

Ordination of Susan Raedeke

On Sunday, December 15, Bishop Stewart Ruch will visit Immanuel to ordain our Susan Raedeke as a permanent deacon in the Anglican Church of North America.

Who is Susan Raedeke? Susan is one of Immanuel's early leaders. She has served in a variety of staff roles over the years and currently serves as our part-time Equipping Pastor.

What is a deacon? The word deacon is best translated as "servant," and deacons are first and foremost simply servants of the Church! While all Christians are given gifts by the Holy Spirit to serve the common good of the Church, ordained clergy (bishops, priests, and deacons) are primarily called to build the Church by equipping the saints. All believers are called to be ministers of the Gospel; ordained believers are called to serve and equip those believers. Three main roles of the deacon are to preach the Gospel, to care for the poor and those in need, and to serve at the Table of communion.

What is ordination? In the Anglican church, the Bishop performs the sacramental rite of the laying on of hands for three purposes: consecration (the ordinand's life is set aside for service of the Church), authorization (the ordinand is authorized to speak officially on behalf of the Church in the name of Christ), and empowerment (the gift of the Holy Spirit is released in the ordinand's life to empower him or her serve the Church).

What does our church teach about the ordination of women? Women lead, preach, and pastor in our diocese as they are gifted and called, and do not need to be ordained to do so. When women are called vocationally to serve the church, they are ordained to the diaconate (note St. Paul's reference to Priscilla as a deacon in Romans 16:1-2). Women in our diocese are not ordained as priests, as we understand the sacramental reality of the priesthood to be uniquely expressed through maleness. There is no difference between men and women in inherent value, gifts and competencies, or the capacity to be like Christ, but maleness and femaleness were designed to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His Church in unique ways.

What will change when Susan is ordained? Because our church has received special permission to have lay people perform the roles typically done by deacons in the worship service, her Sunday morning role will look much the same, although she will wear robes when Fr. Aaron does, and she will lift the chalice at the end of the Eucharist prayers. And because our diocese typically expects to witness people exercising their gifts for the sake of the Church for a few years before discerning that person's call to ordained ministry, Susan will continue equipping the saints through her various roles of teaching, preaching, leading, and providing pastoral care--but in a new way: consecrated, authorized and empowered.

A Note from Susan

It's been an indescribable honor and joy to serve the Church in various capacities in various seasons of life, and that's especially true of these past six or seven years at Immanuel. This is the place and the season God has used to increase my faith and hope in Him, my love for those outside the Church and/or in the margins of society, and my desire and capacity to love and serve the members of His Body.

Please pray for me in these weeks leading up to ordination. Part of the ordination process involves being examined on various aspects of the Bible, theology, ethics, and Anglicanism. Due to some unusual circumstances, final preparation for my ordination exams will need to be largely self-led--I would deeply appreciate your prayers as I prepare for those exams (set for Nov. 4-6). Pray also that I would be really attentive and cooperative with everything the Lord wants to do in me this season as well. Already the path to ordination has involved confrontation with new temptation and new calls to growth in key areas.

I look forward to worshipping--and celebrating--with you on December 15!