Zion Lutheran Monthly May 2022

Pastor's Corner

A Perfect Message

Have you ever thought what you would like to have written on your tombstone? I know that sounds like an odd question, but have you? And I certainly don't mean the dates of when we were born, or when we died. Some people like to have information written on their tombstone like "A Loving Father" or "A Caring Mother." There's nothing wrong with that information, but sometimes people like to have MESSAGES written on their tombstones. People want to impart some bit of advice to those who read it, or even a gospel message like John 3:16.

Full disclosure: I have thought about what I would like written on my tombstone. I thought that maybe a hundred years after I die an unbeliever would come by, read my perfect gospel message, and then go read the Bible or go to church (nice thoughts, right?) But what to write on the tombstone? It is hard to find the right Bible message, hard to find the right words. I was perplexed about this . . . until Easter. The hymn *"Awake, My Heart, With Gladness"* provided the perfected gospel message for all Christian tombstones. The verse goes like this:

He brings me to the portal That leads to bliss untold, Whereon this rhyme immortal Is found in script of gold: "Who there My cross has shared Finds here a crown prepared; Who there with Me has died Shall here be glorified." (LSB #467, st. 7)



What a PERFECT message! And why is it "perfect"? It is not witty, it is not a Bible quote, it is a song. It is "perfect" because it perfectly describes the perfect life of a Christian here on Earth; someone who shared Christ's cross in this life, and will be glorified with Christ in the life to come. This verse is all about the death of our sinful nature, and the giving of the Holy Spirit to us. This verse is all about us carrying a cross in this life, but being overwhelmed by joy in Christ in the life to come. This verse is about the decay of our mortal bodies and the resurrection of our new, heavenly body. This verse describes you. This verse describes your entire Christian life in one sentence. I think it is perfect for a tombstone because it reassures all of us that one day those tombstones will be cracked open, and discarded in the blessed resurrection of the dead! May Christ preserve all of us in the faith until that day dawns.

-- Pastor Grimenstein

President's Report

A Little Sacrifice

Over the past three years as Zion's President, I've tried to write this monthly column such that you'd enjoy some relevant information about what is happening at your church. I've tried to end each piece with motivational religious snippets that I thought would be nice to read. I'm getting a bit concerned about something.

On April 24th we had a Voters' Meeting after the second service. We need 33 people for a quorum. We had 34 members present. As an observation, I see the usual Council Members that are also always at Council Meetings and their spouses, and some of the nearly 30 employees your church employs, plus what I'll call the "usual" other interested members that participate regularly at these meetings. Where were you? Where have you been ... and Why?

The Voters' Meetings aren't "for" the Council members. They're held for YOU, the membership of Zion, so you can interface with the people who work on your behalf to keep things running smoothly at your church. The meetings only last around an hour or so because all your presenters are usually well prepared. The meetings are not meant to glorify me or the people who give reports, they're held to glorify our God who has given you this church in which to worship and enjoy the sacraments. It's "about" our God and it's "for" YOU. So, where are you? Is it too much of a sacrifice to schedule five of your Sundays each year to attend a Voters Meeting? Does attending a service exempt you from a meeting or even Bible Class?

Perhaps when the Elders contact our members they should ask questions such as: When were you last at Bible Class? When did you last attend a Voters' Meeting? Why? We just celebrated the greatest Sacrifice of all: Good Friday/Easter. How much of a sacrifice is it to put several Voters' Meetings on your Sunday schedule? How about putting on some "armor" in some Bible Classes?



If you were working on Council, what would your expectations be? The ministries are very busy. We manage over one million dollars per year now. Are you interested in hearing about your ministries? I'm hoping you are, because there's a Voters' Meeting on June 26th at which we will pass next year's Fiscal Budget. Your Council would appreciate the courtesy of your presence. There's a quarterly regular Voters' Meeting on July 31st at which you can hear from the various responsible people that will report on all that is happening at Zion. Our Lord has provided us with an overflowing cup and you are part of that cup and that blessing! We should be united and gather together at these occasions to hear about our church and to properly conduct the business of our church to strengthen our ministries collectively as one Christian body.

