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June & July 2023 Happenings

From Pastor Brand's desk: A Hymn for Times Like These

I know that many of you have days where the time just seems to fly. It seems to be a function of age, that time goes faster and faster. Lately it seems like that old saying, *'The fowarder I go, the behinder I get!'* It isn't just the hours or the days that seem to be speeding by, it is life itself. It is at precisely these sorts of times that I think of that wonderful hymn, **Abide with Me.**

I guess the reason it comes to mind is the second line, **"Fast falls the eventide."** How swiftly indeed! It wouldn't be so bad but as it falls, all of the skills and abilities of the flesh upon which we have grown so dependent seem to fade too. The easiest one to identify with is the memory. I keep telling myself that it is "covid brain." Everyone seems to feel their memory changing and drifting and fading. **"The darkness deepens;"** is how the hymn puts it. We could picture the darkness of the world, its crimes and evils as deepening, I suppose. It's true. But somehow I see, in these words, the darkness of the gathering night of death more clearly. And when I see that in my life, I pray as in the hymn, **"Lord, with me abide."**

Failing Comforts Abound- I see it happen more often, lately. Right now it is happening among my older friends who happen to be Pastors, and even among some of you here at Saint Paul. The doctors say, "Well, there is really nothing more that I can do. You will just have to live with it." It is not always about something serious and deadly - sometimes it is about Arthritis, or about a bad back. These are serious and painful enough, but not immediately life threatening. Still, that comfort and help afforded by the doctor and by the hope that something is going to ease the burden of pain and growing disability is suddenly gone. It is at a time like that when we reverberate in harmony with the hymn, **"When other helpers fail and comforts flee. Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me."** The best part is of course, that He does - He abides with us and He comforts and helps us. But the comfort of God is not to take away the troubles or stop the pains, but to give us grace to bear it patiently. Christ suffered for us, we too can suffer, and when we do it with faith and patiently (relying on God's promises that our suffering will never be too much to bear and that He will help us endure) we bring glory to His name! It is then we echo Christ's suffering by how we endure. In such a time as this our prayers often echo verse 2; **"I need Thy presence every passing hour; what but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power? Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me."**

Change and Decay- It is not just the speed of life that is so striking, but the direction it is going. We no longer seem to see the progress we thought we were seeing when we were younger. Then it was all so exciting! Today, it is no less stimulating, but it is not filled with promises of a bright future, but with depressing images of good things being left behind and evil consequences and unhealthy attitudes increasingly seem to be taking their places. Everything is changing! I am a technophile, so, naturally, I like the new gadgets. But I don't like the way they separate people from one another. We have our own awesome smart phone, super glued to our hand. Our heads are down. We even text message across the table. We are losing social activity. And many of the changes are frightening. We read the papers and watch the evening news and see murders rising every year. Senseless violence is happening everywhere.

Violent attacks are no longer things that happen only at night in places where we should be careful not to be, alone, at night. We hear and see a different "right and wrong" in our culture. For many years the saying "love the person, hate the sin," was acceptable. Then it became "to really love the person you must tolerate the sin." And now it is "you hate me if you don't celebrate my sin." How true verse 4 of the hymn, **"Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away; Change and decay in all around I see. O Thou who changest not, abide with me."** Thank God that He does not change – His law and commandments, or His love for us. That is exactly why I absolutely insist on a few things when it comes to worship- the Invocation, Confession and Absolution, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Lord's Supper, Biblical preaching that is crystal clear about Jesus and the Gospel. While the world is changing around me, I need a touchstone, a place where I can go and the world is not changing, and everything is not decaying, and I can hunker down in the familiar and be "home" with God and with those who also need that secure and unchanging love of God. The hymn says, "O Thou, who changes not, abide with me." In that sweet unchanging yet always changing (the prayers, the scripture readings and the season) liturgy of the church and in the sweet constancy of the proclamation of forgiveness and of the love of God for me, I find the solid security and unchanging rock and fortress I crave. If the worship was always changing, I would not find that Refuge. I might not even find the faithfulness of God and the trustworthiness of the gospel believable. I can forge out into this changing world because I can turn back to my unchanging God and meet Him in the commonplaces of His Word and of the Liturgy which preaches that Word. I guess the thing that bothers me most is not that the world is changing, but that I am not. Oh, I see the **"age and decay"** creeping up on me. What I do not see is me growing more and more to the image of Christ. I see another law at work in the members of my body (to borrow the words of Saint Paul). I had hope to become more holy, somehow. But I see my own sins in sharper relief. I see my failures and my wickedness even more clearly. Now it might be true that I have grown in the grace of God. My intellect tells me that, as I look back on my life, but my conscience has a different story to tell. Verse 3 echoes my thoughts, **"tears for all woes, a heart for every plea, come Friend of sinners, thus abide with me."** My heart convicts me of my sins. How good it is to know that God does not! I particularly find comfort in the gospel - in the constancy and always- there-for-me good news of the love of God and the grace which He has poured out on us all in Jesus Christ. It never changes. He never leaves me nor forsakes me. I am never alone, and I am never without the comfort of His absolution. I did not understand it when I was young, but there is nothing so sweet as forgiveness! When I hurt, I am not really comforted by someone patting my shoulder and saying "There, there." When I sorrow, human sympathy does not actually soothe the pain. When I am in danger and in fear, I am not reassured by vague promises that all will be well. But in every case the absolution is my solid rock in the tempest! **"I forgive you all your sins."** Those words comfort me. What do I have to fear if my sins are forgiven? Then God is with me! Then I know that God really does love me. Then I have a lively confidence in every need. The beginning of verse 3 says it beautifully, **"Come not in terrors, as the King of kings, But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;**

