

August 2026

the MESSENGER

406 S. HIGH STREET—53956

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I've come to expect that early to mid-summer season is generally a quieter season around the church campus. This year it's felt less so! The new Gathering Place has been host to extra activity – art nights and senior bunco, as well as bridal, baby and baptism celebrations. Around the property too, we've had concrete torn up, trees getting trimmed, and attention to growing new grass. On Sunday mornings we've had some extras. We've baptized and received professions of faith. We grilled and tossed bags outside on Fathers Day, and we'll be outside again for worship in a few weeks. It's easy to imagine someone driving by thinking, "Looks busy at the church!"

And yet, this past week I heard the simple reminder from one of my favorite Bible teachers that always bears repeating here and there: The church, the family Jesus created by his death and resurrection, does not exist merely at 406 S High Street. The church is not an entity that pops up every Sunday at 9am and then disappears for the rest of the week. In Ephesians 5:25, Paul writes, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church." We know Jesus didn't just die for a building or a weekly time slot. He gave himself for men and women, boys and girls – his church.

And Scripture tells us that sometimes Jesus gathers his church and just as often Jesus scatters his church, sends them out like a farmer tossing out seed. In our Mark Bible study, we recently read about how Jesus specifically called twelve special disciples to gather close and learn from him, but also that later Jesus sends them out to mingle with those around them as the salt and light of the gospel. When talking with our Profession of Faith groups, I encourage them to recognize how God gives us a church family not just on Sunday mornings within these four walls, but when we see each other at school or at the park, at the grocery store or at the doctor's office we serve as encouragements and reminders to each other of the faith we share, that wherever I go "I am not my own but belong ... to Jesus Christ" (HCQ&A1).

Every day I'm in the office I try to make time in the afternoon to pray specifically for the members of our church. As I see names on my sheet, I try to recall past conversations and imagine what their day looks like, and how God may be calling them to honor him where they are. When I pray on weekday afternoons the sanctuary, of course, is empty, but that doesn't matter because Jesus' church always remains! Whether we're the church gathered on a Sunday or we're the church scattered on a weekday, my prayer is that the Holy Spirit reminds you at all times who you are, what love has done for you, and whose strength and comfort is always in you.

God's Kingdom come,
Pastor Luke



REMINDER

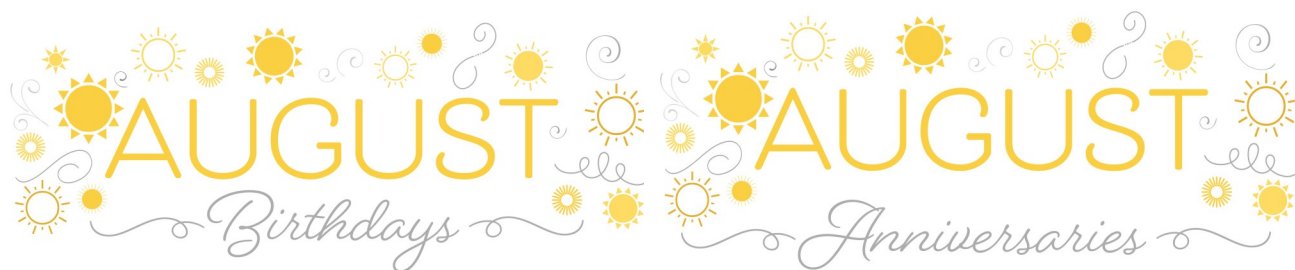
IMPORTANT DATES

- August 2 Communion
- August 8 Community Art Night
- August 10 Consistory
- August 16 Outdoor Service
9:30am
- August 19 Senior Citizens
- August 22 GriefShare
- August 25 Blood Drive
- August 26 RCS 1st Day of School

PRAYING OVER
a new
school year



Birthdays and Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

- 1 Kinley Van Buren
- 9 Seth Braker
- 10 Todd Leystra
- Jason Stiemsma
- 12 Jane Horton
- 16 Kate Koopmans
- 18 Dale Macheel
- 19 Vincent Reed
- 20 Jim Bylsma
- 21 Garrett Deakin
- Wink Tillema
- 22 Jonathan Roberts
- John Baneck
- Ken Ireland
- 25 Nicholas Pfeffer
- 28 Nichole Roach
- 29 Marion Griffith

