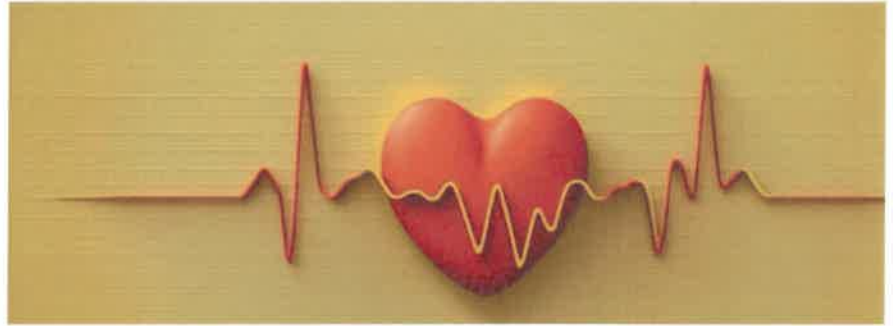


St. Paul's United Church of Christ
47 S. Whiteoak Street
Kutztown, PA 19530

(610) 683-3393

Sunday School for all ages 9 AM
Sunday Worship 10:15 AM

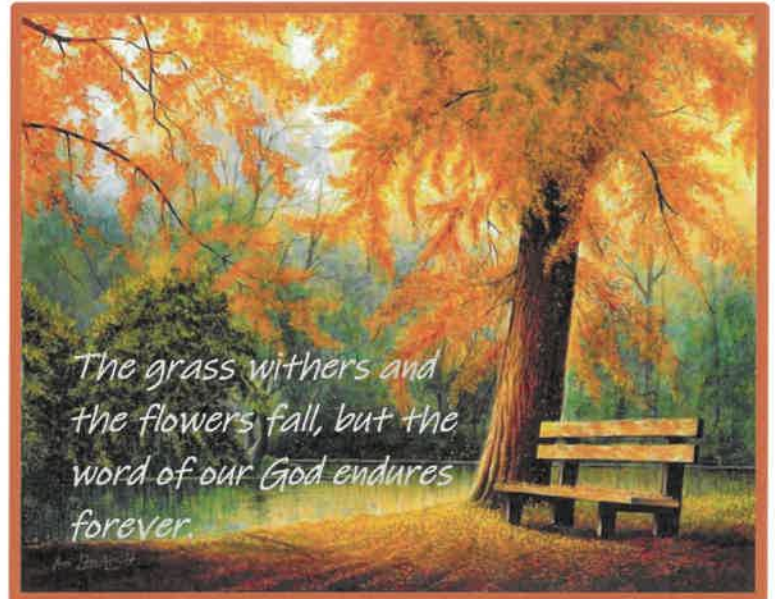
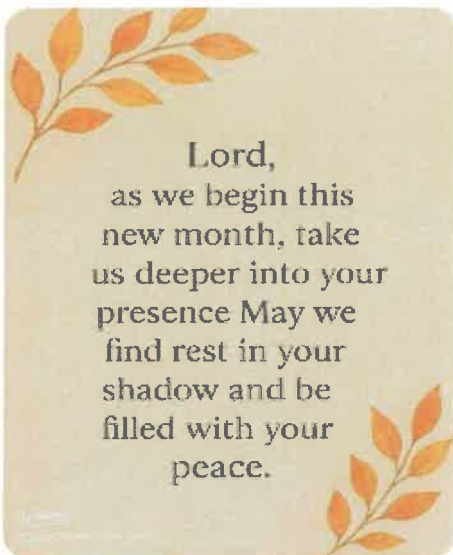
office@stpaulskutztown.org



The Pulse

SEPTEMBER VOL 57 #9

Of ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Kutztown, PA



HELP WANTED

Chairperson – Finance Committee
Volunteers – Property Committee
Please see Kathy Landis

Technology - Slide set-up & preparation.
Weekly screens and live stream.
See Laraine Wuchter

JULY 2026

\$38,594.57



\$15,731.20

With the coming of September, we conclude a year of ministry together. It's a good time to take stock of where we are.

