

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
LCMS**

CUSTOMS

Annual
Picnic



**AUGUST 2018 PUBLICATION
VOLUME 11 ISSUE 8**

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: rlcofc@comcast.net
Visit our website at: www.redeemerjackson.org**

REDEEMER REFLECTION

GOING THROUGH CUSTOMS

by Pastor Michael Geml

The topic for the August Newsletter is “Custom.” A custom is a common practice observed among such groups as families, countries, ethnic groups. For example, it is the custom of people in the United States to celebrate the 4th of July. Customs are often associated with holidays, which makes the topic for August doubly interesting considering that August is the only month that has no holiday among its 31 days. So, since there are no holiday customs associated with the month of August, I am taking a different approach to the topic of “Custom.”

For those of us who have traveled between the United States and Canada, one must go through Customs. I don’t know why, but every time I have ever gone through Customs, either into or out of the United States, I get nervous. Even though I have nothing to fear, I still have felt a sense of guilt. You know the questions that will be asked of you but the nerves are still there. “Where were you born? How long will you be in the country? Do you have anything to declare?”

Do we have anything to declare? If you say, “no,” you will most likely be sent happily on your way. If you say, “yes,” the border guards just may decide to pull you out of line for some closer inspection of you and your vehicle. After all, that is the custom at Customs.



Now, imagine that the border crossing was a crossing not into another country but into your eternal home. To the question, “Where were you born?” Answer, “I was born in sin.” “How long will you be in heaven?” Answer, “Eternally.” “Do you have anything to declare?” Answer, “Yes, I declare that I

am a sinner saved by God’s grace and deserve nothing, but in Christ I have everything.”

For all who profess faith in Jesus, there is an eternal home that awaits us all. We wait in joyful hope for that day. The declaration we would make at the gates of heaven is the same declaration we are to be making in our lives as God’s children. “For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord...” (2 Corinthians 4:5). Those who declare faith in Jesus must be ready when the world makes that closer inspection of your life. “*Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...*” (1 Peter 3:15). The challenge for us is that speaking about Jesus to a doubting and unbelieving world is not our custom. But customs do change. And with the power and promise of God’s Holy Spirit, we can become accustomed to bold evangelism that relies not on gimmicks or trends or fancy speech, but on the Gospel, which alone is “*the power of God for salvation*” (Romans 1).

Speaking the truth in love,
Pastor Geml



AUGUST

Samantha Anderson	08/02
Blair Bennitt	08/02
Abigail Bahr	08/03
Kevin Herrick	08/03
Janet Gamet	08/04
Bob Rice	08/07
Andy Biegner	08/08
Ron Rockwell	08/09
Kay Burger	08/11
Craig Britton	08/12
David McFarland	08/12
Elsie Lyn Walsh	08/14
Dana Farley	08/15
Winifred Engle	08/18
Fran Althouse	08/19
Michelle Potter	08/19
Ron Ellison	08/21
Trudy Gatz	08/24
Nelda Hoffer	08/24
Madison Brandt	08/25
Caeley Schnebelt	08/25
Allan Arvy	08/28
Stephanie Herrick	08/30
Sophia Kane	08/31

1 Kings 3:14

“If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days.”

CUSTOMS

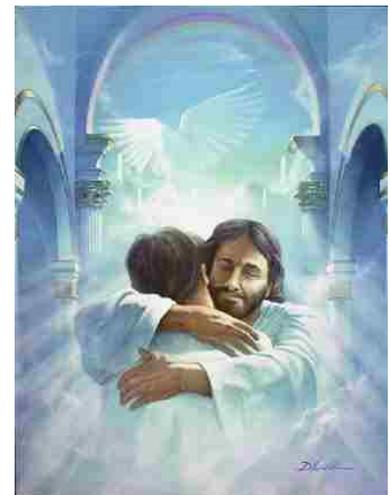
by Kimber Walsh

If you’ve ever travelled internationally, you know the process of going through Customs upon your return. On our return from a mission trip to Haiti, Customs was the only thing standing between us and getting home. The guard at the gate seemed to be our last obstacle. Or so we thought. Until we waited so long in the line for Customs that we missed our connecting flight. We were back in the United States, but we were far from home. We had much more to experience. We had more growing to do. And we needed to see God work a little more too so we would learn to trust Him deeper.

But then, there was the moment when we arrived at long last. My dad was eagerly waiting to give me a hug and welcome me home.

Sometimes as Christians, I think we see life on earth as “the one last obstacle before going Home,” that we’ll soon reach a point of coasting smoothly into eternity. But that’s not how it works. We have much more to experience. We have much more growing to do. And we need to see God work a little more too so that we learn to trust Him deeper.

