



"THE STARTER"

September 2025

Rev. Mark Harder. Minister

Our email: 1stcongregperu@sbcglobal.net

Web page: firstcongregationalperu.net

Phone 815-223-0722

*Good Morning! This is God
I will be handling all your
problems today. I will not need
your help. So have a good day!*



With Sincere Sympathy

With our deepest prayers and sympathy, Jane McClintock has been called home to the Lord. Services are pending here at the church.

January 31, 1929 – August 26, 2025

Choir Rehearsals Resume

Our chancel choir will resume singing once again this fall. Hallelujah! Anyone who loves to sing for the lord is welcome to join. We'll start rehearsals on September 24th at 4:00PM. Let's sing a joyful noise!

Special Choir Sunday

Join us Sunday, September 28th to welcome back our choir for another season. Special service you won't want to miss.

Thank You

Thank you to all the summer music people. Dick Ristau, VBS Kids, Harder/Castillo Families, Evan Hall, Ellen Marincic & Lois Croasdale

Thursday Coffee Hour

You're invited to join for coffee and an easy chat at Parsonage at 10:00AM.

September 11th

Sermon Series

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sept. 7 | Baptism, Testing and Calling | Mark 1:9-20 |
| Sept. 14 | Eating With Sinners | Mark 2:13-17 |
| Sept. 21 | Healing on Sabbath, Crowds Following | Mark 3:1-12 |
| Sept. 28 | Calming The Storm | Mark 4:35-41 |

Illinois Valley Pads

Peru Pads kicked off their season on August 1st and welcomed 26 clients, 8 of those clients were children. They are currently in need of drink mixes, kids drinks and snacks. Items may be dropped off to the Peru shelter anytime. There are donation boxes on the table for any financial donations.

Bibles and Cell Phones

What would happen if we treated our Bibles like we treat our cell phones?

What if we carried it around in our purses?

What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?

What if we flipped thru it several times a day?

What if we used it to receive text messages?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to kids as a gift?

What if we used it as we traveled?

What if we used it in case of an emergency?

Unlike our cell phones being disconnected, it can't happen with your Bible because Jesus paid the bill.

Never any dropped calls!!

Liberty Village Service

Pastor Mark will be doing monthly service at Liberty Village in Peru. Tuesday, September 23rd at 3:30PM.



Discussion Group

September will be here before we know it. The Wednesday Discussion group resume meetings in September. The group is open to anyone who wants to join us. We discuss biblical topics, news topics applied to religion or news topics of interest. We will meet the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Wednesday at the church at 11 a.m. each month. Pastor will conduct the group the 2nd and 4th Wednesday. Diana will lead the group the 1st and 5th Wednesday unless someone else has a topic. We will skip the 3rd Wednesday as it is Pizza Praise and Prayer night. Lunch will be ordered in unless the group decides to go out that day.

Please contact Pastor (574-993-2577) or Diana (815-228-5352) or the Church (815 -223-0722) if you won't be attending.

2025 dates to meet:

2026 dates to meet:

September dates: 3,10,24

October dates: 1,8,22,29

November 5, 12

December 3, 10

January 7, 14, 28

February & March 4, 11, 25

April 1, 8, 22, 29

May 6, 13, 27

Please come and join us and share information with us.

****Pray for the health of Mike Beuster, Dick Ristau, Marilyn Dunker, Pete & Char Belski, Les & Rita Tieman, Bernie Dahl, Charlotte Oglesby, Pastor Karl & Connie Johnson. Tricia Glasper's Family, Vicki Hall and Family, Lynne Rybarczyk, Jeanne VanSchaick and Family, Sarge Massat, Amy Crouch and Family.**

**** Holy Spirit will touch each loved one whose name is on the Salvation Cross and bring them to the Lord.**

****Pray for the daily grace for our shut-ins:
Lillian Mini, Betty Martuzzo**

**** Pray for Peace Mission in India caring for children & widows**

**** Pray for the Surbers with Supply & Multiply in Haiti**

**** Pray for Abigail Women's Center helping women in crisis**

**** Pray for Cup of Cold Water supporting missionaries**

**** Pray for Wycliffe Bible Translators**

**** Pray for Jews for Jesus**

**** Pray for Transport for Christ reaching truckers at truck stops**

**** Pray for our local food pantries**

**** Pray for PADS providing shelter for the homeless**

**** Pray for persecuted Christians around the world**

****Pray for Trans World Radio Broadcasting bringing God's message into countries that are closed to missionaries**

All Church Breakfast

Enjoy breakfast and a time of devotion. All Church Breakfast at Liberty Family Restaurant at 9:00AM.

