

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS

CULTIVATE



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Redeemer *Reflection* Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

Redeemer Lutheran Church 3637 Spring Arbor Road, Jackson, MI 49201
Phone: 517-750-3100 Fax: 517-750-4590
Email: office@redeemerjackson.org
Visit our website at: www.redeemerjackson.org

REDEEMER REFLECTION

*From the
Intentional Interim
Pastor's Desk...*

CULTIVATE

by Reverend Carl Bassett,
Intentional Interim Pastor

*"Grow in the grace
and knowledge of our
Lord and Savior, Jesus
Christ."*

1 Peter 3:18

*"Continually proclaim Christ,
admonishing and teaching everyone
with all wisdom, so that we may
present everyone perfect in Christ."*

Colossians 1:28

Dear Family in Christ,

Well, spring showed up on the calendar several weeks ago, but these past weeks the spring weather definitely arrived (occasionally interrupted by Michigan snow showers and freezes!). The signs of late spring are everywhere. People are out walking and jogging and working on their lawns. You see activity at the farm stands as they prepare for a new season. Backyard gardeners are tilling the soil and getting ready to plant.



Hostas are popping out of the ground, the grass is greening, and buds and leaves are forming on the trees.

Truly, spring is a wonderful time of the year because it is a time of growth. And so this is a great time for us to be talking about an important purpose of God's Church: **Cultivation**, or growing in Christ-likeness. The word

"cultivation" itself is a gardening term that calls forth images of planting,



watering, tending the soil, and eventually harvesting. And so it is a very appropriate word to use when we talk about growing in our faith as a Christian.

So what do we mean by “Cultivation”? First of all, we are not talking about *cultivating* plants, but rather *cultivating* spiritual growth and maturity in ourselves and others. We talk quite a bit about sharing the gospel, and the importance of people putting their trust and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. But God doesn’t want you just to put your faith in Christ. He wants you to grow in your faith. You see, faith isn’t just a one-time gift of God that you leave behind after you’ve received it from Him! It is a living, personal relationship with our Heavenly Father



through His Son, Jesus. When you come to Christ, you become a new creation in Christ. You are born again. Spiritually you are a newborn baby, and like all babies, you need to grow.

Our first text for this month says: *“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* Folks, we’re saved by God’s grace, and we need to grow in that grace. Growing in grace means growing in your understanding that you are accepted by God, not on the basis of your performance as a Christian, but on the basis of Christ alone. Some people might think that would cause you to sin more, but ironically, the more we grasp the grace of God, the less we will sin.

So growing in grace also means learning to live in God’s grace so that God’s grace motivates and sustains us throughout the day.

We are also to grow in the knowledge of Christ. Certainly, part of that knowledge is learning about Christ from the Bible as we read the life of Christ in the New Testament gospels, doctrine about Christ in the New Testament letters, and prophecies and foreshadowing of Christ in the Old Testament. But we are also to grow in our own personal knowledge of Jesus, as we walk with Him daily, as we spend time in prayer, and as we submit to His Lordship and authority in our lives through the choices and decisions we make.

You know, there is something wrong about a Christian who never experiences Christian growth. Trust me, if you had a baby who was not growing, you would be checking with every doctor you could to find out what was wrong. If you are not growing as a Christian, then that also means something is wrong. As the Holy Spirit leads us through God’s Word, He reveals to us ways that we can grow as a follower of the Lord Jesus. One question you should ask if you have never experienced Christian growth is: “Am I really a Christian? Have I really turned from my sins and put my faith in Christ?” Because if you haven’t, that would definitely be a reason why you are not growing. You can’t grow as a Christian until you first *become* a Christian. There must be spiritual life before there can be spiritual growth.

So, when we talk about **cultivation**, we are talking about cultivating spiritual growth, but we are also talking about cultivating spiritual maturity. Paul

wrote in our second opening verse, Colossians 1:28, *"We proclaim Him [Christ], admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."* You know, the word that is usually translated "perfect" is more accurately a word that means "mature, fully grown, complete, or finished."

