



THE PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Loving the Person Who Isn't "One of Us"

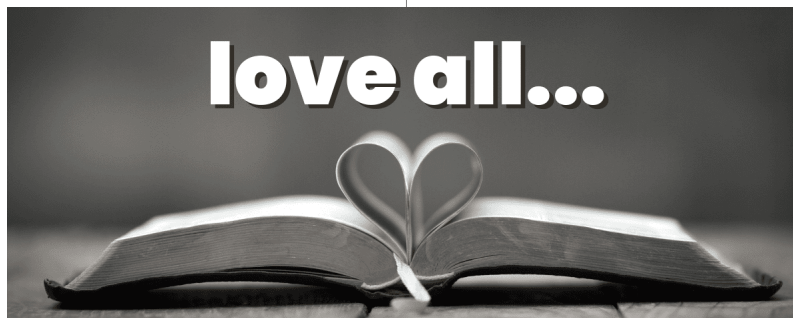
The best way for the church to get clear about our mission in the world is to study the life of Jesus. Our goal is to be in our corporate life the continuation of who Jesus was in His personal life. So naturally we need to take our cues from Him. If you read the Gospels carefully, you notice how He breaks down barriers: by taking time for children, by affirming the dignity of women, and by receiving the people others avoid. He touches lepers and blind people.

He receives Gentiles and makes a Samaritan the hero of one of His best-known parables. He rescues a woman about to be stoned for committing adultery. He eats with tax collectors and sinners. As you read those stories from the Gospels, you should

also notice that the religious establishment was outraged by His behavior. They don't imitate Him. They criticize Him -- and eventually murder Him!

It distresses me greatly that churches generally have the same bad name with the general public today that I have just given the "religious establishment" of Jesus' time. That is, churches are typically viewed more as exclusive clubs than welcoming havens. More people say they find nonjudgmental acceptance in Alcoholics Anonymous than in churches! And if you are inclined to reply in a defensive mode that groups like AA are willing to tolerate every point of view and let people get by with doing anything the like, you are exposing the fact that you know nothing about how that group functions.

Christ's church is supposed to be the place where the disenfranchised and rejected find acceptance. It was created to be the place where Jew or Gentile, slave or free, and male or female would all stand on equal footing. It is supposed to be a unified group in our fragmented world that models oneness among black and white, have and have-not, educated and illiterate, Democrat and Republican. Is that how the world sees the church? Does the church bridge those great divides in human experience? Do we even try to make an attempt to model unity among those of us who confess Christ as the Son of God and try to follow Him?



Jesus not only challenged His disciples to love those who were ethnically or socially

different from themselves. Do you realize that the Parable of the Good Samaritan points to both race and religion as distinctions between the wounded man and his rescuer? Ironically, Jesus made the Samaritan the hero of the story - a story He told to a Jewish audience.

One of the most informative texts in this regard is one that deserves more attention than it gets among church people -- especially the more conservative ones like us. It is the love-your-neighbor passage. The circumstances that produced it are clear from the brief context in which it is set. The narrowness of His own disciples forced Jesus to confront them for their suspicion, hatred, and exclusion of someone whose experience of Him was different from their own.

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"Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in Your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in My name can in the next moment say anything bad about Me, for whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in My name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward" (Mark 9:38-41).

John was guilty that day of what many of us have done over the centuries of church history. He equated being "one of us" with belonging to Christ. He was mistaken. Jesus rebuked his narrowness and told him to stop passing judgments on other people who were following Him. To be sure, God's instruction to us in terms of rules and commandments is to be taken seriously. A disciple listens and learns. A servant hears and obeys. As Jesus would later teach us, however, some disciples learn more and some less. And there are varying degrees of

responsibility for servants, depending on their opportunities and possibilities. The sense of fairness we humans have comes from the fact that we are made in God's image, after all.

The God who has been revealed in Jesus deals with us as a loving father does a prodigal-but-dearly-loved child. We are not numbers on His judge's docket; we are the objects of His love as daughters and sons within the dysfunctional human family. Yet we need to understand that God didn't become kind, loving, and gracious after Calvary. Calvary happened because He has always been that way!

So let us be known for loving one another, not squabbling. Let us meet our neighbors in service to them, not in confrontation. Let us love across the dividing lines of race and gender, economic status and religious affiliations, even between one church clique and another, neither compromising our own beliefs nor judging another's faith. It is Christ who is the judge of us all.

LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY - AUGUST 2023

Define Your Life by How You Give

Winston Churchill reportedly said that "we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." According to Churchill, our lives are defined not by what we have gotten, but by what we give away.



