

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

43 N 3rd St., Hilbert, WI 54129

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July 2024

From the desk of Pastor Peterson

Grace, mercy, and God's peace to you from our risen, victorious, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The month of July is important to us as American citizens. On July 4th we celebrate our independence from England. The American experiment of our own democracy created a constitutional republic that has been the envy of the world for the last two hundred and fifty some years. As a nation, we have faced many challenges. For example, our nation became divided during the Civil War as North versus South fought a war over the role of slavery and states' rights. We have faced a depression, numerous recessions, two world wars, a cold war, wars and political upheaval and other trials and tribulations, yet we still are a nation that is unified for the most part by a constitution that has proved to be very strong against those forces that would change what our founding fathers had envisioned.

Since we are coming up on the 4th of July and preparing to celebrate the birthday of our nation, I was wondering about what to write in a religious newsletter without becoming political. So, I began to think about how we become citizens of our country. The most common way is being a natural born citizen. Of course, legal immigration is another way to become a citizen. I did a search of questions that people who want to become citizens through immigration and here are just a few questions from a test that is given to those individuals to become citizens:

A: Principles of American Democracy

1. What is the supreme law of the land? ▪ the Constitution
2. What does the Constitution do? ▪ sets up the government ▪ defines the government ▪ protects basic rights of Americans
3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words? ▪ We the People
4. What is an amendment? ▪ a change (to the Constitution) ▪ an addition (to the Constitution)
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution? ▪ the Bill of Rights
6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment? * ▪ speech ▪ religion ▪ assembly ▪ press ▪ petition the government
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have? ▪ twenty-seven (27)

As a citizen of this great country, I enjoy watching parades, both in person and on television. I enjoy singing our national anthem. July 4th is a good reminder of our citizenship in this country. We also have dual citizenship as well. God's Word tells us in **Philippians 3:20-21** ²⁰ **But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,** ²¹ **who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.** To become a citizen of heaven is totally different than the ways we become a citizen of our country. We become citizens of heaven by the grace and mercy of God. Through baptism we are made children of God. No citizenship test. No hoops to jump through. No vetting and looking into our background to see if we are worthy on our own. If a background check and vetting were required and determined by how we live our lives, we would never be good enough because of our sins.

So, on this 4th of July, celebrate that we are blessed to live in the good ole USA. Let us though do not lose sight of where our final country is so to speak, which is the new heavens and the new earth that is to come. In the United Kingdom (Note the irony here. They sing a patriotic song called "I Vow to Thee My Country". We may not know the words, but we are familiar with the tune of "We Praise You and Acknowledge You" from our

Lutheran Service Book. This song speaks of two countries, one is an earth-bound country, and the other is the new country, the Kingdom of Heaven. Here are the lyrics:

“And there's another country, I've heard of long ago, Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know; We may not count her armies, we may not see her King; Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering; And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase, And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace. “

Credit: *Words:* Cecil A Spring Rice 1918.

Music: THAXTED [Gustav T. Holst](#), THE PLANETS (JUPITER) 1917

We have all heard about another country and that country is heaven throughout all of our lives and we look forward to being with Jesus in the new heavens and the new earth that is to come. Our true independence came not on July 4th, 1776. Our true independence came over 2000 years ago, on a mount outside of Jerusalem, called Golgotha/Calvary. There Jesus won our independence from the Satan, defeated him, and sin. The greatest enemy, which is death was defeated after a three-day rest in the tomb, when Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus now gives us eternal life, and the promise of a new heavens and a new earth. Amen. Happy Independence Day everyone and remember that God really, really, really does love you.



Pastor Peterson



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

July

- 7th Neil & Tina Sowinski
- 9th Dennis & MaryKay Hein
- 17th Wally & Marjy Jentsch
- 27th Dale & Kelley Mueller
- 28th Ed & Debbie Manders

July

- 1 Kris Krueger
- 3 Beverly Hackbarth
- 7 Steve Hemauer
- 10 Preston Schwalenberg
- 12 Clara Lintner
- 14 Ruth Broehm
- 15 Taylor Weyenberg
- 19 Karen Price
- 23 Dravyn Voigt
- 30 Emily Hein

Our Response to His Love

	6-09-24	6-02-24	5-26-24	5-19-24	5-12-24
General Fund	\$1301	\$2602	\$1130	\$964	\$2005
Missions	\$110				
Memorial – Eva Kamps			\$900		
Totals	\$1411	\$925	\$2030	\$964	\$2005



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

Convention Highlights:

As expected, the LWML SWD convention was interesting and informative. The exhibits were inspiring and fellowship was enjoyable.

