

June is here!  
What's in *your* plan?

June 2023

# Reflections

A PUBLICATION OF ASCENSION LUTHERAN

## OUR STATE OF PRAYERS

I don't know if any of you have noticed this or not, but lately, our services have had a lot of mention of prayer in them.



Sermons have been happening with Jesus giving His own prayer to His Father, asking

for blessings and protection upon His people, both in His day and encompassing us in this day - and those who will be coming in the future. That's a very long prayer in terms of time span.

We have had one service with prayer as the entire theme; perhaps more will follow.

What are we seeking? I'm pretty sure our main focus as a congregation is the arrival of a Called Pastor to serve here at Ascension. It seems to be taking us a long time to come up with the "perfect" man for us, but maybe that's not what God has in mind. Maybe instead of us deciding who *we* think is suited for us, we should let God guide the man to Ascension who needs *us*. And maybe that's what we should be seeking.

And the thing about knocking, especially on God's holy door, is that we don't know what's going to be behind it when God opens it to us. We might *think* we know, but then, no one knows the mind of God. We can only trust that He will answer when we ask for His will to be done.



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## Reminders

VBS - June 25-30, 2023  
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Youth Lock-In - June 16, 2023

June 24 - Men's Prayer Breakfast  
8:30 AM



VISIT US ONLINE [www.ascensionhsv.org](http://www.ascensionhsv.org)



# SUMMER

Carla Jo Peebles

Wow! What a month this has been. It has been busy finishing up the school year with Prekindergarten graduation. Thanks to Nadine and Bob Hartwig for planting our garden this spring. Next is to get Summer Camp up and running.

We held our prekindergarten spring program and graduation the morning of May 17. We had nine children graduate with all the ceremony befitting 5-year-olds. The new gowns were given by the LWML. Thank you, ladies! Every graduate had family representatives there. The children received their diplomas. Ms. Whitman awarded both the family members and the children with special gifts as well.

Nadine and Bob have been working hard at the preschool garden. I can't remember everything they have planted, squash, green beans, corn, tomatoes, radishes, and peas. They have plans for the mulch pile behind the playground, as well.



Upcoming events at the CDC include a jam-packed summer program with visits that include, but not limited to, Huntsville Hospital, Hampton farms, HEMSI and a harpist. (That's only letter H!)



**VBS – RAINFOREST EXPLORER** is scheduled for June 25-30 from 6:00-8:00 PM. The theme for this year is **RAINFOREST EXPLORERS**.

At Rainforest Explorers, we learn how Jesus is our ultimate guide in the rainforest and throughout our lives. We might feel lost, but He'll show us the way. We already have people lined up for refreshment time and recreation. We are still in need of volunteers for Bible time, crafts, music, and opening/closing.

**Please volunteer to serve our congregation, and our Lord** by filling in one of these positions. Jennifer Hartwig and Kelly Aschenbrenner are spear heading VBS this year, so please reach out them, or another member of the Board of Ed to ask how you can help!



We had a great showing of hats and bonnets from the ladies of the congregation on **Mother's Day!**



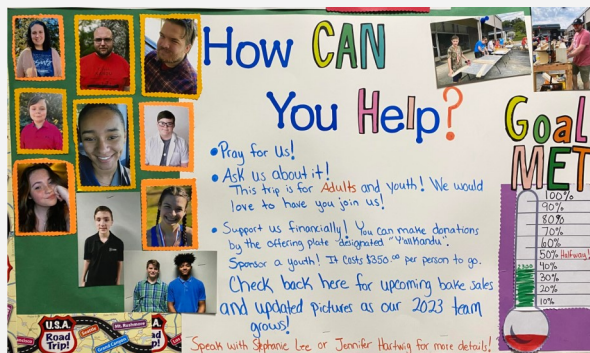
## From the DCM (Continued)

Carla Jo Peebles

UKANDU is scheduled for July 9 – 16! At the present time, we have four adults and 9 youth going! That is a great showing from our congregation!