September 27th.

Formerly Men's Breakfast.

Worry Looks around
Sorry looks back
Faith looks up



VBS STAFF



VBS JUNIOR CLASS



VBS ELEMENTARY CLASS



VBS 2025



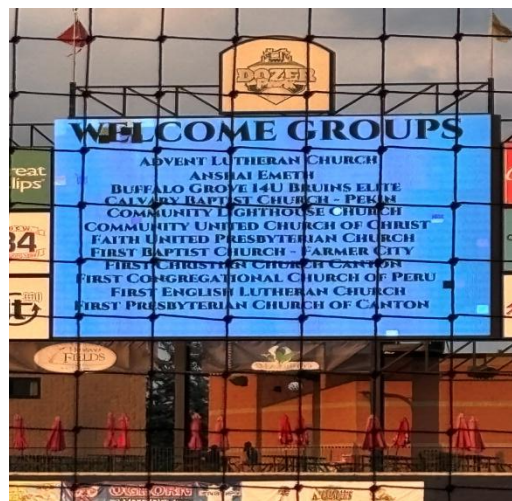
VBS PRESCHOOL CLASS



Pastor Mark Pied



HARDER/CASTILLO FAMILY CONCERT



PEORIA CHIEFS GAME



Father's Day Root Beer Floats



PEORIA CHIEFS GAME



Christmas in July Vendor Show



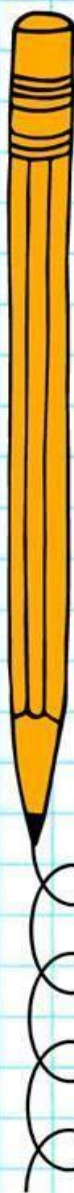
Session Board Meeting Summary

The **Session Board** held its monthly meeting August 13. Ellen reported that the choir will begin singing the end of September. We will also recognize Dick Ristau for 80 years of singing with the choir. This will be on Sunday, September 28 with a small reception following worship. We have 2 folks interested in joining the church. The planned date for that is after Pastor returns in August. Diana reported the **Kan Do Club** held a successful Vendor Show. There were 18 vendors and we had a lunch counter and bake sale. The Concert August 9 had a nice turn out. The Harder Castile family did a great performance and we all heard from one person his testimony to Christ. Diana reported that the committee is finished with events for 2025. They will only be hosting 2 events in 2026 which will be the Mother Daughter Tea in May and the Vendor Show in September. The club also paid to have the sidewalk repaired and leveled by the parsonage and will be reimbursed when the church finances allow. **Christian ED** is held VBS on July 22-24. We are grateful to those who those who volunteered to help. A wrap up session will be held on August 20 and there will be discussion for the 2026 VBS. **Rally Day** will be September 7 after worship. It will be an all church potluck and games for all ages to follow. It is supposed to be a family friendly day and for the congregation to have fellowship and fun. Age appropriate games will be provided. The **Trustees** are still evaluating different material to rebuild the canopy on the north side. Also, gathering estimates for a new heating system. The grounds look much better with the weeding completed by our lawn care company. It was asked if you should be inclined and see weeds that need removed, please pull them. **Pastor** was away and not available for a report. **Pizza, Praise and Prayer** will resume the 3rd Wednesday in September at 5 p.m. Discussion Group will resume at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, September 3. **Our cleaning person** has had to do additional cleaning unnecessarily. Please be sure to pick up and clean up after yourselves leaving the facility as you found it. That may also include

