



From The Pastor's Desk

VBS Gets Personal

Ruthfred members take vacation Bible school personally. Some members take a week's worth of vacation days off work to help. Many devote hours of personal time to preparing the building and classes, invite family and friends, get them here, dip into their own pockets to buy supplies and treats. Many who would've been far more comfortable resting at home endured even pain from injuries, limping around Ruthfred, guiding kids, helping, making VBS wonderful! Praise God for everyone at Ruthfred who makes VBS a success! At Ruthfred, VBS *is* personal!



The middle schoolers and I discovered that too as we traveled around the area meeting other Christians and churches, learning about their ministries. By the way, why do we *only* do these great church tours for VBS? We could do them any time! Anyone want to help with that? The new church van is a comfortable blessing. It holds 15 people.

On Monday at VBS Lou Ball, Matt Moore, and I took Ruthfred's teen VBS students to the Washington City Mission, a ministry that Ruthfred has generously supported for many years. We studied Matthew 25:31-40, noticing that Jesus calls us to be personally involved in helping the poor and needy; feeding, clothing, visiting, and ministering to them.

The Washington City Mission has a soup kitchen where groups can go to help feed people. They also provide housing for men, women, families, and single moms; job training; a ministry for people struggling with addiction; thrift shops provide clothing; and much more assistance for people in need. I found out that they also periodically need pastors to come and preach and lead Bible studies during the week. I'd love to have some people from Ruthfred come with me sometime to help lead an ecumenical worship service there, and/or help lead a Bible study! It would also be a blessing from God to visit the Mission with Ruthfred families, children, and youth to serve some meals together in the kitchen.



On Tuesday we met Pastor Jeff Kipp of Congregation Yeshua Ben David in Squirrel Hill. He met us outside the boarded-up Tree of Life Synagogue, where in 2019 a deranged man killed 11 Jewish people in the deadliest anti-semitic attack ever on American soil. Rabbi Kipp, who loves Jesus, was called by God to share Jesus with Jewish people in Pittsburgh; a challenging and important calling.

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Ruthfred Lutheran Church

3401 South Park Road

Bethel Park , PA 15102

Wwww.Ruthfred.org

Pastor Bryce C. McMinn

Office Manager	Sally Ondrejko
Parish Assistant	Melissa Bostaph
Administrative Assistant	Felicia Rieck
Youth Director	Coltin Cox
Council President	Mark Riley

Herald Staff

Editor	Tom Glasser
Staff Writers	Mettelise Ziegler
	Tom Glasser
Proofreading	Ruth and Alan Hinkelman
Mailing Labels	Lauren Daugherty
Printing	Sally Ondrejko
Assembly Leader	Joyce Bock

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Pastor Kipp hopes to come to Ruthfred to lead another Passover Seder for us, and to lead an adult Sunday School class about his ministry, which Ruthfred has supported for many years. It would be exciting to welcome Rabbi Kipp back to Ruthfred!



On Wednesday we visited the beautiful, 150-year-old Saint Mary's of the Mount Roman Catholic Church on Mount Washington. We learned about the many things Roman Catholics and Protestants have in common, as well as many of our doctrinal differences. It was interesting to learn that Saint Mary's currently serves as the local parish for Roman Catholic people who live both on Mount Washington and on the South Side. In the past so many Roman Catholics lived on the South Side and on Mount Washington that many parishes were needed to serve them. Today fewer parishes are needed, and the Diocese of Pittsburgh has consolidated many of their parishes.

The day before our visit to Saint Mary's I had gone to visit Jim Segerdahl at St Clair Hospital, where he died later that day. One of the last things I did with Jim was to pray and sing to him Simeon's Song from Luke 2:29-32. At Saint Mary's I noticed a beautiful stained-glass window depicting Simeon holding his Savior, Jesus, in his arms, looking up to God and praying the Nunc Dimittis.

It was a wonderful opportunity to tell our VBS students the story of Simeon's Song (the Nunc Dimittis). I even took the opportunity to sing part of it to them there in the sanctuary of Saint Mary's. If you've never visited that lovely church on top of Mount Washington, I highly recommend it. The folks at Saint Mary's would be happy to welcome us for another tour.

On VBS Thursday we traveled to Oakland to visit First Trinity Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Pastor Doug Spittel and First Trinity's Campus Ministry Pastor, Eric Andrae, gave us a great tour. How wonderful to meet these two men, and to learn more about this faithful, Bible-believing congregation in the heart of Oakland.