Time has gone by quickly, yet richly. As I was preparing to return after three weeks away recently, I found myself smiling – looking forward to being with you again. We have come a long way together. Looking back, I recall below what I wrote in my Annual Report piece on 12/30/25 (also included in my Feb 2026 newsletter):

I fear that if we move too quickly, St. Paul's will remain caught in the pastor turnover cycle you've been experiencing in recent years, since a key piece of the process would be missing – digging deeper into the **Who are we?** strategic question in the long profile.

Why do I say this? In my time serving you so far, I have become aware of some behaviors that have hampered you in recent years and will surely hinder, if not sabotage, your desired future if we don't address them forthrightly. I refer to a seeming lack of respect in how some of you talk to and about each other and how you treat each other. These unhealthy behaviors seem to have embedded themselves into the culture of St. Paul's to such a degree that people don't even notice any more that they are unhealthy and damaging.

This assessment is based not only on my own direct observations and experience, but also on what you've shared with me in the Meet and Greet gatherings and other times. Some examples:

- "I want to see us communicate better and respect each other better and respect the pastor better."
- "There is a lack of respect for female ministers. We need to respect our pastor as the leader."
- "We definitely need some skills to communicate better."
- "Less bossiness – folks often don't even realize they're doing it, but it's no fun being on the receiving end."
- "People need to be genuine with friendship, not "pretend" to be a friend, and then turn on a person because they did something you didn't like."
- "When members see something they don't like, they gossip and make unfounded accusations, no direct communication."
- "St. Paul's is not a single 'church.' It is two churches trying to work together with the other, while each 'church' politely tries to exert its identity and fundamentally attempts to control the church's vision. They do not truly wish for a blended, modern church that benefits from each church's strengths."
- To this, another of you said, "Agreement among members must be in unity, for the betterment of the whole church membership, not individual preferences." This is spot on. The motto of the United Church of Christ, "That they may all be one," (John 17:21), points to this necessity.

From the Desk of our Interim Pastor

Unity doesn't mean everyone thinking alike or having exactly the same beliefs. However, I suggest that it does mean treating each other with respect and learning from each other's differing experiences and viewpoints. It takes seriously a core element of biblical faith that each of us is created in the image of God.

It's now late August 2026 as I write this. We have come a long way since I wrote the above words in December 2025. However, you (we) are not out of the woods yet. Sure, morale is up. There are more smiles and cooperation, yet this progress can easily backslide without a strong foundation.

As I've noodled with how we can keep moving forward, I've come to see that it's less of a training issue on how to listen better, or how to speak more respectfully. Rather, it's more about creating deeper, more meaningful connections with each other. The better you know each other, the better you will speak to, listen to, and treat each other and your pastors. And the less likely you will allow yourself to get caught up in drama and respond in unkind ways.

That is, I've come to realize that the fertile ground that fosters this unhelpful behavior is that the people of St. Paul's – collectively – don't know each other so well. Rather, you know well those in your own group – the folks you naturally hang around with (and so treat them well because you understand each other pretty well). However, there are a number of different groups (cliques) at St. Paul's. While this clumping is natural human behavior, it is not helpful for a Christian faith community that is commanded by Christ to "love one another," - to relate to the image of God in which each of us is made.

The better you know each other individual to individual, the healthier the congregation will be. This doesn't mean you have to like everyone, but it does mean extending yourself to learn about another's life: what gives them joy? What challenges are they facing these days? Questions driven by a genuine curiosity to learn about the other's life.

During the recent listening groups facilitated by the PSC (Pastor Search Committee), a question you were asked was: *What we can do to help the Pastor feel comfortable and successful with our congregation, to ensure his/her success?* One of you responded, *"Be a friend to them.* This is spot on. That is, take the initiative to meet up with them, to learn each other's stories, likes, dislikes, etc. Don't be passive.