Our Lord's life is defined in this way. He gave completely of Himself for us. He became man for us. He taught the truth of God's Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserved for our sins. He gave of Himself in order to save us from sin, death and hell. And so it is that by giving completely of Himself, He got for Himself us, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace.

As it was for Jesus, so it also is for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. For giving softens our hearts and frees us from the grip which the worries of this world and making a living has on us. For when we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get. That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives — our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking the question, "How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor and servant to others," to asking the question, "What have they done for me lately?" We become more selfish instead of selfless.

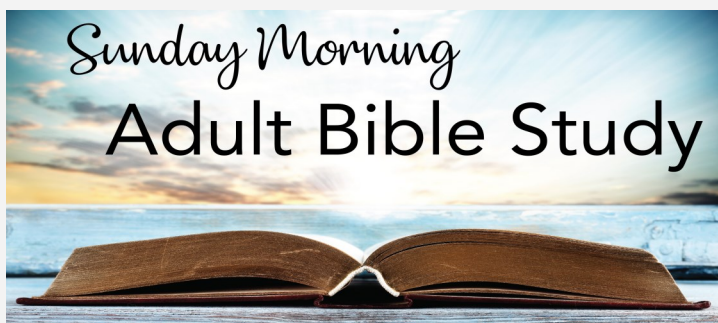
But when we give, we do not have less, we do not become less; rather, we have more and become more. When we give, we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus, we are participating in the divine nature. As Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

LCMS Stewardship Ministry
lcms.org/stewardship

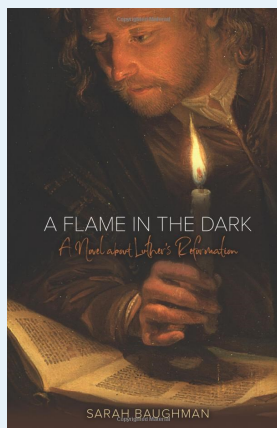
ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Join us for Sunday Morning Study as we look at the C.S. Lewis's book *The Screwtape Letters*. It is a brilliant and satirical look at spiritual warfare and the dynamics of temptation. Screwtape, a senior demon in the bureaucracy of Hell, writes letters to his incompetent nephew Wormwood, a junior devil. The younger demon's assignment is to corrupt a young man living in London during the tumultuous days of World War II. Using Scripture references, discussion questions, and related commentary, we will examine each letter through

a Christian lens of morality, temptation, and good and evil. There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight. Join the Study if you haven't been here, discussion on these topics should be enriching for all.



BIBLE BOOKENDERS



Our next Bible Bookenders meeting will be **Tuesday, October 24 at 7:00 pm.**

Our selection is *A Flame in the Dark - A novel about Luther's Reformation* by Sarah Baughman. This rich and authentic historical fiction novel is set against the backdrop of the Reformation, showing how the reverberations of this religious reform echoed

throughout the world and in the lives of ordinary people. Invite your friends to join us, all are welcome, men, women and teenagers. Questions? Ask Bonnie Nowak, Patricia Harvey or Michele Lein.

PRAYER REQUESTS



If you have a prayer request on Sunday, please fill out the form in the pew and put it in the offering plate. Pastor will include them in Prayer of the Church during the service. You can also email weekly prayer requests, and any prayers that should go out to the whole congregation, to megan@holycross-pl.org.

INCONCEIVABLE

"If you found a cure for cancer, wouldn't it be inconceivable to hide it from the rest of mankind? How much more inconceivable to keep silent the cure from the eternal wages of death."

- Dave Davidson

NEWSLETTER REMINDER!

Reminder to get you newsletter additions in to Megan by the 15th of each month. **We'd love to have some new ideas, articles, anything you find relevant to add to the Newsletter!**



AUGUST

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

August 6**10th Sunday after Pentecost**

"The Value of a Broken Heart"

Romans 9:1-5

Romans 9:1-13

Isaiah 55:1-5

Matthew 14:13-21

August 13**11th Sunday after Pentecost**

"God's Simple Plan of Salvation"

Romans 10:5-13

Romans 10:5-17

Job 38:4-18

Matthew 14:22-33

August 20**12th Sunday after Pentecost**

"The Offense Of Grace!"

Matthew 15 21 28

Romans 11:1-2a, 13-25, 30-32

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Matthew 15:21-28

August 27**13th Sunday after Pentecost**

"Dare To Judge"

Matthew 16:13-20

Romans 11:33-12:8

Isaiah 51:1-6

Matthew 16:13-20

LUTHERAN NIGHT AT THE TWINS

The annual Lutheran Night at the Twins will take place on

Tuesday, August 15, 2023 as the Twins take on the Detroit Tigers! Groups of 20 or more will receive

discounted tickets and may, if interested, participate in the Lutheran Night National Anthem Choir! It's also a "Dollar Dog" night and family value concessions are available for certain sections. See the flyer posted on the bulletin board for more info.