sweeping the floor. The next board meeting will be **September 24 at 5:00 p.m.**



the ABC's of Praying for Students



Attitude ... Psalm 14:14
Boldness ... Psalm 27:1
Courage ... John 1:9
Discernment ... Philippians 1:9-10
Enthusiasm ... Colossians 3:23
Friendliness ... Proverbs 18:24
Generosity ... 2 Corinthians 9:7
Humility ... Philippians 2:3-5
Initiative ... 1 John 3:18
Joyfulness ... Philippians 4:4
Knowledge ... Proverbs 18:15
Listening ... Proverbs 12:15
Maturity ... 1 Corinthians 14:20
Neighbors ... Mark 12:31
Overflow ... Romans 15:13
Perseverance ... Galatians 6:9
Quiet ... Proverbs 24:11
Respect ... Romans 12:10
Self-control ... 2 Peter 1:5-7
Thankfulness ... 1 Chronicles 16:34
Understanding ... Psalm 119:130
Victory ... Psalm 18:29
Wisdom ... James 3:17
eXcellence ... Proverbs 3:9
Youthfulness ... 1 Timothy 4:12
Zeal ... Romans 12:11

juliesanders.org

Flag Day

Flag Day commemorates June 14, 1777, when the Continental Congress determined the composition of the nation's banner: "Resolved, that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.

The holiday is a time to celebrate American values, including freedom, unity, and patriotism.

To properly honor the flag, you want to be sure you're displaying it correctly: Raise the flag briskly and lower it ceremoniously. Never allow the flag to touch the ground or floor. The flag should never be transported flat or horizontally, but always aloft.

Symbolism of the flag elements:

Stars:

The 50 white stars on a blue field represent the 50 states of the United States.

Stripes:

The 13 alternating red and white stripes represent the 13 original colonies that formed the nation.

Colors:

- RED: Symbolizes hardiness, valor, and courage, representing the readiness to sacrifice for the country.
- WHITE: Represents purity, innocence, and independence from other countries, reflecting the nation's core values and ideals.
- BLUE: Represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice, symbolizing the nation's commitment to upholding its principles and ideals.



The flag's design and symbolism are rooted in the nation's history, with the stars and stripes evolving over times as the United States grew and expanded.







Birds go to sleep on their perches, but they never fall off. This is because the tendons in the bird's legs are constructed so that when the leg is bent at the knee, the claws contract and grip like a steel trap. The claws refuse to let go until the knees are unbent again. The bended knee gives the bird the ability to hold on to his perch so tightly.

Isn't this also the secret of holding power of the Christian? Daniel found this to be true. Surrounded by pagan environment, tempted to compromise with evil, urged to weaken his grip on God, he refused to let go. He held firm when others faltered because he was a man of prayer. He knew the power of the bended knee, from sleeping birds we can learn the secret of holding things which are precious to us – honesty, purity, thoughtfulness, honor and character. That secret is the knee bent in prayer, seeking to get a firmer grip on those values which make life worth living. When we hold firmly to God in prayer, we can rest assured he will hold tightly to us.



I don't walk with God. I can't keep up with him. He walks with me, and waits for me every time I fall behind.



Thank You!!

A HUGE Thank You to Bernie Dahl and Nancy Balda for spending the last several days washing dishes, cupboards and getting things organized. Thank You!



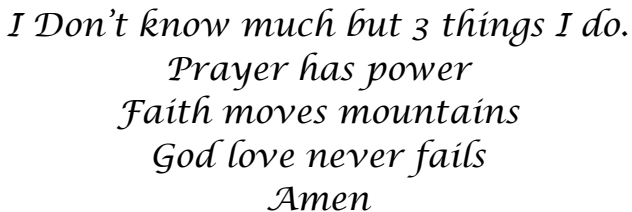
The Power of Bended Knee

CONGRATULATIONS

Cordell Pelka will be graduating from Hall High School on May 18th. Elijah Harder will be graduating from Home School.



*"For we walk by faith, not by sight."
Faith is when you praise God in the storm, you trust Him in the valley,*

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]



Congratulations Confirmation Class of 2025

Evan Hall

Jeremiah Farling

Saleen Farling

Theresa Panicucci

Abigail Redmon



GRACE *is when God gives us good things that we don't deserve.*

MERCY *is when He spares us from bad things we deserve.*

BLESSINGS *are when He is generous with both.*

TRULY, *we can never run out of reasons to thank Him. God is good all the time.*

IF GOD HAS BEEN GOOD TO YOU,

PRAISE HIM, AMEN.