How can you help? Glad you asked! They are working on fund raising. They are hosting bake sales in June and July between services to help raise funds. You can also sponsor a child. The cost per person is \$350.00.



## This 'n That

### Coming Up in June - LWML Convention in Wisconsin

The Ascension LWML is collecting items to assemble for hygiene kits to be taken to the 2023 LWML Convention in Milwaukee, WI, June 23-25. We are in need of the following items:

Bath towels, dark color, 52" x 27", dark color wash cloths, bath size bars of soap, toothbrushes, sturdy combs, band aids, 1/2" or 3/4", small packages of facial tissue, nail clippers and strong ribbon or cord.

If you wish to donate, place your items on a table in the Fellowship Hall. The **deadline for donating items is Saturday, June 10 at 10:00 AM** when an in-gathering meeting will be held to assemble the kits.

There are also other items needed not included for hygiene kits. They are: Puzzle books, journals, playing cards, crochet, knit or baseball hats, fuzzy socks, Walmart, Target or Kohl's gift cards, new and like-new eyeglasses, quilts, blankets and comforters.

Thank you, and if you have any questions, call Marsha Carden, 256-541-8524 or Linda Hirschbuehler, 256-520-0928. Thank you. We appreciate your help and donations!

(Joanne Hildreth, Marcia Pate and Marsha Carden are attending)

# SUMMER

## Outreach

Our mission groups attend two different residences in town to bring God's Word to the people. Times and places of this visits are listed below:

Regency - 6/8, 6/22 at 12:15 PM

HHR - 6/14, 6/28 at 10:15 AM

### Agenda

Opening and Welcome

Song 1

Song 2

Old Testament

Song 3

Song 4

New Testament

Song 5

Song 6

Gospel

Song 7

Message

Song 8

Song 9

If interested in being part of this missional outreach group, contact Bob Smith (256) 656-9795

# Stewardship

Bobbie Scroggins

## Baptism Saves You

In April, 1997, the Red River flood devastated the communities of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Damages reached \$3.5 billion. Has there ever been such a flood as devastating as this?

Well, there was a flood that surpassed all other floods in history. It was the great flood in the days of Noah. The Lord caused it to rain for 40 days and nights. Water poured down from the sky and came up from the earth. No person was spared except Noah and his family - eight persons in all.

1 Peter 3:18-21: *"<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup>After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— <sup>20</sup>to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup>and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear*

*conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

Peter says that Noah's salvation through water symbolized baptism, a ceremony involving water.



When we witness a baptism, we see the pastor pouring water over the person's head, saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In Baptism, the power of God's Word forgives our sin and gives us eternal life. Also, in baptism, we identify with Jesus Christ, who separates us from the lost and gives us new life. It is not the ceremony that saves us; instead, the ceremony is evidence of our faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism is the symbol of Baptism cleansing us that happens in the hearts of those who believe. By identifying themselves with

Christ through Baptism, Peter's readers could resist turning back, even under the pressure of persecution. Public baptism would keep them from the temptation to renounce their faith.

St. Peter says Baptism corresponds to the Noah flood. As Noah was saved through the flood, so we are saved through Holy Baptism. God removed sinners through the Noah flood; God removes our sins in the

Baptism flood. Martin Luther calls Baptism flood a daily drowning of the old Adam and a daily rising of the new man - our sins are washed away!

The Red River flood was devastating, but today, Grand Forks is new and rebuilt. In the water of Baptism, we are drowned and die with Christ in our sins. But with these same waters, we rise with Christ. We are made new. Baptism saves us because through these flood waters, we are saved and have eternal life with Christ.

Psalms 1:1-6:

*"<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, <sup>2</sup>but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. <sup>3</sup>That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers. <sup>4</sup>Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction."*

God doesn't judge people on the basis of race, sex or national origin. He judges them on the basis of their faith in Him and their response to His revealed will.



