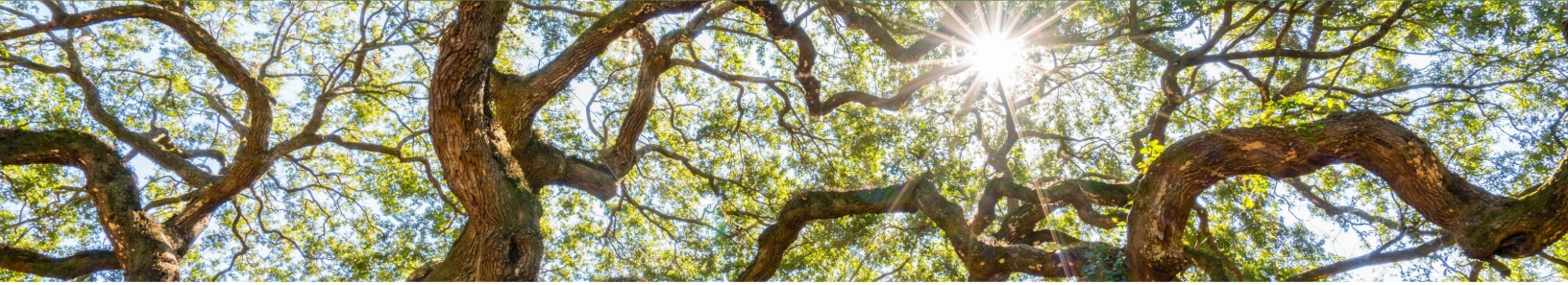


# Connection

*to inform & inspire*



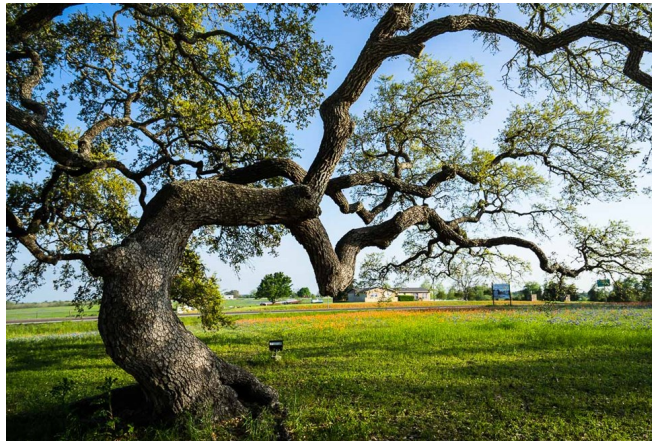
## Acorn to Oak

~Pastor Mark Johnson

The image of an acorn represents the tremendous potential contained in a small seed. In an acorn there exists all the information necessary to form a massive Oak tree. However, for an acorn to become an Oak, it takes many years and multiple seasons of sunlight and rain, while slowly gathering nutrients from the soil. Each season represents growth, dormancy, challenges and time. There are times of budding and flourishing. There are times when the leaves fall and growth slows.

There are hard seasons of drought or a heavy winter that puts stress on the tree. These conditions mold and shape the contours of the limbs, causing them to contort and twist as they strain upward. Each year a growth ring develops that contributes to the girth of the trunk, making it stronger to support the weight of the growing limbs.

One day the tree is a beautiful, unique object of beauty whose size and shape tell a story of all that it experienced. It is a refuge and resource for other living things to nest and gather and thrive.



Our own personal development is much the same. To become a huge flourishing Oak takes time and patience. Sometimes we wish we could grow leaps and bounds but true growth takes place incrementally. Daily choices become habits that in time produce visible, noticeable change.

Paul wrote, *“Do not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Gal 6:9)*. Our life’s story, both in times of celebration and in times of loss and hardship, shapes us uniquely. God uses every aspect of our human experience for his glory if we lay our lives down for his good purpose. Our life can be a refuge and resource for other people as we point to our hope in Jesus.

How is God using your current season to shape you? Be patient and know that your life is valuable and beautiful – even if our “limbs” are a bit crooked. If you are encouraged, tell someone. If you are struggling, invite God and others into that vulnerable space to bear it with you. Together we can spur one another on to love and good deeds!