It's the Real Thing! Not Coca-Cola, Jesus Christ! Only Jesus is the answer to whatever question that befuddles us. And because of Jesus we can endure and overcome any and everything. Verse 5 sums it up, **"I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness."** The swift passage of time and the gathering clouds of evil, and the setting sun of life have no power to defeat us. They catch our attention now and then. They even tempt us to despair. But they always lose when we realize that God is with us. Jesus Christ is with us every step of the way. The real pressure for me is that door at the end of the tunnel - the door marked "Death." And this marvelous hymn holds out the only answer, pointed and clear: **"Where is death's sting? Where, grave thy victory? I triumph still if Thou abide with me."** Only one verse left. It is my prayer - and yours, I am sure. I end this message with its words. I type them with tears blurring my eyes and my throat closing with emotion, because I have this quirky insistence that we sing this last verse without music, at the graveside of every funeral I officiate. So I am glad I do not need to try to speak them, but I am praying them and encourage you to pray them to: **"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes, Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies. Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee; In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"**

Peace and joy in our Risen Lord Jesus, Pastor Timothy Brand



thank you

The church office will be closed on Mondays & Fridays from Memorial Day until September 5th.

Office hours will be:

Tuesday-Thursday

7:30-4:00

Enjoy your summer!



Thank you to all of our St Paul friends who joined us as we celebrated our 60th anniversary.

It was a special and memorable day for us. We appreciated all of your prayers, cards, calls and words of encouragement.

God's blessing on each of you!

Roger & Joyce Keating

Praise!

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" Psalm 100:4

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." Psalm 139:14

Praising God for our amazing body is not something we may naturally do. Many times we are grumbling about aches and pains, not giving much thought to the care of our body. We truly ARE fearfully and wonderfully made! Think of all your body does for you!

"The brain is arguably the most important organ in the human body. It controls and coordinates action and reactions, allows us to think and feel, and enables us to have memories and feelings—all the things that make us human. (Princetonbrainandspine.com) "

And our Creator God gave us this gift at conception! Our God is an awesome God...and our body is a gift from Him. Praise God for our intricate and awe-some bodies!! Praise God for SUMMER and new life bursting all around us. Take time to get outside and be in nature. Walking, riding bikes, swimming, or just swinging on your porch swing. Have a wonderful summer!

Feel welcome to contact me with any questions or suggestions:

Pam Doublestein RN, PN



[This Photo](#) by Unknown

From the Desk of Pastor Miller

Note: This was my final paper for my Theological Ethics course. The rubric called for a "parish newsletter regarding a social issue". I hope that you are blessed with the discussion and pray that the Holy Spirit will bless you in your meditation on this issue.

Abortion, unfortunately, has become a hot button issue. Abortion is to be opposed by all Christians, as abortion is the willful taking of a human life. This act is clearly forbidden by the fifth commandment. Why has it become such an issue? And why do we as Christians give so much ground? If a child is willfully killed at one month or at eight months, it matters not. This has become such an issue because the common Christian has seceded much ground in this "debate". We know that Abortion is a sin, Scripture is abundantly clear, but how do we give an honest account of our faith while working through the different arguments, all doing so in grace and love?