Thank you to all the people who have worked, and continue to work, for the ministries here at Zion. Without the time and talent put into the efforts to make our church operate well, we would be adrift in a tempest. Let's be thankful and please consider your personal responsibility to be a "member" and interested participant in the workings of your church to the best of your ability. We need to grow together and we need to have people ready to assume positions on Council as those of us who are older become no longer able to do so.

I know none of us can be perfect in attendance or otherwise, but something tells me we can do much better with a little sacrifice.

-- Paul Klemash



www.lutheransforlife.org 888.364.LIFE

Lutherans for Life witnesses to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God. It serves through individuals who volunteer at pregnancy care centers, with hospice, through prayer, and in a wide variety of caring activities. It educates and encourages through conferences and workshops, printed resources and newsletters, Life Sunday materials and Bible studies, curricula, video, and through the website www.lutheransforlife.org

Life IS Amazing!

by Pastor Michael Salemink

Words matter, especially to Christians. Our Savior is the **Word** made flesh, and from His **Word** comes the faith that saves. But human beings are not books, and human life amounts to more than sentences or even stories.

Sometimes words cannot quite express the wonder—*a time to speak and a time to keep silence* (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Sometimes, especially at the edges, life brings us into exceptionally close contact with the grace and glory of God.



Announcing a pregnancy, feeling a fetus kick, cradling a newborn, attending a Baptism, what happens and what we experience defy description. Grieving and believing over a terminal diagnosis, listening to an aged neighbor's wisdom and reminiscences, holding a loved one's hand at a hospital bedside, singing hymns and reciting Scriptures as a relative enters eternity, the encounter exceeds even the beauty and power of words.

We find ourselves speechless:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

With the Psalmist we grasp at adjectives that fall magnificently short: **"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"** (Psalm 139:14).

Can "amazing!" capture or express it? Probably not. That's exactly why life /S amazing!



Zion Lutheran Preschool Program



As we close out the school year, it's hard not to think about what made it so special ... the children. We are always blessed with wonderful kids and families, and this year was no different. It will be hard to say goodbye to those moving on to Kindergarten ... we get so attached! The good news is that we are offering a number of summer camps (16 to be exact) which will allow us to extend the time we get to spend with them, all while having a great time! The camps being offered this year include:

> Under the Sea Dynamite Dinosaurs Out of the world Nature and Adventure Splish Splash Art Down on the Farm Dirt (2) Pirate

Fun and Games Lego Superheroes of the Bible Making Music Summer Boost PreK Prep

If you happen to be at the church this summer, please stop by and check out our camps. The kids would love to say hello! Have a great summer and we will see you in the Fall.

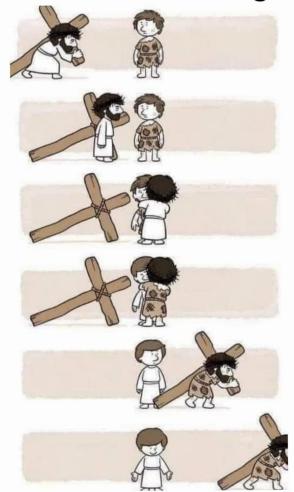
Blessings, Tracey

1847 DOLLY JESUS

– 175 YEARS –

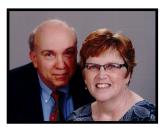
lcms.org/175

The Great Exchange



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

As the new Co-Directors of Zion's Sunday School program, we have enjoyed getting better acquainted with many of our Sunday school children and their families! We are so grateful for our families' participation in this important program that teaches children what the Bible says about the love of God in Christ Jesus.



A Couple of Reminders:

Sunday School classes meet from 9:15 to 10:15 in the school classrooms. Please do your best to arrive before 9:15 so that students and teachers have all the time necessary to learn the Bible lessons, engage in discussion, and complete themed crafts. Thank you
for helping your child to be on time!



• Our last class of the Sunday School year will be Sunday, June 12th. We will have a special party on that Sunday ... details to come!



Highlighting the academic awards, scholarships, and extra-curricular achievements of Zion's students in Kindergarten through College.

Ava Pasquini, a Junior at Upper St. Clair High School, recently competed in Orlando, Florida with her Pittsburgh Pride competitive cheer team and placed 7th in the World. Congratulations Ava!





Brady Joling, a Junior at Chartiers Valley High School, recently finished his Junior wrestling season. He placed 3rd at Sections, 4th at WPIALs, and qualified for the state tournament where he won one match but did not place. He hopes to qualify for Team PA for Freestyle and Greco wrestling. He has also achieved a 5.0 grade point average at CVHS.

Lexi & Lucas Meyer earned kudos in their club activities. Lexi, a second grader at South Fayette, recently finished her cheer competition season at ICE Pittsburgh with three first-place wins, and several second and third placements. She is excited for tryouts in May for next season!

Lucas, in Kindergarten at South Fayette, is currently a green belt Tiger in Karate at Steel City ATA. At a recent competition he was recognized for excellence in Forms, Sparring and Weapons.

Pastor Alexei Streltsou Rector of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Siberia

will be our Guest Presenter Sun, May 22nd @ 9:15 during Adult/Teen Bible study in Fellowship Hall

Zion has financially supported the efforts of Pastor Streltsov and the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society for several years. Pastor Streltsov will discuss the progress being made in rebuilding the Lutheran church in a land that was dominated by Atheistic communism for generations. Also, learn about the challenges facing Russian Lutherans due to the war in Eastern Europe.









Armed Forces Day Saturday, May 21st





- Ecclesiastical endorsement, annual training and career management for chaplains
- Operation Barnabas
- "Ministry-by-Mail"
- Armed Forces Sunday resources
- Quarterly Armed Forces newsletter So Help Me God

How to Get Involved

- Watch videos at video.lcms.org/ archives/category/armed-forcesministry
- Download resources at lcms.org/ armedforces/resources
- Give a gift lcms.org/givenow/maf





"Put on the whole armor of God." - EPH. 6:10-18 ESV -

Serving Those Who Serve

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's (LCMS) Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) is authorized as the mission arm of the Synod to support and serve all military chaplains — active and reserve their families and the veteran population. MAF recruits, interviews and endorses all military chaplains; sponsors annual training for all chaplains; and maintains close, pastoral relationships with chaplains after endorsement, offering counsel, training and advice throughout their entire careers.

CRAIG MUEHLER CAPT, CHC, USN (RET.), director LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces 888-THE LCMS • lcmschaps@lcms.org lcms.org/armedforces • lcms.org/operationbarnabas



Standing Ready with the Gospel

by Pamela J. Nielsen

n bunkers and fighter jets, on battleships and bases, in field hospitals and training camps, the men and women of the United States Armed Forces stand at the ready in service to our country.

With them are the 160 active and Reserve LCMS Armed Forces Chaplains stationed around the world. These pastors proclaim the Word of life, in environments often shrouded in death. Their flocks frequently come and go, providing scant opportunity for longterm ministry. Their work takes place in some of the most difficult situations any pastor could ever face, where lives can be unraveled in an instant.

Upholding these faithful servants is the Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF), the LCMS effort to care for and support military chaplains and, through them, our LCMS members and their families in uniform.

The MAF exists to recruit, prepare, endorse and support LCMS chaplains in their service to God and country.

Authorized by the Synod and registered with the Department of Defense, Chaplain Craig Muehler is the endorsing agent for LCMS military chaplains. There is a "lifelong marriage" between his office and the LCMS chaplains that includes ongoing contact and an annual visit with each chaplain. Through these visits and regular reports by phone and email, MAF helps the chaplains to stay connected with their church.

Each year, MAF gathers the chaplains at one of two training seminars, providing a rich opportunity for Lutheran worship, fellowship and study with LCMS seminary professors. Training and conversation is focused on the unique challenges of military chaplaincy.