The good news is that you do know how to do this and, in fact, are doing it. The PSC is a shining example of this happening. My observation is that these six individuals on the PSC come from different subgroups within St. Paul's, and yet, with specific intention, they are fostering deeper and richer connections with each other. They have become a good example of our UCC motto, "That they may be one."

I invite you to ask them about it: How do they feel towards each now, versus when they started together? How have they learned about each other individually and deepen their connections with each other? What advice would they give to you (others in the congregation) about how to do this? As a reminder, the PSC members are: Daryn Keim, Sue Kunkle, Keith Wuchter, Mandy Boyer, Barb Krause, and Ray Oswald.

I offer you this challenge: in the coming weeks, get better acquainted with someone at St. Paul's. By better acquainted I mean get past names and into learning about their joys and struggles – their humanity – what gets them out of bed in the morning, what makes them sad, etc.

Pick someone you don't know very well, perhaps someone who doesn't seem very interesting to you or that perhaps you don't like very much. Reach out to make friends with them. Move from being just an acquaintance to being a friend.

The better you know each other individual to individual, the healthier the congregation will be. It will take concerted effort by everyone to continue this good trend. Don't be passive. Take the initiative. It will pay off.

We're in this together,

Rev. Jim

WHAT IS YOUR MOST CHERISHED POSSESSION?

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

If you were asked to name your most cherished possession, what would come to mind? Perhaps it is a sentimental piece of jewelry passed down through generations, an album of photographs capturing precious memories, or the house you have worked so hard to make a home. We all have items that hold deep personal value. These possessions can be wonderful gifts that enrich our lives, but they are all temporary. They can be lost, broken, or left behind. In our quietest moments, God gently invites us to consider a deeper question: where do we store our ultimate treasure?

Jesus reminds us that whatever we treasure most is what will capture our hearts. If our focus is on accumulating wealth, status, or material goods, our hearts will be anchored to the fleeting and uncertain things of this world. This can lead to a life of anxiety, constantly striving to protect what we have and gain what we do not. But there is a treasure that will never fade, rust, or be stolen: our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This is the one possession that holds eternal value and offers unshakable security.

When we cherish our walk with God more than anything else, our hearts find their true home. Our identity is no longer tied to what we own but to whose we are. We begin to see the world differently, recognizing that the greatest blessings are not found in possessions but in His presence, His grace, and His unfailing love. Take a moment to reflect on where your treasure truly lies.

- Dr. Joe Pettigrew

Thought of the Day

Let us ask God to align our hearts with His, so that we may cherish Him as our most precious possession, the source of all lasting joy and peace.

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. James Latimer.....Interim Pastor
Barbara Merkel.....Admin Assistant/
Editor

Judy Heffley Organist
Donna Sheaffer Bell Choir Director
Cathy Dill.....Bell Choir Director
Sue Kunkel.....Custodian

Church Officers

Kathy LandisConsistory President
Sherry Leinbach.....Consistory V.P.
Gerald Silberman.....Consistory Secretary
Laraine Wuchter..... Treasurer
Marjorie WeidaFinancial Secretary

St. Paul's UCC belongs to the
Covenant Association, Keystone
Conference of the United
Church of Christ.

Association Website:

<https://covenantassociation.org>

Keystone Conference Website:

<https://keystoneucc.org>

United Church of Christ website:

<https://www.ucc.org>

God wrecks your
plans when He
sees your plans
are about to
wreck you.

Let.

That.

Sink.

In.

Anything Goes On



August 2nd was a busy Sunday in Kutztown and the surrounding area. It was also our Rejoicing Spirits worship service. Thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy day to worship with us.

Pastor Dennis Ritter was the lead pastor. His message was "Surprised by God." Pastor Ritter shared a short story from "The Magic Stone" by James Henderschedt. Carl read from the book of Matthew, chapter 14, verses 13-21, sharing the story of the "five loaves of bread and two fish." Many of us heard the same scripture at the 10:15 service.

