

“THE MEADOWS MESSENGER”
A Communication of Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church
August 2019, Issue



June and July Financial Reports

We hope that you find this information helpful as you pray for this congregation and evaluate your giving and participation in the worship, work and mission of this part of the Body of Christ. Sincerely, the Session and Pastor.

Tithes and Offerings needed for each week of 2019 = \$1,709.06. This figure is based on a total 2019 budget of \$88,871.00 which was approved by the Session.

JUNE

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (26 weeks)	\$8,545.29
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (26 weeks)	\$4,975.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$3,570.29)
Total Expenses (26 weeks) resulting in a shortage for the month	(\$192.01)

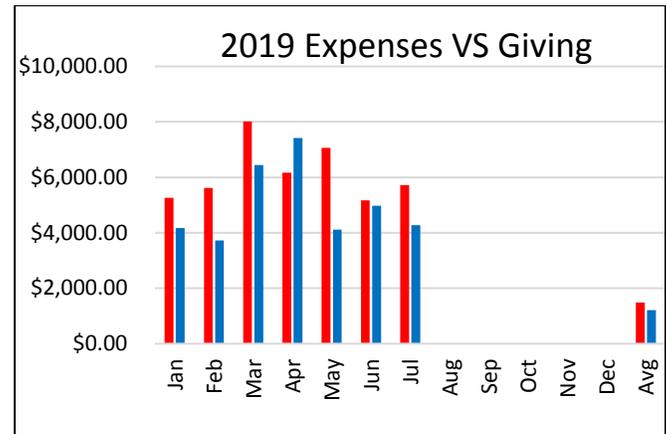
JULY

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (3 of 4 weeks)	\$5,127.17
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (3 of 4 weeks)	\$4,280.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$847.17)
Total Expenses (3 of 4 weeks) resulting in a shortage for the month	(\$1,445.65)

YEAR TO DATE

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (29 weeks)	\$49,562.67
Actual Tithes and Offerings (29 weeks) received	\$35,138.00
This results in a budget shortage to this point	(\$14,424.67)
Total Expenses (29 weeks) This results in a shortage to expenses for the year	(\$7,890.74)

For those of you who understand a chart better than a bunch of numbers, below is the ‘picture’ of our YTD finances for July 2019 (through week 3 of 4):



Expenses VS Income

Some Bible Trivia

The theme for this month is: voices

1. What New Testament character was the ‘voice crying in the wilderness’?
2. What blind father recognized Jacob’s voice but was deceived by his glove-covered hands?
3. When Moses was in the Tabernacle, where did God’s voice come from?
4. Who heard a voice that said, “Write down what you see”?
5. Where did God speak to Moses in a voice like thunder?
6. Which Gospel mentions the voice of Rachel weeping for her children?

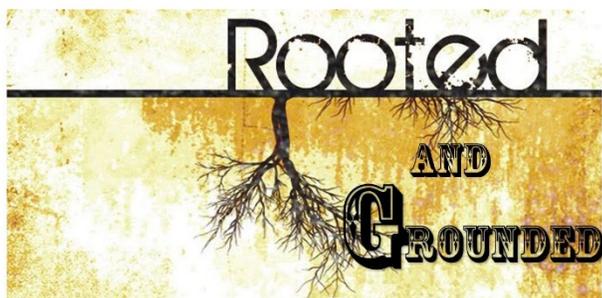
Session Highlights

Stated Meeting – June 30th

The Session:

- Reviewed and approved the financial reports for April and May.
- Received a letter from the Burke County Sheriff’s Department thanking us for our help with an incident on Mother’s Day. (The basic contents of that letter were included in the last newsletter.)

- Received a promotional flier from The Rev. Dr. James Cockerham regarding the Blue Grass band his is a member of. They might be available to play for a fundraiser or other church event.
- Approved a motion to send \$800.00 to the presbytery for the Guatemala partnership and scholarships and then inform the presbytery and Guatemala Partnership Committee that we want to end our participation in this ministry.
- Approved Ann Dietz as our commissioner to the next presbytery meeting on July 30th.



The Pastor's Ponderings

On July 14th and July 21st, I preached on Christian virtue as gleaned from Colossians 1. These virtues are both the evidence of our Christian identity and the means by which we become more rooted and grounded in our Christian identity. I was asked to include a list of these virtues in this newsletter as a reminder, but decided to include a slightly streamlined version of the sermons instead. The virtues in bold type.