However, we skipped the mission walk due to the extreme heat on Friday afternoon. We did donate our mites, though! As noted by LWML President Eden Keefe, we were there “to worship, serve, learn, and give in response to His great love to us through Christ.”

Our Bible study was the basis for the convention theme, “chosen to love and serve” taken from Colossians 3:12-17. We were reminded, in verse 17, that “whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

We voted on a mite goal of \$220,000. Of that amount, 25% goes to the LWML mite projects voted on in Milwaukee last summer, and \$181,548.28 will be applied to the grants we approved for LWML SWD. In addition to that amount, we had extra mite funds during this biennium due to a generous gift and the withdrawal of an approved grant. Sometime this happens because other funds are received, or because the needs of the proposed recipient have changed. Our total mites available to grants during 24-26 will be \$236,548.28. Eight grants were approved for funding starting with Orphan Grain Train – Wisconsin Branch for \$15,000. All of the approved grants will be highlighted in the upcoming Mission Lamp.

Greetings were given by Karen Morrison, an LWML Vice President, and Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador, SWD Mission Executive.

Another highlight was the massive amount of the ingathering for state universities to be shared by

the campus chaplains. The original intended recipients from LaCrosse, Platteville and Madison received 150 bags of treats for their outreach, and another 14 boxes of items were shared with Mequon and UWM.

We look forward to the LWML convention in Omaha in June 2025 and the LWML SWD convention in Brookfield in June 2026. The Brookfield convention will highlight 80 years of LWML SWD!

Gifts From the Heart:

This is just a reminder to start watching for the school sales. During August, we will gather items for the Hilbert School District students. School starts on September 3, and we will deliver our gifts on or before that date. Watch the bulletin board for more details and bring your donations on or before September 1.

July Meeting:

Our July meeting will be held on July 9 at 1:00. Join us for Bible study and planning. We’d love to see all of our ladies participate. New ideas are always welcome! Bring your Quarterly for Bible study.

MISSION MATTERS

Orphan Grain Train

Orphan Grain Train (OGT)

Orphan Grain Train is a 501c3 Nonprofit Christian volunteer network that shares personal and material resources with needy people in America and around the world. Grain Train volunteers gather donations of clothing, medical supplies, food, Christian literature, and other aid to meet real needs. The Orphan Grain Train movement is a loving response to Jesus Christ’s example as a servant and His love for us.

Do you remember the days when there was a small garage unit located at Grace Lutheran in Elkhart Lake where members of our circuit could take items to donate for Orphan Grain Train? Perhaps not, as it was discontinued quite a few years ago because there was no longer anyone who could

manage it and deliver the donated items. Currently, we have an Orphan Grain Train center located in Westfield. Any group in Wisconsin can provide items for shipment or people for an occasional work day.

During recent months, many shipments of needed items have been sent to areas in need in the United States as well as around the world. Some of these areas include flood victims, forest fires, war zones, famine ravaged areas and other wide spread disasters. According to the March newsletter from the Westfield OGT headquarters, 53 loads/containers were sent to areas in our country and around the world from Wisconsin. Items sent included food, clothing, boots, warm coats, new underwear and socks, blankets, medical items such as ventilators, a donated surgical suite, tourniquets, heat blankets, hygiene kits, baby formula and so much more.

For more information on the Orphan Grain Train Center in Wisconsin, or to sign up for their quarterly newsletters, visit the following website: ogt.org/branches/wisconsin

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter Article – July 2024

The Rewards of Godliness

It's no secret that you can't bribe your way into heaven. No amount of good works will impress God enough to open heaven's door for their sake. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and the person who "keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). Rather, salvation is "the free gift of God ... in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:23).

So, your good works won't earn you the reward of heaven. But does that mean that there are no rewards at all? Consider what the Small Catechism says in the "Close of the Commandments":

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth

generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex. 20:5–6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.(SC II)

