



From the Pastor's Desk

God Uses His People to Shepherd His Flock

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'

Then I said, 'Here I am. Send me.'" Isaiah 6:8

In the past several weeks staff members Melissa Bostaph, Felicia Rieck, and I have met with many amazing people at Ruthfred who are active shepherds. They visit the sick and home bound, write notes of encouragement, keep in touch with many members in many ways, and generally are faithful at being the hands and feet of God on earth, ministering to His people, whom they genuinely love. They do a phenomenal job in this ministry, and they do it in love! They enjoy it, and that's obvious when you speak with them.

It's true, nevertheless, that most congregations struggle to keep in contact with members, particularly members who don't regularly come within the four walls of our church buildings. For various reasons many people find it difficult to make it to church regularly. God's people struggle. It's a fact (John 16:33). The longer people struggle to be an active part of a congregation, the longer and farther they wander from the church, the more distant their relationships with people in the congregation become, and the smaller the impact the ministries of the congregation have in their lives. That's a fact. It's a challenge facing every Christian congregation.

Between 600 and 800 Ruthfred members (we're still examining this) are officially part of our congregation, but don't regularly (or ever) worship here; don't enter the building. There are various reasons for that. Many people walk through seasons in life when they wander spiritually. I experienced that myself before wandering into the Patterson Road door at Ruthfred in 2001. In those seasons church attendance seems unimportant. Especially in life transitions, these things happen, whether it's empty nesters, people having challenges in their marriage, going through a divorce, struggling with addiction, graduates moving away, people getting married, having children, suffering the death of loved ones, losing jobs, starting jobs, or experiencing a deep hurt in life.

For these and other reasons there are many souls that are part of our congregation, but whom we don't often see. Our staff and many faithful shepherds at Ruthfred are meeting on a weekly basis now, putting together a strategic plan to help lovingly address the unique needs of these beloved members of our congregation, and to help us be faithful to our calling from God, to care for His flock (John 21:15-17).

Our shepherds have already developed Mission and Vision statements! A vision is what we ideally hope to see. A mission is a plan to reach that vision. Here are the statements they've developed:

Our Vision: That, by God's grace, every member of Ruthfred will *establish* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Acts 2:38) and *preserve* (Acts 2:41-47) a healthy personal relationship with God while encouraging the same of other Ruthfred members.

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Ruthfred Lutheran Church

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The submission deadline for the next Herald is
Friday, May 26th, 2023

The email publication date is
Thursday, June 1st, 2023



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Our Mission: By God's grace, the shepherding ministry at Ruthfred will continue to reinforce the Faith that is in you by encouraging active personal participation (Hebrews 10:23-25) in the life of our congregation.

We're still working. Our strategic planning continues. We acknowledge, as all congregations should, that we don't have all the answers. We don't know the needs of every member of our congregation. I myself, for example, am not a perfect pastor. I haven't memorized the names of every Ruthfred member, nor am I in regular enough contact with all of you. When was the last time I visited *your* home? I *desire* to do all things well, humbly acknowledging that I need God's help. My own efforts often fall short. The tasks ahead are great, but all things are possible with God (Matthew 19:26)! We, as a family of the Faith, want to minister well and faithfully to you and your family! May God help us!

By God's grace, Ruthfred's confirmation students, parents, and I did something well on April 26th. We got together and hit the driving range at Cool Springs! We had a blast! It wasn't just about having fun and breaking bread (Vocelli's pizza) together. It was about relationships. We're not just fellow members of Ruthfred, and I'm not just their pastor and confirmation teacher. We're friends. We're all members of the family of the Faith, brothers and sisters in Christ, children of God (John 1:12). Our confirmation students have worked hard in class. Their parents have worked hard to get them here often, week after week, for these critical classes. When their kids have missed classes, they've helped teach their kids at home. The least we could do was have a bit of fun together to relax and celebrate the near-completion of another confirmation year.