I recommend First Trinity to all of Ruthfred's college students living in and around Oakland, who can't make it to Ruthfred for worship services during the school year. They have an active ministry to college students at CMU, Pitt, Point Park, Duquesne, and other colleges and universities. Seeing First Trinity's vibrant outreach and ministry to college students was personally convicting. Ruthfred has many members currently attending colleges and universities. Do we keep in contact with them? Have they found good churches to attend? Are they attending them? What are the spiritual needs of Ruthfred's college students? Are we helping to meet them?



On Friday we toured Ruthfred's sanctuary, then had fun breaking bread together on a Sheetz run to the Sheetz on Route 88 in Bethel Park. We had a great time getting to know each other better this week, and learning more about God's Word and some of the many different ministries and churches in our area. I pray that our experience at this year's VBS encourages each of us to be more personally involved in ministry to others, and helped us each grow in our understanding of some of the doctrinal distinctives that make Ruthfred Lutheran Church unique.

*Love in Christ,
Pastor McMinn*

What a spectacular VBS week of Twists and Turns it was!

Following Jesus definitely Changed the Game. 125 children and 53 volunteers erupted our beloved Ruthfred with joy and excitement to learn the Word of our precious Jesus.

Each day the kids enjoyed the TNT Challenge hosted by Tripp" (Mason Mitchell) and "Tanner" (Sam Bostaph) which had them searching for answers about Jesus to circle back at the closing to share what they all learned. Maddie Cox and Julia Hoppe shared their love of children and music to help all the awesome kids grow their faith by learning the songs and moves each day.

The children then moved to stations during the morning, learning about the Bible stories; the older children with Mrs. Sue Hughes and the preschoolers with Mrs. April Blackston. This included a demonstration of walking on water! What an amazing experience the kids got having these wonderful women of faith sharing their love of our Lord.

The crafts that were made by all the children were amazing and we are very fortunate to have wonderful faithful people leading our children in these fun projects that related to our Bible points or lesson each day. We also challenged the elementary kids to learn the Lord's Prayer this week. (65 out of 103 Children completed this challenge.

Mari Donlin and Jim Handshue ran the preschool crafts that all the children loved to show their parents each day. The older kids had a blast with all the crafts they got to make with Arlene Ball, Jan Ruzicka, and Sharon Cardiges. The children got to make some cool crafts in both rooms.

What was especially neat this year was the mission learning that was developed over the last week. Mark and Jodie Riley helped the preschool children learn what this meant for our church and Peggy Cox shared with the older kids. This year there was a special project where all the children made Friendship soup to be donated to those in need. This allowed the kids to have a hands-on experience of mission work in action.

Also, this year this kids really enjoyed the snacks that were lovingly prepared by our awesome kitchen crew led by Sue Rotz and Judy Agnew. The kitchen crew had complex snacks to prepare for the children, but they made it look so easy, and the kids really loved how they connected to what they were learning.

We've mentioned many people by name, but of course we could not have had the success we had without the dedication and hard work of all of our fabulous volunteers! We would also like to thank everyone for the food donations



Continued on next page ...

and gift card donations that well exceeded our expectations. This week went off without a hitch in part to the many crew leaders guiding the children to all the different stations during their time with us each day. Our wonderful church family is so giving of their time to share the love they have for Jesus so others can learn and grow in faith. The awesome crew leaders also coordinated the collecting of offerings for this year's dedicated mission, Bbright. This organization provides education and meals to children in Africa and Thailand. There was a friendly competition between the boys and girls. The boys won the challenge this year by collecting \$533.92 vs. the girls' \$403.32.

All good things have to end, but what a game changer we had! Each year there is a closing program for the parents. We had over 87 in attendance and the parents got a challenge to up the mission offering. That they did, collecting an additional \$596.97 for Bbright, bringing the grand total to \$1,534.31! This is truly tremendous giving for a worthy mission. Hopefully the connections that were made this week leave the kids wanting more, and that Vacation Bible School next year will once again be a game changer!



**Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths. Psalm 25:4**



GAME CHANGER !

Save the Date!

RUTHFRED CHURCH PICNIC

GAMES | FUN | MUSIC



Get ready for Ruthfred's annual church picnic! We'll be cooking up hamburgers and hot dogs, you bring a side or dessert. Last names A-K please bring a salad, L-S please bring a side (not salad), and T-Z please bring a dessert.

