

## Pastor's Pondering's

### Reverend Sue Strickler



The calendar says it's "spring" and I dare say it really is! Recently spring has just "sprung" outside around our house. The tulips and daffodils seem to be leaping from the warm wet earth. And especially in the morning I hear the courting calls of many birds who have returned home from their winter vacations in the south. And even though I have witnessed this coming of spring for 63 years, each year the new life of spring brings a deep joy and contentment to my heart.

But as I write this, one last very important piece that says spring and new life is still missing. And that is Easter! This year we celebrate Easter and the resurrection at 7 and 10 on April 4. Sunshine, rain or (even) snow, it will be a beautiful day filled with powerful reminders of the hope and new life God gives us through Jesus Christ! I feel that our life at Immanuel is beginning to burst forth in blossom. And even more than that, I feel that the embodiment of a true resurrection is on the horizon for Immanuel. I thank God for all of this.

I feel the hearts of our congregation are opening and realizing the amazing, exciting things God is bringing to us. This isn't to say that it has been just easy-breezy. No, I think you have worked hard and faithfully to open your hearts and minds to what God has out there for us. You have been active in praying for the path God wants Immanuel to follow. You have been supportive of and worked with the gifted and dedicated leaders God has given us. You have worked hard to trust in God's goodness and to set aside fears so that we might be open to receive what God is bringing us. In the past few months God has brought us so many truly amazing gifts and opportunities: Rev. Jonna Jensen's, (our conference staff representative) support and encouragement from the very beginning; Cindy Robles and the Visioning Committee's faithful, careful, and thorough work to discern what God was /is calling us to do and be; our decision that God was calling us to "do a new thing" and to say "yes" to sharing a pastor with St. Matthew Lutheran church; then St. Matthew also making the decision to share a pastor with us; Larry Jackson and his "Just4the Boys" neighborhood program needing a larger place to meet as we were seeking a way to truly help our neighborhood; the desire of Fatimah Al-Amon (a woman from our neighborhood) to be baptized and to join our congregation; ... and the latest ... the very real possibility of having a full time (40hours/week) Intern pastor from Wartburg Seminary as part of our shared-ministry team in the next year. And these are just the highlights! Wow!! have we been blessed!! Praise God!

We have received such an abundance of blessings and opportunities from God in a very short time. And for some it may feel like it like it's coming too fast. But how can we, why would we, say "no" to what God is laying right before us? I pray we can continue to boldly and confidently follow what and where God is calling us. I pray that we receive God's gifts with deep gratitude and praise. I pray that we might truly be a sign of resurrection in our corner of Dubuque. I pray that we can set aside our fears (as Jesus tells us over and over again) and say to God, "Yes. Here we are! Use us!" Let us not forget that we are definitely not being left to our own devices in all of this. God is with us – Jesus walks with us – the Holy Spirit is within us every step of the way.

## Pastor's Pondering's cont.

I mentioned on Palm Sunday that I would share a thought and image I recently shared with the Church Council and the CARE Bridge Committee. This is a reflection on one of my favorite Hebrew Scripture passages – Micah 6:8. **“And what does the Lord require of you? Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly with your God.”** Using the metaphor of juggling, I think it speaks in a helpful way to our recent abundance of blessings. I hope you find these “highlights” of “The Micah Juggle” to be meaningful

I started with one – one ball in juggling – for in the beginning that is what I could do.

**Walk humbly with my God. O God of promises and expectations I start with this – this walk with You.**

It begins to have a rhythm – ball in the air – a graceful line – then falling down again into waiting hand.

**My walk with You creates its rhythm too – the candles lit, the prayers lifted, a dailiness of effort to be gentle and be real. I feel Your presence as I feel juggling ball connect with hand.**

And then comes two – two balls – more drops to floor as arc crosses arc and balls land where hand is not.

**Love kindness and I have much where others have less. ... And sometimes I find the efforts scattered on the floor like falling balls that missed their mark.**

Keep at it, for in the keeping there comes the skill of catching two balls over and over, creating a path that lands the balls in open hands

**Keep at it, ... and find the path to help.**

How can I add a third – three balls – one always in the air, and one always being caught? I balance carefully; insist my feet stay grounded.

**Do justice. ... Stand firm and balanced ....**

And the balls fall, skidding across the floor. I pick them up. I center again and breathe from deep within to keep three in the air. Remind myself, “You cannot put a new ball in the air until you let go of the old ball.”

**The balls cascade within a never-ending circle, ... one moment of success, two moments of deafness, where ... hope lay crushed. Stand firm. Keep present. Breathe deep. Let go of failures. Put balls of new efforts into the air.**

Do not give up the juggle.

**For the God who loves each requires the keeping on.**

(“The Micah Juggle” by Ann Freeman Price, “Alive Now!” March/April edition, (pages 20-21))

Alleluia! Christ is risen! May we bring glory to God in the name of Jesus Christ!