Those who diligently try to obey God are blessed. Their happy condition is like healthy, fruit-bearing trees with strong roots and God's promise to watch over them. God's wisdom guides their lives. In contrast, those who don't trust and obey God have meaningless lives that blow away like dust.

Only two paths of life lie before us - God's way of obedience or the way of rebellion and destruction. We can learn how to follow God by meditating on the Word. Meditating means spending time reading and thinking about what we have read. It means asking ourselves how we

should change so we will live as God wants.

In Psalm 1:2-3, hold simple wisdom - the more we delight in God's presence, the more fruitful we are.

The phrase, "Whatever he does prospers," does not mean immunity from failure or difficulties. Nor does it guarantee health, wealth and happiness. What the Bible means by prosperity is this: when we apply God's wisdom, the fruit (results or by-products) we bear will be good and will receive God's approval. Just as a tree soaks up water and bears luscious fruit, we also are to soak up God's Word, producing actions and attitudes that honor God. To achieve anything worthwhile, we must have God's Word in our hearts.

Read Psalm 1:4 again: *"Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away."*

Chaff is the outer shell (husk) that must be removed to get at the valuable kernels of grain inside. Chaff was removed by a process called threshing and winnowing. After the plants were cut, they were crushed and then the pieces were thrown into the air. Chaff is very light and is carried away by even the slightest wind, while the good grain falls back to the earth. Chaff is a symbol of a faithless life that drifts along without directions. Good grain is a symbol of a faithful life that can be used by God. Unlike grain, however, we can choose the direction we will take.



The Red River flood was devastating, but today, Grand Parks is new and rebuilt. The water of Baptism is even more devastating the more renewing. In Baptism, we are drowned and die with Christ in our sins. But in these same waters, we rise with Christ. We are made new! Baptism saves us because, through these flood waters, we are saved and have eternal life with Christ.

### The Holy Spirit

*"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

Matthew 3:11

Amen!

# From the Elder

Rick Hilst

## THE WAR IS RAGING

*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

Romans 12:1-2



On Memorial Day we remember all the men and women who have served in our military. Many of them have fallen in war, giving their lives as the ultimate sacrifice. Many others have survived and come back from war wounded, perhaps missing a limb, perhaps with some other permanent disability, perhaps suffering from PTSD, perhaps suffering in some other way. All of them, whether they have fallen in battle or not, have sacrificed for their country, for the freedoms we often take for granted.

We understand, and most of us appreciate, the price these brave men and women have paid. We recognize that our country, our way of life, our freedoms are dependent on their courage, on their willingness to literally put

their lives on the line. We may not always show it, but most of us have great respect for the men and women in uniform, for the risks they take and for the high cost that may come with those risks.

When our country is at war, our soldiers are expected to follow commands and fight. If told to attack, even at great risk to life and limb, our soldiers will be expected to do as instructed. In wartime the individual soldier's will is subservient to that of the military. The soldiers that invaded Normandy on D-Day probably would have preferred to be almost anywhere else. However, that did not stop them from putting their lives at risk to capture that beach.

The Bible uses war terminology, literally life and death verbiage, in describing the Christian life, in tabulating the cost of discipleship. We are called to take up our crosses, symbols of torture, shame, and death, and follow Jesus. In the passage from Romans 12, we are called to be living sacrifices, and we all know what happens to sacrifices. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a well-known Lutheran pastor who died in a concentration camp in World War 2, described Christian discipleship using the words "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

# SUMMER

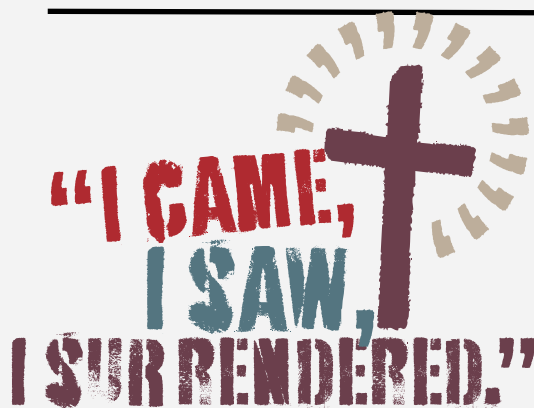
When a person is converted, he is born from above, he is transformed, he becomes a new creature, a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ. He has become spiritually alive, and his spiritual blindness is replaced with sight.