But know this: there is a sense in which none of us will be finished growing as Christians until we reach heaven. We will not be fully mature in Christ until we die. And yet there is also a sense in which we can say there are mature and immature believers in Christ. The young believer in Christ has so much to learn about God, the Bible, prayer, forgiveness, sin, temptation, and a host of other Biblical issues. The Christian who has walked with Christ for many years and has spent time in the Bible and prayer, has been tested and tried in ways that a new believer has not. And so, even though we will never be fully mature as Christians in this life, we can become mature



followers of Christ. We should want to *be* followers of Christ. That is part of our goal as believers, and that is one of the main purposes of the church: cultivating spiritual growth and maturity.

Let the **cultivating** begin! Put on your work clothes! Plant those seeds of God's Word! Care for those seeds planted in You by the Holy Spirit! Look

forward to the harvest of souls that is ahead, as God brings forth growth!

Have a great month for the Lord!

Peace and Love in Christ,

Pastor Bassett



😊 **Mondays, Ongoing: Women's Bible Study: *Altogether Beautiful*.** This Bible study will meet every Monday morning at **10:00 a.m.** in the large *Connection* classroom in the lower level or live online. We will finish this study on June 21. A new study will begin on July 12. (Masks/distancing guidelines will be the same as on Sundays.)

😊 **Thursdays, Ongoing: Bethel Bible Study.** This Bible series will meet every Thursday evening from **6:30-9:00 p.m.**, through June 24.

😊 **Sunday, June 20: Fathers' Day.**

😊 **Monday-Wednesday, June 21-23: Vacation Bible School.** Evenings from 6:00-7:45 p.m., for 4-10 year-olds in our congregation and community.

😊 **Saturday, June 26: Mobile Food Pantry at Trinity.** From 10:00—11:30 a.m. Ongoing event, the fourth Saturday of each month. Redeemer partners with Trinity in this outreach to

serve the community. We need volunteers to be available from 9:00 a.m. until Noon. Hope to see you there!

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY AND GIVEAWAY

The Mobile Food Pantry is a monthly event that takes place in front of the doors of Trinity Church in downtown Jackson. Each month Redeemer partners with Trinity to provide essential food items for those in need in our community. Non-food specialty items are also offered to help fill additional personal needs, as we become aware of them.

We are collecting **toilet paper** for the June giveaway. This is another way we can help with providing necessities to our community.

Please put your donated items in the provided bin in the narthex.



The food items that we distribute are provided through Compassionate Ministries of Jackson County. This is a wonderful organization in the Jackson area, and more information can be found online at www.cmjackson.org/

If you'd like to volunteer and get involved with these **fourth-Saturday-of-the-month** opportunities to serve our community, please contact the church office at 517-750-3100.

Thank you all for being so generous during these unusual times.

TOPIC FOR JULY

The *Reflection* newsletter is meant to reflect Jesus through our lives into our community and the world in which we live. **The writing prompt for July is *Nurture*.** How can we help nurture a culture of faith through our home life and church family that will touch and include those around us? What would that look like?

Our print media, and all other communication from and through Redeemer Lutheran Church, is designed to *reflect* His light to a searching world. Send articles, information, and/or photos by the 15th of each month, to bennitt49@yahoo.com, to be included in the following month's newsletter. All submissions are appreciated and prayerfully considered.

2021 GRADUATES

Samantha Anderson—Jackson High
Kristofer Herrick—Vandercook High
Ellie Hoyt—Western High
Kaylee Hoyt—Western High
Matthew Mogle—Lumen Christi High
Connor Mogle—Spring Arbor University

When you see these young people, within our church family or in the community, congratulate them on this awesome accomplishment. Much perseverance went into the completion of their educational goals during these exceptional times.

May God bless you on your next steps. Congratulations, Graduates!
From your Redeemer Family!

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Call Committee is currently waiting for District, which is in the process of compiling a list of prospective candidates that are compatible with Redeemer's needs.

Please keep this ongoing process in your prayers, along with the members of our Call Committee. God already knows who He has planned for Redeemer's next pastor, and our prayer support is a key element in the *Call process.



*Want to stay up to date on the latest news regarding the Call Committee's work toward calling our next pastor? You can visit our website anytime at

redeemerjackson.org/news/pastoral-call-updates/. There are also updates weekly in the bulletin, on the slides, and during the pre-service verbal announcements.



