

REFLECTIONS

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CDC WORKDAY

The CDC begins its new year on August 7. Before then, volunteers are needed to help clean up the building and grounds in preparation to begin. Pray for the teachers, staff, children and parents, that all who walk through the doors of the CDC will recognize the presence of God and know there is something special going on there.

Ascension Lutheran Church | Huntsville, AL 35810

Those Who Serve



FROM THE *Pulpit*

August 5 - Rev. Christopher Clark

August 6 - Rev. James Garnett

August 13 - Rev. Keith Enko

August 20 - Rev. Doug DeWitt

August 27 - Rev. Gary Nagy

Pastor Clark from Cullman will perform the funeral service of Chloe Hunt on Saturday at 1:00 PM. More information on Page 9.

Worship Schedule

Sundays

- 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship
- 9:15 AM - Fellowship
- 9:30 AM - Bible Study and Sunday School
- 9:30 AM - Regency

Mondays

- 6:00 PM - Worship



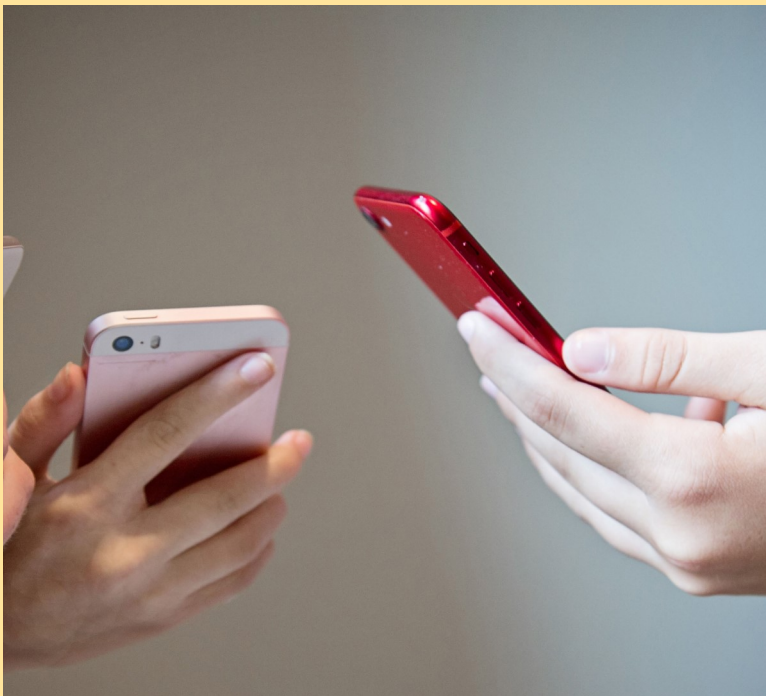
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE CHURCH

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

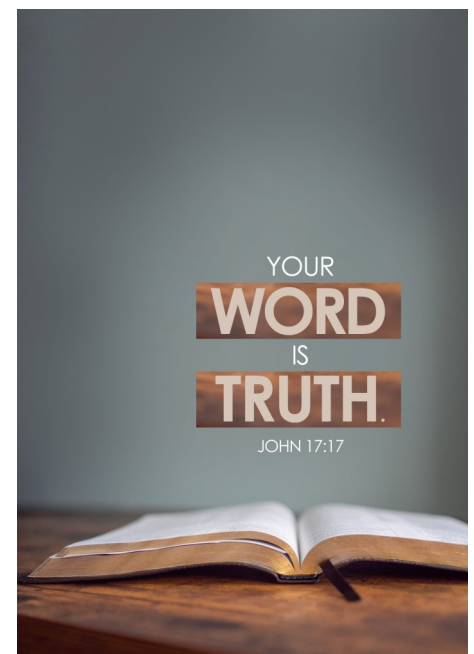
Artificial intelligence (AI) has been in the news a lot likely and, in all probability, will be in the news even that much more in the future. Much of what has been covered in the press is the negative side of AI. AI will undoubtedly replace many jobs, putting those workers who are unable or unwilling to adapt to the new reality out of work. AI has also been the focus of great worry about being an existential threat to mankind, with many experts voicing serious concerns about whether AI will destroy us and how governments can regulate it to prevent future disaster.

However, artificial intelligence also holds great promise. Already it is being effectively used in medical diagnosis, being capable of things like early detection of cancer and other diseases. Its ability to organize information has made it an effective competitor to Google as a search engine. Many people are using it as a highly effective tool for doing their work more efficiently. In the future no doubt it will be that much more capable and that much more useful.

However, artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword, perhaps even more so than the Internet. While the Internet has been a tremendous boon



for accessing information of all sorts, it has also been a breeding ground for pornography, for identity theft, for coordinating criminal activities and for a variety of other evil purposes. As AI becomes more and more capable and more popular, it is reasonable to expect that malicious activities will become even more prevalent.



Artificial intelligence can easily be used to deceive. Already the technology exists to replicate physical appearance and voices to fool unsuspecting individuals. Whereas spoofing e-mails has been successfully used to dupe people into either providing confidential information or to load malware onto their phones or computers, in the future, with the deep faking capabilities of AI, this duping will also extend to audio and even video

interfaces. That person you're talking to on the phone or over the Internet may or may not actually be who you think.

When it comes to the church, artificial intelligence is also a double-edged sword. With its ability to quickly learn new languages, there has been discussion about using AI to translate the Bible into all the languages that currently don't have a translation. As a properly used assistant, it can be a valuable tool for all sorts of church-related activities. It can be used to connect people with questions and/or needs with those individuals, including pastors and other believers, best able to answer those concerns. It has tremendous promise as an aid to outreach, to church organization, to a host of other useful purposes.

Figuring out how to take advantage of the tremendous upside of AI, while avoiding the

pitfalls, will be one of the biggest challenges that churches, including Ascension, will face in the future. This is a tremendous opportunity for us, as the prevalence of AI will undoubtedly lead to great confusion and uncertainty in the world, particularly about what is true and can be trusted. We have the truth, the Word of God. We have the good news of salvation, the Gospel, Christ's atoning death on the cross, the free gift of forgiveness that is available to all.

The future is going to be challenging, but with great possibilities. We have what the world desperately needs. As things become even more chaotic, more confused, having the real answers, knowing what is truth, should, if properly executed, put us in a position to effectively reach out to the world, to better fulfill the Great Commission.



WHAT THE “REAL” PROBLEM IS

“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 all spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12

Doesn't it seem like after we get through one problem, another one comes up behind it to hit us? Maybe with so many of them, we should talk about what kind of problems we have. Costly repairs; budget problems; bad accidents; student illnesses; family conflicts. Not to minimize these problems, but every person goes through hard situations, at times.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:10-12.

In the Christian life, we battle against rulers and authorities, the proverbial evil forces of fallen angels headed by Satan, who is a vicious fighter. To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God's strength and use every piece of His armor. The whole body needs to be armed. As we do battle against the powers of this dark world, fight is the strength of the church whose power comes from the Holy Spirit.

These are not “flesh and blood” enemies; these are the demons over whom Satan has control. They are not mere fantasies - they are very real. We face a



powerful army whose goal is to defeat Christ's church. When we believe, these things become our enemies. They try every device to turn us away from Him and back to sin. Although we are assured of victory, we must engage in the struggle until Christ's return, because Satan is constantly battling against all who are on the Lord's side. We need supernatural power to defeat Satan, and God has provided this by giving us His Holy Spirit within us

and His armor surrounding us. If we feel discouraged, we need to remember Jesus' words to Peter, *“On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”* Matthew 16:18.

This on which Jesus would build His church has been identified as (1) Jesus Himself (his work of salvation by dying for us on the cross); (2) Peter (the first great leader in the church at Jerusalem); and (3)

the confession of faith that Peter gave and that all subsequent true believers could give (*“But who do you say that I am?”* Peter answered him, *“You are the Christ.”*) Mark 8:29



In hard situations, we get in a mode where we either want to fix everything or just want to give up. Both of these

modes cause us anxiety. They both overwhelm us.

Psalm 103:20-23:

“Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.”

Everything everywhere is to praise the Lord; all angels mighty ones and heavenly - and all His works. Praising God means remembering all He has done for us.

Psalm 103:2:

“Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits”;

Psalm 103:17-18: *“But from everlasting to everlasting*

the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts."

Does your life praise the Lord?

Psalm 103:21: *"Praise the Lord, all His heavenly hosts, you His servants who do His will."*

The most difficult problem to beat is the one we cannot see. Satan is trying to get us to believe that we are defeated in every way and that we are lost forever. But faith always wins and saves. Jesus made sure of that when He died and rose, defeating Satan forever. Problems do come, often on a regular basis, but faith says Satan can never bring us down, for faith always has us looking up to Jesus, who guides us through all things to victory.