Happy Anniversary

- 7 Kyle & Miranda Roberts (5th)
- 8 Harold & Darlyn DeYoung
- John & Jill Baneck
- 10 Dave & Lois Wendlandt
- 11 Rich & Patti Hiley
- 15 John & Erin Stampfli
- 17 John & Keri VerHage (30th)
- Gordon & Wilma Vander Velde (70th)
- 19 Jason & Jaime Kok
- 24 Gary & Kate Kooopmans
- Tim & Jacqui Hollander
- Jonathan & Brittney Roberts
- 25 Daniel & Kari Schumacher
- 28 Dale & Perle Macheel (55th)
- Dylan & Vicki Minnig (5th)



Thank You & Upcoming Events



Senior Citizens have been meeting for 2 months now. We have played Bunco and United States Trivia and card games. It is going well so far, having fun and socializing. It was decided to meet on the third Wednesday of the month. We will meet

August 19th -12:00-3:00, Burgers, Chips, Baked Beans and Dessert will be served, followed by Bingo with prizes.

Being a "Senior Citizen" is largely a social and legal milestone rather than a fixed biological rule. While most think 65 is the magic number, age 55 is frequently considered an early milestone.

I would like to thank our special family of brothers and sisters in Christ at Randolph First Reformed Church for all the cards, prayers, healing thoughts, support and visits during my diagnosis, surgery and healing from cancer surgery. I am blessed to be surrounded by such loving and caring church family. Thanks again and may God bless you all.
-Don Cupery



Randolph Blood Drive — Wed, Aug 26
Randolph Village Hall • 12–5 PM
Appointments are **highly recommended**.
Come donate and make a difference!

Thank you for your support of our vital mission. Your generosity is deeply appreciated. Today and every day, we are thankful for the difference you make.
-Living Hope Food Pantry

Serving the Congregation

Date	Nursery
August 2	Miranda Roberts
August 9	Aubrynn Leystra
August 16	Zoe Kok
August 23	Stephanie Wilcox
August 30	Lydia VanBuren

June Consistory Minutes

June 8, 2026 - 7:00pm Present: Pastor Luke, John VerHage, Randy Paul, Deb Cupery, Hugh Roberts, Mike Grieger, Aaron Retzlaff & Nick Leystra

DEVOTION & OPENING PRAYER – Randy Paul

CHURCH OFFICER REPORTS

Pastor's Report – Pastor Luke

- Relayed The Gathering Place's provisional vision statement and reported on May usage
- Reported that Wisconsin Classis is likely to dissolve within the year with churches either moving to new multi-state Middle Assemblies within the RCA or to other denominations
- The Denominational Discernment Team is scheduled to meet with ARC representatives in the middle of June
- Introduced a new regular Secretary Report to keep Consistory informed of the secretary's work and what items might need to be taken care of by Consistory

Elders Report – Randy Paul

- Approved baptism request by Nate & Corinna Leystra for their son Jackson

Deacons Report

- Continued discussion on the goals and policies of the Benevolent Fund

TEAM REPORTS

Finance Report – Aaron Retzlaff

- General Fund: \$144,626.51
- Benevolent Fund: \$25,005.18 (Gathering Place: \$40,408.63)
- Building Fund: \$52,012.52
- MSC to approve the Finance Report
- All regular Gathering Place expenses will be paid from The Gathering Place account beginning in June
- To date, The Gathering Place has been scheduled for five rentals, totaling \$750 in income
- First half of Partner in Ministry (PIM) Shares have been paid

Education Report – Deb Cupery

- May 31 Teacher Meeting: Good year reported. Most Sunday School/Catechism teachers plan on returning next year. Looking to recruit a new younger elementary Sunday School teacher, along with raising up new teachers in general
- Heard from younger families that having Kids Church run through the summer could be something to consider
- RCYF/Cornerstone will not be hosting the Labor Day Pie Stand going forward. Shirley has asked the Consistory to explore whether any other church group would like to pick it up as a fundraiser

Decorating Team – Mike Grieger

- Consistory approved subsuming the responsibility of Decorating Team liaison to Property, and expanding Property leadership to two "Co-Chairs". Mike Grieger will move to co-chairing Property with Nick Leystra