OPEN THE BOOK & JUMP IN!

by Craig Britton

The end of June 2021, Covid-19 notwithstanding, the first Redeemer Bethel Series class in the "modern" era will finish its two school-year trek through the Bible. Nine students weathered weather, disease,

cancellations, and a first-time Bethel instructor and, after jumping in, in October of 2019, are stepping out knowing, and I believe, loving the Bible with a stronger connection to it than when they began.

The Bethel Series, originally penned in 1960, is a two-year "deep dive" into the Bible from cover to cover. Students who are ready make the commitment to opening mind and heart, as well as the pages of Scripture, to learn to hear the Word of the Lord more clearly and to, in the end, get to know their God in more profound ways. While accessible to someone literally opening a Bible for



the first time, even a seasoned student of the Bible can glean much from the approach taken in the Bethel Series. The series uses

various disciplines within the course to capture, center, and help the student retain the flow of the Bible from the Creation in Genesis to the final unveiling of the Savior in John's Revelation.

Memory of "Big Picture" concepts, by book and chapter, compelling visual illustrations, and even an occasional quiz, aid the student in seeing all of the Bible as an outworking of the promise God gave to His friend, Abram in

Genesis chapter 12:3, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Our Bethel graduates this June are:

Samantha Anderson
Blair and Peggy Bennitt
Cindi Byrd
Art and Naomi Drake
Amanda Kapp
Kris Nowak
Linda Tschabrun

Please feel free to "corner" any of our graduates or their instructor, Craig Britton, for more information. Our next trek through the Bible with the Bethel Series will begin on Thursday evening, October 7 at 6:30-9:00 p.m. in the Connection Room beneath the sanctuary. Classes meet once per week and follow the contour of a normal academic year with summers off. Please give genuine consideration and prayer toward joining this amazing journey through God's self-display.

ALL SUNDAY BIBLE STUDIES

Summer is here and we're praying that the summer break will help slow the spread of the coronavirus. With that thought in mind, May 23 will see the last Sunday Bible studies until after Labor Day in the fall.

This does **not mean** we should take a break from God's Word. It **does mean** that with the approach of better weather and the lifting of some protective restrictions, we'll all be able to move around more, and enjoy nature and travel a bit more like "normal."

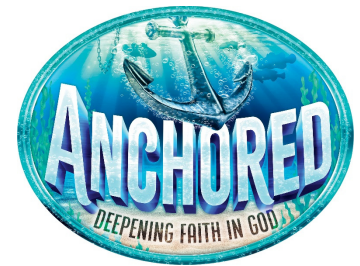
May God bless us all as we enjoy a new season and move forward with the hope and the promise of this next step in God's plan for our faith walk.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

by Kimber Walsh, CFLE

Anchors aweigh!
At Redeemer's
Vacation Bible
School, we will
deepen our faith
in God by diving
into



His Word, music, games,
crafts, and activities. Kids
ages 4-10 are invited to
join in the fun June 21-23
from 6:00-7:45pm.
Register now at



redeemerjackson.org or by
calling the office at 517-750-
3100. Are you still wanting
to join the crew? Contact
Craig Britton at
craig@redeemerjackson.org
or Kimber Walsh at
kimber@redeemerjackson.org to get
details.





JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Dave & Betty Lathrop 06/20/1964



CULTIVATE

by Peggy Bennitt

Cultivate: to prepare land for the raising of crops as in **cultivate** a field. 2: to raise or assist the growth of crops by tilling, or by labor and care. 3: to improve or develop by careful attention, training, or study; devote time and thought to. "He's trying to **cultivate** a better attitude." Retrieved from www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary

What do you want to cultivate at this point in your life? A vegetable garden? A new flowerbed? A better attitude? A more dignified persona? A better lifestyle? How about a more optimistic outlook? Better study habits? Healthier relationships? A closer walk with God?

When I hear the word cultivate, growth immediately comes to mind. Whether it be mental or physical, spiritual or worldly, growth seems to be inferred. If you've ever visited or lived on a farm, or have planted a garden of vegetables or flowers around your home, you know how to cultivate the soil and ready it for planting. Your hope is for a bountiful crop or for beautiful and healthy flowers and plants.

