



PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Greeting to the Saints,

As we turn our calendar pages and start another New Year, I would like to encourage and challenge you to do something just a bit different this year. Instead of making that customary list of resolutions --- many of which will be forgotten or leave us feeling guilty – why not mark the turning of this year with a time of quiet meditation?

Maybe you could make arrangements to spend part of a day by yourself and find the quietest place you can with your Bible, a journal, a good pen, and a highlighter. Then, with a humble and open heart, and with God's Word as your guide, take some time to look forward and back.

Let me suggest to you five words to guide your "as the year turns" meditation:

COUNT. It's tempting to look back and think of all the unfulfilled promises, broken dreams, and missed opportunities of 2023. Instead of numbering your complaints, get out your journal and count your blessings. You will find, I think, that there are many, many blessings in the unnoticed cracks and crevices of your life.

CONFESS. Since you and I are far from perfect, there are always some things to confess. As the year turns, open your heart to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. Conviction and confession are not things to be afraid of, but are God's way of drawing us close, keeping us near, and protecting our wandering hearts.

CONSIDER. Since you have the comfort, commands, and wisdom principles of Scripture, and since you have God Almighty living within you in the person of the Holy Spirit, change really is possible. Take time to write down specific places in your heart, life, work, and relationships where change is needed. And don't be discouraged as you admit your need for growth!

CELEBRATE. Write down all the tremendous benefits that are yours simply because, by grace, you have become a child of God. Take the time to celebrate the fullness of our identity in Christ. Maybe you could reread Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians and rehearse all that is yours because God adopted you into God's family.

COMMIT. Now commit yourself to a plan of action. What new habits do you need to incorporate into your daily routine? Which relationships require repair? What new commitments do you need to make with your time, energy, and resources? Begin your new year by turning your meditation into action.

The Bible reminds us again and again that our thoughts precede and determine our activity. Your actions, it seems, go where your heart has already gone. So, plant 2024 in the rich, nutritious soil of meditation so that in the months to come, you can reap the joy of a harvest of good fruit. There is no better time to meditate than as the year turns!

Happy New Year!

Pastor Jack Keating

INSIDE...

Youth/ Family News
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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. NAME TAGS...** Please remember to wear your name tag each Sunday when you enter the Sanctuary. Everyone appreciates hearing their own name and by wearing your name tag you make this so much easier. If you need a name tag, please put a note in Pam's mailbox across from the office. Thanks!
- 2. KIDZ CLUB...** Our kids are having a great time at KIDZ CLUB every week! Thanks to all those who have stepped in to help keep this vital ministry going!
- 3. WE WELCOME...** Lorie Wood as Immanuel's **Faith Formation Director**. Lorie joins our church staff on January 1st. Our SPRC has asked her to initially concentrate on resourcing our KIDZ CLUB program and then begin to plan for a summer 2024 youth activity. Restructuring our Youth group and other youth activities will also be priorities for Lorie in the New Year. Please take a moment to welcome Lorie and offer her your help and support as she begins this new and important ministry work here at Immanuel.
- 4. Our Trustees and Disaster Recovery Teams** have combined their efforts to secure an AED device for emergency use here at Immanuel. Shortly after the first of the year we will have the device installed and begin to conduct training sessions to help us use this important tool to protect all who worship and fellowship here. Thanks to both the Trustees and our Mission Team members for helping to keep us all safe!
- Our **Second Sunday Lunch** program continues to grow each month! Thanks to our Fellowship Team we have this great opportunity to share a meal together each month. We hope to see you at a Second Sunday Lunch meal soon!
- 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.



THIS AND THAT CONTINUED...

7. Thanks to all who worked so hard during the **Advent and Christmas** seasons! The building looked beautiful, the music was superb, and Immanuel did its usual "bang up" job of supporting ministry and mission opportunities like the Angel Tree, Mitten Tree, Heifer Project and providing poinsettias for our veterans at the Veteran's Hospital. Our 3rd annual Living Nativity was well attended once again, as well! Thanks and nice work to all who participated!

8. **I would like to thank** all of you for the many gifts of delicious baked goods, holiday cards, and other gifts and the Pastor's gift received on Christmas Eve. Immanuel continues to support her pastor and staff and we are all blessed to be in ministry with you!

Pastor Jack



NEW SIGN FUNDRAISING

With a New Year here, we have begun a campaign to raise funds to help defray the cost of our new sign which will be installed by this summer. Any support anyone can give will be greatly appreciated. The Admin Council & the Trustees Thank You for all your support.

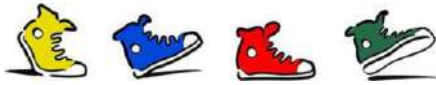


All of our Team and ministry leaders are requested to provide the office with an **Annual Report** of your group's ministry efforts in 2023, by 1/31/24. We will be preparing our Annual Report book the first week in February to help everyone know all the ministry opportunities that are offered here at Immanuel!



