

***“Following God through Jesus
in work and word.”***

IMMANUEL MESSENGER

September-October Volume 18, Issue 4

**IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(EVANGELICAL & REFORMED)**

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**“...you shall be called the repairer of the breach...”
~Isaiah 58:12**

I grew up watching *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Did you? Or perhaps your children? Mister Rogers was an agreed upon favorite for my sister, my brother, and me. Of all the puppet-personalities that populated the Neighborhood of Make Believe, Lady Elaine Fairchilde was my favorite. She was independent, temperamental, and mischievous – a character with whom I could identify.

Besides the loveable puppets in the Neighborhood of Make Believe, my siblings and I enjoyed the video visits Mister Rogers made to factories where we could see how things of all kinds were made. A visit to a crayon factory and a peanut butter factory stand out especially in my memory. There's even an episode which includes a visit to Kohler Company and explains to children how toilets are made (1998 season, episode #3)!

Each of Mister Rogers' fascinating factory visits teach the children (and adults) who view his program that everything we have is made from the stuff of earth and carefully and skillfully constructed by hardworking people. All of the everyday objects we take for granted, and sometimes even squander, (like crayons and peanut butter and toilets) take hours of painstaking work done by real people who labor long hours to make a living. The message that comes across clear as day, episode after episode, is that stuff doesn't just appear out of thin air ready to be used and consumed. The gifts of earth that make up the stuff of

our lives are the fruits of the labor of our neighbors, and therefore have value, are worthy of respect, and are not meant to be wasted.

No doubt we've been hearing a lot about Mister Rogers this year, as it is the 50th anniversary of the debut of his beloved children's show. Fred Rogers, who was also an ordained Presbyterian minister, created an environment on his show that was something akin to a sanctuary – a space in which people of all sorts can feel safe, accepted, challenged, taught, and encouraged to imagine in community with others. In the purest of ways, Mister Rogers taught profound truths. He was known for often remarking: “I feel so strongly that deep and simple is far more essential than shallow and complex.”¹

He had a way of speaking gently, but directly and honestly, about difficult subjects like war, death, differences among people, and the ever-challenging topic of change. In fact, the very first week of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which aired in February of 1968 (50 years ago) deals with change: Ever the trickster, Lady Elaine Fairchilde has made some changes in the Neighborhood of Make Believe. The changes have made King Friday XIII so uncomfortable that he feels the need to set up a border guard to patrol the castle. While on patrol the border guard sings: “Down with the changers. Down with the changers. We don't want anything to change because we're on top” (1968 season, episode #2). It's remarkable how a scenario in the Neighborhood of Make Believe from

¹ Long, Michael. *Peaceful Neighbor: Discovering the Countercultural Mister Rogers*. 2015.

50 years ago can still speak so poignantly to our current circumstances and our contemporary fears about change.

Recently I saw the new documentary “Won’t You Be My Neighbor,” directed by Morgan Neville. Released in honor of the 50th anniversary of the first airing of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, the documentary examines the life and legacy of Mister Rogers. If you get the chance, I would highly recommend seeing it.

One of the points in the film that moved me most was Mister Rogers’ preparation of a 2002 Public Service Announcement which he taped for the occasion of the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks. It was a message, not so much for children, but for those who had grown-up with *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* and who, a year after the attacks, as adults and parents themselves, may be struggling to find hope in the wake of the tragedy. It was one of Mister Rogers’ last recordings before his death the following February.

Before the take, Mister Rogers is openly discouraged and uncertain about what to say in response to widespread fear, anger, and thirst for revenge. His producer, Margaret Whitmer, remembers that he was very troubled and worried that it wouldn’t do any good.² When the director shouts “action!” Mister Rogers begins playing a very Mister Rogers sounding melody on the piano. He then turns and looks into the camera and speaks, gently as ever, a word of deep understanding and undying hope. “I

² *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* Directed by Morgan Neville, 2018

know how tough it is some days to look with hope and confidence on the months and years ahead,” Mister Rogers begins. And then, leaning into his deep faith, Mister Rogers Channels the prophet Isaiah, whose message in chapter 58 includes some of the most powerful and beautiful hope-filled words of promise in all of scripture. Sounding very much like Isaiah, Mister Rogers continues: “No matter what our job, we all are called to be repairers of creation...Thank you for everything you do to bring joy, light, hope, faith, pardon, and love to your neighbor.”³

Even today, to a hurting world so overwhelmed by fear, division, and change, Mister Rogers and the prophet Isaiah encourage us to be repairers of the breach between ourselves and others and all of creation. Isaiah and our friendly neighbor, Mister Rogers, challenge us to embrace as wide a view as possible, and in our own time of uncertainty, cynicism, and bewildering despair to seek to bring joy, light, pardon and love to our neighbors and indeed all creation. The good news that Isaiah spoke and Mister Rogers lived is that when we participate in that kind of mending, “then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly...your light shall rise in the darkness and....you shall be called the repairer of the breach” (Isaiah 58:8-12). May we be those repairers who bring sweetness and light to all our neighbors today and always.