Mission Report – Aaron Retzlaff

- Deacon Board approved supporting Haiti Empowered (formerly Mission E4) by purchasing 1 of 20 new sewing machines (\$375) Haiti Empowered needs for their vocational school. The Deacon Board supports funding 1-2 more if someone would like to use a summer event to fundraise for it

Property Report – Nick Leystra

- Sewer line replacement successful. Once ground is settled repaving will be scheduled, including the sidewalk to the northwest door
- Sanctuary Lighting: Earlier bulb replacement plan is no longer feasible. Insides of each main fixture will need to be replaced at an estimated to material cost of \$20,000
- Plans should begin for a parking lot replacement project in a few years. Deacons are considering how to begin creating and contributing a parking lot fund
- Looking into sound paneling for The Gathering Place

Personnel Report – John Verhage

- Reviewed and approved The Gathering Place Custodian job description

Music/Tech Report – Randy Paul

- Sanctuary audio upgrades should be complete within the next two

May 2026 Financial Report

General Fund:

Offerings	\$19,131.00
Disbursements	\$24,052.03

Benevolent Fund:

General Offering	\$ 5,620.59
Special Offering	\$ 1,505.00

Disbursements

Local Need	\$ 1,079.95
Pollasch	\$ 250.00
Compassion	\$ 850.00
Emily Dykstra	\$ 325.00
PIM Shares	\$ 4,277.50
RCYF	\$ 1,020.00
DCRTL	\$ 159.79

Building Fund:

Offerings	\$10,425.00
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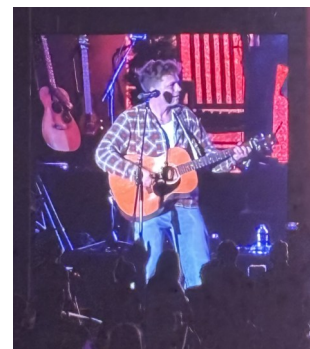
Youth News



June 28th was the Brendan Brooks concert. He and his band and his family were there. It was an inspirational and personal event, and those that attended enjoyed his music and root beer floats. It was a good evening praising our Lord!



Lifest was a good time with many memories made. We got there Thursday morning and had to carry all of our stuff to our campsite. It was raining so we set up our tents as quickly as we could. The boys were a little better at setting up tents and then proceeded to go inside theirs to stay dry. LOL Kaylee and I struggled to get ours up, but we finally got it, with only a little rain on our tent floor. After it stopped raining we set up the rest of the camp. The boys did a lot of exploring around the Lifest grounds. There was a Market place with many different vendors and opportunities to win small prizes. It was an air conditioned building so it was a good place to go cool off. Pastor Luke joined us Thursday afternoon. We enjoyed the bands Rend Collective and Cain on Thursday evening and KB and Josiah Queen on Friday. They were all amazing and talented, devoted to serving and praising God. There were many other bands/singers and we all went to different places at different times. Saturday it was only Kaylee and myself left to take everything down. Did I mention it was a hot week? (It did cool down at night) Well, we got it done and then enjoyed doing a few events. We stuffed 2 dogs each, 1 to keep and one to donate to Make A Wish, listened to music and a speaker, walked around the Market Place. Holly came with 4 girls so we met up with her and showed them around. They as well enjoyed the event. There were a lot of campers and people camping in tents. It is amazing to see how many people come to this to worship for the week. God was at work and you could see it!