In addition to our usual music, we sang the third verse of Away in a Manger. Pastor Ritter explained that this was his favorite song. Dave Miller added to our service by playing guitar.

Louise brings snacks for every fellowship time. Thank you, Louise! This week we had additional snacks thanks to Christine Keim who provided snacks for St. Paul's fellowship time and kindly donated the remaining snacks for our RS fellowship.

Take a look at the hallway bulletin board. See how many Rejoicers, families and volunteers you recognize.

Hope to see you in September!

Blessings,
Erin



PRAYER LINKS

Prayer Links Group is up and running. We will have our first meeting on August 25th at 3:00 PM in the church lounge. Our devoted members are Joan Bieber, Pat Bubbenmoyer, Ethel DeMatteo-Beck, Joan Gangewere, Denise Keim, and Erin Webb.

If you, your family, or friends need prayer, you can leave a message with Barbara in the church office or call me at 610-683-8091. This information is confidential and is only shared within the group.

This is an important ministry of our church, and we would encourage you to use it. God Bless.

- Ethel DeMatteo-Beck, Group Leader



Daryn Keim – Pastor Search
Committee Chairperson
Mandy Boyer – Secretary
Keith Wuchter – Chaplain
Sue Kunkel
Barbara Krause
Ray Oswald

Greetings from the Pastor Search Committee. Great news!! We have a rough draft of the Long Profile. (And the people said, AMEN!) Our committee met on Saturday, August 1, and at that meeting we started the process of editing. Editing our rough draft includes proofreading what we have written line by line, updating all information and pictures, and most importantly representing our church in an open and honest format.

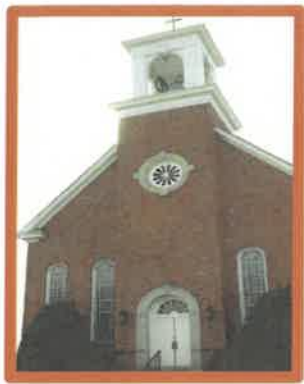
Prior to this meeting we contacted each committee, and they were given some “homework” to complete, by August 16. Each committee was asked to review their purpose and provide a description of what they do here at St. Paul’s. We also asked them to provide any requests they have of our future settled Pastor. I am pleased to say we have had a great response from numerous committees. Our finance committee is working hard on determining a salary that we can offer, along with updating all our account balances that will then be presented in the profile.

Going forward our committee will start to meet weekly. Our next meeting is scheduled for August 16 after worship. Our goal is to have the profile completed no later than the end of September. Once again, we thank you for your continued prayers, kindness, and support. Having the congregation’s input and support means a lot to us, and that support keeps us inspired to do our absolute best.

My great-grandmother Gertie taught me a saying, and it went like this:

Good, better, best.
Never let it rest.
Until your good gets better.
And your better, best!

Daryn Keim
Pastor Search Committee Chairman



Greetings from Consistory

Kathy Landis, Consistory President

The Kutztown Fire Department will be available to give instructions on how to properly use a fire extinguisher, but firefighter Robert (Bob) Houck is planning to instruct only the Consistory on September 9th. Depending on how this goes, Mr. Houck may return to instruct other members of the congregation if requested.

Rev. Jim opened with the devotions based on the beautiful song "Day by Day" sung and played on guitar.

Financial Report - Jerry reported on the Financials and the Treasurer's Report: The total value of our trust funds, including the memorial fund monies, decreased this month by \$41,468.44 primarily due to Market losses and the quarterly funds withdrawn to support the Church's operating budget. The previous month showed an increase of \$4,462.59.

Treasurer Report - July contributions were much higher than expected at \$11,529. This is the highest amount the church has collected in July over the past six years. The total general contributions are 10% higher ahead of last July. We remain on budget for expenses, but it is higher than last year partially due to increase in utilities, insurance, and property maintenance.