Before I continue, I know that some of you have had an abortion yourself. In repenting of your sin you can be and are forgiven. This does not remove the physical, emotional, or mental consequences of such an act though. Through counseling, therapy, and the continued hearing of God's Word and receiving the Sacraments, you can begin to heal of these wounds. I believe that the testimony of those who have had abortions can be some of the strongest witness for the young couples who are being tempted into this sin.

There are several Scriptural texts that teach that the child in the womb is a human being. Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; and Luke 1:41,44. (Take a moment and open your Bibles and find these texts and read them aloud). These are key texts that give us the clear understanding of how God views life.

Generally, the arguments that are Pro-Abortion, are either appealing to the rights of the pregnant woman, or against the personhood of the fetus. (*"It's the woman's right to choose!" "It's just a clump of cells until xyz"*) The third argument is used if the life of the child would be a burden to the parents, or itself. (*The child has a serious illness, their life would be a burden and very difficult for all involved, you should abort the child, it would be a "mercy".*) The fourth argument is used in cases of incest, rape, or the endangerment of the mother's life. (*The mother was raped by her drunken father, it's a terrible situation and the mother should abort to begin to heal from her father's terrible actions.*)

Of these four arguments ("Rights of the woman", "Against the personhood of the fetus", "The life will be a burden", "Cases of rape and incest") these often use logical fallacies to strongarm the Christian into a position that is not built upon Scripture. *It is also to be noted that the world doesn't subscribe to the Holy Scriptures (nor the Lutheran Confessions), but that conversation comes after their argument is shown for what it is. A sham.*

There are many logical fallacies that are used in every argument. The use of a logical fallacy does not negate whatever truth they have (Christians often use logical fallacies unknowingly). A few that are used by the world in this debate are *The Bandwagon Fallacy*, *The Appeal to Authority*, and also *The Middle Ground Fallacy*. These fallacies are self-described in their name.

The Bandwagon Fallacy is where a significant population of people believe a proposition is true, and thus it is true, because many people believe it to be true. This Fallacy is used to argue that a fetus is not a person, thus there is no moral quandary to abort the fetus.

The Appeal to Authority is where one single entity has the “right” to decide. People use this to argue that the woman has the decision to abort (and not the husband/man, God, family, or even the baby itself.)

The Middle Ground Fallacy, is where a compromise between two extreme conflicting points of view is true. This Fallacy is used to get Christians to slide over and be “ok” with abortion up to a certain point.

There are other types of logical fallacies that are used, but I am certain that you can see how these are used for people to get their (sinful) way.

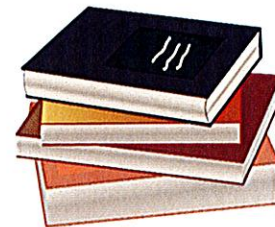
So what is it that we must do? Firstly, pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the words when you are faced with these fallacies and arguments. Secondly, much of the work is done before you even sit at the table. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. Read up on the common arguments that are used by the Pro-Choice crowd. Understand their point of view, and **be prepared to give a defense of your faith.**

Because that’s what this argument is truly about. This debate is about how the person has become “god”. It’s the breaking of the first commandment. They get to decide who lives and who dies.

Because all of those logical fallacies move the point away from where truth is. What does God say? It doesn’t matter what the *bandwagon* says, who is the *perceived authority*, or where the *middle ground* is. If the argument is not built upon the solid rock of Christ, then it’s off. Our work is to give a defense of the faith. Move away from falling into their logical fallacies, and confess Christ crucified. If they don’t have faith in Christ, and hold the Holy Scriptures (and hopefully the Confessions), then they’ll be off base no matter what.

Don’t get caught up in their smart sounding debates. Bring the focus onto Christ. He was a real person, who really died, and really was raised to new life. Start there in any of these worldly debates. And if they don’t listen, pray for them, and kick the dust off of your shoes.

May the Lord bless you in the work of His Church on earth today, and everyday. Amen.

