

September 2014

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus:

On July 1, 2014 I began my fourth year as your pastor; I am grateful to Bishop Matthews for appointing me to the Brookfield Immanuel Charge for another year. Where has the time gone? It seems like I just got here! Yet, in these past three years, we have seen the Kingdom of God become more visible and real in our midst and in our community. Look at some of the Kingdom ministry in which we have served in the name of our Risen Savior:

- ❖ In September of 2012 and 2013 we sent a Volunteer in Mission (VIM) team through Unity Ministries to West Virginia.
- ❖ Our commitment to Christmas-in-April remains strong and has grown to help community families beyond one single day in April.
- ❖ Our charge has pledged \$2,200.00 to support the Baltimore Washington Annual Conference's "Imagine No Malaria" Campaign to eliminate malaria deaths on the continent of Africa. (you will hear more details about our commitment this fall)
- ❖ We have a walking group that meets three days a week, and a needle-arts group (Naylor Needlers) that meets weekly, learning to make hand-pieced quilts, while others crochet or knit items for charities.
- ❖ We've sent a pilgrim on a "Walk to Emmaus" Weekend with plans to send others to help our congregations grow in faith, knowledge, and service to Christ.
- ❖ In 2011 Brookfield and Immanuel donated fifty backpacks filled with school supplies for local school children. From this modest beginning, under the leadership of UMW president, Debbie Cooke, President Emeritus, Dot Borrás, and Joyce Sweeney, a year round Children's Ministry has grown and developed that seeks to care for the whole child. As of 2014 we now provide backpacks school supplies, school uniforms, coats, shoes, lunch money, weekend food packs, and in-school tutoring. Funds are raised by the UMW through partnerships with other local churches, local businesses, the 2013 UMW Christmas pie auction, and individual contributions from church members and friends like you!
- ❖ We have celebrated several family weddings and we have witnessed and celebrated the baptisms of children in our community.
- ❖ We have celebrated the home-going of several of our dear saints.
- ❖ We confirmed five young people, and we have received new members by profession of faith.
- ❖ We celebrated my ordination at Annual conference in May 2013—that your prayers, encouragement, and support, with God's help made possible.
- ❖ We celebrated my marriage to Steve as you welcomed him into the church family in July 2013.
- ❖ More lay people are getting involved in home/hospital visitation ministry

These are in addition to our other long term ministries with our community:

- ❖ Brookfield's PBJ Sunday provides 350 sandwiches per month to S.O.M.E. In D.C. (So Others Might Eat)
- ❖ Brookfield's annual tea raises \$5000 to provide meat and milk for CSS Baden food pantry.
- ❖ Individuals from Immanuel and Brookfield volunteer at the pantry weekly and/or serve on the CSS Board
- ❖ Immanuel's Spaghetti Dinner tithed (10%) of its proceeds to support our charge pledge to "Imagine No Malaria."
- ❖ Immanuel's Golf tournament tithed (10%) of its proceeds to support missions.
- ❖ The weekly bible study led by Jan Sweeney has grown in attendance steadily the last 3 years
- ❖ Children of our church community have had a wonderful experience through Sunday school and VBS led by Cherry Lynn Tarbox, Linda Grabis and Mellie Landon.
- ❖ We continue our combined worship with the sacrament of Communion at the beginning of each month as well as our Riverside services at the Lee Farm.
- ❖ Our worship music program, along with our annual Christmas Cantata continues to flourish under the dedicated direction of music director, Sandy Cross.

Over these past three years, we heard the ways God has called us to grow in faith, knowledge, and in service to Christ. We have answered God's call—we have stepped out in faith and in trust of God's provision—and we have seen the miracle of multiplication like the loaves and fishes where Jesus fed the 5000. . . So what's next?

I believe God is calling us to become more involved in ministry to our brothers and sisters around the globe. That is what the "Imagine No Malaria" commitment is all about—here in the U.S. we have the science, technology, medicines and resources that could wipe out this completely preventable disease—if only the medicine, education, and bed nets could be distributed to those who need them; those who will not receive that help without our action.

Each of us has gifts, skills, and talents given us by God. These are called spiritual gifts—gifts given to use in service, so that God's kingdom may be more real and more visible to all. We all have spiritual gifts, but we often may not be aware of what our gifts for ministry are.

What are your gifts? You may already know and use them or you may be unsure what your gifts are. Our gifts can also shift or change as we move through a lifetime of faith and service in God's kingdom. Maybe God is calling you to use your gifts in a new and different way.

For many years I did not think I had a gift for leading others —I wanted to lead—I had the desire, but I was afraid to fail—that is until someone encouraged me to step out in faith to try it. And I have failed at times. But each time I have learned from my mistakes and it has made me

a better pastor. A lady I used to know had MS. She was confined to a nursing home by the time she was in her mid 30's—but God gave her the gift of intercessory prayer—and she prayed for the church and its ministries. Anyone who visited her came away feeling uplifted by spending time with her. God gave her a gift she could use for the kingdom even from the nursing home.

This fall and winter as we worship, we will explore the many ways God calls and provides us with spiritual gifts—later, possibly in early 2015, there will be an opportunity for anyone who wants to learn and explore their Spiritual gifts more deeply.

You have a gift—a gift given by God to use in service to transform the world for Jesus Christ. So, come and see what God has in store—come and see what God will do next!

PBJ (peace blessings and joy)

Pastor Marianne

Rev. Marianne T. Christofferson