Vitas

Vitas will be facilitating a Five Wishes presentation on Saturday, February 8th. This event

[illegible]

Sue Gillio will be hosting a Flute day for her students on February 22, 2025 from 9AM-5PM. There will be a concert at 5:00PM open to everyone.

Sunday, February 9th is Scout Sunday. Cub Scout Pack 3709, who meet here in the church will be bringing in the flags and leading the Pledge of Allegiance. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know some of the families and scouts.



Faith Salander will be hosting a violin recital of her students, here on February 8th at 3:00PM with a reception to follow.



Jen Ebner will be hosting a parent night out on Febraury 14th from 5-9PM. She will be looking for volunteers to assist. For more information please see Jen.

I am the New Year. I am unused, unspotted, without blemish. I stretch before you three hundred and sixty five days long. I will present each day in its turn, a new leaf in the Book of Life for you to place upon it your imprint.

It remains for you to make of me what you will. If you write with firm, steady strokes, my pages will be a joy to look upon when the next New Year comes. If the pen falters, if uncertainty to doubt

[illegible]

I am the New Year. I am here – but once past, I can never be recalled. Make me your best!



WHERE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
1431 FOURTH ST.
PERU
815-223-0722 WITH ANY QUESTIONS

[illegible]

Thank You

VBS Prayer Checklist

***Pray for all the planning that is being done for this year's VBS*

***Pray that we would have all the volunteers we need for a successful VBS*

*****Pray for health and safety for all volunteers,
church, staff, and children coming to VBS***

***Pray that the signup process would be smooth and easy for parents and staff*

***Pray that every day VBS would run smoothly*

***Pray that all of the children coming To VBS
would leave knowing that Jesus loves them*

***Pray that children will make a commitment to follow Jesus at VBS*

***Pray that new families would join the church as a result of VBS*

VBS IS COMING



WHO IS JESUS

Grab your bandana and dust off your boots! We have tickets to Wonder Junction, where we will discover who Jesus is and how to live for his glory.

- *Learn nuggets of truth through hands-on Bible lessons
- *Explore God's world through science experiments
- *Munch on tasty vittles
- *Gallop in for exciting games
- *Create fun and creative crafts
- *Sing toe-tapping tunes

WHEN

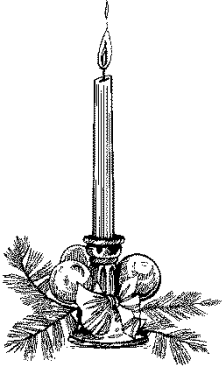
July 22nd 9AM-12PM

July 23rd 9AM-12PM

July 24th 9AM-2PM (lunch will be served with water activities following)



When Christ rules the heart.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

We will be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior with our scripture, music & candlelit filled service at 9:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. All are welcome!

Join the Choir on December 15th.

Have you always wanted to sing with the choir but could not make a weekly commitment? We're inviting all those of you who answered yes to join us on the 15th. Come to the choir room at 10:00 AM and we will rehearse a Christmas carol from the hymnal. Make a joyful noise!

Offering Envelopes

We will be discontinuing the use of preprinted offering envelopes in 2025. We hope those who use these envelopes are not inconvenienced.



With Sincere Sympathy

We extend our love, prayers and sympathy to Vicki, Brianna and Evan Hall. Terry was called to the Lord's side on November 4th. Terry was an active member of our church family.

Don Walker went home to the Lord on October 27th. He had been a faithful member here since 1954.

Sandy Starr went home to the Lord on November 4th. Services are pending.

Mitten Tree



We will once again collect hats, gloves and scarves for our mitten tree. These will be distributed to area schools to keep kids warm.

Operation Christmas Child

'Oh yea of little faith.' That applied to me (Ellen) regarding the shoeboxes for Operation Christmas child. I thought it was crazy to load the narthex table up with 50 empty shoeboxes. We only filled 9 last year. Well, this week I delivered 29 to the processing center. The Lord worked through all of you bringing these gifts to over 220 million kids in 170 countries. I also want to thank those of you who donated money to cover the postage costs. What a loving congregation we have!