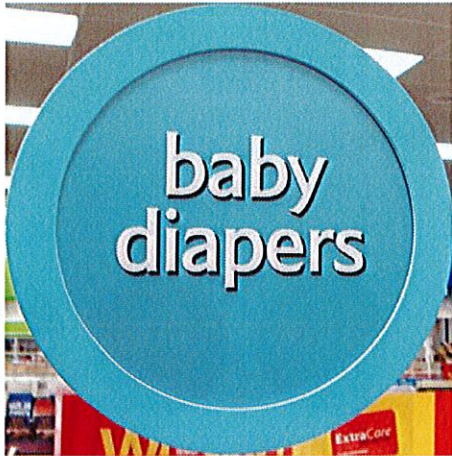


New titles are displayed with signage for a few weeks in their own special space. Two lower shelves on the south wall below the Bible section. Easy check-out: Pull check-out card from item, sign & date card, place in plastic receptacle on the shelf by the east library door. Return items to "RETURN" bin on the floor by the east library door.

June 2023:

- "Anxious For Nothing," by Max Lucado [2017 – Nonfiction]
 - "Barrister & the Letter of Marque," by Todd Johnson [2021 – Christian Fiction]
 - "Bookends," by Liz Curtis Higgs [2014 – Christian Fiction]
 - "Butterfly's Daughter," by Mary Alice Monroe [2011 – Fiction]
 - "Christmas Box Collection" by Richard Paul Evans [1997 – Christian Fiction]
 - "Christmas Hope," by Donna VanLiere [2005 – Christian Fiction]
 - "Just Like Jesus," by Max Lucado [1998 – Nonfiction]
 - "Madman," by Tracy Groot [2006 – Christian Fiction]
 - "Magic Strings of Frankie Presto," by Mitch Albom [2015 – Fiction]
 - "Nearing Home," by Billy Graham [2011- Nonfiction]
 - "Reaching for the Invisible God," by Philip Yancey [2000 – Nonfiction]
 - "Running from Mercy: Jonah & the Surprising Story of God's Unstoppable Grace," by Anthony Carter [2018 – Nonfiction]
- Series for Developing Church Musicians: In Thee Is Gladness (piano); Jesus, Groundof Faith (piano); Jesus, Priceless Treasure (piano); Life From Heaven (piano);Jesus, Ground of Faith (guitar).
- "Six Hours One Friday," by Max Lucado [1989 – Nonfiction]
 - "What Are You Afraid Of?" by David Jeremiah [2013 – Nonfiction]
 - "Woman of Words," by Angela Hunt [2021 – Christian Fiction]

Lutherans For Life is having their annual diaper drive. We have not done this in awhile, so it's time to start it up again! It will run from Mother's Day thru Father's Day (May 14—June 18). There will be a baby cradle in the Narthex to put the diapers in. Diapers will be donated to a local pregnancy center.



Be on the lookout for Summer Back To School Sales!

LWML will be collecting school supplies for School Kits starting in August. Here's what to look for:

70 Sheet Spiral Notebooks

Blunt Scissors

24 Pack Crayons

2 1/2 Inch Erasers

Pencil Sharpeners

Black or Blue Pens

Thank You for your continued Support!



Euchre Night is Cancelled for June & July

It Will Resume in August

Enjoy Your Summer!



GOLF SEASON IS HERE

*** 3rd Thurs. of the month ***

*** 3 Tee Times beginning at 1pm ***

*** Carts - 9 holes Mark your calendars! ***

*** Questions, talk with Bill Browne ***

June 15 Broadmoor

July 20 Briarwood

Aug. 17 Broadmoor

Sept. 14 Briarwood



It's Our Mission: Period 2023

COME JOIN US FOR
IT'S OUR MISSION PERIOD

We have plenty of fabric cut and many items finished to pack. You do not have to sew to help. We have other tasks to be accomplished also. We were very excited to have many yards of fabric donated to us from an estate sale. It is all beautiful fabric that will keep us busy for a very long time. It will also keep our budget down. **God Is Good!**

So come join us on the following dates this summer.

Any questions call Mary Stehouwer 616 293-4461

Together we are making a difference!

Mary Stehouwer

Tuesdays

June 20, 2023 (3rd Tuesday) July *to be announced*

August 8, 2023 September 12, 2023

October 10, 2023



Period.

Diaconate Ministries

The Medical Equipment Room is being utilized well by members and the community! We are blessed to be able to offer this service because of generous donations from you, our members. Please remember to clean used items before donating or returning equipment. Lysol wipes and spray can be found on the table in the wheelchair room. Follow the signs to the downstairs rooms. Thank you!