Psalm 47:1, 6-7: *"Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise."*

1 Peter 2:9: *"For you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."*

Our lips should confess God's name in praise. Yet, in our typical day, how many times do we hear God's name used profanely? Christians should turn their frequency toward praise! Praise God early in the day before the rush, then again in hurried middle, and at the end as business winds down. Offer Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise.

Psalm 71:8, 14: *"My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more."*

As we face the sunset years, we recognize that God has been our constant help in the past. As physical powers wane, we need God even more, and we realize He is still our constant help. We must never despair but keep on expecting His help, no matter how severe our limitations. Hope in Him helps us to keep going, to keep serving Him.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I "TRUST GOD"

We often find it difficult to understand God's purpose for our lives, especially when things go wrong. Our vision of the future fades and our faith wavers. The core of a strong faith depends on our ability to trust God completely no matter what happens. The true test of faith comes when

things turn against us; when we are tempted to question God; when we are in total despair.

Jesus had an unconditional trust in God. Even in His darkest moment, his faith was strong enough to enable Him to fulfill the will of the Father. Trust God in all circumstances and the grace of God will help us deal with every situation.

II "UNSHAKABLE TRUST"



When everything seems to be going wrong, we may feel overwhelmed by our problems and want to give up or try to solve them with our own strength. But remember the Lord has promised to never leave nor forsake us. However, we must have patience because we cannot hurry or prescribe to God. He does everything in His own perfect time and way. God sees the big picture of our life. He is all-knowing and all-seeing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to teach us to wait patiently on the Lord. Then with childlike trust, we can leave everything in God's hands. Those who stand steadfast in affliction receive God's most precious gifts from His treasure house of mercy.



III "GOD'S SUFFICIENT GRACE"

All of us, at one point or another when faced with a certain situation, feel hopeless and defeated. Yet, whatever the predicament we are in - however dark the outlook - never underestimate the extent of God's love for us and the expanse of His grace. Look at examples in the Bible or in history when God transformed despair into hope and defeat into victory through His grace.

He is waiting for us to turn to Him and trust in Him. Our faith will be rewarded and, in His own wonderful way, He will deliver us.

God, through the years, you have proven yourself to be faithful. Therefore, we will hold on to Your hand in the future because Your grace is sufficient for us at all times and in all circumstances. Amen.



COLOR YOUR OWN BOOKMARKS! THEN USE THEM





CONNECTED

“Connected” is the theme for the 2023-2024 school year. It is inspired by John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.” It is the same theme the National Lutheran School week is centered upon.

The theme “Connected” emphasizes the importance of staying connected to God and to one another when we face challenges and difficulties and when we share in joys and triumphs! It encourages Lutheran schools to continue to cultivate an environment of faith, love and fellowship, where students can learn, grow and thrive.

For the first time in a long while, I can say we are fully staffed. Laci Hall, our pre-k/preschool afternoon teacher has been having multiple health issues over the past several months. She has missed a considerable amount of work. Please keep her in your prayers.

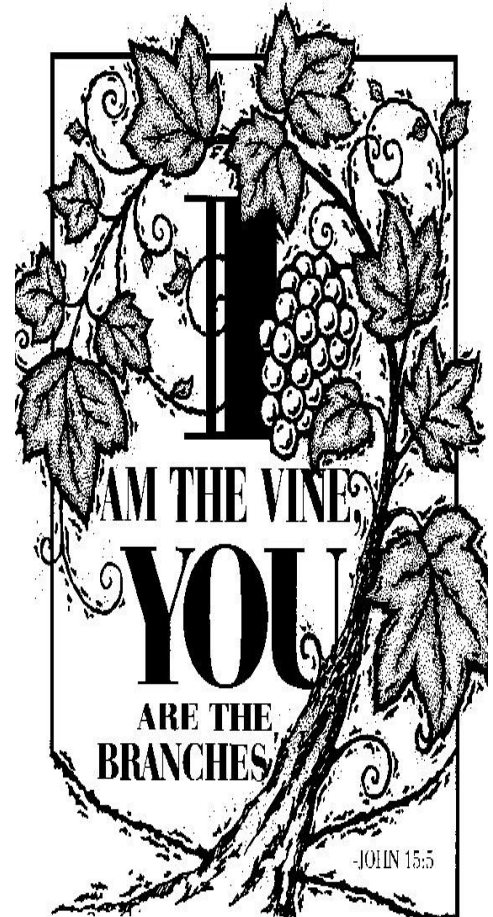


We have/are experiencing quite a bit of turmoil on account of the storm that blew through the evening of July 20. A lightning strike blew out part of our playground shed, (even spot welding our playground gate closed). It destroyed much of the electronics in the building. Some items affected were office computers, phones, camera system, internet, and printer. Some of the men have been working hard to get us up and running again. Insurance has been contacted, but we aren't scheduled to have an adjuster come until August 7. In the meantime, all the broken equipment is being piled on a table in the staff room. That, and trying to get things up and running for the first day of school, have made for a challenging time.