Relationships count! May God help us to build them here at Ruthfred! May God help us to bless each of *you*, to minister to *you*. May God use *you* too, to minister to people in need here at Ruthfred, who'd be blessed to have *you* in their lives. God's people struggle with many different things. We need Him to bless us in those struggles. He blesses us at Ruthfred with and *through* each other! Thanks be to God!

Love in Christ,
Pastor McMinv

Please note a correction to last month's Member Profile article. The "apple pie lady" who introduced Bob and Gladys Reith to Ruthfred Lutheran was Ida Mae Colledge, not Ida Mae Collins as incorrectly reported.



90+ Birthday Club

Martha Schneider	May 5th	91
Marian Meyer	May 12th	91

Happy Birthday !!



Life Quotes from Lutherans For Life



“God has chosen each one of us from the beginning of creation. God has also chosen our body to be a temple. He gave us the beautiful gift of a body, and we are called to be stewards of that body, to take care of it and be aware of what we do with it. God also chooses each one of us to belong. We all have a spot and purpose in God’s family — and not one of us is useless or random. God chose us with a purpose. Nothing He does is random.”

Kambria Steinhaus, Knights 4 Life
A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org

Another successful Family Easter Festival was held on Palm Sunday, April 2nd. This event wonderfully combines fun, fellowship, food, and most importantly, proclamation of the good news of Jesus' resurrection!

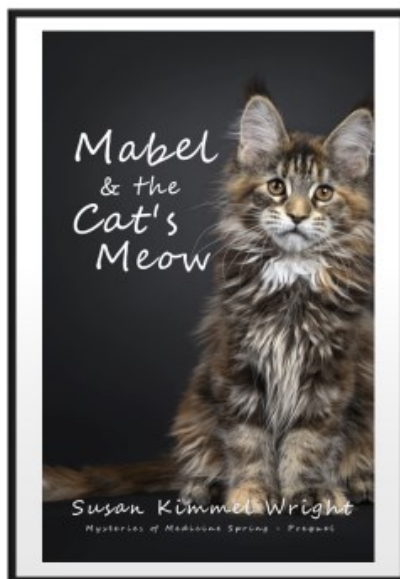
Thanks to Barb Harrold who originally brainstormed the idea for this festival and once again spearheaded the planning and coordinating. Thanks also to the many volunteers who pitched in to make it all happen.

Attendance included 41 children, 37 adult attendees, 35 adult volunteers, 18 youth, and 5 musicians from the worship team.



XYZ'ers Enjoy Presentation By Resident Author

On Friday, April 28th, RLC's XYZ group hosted another enjoyable afternoon of fellowship. Alan Hinkelman opened the gathering with a devotion and a fun quiz game involving movies, books, and authors. Then, following another fabulous meal prepared by Peggy Cox and her industrious kitchen crew, everyone adjourned to the large Sunday School classroom for a presentation by fellow RLC member Susan Wright. With a disarming combination of humility, honesty, humor, poignancy, and fun pictures, Sue chronicled her struggles and growth as a writer, from a daydreaming grade schooler to the present. Although a devout Christian, she came to the realization that writing fiction that is outrightly Christian was not something she could do well. So, after seeking God's blessing and direction, she has blossomed as a writer of wholesome "cozy mysteries" that can be enjoyed by everyone, whether Christian or not. Shown below are her most recent published novels. They can be purchased through various online outlets (or perhaps by talking to Sue in person).



Member Profile:

by Mettelise Ziegler

Megan Huwe

Last month, I wrote about the DNA of Ruthfred. Since its founding, the church has stood for Biblical truth while displaying love and concern for all people. In this article, Megan Huwe shows us what this looks like through the lens of our Youth program.

Megan's family, including older brothers Jeremy and Logan, has been very active at the church. Parents, Jill and Pete have spent countless hours serving in numerous ways, most especially with the youth. Megan was baptized and confirmed at Ruthfred. She even attended Ruthfred's preschool. Like most, she attended Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Children's Choir. Unlike many, she did not drop out post-confirmation.

