HOURS...** the office remains open Monday-Friday from about 9:15- 3:00pm with an hour closed for the lunch hour from 12:30-1:30pm. Emergency numbers are available of the answering machine for any pastoral emergencies that may arise.
3. **ARE YOU WEARING** your church name tag each week? It is so nice to hear our own names and be able to call others by their name as well. Thanks for taking the time to put your name tag on each week.
4. **KIDZ CLUB** continues each Sunday morning. Lorlie has a lot of fun and educational activities planned for the kids and we hope to see all the young people for KIDZ CLUB each week!
5. **2026 CONFIRMATION PROGRAM** will be kicking off in March and we hope to welcome several young people as church members through the Rite of Confirmation on June 7th! If you have a young person interested in Confirmation, please speak to me to become a part of the group.
6. **CAMILLUS RIDGE AND SUMMERFIELD WORSHIP** will both be held the second Wednesday of the month. Camillus Ridge worship will be held at 11:00am, while Summerfield worship will begin at 1:30pm on that day. You are invited to join us at either worship time to celebrate with the residents.
7. **HOLY WEEK WORSHIP** includes Palm Sunday on March 29th at 8:30am and 10:00am. On Maundy Thursday we will worship at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary and we will offer an open sanctuary time again on Good Friday from 12:00noon – 3:00pm. On Easter morning we will worship at 8:30am and 10:00am, as well!
8. **REV. CANDACE LAWRENCE** will return to lead worship on April 12th and 19th while I am away on vacation. Please welcome Candace back to Immanuel and I am so thankful for her willingness to lead worship as I travel. ~Pastor Jack

Kidz Club News

The kids of Immanuel would like to invite you to take a look at their recently created bulletin board up in the Sunday School wing. We were learning about serving and did a little decorating!

Coming up in March we hope everyone will help us with our next exciting mission project. It will be "kicking off" on March 1st.

It isn't too early to start thinking about Vacation Bible School, whether you know of children who would like to attend, or maybe older kids or yourself that would like to help us out by volunteering. Believe it or not, summer is coming!

Our Youth group will be meeting the first Sunday of every month so if you know of a 6th, 7th, 8th/ 9th grade student that would be interested, we would love to have them join us. Any questions please reach out to me.

Lorlie Wood
Faith Formation Leader



As we enter the sacred season of Lent we are reminded of the beautiful rhythm of the church year—and of creation itself. Lent invites us into reflection, repentance, and renewal. And while the snow and cold make it hard to find the softening earth, it too will echo that same invitation: something new is preparing to grow.

In our music ministry, Lent often carries a quieter, more contemplative tone. The hymns and anthems of this season help us turn inward, making space for prayer, humility, and honest reflection. There is a simplicity to Lenten music that allows the text to speak deeply and directly to our hearts. It is in these quieter moments that we prepare ourselves for the joy that is to come.

Thank you for the many ways you support and participate in our music ministry. Whether through singing, playing, listening, or praying, you are part of the song that shapes our worship. May this season of Lent be one of meaningful reflection, and may the hope of spring fill you with renewed faith and joy.

Colin Keating
Music Director





LENT MISSION PROJECT

This year Immanuel will be helping to support Camillus 1st UMC with their summer lunch program by collecting food items for their brown bag lunches. There will be a sample of the items needed as well as a list in the Narthex. There will also be Lenten coin boxes in the Narthex with the money given to Camillus 1st UMC for this mission. You can help our friends at Camillus 1st feed people in our community by putting an extra food item in your grocery store shopping cart or by putting an extra coin or two in your Lenten coin box.

Below is a list of the items needed for the brown bag lunch:

1. #8 Brown or White paper lunch bags.
2. Ziplock type plastic sandwich bags.
3. Capri fruit juice pouches. Any flavor.
4. Strawberry or grape jelly in squeeze bottles.
5. Peanut butter. Smooth only. Any size jar.
6. Individual applesauce containers. Preferably sweetened.
7. Individual fruit containers. Any kind of fruit.
8. Breakfast bars. Any flavor.
9. Goldfish crackers. Any size.