Pastor's Report - Rev. Jim summarized his activities for the month. He and St. Paul's begin their second 12-month contract on September 2, 2026. While he is away August 31 – September 17, Pastor Sara Herzog will serve during that time. He continues to guide the Pastor Search Team in creating the Long Profile.

Christian Education - Vacation Bible School July 19-23 at St. Paul's with Trinity Lutheran Church.

Home Communion/Visitation Process - At recent visitations/communion with two of the homebound patients in the Memory Unit at Topton, they did not recognize either member of the visiting team, and the appointment caused the patients to be agitated with one refusing communion. One suggestion as a result is to stop the visitations with these members since they were upset and did not understand. In the Consistory meeting, however, it was suggested that a meeting be held with all the participating elders and helpers to determine the best way to address the issue.

Finance Committee - The Finance Committee has decided on a proposed salary plus housing scale for a new pastor based on the amount of experience. Many factors were considered including rates mentioned on Zip Recruiter for local pastors, the conference guidelines based upon local teachers' salaries, and the actual amounts given to pastors here since 2018. The proposed amount for a future pastor has been forwarded to the Pastor Search Committee for their review.

Prayer Links - Since Ethel DeMatteo-Beck volunteered to head the committee, Prayer Links is up and running. The first meeting will be August 25 at 3 PM in the Lounge. Anyone who would like to participate is welcome to attend. This is an important ministry of our church, and you are encouraged to use it.

Property - The Property Committee has recently added another willing volunteer to the group: Jeff Schmoyer. He has joined Dave Abel and Steve Leinbach. There are many tasks awaiting the committee, one of which is to clean up the former restroom in the basement.

Exterior Church Enhancements - A Beautification Team was formed with Sandy Fenstermacher, Sue Kunkel, Kathy Landis, Jeff Schmoyer, and Louise Wessner. Wreaths have been purchased and hung on the front doors of the church. The dumpster was moved further away from the back entrance, and the cabinet was placed in the basement. Plants were placed at the back entrance. Other items are in the works including new signage at the front and back of the church and additional plantings at the front of the church. The purpose of the team is to make the church more visible and welcoming. However, the ultimate welcome comes from our members with newcomers and each other.

The meeting ended with everyone reciting "Some Moravian Perspectives," much like our UCC belief in Unity—May We All Be One.

Join we all with one accord; praise we all our common Lord; for we all have heard his voice, all have made his will our choice. Join we with the saints of old, no more strangers in the fold, one the Shepherd who us sought, one the flock his blood has brought. One the name in which we pray, one our Savior day by day; with one cup and with one bread thus, one covenant way we tread. One in Spirit, one in life, one amid earth's frequent strife, one in faith and one in love, one in hope of heaven above.



YOUNG AT HEART

On Wednesday, July 15, Young at Heart featured David Bullock, a former Graphic Design Professor at Kutztown University and world traveler, presenting his Jaunting Abroad tour.

In addition to the opening prayer, a big surprise was the playing of "Around the World in 80 Days" sung by Bing Crosby. Sandi Madeira brought it to life through the internet on her cell phone. That was the first for Young at Heart presentations!

David revealed that it was a life-changing experience from his own planned trip around the world in 1968 when he was 29 years old. He found it difficult to leave his aging mother, but he taught her how to drive and get her license so she could be more independent without him. For many years David had this dream to someday circle the globe and decided it was now or never.

He started out in Europe where he bought a VW Beetle to travel around with friends starting out with another U. S. young man for the first month. After that he befriended people who at times would cram into his Beetle and join him temporarily. Other times, he journeyed by himself.

Travels included many countries in Europe especially Switzerland, and more countries in the Middle East, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan, Israel, Greece, Palestine, Singapore, Vietnam (when the war had just begun), Hong Kong. At that time, he was not allowed to enter China, but a friendly person took him to a place where he could see it across a river.