“Christian Virtue – Part 1”

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul provides new Christians with a discussion of some virtues which will help them be rooted and grounded in Christian character and thus be better equipped to avoid the trappings of their pagan culture and their own personal sins. Paul's powerful triad of faith, love and hope provides the Colossian Christians with the foundation for a faithful and fruitful life. The three characteristics of faith, love and hope, create a rich soil in which the

virtuous behaviors Paul describes can take root and thrive. But don't be fooled. Real Christian virtues are identified by the dirt under your fingernails and the sweat on your brow, because you have to deliberately and constantly work them into the ground of your being.

Virtue # 1 is **generosity**. When we pay attention to being rooted and grounded in Christ, we become generous. Generosity is the willingness to give good things freely and abundantly to others. In order to truly be generous however, we must be unattached to material possessions and make no demands on the people we are giving to. In other words, if we give expecting something in return for what we give then we are not being totally generous. Possessing a “generous spirit” enables believers to participate in the reckless extravagance that characterizes God's own generosity towards us and creation.

In the Christian tradition, generosity is a virtue that can never be overdone. No matter how much we give, no matter how open our spirit, we can never out give God's extravagant gift of salvation through Jesus Christ – a gift that was given, while we were still sinners. Christian generosity is generosity to a fault. It extends itself across all the faults and fissures that disrupt our families, our churches and our communities. Christian generosity seeks to find the cracks in our relationships and fill them in and fill them up with the love of God.

Virtue # 2 is **tolerance**. When Paul urges the Colossian Christians, in verse 11, to “endure everything with patience”, he is promoting tolerance. However, Christian tolerance is not apathy. You don't ‘tolerate’ a toxic waste dump being built beside an elementary school. You don't ‘tolerate’ a person abusing another person. You do something to stop it and protect those who are in danger. Just because we claim to be Christians does not mean that we are expected to tolerate anything and everything. Jesus himself did not tolerate sin, but rebuked it and called the

people to change their behaviors and their lifestyles – to go and sin no more.

The virtue of tolerance enables us to see ourselves through the eyes of other people and realize that we could easily be in the same situation. It helps us to understand that we are connected to others because of our shared humanity. No matter how much someone might get on our last nerves, no matter how much we may disagree or just plain dislike another person, the virtue of tolerance helps us remember that we are all fallen, vulnerable and often self-preserving human beings who have been shown a tremendous amount of mercy and grace by God.

Alan Cohen, wrote a book called “The Dragon Doesn’t Live Here Anymore” in which he describes going to an elementary school band concert. He says: “As the director raised his baton, I sat back and for some reason expected to hear a beautiful symphony. To my surprise, I heard instead, a horrid [noise] of squeaks, honks, upbeat notes on the downbeat and a march that sounded like a 45 rpm record played at 33. ‘This is terrible!’ I thought, as I shriveled inside. And then I heard a gentle voice speak within me: ‘These are children; they are learning; they are doing very well.’ The voice, of course, spoke truth. I was judging them according to my expectations, not accepting that they were all playing according to their abilities. At that moment, the music became so lovely to me, I sat back and thoroughly enjoyed every remaining moment of the concert, and I think I cheered loudest at its finale.”

Maybe the next time you find yourself annoyed and judgmental and uncompassionate with another person, you might consider that they are like children, learning to play in a band. Some children never get very good at playing an instrument and for their whole lives they will make ‘noise’ when they try to play. And, some people in our lives never quite learn how to be in good relationship with us. Can we look at them with compassion and a willingness to accept that

they are just not able to do certain things? If so, we give them the gift of tolerance.

Virtue # 3 is **forgiveness**. Perhaps the greatest theological virtue we can develop is the willingness to forgive. Notice that I said the ‘willingness to forgive’ and not the ‘ability to forgive’. True forgiveness is often very difficult, but if we are willing to forgive, if we are willing to release our offender from punishment and if we are willing to release ourselves from the burden of carrying the offense, then God will help us actually forgive. It is only by an act of the Divine will that we are transferred from the power of darkness into the kingdom of light with God’s beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (v.14)

Just as the virtue of tolerance should not be confused with apathy, neither should the virtue of forgiveness be confused with condoning. Destructive behaviors – like cruelty, deceit, injustice, and hatred – are not condoned through the act of forgiveness. But neither can these behaviors be altered or undone without the act of forgiveness. People must be giving the room to grow and change. Forgiveness is often the first step to giving people that room. Only when we learn how to forgive can the healing power of love be released to work against these evils.