August Reading Plan

Walking Worthy

Topical Bible Study Plan



- ☐ Day 1: Ephesians 4:1
- ☐ Day 2: Colossians 1:10
- ☐ Day 3: Philippians 1:27
- ☐ Day 4: 1 Thess 2:12
- ☐ Day 5: 2 Thess 1:11
- ☐ Day 6: Romans 12:1
- ☐ Day 7: 1 Corinthians 6:20
- ☐ Day 8: Micah 6:8
- ☐ Day 9: Galatians 5:25
- ☐ Day 10: 1 Peter 2:9
- ☐ Day 11: 1 John 2:6
- ☐ Day 12: Matthew 5:16
- ☐ Day 13: 2 Corinthians 5:20
- ☐ Day 14: Ephesians 5:8
- ☐ Day 15: Philippians 2:15
- ☐ Day 16: Titus 2:7-8
- ☐ Day 17: 1 Timothy 4:12
- ☐ Day 18: Romans 13:13
- ☐ Day 19: Hebrews 12:1
- ☐ Day 20: 2 Peter 3:11
- ☐ Day 21: James 1:22
- ☐ Day 22: 1 Peter 1:15
- ☐ Day 23: Matthew 22:37-39
- ☐ Day 24: John 13:34-35
- ☐ Day 25: Ephesians 5:1-2
- ☐ Day 26: 1 John 4:7-8
- ☐ Day 27: Colossians 3:12
- ☐ Day 28: 1 Peter 3:15
- ☐ Day 29: Galatians 6:9-10
- ☐ Day 30: Hebrews 13:16
- ☐ Day 31: 2 Timothy 2:15

Kingdom Bloggers

Study and Reflection Questions

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to have a calling from God? How is this calling unique to each believer?
2. How can spending time in prayer and reading the Bible help us understand our calling better?
3. What are some examples of actions that reflect Jesus' love and grace in our daily lives?
4. In what ways can joining a Bible study or listening to sermons help us grow in our faith?
5. Why is it important to let our light shine before others? What impact can this have on those around us?
6. How does showing love and grace to others demonstrate that we are walking worthy of our calling?
7. What role does humility and gentleness play in our interactions with others?
8. How can serving others help us live out our calling and follow Jesus' example?
9. What are some practical steps we can take to stay connected to God on a daily basis?
10. How can we balance our personal growth in faith with our responsibility to reflect Christ to others?

Reflection Questions

1. In what areas of your life do you feel most challenged to walk worthy of your calling? How can you seek God's help in these areas?
2. How has understanding your calling influenced your daily decisions and actions? Are there specific changes you've made as a result?
3. When interacting with others, do you find it easy or difficult to show Christ-like love and grace? What steps can you take to improve in this area?
4. How do you stay motivated to live a life worthy of your calling, especially when facing difficult situations?
5. How can you be a light in your community, reflecting Jesus in your actions and words? Can you think of specific examples where you can let your light shine?
6. What does it mean to you personally to bear good fruit in every good work? How can you apply this in your daily life?
7. How do you balance the need for personal spiritual growth with the call to serve and love others?
8. In what ways can you encourage and build up those around you in their faith journey?
9. How does your relationship with God influence the way you treat others? Can you think of areas where you need to grow?
10. What practical steps can you take to ensure that your actions and words align with your calling as a follower of Jesus?



— a message from —

EMILY DYKSTRA

MAKING MULTIETHNIC MULTIPLYING DISCIPLES IN THE MILWAUKEE METRO AREA

MEET OUR INTERNATIONAL INTERNS!

This newsletter contains sensitive information due to security reasons. Please refrain from sharing this letter on the internet. As my team helps students find their place in the mission of God, we pray that some might choose to go to the nations to bring the Gospel to every corner of the earth. This year, the Lord called four Milwaukee Metro students to intern with Cru internationally next school year! Sarah from Wisconsin Lutheran, Amanda from Concorida University, and our first year intern, David, have been placed in locations in our partnership in the Middle East! Ella from Marquette University is interning in Thailand next year! I have had the priveledge of getting to disciple Ella and Sarah during my time at Marquette and worked with David at UWM. I could not be more excited about what they get to enter into next school year!

Mario Update

Not long after sending last letter, we were made aware that Mario had taken a fall down some stairs on campus, and seriously injured his head. After multiple surgeries, weeks in the ICU, and lots of prayer, Mario is healing remarkably! Our UWM students have been surrounding him, and I am humbled by God's love and power in Mario's life!

Right: Sarah, Amanda, and Ella from WLC, Concordia, and MU!



Above: David, our first year intern at UWM

Ways to Pray:

- Praise God that he is sending Ella, Amanda, Sarah, and David internationally with Cru! Would you join me in praying for them as they start building a team of ministry partners this summer?
- Praise God for protecting and healing Mario after his accident! Please pray with me that he would make a full recovery
- I am spending this summer connecting with my current and new ministry partners. Please pray that the Lord would bless and refresh these connections.



