CHURCH of the BELLS
IMMANUEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Immanuel Family News

September/October 2026

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Beloved in Christ,

I first want to thank you all for the amazing welcome you have given not only to me but also my wife Alyssa. It has been such a joy meeting many of you during our meet and greet sessions. I am looking forward to continuing to meet with you and share our stories together. Alyssa and I consider ourselves truly blessed to be serving alongside you as the Holy Spirit moves.

As Alyssa and I continue to unbox (the mountain of boxes seems to never end!) and get settled, my heart and mind have been leaning toward all the times we see new beginnings within Scripture. The start of the Church within Acts, the prodigal son within the Gospel of Luke, and even the prophet Nehemiah as instructs God's people through the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. However, more recently my heart has been on Joshua as he leads Israel out of the wilderness into a new land.

Change can often be such a scary thing. Some of us may remember the times we feared change happening to us, times like going to school while leaving a loving home, the joy of paying bills for the very time, or how our body changes with new aches and pains as we gracefully age. Though these changes may not be new to us now, they can cause us fear or hesitancy of venturing into a new land. I have found in my years of ministry how true this can be. There is a very real feeling of "What is going to be like living in a new home? How will people like me? How much snow does this place get!?" These are just a few thoughts many United Methodist pastors may feel during an appointment. This is why we hold on to the depth of Scripture where we meet a God who is with us even in the new seasons.

Brothers and Sisters of Immanuel as we venture into a new season together I humbly ask that you might join me in seeing where the Lord is leading us. In the upcoming season we have so much to look forward to. On September 13th we will be returning to our two service times of 8:30am and 10:00am praising God together with our Fireside and Sanctuary services. Also in September our church will be blessed to host Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a ministry that sees the construction of beds alongside acquiring all the essentials for sustainable sleeping patterns. In October we are gifted to celebrate World Communion Sunday with the whole of Christ's Church on October 4th. Later in October we are blessed to share in our craft sale to share our gifts with others.

This new season may come with many fears of the unknown. There will be challenges in front of us. Yet I hold onto the truth of who has gone before us. After a lengthy season of settling the region of Canaan Joshua knew that God's people would still face new unknown obstacles so he invited all to renew their covenant with God in Joshua 24. You may have seen or heard this familiar passage in verse 15 "but for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Let us venture into a new land together joyfully anticipating meeting the Risen Lord Jesus each step of the way.

Blessings and peace, *Pastor Benjamin Lalka*

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Music News:

As summer leans into fall, we look forward to the beginning of another wonderful year of music ministry. Each year, September brings a renewed sense of purpose as choir rehearsals begin again, familiar faces return, and new voices are welcomed into our musical family. Whether shares your gifts for years or have been thinking about sharing music for the first time, there is a place for you. Together, we have the privilege of leading worship through music, sharing our faith, and helping to create meaningful moments of praise for our congregation.

This fall is especially exciting as we begin a new chapter alongside our new pastor, Pastor Ben. We look forward to partnering in worship as we grow together in faith and serve our church community.

~Colin Keating, Music Director/Accompanist

Fellowship News

Once again this year our Fellowship Committee will be sponsoring several events to bring folks together for food, conversation and friendship. We will be offering Second Sunday Lunches starting in October, but please note we have to move it to the first Sunday, October 4. We will be serving a delicious brunch with an Autumn theme, after the second service. The next SSL will be in November with our delicious turkey a la king.

Think about it. What a great opportunity to introduce friends to our church, and enjoy lunch together. Or come and sit with someone you don't know and learn more about them. Be sure to sign up so we can plan how much food we need. And donations are so helpful to help us cover expenses for the meals.

PS: If you would like to participate on our committee, we welcome new members! We enjoy our time together, as well as feeding you. Fellowship Committee members can participate in putting on the events as their schedule allows. Wishing you peace, and the joy of eating good food with other Jesus followers.

~Barb Merckel
Fellowship Chair

Kidz Club

At the time of writing this, we are in our third week of Vacation Bible School (Snowball Mountain Challenge!). We have a great group of 24 kids registered. We are very busy on Wednesday nights starting out with a great meal and then learning stories from the Bible and tying in crafts, recreation, science and games. The kids are also trying to figure out who is behind our puppet (Ollie)! Just ask them- they will surely give you their very educated guess! We will share a very shortened version of the 5th session with everyone at the 10am service on our start up day of Kidz Club on September 13th during the Children's sermon time.