The characters of the movie “Love Story” were absolutely wrong when they claimed – “Love means never having to say you’re sorry.” Extending and accepting forgiveness is often the absolute essence of love. Forgiveness is the Christian virtue most rooted in love, the most dependent on faith, and the most embedded in hope because it releases the other person without any demands for restitution or change. Forgiveness might be the best way that we can free ourselves and each other to the transforming power of God.

In her book “Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love”, Stephanie Dowrick says that life without saying “I’m sorry” is, like climbing Mount Everest without oxygen; trying to win

Wimbledon without a racket; trying to play La Scala without a score. When you forgive, [Dowrick says] “the muscular tensions that you had come to assume were normal are eased. You are less vulnerable to infection or to far more serious illness. Your immune system lifts. Your face muscles let down. Food tastes better. The world looks better. Depression radically diminishes. You are more available to other people and a great deal more available to yourself, yet you think about yourself less, and less anxiously.” I don’t know about you, but I could use less tension in my neck and shoulders and a stronger immune system.

When Christians practice the virtue of forgiveness, we often forget to include ourselves among those who need to be forgiven. But forgiveness is not just letting ourselves “off the hook.” Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we are indeed already forgiven, even though we must always acknowledge our own actions. When we do wrong, we are required to “own up” to what we have done. Without taking that first step, we continue in a state of personal unforgiveness, a state which is self-destructive and stunts our ability to extend genuine forgiveness to others. Self-forgiveness might just be the most needed step to forgiving others.

In the concentration camp of Ravensbruck, an extraordinary prayer was left by the body of a dead child: “Oh Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted on us; remember the fruits we have bought, thanks to this suffering – our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this, and when they come to judgment let all the fruits which we have borne be their forgiveness.”

How many of us could pray this prayer? How many of us could pray that those who have done us the greatest harm would be spared punishment

because of the growth which God’s grace has produced in our lives?

Generosity in a culture of selfish possession of anything and everything is difficult. Tolerance in a culture where our differences are more the focus of the daily news than ever, is difficult. And forgiveness of ourselves and others in the face of the realities of life is difficult. But if we want to be more rooted and grounded in the love of God, then we must display the fruits of Christian virtue.

Friends, may God continue to grant us his amazing love so that we can continue to be transformed from the darkness of our fallen humanity into the light of generosity, tolerance and forgiveness which is characteristic of God’s eternal kingdom. Amen.

“Christian Virtue – Part 2”

I’m not necessarily asking for a show of hands, but how many of you know about TV shows like, Jerry Springer, The Maury Show, The Steve Wilkos Show, Cops, or Temptation Island? I believe it is not an exaggeration to say that these shows promote vices. Violence, nudity, bizarre relationships, violence and twisted psyches are packed into what have become favorite shows for many people. According to the producers and promoters of these shows, vice and violence sells. In such an environment, virtues seem to have no chance to flourish at all. Who would watch a TV show on the daily practice of Christian virtues? Not many people, but those are the very character traits which our world so desperately needs.

So, let us continue the list of virtues from last Sunday. The next three virtues which we can see described in today’s passage from Paul are: restraint, fidelity and courage.

Virtue # 4 is **restraint** (or what we might call, **self-control**). Few virtues are as actively ridiculed or passively ignored as the virtue of restraint. Why is self-control prized less than self-expression? According to Paul, restraint is a characteristic of our maturity in Christ. Despite –

or perhaps because of – the astonishing nature of Paul’s news of salvation, Paul both practices and promotes self-control.