And, so it is with our Homegoing. There’s no long line we have to endure. There’s no gate agent for whom we have to answer all the questions correctly. There are no forms to fill out. There’s just our Father, waiting eagerly to give us a hug and welcome us Home. It’s going to be the sweetest day in all our existence.



Praise be to God for His eternal gift to us through His Son, Jesus!



REDEEMER LIBRARY

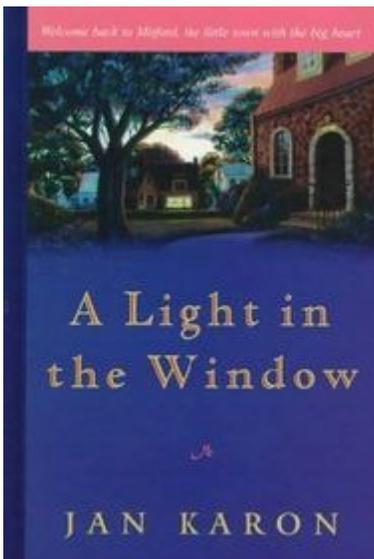
by Peggy Bennitt

For the past several months I've been sidelined by a car accident injury that has put even more limitations on my already restricted lifestyle. Due to impending rotator cuff surgery, reading has become my go-to activity and recreational outlet. Now, reading is not a hardship, but the arm-thing has literally "been a pain." But the amazing amount of resources available to me, has me reading books faster than our church library, Amazon, The Book Cottage, and The Book Exchange can keep me supplied.

God's ways are indeed not our ways, but He does expect us to "give thanks in all circumstances," right? Who knew He would give me such a lovely gift in such a strangely painful package? And yet, I am giving thanks daily for this opportunity to be lazy and indolent, but productive in small ways, at the same time. Because I've been able to read so much lately, I have some wonderful summer "reads" to share with you from the treasure

chest of our Redeemer Library. Check them out as you have time and inclination. There is something for everyone...and sometimes in the same books...books you may never have considered reading.

The Mitford Series, by Jan



Karon, is an excellent place to start if you might enjoy a relaxing escape to a small town filled with interesting characters and a parson/priest who readers can't help but love. Father Timothy is caring and approachable, while being human and subject to the same fears and concerns that come to us all as we try to love others while protecting ourselves from hurt at the same time.

Walk through the days and years, meet the characters and personalities who populate Mitford, and laugh and cry with the antics of children, church members, octogenarians, and animals alike. Meet the rector's Scripture-disciplined dog, Barnabas, who is the "size of a sofa"; his "neighbor," Cynthia, who writes children's books with animal protagonists; and the townspeople themselves who are all unique and give the story such a sweet, down-home flavor that you can't help but keep turning the pages.

Homeless, abused boys are taken in; an abused girl gets saved and receives a loving home; families are reunited and reconstructed; married love is found by a 60+ bachelor pastor; and a boy becomes a millionaire without his knowledge. Miracles still happen and good people are everywhere, in every life stage and economic situation. Life affirms God's goodness and His willingness to use us imperfect vessels to accomplish His plans for the many and the few. God is good!

The following are a few excerpts from several books in the Mitford series—a taste of southern comfort with home-style richness—

Light In The Window

"We are not necessarily doubting," said C. S. Lewis, "that God will do His best for us; we are wondering how painful His best might be."

He [Father Kavanagh] had spent an hour on his knees, asking for the best, believing in the best, thanking God in advance for the best. No, he didn't doubt that God would do the best...But yes, he was wondering how painful the best might be."

Father Tim: "Is there anything you don't love?"

Cynthia: “Crow’s feet, age spots, and good-byes.”

🦋 *These High, Green Hills*

“They walked home together after church, hand in hand...he felt free as a schoolboy, as light as air. How could he ever have earned God’s love and hers into the bargain?”

The point was, he couldn’t. It was all grace, and grace alone.”

“...it’s not having someone to love *us* that’s so important—but having someone to love, don’t you think?”

A Light In The Window and *These High Green Hills* are my latest reads in this series, with

wonderful bits of pure golden-nugget truth, and Scripture that lives a real life. Even though this might not be your normal genre for a

relaxing read, each book in author Jan Karon’s Mitford series is a piece of nostalgia, wrapped in everyday joys and struggles in Any Town, America. Welcome to Mitford—and—you might just catch glimpses of your church family as you read. Use your imagination and...