Operation Barnabas

Operation Barnabas, an extension of MAF, provides a network of care through trained congregations that want to reach out to members of the military, their families and the veterans in their congregations and communities.

Operation Barnabas has worked with dozens of congregations, but we realize hundreds more congregations also are caring for military families. We ask you to contact us, so we can recognize your work and encourage you as you serve military families.

America's sons and daughters are in harm's way in faraway lands, and our chaplains go with them. Their families wait in our communities, where the people of God support and care for them in our life together.





Get Involved!

- Pray for our troops
- Order MAF bulletin inserts
- Join our Operation Barnabas network







Experience the new, live performance of *David* at the beautiful **Sight & Sound Theatre**

Zion would like to plan a church trip to Lancaster to experience the new production *David* at Sight & Sounds Theatre. This would be a wonderful opportunity for fun and fellowship. White Star Tours is a motorcoach company that has many years of experience conducting overnight trips to Lancaster and Sight & Sounds. Their trip package includes:



- One Night's Lodging
- One Breakfast
- One Dinner
- Ticket to "David" at the S&S Theatre
- Luggage handling
- Taxes & Meal Gratuities
- Motorcoach Transportation

\$279 per person (double occupancy)**/\$368 per person** (single occupancy)

Trip Dates -- Sunday, October 9th to Monday, October 10th (Columbus Day)

We would leave Sunday after church and return Monday evening. Most schools not in session for Columbus Day. Zion has financial assistance available for those who may need help covering the cost of the trip.

Before we move forward with securing this package through White Star Tours, we would like to gauge the congregation's interest in attending. *We will need a MINIMUM of 30 guests for this trip.*

PLEASE e-mail Susie Bishop, Zion Office Admin, at secretary@zlcb.org by May 4th if you would be interested in attending this trip and if you would be

interested in financial assistance!



You Can Help Further Our Seminary's Vital Mission **Give STL Day is <u>May 5th</u>!**

This special day of giving is one of three of the Seminary's annual giving days. Give STL Day is an online giving event organized by the St. Louis Community Foundation for the benefit of nonprofits headquartered in the metropolitan area.

With your support, graduates go out from here to the four corners of the world to shine the light of the Gospel. To help meet the needs of students, the Seminary's goal this year is \$25,000. We thank you in advance for your partnership in this special campaign and for making the Seminary's mission possible!

Early giving for Give STL Day opens April 5. Thanks to a matching gift from a generous benefactor, gifts will be doubled dollar for dollar up to the first \$12,000 raised. Your gift will go twice as far in support of the Seminary's mission to prepare our church's future ministry leaders. Thank you! Give at https://www.givestlday.org/ConcordiaSem

Bridgeville Area Food Bank

The May collection for the Bridgeville Area Food Bank is <u>Sunday, May 8th</u>. The "items of the month" are CONDIMENTS. Items may be placed in the wicker receptacle in the narthex near the coat rack. You are welcome to help at the food bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 am and noon at Bethany Presbyterian (contact Barb Oechslein to learn more).







What About...



The Gospel

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This article has been prepared to shop you how much we need the Gospel, why it is such good news, how we receive it and how we respond to it.

Why do we need the Gospel?

We cannot really understand how good the message of the Gospel is until we understand how bad our situation is without it. We are poor miserable sinners. We sin daily and deserve nothing but God's wrath and punishment.

The scriptures describe human beings as dead in trespasses and sin. Without the mercy and cleansing of God through the blood of Jesus Christ, there awaits for us only everlasting punishment in hell. Thus, we need the Gospel desperately!

What is the Gospel?

The word "gospel" is translation of a Greek word that means, "an announcement of good news." The Gospel is the good news that God the Holy Trinity decided not to abandon humanity when Adam and Eve first fell into sin. God decided then and there that sin and death would not have the last word. He promised to send a Savior.

When the time was right, God sent His Son into our world to be born of the Virgin Mary. Our Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect life for us. On the cross, He received the penalty and punishment for the sins of the whole world, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus rose from the dead, victorious over our ancient enemies: sin, death and the devil.