..... **SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH**
RUTHFRED BALLFIELD

3 PM - 7 PM

Member Profile:

by Mettelise Ziegler

Deborah (Deb) Skundrich

Few church members can boast they have been active for seventy years and still going strong. That is why Deborah (Deb) Skundrich is such a rare and inspiring subject for this month's column. A member since she was a child of four, Deb was married to Ray who sadly passed away during the COVID lockdown three and a half years ago. They just missed celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Her parents, Bob and Louise Johns, also deceased, raised Deb and her sister Diane (Alwine). Deb's daughter Libby Kenny still lives in the area, and her son Geoff lives in Wexford.

Deb remembers that while the sanctuary was under construction, she attended confirmation classes in the parsonage basement with Pastor Dennis. The congregation held services at the former Bethel Park Junior High School located on Park Avenue. Her father drove to West Virginia with Pastor Dennis to pick up the church bell. Dozens of memories have surfaced, as she is currently serving on the 75th Anniversary Committee, helping to plan a celebration for the congregation.

The Skundriches met while attending West Liberty State University in West Virginia. Ray studied accounting, becoming a CPA, while Deb studied art and history. One of the ways Deb's appreciation for art manifested itself was in quilt-making. Her passion for textiles, passed down from grandmother and mother led to working in a local quilt shop, helping crafters select patterns and fabrics for their creations. Another way Deb has served the community is by substitute teaching in the Bethel Park School District.



At church, Deb has been busy. She estimates she has served Vacation Bible School for thirty-five years. She taught the Second Grade Sunday School class for twenty. Deb "just retired" as "trustee", spending countless hours landscaping our grounds. She serves on the altar guild, has helped with games at church picnics, reorganized the church stained glass window catalog, and as she says, helped off and on with numerous activities. But just being a busy bee is not how best to define Deb. She possesses a faith that bubbles with enthusiasm for serving the Lord. Although our church feels like home and family to her, Deb is one of the many I know who emphatically support this core value: We stand on the inerrancy of Scripture.

As we were wrapping up an uplifting, cheerful chat, Deb surprised me by saying her favorite Bible passage was Isaiah 53. She said it had been her father's preference also. The chapter details the sobering, gruesome death of Jesus. It is heartbreaking, but it gives Deb assurance that Jesus paid her sin debt and that she can face the future with optimism as she serves God with joy.



The Great Journey Through the Word Summer Film Festival



Wednesday mornings at 10AM

Many excellent Christian movies have been released through the years. A variety of old and new, fiction and documentary have been shown at our church this summer. There are two opportunities left in August. Come and enjoy! No registration necessary, and all are welcome.

- ♦ August 2 ***The War Room*** Outwardly, Tony and Elizabeth Jordan seem to have it all—but their world is crumbling under the strain of a failing marriage. Their lives take an unexpected turn when Elizabeth meets Miss Clara and is challenged to establish a “war room” and a battle plan of prayer for her family. Starring Priscilla Shirer as Elizabeth.
- ♦ August 9 ***A Man Called Peter*** This biographical feature film from 1955 tells the story of the Scottish-born minister who became Chaplain of the U.S. Senate and the husband of Christian writer, Catherine Marshall.

* * * * *

Morning Journey through the Word, Fall 2023



It's time to look forward to the fall! We're excited to be studying the book of Ecclesiastes for the first seven weeks, starting September 13. Ecclesiastes has much to teach us about wisdom from the wisest person who ever lived, King Solomon. The Bible frequently contrasts the wise and the foolish. This book will help us understand how to live our lives in and with God's wisdom. Starting on November first, we'll finish this session with a four-week study of Ruth.

Everyone is welcome! We have study groups for both women and men and an online discussion group. Please fill out a registration form and put it in the basket outside the sanctuary across from the elevator. Check the church website (www.ruthfred.org) to also register online.

In addition to participants, we are always open to people willing to lead a small group. You do not need to be a Bible scholar and are guided through each lesson and how to teach it to your class. We are praying for you to step forward and respond to the Holy Spirit's tug on your heart!

Another need we have is for two people to serve our smallest participants in the nursery, giving their moms (or dads or grandparents) an opportunity to attend Journey. Clearances are needed to do this but are easily obtained through our church office.