# Taste and See

*"O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8).* How true this verse is. For anyone who gets a taste of the goodness of God, it is an unforgettable experience. He never disappoints. He is always good. The hungry, needy, searching, and empty soul that gets a taste of the kindness of God, the love of God, the grace and mercy of God, the faithfulness of God, the thoughtfulness of God, and the care of God—that person will always find that taste to be good!

And with that in mind, the Bible tells us that Jesus is the vine and we are His branches, and we are to bear fruit (John 15:1-11). It is most often from the fruit of our lives that people get a taste of God.

So, when we are in the presence of others, they get a taste of who we are and who God is! As we interact with others, as we respond and react, as we speak and as we act, the fruit of our lives is on display. People are getting a taste of the fruit that comes from a branch that is connected to the Vine, Christ Himself. And when they get that taste from the fruit of our lives, does it cause them to respond with wonder at how good it tastes?

I remember attending a memorial service of a dear friend. Johnny Trimmer was a great talent. He had the voice of an angel. We led hymn sings together. He would sing and I would accompany him on the organ. The officiator of his service asked the crowd if Johnny exhibited certain traits in his life. These traits were none other than the 9 qualities found in *Galatians 5:22*. *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"*. The memorial service was an amazing experience for me because as the Pastor stated each trait, the crowd acknowledged in the positive. I was moved by this. Here was a man, that if you knew him, it was easy to confirm the fruits in his life. They were so clearly visible! And, what an honor to

have the final thoughts of you be an affirmation of the fruits of the spirit! Because of this experience I will always remember him in the best way possible. A man who bore good fruit.

Ministry is also a place where we need good fruit. Sometimes we can assume that our leadership bears no bad fruit. We look to our leaders and pastors to be Godly examples. But as one of your pastors, I can safely say that we are only human. We live under the same mercies that renew themselves every morning (Lam. 3:22-23). Every Pastor, as he hears his call, will only ever be "simply human". We have all made many mistakes along the way with the potential for many more to come. It is only by God's infinite compassion and grace that we can continue to help lead His church. Our desire is to live a godly life, but we need prayer. Prayer for strength and steadfastness. Prayer that if mistakes are made, that they are minor and have small impact.

In our humanity we struggle. "But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him." (Jer. 17:7)

So, let me ask you, do you have love in your life? Do you have joy in your life? Do you have peace in your life? Do you have forbearance in your heart? Are you kind? Are you full of goodness? Are you faithful? Are you gentle? Do you have self-control? Answer these questions honestly to yourself. And if you find yourself lacking, know that you are not alone. Continue to work at it, ask God to make you whole in the areas you need help in. I do and will continue to do so until I receive another call to come home. I pray that people will only see the richest, most delectable good fruit produced when I am gone.

Your friend,

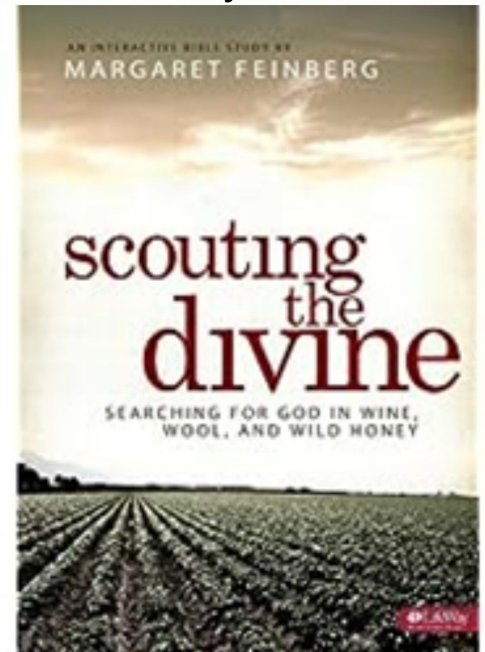
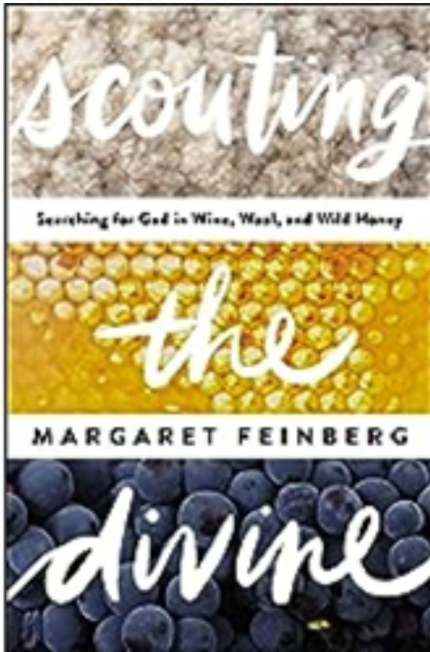
Pastor Jonathan Casas