He is also inducted, drafted, into the church militant, and outfitted with the battle armor needed for spiritual warfare - the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit (Ephesians 6:13-17). He is instructed, indeed commanded, by our Lord to be a royal priest, an ambassador for Christ, a teacher to all nations, a contributing member of the body of Christ.

There is a war that has been raging since the Fall between the forces of evil and the forces of good. Since we are, as Christian soldiers, members of the church militant, we are combatants in this war. So how do we fight against an enemy we can't see? How do we wield the spiritual armor previously described to battle the devil, his evil cohorts, the world, and even our own sinful flesh?

## From the Elder (Continued)

Rick Hilst



We start this fight by ... surrendering. What?! We fight by surrendering? How does that make sense? Yet, it is exactly what we must do if we wish to be effective warriors. We must surrender – not to the forces of evil, who would be more than happy to see us sidelined – but to God. Just as a good military soldier surrenders his will to that of the military, we must surrender our will to God. We must be prepared, indeed desiring, to do whatever God commands.

Many of us want to straddle the fence. We want to be “Christian,” but the kind of Christian that comes at a cheap price. We’ll give up Sunday mornings. We’ll pray before meals and at bedtime. Maybe we’ll read our Bibles, maybe we’ll have regular devotions, maybe we’ll try to be a good example to others, maybe we’ll try to run from temptations. But have we surrendered to God, or do we want to play by our own rules? Are our actions based on our priorities, our timeline, our will ... or on God’s?



The Bible states “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his

life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:25). We are to put on the battle armor of God and join in the fight. The Christian life is not meant to be easy, not meant to be a life in which God is relegated some minor role, not meant to be a life in which our needs and desires take center stage. The Christian life is intended to be one in which we die to self, in which our desires fade, in which our minds are renewed, in which our hearts are transformed by the Holy Spirit to align with God’s good and perfect will.

Does this describe you? Are you in the battle against the forces of evil? Or are you watching from the sidelines? Have you surrendered your will to God? Are you pursuing His desires, His will, or are you chasing after your own desires, your own will? Are you a living sacrifice, are you carrying your cross and following Jesus, or are you playing it safe, saving your own life?



Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, sacrificed Himself for us, to take on our punishment, to suffer the wrath of God for our sins that justice demanded. He did this out of love for us, out of a desire to adopt

us as His brothers and sisters and fellow heirs of eternal life. This incredible act of love, of mercy, has opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all who believe and trust in Him. This is a wonderful gift, a totally undeserved gift, one for which we will be eternally grateful. Our response is to reflect this love to others.

So what comes after surrendering? How do we do the will of God? How do we combat the forces of evil? The simple answer is we do what God tells us to do in His written Word, in the Bible. Essentially, this boils down to a combination of witnessing, sharing with others by our words and actions what we believe, and doing good works, deeds done in faith, out of love for God and our neighbor, for the glory of God and for the good of our neighbor.

The war between good and evil is raging. Evidence of this war is everywhere. Even in our country Christianity is under direct attack. The question is “Are you in the fight?”

## Kids' Corner



### GROWING IN GOD'S WORD

God wants you to be "planted" in His Word and to grow up serving him all your life.

Unscramble each underlined word, and write it in the blanks below.  
Use the definitions as clues.

Psalm 1:3 NIV tells us what we should be like:

"He is like a (1) etre (2) dpeltan by (3) smatres of (4) rawte,  
which (5) ledsiy its fruit in (6) sonsea and whose (7) afle does not  
(8) rithew. Whatever he does (9) spropres."