We work hard to cultivate our gardens, expecting the reward of fruit for our labor, whether it be flowers or produce. But many of us enjoy the cultivation process almost as much as the end results. What if we thought of our marriages and relationships as a plot to be cultivated? Include in this mix, our relationship with God.

Do you work as carefully around your spouse's feelings as you do around the root system of your favorite flower or tomato plant? How many of us think to



"water" our loved ones with praise and encouragement daily? We water the plants when the hot sun has beaten down on them all day. But do we have the same care for our spouse who may have been beaten down all day with the heat of perhaps deadlines or system failures requiring quick decisions or creative fixes? This is doubly important if you are "both" dealing with pressures in your careers each day. Be the "watering can" for your spouse or loved one.

Cultivate this thought process in your home life, as well. Water your little ones daily with love and godly attention. Kids are "working-from-home" too. Stay-at-home-moms/dads are really taking the heat from all sides and also need that "watering" to keep them hydrated with loving care. But the cultivation part is key. If we don't till the soil, if we don't break up the hard

spots and remove the stones and weeds, if we don't fertilize/feed the garden; the water can't sink in and the nutrients won't be dispersed. Without proper cultivation, not much will grow besides weeds. And even those are likely to be stunted.

Summer is here, and while most kids will not have school during the summer months, parents are still working. Many are working from home. Let's keep cultivating the gardens of our homes. Let's remember to "water" our relationships daily, with love, respect, and encouragement, remembering that God is the foundation of all relationships. If we cultivate our fundamental relationship with God, the rest of our relationships will benefit and flourish as well. God is the healthy soil; planted and cultivated in Him, we will produce good fruit for His kingdom.



Women's Bible Study

The Monday Women's Bible Study is looking at the book of Song

of Songs using the resource *Altogether Beautiful* by Heidi Goehmann every Monday, at 10-11:30 a.m., in the Redeemer Connection Room. We will finish this study on June 21. A new study, as yet to be determined, will begin on July 12. More information will be included in the bulletin and the July *Reflection* newsletter.



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Glen Speed	06/01
Daniel Herrick	06/02
Connor Mogle	06/02
Kris Nowak	06/02
Heidi Gannon	06/07
Chris Walsh	06/07
Elmer Mueller	06/10
Robert Kellogg	06/11
Josh Kuntz	06/11
Adriel Macomber	06/11
Liam Heffner	06/12
Donna Smith	06/13
Peggy Bennitt	06/15
Roberta Kellogg	06/20
Maria Boyle	06/21
Danielle Speed	06/21
Brianna Fall	06/22
Mardi Bartlett	06/25
Tony Mogle	06/25
Wanda Williams	06/25
Cynthia Ott	06/28
Levi Bahr	06/30
Phyllis Tschabrun	06/30

CULTIVATE

by Kimber Walsh, CFLE

Accidents happen. We spill. We say the wrong word. We trip. We forget. We

grab the wrong bottle out of the fridge. “It was an accident!” We are human. Accidents don’t just happen occasionally; they are a regular part of our days.

But do you know what’s never an accident? Cultivating. You can’t cultivate something by accident. Cultivating takes intentionality, focus, and work. It is never an accident to cultivate healthy, God-pleasing relationships. They are not something we just “happen” upon. They are not something we drift toward. Cultivating a relationship with God takes setting aside time to spend with Him in study of the Word to learn who He is and what He’s done for us; to talk to Him in prayer; and to receive the gifts He has to offer us in worship. We must repent and turn from our sin over and over again and allow Christ to make the relationship right again. We must allow our hearts to be changed by the Holy Spirit as He continues His sanctifying work.

Cultivating a healthy relationship with other people looks relatively similar—we must set aside time to



study who they are, to talk to them, and to receive what

they have to offer us. We must repent when we sin against them and allow Christ to make the relationship right again. We must allow our hearts to be changed and to grow because of the relationship.

It’s no accident. God cultivates us to grow us. We also must cultivate all of our relationships with Him and with people in order to allow them to grow, too.