But there is a crucial distinction between practicing self-restraint for the sake of the common good and being restrained by some external power or authority. Practicing self-restraint or self-control gives witness to others that we are willing to consider the effects our behaviors have on others and that we are willing to adapt our behaviors for the sake of others. Self-control gives others the confidence that we are not a dangerous, careless or wild person who will bring them harm by just being in our presence. The virtue of restraint made it possible for Paul to preach the message of Christ with power and persuasion before groups as diverse as the Gentiles of Colossae and the Jews of Rome. The virtue of restraint enabled Paul to pause – and choose not to judge; to pause – and choose not to speak; to pause – and choose not to act. Restraint allowed Paul to pause long enough to understand the people around him and decide how best to reach them with the good news. Paul did not go into all situations with his spiritual guns blazing because many times he was in the presence of new Christians or immature Christians who needed him to “encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, [and to] be patient with all of them.”

Virtue # 5 is **fidelity**. In verse 4, Paul praises the Colossians for their “faith in Christ Jesus” and then in the stirring Christ-hymn of verses 15-20, he describes how faith is connected to the revelation of all of Christ’s glory. Christ is “the firstborn of all creation” (v.15), “in him all things ... were created” (v.16), He is the head of the body” (v.18), in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (v.19), and “through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through the blood of his cross” (v.20). Christ’s divine identity, his supreme sacrifice and the total reconciliation he offers, become part of our Christian faith, Paul declares, as we “continue securely established and steadfast in the faith” (v.23).

“Keeping faithful” is another way to name fidelity. As with most of the virtuous attitudes and behaviors taught by Scripture, secular society has attempted to limit fidelity to a shallow, one-dimensional, “thou-shalt-not” command about sexual behavior. But fidelity is about much more than marriage and family relationships. Whether keeping the promises and commitments we have made, or maintaining our Christian character in the face of the promotion of the vices and violence in our culture, fidelity is about being true to the person God has created each of us to be so that we are our genuine selves with God and others.

Integrity is another way to name fidelity, and might be a better word in our cultural context because it does not have the same emphasis on sexual behavior. Integrity is nothing more or less than being true to who you are as a uniquely created human being. Integrity means that you are true to yourself in body, mind, and soul; that you strive to be the best version of yourself which you can be and do not spend time trying to be someone else. To practice the virtue of genuine fidelity or genuine integrity means to have no hidden agendas, no dark secrets, no surprises in our psychological or spiritual closets which cause you to present a false face to others.

The advertising and social media promote the following false belief: that we are “tied down” or that we are “missing out” when we commit ourselves to one spouse, when we commit ourselves to important relationships and when we commit ourselves to the worship and service of one God, one Way, one Truth, one Life. The ‘have-it-all’ culture says, do whatever feels good to you, don’t miss any opportunity to experiment with your life – with whomever you want – because you only live once and you deserve to live with gusto. But virtuous fidelity to family, friends and colleagues and faithfulness to Jesus Christ enables each one of us to be steadfast and true to ourselves. That integrity enables us, in other words, to be a fully integrated and mature

person. It is through fidelity that we become free from falsehood, free from confusion, free from coercion and free from collusion.

Fidelity brings us freedom because we do not have to always remember who we have to pretend to be with different people. You all would call that being ‘real’. When you are person of fidelity or integrity, you are the same person of character with everyone – you are your real self, everywhere and always.

In a world accustomed to flash-in-the-pan fame, where today’s hero becomes tomorrow’s nobody, where one bad “tweet” or Facebook post or internet photo can turn the tide of opinion against a person in an instant, it is difficult to be people of fidelity and integrity. In a world where fickleness is the accepted norm, how do we “practice” faithfulness? Paul gives us an answer in verse 23 where he warns the Colossians to remain “securely established and steadfast ... without shifting from the hope promised”. From this verse we can see that, for Paul, fidelity is possible, only when love and hope and faith work together, keeping us focused and on track in our relationship with God.

Virtue # 6 is **courage**. Have you ever noticed how routinely Paul mentions suffering in his writings? In verse 24 he actually says something shocking. He says, “I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake.” What kind of a lunatic claims to rejoice in suffering? What kind of crazy recruiter promises hardship, criticism, rejection, or even death among the rewards new members may look forward to if they join in the movement he/she is promoting? What kind of a virtue can be gained from the hard-core experiences of human pain and suffering? Paul – along with later generations of Christian martyrs – are those kinds of lunatics and that kind of crazy recruiter because they were advocates of the virtue of Christian courage.