A junior at Bethel Park, Megan is on the drumline and performs with the symphonic band as well as in a percussion ensemble. She will be captain of the drumline next fall. Out of the eleven girls on the line, she has convinced five to join her for TNT, our church's youth group.

TNT is not just a time for teens to hang out and eat pizza. Megan says that fellowship is authentic with group discussions centered on the Bible and shared experiences. The participants are learning how to "go out in the world and not just be around Christians all the time." Megan says that she has been to some "life-changing" retreats and trips through our youth program. The teens have been to Seneca Hills Bible Camp and the Association Retreat Center (ARC) in Wisconsin several times. They also attend work camp every summer. Last year, they traveled to Nashville through Youth Works to sort donated food and thrift store items.

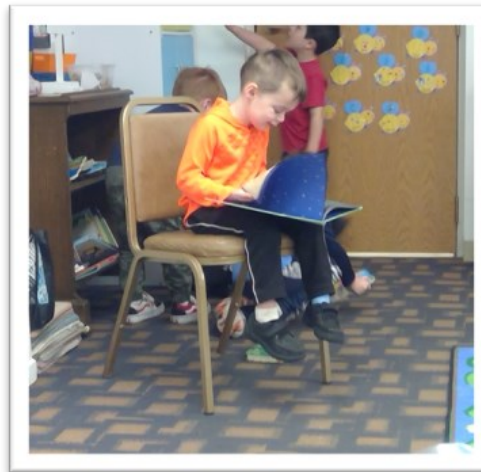
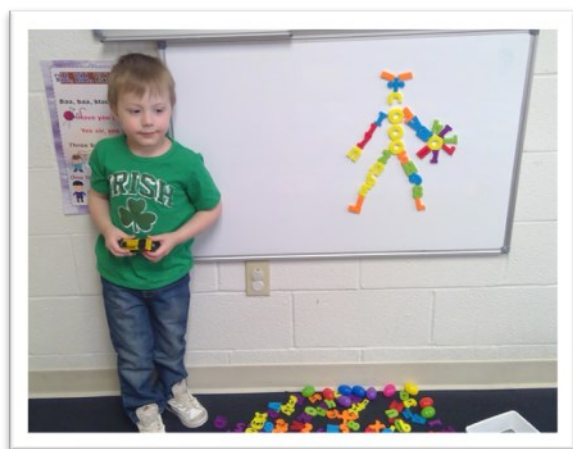


Every other year, TNT participants may attend the Free Lutheran Youth (FLY) convention in Estes Park Colorado. There are approximately 1,300 attendees representing our sister congregations. Ruthfred members make every effort to help financially. The convention is packed full of fun, of course, but more than that, it is packed with worship, music, Bible study, and inspirational speakers.

Megan says that her "parents set me up to be strong in faith." Her father read to his children from a children's Bible every night before bed, ending with the Lord's prayer. At her baptism, her parents, godparents, and the congregation were reminded of their sacred responsibility to protect, educate and love her with the truth of Christ. It is encouraging to see the results of baptismal vows that have been kept. There is certainly "good fruit" being produced in the young life of Megan Huwe.

After high school graduation next spring, Megan plans to continue her education either by attending the AFLC Free Lutheran Bible College or going directly to the University of Pittsburgh for nursing. She finds time to play piano, babysit, take walks, and bake. Her specialty is almond torte.

Preschool News



We are entering our last month of preschool! In April we learned all about Easter. Both classes have been working their way through the alphabet and we are almost to the end. We are working hard learning our songs for our ending programs and will be having them at the end of May.