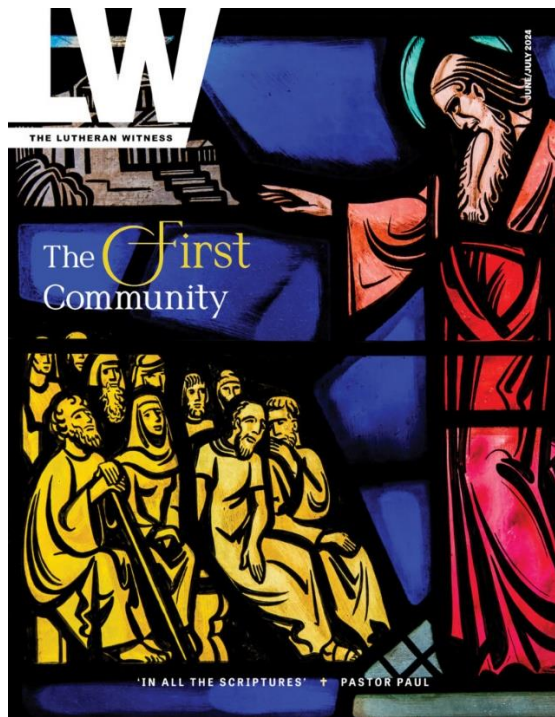
God promises to bless you in keeping His commandments. What might these blessings be? Well, consider what Paul says about keeping the Fourth Commandment: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land'" (Eph. 6:1–3).

And think about what your life would be like if you went around stealing (breaking the Seventh Commandment), telling lies about people (breaking the Eighth Commandment), and generally being cruel to those around you (breaking all the commandments!). That is obviously not a blessed way to live. In fact, you'd be miserable living that way.

And Jesus says more about what is in store for those who make sacrifices for His sake: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life'" (Matt. 19:28–29).

So don't grow impatient in doing good. Follow the Lord who has freely given you everlasting life.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry:
lcms.org/stewardship



Letter From the Editor

The First Christian Community

by Roy S. Askins

Theologians and pastors have often noted similarities between the situations of the Early Church and the modern church. And the similarities are certainly there. The first Christian community, which we see in the Book of Acts, faced a panoply of pagan nations that had no interest in what they taught. The church faced opposition, severe moral corruption, a government hostile to the Christian faith, and more. While the church in America today does not face persecution to the same degree, she must still contend with many of the same challenges as the Early Church.

At the same time, we also see distinct differences. The technological realities of the 21st century differ dramatically from the first century and have created a situation in which even the smallest scrap of attention must be closely guarded. The modern church today has the benefit of nearly two thousand years of history and settled doctrine. The church has faced many heresies, and — by the grace of God — continued to proclaim the truth. The modern church must also contend with the reality that the Christian faith is no longer

“strange” in the way of the Early Church. As with modern politics, it seems as though many moderns have already “made up their minds” about the Christian faith.

Whether you fall on the “we are in the same situation” or the “it’s just too different” side of the argument, one reality remains true: God. He has not changed. And neither has the way He provides for and preserves His church, in spite of the intervening two thousand years. Through the preaching of His Word and the administration of His Sacraments, God continues to ensure that His children are reborn, that they are fed on His body and blood, and that they are renewed through the preaching and study of His Word.

So, whether we are dealing with conflict in the church (Peter Scaer), the witness of the Early Church to the world (Adam Francisco), the care and planting of congregations (Phillip Brandt), or just the joy and opportunity of living together in community (Jeffrey Oswald), the Acts of the Apostles is a book worthy of our reading and commendation. In it, St. Luke records for us how our Lord worked through the first Christian community to send forth the Gospel into all the world. We have the opportunity to learn from their example and live in the faith they received and likewise handed down, through the generations, to the Christian church today.

In Christ,
Roy S. Askins
Managing Editor, *The Lutheran Witness*

Features in this issue:

- ‘With One and the Same Desire’: Christian community in the Book of Acts — *Jeffrey A. Oswald*
- ‘In All the Scriptures’: Interpreting the Old Testament with Luke — *Kevin Golden*
- Pastor Paul: How St. Paul cared for his congregations over the long term — *Phillip L. Brandt*
- Truth, Wisdom and Gentleness: The Jerusalem Council and conflict in the Early Church — *Peter Scaer*
- Devoted to Jesus: A reflection on Acts 2:42 — *Kenneth Wieting*

Letter From the President



The Collection: Christ's Mercy in Action

by Matthew C. Harrison

There's a theme in the Book of Acts that rarely gets the attention it deserves. In Acts, Luke provides the basic events of the blessed apostles and the church, from Christ's ascension to Paul's imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 33–61). St. Paul was brought into the apostolic mission because of this theme (Acts 11:27–30), and later encouraged all his church plants to participate in this task. He spent his entire third missionary journey concerned with this issue (A.D. 54–58), writing and speaking to his mission churches about it, defining it theologically, encouraging churches to get it done, arranging delegates for it and risking his life for it. He gave his life for this mission. What am I talking about? St. Paul's great collection for the poor suffering saints in the mother church in Jerusalem.