“Are you reading your Bible?”
“Ah, well...I was.”
“And then you quit.”
“You got it.”
“Then, you can expect to be weak on one of your flanks, and that’s precisely where the Enemy will come after you with a vengeance.”

~ Jan Karon, *At Home in Mitford*

Check it out!

There is a time
for everything,
and a season for every
activity under heaven...



FAMILY FAITH LIFE

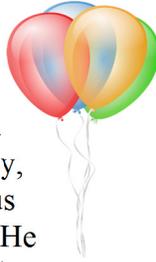
by Kimber Walsh, Director of Family Life Education, CFLE, Redeemer Lutheran Church



We have a lot of birthdays in our family in August—this year a couple of big milestone birthdays. And whether your family is celebrating birthdays this month or not, there are many ways faith talks can happen surrounding birthday celebrations and traditions to keep in mind throughout the year. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the way, when you lie down and when you get up.*” Here are some ideas to start your faith talks on birthdays...

- **Cake**—Most birthdays have cake or a treat of some sort, with candles to blow out. The tradition started because people believed that the smoke would lift their wishes to the Greek god Artemis, sort of like prayers. Thankfully, the One True God allows us to approach Him with our prayers all the time. As you think about your birthday wishes or watch others make wishes, talk to God about your big and little wishes, not because He’s like a genie granting whatever we want, but because He’s a God who cares about what we care about, and He welcomes us to come to Him with anything.

- **Balloons**—What makes a balloon a balloon that we know and enjoy is the helium inside it, leading it in a set direction; upward. Similarly, God the Holy Spirit living in us is what makes us who we are. He leads us in the ways we should go and points us toward God. When you see a balloon being guided upward by helium, think about the Holy Spirit in you, guiding you upward toward your heavenly home.



- **Presents**—Anytime gifts are exchanged, we can practice gratitude not simply toward the giver of the gift to us, but also toward the Ultimate Giver of all good gifts, God. What are some of your favorite birthday gifts that God gave you through the people around you? Have you thanked God for those things and the joy they brought to your life? Take some time to do that now.

- **Getting Older**—Each time we age another year, we get to see what God has done in our lives to that point. It's a



good time to reflect on the blessings and lessons God gave through the previous year(s) and talk about how He has given us everything we need to support our bodies and lives.

Try to think of everything you need for a minute, hour, day, week, month, year. Wonder together at just how big of a job God has in taking care of just one of us, and the whole world and everything in it! What an awesome God He is!

God is in the midst of all the fun celebrations we have too! How can you talk about faith as you go along celebrating birthdays this year?



BUILDERS is our new monthly Family Life Education time—covering various topics that will build up your family and build up the body of Christ.

We will meet the first Sunday of August, the 5th, 3:30-6:00 p.m. August's topic will continue the "Visionary Parenting" series. If you're a parent with kids of any age still at home, please join us to learn Biblical tools you can use with your family. RSVP on the sign-up sheet in the narthex so plans can be made for childcare and dinner.

Grandparenting

Mondays throughout August, 2:00—3:30 p.m. in Redeemer's Library, grandparents of all stages are invited to gather as we look at what the Bible has to say about grandparenting.

Practical tips for grandparenting in a variety of circumstances

including: divorce of your children, grandchildren living with you, step-grandchildren, spoiling in a positive way, navigating the fine

line between interfering and intervening, challenges with your children, grandparenting from a distance, changes as your grandchildren grow up, praying for your grandchildren, and leaving a legacy will be discussed.



We'll learn from experts in the field, and from each other, as we share our hearts for our grandchildren (and there will probably be opportunities to brag a little too!). It doesn't matter if your grands are little or big, there will be things for you. Questions? Please contact Kimber Walsh, Family Life Educator, at kimberwalsh@comcast.net or 517-750-3100.



Community Event

Redeemer is partnering with Trinity Lutheran to serve our community. This year's event has been moved to November 10th.

Each month between now and then we'll have a challenge item. These items will be in the bulletin to remind you and can be turned in in the narthex.

August's Challenge Item: Men and Women's Underwear (New!)

Besides these items, we need volunteers for each area, corporate sponsorships, bulk in-kind donations, and financial donations. Please contact Kimber at kimberwalsh@comcast.net or 517-750-3100 for more information or if you're interested.

CUSTOMS... the accepted, the usual?

by Peggy Bennitt

Customs and traditions are often considered to be the same things. While this can be true, it is not always the way it is. For example: it may be the custom to wear white only after Easter; it

may be traditional for a bride to wear white, no matter the season.