Prayer Bear gift bags are located on the Parish Nurse/Healthcare Team table in the hallway near the sanctuary. They are free and a very special way to offer prayer and support to anyone needing comfort for any reason. Patti Troost donated 8 little stuffed bunnies which read "Jesus Loves Me" on the front... perfect for little ones who need prayer and comfort. These **Prayer Bunnies** will also be in gift bags on the table. Thank you, Patti!

Thank you everyone for the thoughts, cards and prayers!

THEY WORKED!

I have to have hormonal therapy, a shot every three months and a daily pill to kill the cancer for an unspecified amount of time. God is so good and I thank Him for our St Paul family!

SAVE THE DATE 2023 VBS

St. Paul Lutheran Church & Preschool

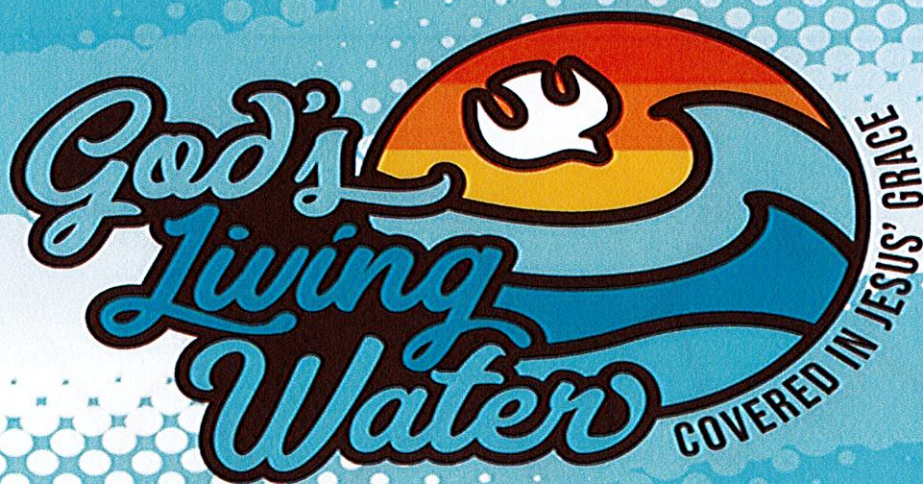
Come discover how we are covered in Jesus' grace!

July 24th-27th 6:00-8:00pm

Students entering preschool-5th grade

Sign up at www.stpaulcaledonia.org

Look for "VBS" under the MINISTRIES tab



Yogurt Sundays Are Back

Come join us: June 4 & 18, July 16,
August 13 & 27, September 10 & 24.

If you have suggestions for new flavors or toppings, let me know! Pam Doublestein

Our Healthcare Team will be taking **BLOOD PRESSURE** readings in the gym 8:15-11am on the following Sundays:

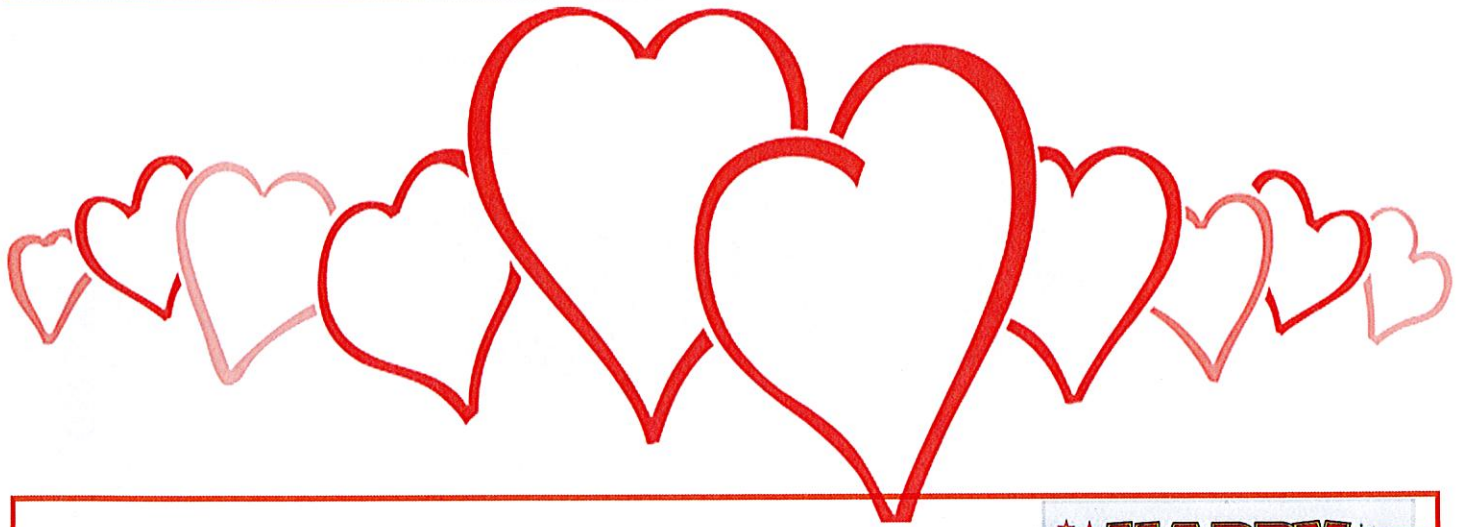
July 9, August 20 and September 17





JUNE

Jon & Lisa Swart	06/02	David & Kiristin Miller	06/20
Donald & Melissa Aversano	06/03	Drew & Dawn Franchetti	06/21
Lisa & Todd Pulawski	06/04	Sarah & Brian Hammer	06/21
Kurt & Julie Kreger	06/06	Frank & Julie Zacsek	06/23
Mike & Becky Wilson	06/12	Bryan & Danielle Jahnke	06/25
Chad & Julie Rop	06/15		



JULY



Mike & Erika Delaney	07/03	Keith & Norma Rosol	07/20
Boyd & Nancy Bender	07/09	Bill & Deb Born	07/26
Kraig & Jill Keating	07/09	Ken & Lynette Stayton	07/30
Tim & Debby Jones	07/14		

June Birthdays

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1 Susan Brand Kara Stevens	2	3
4 Riley Tjemmes	5 Emma Dowdle Dave Jahnke	6 Emory Stouffer	7	8	9 Elisabeth Swart	10
11	12 Austin Ottow	13	14 Richard Paalman	15 Brittini Merchant Dick Thompson Karlina Wilson	16 Becki Wilson	17 Matthew Delaney
18	19 Helen Jahnke	20	21 Julie Kreger	22	23	24
25 Connie Armijo	26	27	28 Tim Jones Norma Rosol Laurie VanderKolk	29	30 Fran Beuschel Bill Browne Hope Miramontes	

June Happenings

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:30a Communion Service 9:45a Fellowship 10a Adult Bible Study 11a Communion Service				9a Men's Prayer Breakfast		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:30a Worship Service 9:45 Fellowship - Graduate Sunday 10a Adult Bible Study 11a Worship Service				1p Golf Broadmoor		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:30a Communion Service 9:45a Fellowship 10a Adult Bible Study 11a Communion Service		9:30a It's Our Mission				
25	26	27	28	29	30	
8:30a Worship Service 9:45 Fellowship 10a Adult Bible Study 11a Worship Service	6:30p MGB				End of Youth Group Can/Bottle Fund Raiser.	

July Birthdays

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5	6 Elijah Dollarhide Judy Draaisma Jan Kunst Spencer Tjemmes	7 Tobin Seifert	1/8 8 Robert Harmon 8 Camden Ritz
9 Parker Boom Hannah Holmes Paula Kunst Hanna Pulawski Hunter Pulawski	10 Adia Whisler	11 Kurt Kunde Kirstin Miller	12	13 Kim DeImmer	14 Jim Becker Phil Datema Evelyn Franchetti	15 Ethan Tjemmes
16 Reina Vogeli	17 Ken Podbevsek	18	19	20	21 Eric Betz	22 Kristine Meeuwesen
23 Ivan Bourn Troy Elenbaas Tommy Stehouwer	24	25 Olivia Swiderski	26	27	28 Melanie Swart	29 Bill Born Douglas Stack
30 Amanda Burns	31					



July Happenings

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 10a Communion Service	3	4	5	6	7	1/8
9 8:30a Worship Service 9:45 Fellowship 11a Worship Service 12:30 Elders	10	11	12	13 9A Men's Prayer Breakfast	14	15
16 8:30a Communion Service 9:45a Fellowship 11a Communion Service	17	18	19	20 1p Golf @ Briarwood	21	22
23 8:30a Worship Service 9:45 Fellowship 11a Worship Service	24	25	26	27	28	29
 <div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JULY 24—27 6:00pm—8:00pm</div>						
30 10a VBS Celebration Service & Church Picnic on the South Lawn	31	2	3	4	5	6
						