MAIN STREET LIVING NORTH



Main Street Living

Main Street Living is an hour-long Lutheran television program that airs new episodes each Sunday morning. The Twin Cities program is broadcast at 9 am Central time on WFTC channel 29/9-2. Each Sunday, viewers enjoy a 30 minute remastered episode of "This is the Life," a popular Lutheran Hour Ministries series from the 70s and 80s. The episode is followed by a modified Lutheran worship service—led by a different local pastor each week. Main Street Living (Twin Cities) is endorsed by the Minnesota South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; however, the program receives no funding from the District. It is totally funded by viewers and congregations of the WFTC viewing area.

www.mainstreetliving.com/twincities

MOWING VOLUNTEERS



We are in need of some volunteers to help with mowing the church grounds. It's a great way to get outside and get some sunshine, fresh air, and exercise. Lawn mowing can also be a form of therapy, no one bothers you and you can't hear your phone! Talk to Dave Albrecht, Denny Case, or Rich Vannett to help out.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP



Please check out the coffee signup in the Commons. I encourage those who haven't as yet chosen to do so to pick a Sunday. Serving with another person/couple is a good option for first-timers. Thank you to those who

always faithfully sign up to serve.

CONFIRMATION MEETING

We invite all parents and 7th and 8th grade confirmands to join us for an orientation meeting on **August 29, 2023 at 7:00pm** here at church. If you have children that are planning on being in Confirmation please fill out a registration form (found on the visitors table by the secretary's office) so I can order enough materials for class. We will be discussing the year's schedule and expectations as well as handing out material for the upcoming year. We look forward to seeing each of you.



MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

MEMBER DIRECTORY



The membership directory has been updated! You can pick up a new copy in the back of the church. If your contact information is incorrect or needs updating, please let Megan know.



- Tess Lerum.....August 1
- Carol HamAugust 5
- Jace Fitzwater.....August 11
- Alanna Hentges.....August 11
- Esther Brunner.....August 13
- Mary Deluhery.....August 13
- Lance Lerum.....August 13
- Charlie Vig.....August 14
- Wendy Fitzwater.....August 16
- Sheri Brunner.....August 24
- Dave Albrecht.....August 31

SAVE THE DATE!

Lutheran Women on a Mission will be having their Fall Conference Rally on **Saturday, October 7th** at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Plymouth. The SW Suburban zone (which we are in) and the NW Suburban zone come together for a Conference Rally every two years. As plans are finalized, more information will be shared.

NO GARAGE SALE THIS YEAR!

This year we will not be holding a garage sale. **But please hang onto your items for next year's sale!**



2 MINUTE MULTIPLIER



A WEEKDAY 2-MINUTE DEVOTION THAT HELPS YOU SEE JESUS AT WORK IN YOUR WORLD

Marinate

Chicken doesn't live at the top of my preferred meats list. I understand it's healthier than other options. Less fat. More feathers. (That last statement was simply random filler.) I go to the sea if I must choose white. Chilean Sea bass wins in the water-bound department. Beef or other red meats win in the land-bound slot. "Ribeye for \$1,000, Alex."

So on the 8th day God created marinade. When compelled to be healthier, I soak Mr. Poultry in Italian salad dressing. For at least six hours. Some will comment how infusing said low-fat bird with seasoned fat defeats the purpose. True if the purpose is health. Untrue if the purpose is taste. When food marinates in vinegar and oil, soy and citrus, buttermilk and salt, toughness turns to soft, and bland, to tasty. The food's more enjoyable. Appealing.

Much like you and I marinating in grace. Soaking in God's Word. Being filled with a Holy Spirit bent on

breaking us down so that the Father's Image peeks through. Makes us more enjoyable to be around. More helpful. More loving. Kind. Patient. Just nicer all over.

Being known by Jesus and knowing Him back starts one on that journey. Moves you down the track of blessing others even if never blessed back. Of comforting and caring and consoling because, well, that's what people steeped in Jesus do. They grow daily in loving God with all their heart, soul, and mind. In loving their neighbor as themselves.

All because God's Spirit's infused in them. It's doing the work. It's creating the taste. God Himself is making us more palatable. More likable. Marinating us into His likeness.

Rev. Bill Woolsey
President and Founder
FiveTwo Network

Sign up to receive the *2 Minute Multiplier* emailed to you! www.fivetwo.com/2mm



S.A.G.E.S.