Registration is open for both the 3-year-old and 4-year-old classes for the 2023-2024 school year. Visit ruthfred.org/preschool to register online and to see more pictures of our classes in action. Ruthfred members receive a 15% discount on tuition. Any questions can be directed to preschool@ruthfred.org

Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart

Lyrics: George Croly

Music: Ascribed to Frederick Cook Atkinson

Do you believe there is a God? Yes. Do you believe in the God of the Bible? Yes. Do you praise that God? Yes. Do you fear God? Yes. Do you love God? Ye wait, let me think about that. Do I love God? What does that really feel like, or look like? God is spirit, and most of the time invisible to us. He is the almighty Creator and Lord of the universe. Can I possibly love Him the way I love my parents, my spouse, my children, or my friends?

"Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart" was chosen as the featured hymn for this month due to the fact that Pentecost will be celebrated on May 28th. As I reviewed the lyrics for this article, I noticed that 3 out of the 4 verses deal with loving God.



Make me love thee as I ought to love. (v. 1)

Hast thou not bid me love thee, God and King? (v. 2)

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love. (v. 3)

Dennis Prager is a radio talk show host that I enjoy listening to on a regular basis. Although not a Christian, he is a conservative, devout Jew who believes in God and does have a very good understanding of, and respect for, Christianity. Mr. Prager talks about how difficult it can be for many people, including himself, to love God, especially given all of the suffering in the world. Perhaps, he says, it is because God knows how difficult it is that He actually makes it a command: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5, and quoted by Jesus in the NT.) Prager also goes on to note the amazing fact that Deuteronomy was the first book in history to present God as a being who loves human beings and who wants human beings to love Him!

With all my heart and with all my soul and with all my might – wow, that is hard! I think I'm going to need help with that. God knows we need help, and He has promised such help. As Jesus was teaching his disciples near the end of his earthly ministry, he talked about the coming of the Holy Spirit, and referred to him as the "Helper". And that is what Mr. Croly's hymn is all about.

*Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
And make me love thee as I ought to love.*



God knows our weakness and that our sinful nature does not allow us to love him the way that he wants to be loved. But when we confess our sinfulness and put our trust in Christ as our Redeemer, God "is faithful and just to forgive

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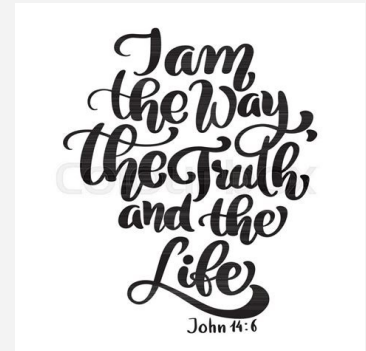
us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) When we allow ourselves to be clothed with Christ's robe of righteousness, then when God looks at us He sees us through the lens of His "Beloved Son".

As we live our lives trusting in God's forgiveness through Christ our Lord, however, may each of us also pray:
'O Holy Spirit, Helper, help me to make *My heart an altar, and thy love the flame. Amen.*



Official Acts -- April 2023

No official acts to report for April



Ponderable Quote:

"The mysteries of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man."

G.K. Chesterton

The Great Journey Through the Word Summer Film Festival

Wednesday mornings, beginning June 14 at 10AM

Many excellent Christian movies have been released through the years. A variety of old and new, fiction and documentary will be shown for your viewing pleasure! Come for one; come for all! No registration necessary, and all are welcome.



- ◆ June 14 ***The Hiding Place*** Corrie ten Boom's family hid Jews in their home during WW II until they were sent to concentration camps for it.
- ◆ June 21 ***Risen*** Clavius, a Roman Military Tribune, and his aide are tasked with solving the mystery of what happened to Jesus in the weeks following the crucifixion, in order to disprove rumors of a risen Messiah and prevent an uprising in Jerusalem.
- ◆ June 28 ***The Jesus Revolution*** The true story of a national spiritual awakening in the early 1970s chronicles its origins within a community of teenage hippies in Southern California. Starring Jonathan Roumie and Kelsey Grammar.
- ◆ July 5 ***Shadowlands*** This story follows C.S. Lewis's romance with and marriage to American Joy Davidman later in his life. Anthony Hopkins plays C.S. Lewis.
- ◆ July 12 ***I Can Only Imagine*** A biopic of musician Bart Millard tells how he wrote the song about the relationship he had with his father that became the best-selling Christian single of all time.
- ◆ July 19 ***Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resister*** This documentary tells the dramatic story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the young German theologian and Lutheran pastor who became part of a plot to kill Adolf Hitler.