The words Paul uses to define the collection of money give us clear indication of how significant this matter was for him. In 2 Corinthians 8–9, the apostle calls the collection a “grace,” a “koinonia” (or participation/fellowship, a word he also uses for the Lord's Supper! See 1 Cor. 10:15–22), a “diakonia” (service/ministry), a “blessing,” a “good work,” a “eucharistia” or “thanksgiving,” a “liturgy” (public service), a “harvest of righteousness,” and more. These are the most powerful words St. Paul uses in his letters. And he uses them all to describe the local congregations gathering funds to assist suffering Christians.

From the beginning, the church cared for the needs of its people. In this they followed Jesus' own example. He cared for “body and soul” (Luther).

When we think of the money sack that the apostles of Jesus carried, we immediately think of Judas and his theft. The great Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard, however, noted that the money bag demonstrated the charitable work Jesus and the apostles carried on for the needy, and so Gerhard argued that pastors should also be concerned for the physical well-being of their Christians. In Acts 2:42 we see the earliest apostolic church concerned with the basics, which indeed ought to concern us today.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship [the collection of money and goods for the needy among them], to the breaking of bread [the Lord's Supper] and the prayers [worship]” (Acts 2:42). They shared everything. They voluntarily sold property to provide alms for the needy among them. When there was a crisis caused by some ethnic tension, the apostles with the congregation established an order of seven deacons to see that all the widows had enough to eat.

“Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” ... And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. (Acts 6:3–4, 7)

Along the way, Luke tells us that Barnabas (Acts 4:36–37), Cornelius (Acts 10:1–2) and other men of God were particularly generous in giving to the needy. St. Stephen was martyred in A.D. 36, and St. Paul was converted not long after. He'd been persecuting Christians. Barnabas brought this fearsome man and vouched for him before the apostles (Acts 9:27–28). There were waves of persecution and famine in Jerusalem as the Gospel spread. Persecution only caused the church to grow, and soon in Antioch non-Jews were believing in Jesus.

What to do with them? Barnabas was sent down to investigate. He summoned Paul, and they taught these new converts for “a whole year” (ACTS 11:26). Barnabas likely brought Paul in because he knew Judaism and had a record of zealotry for the law. I suspect, knowing how wonderful folks populate the church, that some Gentile convert, aware of the famine which hit Jerusalem, put a bug in Barnabas' and Paul's ears that it would be the Christian thing to do to help the mother church. This

was a crucial move, as the question of circumcision and following the Mosaic law as new Christians would burn intensely for several years until settled by the Apostolic Council in A.D. 49 (Acts 15). Remember, Paul stood his ground even against Peter on this, and the apostles agreed with Paul. After extending to him the “right hand of fellowship,” “they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing we were eager to do,” said Paul (Gal. 2:9, 10). What an impression the gifts of love of these Gentile converts must have made on the Jerusalem church. Humanly speaking, without them, one wonders if the mother church would have ever been able to get past the issue of requiring non-Jews to take up Jewish laws and customs to become Christians.

The famine raged in Jerusalem throughout the 40s and then subsided. Paul and Barnabas quickly moved on. The church in Antioch sent them on the first missionary journey A.D. 47–48 (Acts 13–14). After this they went up to Jerusalem and the circumcision question was solved with the apostles (Acts 15). Paul took off for his second missionary journey (A.D. 49–54). There is not a whisper of the needy Jerusalem church after 49 until the third missionary journey (A.D. 54–58). The conditions in Palestine must have considerably deteriorated again. We know there was a rise of “zealotism” A.D. 55–59, which meant persecution. There was constant political unrest over Roman rule and the establishment that cooperated with Rome. The zealots attacked anyone who cooperated, and attacked intensely any hellenizing influences. The zealots infiltrated the church and pushed against Gentile mission and Paul especially. The zealots were dangerous, and Rome later destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because of them. The saints in the mother church were suffering again. Now the “great collection” became Paul’s obsession. Knowledge of the Gospel of free forgiveness by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus produced love for others — Jesus’ love for others.