What is SAGES?!!! No, it's not a candle scent! It stands for **S**aints **A**live, **G**rowing, **E**ver **S**erving = **SAGES!** Over 30 years ago our synod requested our District, among others, to attend a conference on older adult ministry in churches of the LCMS. As a result the Minnesota South District started **SAGES**, a ministry that encourages individual churches to reach out and provide guidance and activities for their older adults. **SAGES** also hosts a yearly two-day event with speakers, workshops and socializing. The question is, do our churches have an older adult ministry in place. Sadly, most do not. It's something to work towards. A new **SAGES** newsletter, the **SAGACITY**, has been printed and has been placed on the tables as well as on the first bulletin board on the left as you enter the Commons. Take one and check SAGES out.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Board of Education is working on the Sunday School calendar for the 2023-2024 season. **The fall start-up of Sunday School will be September 10th.**



We are seeking one or two additional people to share teaching in the youngest class. Please talk to Pam Hunter or Dorene Oak with questions.

THE LUTHERAN HOUR



The Lutheran Hour can be heard each Sunday on WCCO (830 AM) at 6:05 am. And it can be streamed online too, www.lhm.org. Check-out LHM's daily devotions too.

August 6

"Who is Jesus?"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

Jesus never needed to take a poll to figure out who He was or what He should do. (Matthew 16:13b-16)

August 13

"How Well Does Jesus Know Me?"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

The God who knows everything about you is also the God of grace who forgives on account of Christ. (John 1: 48-51)

August 20

"The Latest Polls"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus

What people think about something--that's a poll. What that something actually is--that's the truth. (Matthew 21:8-11 and Luke 23:23-25)

August 27

"Raising the Praise"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. John Nunes

Every day and everywhere they go, the followers of Jesus bring the "echo" of Easter with them. (1 Peter 1:3)

MN SOUTH LWML FALL RETREAT

PROMISED REST

FINDING PEACE IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Save the date for the MN South LWML Fall Retreat! It will be held on **September 15-16, 2023**, at Omega Lodge in Waterville. Special guest is author, Michelle Diercks. Look for registration details this summer!

TIME OF GRACE



Straight talk about God's Word and real hope for this life. A strong gospel message delivered in an informal Bible study style.

Subscribe to **Time of Grace** (www.timeofgrace.org) resources to be delivered to your email inbox daily. You will receive daily devotion emails with "Grace Moments" written devotions and "Grace Talks" video devotions.

Pastor Mike Novotny • The Core, Appleton, WI • KARE (NBC 11) 10:30 am

POBLO TEACHERS WANTED



POBLO ESL teachers wanted for the Prior Lake IFC. Mondays at 4:30pm and Wednesdays at 6pm. Please contact Shari Schulze at 612-387-6469 for more information.

WHAT IS A BIBLICAL COMMUNITY?

The Christian Community is the body of Christ expressing the life and message of Christ in order to build up one another for God's glory.

The Fellowship of the Believers (Acts 2:42-47)

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Believers in Christ are called to live in mutually accountable relationships as they strive to reflect the loving character of God in their lives. It is God's plan that those who call on His name should be like Him in attitude and behavior. The Church exists not just to collect the saints, but to transform them. As St. Paul exhorts in the 5th chapter of Galatians, this begins by walking in step with the Holy Spirit as He builds up and transforms the Church.

The Church exists to produce "The Five G's" in it's members lives.

Grace - the individual appropriation of the saving work of Christ.

Growth - the ongoing evidence of a changing life in Christ

Group - connection with others in significant relationships

Gifts - serving Christ's body according to one's spiritual giftedness

Good Stewardship - honoring God with our resources in first fruit giving of our Time, Talents and Treasures

The ultimate goal of all of these is to help members of the church to grow in their Christ-like character through learning, loving one another and in sharing of themselves.

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:15)

THE MASTER GREETER

Actions That Build A Friendlier Church

Pray for God to bring new people into our church and to bring them back. Pray for present members to reach out to each other. Prayer is the beginning foundation for any of God's work. Let us humble ourselves before Him. Let us ask Him to work through us. Let us tell Him that we are available to be used as His SMILE, His handshake, and His words of introduction. And because we are ready, let us ask him to bring in our midst new people to meet whether they are new to the church or just new to us.

Upcoming EVENTS

August 8	Camp Omega Golf Benefit
August 15	Lutheran Night at the Twins
September 10	Sunday School starts
September 15-16	MN South LWML Fall Retreat
October 7	Lutheran Women on a Mission
October 24	Bible Bookenders

CAMP OMEGA GOLF BENEFIT



Help Camp Omega grow its Campership Endowment Fund! Each year, \$15,000 - \$25,000 is given out to help children have Christ-centered experiences at Camp Omega. You can help by participating in this fun golf benefit held at Faribault Golf Club on **Tuesday, August 8**. Contact Russ Schwichtenberg at 507-384-7947 or email Russ@campomega.org.