July 26 VBS—no Journey

- ◆ 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.

VBS Volunteers Needed!

Please consider signing up at myvbs.org/ruthfredlutheran to be a volunteer. Even if you cannot do the full week, please let me know if you can volunteer for at least a day. I promise you will find the time investment is worth it! There will be a volunteer meeting June 11th after the 11AM service. Right after that meeting I will be helping anyone that would like assistance completing the required Child Clearances. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jason Weighley.

(Jason.weighley@gmail.com)



VBS is right around the corner. Please register at <https://www.myvbs.org/ruthfredlutheran>. Our VBS will be from July 24 to 28th. 9AM to Noon. Come and see how **Following Jesus Changes the Game!**

Decorating continues on May 2nd, 16th, and 23rd from 7PM to 9PM.

Worship Team Members for May 2023

Acolytes & Crucifers:

		<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Crucifer</u>
5/7	8:30 AM	Asher Manzo	-----
	11:00 AM	Elliot McMinn	Holly Miller
5/14	8:30 AM	Jonathan Tarrant	Morgan Dolence
	11:00 AM	Elliot McMinn	-----
5/21	8:30 AM	Evan Gusky	-----
	11:00 AM	Elliot McMinn	Holly Miller
5/28	8:30 AM	Asher Manzo	Courtney Felicetti
	11:00 AM	Elliot McMinn	-----

Ushers:

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

Counters:

8:30 AM	Mark Killinger Steve Cox
11:00 AM	Nathan Donolo TBD

Altar Guild

Mari Donlin









Coffee Hour

Mary Lou Streiner

Better is ONE day in
your courts than
thousands elsewhere;
PSALM 84:10

May 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Sts. Philip & James, Apostles Craft & Sew 9:30 Elders Meeting 6:30	2 Worship Team 7:00 VBS Decorating 7:00 - 9:00	3 Children's Choir 5:45 Senior Confirmation 6:45 Senior Choir 7:00	4 National Day of Prayer -- Observance 10 am & 7:00 pm	5 HAPPY 91st BIRTHDAY MARTHA SCHNEIDER  Men's Prayer Group 7:00 am (Fireside Lounge)	6
7 4th Sunday after Easter Holy Communion 8:30 Fellowship Breakfast 9:45 Holy Communion 11:00 Parents' Date Night planning mtg Noonish Holy Communion 6:00 City Mission Food Sunday	8 Elders Prayer Time 7:00 Council Meeting 7:30	9 Congregational Meeting 6:30	10 Esther Noon Children's Choir 5:45 Senior Confirmation 6:45 Senior Choir 7:00	11	12 HAPPY 91st BIRTHDAY MARIAN MEYER  Men's Prayer Group 7:00 am (Fireside Lounge)	13 Mary Bible Study 9:30 am (Fireside Lounge)
14 5th Sunday after Easter Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Mother's Day	15 Memorial Service for Mary Ann Scott Noon Benevolence 7:00 Mason Mitchell begins as Interim Youth Director Rogation Day	16 Election Day Worship Team 7:00 VBS Decorating 7:00 - 9:00 Rogation Day	17 Senior Confirmation 6:45 Senior Choir 7:00	18 Preschool Closing Program (3-yr-olds) 10:45 Ruth 2:00 	19 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 am (Fireside Lounge)	20 Contemporary Liturgical Worship Service 6:00 
21  Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Confirmation reception after 11:00 service Young Adult Bible Study 6:30 GIFT Bible Study 6:30	22 Preschool Closing Program (4-yr-olds) 10:45 (Sanctuary)	23 Craft & Sew 9:30 (Sewers) Preschool Last Day (3 yr olds) Worship Team 7:00 VBS Decorating 7:00 - 9:00	24 Preschool Last Day (4-year-olds) Senior Confirmation 6:45	25 Knit Wits 10:00	26 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 am (Fireside Lounge) Herald Deadline	27
28 Pentecost Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 	29 Memorial Day Observed  Church Office Closed	30 Worship Team 7:00 VBS Decorating 7:00 - 9:00	31			