-Rev. Laura

³ *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* Directed by Morgan Neville, 2018

Regular Wednesday evening classes will begin on
Wednesday, September 12th

Other dates to remember:

- **Sunday, September 9th** during the 10am worship service 7th graders will be presented with Bibles and Catechisms as a gift from the congregation.
- **Wednesday, September 19th** at 7:00p.m. is Confirmation Day at Lakeland University. (Parents and mentors are encouraged to attend this event along with their confirmand.)

**Special Mission Offering to be collected this
Fall:**

We will be collecting gifts for the annual **Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering** of the United Church of Christ from **Sunday, October 7th through Sunday, October 28th**. Neighbors in Need supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of Neighbors in Need funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries(JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service

projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Thank you for your generous support of this mission of our wider church!

The Annual Rural Church Fellowship CROP Walk is coming up on Sunday, October 14th. CROP walks are community-wide events to raise funds to end hunger at home and around the world. Envelopes for fundraising are available from Carol Knoener. Please consider fundraising, donating, and walking with us. Registration for the CROP Walk is at noon on October 14th at the Village Hall in Howards Grove, with the walk set to begin at 12:30pm. There are two, four, and six mile options for walking around town as we seek to end hunger one step at a time. All ages are welcome to participate!

**All Hallows' Eve Open House at the
Parsonage!**
Sunday, October 28th



**Drop by between 5:00pm and 7:00pm
for some scary fun, fellowship, and snacks.
Costumes are encouraged!**

*The Annual **United Church Men and Women's Scholarship Banquet** is scheduled for 6:30pm on Thursday, October 18th at Lakeland University. Our congregation faithfully supports this scholarship program each year, so you are invited to attend the banquet, meet the scholarship recipients, and learn more about the program that evening. Please speak to Rev. Laura or a member of the Consistory if you have interest in attending.

*At the end of August, a young hawk was rescued from our church woods. The little guy, one of this year's babies, was discovered starving and near death at the edge of the woods by the road. Some friendly neighbors called Rev. Laura and Wildlife of Wisconsin to help. Two wildlife rehabilitators came from Wildlife of Wisconsin, caught the hungry hawk, and transported him to their wildlife rehabilitation facility in Cato, WI. The young hawk (Rev. Laura has named him Herman) will be fed and cared for

until he is strong enough to survive. He will be kept safely at the wildlife rehabilitation center until rehabilitators are confident he has learned to hunt on his own, and then he will be returned to his home in the church woods. Many thanks to our neighbors and friends at Wildlife of Wisconsin for their support of the furry and feathered members of our community. Wildlife of Wisconsin is a non-profit volunteer-run wildlife rehabilitation organization that is supported entirely by private contributions. They rescue, rehabilitate and re-release into the wild hundreds of animals each year. The average cost to rehabilitate a hawk like Herman is about \$180. If you feel moved to support the work of Wildlife of Wisconsin and to thank them for helping Herman, please send your donation to:

Wildlife of Wisconsin
Manitowoc Area Rehabilitators
10915 Melanie Way
Cato, WI 54230

And if you find an injured animal, you can call 920-323-5609, and Wildlife of Wisconsin will come to help.

On August 12th, 2018 Immanuel celebrated the newly refurbished organ with a hymn sing dedication Sunday.

We had listed organists from the past and after we had put in print with a photo of the console of the organ that WAS in service from 1928 to 2017 but now is gone we realized there were many more members who were not included in the list. So here is an updated list and who knows after this is posted we may even find out about a few more. We would love to hear from you and include your name to this very special group among us. **Contact Laurie Lorenz**

From the consistory regarding church woods:

Some church members have shown interest in collecting fallen trees on the church wooded property. In order to be fair, the consistory decided not to allow anyone to collect or harvest wood at this time. Please remember that no hunting is allowed in the church woods due to the proximity to the church and parsonage.

*The annual Women's Fellowship school supply collection started off with a challenge from the Vacation Bible School. Who will set a record for the most school supplies collected-Women's Fellowship

of Vacation Bible School? Thank you to Karen Karsteadt for initiating the challenge!

*The next meeting of the Women's Fellowship will be Monday September 10 at 6:30 P.M. We will be looking ahead to our service projects for the fall. Membership in the Women's Fellowship is encouraged and open to all women of Immanuel. Please contact a member of the Executive Committee for more information.

President: Elverta Reinemann

Vice President: Nancy Dreier

Secretary: Chris Thieleke

Treasurer: Carol Knoener

Respectfully submitted by Chris Thieleke

Library News

Many Christians become disillusioned as their quest for peace and pleasure on this earth fills them with despair. If you've ever wondered, "Isn't there more to life than this?" or felt the despair that perhaps you've "missed" something, then *Eternity: Reclaiming A Passion for What Endures* is for you. If you had hoped for more in life, it may be that your perspective is distorted by your focus on this world, this life. If this world is all there is life can seem meaningless, with few answers to the tough

questions. The stresses of everyday living can overwhelm as we continue to search for something more.

The author Dr. Joseph M. Stowell helps you see that your true calling is in eternity. **"Built for eternity," you are a citizen of two other worlds: the world to come and the world Christ has placed within your heart.** With heaven as your point of reference, you can learn to live a satisfying, balanced, and victorious life, even in a fallen world. Dr. Stowell shows you how to develop a passion for the eternal kingdom, providing fresh alternatives to a world filled with hollow pursuits. We belong in heaven, alongside our Father and Creator. You can locate this book with the call number 248.4 STO.

When God Doesn't Make Sense is an immensely practical book for those who are struggling with trials and heartaches they can't understand. This book explains much about the age old question "why do bad things happen to good people" as well as common sense explanations of other Christian doctrines that many Christians struggle with. Why does disease, divorce, rejection death, or sorrow

seep into our life when we are trying to serve the Lord? It just doesn't seem fair! The author Dr. James Dobson brings hope to those who have almost given up *When God Doesn't Make Sense* also helps believers avoid "the betrayal barrier," the sense that God is abandoning them amidst the storms of life.

Every person who lives long enough will eventually encounter circumstances that are difficult to explain theologically. From years of counselling experience, Dr. James Dobson offers assurance of God's constant care, even when human suffering is beyond our comprehension. You can locate this book with the call number 231.8 DOB.

You are encouraged to use the library, the only request is that you sign the card in the back of the book and place the card in the file box. There is no time limit for returning the book. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions about any of the books in the Church Library you can contact Karen Karsteadt or Vanessa Thieleke.

Submitted by Vanessa Thieleke

September 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group Meets 9:30a	5 Confirmation Orientation Potluck	6 Senior Choir Practice 7p	7 Fellowship with St Peter's UCC Women's Guild 1:30p	8
9 Kick Off Sunday! Sunday School Breakfast and parents meeting 8:45a 10a Service Starts	10 Visiting Team Consistory Meeting 7p	11 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group Meets 9:30a	12 Confirmation Class	13 Senior Choir Practice 7p	14	15
16 Sunday School 8:45a Worship at 10a Mission Committee Meeting after worship	17	18 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group Meets 9:30a	19 Confirmation Day at Lakeland University 7p	20 Senior Choir Practice 7p	21	22
23 Sunday School 8:45a Worship at 10a	24	25	26 Confirmation Class	27 Senior Choir Practice 7p	28	29

October 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9/30 Sunday School 8:45a Worship 10a	1 Women's Fellowship Meeting 6:30p	2 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group Meets 9:30a	3 Confirmation Class	4 Senior Choir Practice 7p	5	6
7 Sunday School 8:45a Worship 10a (World Communion Sunday) Begin Collecting for Neighbors in need	8 Visiting Team Consistory Meeting 7p	9 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group Meets 9:30a	10 Confirmation Class	11 Senior Choir Practice 7p	12	13
14 Sunday School 8:45a Worship 10a CROP walk at Noon	15	16	17 No Confirmation Class Newsletter Articles due	18 United Church Women's and Men Banquet 6:30p	19	20
21 Sunday School 8:45a Worship 10a	22	23	24 Confirmation Class	25 Senior Choir Practice 7p	26	27
28 Sunday School 8:45a Worship 10a Halloween Open House at Parsonage 5-7p	29	30	31 No Confirmation Class			