Many attendees at the program commented on how much they enjoyed the presentation. It was unlike many tours where the traveler highlights slides of the places visited. Dave's show was very different as he featured the people and their culture. Most of the photos were of the residents of their country often engaging in work activities and entertainment indicative of their daily lives. One example was the Swiss farmers and wives gathering potatoes during harvest time and later enjoying festivities with local music on the accordion accompanied by singing, yodeling, and dancing. David met so many natives he befriended in spite of the language barrier. In Switzerland, he developed relationships with people there whom he returns to see again and again.

David wrote a book entitled Jaunting Abroad for sale on Barnes and Noble and other internet sources. He also donated a book to St. Paul's which is located in the church library.

Lots of delicious refreshments were served including cookies, meat and cheese tray, blueberry pie and ice cream, and fresh fruit.

Thank you, David Bullock, for your lively presentation attended by seventeen people, eight from the community and nine from St. Paul's.

YAH upcoming schedule for 2026:

September 16- Weaving a "Witches Hat "with Debbie Zvanut

Many thanks to the Young at Heart team: Sharon Kozlowski, Sandi Madeira, and Ethel DeMatteo-Beck. Also, kudos to Barb Merkel for her valuable support.

Submitted by: Kathy Landis



Linda Arndt	September 1
Aaron Kulp	September 1
Caleb Moyer	September 1
Myles Moriarty	September 2
Nancy O'Neil	September 3
Julie Schmoyer	September 3
Lois Beekey	September 5
Sandy Scholar	September 5
Christine Keim	September 5
Robert Heffner	September 7
Ann Oswald	September 7
Marilyn (Pal) Eckert	September 11
Sherry Leinbach	September 13
Kimberly Arndt	September 13
Connie Ashenfelder	September 16
John Printz	September 22
Shirley Stricker	September 23
Jan Lenich	September 23
Kathryn Landis	September 27
Taylor Fenstermacher	September 28
Joan Gangewere	September 30



GRACE NOTES

**They might not
run into a
church building
but they could
run into you.**

They might never step inside a church building. They might never lift their hands in worship or sit through a Sunday sermon. But they will run into you. And when they do, what will they encounter? Will they feel judged...or will they feel loved? Will they see religion...or will they see Christ?

You may be the only reflection of Jesus someone ever meets. Your patience in conflict. Your kindness when it is undeserved. Your integrity when no one is watching. Your forgiveness when it would be easier to hold a grudge.

The Gospel is not confined to four walls. It walks into workplaces. It sits at dinner tables. It shows up in comment sections. It responds gently. It serves quietly. It loves boldly. People might avoid a church, but they cannot avoid the way you live.

Be a living testimony.

Be grace in action.

Be truth wrapped in love.

**Be the reason someone reconsiders
God.**

Because sometimes the closest thing they will ever get to a church...is you!

Salt & Light
saltandlight.words



BEAUTIFICATION GROUP – Sandy Fenstermacher, Sue Kunkel, Kathy Landis, Jeff Schmoyer, Louise Wessner

Scripture reminds us that God is a God of beauty, order, and renewal. To reflect this in our own spiritual home, we are launching a Beautification Group. This team will focus on making our sanctuary and grounds more welcoming and inspiring for everyone who walks through our doors. You will notice wreaths have been hung on the front doors of the church. To make our main entrance more pleasing the dumpster has been moved and the storage cabinet has been moved to the basement where it will be better utilized. As our church grows more beautiful on the outside, may it inspire a deep, renewed faith within each of our hearts. – Barbara Merkel



Wreaths placed on the Sanctuary doors.