2023 Youth Ministry Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 TNT @ Church 7 - 8	3	4	5	6
7 4th Sunday after Easter Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6 - 7:30	8	9 No TNT Meeting Congregational Meeting 6:30	10	11	12	13
14 5th Sunday after Easter Sunday School 9:45 No SWAP Meeting 	15 Welcome to Mason Mitchell as Interim Director of Youth Ministry 	16 Election Day TNT @ Church 7 - 9	17	18	19	20
21 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6 - 7:30 	22	23 TNT @ Church 7 - 9	24	25 	26	27
28 Pentecost Sunday School 9:45 No SWAP Meeting	29	30 TNT @ Church 7 - 9	31 			

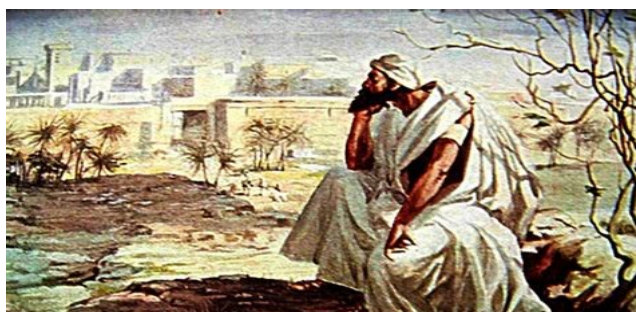
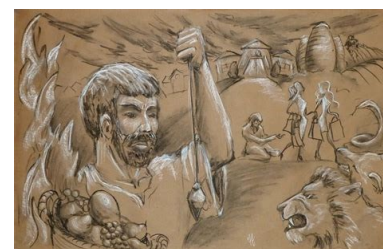
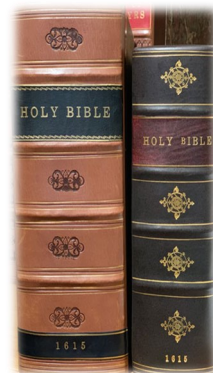
Reading Through the Bible 2023

"One Story that Leads to Jesus"