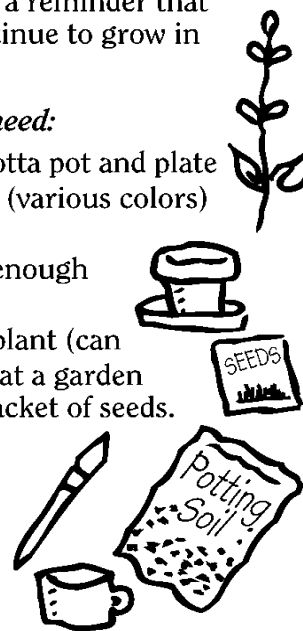
1. \_\_\_\_\_ (a wood plant with one main stem or trunk which has many branches)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (rooted into the ground)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (small rivers)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (a colorless and transparent liquid)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (produces, gives)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (a time of the year)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ (flat, thin part of a plant growing from the stem — usually green)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ (to dry up or wilt)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ (succeeds)

## Growing in God's Word

Try this craft as a reminder that we need to continue to grow in God's Word.

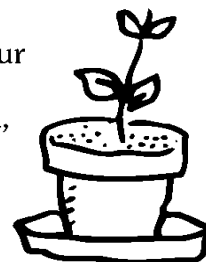
*What you will need:*

- Small terra cotta pot and plate
- Acrylic paints (various colors)
- Paper plate
- Potting soil (enough to fill the pot)
- Small inside plant (can be purchased at a garden nursery) or packet of seeds.
- Newspaper
- Paintbrush
- Cup of water
- Permanent black marker



*What you do:*

- 1) Spread some newspapers out on a table for your working area.
- 2) Squeeze the paint colors that you wish to use onto your paper plate.
- 3) Paint designs on the pot and plate. Make sure you clean your brush in the cup of water when changing colors.
- 4) When the pot is dry, take the black marker and on the collar (top part of the pot) write: "Growing in God's Word"
- 5) Pour a small amount of potting soil into the bottom of the pot. With an adult's help, place your plant into the pot and surround your plant with the rest of the soil. If planting seeds, follow the packet instructions.
- 6) Water your plant so the soil is moist. Check your plant every day and keep the soil moist.
- 7) Enjoy watching your plant grow, and remember that you, too, need care as you grow in God's Word.



Answers: tree, planted, streams, water, yield, season, leaf, wither, prospers

# Assimilation

Mary Engel

A lot of happenings at Ascension!

Fellowship Groups are meeting for the last time before taking a summer break in June and July. A Fellowship Potluck will be in August to regroup. They will start up in September!

A new Ascension Telephone Directory is being sent to everyone electronically. A hard copy is also available in the Narthex under the Visitors Book.

The Ascension Lutheran Preschool had their graduation with 9 graduates! Ms. Priscilla and Ms. Charla and the children worked hard and put on a great presentation.

There was a celebration for the baptism and adoption of Ciara Gehring. Congratulations, Ciara and to the Gehring family!

There will be a youth lock-in June 16. Youth in the 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to the all-night fun and fellowship! Kristen and Aaron K and Jenn & John H are hosts.

The youth have been very busy raising money at their bake sale for their mission UKANDO mission trip to Chicago in July 9-16th. The tuition is \$350 per person and there are a few who need support. A check may be made out to Ascension Lutheran Church with the memo of

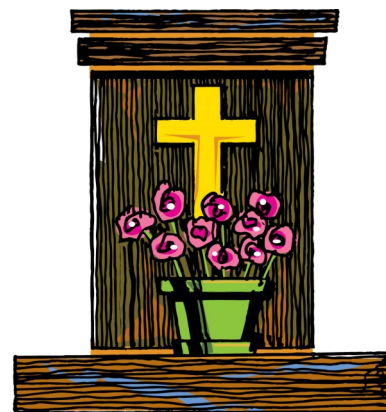
UKANDO. There will be 15 going. Attendees will include Stephanie L, Jenn & John H, Isaac L, James H, Meredith H, Charlie S, AnnieQ G, Ciara G, Brian P, Abby H, Elizabeth K and 3 more. They will have a busy and hard-working week doing various mission projects.