Therefore, each Christian is able with great joy to declare before the whole world; "My Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

What glorious good news! The one, true eternal and all powerful God came into our world to live, suffer, die and rise again for us. We, who are unholy and unrighteous, receive the forgiveness of all our sins and thus receive the perfect holiness and righteousness of Christ our Savior—as a free gift –purely because of His love for us. This is good news! That is the Gospel!

How do we receive this great salvation in our lives?

How do we personally receive the forgiveness Christ won for the entire world? How does what happened on the cross nearly 2,000 years ago flow into our lives today?

God, through His Gospel, offers us forgiveness and help against sin in more than one way. He gives His Gospel to us through His Word, through Baptism, through the Sacrament of the Altar, and through confession and absolution. These are the ways God enters our lives today to apply to us personally the great salvation Christ won for the world.

The Holy Spirit works through the Word of the Gospel to create and sustain faith in our heart that Christ is our Savior. The Bible is the Word of God, written down for our learning and edification. The Scriptures are filled with the good news of Jesus Christ. Through the almighty, Spirit-filled Word, God gathers us into His church, which is truly the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is present, effective and active through the Word when it is proclaimed, heard and meditated upon.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism is water included in God's command and combined with God's Word; or as St. Paul says in Holy Scripture, "The washing of water with the word." Through Baptism, we are made partakers of Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore, we know that Baptism works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal life to all who believe. Since Baptism is connected to the Word and promise of God, it is truly a life-giving water, rich in grace—a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit.

Christ has provided a special application of the Gospel through confession and absolution. Confession is admitting our sins to God and receiving His forgiveness from our pastor, as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven. Thus, by divine ordinance, Christ Himself has entrusted absolution to his Christian church and commanded us to absolve one another from sins.

What About...

The Gospel

The Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink. In the Lord's Supper, Christ's body and blood are given to us as our treasure and gift which sustains our faith and life in Him. If you are heavy-laden and feel your weakness, go joyfully to the Sacrament and receive refreshment, comfort and strength.

Those who want to be forgiven by God and who want to enjoy His presence in their lives, hunger and thirst for the Word and Sacraments. With the Psalmist we say, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" God has provided the means to receive Him. So, Christians hunger and thirst for God's Word, absolution, the Sacrament, etc. We have the certainty that God meets us and gives us what we need in His means of Grace. Thus, we believe that we cannot, by our own reason or strength, believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith. In the same way, He calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all of our sins, and the sins of all believers.

How does God cause us to respond to His Gospel?

We love God because He first loved us. Our Lord is at work in us both to will and to do what is pleasing to Him. Christians look to the Ten Commandments to know what is pleasing to God and wish to serve Him in gratitude for the great salvation that is theirs in Christ.

From the Word of God we learn that God wants us to put Him first, above any other person or thing, to respect His name and not misuse it, to hear and obey His Word. Children are to honor and obey their parents and others in authority. We are to look out for the welfare of others, doing nothing to hurt or harm our neighbor. We are to live sexually pure and decent lives, with husbands and wives loving and honoring each other. In looking out for our neighbor's welfare and helping him to improve and protect his property and business, we are also to take care not to lie about our neighbor, but to help, support, and defend him in every need. And finally, we are to be content with what we have been given, and not want what is not ours.

What a joyful privilege we have to serve God and others! He gives us the opportunity to bear witness to our faith through both our words and our deeds.

How is the Gospel obscured?

Cont'd.

The gospel is obscured by well-intentioned people who want to encourage a life of good works, and end up making Christians think that it is by their works that they are saved. This is a great danger. Through His Word and Sacraments, Jesus is constantly working in our lives to forgive our sins and strengthen our relationship with God. God always receives the credit for our salvation. He is the one working in us. This is not something we can do. Our good works are the result of God's love in our hearts and lives. Our good works in this life do not save us, only Christ saves us. Works serve our neighbor and show to the world that we are grateful for God's mercy in our lives.