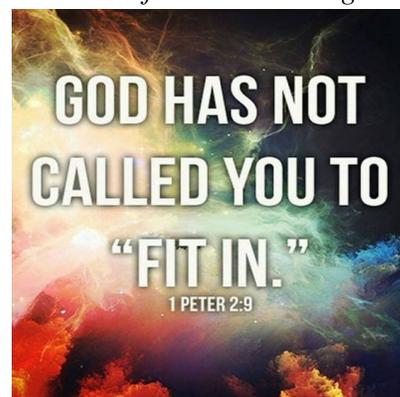
Customs are often defined as actions or certain types of behavior that are usual and traditional among the people in a particular group or place; something done regularly by a person or people.

In our family, it has always been the custom to pray before meals and at bedtime. Prayer is a comfort as well as an invitation from our God to share our thankfulness and to praise Him, but also to share our meals and our very lives with our Maker. He invites us to talk to Him at any and all times. Even as I say that this is a custom, know that it is not *just* a custom; it is a blessing and a privilege to be able to speak our hearts directly to our God whenever we need to connect with Him during the stresses and joys of daily life.

Customs often become norms in a culture, country or ethnic group, even when they aren't in accordance with God's Word and Will. We see proof of that with the Israelites and the practice of marrying many wives (Deuteronomy 17:17, "*And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away...*," a practice which they adapted from the pagan tribes around them. Life became more and more difficult for them as they assimilated more of the amoral and idolatrous customs of those around them. (Psalm 16:4, "*Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I [God] will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.*")

God is indeed a jealous God and does not tolerate disobedience lightly. Just because

something is a custom in our group/area/country, does not mean it is right or



good for us. But He lovingly gives us rules and promises, and blesses us when we follow His safety guides (commandments). When God's Will is so integral to our lives that it becomes a custom, that is truly a Godly custom, and He will bless it. God's people must remain diligent as we seek to make the Christian values a way of life—a precious custom.

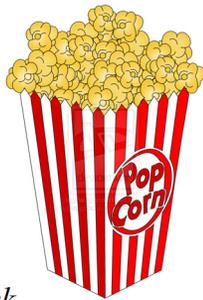
Popcorn Prayers

by Reverend Wm. Gatz

I send up many popcorn prayers during the day to the Lord. To me, “popcorn prayers” are prayers that we “pop up” to the Lord whenever we need a boost from Him. Most of us who maintain a close walk with the Lord realize the value of prayer. Such Bible passages like Matthew 7:7 are familiar to us. *“Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”* Personally, I have had many of my serious prayers and many “popcorn prayers” answered. God answers our prayers because of His goodness and grace. As sinful human beings, we don't deserve to be able to talk to the Lord, the Holy God, King of Kings, and we don't deserve to receive any blessings from the Lord.

Because of the Lord's mercy, He has given us permission in the Bible to pray. One is of these is found in John 14:14, *“You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it.”* In James 4:2, The Lord says, *“You do not have because you do not ask.”* The Lord is saying that there are certain blessings He will not give to us if we don't ask.”

I want to share with you a popcorn prayer that has been a blessing to me for the last 20 years. In the previous “Prayer Thoughts” I shared with



you in the Redeemer newsletter, the power of prayer is in the Word of God. We pray because the Bible tells us to pray. There are certain Bible passages that tell us about praying. The more trust we have in these passages, the more we will pray Bible passages like John 15:7, *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you,”* will help us. Also in Matthew 19:26, *“With God all things are possible.”* I have mentioned in other Prayer articles how I try to read the Bible through every year. Today, it takes me longer to read it through because I dwell on certain chapters.

For several years, when I read Deuteronomy 34:7, *“Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak, nor his strength gone,”* I would say to myself, it would sure be nice if I didn't have to wear glasses. I had worn glasses since my junior year in high school and simply didn't enjoy wearing them. As I read Deuteronomy over several years, I simply said “Lord, it would be a blessing for me if I did not have to wear glasses anymore.”

Before Trudy and I go on a trip, we always pray together that the Lord will send His guardian angels to watch over us and that we will arrive safely and return home safely. The “miracle” happened about 25 years ago when we were on our way to Whitehall, Michigan, to attend a funeral of a friend of mine. My driver's license indicated that I needed to wear corrective lenses. I had forgotten to take my glasses along on that day.

As we were travelling around Lansing that day, I realized I did not have my glasses. I freaked out for a short time.

After I settled down, I prayed that the Lord would be with us. We had a good safe trip to the funeral and back home. After that, my eyes had changed and I didn't have to wear glasses when I drove.



It was a miracle and I still thank the Lord for this special gift.