A presentation was given to the Sr. and Jr. High Sunday School class on the LCMS recruitment program, "Set Apart to Serve," by Mary Engel and guest speakers Pastor Doug Dewitt, Donna Behnken, and Susann Gehring. There are vocations of a Pastor, a Deaconess, and 6 different Directors.

There will be a dedication of an Autumn Blaze maple tree in honor of Pastor Bernard Ansorge's years of service at Ascension. The tree was donated by the LWML. The dedication will be on Father's Day, June 18. A ceremony will be held after the early service outside by the tree (located in front of the CDC).

## SUMMER



### FROM THE *Pulpit*

We thank God for His grace in sending us these retired pastors to fill our continued vacancy. We appreciate your ministry among us!

#### *June*

- |    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| 4  | Rev. James Garnett |
| 11 | Rev. Keith Enko    |
| 18 | Rev. Doug DeWitt   |
| 25 | Rev. Gary Nagy     |

#### *July*

- |    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| 2  | Rev. James Garnett |
| 9  | Rev. Keith Enko    |
| 16 |                    |
| 23 | Rev. Gary Nagy     |
| 30 | Rev. Doug DeWitt   |

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

Larry Jeziorski	06/04	Ian Thies	06/19
Dan Gehring	06/05	Sharon Damron	06/19
Andy Hilst	06/05	Marj Ogles	06/24
Christian Reynolds	06/05	Carla Peebles	06/24
Bruce Skrabanek	06/06	Bob Hirschbuehler	06/25
Emily Skrabanek	06/08	Sue Ellen Smith	06/26
Sonya Burhans	06/09	Jeremy Gehring	06/26
Anna Grott	06/11	Barbara Cowart	06/27
Kathy Linden	06/16	Cameron Lee	06/28



### *Accidentally Missed Anniversary in May:*

Mike & Carla Jo Peebles 05/21 (1 year)

### *June Anniversaries*

Lynn & Nancy Hunt 06/11 (5 years)

Jim & Anne Sims 06/17 (62 years)

# SUMMER

### *Update Our Records*

#### Basic needs (Adults)

Name

Address

Email Address

Phone Number(s)

Date of Birth

Date of Baptism\*

Date of Confirmation\*

Date of Marriage  
(If no longer married,  
date of death or divorce)

#### Extended needs (Children)

Names

Gender (only because  
names like Taylor or  
Lynn, etc., can be either  
or)

Email Address

Date of Birth

Date of Baptism

Date of Confirmation

For the records, I do need full dates, mainly due to sometimes needing to be exact. Except for the anniversary dates that are listed in the *Reflections* as far as how many years a couple has been married, a person's age is *not* listed, just the month and day. However, it helps to have the year for statistics, demographics, grade/level in school and other things. Ages are confidential, so if you want that made known, it's up to you.

I can send a link, if you would like, to fill out the information; or just fill out your own copy/paper and turn it in to me at the office.

Thank you!

\*=If known

# Calendar— June

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Bible study and Sunday School 9:45 AM - Regency	5 6:00 PM - Worship	6	7	8 12:15 PM - Regency	9	10 10:00 AM - Donations Due in Fellowship Hall for LWML
11 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Bible study and Sunday School 9:45 AM - Regency	12 6:00 PM - Worship	13 7:00 PM - Board of Directors	14 10:15 AM - HHR	15	16 ? time - Youth Group Lock-In	17
18 BAKE SALE 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Bible study and Sunday School 9:45 AM - Regency	19 6:00 PM - Worship	20 6:00 PM - Board of Elders	21	22 12:15 PM - Regency	23	24 8:30 AM - Men's Prayer Breakfast
25 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Bible study and Sunday School 9:45 AM - Regency	26 6:00 PM - Worship 7:00 PM - Gathering Meal at New China Grill & Buffet	27	28 10:15 AM - HHR	29	30	