Left: David visiting Mario at the hospital

Because of your prayers and support, the Lord is sending students to the world in full time ministry! Thank you so much! I would love to connect with you this summer. Please feel welcome to reach out and find a time to connect!

For the Kingdom,

Emily

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— a message from —

EMILY DYKSTRA

MAKING MULTIETHNIC MULTIPLYING DISCIPLES IN THE MILWAUKEE METRO AREA

RECORD METRO STUDENTS ATTEND JERSEY SHORE SUMMER MISSION!

Although I did not get the opportunity to join the Jersey Shore Summer Mission this summer, I am celebrating that God did in Seaside Heights! We sent 10 Metro students and 2 staff this summer. This is more students we have seen go on mission together in years! During those two weeks, they initiated 1000 conversations, gave 200 people an opportunity to respond to the gospel, and saw 40 new members join God's family! Ben, a student from UWM, shared this experience while sharing his faith on the boardwalk: "I was walking down the boardwalk and my group stopped to pray "God, prepare the hearts of those we encounter and let Your Spirit guide us." We immediately noticed a young couple who we decided to approach. We shared we were with Cru and had a survey about spiritual things to go through, to which they were interested. Matt and Olivia shared that they were curious about Jesus, as each shared feeling the weight of sin and shame and feeling disappointment toward the things of this world. My group then took turns sharing the "Knowing God Personally" booklet with them, where they began to grasp the beauty of the gospel and Christ's free gift of salvation. After realizing they wanted and needed Jesus on the throne of their life, they prayed to receive Christ. Another group from Cru walking nearby saw the look of pure joy on Matt and Olivia's face as they left our conversation being freed from sin and welcomed into God's family."

Below: Metro students and staff on the Jersey Shore Summer Mission!



Ways to Pray:

- Praise God for all the spiritual conversations and the growth students experienced on Jersey Shore Summer Mission!
- Praise God for our student lead Bible Study, Summer Cru! They have consistently seen about 20 students attend this month!
- Continue to pray for God's provision as I invite people to join my team prayerfully and financially.
- Pray for safe travels this month as I drive to meet with partners and my friend's wedding in Duluth!



Left: Ben sharing his faith on the boardwalk

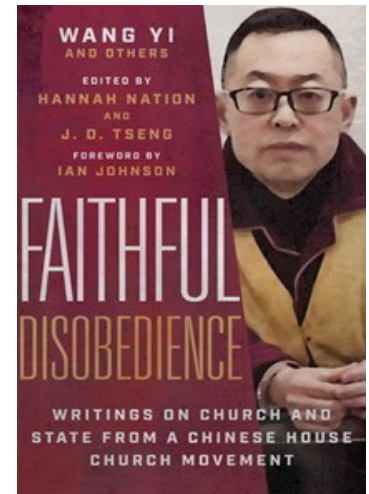
Because of your prayers and support, the Lord is sending students are getting to experience life on mission and bring others to Christ! Thank you! I would love to connect with you this summer. Please feel welcome to reach out and find a time to connect!

For the Kingdom,

Emily

2125 N 52ND ST MILWAUKEE, WI 53208 | 920.382.7566 | EMILY.DYKSTRA@CRU.ORG

Persecution Watch



Nadia Dybvik, Persecution Watch Prayer Conference Call Leader

**If you would like to receive monthly email updates, there is a sign up sheet in the narthex on the bulletin.*

A CALL FOR ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TO PRAY

Bitter Winter Online Magazine has closely followed the tragic story of Pastor Wang Yi and the Early Rain Covenant Church. On December 9, 2018, authorities in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, forcibly shut down the church and arrested nearly 100 members. Pastor Wang Yi was charged with “*inciting subversion of state power*,” and his books were banned throughout China.

Wang Yi’s bold influence within China’s house church movement deeply alarmed the CCP. He helped initiate a joint declaration in which hundreds of pastors publicly denounced the persecution of house churches. More than 400 leaders signed their names—an act of courage that led directly to his arrest. Pastor Wang Yi was later sentenced to nine years in prison, a ruling that made clear the government’s determination to silence independent Christian churches.