Schedule for May

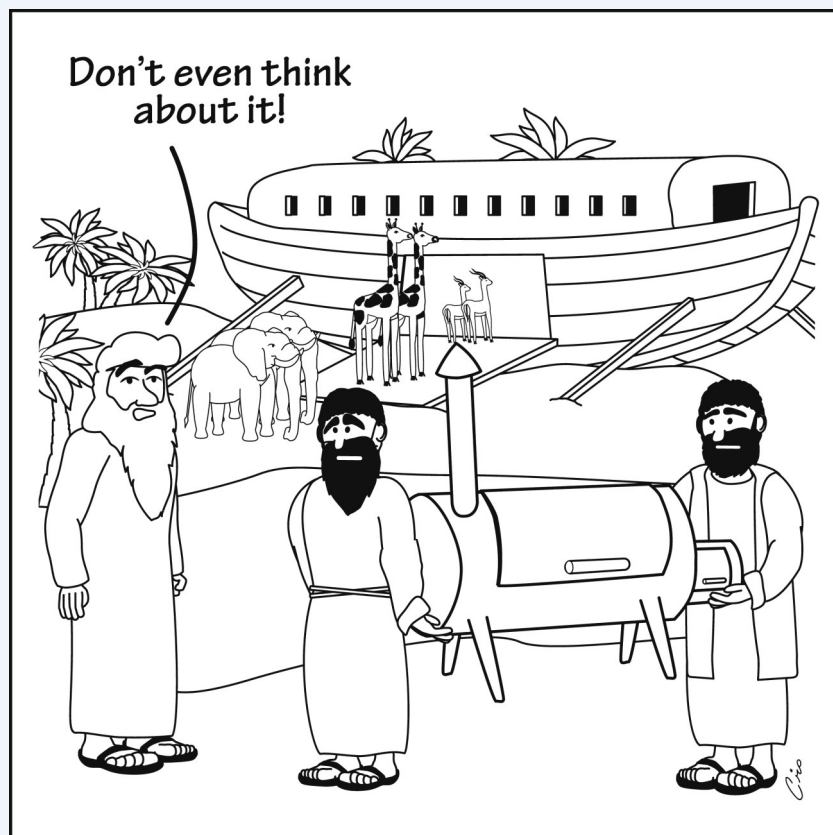
1st	Isaiah 49	Isaiah 50	Isaiah 51	Psalm 119:65-96
2nd	Isaiah 52	Isaiah 53	Isaiah 54	Psalm 119:97-128
3rd	Isaiah 55	Isaiah 56	Isaiah 57	Psalm 119:129-152
4th	Isaiah 58	Isaiah 59	Isaiah 60	Psalm 119:153-176
5th	Isaiah 61	Isaiah 62	Isaiah 63	Isaiah 64 Psalm 120
6th	Isaiah 65	Isaiah 66	Psalm 121	
7th	Hosea 1	Hosea 2	Hosea 3	Hosea 4 Hosea 5 Psalm 122
8th	Hosea 6	Hosea 7	Hosea 8	Hosea 9 Hosea 10 Psalm 123
9th	Hosea 11	Hosea 12	Hosea 13	Hosea 14 Psalm 124
10th	Joel 1	Joel 2	Joel 3	Psalm 125
11th	Amos 1	Amos 2	Amos 3	Amos 4 Amos 5 Psalm 126
12th	Amos 6	Amos 7	Amos 8	Amos 9 Psalm 127
13th	Obadiah 1	Psalm 128		
14th	Jonah 1	Jonah 2	Jonah 3	Jonah 4 Psalm 129
15th	Micah 1	Micah 2	Micah 3	Micah 4 Psalm 130
16th	Micah 5	Micah 6	Micah 7	Psalm 131
17th	Nahum 1	Nahum 2	Nahum 3	Psalm 132
18th	Habakkuk 1	Habakkuk 2	Habakkuk 3	Psalm 133
19th	Zephaniah 1	Zephaniah 2	Zephaniah 3	Psalm 134
20th	Job 1	Job 2	Job 3	Psalm 135
21st	Job 4	Job 5	Job 6	Job 7 Psalm 136
22nd	Job 8	Job 9	Job 10	Job 11 Psalm 137
23rd	Job 12	Job 13	Job 14	Job 15 Psalm 138
24th	Job 16	Job 17	Job 18	Job 19 Psalm 139
25th	Job 20	Job 21	Job 22	Job 23 Psalm 140
26th	Job 24	Job 25	Job 26	Job 27 Job 28 Psalm 141
27th	Job 29	Job 30	Job 31	Psalm 142
28th	Job 32	Job 33	Job 34	Psalm 143
29th	Job 35	Job 36	Job 37	Psalm 144
30th	Job 38	Job 39	Psalm 145	
31st	Job 40	Job 41	Job 42	Psalm 146

THE
MIN
PRC



A joyful heart is good medicine.

Proverbs 17:22a



Q: Where did Noah keep the bees?
A: In the ark hives, of course.

Noah: Keep a close eye on those termites, especially Clint!
Wife: OK, but by the way, why did you name him Clint?
Noah: Clint eats wood.

Why didn't Noah just swat those two mosquitoes?