The kids are once again participating in the Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed build day by making no sew blankets.

In October we will be participating in the CNY Crop Walk for hunger.

The Youth group will start gathering again the first week of October.

Please be on the look out for Aeryn and Hailey (two of our Kidz Club kids) who will be selling their hand crafted potholders after the service on Sunday and they would like the donations to go to Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

~Lorlie Wood, Faith Formation Director

Check out our website at www.churchofthebells.org for up to date news and photos of our events.

Methodism 101 class

Join Pastor Ben to learn what Methodists believe and why. All are encouraged to come! There will be 4 classes held on Thursdays at 5pm at church. First class is Sept. 10 and last class is Oct. 1.

District news

Crossroads district clergy day is September 8 from 9am-1pm. Pastor Ben will be attending this event.

District Learning day is scheduled for Saturday, October 24 from 9am-2:30pm at Auburn UMC. Stay tuned for more information.

Our Charge conference has been scheduled for November 21. The time and place are yet to be determined. Please mark your calendars.

17th Annual Mini Golf Tournament

August 8th was a perfect sunny morning for the 17th annual Miniature Golf Tournament to support Disaster Recovery Mission. And once again the rain held off until we were done playing!

We were blessed to have 18 hole sponsors with signs spread throughout the course recognizing their support.

There were 64 people including 10 children playing mini golf at beautiful Fairmount Glen.

hanks to Chef Sam Paventi and his helpers for the delicious brunch.

A special thanks is extended to Tom Ness, owner of Fairmount Glen Miniature Golf for donating the course for this event and also to several church members who made cash donations.

Thank you to everyone involved for your support and because of all of you $2,593.85 was raised!

~Shelley Dawson Smith, Mini Golf Chairperson

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M2 Report

June 2026 Donations

Total Donated	$7,844.00	
Missions	$2,614.67	33.33%
Maintenance/Trustees	$5,229.33	66.66%

July 2026 Donations

Total Donated	$4,270.00	
Missions	$1,423.33	33.33%
Maintenance/Trustees	$2,846.67	66.66%

Any questions ask Shelley Dawson Smith

Mark Your Calendars **NOW** for our annual **Fall Holiday Craft Show** to support Mission projects.

Friday, October 16 from 4-8pm

Saturday, October 17 from 9am-3pm

So many choices of handmade items for your fall and holiday shopping PLUS homemade food will be available as well.

If you would like more information or to find out how to help, contact Betty Block at 315-491-8256 or Bblock4938@gmail.com.

Sleep In Heavenly Peace

On September 19th at 9:00 the parking lot at Immanuel will be transformed into a work site to build 50 beds for children in our community who do not have their own bed.

There is a link listed below or on our website, www.churchofthebells.org for you to use to sign up to help. There will be 2 sessions 9:00-10:30 and 11:00-12:30. We will be served food at the end of both sessions by Chef Sam. Water and Gatorade will be provided throughout the morning. Children are welcome but there must be one-on-on supervision by an adult. The children will also be making "No Sew" blankets with Lorlie Wood. There will be jobs for everyone and even a few jobs for people who need to sit.

If you aren't able to work the entire time or you just want to come and provide support that's ok as we will have tents and chairs set up. You can also provide support by purchasing twin size sheets or comforter or pillows or make a monetary donation.

We hope the weather will cooperate, but we will have tents.

Hope to see you on the 19th.

SHP registration

Outhouse Mission

The mission team's "Outhouse" project was very successful thanks to the generosity of the members of Immanuel. The items were delivered by some of the Tuesday morning "guys" to West Side Food Center Pantry located at Brown Memorial UMC and also to St. Joseph's Food Pantry (helps our friends in need who live in Memphis, Camillus and Warners).

Any church or organization who has had the outhouse writes their name and the number of items collected on the wall inside the outhouse and I'm pleased to say that our name and **767 items** has been added to the wall!

Thank you everyone!

~Shelley Dawson Smith, Mission Chair

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."

Sept. Oct. 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 Ben Lalka
Phone	(315) 487-1171
Email	office@churchofthebells.org
Website	www.churchofthebells.org
Worship	Sundays at 8:30 & 10 am
	*Facebook Live during 10 am
	Kidz Club during 10am
Office Hours	Monday-Friday 9 am – 3 pm

Handicapped accessible

Please join us!