His imprisonment reminds believers of the truth found in **2 Timothy 3:12**: “*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*”

-Pastor Wang Yi — Activism, Imprisonment, and Early Rain’s Perseverance

Pastor Wang Yi, leader of Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, boldly taught that the church must remain independent from the Chinese Communist Party. In sermons he publicly called on Xi Jinping and national leaders to repent. During China’s campaign to Sinicize Christianity, Wang Yi authored “**A Declaration for the Sake of the Christian Faith**,” which over 400 house church pastors signed with their real names. This act led directly to his arrest on December 9, 2018. Since his imprisonment, authorities have tightly restricted all news about him. Only one and a short statement from January 9, 2020 have reached the outside world.

His Words

“If someone attacks me, I will be meek as a lamb. But if someone attacks the Church, I will be brave as a lion... I criticized the authorities not out of hatred, but out of love. When I was arrested, I submitted myself to them. That’s when people knew it was true.”

Prison Conditions

Reports from ChinaAid describe harsh treatment:

- Held in near isolation, allowed contact only with two long term inmates.
- Fed 10 year old moldy rice.
- Treated with expired medications by uncertified medical staff in the prison hospital.

Please pray for Pastor Wang Yi:

- Strength, boldness, and confidence to witness like Paul and Peter.
- Protection from discouragement; continued access to a Bible, paper, and pen while in prison.

Please pray for the members of the Early Rain Covenant Church members.

- Guidance of the Holy Spirit in every circumstance, unity, wisdom, love, and endurance under hardship.

Pray for the Ministry Team of Early Rain Covenant Church.

- Pray for resilience and deep rootedness in the gospel.
- Pray that God’s Word would increase and multiply through the ministry team.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Children's Activity Page



A sweet reminder that God is always growing something new, no matter the season. As summer winds down and a new school year begins, remember He is at work in your life, helping you grow in faith, kindness and courage. With His help, you can grow in wisdom, build friendships and shine His love wherever you go.

What you need:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 (4-serving) box chocolate instant pudding mix
- 1 (8 oz.) tub whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (16 oz.) package Oreo cookies, crushed
- 8 (9 oz.) clear plastic cups
- Gummy worms or frogs (optional)



What you do:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together milk and pudding mix for 2 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes until thickened.
2. Gently fold in the whipped topping.
3. Add a layer of crushed cookies to the bottom of each cup.
4. Spoon pudding mixture on top, filling the cups about $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
5. Sprinkle more crushed cookies on top to look like "dirt."
6. Add gummy worms or frogs for fun.
7. Chill until ready to serve, or enjoy right away.

See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not
perceive it? — Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)



Compete for the crown



The apostle Paul compares the Christian life to running a race for an imperishable crown.



Directions: From the starting line through the finish line, circle every third letter. Then place the circled letters in order in the blanks below to complete 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, NIV.

START

ctrejasucphelnpomrxkibvztaejargiusonyc
w
e
qsatexympsakogmzsjeaubtneyhapidmrfo
tegrbuanpicdnofihmneygjocsxrdpoetwkin

FINISH

"Do you not know that in a _____ all the runners run, but only one gets the _____? _____ in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who _____ in the _____ goes into strict _____. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a _____ that will last forever."

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-25, NIV

Answer: race, prize, run, competes, games, training, crown





August



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9am Worship Communion Special Offering: Lay Leader Continuing Ed	3 6:30pm Women's Bible Study Lesson 43	4 8:30am Mark Bible Study 6:30pm Read Thru Bible Study 6:30pm Prayer Team	5	6	7	8 5-8pm Community Art Night @ TGP
9 9am Worship	10 6:30pm Elder's Meeting 7pm Consistory	11 8:30am Mark Bible Study 6:30pm Read Thru Bible Study	12	13	14	15
16 <u>9:30am</u> Outside Service with Brunch	17 6:30pm Women's Bible Study Lesson 44	18 8:30am Mark Bible Study 6:30pm Read Thru Bible Study	19 12-3Pm Senior Citizens	20	21	22 8:30am GriefShare
23 9am Worship	24	25 8:30am Mark Bible Study 6:30pm Read Thru Bible Study	26 12-5pm Community Blood Drive at Village Hall 1st Day of School RCS	27	28	29 8:30am GriefShare
30 9am Worship Special Offering RCS	31					