New home in the basement to be used for storage.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

September 3 - Rejoicing Spirits @ 3:00 PM
 September 4 - Community Lunch at St. Barnabas 11 AM
 September 6 - Coffee, Cars, Cops 7:00 AM
 September 12 - Prayer Walk at Kutztown High 9:00 AM
 September 12 - Flash Train Meet at Renninger's 8:00AM-2:00 PM
 September 13 - Rally Day at St. Paul's
 September 19 - Fall Fest on Main 3:00 - 9:00 PM
 The Barnstormers @ Trinity Lutheran 7:30 PM
 September 20 - Outdoor worship/Picnic at Wessner's Grove 10:15 AM
 September 23 - Women's Guild Meeting 6:00 PM
 September 26 - Heemet Fescht at PA German Cultural Heritage Center 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
 September 27 - Kutztown Octoberfest 12 Noon - 5:00 PM

Alburtis Park Country Music Shows

Sunday Evenings: Alburtis Park Opens 12 Noon

- Bingo 12 to 6 pm / Jackpot at 6 pm
- Bands play 2-6 pm
- Pennsylvania Dutch Cooking!
- Free Admission -- Free Parking

<https://www.alburtispark.net/#Info>

RECIPE FROM THE KITCHEN OF Sandy Fenstermacher



PEANUT BUTTER PIE

Ingredients:

Chocolate Graham Pie Crust
 8 oz. thawed cool whip
 8 Oz. cream cheese
 1 cup peanut butter
 ½ cup sugar
 Hershey's Chocolate Syrup

Directions:

Mix softened cream cheese with peanut butter and sugar. Fold in thawed cool whip except for one cup to use on top of the pie after it has been refrigerated.

After pie has been refrigerated and set, spread the remaining cool whip on top and drizzle with Hershey's syrup.

EMERGENCY BIBLE NUMBERS

Upset?.....John 14
 Weak?.....Psalm 18:1-29
 Lonely?.....Psalm 23
 Sinned?.....Psalm 51
 Worried?.....Matthew 8:19-31
 Anxious?.....Phil. 4:4-9
 Unhappy?.....Col. 3:12-17
 In Danger?.....Psalm 91
 Depressed?.....Psalm 27
 Lack of Faith?.....Exodus 14
 Others Unkind?.....John 15
 Need Courage?.....Joshua 1
 Need Direction?.....Psalm 73:21-26
 Seeking Peace?.....Matthew 11:25-30

Facebook - Divinely Blessed Insights

SEPTEMBER 2026

Worship—10:15 AM

Sunday School—9:00 AM Adult SS 8:45 AM

Office Hours; Tuesday—Thursday 8 AM—12:00 PM



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 5-9 PM KB Cougars	2 5-9 PM KB Cougars	3 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6-9 PM Lions Club (FH)	4	5
6 Worship Rev. Hertzog 3 PM Rejoicing Spirits	7 LABOR DAY	8 5-9 PM KB Cougars	9 5-9 PM KB Cougars 7 PM Consistory	10 5-9 PM KB Cougars	11	12 9 AM Prayer Walk
13 Worship Rev. Hertzog 9 AM—Rally Day Pancake Breakfast GP Day	14 2-4 PM Bazaar Crafts 6-8 PM Mice Flower Orders Due	15 PULSE DEADLINE 5-9 PM KB Cougars	16 10 AM—Noon Young at Heart 2-9 PM H & H Quilt 5-9 PM K B Cougars	17 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6-8:30 PM Lions Club (L) 5:30-8 PM Relay K- Town (FH)	18	19
20 10:15 AM Outdoor Worship/Picnic at Wessner's Grove	21 2-4 PM Bazaar Crafts 6-8 PM Mice 6:30 PM Fellowship 6:45 PM Missions	22 10 AM Worship Mtg. 5-9 PM K B Cougars 7 PM Christian Ed	23 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6 PM Women's Guild	24 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6:15 PM Bells	25	26
27 Harvest Home Mums Bible Dedication	28 2-4 PM Bazaar Crafts 6-8 PM Mice 7 PM Property	29 5-9 PM KB Cougars	30 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6 PM Personnel (L)			