When you think of someone who is “courageous,” what kinds of situations come to mind? Probably you imagine a person who faces down an armed gunman, or a person who rescues

someone from a burning house or car, or a person who donates a kidney to a dying stranger, or perhaps a person who stands up to the overwhelmingly evil forces of hatred or injustice. But is the virtue of courage really only about risking your life? If you manage to live your whole life without ever pulling someone from a burning building or standing up to a gang of thugs or fighting against an “evil empire” ... have you failed to nurture courage as a virtue in your life?

No. The truth is, the need for virtuous courage probably appears in our lives at least once a day. Christian courage is simply another way to say that you are willing to live your life in a way that denies your own selfish desires and seeks to actively live out the love of God towards others. For example: It takes courage to maintain the Christian characteristics of compassion and mercy and hope in a culture which rewards hatred and competition and greed. It takes courage to turn down the rewards of a big salary and high status in order to devote your time and energy to raising a family or following a calling. It takes courage to look at the decline of mainline churches in this country and trust that God is at work re-creating the Church for a new century. Essentially, it takes courage to live each day of our lives, not determined to hold tightly to what we have and what we have always done at all costs, but willing instead to embrace the new opportunities life presents to us and to look forward to the future with expectation. Christian courage might be nothing more than being determined to live with faith, hope and love no matter what is happening around us.

So friends, are you willing to participate with God in becoming more rooted and grounded in the life of Christ through the practice of the Christian virtues of restraint (or self-control), fidelity (or integrity), and courage? It will not be easy to do so, but the rewards are great and eternal. May God give us all the desire to continue growing in our relationship with God, through the practice of Christian virtue. Amen.

If you would like to hear the actual sermons, go to: www.quakermeadowspc.org. Click on the worship tab, then click on the date of the sermon at the bottom of the page. If that does not work, click on any sermon date and then look for the sermon date you want, in sermon list in SoundCloud.

Pastor Yvonne

Some Summer Fun

Nickolas Johnson was with us for a few Sundays in June and July. Before he left to return to West Virginia, the children had a party in the fellowship hall. As you can see, these kids are growing up fast!



Recent Graduations

On May 12, 2019, Greg Marler graduated from Duke University with a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. He accepted a teaching position at Appalachian College where he will teach students in the Nursing Program. His teaching duties began with an on-line course this summer, then in August, he will be working with students in the classroom and in clinical settings.

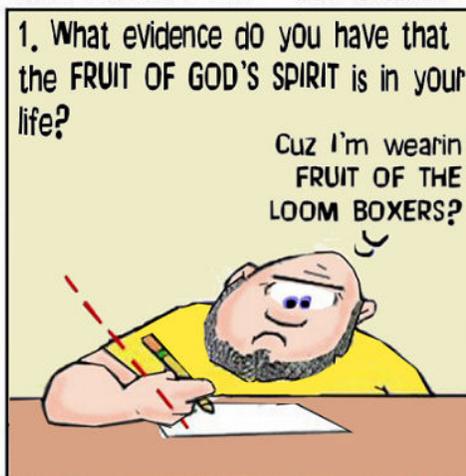
We are proud of Greg and wish him great success and fulfillment in this calling.

Anthony Burkett graduated from Freedom High School on June 07th. He and his family have faced a lot of obstacles along the way to completing this goal, but they all persevered. We are proud of Anthony and wish him continued health and happiness in his life.



https://www.morganton.com/gallery/photos-freedom-graduation-ceremony/collection_1c31a954-8b9d-11e9-84b2-67d874eb33f7.html#6

THE BACK PEW - JEFF LARSON



TAKE THE FRUIT TEST. Gal. 5:22
Underwear does not count!

<http://thebackpew.com>

Recent Improvements to Our Property

We have new carpet in the sanctuary and in the stairwells. Now it is much less likely that someone will trip and fall, since the ripples are gone.



Also, thanks to Mark Paul and Reid Pollard we have a new back splash behind the griddle and stove of the kitchen in the fellowship hall and we have new paint on the walls.





I include the following article, not as a political statement but because it is related to the idea I am

working on for my upcoming Doctor of Ministry project. That project will revolve around the question of how worshiping communities might process grief in a way which brings healing and transformation of the pain into something life-giving for the future. The 9/11 Memorial Quilt Project described below might just be such an example – and it involves folks beyond the Christian community.

