***“Following God through Jesus***

***in work and word.”***

**IMMANUEL MESSENGER**

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**IMMANUEL**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**(EVANGELICAL & REFORMED)**

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Dates to Remember

March 6 – Mid week Lenten reflection at Our Shepherd

March 10 – Examination Sunday

March 13 – Mid week Lenten reflection at Our Shepherd

March 17 – Confirmation Sunday

March 20 – Mid week Lenten reflection at Our Shepherd

March 24 – Palm Sunday

March 28 – Maundy Thursday service at 7 pm w/communion

March 29 – Good Friday

March 31 – Easter Sunday service at 10:00 am w/communion

What does it mean to us that we find ourselves in the midst of Lent? Have we managed to hold onto a fast that we pledged to do during this season? In addition to denying ourselves of sweets, not snacking while watching TV in the evenings… or perhaps more importantly, how I have behaved more decently by being more caring of others, to curb my anger, to rid myself of hate, etc.? Or does all the above have nothing to do with what it means to be in the Season of Lent?

For many people Lent is simply another season in a series of seasons that come our way during the year. However, Lent leads us to Easter and that event is worth celebrating. So, we simply move through Lent to get to Easter. That’s it! Lent leads us to Easter. Then, why bother to even ask the question? Well, for the sake of argument, why is Lent on the calendar?

First perhaps, we’ll look at the length of Lent. It lasts forty days. Why? It was the length of time Jesus took to consider his role after coming to terms with his baptism. Am I prepared to fulfill my role, my ministry, my life as God’s son? It is as easily stated, am I as God’s daughter preparing myself to be what God calls me to be?

It takes time to make decisions that determine how my life unfolds. It took Moses forty days on a barren mountain? It took forty years for Israel to get to the promised land? It takes time to consider how sacred my life is to me. Sometimes it takes forty days. Sometimes it takes forty years.

So, Lent, the forty days before Easter, what can it mean to us? Well, let me suggest something by way of St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, when he wrote; “Finally, my dear ones, what so ever things are true, what so ever things are honest, what so ever things are just, what so ever things are pure, what so ever things are lovely, what so ever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things.”

If is a worthy endeavor during this Season of Lent.

Ernie Huntzinger

**Library News**

Are you looking for communication with God that will sustain and guide you through life's most difficult moments? Marie Shropshire the author of *In Touch with God: How God Speaks to a Prayerful Heart* opens the Scriptures in a way that meets your needs with encouragement and new possibilities for your life.

These deeply personal, easy-to-read meditations will renew your faith and give you new strength for daily living. They will show you ways to become a vibrant Christian strengthened in faith by God’s grace. Let God and the multitude of thoughts toward you comfort you and cause your thoughts to turn more and more to me. As you walk close to God you will be able to draw quickly from His strength. This walk through heartfelt reflections and illustrations reveals the fulfillment that comes from a vibrant faith. Longtime Christians and those seeking a new understanding of God's love during difficult times will be renewed by this source of encouragement and inspiration. *In Touch with God: How God Speaks to a Prayerful Heart* can be located with the call number 248.4 SHR.

Pride, self-respect, peace of mind and love. God is waiting to give you all this and more! The God who made you and cares for you believes in you! He alone knows your full potential, even if you don’t believe in Him. It’s only a matter of trust and Dr. Robert H. Schuller promises you can’t go wrong if you will only choose to *Believe in the God who Believes in You: The Ten Commandments - A Divine Design for Dignity!*You can locate this book with the call number 241.5 SCH

Let Robert H. Schuller help you create a positive mental image of yourself and the God who believes in you! In the book, *Believe in the God Who Believes in You: The Ten Commandments - A Divine Design for Dignity*Dr. Schuller will show you the God of love. If you thought the Ten Commandments were simply a set of negative, old-fashioned rules, think again! Dr. Schuller has found them to be timeless, positive prescriptions for a renewed sense of self-worth that will help you live a happy life to the fullest.

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 Vanessa Thieleke.

 Submitted by Vanessa Thieleke

**Lent Services**

We will join Our Shephard UCC in Howards Grove for Lenten services.  If able, please bring a dish to pass for a pot luck meal starting at 6:30 pm followed by a time of reflection on Wednesdays during Lent until Holy Week.

**Confirmation Pancake Breakfast & Dessert Auction 2024**

On Sunday, February 4, our confirmands and their families hosted the annual Pancake Breakfast & Dessert Auction. The menu included pancakes, sausage, bakery, fruit, and beverages. A total of $917 was raised! The youth chose Laura’s Pantry as the recipient of these funds. Thank you to all who attended and supported the breakfast as well as the dessert auction - there were so many delicious options to bid on! We appreciate you supporting our confirmands in this worthy cause!

Submitted by Kristy Pahl

In 1990, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: “Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat.” Since then, more than $170 million has been generated for local charities across the country.

In partnership with the Mission Committee, the Confirmands helped collect 154 cans of soup for Laura’s Pantry throughout the month of February 2024! Thank you so much for sharing God's love for our neighbors in need by generously giving your gifts of soup and cash donations.



**Immanuel UCC Ice Cream Social 2024**

It's never too early to start thinking about summer, right?! Please mark your calendar for Tuesday, July 9, for our annual Brat Fry and Ice Cream Social. A committee is forming - would you consider joining it and helping out? "Many hands make light work!" Please see Kristy Pahl if interested. Thank you

**Mission Committee Update**

In January, the Mission Committee reached out to the UCC churches in the area. We expressed our gratitude for their continued support of Laura’s Pantry. We then extended the invitation to anyone within their congregations who might be interested in volunteering at the pantry.

Pastor Randy from Bethlehem UCC contacted us, and members of Bethlehem are now volunteering the fourth Thursday of each month. They help unload and unpack the order from the Sheboygan County Food Bank, and they pack bags for Saturday’s pantry.

Pastor Diane from Bethel UCC contacted us about someone talking at one of their midweek Lenten services, and Jennifer joined them on Wednesday evening, February 21st. The offering collected that evening was generously donated to the pantry.

We are also thankful for the continued generosity of the Rural Church Fellowship. We received two bags of non-perishable items after the Sheepshead tournament on February 18th.

Submitted by Jennifer Marten

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Vacation Bible School News



I have had families contact me regarding VBS dates and times as they plan their summer activities.  Please use this information as you plan and PLEASE share with those you think might be interested in joining our fun week of activities.

Theme: "Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:3

Our adventure will take place from July 22nd to the 26th, with closing service on July 28th.  You can attend the weekly events; Sunday is an option.  VBS is open to children and adults from 3 years old to 103-year-olds.  It runs from 9:00 to 12:00 daily.  There are daily Bible stories, songs, games, science, crafts, snacks and more.  Registration forms will be coming out in the next few months. Commitment fee is $10 per participant.

Lou the Lightening Bug has already arrived at Our Shepherd and is busy preparing for this fun week.

Looking forward to you joining us for this great week,

Counselor Sam (Miss Renae)

Parsonage update as follows:

Roofing project commenced on Monday Feb 19th and completed on Friday Feb 23rd

Positive news that no part of the roof needed to be resheeted

The parsonage has been rented and tenants have already taken occupancy

Keri Koenig and Nicki Schumacher prior to occupancy painted one room upstairs and entry hallway going upstairs

A parsonage rental committee has been created with members of Nicki Schumacher, Ed Pahl, Brett and Keri Koenig .

If there are questions with regards to the parsonage rental, please feel free to reach out to one of the committee members

Submitted by Brett Koenig