I M M E R S E
The Reading Bible®

MESSIAH

The small group meetings will be Dec. 20th at 10:00AM. We will be discussing pages 367-482. Asking the questions: 1. What stood out to you this week? 2. Was there anything confusing or troubling? 3. Did anything make you think differently about God? 4. How might this change the way we live?

Discussion Group

The Discussion Group meets on Wednesdays with an alternating schedule. The first, third, and fifth Wednesday will be at 11:30 at rotating

restaurants. The second and fourth Wednesday will be 11:00AM at the church and having lunch here. Everyone is Welcome! Any questions see Pastor or Diana Dornbusch.



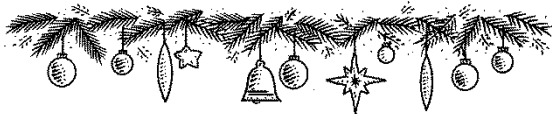
Pads and Food Pantries

Don't forget the shelter and food pantries this winter. The donation boxes on the Welcome Table are for monetary donations for both Hall & Ill. Valley food pantries.



Finances through October

Year to Date Income	\$154,150.25
Year to Date Expenses	\$204,616.54
Shortage	\$ 50,466.29



The hanging of the greens will be following the worship service on December 1st. Decorating for this sacred season is such a festive time of fellowship. Please stay and join us.



Peru Christmas Parade

We will be entering a float in Peru's Christmas parade on December 7th beginning at 5:00 p.m. If you'd like to ride on the float, please see Dean Tieman. But everyone else, come on out and cheer us on!



Our Annual Meeting will be January 26, 2025. Those responsible for reports to be included in the

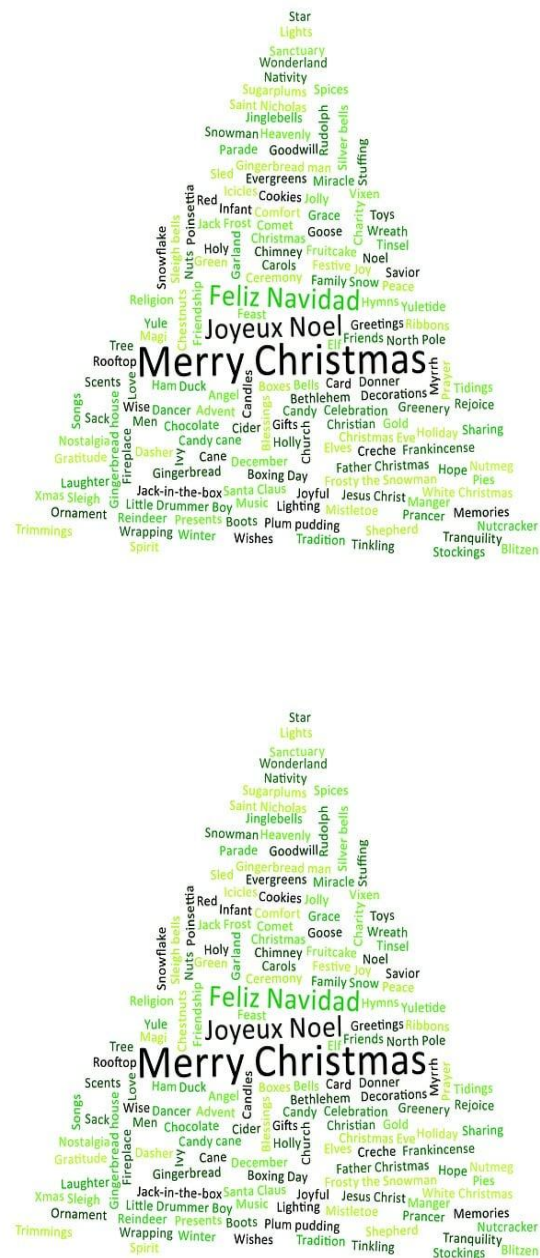
Annual Report are asked to have them submitted by January 12th. Thank you.