Journey through the Word is a ministry that is making a difference in people's lives. We grow deeper spiritually, learn to better love, serve, and worship our Lord and God, and build each other up in faith. There are many ways to participate. Choose one and come journey with us!

Questions? Need more information? Contact Pat Moore, 412-833-3034 (patmoore9@msn.com) or Sue Swan at 412-708-3535 (writingcygnet@gmail.com)

Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

Nearer, My God, to Thee

Lyrics: Sarah Flower Adams

Music: Lowell Mason

There's an old saying that goes something like this: 'If you don't feel close to God anymore, guess who moved.' The Bible is full, after all, of promises that God is always near and that He will not forsake us. In Psalm 139, for example, we read, "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me." In Acts 17 we hear Paul preaching to the Athenians that God "is actually not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being." So the question becomes 'what is the state of our hearts with regard to God's desire to draw us to Him?' Are we feeling near to God and want to be even nearer? Or are we feeling cold and wayward and crying to God to draw us near again? This certainly varies greatly from person to person, and probably varies greatly from time to time throughout most people's lives.

In "Nearer, My God, to Thee", Sarah Adams explores the concept of being drawn nearer to God. Throughout most of the hymn, she skillfully incorporates the story of Jacob's dream of a ladder to heaven as a metaphor for events in our lives that hopefully help us to recognize God's hand drawing us near to Him. Jacob's name is actually never mentioned, being only alluded to as a "wanderer". Who of us can't already oftentimes relate to that?!

*Though like a wanderer, the sun gone down,
Darkness be over me, my rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be nearer, my God, to thee.*



You may recall that, according to Genesis 28, Jacob is on a journey to the land of his mother's extended family in search of a wife. This is probably a time of great uncertainty and anxiety in this young man's life. Now the sun's gone down, darkness is over him, and a hard stone is his pillow. Trouble sleeping some nights, anyone? What now, God? What does it all mean? Are you there, God?

*Then let my way appear, steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me, in mercy given;
Angels to beckon me nearer, my God, to thee.*



"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Remember that prayer? So, two options, right?

Continued on next page ...

Option 1:

*Then with my waking thoughts, bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be nearer my God, to thee.*

Option 2:

*Or, if on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I fly;
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to thee.*

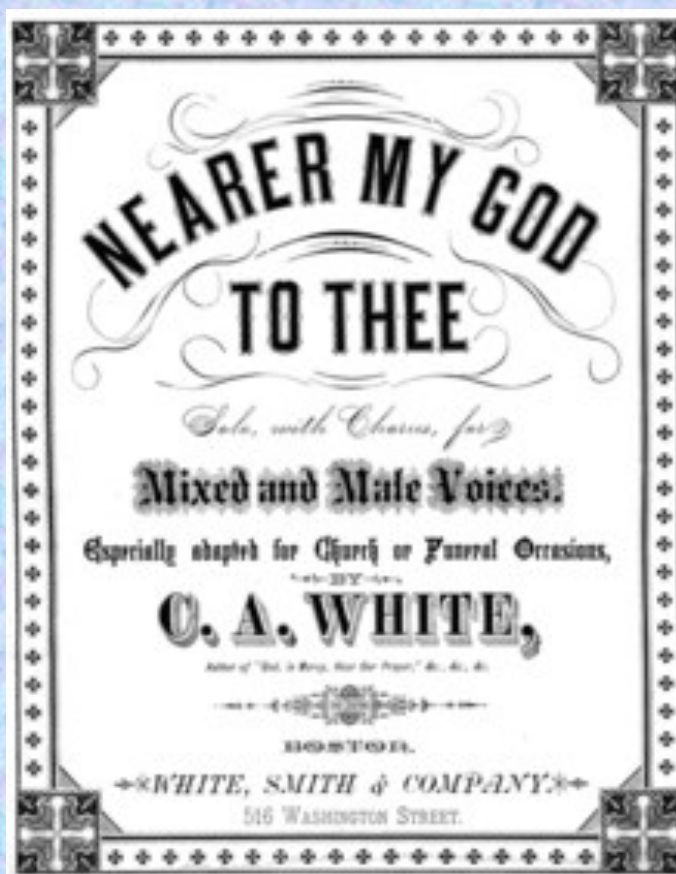
*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 4:16

Some interesting trivia about "Nearer, My God, to Thee":

- * It was the favorite hymn of President William McKinley. As he lay dying, the victim of an assassin's bullet, he was heard to whisper, "Nearer my God to Thee, nearer my God to Thee . . ."
- * It is reported to have been played by the ship's orchestra on the fateful night of April 15th, 1912, when the mighty Titanic sank in the icy waters of the Atlantic.