St. Paul’s most notable churches and compatriots were deeply involved in the collection. Timothy carried 1 Corinthians from Paul in Macedonia to Corinth. He received specific directions for the collection from Paul (1 Cor. 16:10). In fact, he worked with Paul extensively on all matters of the collection while a missionary in Corinth, Macedonia and Ephesus. Titus was involved from day one (2 Cor. 8:6, 16–19), and as a Gentile would have been particularly zealous for the effort. It’s clear that local

churches were planning to send their delegates with the money for proper oversight (2 Cor. 8:19–24). That’s who the list of men mentioned in Acts 20:4 were.

In 2 Corinthians 8–9, Paul provided specific directions. He urged the Corinthians to be generous (2 Cor. 8:7). He used Christ’s Gospel as a motivator. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich. . . . [The gift] is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have” (2 Cor. 8:9, 12). Paul cajoles the Corinthians to be ready. He urges them to set aside a little every Sunday. He brags about the poor “hicks from the sticks” in Macedonia who have given much to motivate the more cosmopolitan Corinthians to give more generously (2 Cor. 9:1–5). And Paul also writes all the great stewardship passages regarding the collection of mercy money for the suffering saints in Jerusalem.

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. . . . He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. (2 Cor. 9:6–8, 10–11)

In God’s economy giving to the needy does not cause one to become poor. Quite the opposite. God pours on the blessings all the more.

Like Jesus, Paul was ready to lay down his life for the mission. “I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13). And so it happened. After he delivered the collection to the church in Jerusalem, Paul was falsely accused and imprisoned for breaking Jewish law. While in prison in Caesarea, he shared the Gospel with King Agrippa and the Roman governors who held him (Festus and Felix). As a Roman citizen, Paul appealed to Caesar as was his

right. The harrowing journey is recorded by Luke with delightful detail.

Luke ends Acts with Paul under house arrest in Rome: “He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:30–31). There’s actually a church built above the very house where Paul lived. The best traditions indicate that Paul was soon beheaded by Nero in A.D. 63 at a military barracks just outside the wall, at the end of the Appian Way.

Next to the proclamation of Christ’s Gospel of free forgiveness, dearest to Paul’s heart was the mission of mercy. We do well to imitate him on both counts as individuals and as congregations and the broader church.

Recently, we have been sharing stories of the mercy work the LCMS is carrying out here at home and around the world. To read stories of recent LCMS mercy work, visit engage.lcms.org/mercy.

If you would like to know more about Paul’s great collection, you might enjoy *Remember the Poor: How the Earliest Christians Cared for the Needy* (cph.org).

–Pastor Harrison



From the mission field – Recovery in Ethiopia

by Cheryl Magness

In August 2021, heavy rains caused extensive flooding in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. On Aug. 17, the Akaki River rose rapidly, overflowing its earthen dike and flooding nearby areas in a matter of minutes. At least seven people died.



Faculty housing on the campus of the seminary of Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is shown submerged in floodwaters following heavy rain and the failure of a dike on Aug. 15, 2021. Rebuilding is underway with assistance from a mercy grant from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. (Photo courtesy of LCMS Africa)

Among the widespread devastation, the seminary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in Addis Ababa was severely damaged. At the time, LCMS missionary Rev. Eric Stinnett, who teaches at the seminary, lived in a home on the seminary campus with his wife, Johanna, and their four children. As the water level rose, it reached within a foot of the Stinnetts’ ceiling. The Stinnetts were able to evacuate without injury, but they lost many belongings and had to find alternative housing.

In the years since the flood, the Stinnetts have recovered well and have now relocated to another home on the seminary campus. A \$250,000 mercy grant from the LCMS is helping fund repairs to damaged infrastructure and the construction of new multi-family seminary housing across the road from the homes that were flooded. The new building will be able to house 10 families. In addition, the road near the houses that were flooded has been repaired and fortified.

Although the EECMY is not in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS, it has solicited residential missionary seminary professors from the LCMS as a result of LCMS missionaries’ interactions with the church over several decades and the recognition that the Synod and its missionaries are bold and firm in the proclamation of the Gospel, the authority of Scripture and its doctrinal positions.

July 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Altar Guild: Donna Marose DeAnn Eldred	1	2 7:00p Bible Study	3	4 Independence Day	5 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	6
7 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service	8	9 1:00p WIM Meeting & Bible Study 7:00p Bible Study	10	11	12 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	13
14 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) Fellowship	15	16 7:00p Bible Study	17	18	19 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	20
21 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service	22 <i>Newsletter Articles Due</i>	23 7:00p Bible Study	24	25	26 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	27 12:00 p.m. St. Luke's Picnic & 7:00 p.m. Campfire Service
28 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) Voters Meeting	29	30 7:00p Bible Study				

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion