

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

IMMANUEL MESSENGER

May-June Volume 18, Issue 3

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

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“If you love me, feed my sheep.”

John 21:15-19



In the church we celebrate Easter for fifty days. We call it the season of Eastertide. We are, now, right in the middle of that season. We've heard the glorious Easter message, but now we have to figure out what to do with it. We are faced with the task of how to do and be in light of Easter. In John 21:1-19 the disciples are, figuratively and literally, in that same boat.

Even though by now something of the Easter news has reached them, the disciples are still unsure of what to do about it. They are still a little scared, and, chances are, probably still feeling a little guilty about having failed and abandoned Jesus when he needed them most – especially Peter.

After all, not only had Peter fallen asleep on the night of the arrest when Jesus needed him, one account says it was Peter who reacted violently, drawing his sword in the garden to fight the authorities who had come to take Jesus away when Jesus had always preached *nonviolence*. Then Peter ran. He abandoned Jesus with all the others. And on top of it,

Peter is the one who denied Jesus. He denied knowing Jesus altogether not once, not twice, but three times – even though he said he wouldn't.

In that sense, we might say Peter messed-up and let Jesus down more than the other disciples, which is an especially stinging indictment when we remember that Peter had once been kind of the star disciple. He was one of the big three that Jesus took with him to the mountaintop when he was transfigured. Peter was the only one courageous enough to risk saying out loud what he believed to be true about Jesus when Jesus asked: "Who do you say that I am." Remember? Peter said: you are the Messiah" – a proclamation that was dangerous, one that could have gotten Peter into trouble had the authorities heard him say it.

Peter had been special, but when push came to shove, he wound-up messing up more than the others. He had once been the most sure and courageous of the disciples, but there at the end, he failed Jesus so completely. He

chose safety and security over being associated with the radical Jesus who preached nonviolence and bold boundary crossing. He chose his own safety and security over following Jesus who stood up to the authorities when they cared more about following the established order than they did about caring for people. Peter failed in all of the things Jesus had taught him when he drew his sword, ran, denied, hid, and remained silent in the face of the powers of domination. He chose safety over the truth.

And yet, after everything, here we have the risen Christ preparing breakfast on the beach for Peter and his friends. After breakfast, the risen Christ approaches Peter individually. And Peter, who had denied his identity and his discipleship, is invited by Jesus back to his true self. He is challenged to re-claim his purpose to live as one called to gather in the beloved of God and treat them with the transformative respect, kindness, and love that the world and its ways deny them.

After having denied Jesus three times, now Peter is welcomed to proclaim his love for Jesus just as many times. And the risen Christ, just as challenging as ever, gives Peter work to do: If you love me, he says, then feed and take care of those I love. If you love me, then lead by serving. If you love me, then get busy caring about the suffering and needs of others.

Perhaps there are moments when we, like Peter feel low, scared, uncertain, or maybe even like we've let Jesus down. The good news for us during this season of Eastertide is that this story is our story. As together we seek to determine what to do and how to be in light of Easter, like he did for Peter, the risen Christ, same as ever, shows up for his beloved friends – you and me. He comes to us, calls us, feeds us, and challenges us with good work to do: If you love me, then feed my sheep. If you love me, then love and serve others in my name.

Rev. Laura

Hymns for a Cause: During the season of Eastertide (now through Pentecost), the Mission

Committee is sponsoring a Hymns for a Cause Fundraiser. On the table in the corner of the sanctuary, behind the piano, you will find several jars. Each jar is labeled with a beloved hymn. Please put money in the jar(s) of your favorite(s). The three hymns which raise the most money will be sung at our upcoming hymn-sing in celebration of our completed organ project.

Half of the money raised from the jars will go to the Sheboygan County Food Bank. The other half will be used to purchase items for compiling activity bags **for social workers to give to children when they are taken to a center (CAC) for forensic interviewing after they have been abused. It is often a long day for them, and these bags will provide goodies and things to do.** Please consider participating and giving generously to this fun mission project!

New Member Sunday: We look forward to welcoming new members to Immanuel UCC soon! If you or someone you know has interest

in joining our church family, please contact Rev. Laura as soon as possible so that a date can be set to accommodate the schedules of all involved. Thank you.

Brat Fry and Bake Sale Fundraiser!

After church on **Sunday, May 20th** the Christian Education Committee and the youth participating in the UCC Great Lakes Regional Youth Event will be hosting a brat fry and bake sale fundraiser. The menu will include a brat, hamburger, or hotdog plus condiments, chips, and a beverage for \$5 per person. There will be a variety of bake sale items for dessert. The Youth Fellowship will provide relays and other games for the young at heart.

All proceeds will help to cover the registration costs of the seven youth from Immanuel UCC who will be attending the UCC Great Lakes Regional Youth Event at Elmhurst College this summer. Thanks, in advance, to the congregation for all of your support!

Thank you to our Association Meeting Delegates!

The Annual Meeting of the Northeast Wisconsin Association of the United Church of Christ took place **Saturday, April 28th** at Union Congregational UCC in Green Bay. Immanuel UCC was represented by Dawn Navis, Laurie Lorenz, and Rev. Laura. **Many thanks to Dawn and Laurie for serving as our delegates this year! Also, our gratitude goes to Gail Gottsacker, who made a presentation at the meeting highlighting Immanuel's prayer shawl ministry.**

Strengthen the Church UCC Special Mission Offering

Throughout the month of May, we at Immanuel UCC will be collecting monetary gifts for the annual Strengthen the Church UCC Special Mission Offering. The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all

by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Beginning Sunday, May 6th Strengthen the Church offering envelopes will be available on the tables near the sanctuary entrances. Please return the envelope with your gift by Sunday, May 27th. Thank you in advance for your generous support for this work of our wider church!

Immanuel UCC Delegate Needed for Wisconsin Conference UCC Meeting

We are still looking for a delegate to represent Immanuel at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Conference UCC which will be held June 8-10 at the Green Lake Conference Center. Please speak with Rev. Laura or a member of the Consistory if you are willing to serve in this capacity. This is an interesting and educational event and a great opportunity

to participate in the important work of our wider church. Thank you!

Don't forget! Beginning Sunday, May 27th we switch over to our summer schedule with worship at 9:00am on Sunday mornings for the duration of the summer.

That morning we will be recognizing those from our congregation who have entered into the blessed rest of eternal peace this past year. Please join us as we rejoice in the good news of resurrection and honor the memory of our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Summer Scripture Readers

Beginning the last Sunday in May, at the back of the sanctuary you will find a sign-up sheet for scripture readers during worship on Sunday mornings this summer. Please consider serving as one of our readers. All are welcome to participate!

Summer Special Music

Do you play an instrument or sing? Are you willing to share your gift with God and the congregation? Please consider offering special music some Sunday this summer. All ages and abilities are welcome! Beginning the last Sunday in May, you will find a sign-up sheet situated at the rear of the sanctuary.

Sunday, June 3rd will be **Graduate Recognition Sunday** at Immanuel. If a member of your family will be graduating from high school, college, or graduate school, please let Rev. Laura know so that all of our graduates can be duly honored and recognized. Thank you.

Pizza Fundraiser

On Saturday March 10, 2018 we gathered together with members of Salem Plankroad UCC for our 7th annual pizza making fundraiser. It was another fast paced morning of slinging pizzas while enjoying fellowship with another

UCC congregation. In total, we made about 1365 pizzas in roughly 4 hours! Out of that total, about 730 pizzas were sold by members of Immanuel UCC. The proceeds raised were \$2,181.15 and will supplement our Scholarship Fund. Thank you to everyone involved from beginning to end, it could not be done without many helping hands!

--Tracy Kracht

Lenten Offering

The offering collected during the Lenten services will go to support two missions of our wider church. Half of the Lenten offering will go to UCC Disaster Relief Ministries, earmarked for aid to Puerto Rico. The other half will go to support the good work of LaVerne's Food Pantry, which works out of St. John's United Church of Christ to serve the hungry of Sheboygan County. The total collected throughout the Lenten season was \$841.72. Each of the missions will receive \$420.86. Thank you to all for sharing your simple gifts.



It's church pictorial directory time!

More information to come in early May regarding sign-up times.

There is no charge and each family will receive a

complimentary 8x10 portrait and one directory. Additional photos can be purchased.

Questions? Call Kristy Pahl 980.0965

Please mark your calendar:

Wednesday, May 30 1-8pm

Thursday, May 31 1-8pm

Friday, June 1 2-9pm

Saturday, June 2 10am-5pm

Christian Education Committee Update:

May 13th: Teacher Appreciation Sunday

May 20th: Sunday School Blast! Brat Fry and Bake Sale Fundraiser after church; activities for kids.

Women's Fellowship Committee Update:

On April 3, Sue Gabsch presented a program to the Women's Fellowship and guests on organ donation. Sue was the recipient of a liver transplant in 2015 that saved her life and she is a strong advocate of organ donation. Her presentation was enlightening and powerful.

May 6th has been set as the date for the annual "Women's Event". Our destination this year will be "Parker John's" restaurant on the riverfront in Sheboygan. Our reservation is for 12:00 P.M. We have a table reserved on the second floor of the restaurant. Please be advised there is no elevator access to the second floor. A sign up sheet will be in church. Deadline for sign up is April 29. Due to the predicted size of the group it has been requested that we view the menu prior to our gathering date to select the menu item of your choice. You can put your entree selection next to your

name on the sign-up sheet. If questions please call Laurie Lorenz at 467-6677 or email: lorenzml@outlook.com

The Women's Fellowship does not meet in June, July or August. Our next meeting will be Monday September 10, 2018 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by: Chris Thieleke

Library News

Those wild and wonderful women are at it again! Campaigning for a joy-filled outlook instead of a gloomy perspective on life, the Women of Faith crew has made thousands of women laugh, lighten up, and face the challenges of life with a smile. *We Brake for Joy! 90 Devotions to Add Laughter, Fun, and Faith to Your Life* is written by Patsy Clairmont, Barbara Johnson and Marilyn Meberg and is truly a wonderful devotional written straight from the hearts of these extraordinary women. *We Brake for Joy!* offers ninety upbeat

devotions to help you live out your faith with verve and style. This devotional offers a spirited view of tackling the challenges of life, taking an honest look at what we face as women every day -- and how we can add joy to our lives in spite of the problems we encounter. Each devotion includes a Scripture passage, a meditation, a closing prayer, and wisdom from traveling companions who know how tough the journey can be -- and how good God is. If the road feels rough and rocky and you think you're running out of gas, let these seasoned women of faith offer you a life. *We Brake for Joy!* will make you laugh, keep you smiling, and encourage your heart so you can get going again! You can locate this devotional book with the call number 242.64 CLA

In the book *Everyday Miracles: Holy Moments in a Mother's Day*, a delightful collection of personal stories from a mother's life. You'll laugh and cry with Dale Hanson Bourke as she shares the struggles of all women who are trying to live their faith somewhere among the

dishes and diapers, the runny noses, and carpool lines are the glimpses of grace. These are the moments when God reaches into our everyday lives and if we will let him performs miracles! He takes muddy little hands and transforms them into instrument of love. He empowers stumbling bedtime prayers with eternal wisdom. And some days he even makes McDonald's seem like a cathedral!!! And on those days when being a Mom takes all the energy and patience you have, these short, heart-touching stories will help you put the demands of motherhood into perspective.

Discover, along with the author, "that God gave us children not so much that we can teach, but so we can learn". The call number for this book is 306.874 BOU.

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 Ausloos, Karen Karsteadt, or Vanessa Thieleke.

Submitted by Vanessa Thieleke

Chili Supper Update:

We had another good chili supper, serving 262 people, between carry outs and dining room seating. **The amount put towards our paving project is \$1,956.86.**

Once again we were told that our chili is excellent, and it was so good to see everyone working together.

Thanks to everyone for your continued help, this is IMMANUEL'S chili supper.

Julie Arnhoelter-Wolf

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	2 Wednesday Evening Study Group 7p	3 Senior Choir 7p	4	5
6 Christian Ed Meeting 8a Mission Committee Meeting after worship	7	8	9 Wednesday Evening Study Group 7p	10	11	12
13 Sunday School Teacher Appreciation	14 Visiting Team Consistory Meeting 7p	15 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	16 Wednesday Evening Study Group 7p	17	18	19
20 Pentecost Holy Communion Brat Fry Fundraiser and Games after worship	21	22	23 Wednesday Evening Study Group 7p	24	25	26
27 Memorial Sunday Worship at 9AM	28	29 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	30 Pictorial Directory Photos 1-8p	31 Pictorial Directory Photos 1-8p		

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June 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Pictorial Directory Photos 2- 9p	2 Pictorial Directory Photos 10a- 5p
3 Graduate Recognition Sunday	4	5 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	6	7	8	9 Wisconsin Conference UCC Annual Meeting
10 Wisconsin Conference UCC Annual Meeting	11 Visiting Team Consistory Meeting 7p	12 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	13 Newsletter Articles Due	14	15	16
17	18	19 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	20	21	22	23
24	25 61 st Anniversary of the United Church of Christ	26 Daytime Fellowship and Study Group 9:30a	27	28	29	30