Session Board Meeting Summary

The Session Board held its monthly meeting November 13. A moment of silence was held in respect of the passing of Terry Hall. Christian Education reported the Peru Christmas parade will be December 7 at 5 p.m. Decorating the float will be at 9 a.m. at Tieman Builders. Sunday Funday will be December 1 from 4-6 p.m. All Mission donations are up to date for the missionaries. Diaconate is gearing up for the Christmas season. We will be hanging the greens on Sunday, December 1 after worship. We hope many will stay to help decorate. You may be contacted to light the Advent candle on one of the 4 Sundays in December before Christmas. Trustees have had the handicap toilet in the ladies restroom raised and moved. A new grab bar has been installed. We also addressed more boiler issues. Also we are hiring a new cleaning person. December 15 Flutes for Vets will be hosting a holiday recital in the Sanctuary. Pastor will be inviting those who may be interested in membership to the church to attend a luncheon after January 1. Pastor will also be doing at service at Liberty Village starting December 26th month. He is looking for a couple of volunteers to go with him to help serve communion. We no longer will have offering envelopes beginning January 2025. People are welcome to remember their envelope number and use a small white envelope to put their tithe in the offering plates. We are still searching for a part time maintenance person. The Kan Do Club reported they will meet in January to begin preparations for 2025. Anyone else interested in joining the committee should contact Diana D. Pizza, Praise and Prayer will continue first Wednesday monthly at 5 p.m. Coffee with Pastor continues every 3rd Thursday of the month; men's breakfast is ongoing the last Saturday of each month at Liberty Restaurant and the book club continues to meet monthly. Pastor Mark will be gone December 26 – January 2. Dean has agreed to take the pulpit on December 29th. The constitution

◆ ◆





I always get to
where I am going
by walking away
from where
I have been.

◆ ◆

Be still, and know I am God.

All things God works for the good.

Cast all my anxiety on Him.

Trust in the Lord with all my heart.

Open my eyes to see the truth.

Show me your ways, Lord.

Oh Lord, you are my strength & shield.

Let love and faithfulness never leave me

[illegible]

A preacher from out of state accepted a call to a church in Houston. Some weeks after he arrived, he had an occasion to ride the city bus. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change.

Messiah delivers scripture to the reader as it was originally created: without chapter or verse breaks.

As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it." Then he thought, "Oh, forget it. It's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare. They will never miss it. Accept it as a gift from God and keep quiet." When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door and then handed the quarter to the driver and said, "Here, you gave me too much change." The driver smiled and replied, "Aren't you the new preacher? I have been thinking a lot about starting back to church and wasn't sure where to go. I just wanted to see what you would do is I gave you too much change. I'll see you at church on Sunday."

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on and said, "Oh God, I almost sold your son for a quarter."

People watch us as Christians and will put u to the test. Always be on guard and remember tht you carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you call yourself "Christian."



*coming this
August:*



I M M E R S E
The Bible Reading Experience™

Immerse will be a church-wide Bible reading experience with daily readings, small groups for discussion, and weekly messages from based on what we've read.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Daily readings (5 days/week) from *Immerse: Messiah* (book provided)
- Monthly small group meetings to discuss our readings
- Weekly sermons about what we've read

*As you go on your way,
May Christ go with you.*

May He go before you to show you the way.

May He go behind you to encourage you,

*Beside you to befriend you,
Above you to watch over you,
Within you to give you peace.*



Prayer Cross

A prayer cross is at the front of the sanctuary. All of us know and love someone who doesn't have a relationship with the Lord. You're invited to write the 1st name of that person on a card and we will all pray for them. We'll pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to these people leading them to come to the Lord's side.

There are plenty of cards on the table. Let's all pray for those we love and care about to draw close to Jesus.

missionaries



May Finances

Tithes & Offerings	\$9005.00
Expenses	\$15,555.15



Wednesday Discussion Group

A group of folks have continued to meet on Wednesdays at the church at 11 a.m. for discussion time and then lunch. Discussions range from faith based, current events and other topics people have to offer. The group is open to anyone interested in attending. We will be taking a summer break from June 1 to September 1. During that time we will meet for fellowship and lunch the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of August at 11:30 am.