Source: "Hymns of Faith" by Nathanael Olson





90+ Birthday Club

Eleanor Dymond

August 14th

90

Happy Birthday !!



Please note that there will not be a Contemporary Liturgical Service in August. The worship team will, however, be leading some songs during the devotional time at the annual church picnic on August 20th.

Life Quotes from Lutherans For Life



Lutherans
For Life

“We need campfires and cookouts and picnic lunches filled with laughter. Yet, as members of the household of God, we also need conversation and consolation and prayer. We need to gather, in person, at the Communion rail. Surrounded by our eternal family, we need to hear God’s promises and rejoice in His forgiveness.”

Michelle Bauman, Y4Life

Ponderable Quote:

"The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it."

John Ruskin

Worship Team Members for August 2023

Acolytes

8/6	8:30 AM	Jonathan Tarrant
	11:00 AM	Josh Cimarolli
8/13	8:30 AM	Elliot McMinn
	11:00 AM	Evan Gusky
8/20	8:30 AM	Asher Manzo
	11:00 AM	Ryan Handshue
8/27	8:30 AM	Jonathan Tarrant
	11:00 AM	Josh Cimarolli

Better is ONE day in
your courts than
thousands elsewhere;

PSALM 84:10

Ushers:

8:30 AM	Bernard Paterra
	John Ruzicka
11:00 AM	TBD

Counters:

8:30 AM	Paul Mikulan
	Gary Fischer
11:00 AM	Josh Cox
	Nathan Donolo

Altar Guild

Elaine Widich

Coffee Hour

Chris and Ron Stout

Official Acts -- July 2023

Funerals:

- * Joanne J. Salvetti -- 07/15/23
- * Katherine (Kay) M. Wyrwas -- 07/21/23
- * James R. Segerdahl -- 07/29/23

* *Indicates member*

*I am
the Way,
the Truth
and the
Life*
John 14:6



august 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Worship Team 7:00	2 JTTW Summer Films 10:00 ("The War Room")	3	4 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)	5
6  Holy Communion 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Holy Communion 11:00 Pastor Gary Jorgenson preaching CITY MISSION FOOD SUNDAY	7	8 Worship Team 7:00	9 JTTW Summer Films 10:00 ("A Man Called Peter") Esther Noon	10	11 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)	12 Mary Bible Study 9:30 (Fireside Lounge)
13 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Welcoming of New Mem- bers at both services	14 Elders' Meeting & Prayer Time 6:00 Council Meeting 7:30  Happy 90 th Birthday, Eleanor Dymond!	15 Mary, Mother of Our Lord Worship Team 7:00	16	17	18 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)	19 Hafen/Miller baptism 
20 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 (Morrow baptism) Church Picnic with Praise Team 3-7 p.m. 	21 Ruth 1:30	22 Worship Team 7:00	23	24 St. Barthol- omew, Apostle	25 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)	26
27 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 GIFT Bible Study 6:30	28 Herald deadline	29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist Preschool Orientation 6:00 Worship Team 7:00	30	31 		



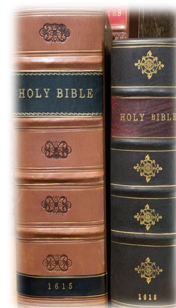
2023 Youth Ministry Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	31 Welcome to new Youth Director, Coltin Cox!	1 TNT @ Julia Hoppe's house 7-9	2	3	4	5
6 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	7	8 TNT @ the Huwes' house 7-9	9	10 Senior Speech Night @ Cox Farm 6-10	11	12
13 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	14	15 TNT @ the Nirellas' house 7-9	16	17	18	19 Hazelbaker's TNT Canoe Trip 11 a.m.—6 p.m.
20 Sunday School 9:45 NO SWAP Church Picnic with Praise Team 3:00-7:00	21	22 TNT @ the McMinns' house 7-9	23	24	25	26
27 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	28	29 TNT @ Church 7-9	30	31		