Sew We Never Forget

Immediately following the tragic events of 9\11\2001, Amy Sue Leasure-Hedt, an avid quilter, mother, and sheriff's dispatcher from Prescott, Arizona, felt the need to create a multifaceted quilt project to honor those who were killed. Her quilt design provided a way for those who had lost loved ones, or for anyone moved to assist in this project, a means to channel their grief through participation in the making of this quilt.

Amy created a website specifically for this quilt project which provided the instructions for anyone who was willing to make a simple 12 1\2 inch block, and directions for the quilter to supply additional information so that the victim's family and the quilter could be notified upon completion of the quilt. Amy's idea of using patriotic colors of red, white and blue, and using a star pattern, would also provide unity for the quilt.

Sadly, Amy lost her battle with undiagnosed cancer in 2002, and the uncompleted quilt project was placed on hold. When another experienced quilter, Brian Kohler, from Seattle, Washington, recognized the significance of the 9\11 Quilt Project and the need to bring it to completion, he persuaded Amy's husband, Michael Hedt, to allow him to complete the project, and Michael personally transported the components of the quilt that had been completed to Brian's home. In Seattle, Brian, with the help of many devoted friends, was able to bring the quilt to completion, and the first showing of the WTC Memorial Quilt was displayed in 2004.

After the initial showing of the quilt, Brian was unable to dedicate the time and resources necessary to take the Memorial Quilt on tour to cities across the nation. Unfortunately, it was just stored away – until Beverly Kuemin successfully convinced Brian to relinquish the quilt to her care so that she could continue Amy's vision of bringing this labor of love and remembrance to the cities of those who assisted in its creation.

Beverly Kuemin (who is the sister of Ruth Preston) is now the keeper of the quilts and President of the 9/11 WTC Memorial Quilt Project. She has already shown this quilt in its entirety to four cities near her home state of Michigan, and it is her great desire to honor Amy's vision and to take this incredible quilt on tour for those who remembers the lost 9/11/2001. Amy's original request was for 7,500 squares – but she received over 20,000 squares from more than 30 countries! Her inspiring project produced 300 quilts, each 60x60 inches. Once these quilts have been seen in as many states as possible, it was Amy's wish to find a permanent home in New York where they can be exhibited for all to see.

The showing of the quilts relies solely on the support of generous donors. The 9/11 WTC Memorial Quilt Project is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Checks may sent be payable to:
 9/11 WTC Memorial Quilt Project
 PO Box 911
 Niles, Michigan 49120
 OR – GoFundMe.com: 9-11WTC Memorial Quilt Project

If you wish to see the quilts, they will be shown in Morganton at the Collett Street Recreation Center – 300 Collett Street:
 Thursday, August 08th from 8 am to 9 pm
 Friday, August 09th from 8 am to 8 pm
 Saturday, August 10 from 8 am to 8 pm

Admission is free.

Some Bible Trivia Answers

1. John the Baptist – Mark 1:3
2. Isaac – Genesis 27:22
3. above the Ark of the Covenant – Numbers 7:89
4. John – Revelation 1:10
5. Mount Sinai – Exodus 19:19
6. Matthew 2:18

Doings at Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church

Ministry with the Children

- August 04th – Pastor Yvonne (sermon), Christine Rose (downstairs)
 August 11th – Ruth Pershing (sermon), Rita Whisnant (downstairs)
 August 18th – Heather Kramer (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)
 August 25th – Kathy Staton (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)

Upcoming Events

- Thursday, August 01st – Vacation Bible school, fellowship hall from 12-5.
 Thursday, August 01st, 08th, 15th, 22nd and 29th – Psalm Bible study, pastor's home @ 12:30
 Sunday, August 25th – Homecoming
 Monday, August 26th – Circle # 2, fellowship hall @ 6

Birthdays

- Kira Good – Aug 10th
 Rachel Marler – Aug 10th
 Gladys Ross – Aug 10th
 Fred Williams – Aug 12th
 Faye Acker – Aug 14th
 Linda Mong – Aug 24th
 Mary Gordon – Aug 25th
 Keith Burkett – Aug 28th
 Virginia Whisnant – Aug 29th

Cover image: <https://www.isabellatailors.com/august-back-school-month/>