Another way the Gospel can be obscured is when too much emphasis is put on an emotional response to the Gospel. Some Christians believe that unless they have some sort of ecstatic, charismatic experience, or feel some sort of "spiritual high," they are not really Christians. It is truly sad that some people look into their own hearts for the security that they are children of God, instead of putting their hope and trust in the objective work of Christ for them, and in the means God uses to come to them—His Word and Sacraments.

If we find ourselves beginning to ask "Am I doing enough?" or thinking, "It doesn't matter what I do, for God will forgive me anyway," then we are at risk of losing Christ and His forgiveness. We look always to Jesus and put our hope and trust in Him. He is our Savior. And, that's good news!

> - Dr. A.L. Barry Past President The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

May Service Participants

	Acolytes	Time	
May 1	Lindsey Liberatore Jeremy Dyczewski	8:00 10:30	
May 8	Daniel Grimenstein Claire Lemonovich	8:00 10:30	
May 15	TBD Johnny Lemonovich	2:00 7:00	
May 22	Decklan Pasquini Carrie Bonacci	2:00 7:00	
May 29	Daniel Grimenstein Lizzie Lemonovich	8:00 10:30	



	Elders	Altar Guild	8:00 am Ushers	10:30 am Ushers
Μαγ	Jim Neill, Bob Schmidt	Barb Oechslein, Megan Pasquini, Diana Schmidt	Joshua Grimenstein, Tim Sheldon, Janet & Larry Zreliak	Bob Bonacci, Aaron & Mike Kozak, Chuck LaJeunesse
June	Mike Wallace, Bill Bishop	Janet & Marian Oelschlager	Gene Koop, Ron Meier, Noah Wallace, Larry Zreliak	Sam Bishop, Dan & Tracey Harris, Luke Lemonovich



- 1st Madison Killinger
- 8th -- Christian Bonacci
- 9th -- John Migyanko
- 9th Rita Sheldon
- 12^{th} Ross Chilcott
- 12th Paige Golish
- 12th Eileen Davis
- 15^{th} Cody Conner
- 17th Tim Fitzgerald
- 17th Kari Gresh
- 21st Stephanie Eckels
- 22nd Dan Harris

- 24th Tyler Goodge
- 24th Aaron Kozak
- 24th Ken Wuerthele
- 26th Mary Hutula
- 30th Christa Blayney
- 30th Bill Schrag





- 1st -- Dallas and Christa Blayney
- 15th Shane and Sandra Bryant
- 28^{th} Michael and Deborah Sterba
- 30^{th} Brad and Jessica Boyle
- 30^{th} Larry and Janet Zreliak



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/Teen Bible Study & SS 10:30 am Worship	2 6:00 pm Confirm. 6:15 pm Grace Bells 7:00 pm Trustees Mtg. 7:00 pm Confirm. 7:15 pm Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bells	3	4 2:00 pm Worship & Bible Study 7:00 pm Worship & Bible Study	5	6	7
8 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/Teen Bible Study & SS 10:30 am Worship	9 6:00 pm Confirm. 7:00 pm Confirm.	10	11 2:00 pm Worship & Bible Study 7:00 pm Worship & Bible Study	12 7:00 pm Council Mtg.	13	14
15 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/Teen Bible Study & SS 10:30 am Worship FOOD BANK COLLECTION	16 6:00 pm Confirm. 6:15 pm Grace Bells 7:00 pm Confirm. 7:15 pm Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bells	17	18 2:00 pm Worship & Bible Study 7:00 pm Worship & Bible Study			21
22 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Presentation by Pastor Streltsov from Siberia; Children's SS 10:30 am Worship	23 6:00 pm Confirm. 6:15 pm Grace Bells 7:00 pm Confirm. 8:15 pm Faith Bells	24	25 2:00 pm Worship & Bible Study 7:00 pm Worship & Bible Study	26 A Ascension Day	27	28
29 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Adult/Teen Bible Study & SS 10:30 am Worship	30 7:00 pm 2nd yr confirmation practice	31			2 1 one day is l and a t	d, with the Lord ike a -thousand years thousand years ike one day. II Peter 3:8