THANK
YOU
VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to those people who have come over to help get the center ready for classes. Thank you also to those who work to keep the yard area clean – with all the downed tree branches, lately, that has been an ongoing job.



HARVEST * Trail Mix *

This portable snack combines favorite fall flavors.



What you need:

- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 2/3 cup pecan pieces
- 1/3 cup roasted pumpkin seeds
- 1/3 cup almonds
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2/3 cup dried fruit (any)

What you do:

1. Microwave syrup, spices, seeds and nuts for 30 seconds at a time, stirring frequently, until mixture thickens.
2. Spread the mixture on a baking sheet lined with wax paper. Let cool and harden.
3. Break the candied nuts into chunks. Combine with dried fruit.
4. Store in airtight container.

Puzzle!

Fill in the blanks with the correct words. Then transfer the letters to the numbered boxes below to complete Psalm 107:1, NIV.

Shape that symbolizes love

31 15 7 18 5

Part of a stove used for baking

12 3 24 39

Color made by red and yellow

28 42 7 8 27 37

A present

1 32 20 11

Clothing a girl wears

19 22 43 44 33

Something you open to go into a room

40 29 17 47

Opposite of soft (sound)

34 17 41 30

To take a long walk

14 2 9 38

A high body temperature

45 50 49 48 42

Items used to build or fix things

13 35 21 16 26

Edge of the sea

10 23 46 51 4

Home for a bee

6 25 36 4

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
9	10		11	12		13	14	15
	16	17	18	19		20	21	22
	23	24		25	26		27	28
29	30		31	32	33		34	35
36	37		38	39	40	41	42	43
44		45	46	47	48	49	50	51

Answer: heart, oven, orange, gift, dress, door, loud, hike, fever, tools, shore, hive, Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love endures forever. Psalm 107:1, NIV

BIRTHDAYS & FLOWERS

August 1	Susann Gehring	
	Harvey Fischer	
August 2	Marcia Pate	
	Helga Akins	
August 3	Mark Smith	
August 4	James Kenny	
August 6	Marsha Carden	
	Nancy Lawson	
August 8	Micah Glenn	
August 9	Sandra Thies	
August 11	Sarah Burhans-Anzalone	
	John Levenhagen	
August 12	Sheila Levenhagen	
August 13	Rhonda Abello	
August 14	Vesta Watts	
August 16	Alan King	
	Philip Ansorge	
August 17	Nadine Hartwig	
	Daniel Reyer	
August 18	Isabella Bowers	
Austin 21	Andrew Burhans	
August 23	Teri Juron	
	Grace Lee	
August 25	Elaine Jeziorski	
August 26	Harold Lawson	
August 27	Joanne Hilst	
	Jared Severance Hall	



August ANNIVERSARIES



August 5	Dan & Susann Gehring	(23 years)
August 19	James & Joanne Hildreth	(45 years)
August 22	Glen & Donna Huling	(59 years)

Prayers

A STUDENT'S PRAYER FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Lord Jesus, I ask for Your help as I begin this new school year. Allow me to experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before me. Open my eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new school year brings. Open my heart and mind to new friends and new teachers. Give me a generous spirit to be enthusiastic with my studies and courage to accept new opportunities. Help me to be attentive to my teachers and let me experience Your presence in my new friends. Jesus, inspire me to do my best this year! Amen

A TEACHER'S PRAYER FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Our Creator, our Savior, our companion, bless this journey of a new school year that we undertake. Refresh our souls and renew our spirits as we embrace the beautiful ministry you have called us to. We welcome those who are new to this community and ask that you strengthen them to share the wonderful gifts you have given them. Lord, make our hearts pure as we prepare for the return of students to this school, and may You guide them to return with open hearts and minds eager to learn. We ask this in Your name.



Funeral Service for Chloe Hunt, who died this past Sunday, is as follows:

Saturday, August 5, 2023

12:30 PM - Ascension open for greeting the family

1:00 PM - Funeral Service

Food and visiting with family in Fellowship Hall after service.