ONE VOICE FOR PUBLIC POLICY - STILL A HOPE-FILLED PEOPLE

Geographically, we Minnesotans still occupy the same physical space - the same part of God's good creation - we always have. Culturally and politically, however, one could make the case we no longer live in the same state, or even the same world, we did even a few years ago.

- With the Minnesota Department of Education adopting new Teacher Licensing Standards that force all new teachers to profess adherence to key elements of Marxist Theory before they'll be allowed to teach in Minnesota's public schools;
- With the State of Minnesota declaring it will take temporary legal custody of non-resident gender-confused children whose parents are unwilling to subject those children to chemical experimentation and surgical mutilation;
- With the State of Minnesota claiming abortion is now a "fundamental right" to be exercised up until the moment of birth and, in some cases, beyond;
- With the State of Minnesota threatening licensed therapists with the loss of their license (and their livelihood) if they assist minor patients who request help in reducing same-sex attractions but actively encourages the reverse kind of therapy;

...it becomes inescapably clear these are not normal times.**

With these and many other equally disturbing examples of legislative and bureaucratic audacity, we are forced to recognize we no longer have political leaders who subscribe to the Judeo-Christian and rule-of-law principles on which this state and nation were founded. No longer do our political leaders seek common political and cultural ground allowing all the citizens of Minnesota to feel equally respected by the state.

How did such a situation come to be? There are, of course, many contributing factors. Certainly, one of them is the excessive degree of ideological conformity expected by party leaders, especially those advocating for progressive policies. This is then compounded by a mainstream media which has ceased to function as a neutral conveyor of information but has, instead, become an undeclared advocate for one side of the political and cultural aisle. All of which has left most of Minnesota's citizens with only an inkling of the radical transformation visited on our state and its people in recent months and years.

Where does all of this leave us as Christian citizens? Are we simply left to despair over these many changes that, in total, have left us with a state government far less reflective of the Christian values and perspectives of its people than before? I think not. That is, while the political and cultural situation we find ourselves in is serious, I believe we are still justified in continuing to be people of hope. Why?

First of all because, even though they are stressed and under attack, the basic elements of our system of representative government continue to function, allowing people to elect new political leadership that better reflects our Christian values. Indeed, though challenging to accomplish, there are very few of the statutes enacted this past legislative session that cannot be reversed by future legislatures and governors. This is a fact which certainly calls on each of us to become more politically aware and active on the local, state and national levels.

Secondly, I would contend that while the act of passing legislation which imposes radical changes of attitude and behavior on the people can sometimes be accomplished very quickly (witness the last legislative session), still, public acceptance of those changes, especially when they conflict with the deeply held convictions of the people, typically occurs much more slowly, if at all. Certainly, the failed attempt of *Roe v. Wade* to change the hearts and minds of the American people on the issue of abortion is a clear example of this in the judicial space - a fact, which should motivate all of us to join with other Christians in supporting organizations like Lutherans for Life in advancing their pro-life work.

Finally, and most importantly, since as baptized Christians we have been joined to Christ, both in his dying and in his rising, and since we know that God's sovereign power is far greater than that of any earthly authority or ideology, despair is simply never a real option for us. For in the end, though we and our neighbors may suffer for a time under these God-forsaking policies, still we know He will ultimately provide relief. Of that, Scripture provides numerous examples.

And so, while we continue to work energetically to protect the welfare and guard the dignity of all people using all the tools our citizenship affords us, we place our ultimate trust in God's grace and power, confident He will, in His own good time, bring all things to a good end (Romans 8:28). Thus, we remain a hope-filled people.

** For a more complete list of the legislation passed in the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session refer to the June 7, 2023 One Voice for Public Policy posted at the MN South District website

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

In Christ,

Rev. Fredric Hinz

fred.hinz@mnsdistrict.org

507-317-9634

Public Policy Advocate
MN South and North Districts
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

AUGUST 2023



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 7:00 pm Elder's Meeting 7:00 pm Bible Bookenders	2 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due	3	4	5
6 10th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Bible Study	7	8	9 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due	10	11	12
13 11th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Bible Study	14 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting	15	16 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due	17	18	19
20 12th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Bible Study	21	22	23 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due	24	25	26
27 13th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Bible Study	28	29 7:00 pm Confirmation Meeting	30 12:00 pm Happenings Articles Due	31		