LORD, YOU KNOW

Sometimes Lord, I wonder where I fit in and where I belong. I feel as if I don’t have any clear purpose and that my life is insignificant. But You created me, and You know for what purpose and to what end I was made. Please open my eyes to Your plan, to the uniqueness of my life, and to the purpose of my existence. As I discover who You created me to be and what You created me to do, help me find fresh joy and a renewed energy for life. Thank You for giving me meaning. Amen!

CULTIVATING FOR CHRIST

by Diane Siedzik

As we have all known in the past year, COVID has been a problem for some. Joshua 24:15... “as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” We have always tried to do this as a family. During this time when we get so many conflicting messages regarding COVID [protocols]—3 feet, then 6 feet apart; one shot, then two shots; antibodies lasting 3 months or 6 months; shutdowns, open states; one mask, or two masks; the never-ending so-called truths and lies—how do we as humans decide?

Well, for my family, we simply made the choice to trust God—completely.

When churches were shut down by our government, we had services with potluck brunches on my daughter's back deck, watching online church services with family and friends (without masks). We brought families to Christ who never went to church before this. (They have continued to attend church and have been baptized as well.) When churches were allowed to open up, we all returned to worshipping our Lord and Savior who has blessed us all our lives, through ups and downs, never leaving us.

As Christians, we look around and see people trusting in everything but God. Aren't we as Christians supposed to know that our God is all-powerful, all-knowing, merciful, loving, and the ultimate healer? He is our all in all!



Don't we know He is stronger than any virus? He knows the plans He has for us. He knows the number of our days. It doesn't matter what we do; that's not going to change God's plans for us.

How many people have masked, stayed away from church, gotten the shot, only to catch the virus anyway? Don't we know His plan for our lives is perfect? That means Perfect! Don't we know that if we get this virus, He CAN heal us? And even if He doesn't, don't we know we have eternal life with Him—forever?

We, as a family, aren't saying be irresponsible, or careless with your life; absolutely not! We are saying: stop trusting in society and fear, and be fearless for Christ! We need to cultivate



people who will have peace, true peace, knowing Jesus and what He has done for us now and forever. If we can't be fearless, how can we show others? So, this world and all its attempts to stifle us will not succeed.

Let us use this time to help show others how to be fearless for Christ, regardless of what is going on around us. God has this situation, and all of our situations, under His control. Trust God to get you through this time; there have been worse. If you can't remember them, just pick up your Bible and read the Old Testament. He has been, and will be, with us always. Trust in God alone, only then can we cultivate for Christ.

STARR COMMONWEALTH STEPS UP!

In response to an urgent request from the United States Federal Government, Starr Commonwealth has opened its

Albion Campus to help alleviate the developing humanitarian challenge at our southern border. A leader in healing trauma and building resilience in children, Starr has signed a facilities agreement to allow the Administration for Children and Families to utilize its 350-acre campus as a safe haven. ACF intends to provide temporary shelter for up to 240 unaccompanied migrant children as it works to reunite them with their families or sponsors. The “why” is simple and can be traced back to Starr’s roots: There are children in need of a secure place, a safe bed, and a beautiful space. Starr is opening its arms and hearts to them, and they would be honored if others joined them in this venture. If you wish to help, go to <http://starr.org/universal-hope-campaign/> and click on Donate Items of Need or make a monetary donation for general use. If you have questions, call Redeemer’s office at 517-750-3100.



REFLECTING ON SIXTY YEARS IN MINISTRY

by Rev. Wm. Gatz

Anniversaries are special times in our lives. This is

especially true for me during my ministry within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. On June 11, 2021, I will be celebrating 60 years since I was ordained into the ministry. It is only through God’s grace that I have had the privilege to serve Him. His Word has given me the power to serve the Lord for so many years.

God’s Word has been a guiding light and central focus of my family for generations. This began when I was young, as my own Mother modeled her devotion to the Lord and read the Bible regularly. After entering the Coast Guard, I became an electrician serving on a ship where I had access to a light bulb locker which allowed me valuable private time to study the Word.

For many years, I read the Bible from cover to cover on an annual basis. Since I’ve gotten older, I still try to read five chapters every day.