CURRENT PRAYER REQUESTS - Travis Parrot Steve Dean Kent Parker Dan Jones Jerry Heape Carol McGuire Jim Sims Charles Tiller Jeremiah Russell Rusty Hilst Leon Weeks Nancy Lawson Ken Gilbertson Martha Patz Phil Fraley Allison Gray Leilani Kyle Scroggins Zac Enko Norman Hartwig Hunter Burkhalter Jonna Barrier Mistie Swearengin Patrick Hurst Jewel Johnson Jean Shaver Charles Underwood The family of Chloe Hunt upon her death this past week

For Pastor Waffel to consider and accept the Call to Ascension

Missional Outreach



Welcome - Elder
Song One
Song Two
Scripture Reading - OT
Song Three
Song Four
Scripture Reading - NT
Song Five
Song Six
Scripture Reading - Gospel
Song Seven
Message
Song Eight
Song Nine

There is time to spend one-on-one with the residents of both establishments.

The schedule for August is:

August 9 & 23 - Huntsville Health and Rehab at 10:00 AM, located at 4010 Chris Drive, SW, Huntsville, AL 35802 (10:15 AM)

August 3, 17 & 31 - Regency at 10:15 AM, located at 2004 Max Luther Drive, NW, Huntsville, AL 35810 (12:30 PM)

Every Sunday between our own worship services, a third group leads a worship service at 9:30 AM.

If interested or if you have any questions, contact person is Bob Smith (256) 656-9795 or smithrms@hughes.net

THE TOUGHEST WORDS TO SAY

“I’M SORRY.”

Most of us, at one time or another, have been in a situation where we’ve been accused of something that we’re not proud of, and we deny responsibility. That’s especially true if the accusation is true, but our first response is to say, “I didn’t do that!” or “*So and so* did that.” I think it comes from the Fall Day in the Garden. Passing the buck and blaming everyone else happens a lot. . .

Genesis 3:12-13: *The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”* Remember that one?

Genesis 27:33-35: *“Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.” As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.”* Jacob had help. . .

Exodus 32:21-24: *And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?” And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”* And ‘out came this calf’?

Job 42:3-6: *‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”* Job had the right idea.

The sins from the Fall continue on, right down to our own lives. Some of us may try to be different and not be quick to blame someone else, but it’s just so *easy* to let others be the *fall* guys. I wonder if that term is related to the Garden, too.

I remember the first time I had to apologize to my own child. Like I said, it was a first, and when my son heard me say I was sorry (for whatever it was I was apologizing for - I don’t remember), he looked at me and said, “I didn’t think moms had to be sorry for anything.” Don’t I wish.

Mark 6:26: *“And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her.”* Know who this was? He didn’t want to lose face in front of his guests. Too bad. It takes a strong person to know they’ve done wrong and make it right. In this case, being sorry wasn’t enough.

Genesis 6:7: *So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”* How many times did God regret anything - and who was the cause of His regret?

1 Samuel 15:10-11: *The word of the LORD came to Samuel: “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not performed My commandments.”*

So what’s the honorable thing to do when we cause God sorrow and regret?

2 Chronicles 7:14: *“If my people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”* May God accept our confessions and have mercy on us.

Calendar

August, 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		CDC Work Day ¹	CDC Work Day ²	12:30 PM - Regency ³ If still needed, CDC Work Day?	If still needed, CDC Work Day? ⁴	12:30 PM - Ascension ⁵ Open for Visiting with Family of Chloe Hunt 1:00 PM - Funeral Service at Ascension
8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship with Communion ⁶ 9:30 AM - Bible class 9:45 AM - Regency	CDC Reopens ⁷ 6:00 PM - Worship	7:00 PM - Board of Directors ⁸	10:15 AM - HHR ⁹			10:00 AM - LWML ¹²
8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship with Communion ¹³ 9:30 AM - Bible class 9:45 AM - Regency	6:00 PM - Worship ¹⁴	6:00 PM - Board of Elders ¹⁵		12:30 PM - Regency ¹⁷		
8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship with Communion ²⁰ 9:30 AM - Bible class 9:45 AM - Regency	6:00 PM - Worship ²¹		10:15 AM - HHR ²³			8:30 AM - Men's Prayer Breakfast ²⁶
8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship with Communion ²⁷ 9:30 AM - Bible class 9:45 AM - Regency	6:00 PM - Worship ²⁸ 7:00 PM - Meal at Jordan Lane China Buffet			12:30 PM - Regency ³¹		