With faith, hope, and love,  
Pastor Sue

## From the Moderator Cindy Robles

It has been another busy month in the life of our Church. The C.A.R.E. committee is now the C.A.R.E. Bridge committee. This committee is made up of members from both Immanuel and St. Matthew. The purpose of this committee is to outline the process of bridging our two congregations in preparation for sharing our ministry. This is a very important process. This is an advisory committee that will prepare a road map for our respective congregations to follow as we move toward this shared ministry. This is not to say that all suggestions will be accepted by both congregations, but hopefully with the make up of this committee we are able to discern what is best for both churches in the

process. We will report to each Church on a regular basis. We will be meeting twice a month until we feel we have made sufficient progress toward building our bridge. If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding the Bridge committee or suggestions, please tell a member of this committee or a member of the council. So far, the members of this committee are myself, Sally Miller, Ruben Robles, and Dorothy Krayer.

This committee will be a spirit led group and will be listening for God's Call to us, please continue to pray for us and for our Church and it's future.

God Bless.

## Christian Education Board

The Christian Education Board has been working on developing new ideas for the youth of the church and looking into how we can reach out to our neighborhood. Sunday School is ongoing and will continue until June. The Sunday School picnic will be on June 13th at Eagle Point Park. We are looking at developing ideas for families to participate together. Vacation Bible School will be combined with the other downtown churches again this year. The dates for Vacation Bible School have not yet been determined. The Board is actively seeking new applicants to fill the Christian Education Director and Youth Director positions. There will be more to follow on all of these activities next month.

## Introducing Just4theBoys

The Christian Education Board and the Mission Board jointly are sponsoring this community outreach program. Just4theBoys (J4B) is a local development group designed for young boys ages 5 – 18 in the Dubuque downtown community. The goal is to help train and develop young men to be productive members of the Dubuque community. While this is a Christian group, the activities do not promote a particular denomination. The leader of the group is Larry Jackson Jr., MSE, Crossroads Counseling Center located in Dubuque.

The group is meeting on Monday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. and will be using our gym and kitchen. Three principles govern their sessions: (1) Pray Hard. (Believe in establishing open communications with God; discuss and apply aspects of prayer with the group); (2) Work Hard. (Use biblical scripture to help shape and train behavior; discuss weekly challenges, and then find scripture to help strengthen for the week to come and use the "game of chess" to teach strategy and focus); and (3) Play Hard. (To finish the evening – food, refreshments and playing games).

Please extend your friendship and support for these young men and this community outreach program. Thank you.

## Karen Candee Graduation

Karen Candee will be graduating from University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) on Saturday, May 8! She will be receiving a Masters of Divinity (MDiv) degree which will enable her to be called as a pastor and then ordained. This is an exciting time not only for Karen, but for all of us! Karen means so much to this congregation and I know you mean so much to her. I see a beautiful love between you, Karen and God. You have affirmed and nurtured Karen's call and her talents throughout these past years. In love she has given much to this congregation in return. We have all benefited greatly from her strong faith and gifts for ministry.

When she is called to a church or other position as pastor, she will be leaving us. We would like to send with her a symbol of our love for her to have wherever God leads her.

To congratulate Karen, and as a token of this congregation's love and appreciation, the Church Council decided at its March meeting that the church would give Karen a preaching robe for her graduation. Because preaching robes are custom made, they are very expensive (\$350-\$500). If you would like to contribute to this gift, please indicate KAREN'S GIFT in the memo of your check and put it in the offering plate or leave it with Charlotte.

## Karen Candee Ordination

After her graduation, and approval for ordination by the division on ministry, it won't be long until Karen is "called" to a position and then ordained!

As an ordination gift we would like to make her a stole from the fabric of the congregation. This way she will take you with her wherever she is a minister. It will be somewhat like Pastor Sue's blue/purple stole which she wears during Advent and Lent (this was an ordination present to her made from pieces of fabric from her home church).

We would like to collect pieces of fabric (just one per person) that have green, blue, or purple in them. They can also be solids in those colors. The size can be from as small as a playing card to as large as a sheet of typing paper (8½ x 11). The best would be if this was cut from an actual piece of clothing that you used to wear (perhaps Karen would even recognize it) but if not that then something appropriate from your scrap basket or the fabric store. Please put your fabric in an envelope with your name on the outside. It will be fun and meaningful for Karen to be able to identify the people she wears on her stole!

Please put your envelopes/fabric in the basket in Pastor Sue's office by May 1.

# Mission Board

## One Great Hour of Sharing Annual Appeal

### Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

Your gifts for this year's annual One Great Hour of Sharing appeal were dedicated on Sunday, March 14. At this printing a total of \$255.00 has been received and of this amount \$160.00 was raised during the youth's Bake Sale. If you were not able to contribute during the dedication and would still like to add your financial support, please make your check payable to Immanuel Church, mark for OGHS and bring to worship or mail to the church office (P.O. Box 1002). Together through our gifts we support programs that rebuild communities ravaged by natural disaster, construct wells and sanitation systems, teach trades and job skills and offer children a chance to survive past the age of 5.

***It is remarkable how together sharing our resources will change lives!  
Thank you.***

## Lenten Sharing - Hygiene Kits for Earthquake victims in Haiti

As a "special" Lenten sharing project, the congregation has been bringing to church during Lent supplies for Hygiene Kits to be shipped to the earthquake victims in Haiti. The response has been great. As-an-all-church project, the congregation is invited to participate in the assembling and packaging of the kits in the gym for eventual shipping on **Saturday morning, April 17 beginning at 9:00 a.m.** Rolls, coffee and juice will be served.