July 10th we will be meeting at Four Star Restaurant and July 31st at Seneca Golf Course. If you would like to join us, we welcome you. Please let Pastor Mark know of your interest or contact the church office. We hope to have many join.



A Pencil Maker Told the Pencil

Five important lessons just before putting it in the box.

****Everything you do will leave a mark.**

****You can correct the mistakes you make.**

****What is important is what is inside of you.**

****In life, you will undergo painful sharpening which will make you better.**

***To be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you. We all need to be sharpened. May this parable encourage you to know that you are a special person, with unique God-given talents and abilities. Only you can fulfill the purpose which you were born to accomplish. Never allow yourself to get discouraged and think that your life is insignificant and cannot be changed and, like the pencil, always remember that the most important part of who you are is what's inside you.*



*Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us,
Choosing gratitude until we are grateful,
and praising God until we ourselves are an act of
Praise.*

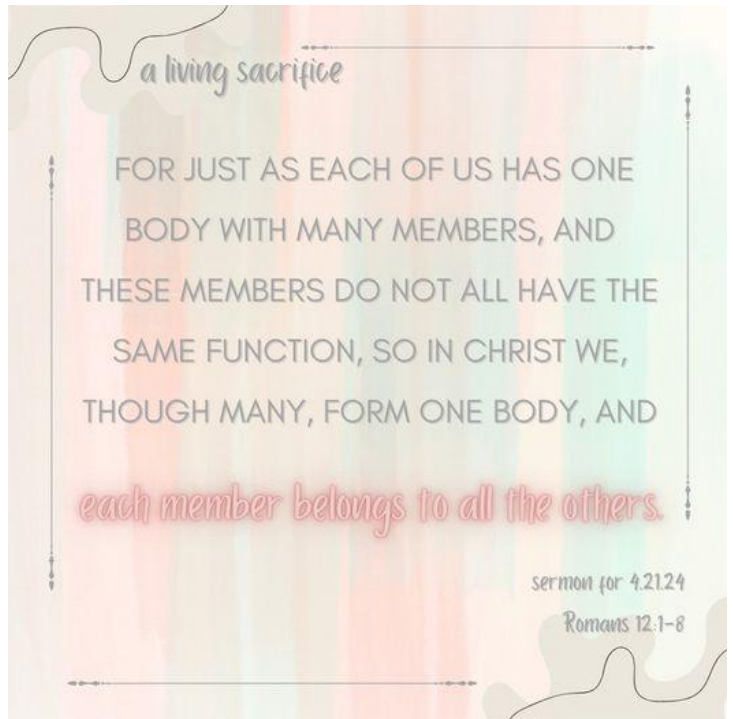
Richard Rohr



Fifteen Characteristics of Faith

1. Faith is a choice.
2. Faith is a step of obedience.
3. Faith is a spiritual exercise.
4. Faith is taking God at His word.
5. Faith is saying yes to God.
6. Faith is looking to Jesus for everything.
7. Faith is knowing we are never without hope.
8. Faith is what lifts us out of our circumstances.
9. Faith is not holding anything back from God.
10. Faith is being obedient even if we don't feel like it.
11. Faith is a gift from God as we read His Word.
12. Faith is knowing that everything will work out.

13. Faith is a way out of our limitations.
14. Faith is the mother of hope.
15. Faith is the road of peace.



Landscaping

Over the past few weeks and with the rains, the weeds are growing fast. Some of our folks have already taken time to weed some of the landscape and we thank them for their time and work. However, there is still a number of areas around the church including the playground, the parsonage and the white fence between the church and hospital that need help. If you have the time and would like to adopt an area to work this summer and keep the weeds pulled, it will help keep the grounds looking manicured. It would be similar to the Adopt a Landscape project we did a few years ago. You do not need to trim bushes. It's the weeds that are getting out of hand. More time will be necessary in the beginning to get the area under control followed by regular monitoring will keep it under control. If you have a specific area you are interested in working, please let Diana Dornbusch know, and she will keep track. If you want to know what is

*available, ask Diana. Thank you all in
advance. Many hands make the work less hard.*