Heifer Project Thank you everyone who supported Heifer International this year. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to raise \$1,100.00, which will be put to great use assisting people around the world. Sara and Helen Forward **page 2**

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 38,841 pairs of shoes in 2023! Ralph donates his time and the supplies however he also accepts cash to help defray the cost of the supplies. This year the Onondaga County Executive declared December 14th to be "Ralph Rotella Day". Immanuel donated 74 pairs of shoes in 2023. 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.

Angel Tree



I would like to thank everyone who participated in the angel tree this year. The Hillside family Center and the Big Brother Big Sister organizations are always so thankful for the gifts. Putting this together is one of my favorite parts of Christmas. ~Angela Keida

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 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 127 items were donated! ~Shelley Dawson Smith



Knit-n-Stitch

We will meet on Monday morning at 10am when the weather permits

TURKEY DINNER REPORT

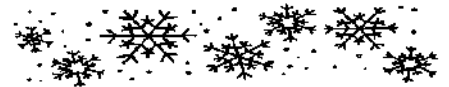
I want to give my heartfelt thanks to our entire Immanuel Family for their outstanding participation in our Annual Turkey Dinner that was held November 7, 2023. We had everyone from pie makers and cutters, to food packagers, to servers, to runners delivering to cars, to folks setting up the tables and getting all of the equipment in place, to our traffic directors, and to an outstanding kitchen crew. As Dave Stanton told me, no one person can pull the dinner off. It takes a committed congregation.

I won't name everyone involved but I have to shout out to Sam and his main assistants in the kitchen, Lori and Bob. Also, Mike Block and Dave Stanton who were there very step of the way. And to Barb Merckel for stepping in with sales when I was gone.

And a special thanks to all those who supported us by buying dinners.

So, quickly, the numbers:	311 tickets sold
Ticket revenue	\$4,791.00
Donations	\$158.00
Expenses	\$2319.20
NET PROFIT	\$2,471.80

Thanks again! We couldn't have done it without you!
~Steve Forward



Door Sprays

>Thanks to Dan Marini, owner of Syracuse Christmas Tree Farm in Syracuse for donating the greens.

>Thanks to Mike DeOrdio (and his chainsaw), Jerry & Denise Sabattis, Gary Merckel and Warren & Janet Robinson for cutting the greens.

>Thanks to Jerry Sabattis who helped set up the tables in Fellowship Hall.

>Thanks to Denise Sabattis, Ed Owens and Mike DeOrdio who helped assemble the door sprays.

>Thanks to Joan Archambeau, Julie DeOrdio, Barb Merckel, Janet Robinson, Denise Sabattis, Angela Keida, Pam Blocklin, Kristin & Kayla Short, Melanie & Kaylee Blackledge, Lorlie Wood, Julie Wild, Jane Monnell & Peg Webster who did an outstanding job decorating the door sprays.

>Thanks to the people who purchased door sprays.

>Through this cooperative effort we made 49 door sprays and as everything is donated, we were able to contribute \$980.00 to the Mission team for Disaster Recovery.

~Shelley Dawson Smith.



OUTSIDE LIVING NATIVITY

On December 9th 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: **Carly Kinsley**
- Joseph: **Jack Keating**
- Angel Gabriel: **Elodie Ahl**
- Shepherds: **Mason Ahl, Rowan McCarthy & Braydon Short**
- Angels: **Avery Ahl, Kaylee Blackledge, Harper Keating, Aeryn Kondratowicz, Hailey Kondratowicz, Claire McCarthy & Kayla Short,**
- Kings: **Sonia Davidheiser, Monica Kmieczak & Jane Middaugh.**
- Narrator: **Pastor Jack**
- Vocalists: **Adie Kinsley & Juliet Sly**
- Rt 80 Stables: **Ollie the donkey, Razzle the mini horse & 2 adorable mini goats.**
- Tori Stopen: **Roosters Hei Hei & Riot**

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

- Dave Stanton:** Bell Tower Ringer
- Sam Paventi:** Refreshments
- Denise Sabattis:** Refreshments
- Mike DeOrdio:** Built & set up the stable & set up star
- Larry McConnelee:** Helped set up stable & star
- Mike Block:** Helped set up stable & star.
- Jane Monnell:** Silent Night song sheet & candles
- Lorlie Wood:** Silent Night song sheet & candles.
- Parents:** Helped dress the children.

Jerry Sabattis: Coordinated setting up stable, the church sign & also ran the spotlight.

Thank you to all!
Shelley Dawson Smith



Immanuel United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 335
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Electronic Service Requested
Our Mission
"To make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world."

as I have
loved YOU,
LOVE one
another
John 13:34

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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Email

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Website

www.churchofthebells.org

Worship

8:30 & 10am

*In Person or Facebook Live during 10am worship

Office Hours

Monday-Friday, by appointment

Handicapped accessible

Please join us!