## Mother's Day Blanket Program

***Will you share a blanket with a needy mother and child?***

The Mission Board is promoting the annual Mother's Day Blanket Program again this year. Members and friends of Immanuel with the purchase of a blanket for \$5.00 as a gift or a memorial can provide warmth for a mother and a child. Orders for these blankets can be made before and after worship services on **Sunday, April 18 & 25 and May 2. These blanket donations will be dedicated on May 9 – Mother's Day** and distributed by Church World Services to the many mothers, children and families experiencing disaster in this country and overseas. Orders for blankets can also be mailed to the church office, P.O. Box 1002. Be sure to note the donor and person(s) being honored or memorialized.

Immanuel has been most generous in their support for this program. Last year 122 blankets were donated in the amount of \$610 – fantastic! ***Your gift will be greatly received by a needy mother and child!*** Thank you.

# Diaconate Board

## March Attendance

Date	Time	Attendance
March 7, 2010	10:00 a.m.	48 Adults/10 Children
March 14, 2010	10:00 a.m.	39 Adults/10 Children
March 21, 2010	7:00 p.m.	54 Adults/17 Children
March 28, 2010	10:00 a.m.	56 Adults/8 Children

## Ushers and Greeters

If you are a greeter or usher, please be at the church 20-30 minutes before worship. Please feel free to contact any one of us if you have any questions regarding this list. If you are unable to be here when you are scheduled, please let a Diaconate member know **at least two (2) weeks in advance** so we can get your replacement.

Sunday April 4th: Easter Sunday

7:00am service: Greeter Ruth Kruse

Usher Bob Krayner

Servers Neil and Karen Candee

10:00 Service: Greeter Dee Hinds,

Ushers Ken and Maureen Harris

Servers Ken and Maureen Harris and Art and Sally Miller

April 11: Greeter Bob and Donnabelle Kramer,

Ushers Kim Brandt and Paul Coates

April 18 Greeter Cathy Bennett,

Ushers Don and Vicki Lenstra

April 25 Greeter Phylis Anderson

Ushers Bill and Monica Meisner



# Finance Board

We know it is Spring. The Robins are back. It is also time for Spring Cleaning. The Finance Board will be having a Spring Cleanup Day for the Sanctuary and Entryway on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00 a.m. If you are able to help please bring your buckets and rags. We will be vacuuming and rotating the pew cushions in the sanctuary, cleaning the pews and wainscoating and cleaning the windowsills. We will also clean the windows and wood in the entryway. Lunch will be provided for those who help. We want to have the entryway spic and span for our May Fest Prime Rib Dinner on Friday, May 7. Make sure you buy your ticket as only 135 will be sold. We look forward to a fun evening with food, silent auction and door prizes as well as music and karaoke. Tickets are on sale at the church on Sundays or call the church office. \$15 will buy you that delicious Prime Rib or Chicken Breast Dinner.

When we had the Energy Audit done we were

advised that if we replaced the furnaces that service the sanctuary we would have more efficient heating . We have received an estimate from Advantage for \$4500 to

do this. We as a board would like to make this change as we feel it would be more economical for us in the long run. If you feel you would like to help support this program we ask that you make a contribution to help defray the cost of this improvement for Immanuel. We have a deadline of April 24<sup>th</sup> to sign this quote and take advantage of this price.

The guys (John, Don, Rob and Bob) will be working to improve the electrical challenges that exist in the organ area of the altar. The outlets there need some updating.

We are thankful for the financial support the members are giving us and look forward to seeing all of you at worship during this Blessed Easter Season.

God's Blessings from the Finance Board.

## Treasurer's Tidbits

General Fund Envelope Offerings	Giving Budget	Actual Received	Over/Under Budget
January-February	\$10,983	\$10,609	-\$374
General Fund-Revenue / Expenses	Revenue Received	Actual YTD Expense Paid	Over/Under Budget
January-February	\$14,500	\$11,356	-\$3,205

**THE INFORMER  
(USPS 259-580) IS  
PUBLISHED ONCE A  
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Dubuque, IA  
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**Postmaster:  
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P.O. Box 1002  
Dubuque, Iowa  
52004-1002**

### **Dates to Remember: April**

- April 11: Baptism and New Member Sunday
- April 18: C.A.R.E. Bridge Committee @Noon
- April 19: Mission Board Meeting 5:30 p.m.
- April 25: Spring Cleaning
- April 26: All other Boards at 5:30 p.m.  
and Council at 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday Services and Sunday School 10:00 a.m.**

**Website:** [www.immanueluccdbq.org](http://www.immanueluccdbq.org)

**Phone:** 563-582-5168

**Pastor: Sue Strickler**

**Office Hours:** Every Tuesday, first two Thursday's of the month, last two Friday's of the month.

**Home Phone:** 608-348-6026 or 888-290-8585

**Moderator: Cindy Robles**

Phone: 608-642-2392