Reading the Word of God and keeping certain



Bible passages in mind has helped me to serve the Lord these 60 years. It gives me the power and incentive to keep going. Today, I still enjoy calling people to encourage them in the Lord and still have a strong desire to serve the Lord and touch hearts for Jesus.

Staying immersed in the Word has been the primary focus of my life. The secondary component of my ministry has been to spend time in persistent prayer. After I’ve read the Word of God, I start my prayer by asking the Lord how He wants me to pray. I also ask Him if He wants me to change or to grow in any area. As I pray, there are certain Bible passages which I keep in mind. I often meditate on Romans 8:26-27:

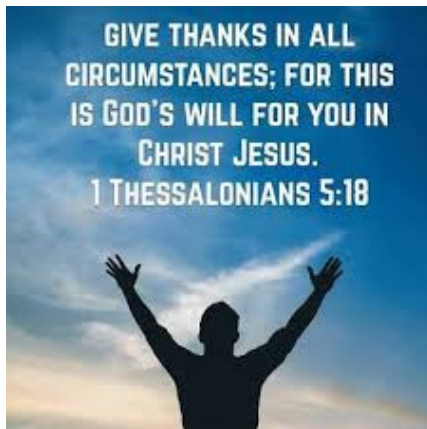
“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us...because the Spirit

intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

Also, James 4:2 informs us:
"You do not have, because you do not ask."

These Bible passages empower me and are kept at the forefront of my conscious prayer life.

I am humbled that the Lord would permit me to serve Him for even one year. I never even felt worthy to serve the Lord for one year. My favorite Bible passage is 1 Thessalonians 5:18, *"In all circumstances give thanks for this is the will of Jesus Christ our Lord."* I keep this verse on my mind whenever I need spiritual strength or inspiration. When I fell two years ago, and as I was struggling to upright myself, I found myself sitting on our deck unable to get up. I tried to quote the Bible passage, but all I could say was, "In all circumstances..." That's all I could say. It bothered me that I could not say the



whole verse. I worked all day trying to say the verse and finally at 2:00 a.m., I was able to say the whole verse. Sometimes the words don't come,

but the Lord truly intercedes for us. I firmly believe that if we are thankful in all circumstances, regardless of what happens, our bodies will begin the healing process.

I have felt the Lord's blessings upon me throughout my life. As I continue to use a walker to move and walk through



life these days, I feel so blessed that I am able to remain mobile. The walker allows me to go to church and to get where I need to be. It's because of God's grace that every day of my life I thank Him for the privilege of serving Him. I continue to serve as a pastor in various unique ways now that are different than in prior years.

Outside of my baptism, which has truly been the greatest thing in my life, I have been blessed with my wife, Trudy, and our family. We are thankful that our children and their children have remained regular in worship. I believe that this happens only through God's grace and His love steering us throughout our lives.

I feel blessed to have served four congregations, followed by six other congregations as an Intentional Interim pastor. I also firmly believe that it was God's grace that provided the lay leaders and congregational members to help carry out the Lord's mission and ministry. The only reason that I had the ability to serve the Lord for 60 years was because of these leaders and the people of the congregation who worked with me.

While serving Redeemer from December 1977 to May 1996, God by His grace caused us to work together to be a blessing for the Lord and accomplish great things. I have many joyful memories of my service at Redeemer Lutheran Church here in Jackson. Redeemer will also be commemorating its 60th anniversary as a congregation this year. So, in next month's newsletter I will give some background of the dedication of Redeemer through the years and a bit of the history.

God's blessings on your month!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
C—Denotes Communion Services		1 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	2	3 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	4	5
6 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Contemporary Service 9:30 a.m.	7 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	8 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	9 Quilters 9:30 a.m.	10 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	11	12
13 Divine Service—C 8:00 a.m. Contemporary Service—C 9:30 a.m.	14 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	15 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m. REFLECTION DEADLINE	16	17 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	18	19
20 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Contemporary Service 9:30 a.m. 	21 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	22 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	23 Quilters 9:30 a.m.	24 Bethel Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	25	26 Mobile Food Pantry @ Trinity 10:00-11:30 a.m. Need Volunteers from 9 'til Noon
27 Divine Service—C 8:00 a.m. Contemporary Service—C 9:30 a.m.	28 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	29 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	30	