Since that time, I've had my eyes tested at the Secretary of State's office and I do not need glasses to drive. I debated with myself about sharing this blessing, because the "Evil One"



doesn't want us to share how the Lord works in our lives, or such instances that we feel are "miracles." Satan tries to plant seeds of doubt discrediting God's hand in our lives. Just about every day, I thank the Lord that I don't have to wear glasses. It is truly a gift from God to me.

Whenever I hear of a miracle happening in someone's life, I thank the Lord for that miracle. Keep believing that God will answer your popcorn prayers, as well as your serious heartfelt prayers. Keep remembering James 4:2, "*We do not receive because you have not asked of God.*" Have a great day in the Lord!

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEEMER MEMBERS

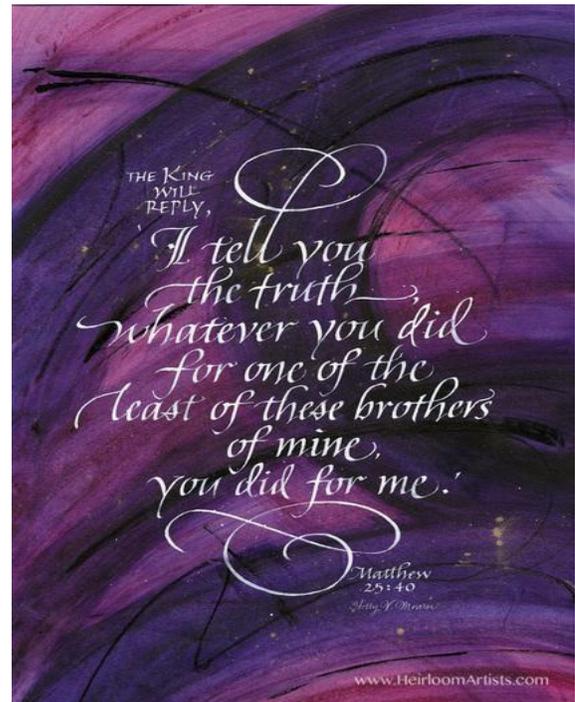
We are working toward streamline our present caring/hospitality/compassionate resources ministries into a new Ministry Board for the purpose of more efficient use of volunteers and resources to better serve our membership and community. This revamp will also help mentor new volunteers who have not been able to participate previously or are new to Redeemer.

We need help! Compassionate people who like to care for others through acts of kindness and helpful physical support are the foundation of who we are at Redeemer. Organizing these caring opportunities to better serve the needs

and to provide teams who can be contacted immediately as needs arise, would supply a usable listing for our new Office Manager, Heidi, to be able to contact the proper groups in a timely manner during difficult circumstances.

All of these ministries are already being done. But as most of these ministries are annual activities or unexpected/crisis situations, providing a listing in order to contact workers/volunteers at a moment's notice would be a plus. Some of the current ministries which would fall under this to-be-formed Board are: Kitchen upkeep and use, funeral meals, and holiday food baskets, meals for members, basic helping-hands needs for shut-ins, or special care situations. Our goal is to validate the people who wish to be involved in each area, and then provide a clear resource for contacting the correct people for the need of the moment.

A meeting will be held in the early Fall to help clarify areas and help volunteers determine where their gifts for helping can best be used. Watch the bulletin and this newsletter for more information on the scheduled meeting. Please contact Nyla Arvy at 810-923-8723, or Nyla.arvy@gmail.com for more information.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p style="text-align: center;">2 0 1 8</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.—8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Study-Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Divine Service— C 9:30 a.m.</p> <p><i>Builders</i> of Faith Families 3:30—6:00 p.m.</p> <p>C-Communion Service</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>Grandparenting Class—Library 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p>Prayer Chapel— Hour of Prayer 6:30 a.m.</p> <p>Elders' Meeting 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p>Quilters 9:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Ministry Council 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.—8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Study-Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p>Divine Service 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p>Grandparenting Class—Library 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">15</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>REFLECTION DEADLINE</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">16</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.—8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Study-Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">18</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">19</p> <p>Divine Service— C 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">20</p> <p>Grandparenting Class—Library 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">21</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">22</p> <p>Quilters 9:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Leadership Board 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">23</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.—8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Study-Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">24</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">25</p> <p>Men's Choir 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Men's Buddy Ball 10:00 a.m.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">26</p> <p>Divine Service— C 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">27</p> <p>Grandparenting Class—Library 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">28</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">29</p> <p>Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">30</p> <p>Community Prayer 7:00 a.m.—8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Bible Study-Craig's 2:30 p.m. in S. A.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">31</p>	