~Any questions ask Shelley Dawson Smith

M2 Report

December 2025 Donations

Total Donated	\$2,354.00	
Missions	\$784.67	33.33%
Maintenance/Trustees	\$1,569.33	66.66%

January 2026 Donations

Total Donated	\$2,921.00	
Missions	\$973.67	33.33%
Maintenance/Trustees	\$1,947.33	66.66%

Any questions ask Shelley Dawson Smith



Annual Garage Sale

Mark your calendars for this year's sale:

- Thurs. April 30th 9am - 6pm
- Fri. May 1st 9am - 6pm
- Sat. May 2nd 9am - noon

More information to come as the sale gets closer.
Any questions ask Shelley Dawson Smith

SOUP-ER BOWL

The congregation got in to the spirit of the Super Bowl by predicting the winner of the game. During both the 8:30 and 10:00 services those in attendance placed a can of soup in the bin representing the team they hoped would win. There were also giant soup bowls where monetary donations could be placed. Immanuel was correct in overwhelming picking the Seahawks as the winner. Out of 91 cans collected, 81 were for the Seahawks while only 10 were donated for the Patriots. And out of \$409.22 collected, \$327.22 was for the Seahawks and \$82.00 was donated for the Patriots. Regardless of the vote our friends at the food pantries at St. Joseph Church and Brown memorial Church will share 50/50 in both the soup and the monetary donations.

Thanks to everyone for their donations as "Dropkick Me, Jesus" was played while the congregation brought their donations to the front of the sanctuary.

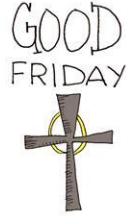
~Shelley Dawson Smith



Our 2nd Sunday lunch was February 8, 2026 as well and was a Tailgate party theme. Delicious food and fellowship were had by all.



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."



March/April 2026

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

Phone

(315) 487-1171

Email

office@churchofthebells.org

Website

www.churchofthebells.org

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!

Lay Leader Report

2025

I look at 2025 as a stable platform from which to launch the next phase in the life of Immanuel.

Our finances are in good shape and the various accounts have been reviewed and consolidated. Our annual sources of income are staying ahead of expenses. And our Trustees have the resources to plan for the future and maintain our facilities.

We have a staff that, from Pastor on down, is enthusiastic, energized and dedicated to improving Immanuel within their sphere of responsibility. And to working creatively with each other and our Church Teams to help grow our ministries.

Our worship time is wonderfully constructed each week by Pastor Jack, Pam and Colin. Attendance has ticked up even with the unfortunate loss of some long time members. There have been new folks and families joining both services. And some who have come back after some years away.

Of significance to me is the myriad of missions and ministries our Immanuel family organize and contribute to in an ongoing basis. If you peruse the reports of the various teams submitted for 2025, I believe you will be amazed at the activities the church engaged in, both within Immanuel itself and in our community at large. If you see any that interest you please contact the team leader or Pastor Jack to become involved. If you have an idea for additional programs or service activities please let us know and we will work with you to make it happen.

As I said at the beginning of this report I believe we are at a good point to move into the next edition of Immanuel. What that is I can't say. We all need to be open to God's moving within us. And share his new and exciting directions.

The status quo is never the Christian way. Let us move together in God's work at Immanuel.

In Christ's Name,

Steve Forward



Easter Plant Orders

Chrysanthemums will be available for the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday. The cost per plant is \$10.

Please fill out the form below and give your order, along with payment, after worship to our volunteer. **(Make checks payable to “Immanuel UMC” with “Easter plant” in memo)** The form can also be left in the office. Orders will be taken March 15 and 22, 2026 after worship.

Please indicate how many plants you wish and include your phone number in case there is a question concerning your request.

**I would like to order _____ Chrysanthemums
(Please limit one or two persons per plant. If more than this, please use “My Family” or “Loved Ones”)**

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Other Message: _____

Given By: _____ Phone: _____

I will take my plant. I wish to donate my plant to a shut-in.

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