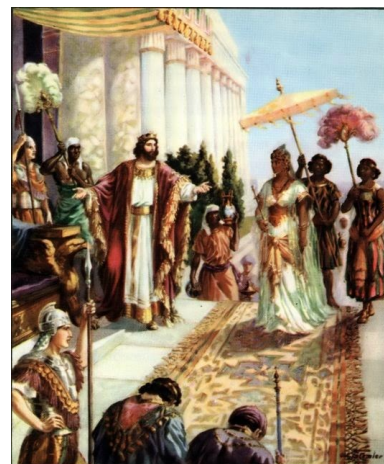
Reading Through the Bible 2023

"One Story that Leads to Jesus"

Schedule for August



1st	Daniel 10	Daniel 11	Daniel 12	Psalm 58	
2nd	Haggai 1	Haggai 2	Psalm 59		
3rd	Zechariah 1	Zechariah 2	Zechariah 3	Zechariah 4	Psalm 60
4th	Zechariah 5	Zechariah 6	Zechariah 7	Zechariah 8	Psalm 61
5th	Zechariah 9	Zechariah 10	Zechariah 11	Zechariah 12	Zechariah 13
	Zechariah 14	Psalm 62			
6th	Malachi 1	Malachi 2	Psalm 63		
7th	Malachi 3	Malachi 4	Psalm 64		
8th	1 Chronicles 1	1 Chronicles 2	1 Chronicles 3	1 Chronicles 4	1 Chronicles 5
	1 Chronicles 6	1 Chronicles 7	1 Chronicles 8	1 Chronicles 9	1 Chronicles 10
	Psalm 65				
9th	1 Chronicles 11	1 Chronicles 12	1 Chronicles 13	1 Chronicles 14	Psalm 66
10th	1 Chronicles 15	1 Chronicles 16	1 Chronicles 17	Psalm 67	
11th	1 Chronicles 18	1 Chronicles 19	1 Chronicles 20	1 Chronicles 21	Psalm 68
12th	1 Chronicles 22	1 Chronicles 23	1 Chronicles 24	Psalm 69	
13th	1 Chronicles 25	1 Chronicles 26	1 Chronicles 27	1 Chronicles 28	
	1 Chronicles 29	Psalm 70			
14th	2 Chronicles 1	2 Chronicles 2	2 Chronicles 3	2 Chronicles 4	Psalm 71
15th	2 Chronicles 5	2 Chronicles 6	2 Chronicles 7	2 Chronicles 8	Psalm 72
16th	2 Chronicles 9	2 Chronicles 10	2 Chronicles 11	2 Chronicles 12	Psalm 73
17th	2 Chronicles 13	2 Chronicles 14	2 Chronicles 15	2 Chronicles 16	
	2 Chronicles 17	Psalm 74			
18th	2 Chronicles 18	2 Chronicles 19	2 Chronicles 20	Psalm 75	
19th	2 Chronicles 21	2 Chronicles 22	2 Chronicles 23	2 Chronicles 24	Psalm 76
20th	2 Chronicles 25	2 Chronicles 26	2 Chronicles 27	Psalm 77	
21st	2 Chronicles 28	2 Chronicles 29	2 Chronicles 30	2 Chronicles 31	Psalm 78
22nd	2 Chronicles 32	2 Chronicles 33	2 Chronicles 34	Psalm 79	
23rd	2 Chronicles 35	2 Chronicles 36	Psalm 80		
24th	Matthew 1	Matthew 2	Psalm 81		
25th	Matthew 3	Matthew 4	Psalm 82		
26th	Matthew 5	Matthew 6	Psalm 83		
27th	Matthew 7	Matthew 8	Psalm 84		
28th	Matthew 9	Matthew 10	Psalm 85		
29th	Matthew 11	Matthew 12	Psalm 86		
30th	Matthew 13	Matthew 14	Psalm 87		
31st	Matthew 15	Matthew 16	Psalm 88		



A joyful heart is good medicine.

Proverbs 17:22a



DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- * Socks lost during laundry return as Tupperware lids that don't fit any containers in your cupboard.
- * More airplanes are found at the bottom of the ocean than submarines in the sky.
- * Bad jokes told during Zoom meetings are not even remotely funny.
- * Snails fight by slugging it out.
- * The inventors of the merry-go-round and the Ferris wheel never met because they apparently traveled in different circles.

*Editor's note: The Ruthfred Lutheran Herald is not responsible for the accuracy of the above claims.
Please do your own fact checking.*