# Women's Ministry

## Study Guide



Starting Tuesday, October 17 at 10 a.m., a new study,  
**Scouting the Divine.**

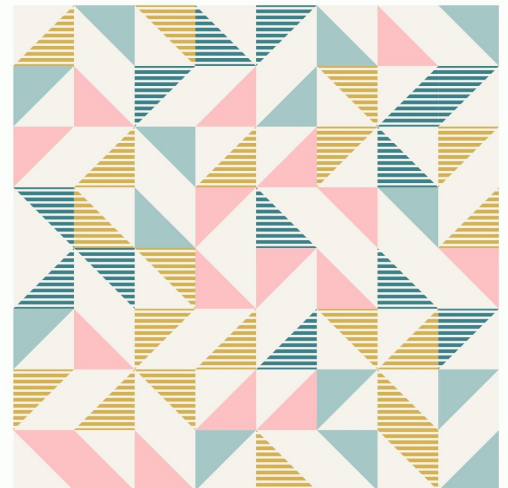
Purchase your book & study guide though Amazon.  
Questions or for more information please see Martha Johnson.  
You may sign up in the lobby or on Church Center.

## Creative Spaces

### Retreat

November 3-5, 2023

*We welcome women ages 13 and up to join us for a celebration of creativity! Hear from our keynote speaker, our own Debbie King, about how God weaves our world and how we can enhance our lives through the arts. Come learn a new craft, hone your skills, or bring projects from home that you might need some inspiration to complete.*



Redwood Christian Park  
information/registration  
[rcp.camp/creativespacesretreat](http://rcp.camp/creativespacesretreat)

# SHARE N' CARE

**Romans 12:4-5** Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

Many of us know this verse... but how are we doing loving one another??

So, you say, what's your point?

As we settle into our seats every Sunday, look around. We are surrounded by family in Christ. Some may not be believers yet, but they are still loved by Almighty God. Those, who are followers of our Lord, have been chosen by Him. We haven't chosen them for ourselves, but they have been chosen for us, and we are, therefore, inseparably bound to them. Because we belong to Christ, we belong to His family.

Here is something else to chew on: As we look around, isn't it amazing to know that we all are being transformed into His likeness, with the aid of the Holy Spirit!? Praise God, eh?

Romans 12:2 **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by the testing of your faith, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."** How's your transformation going?

Without further ado, I want to get right to the point – Care & Share.

Keeping the above in mind, we are launching teams to meet with our church family through home visitations. We want to share in the fullness of faith, and bolster each and every one of us to continue a closer walk with Him, and to radiate His glory. It's crucial to reach out to others. Some may be newcomers, and others may have been with us for a long time, but possibly ignored or overlooked, to our chagrin. We apologize if that's you or a loved one.

I really like what pastor Rick Warren spells out for us:

**"A church family helps you focus on God."**

These days, it's easy to get distracted by details, disturbances, dead-ends, delays, and difficulties. But, coming together with a church family will

help you focus on God. The more you choose to focus on God, the bigger HE gets, and the more insignificant your problems become.

**"A church family helps you face life's problems."** Right now, you're in one of three positions. Either you just came out of a problem, you're in the middle of a problem, or you're headed into the next problem. Life is a series of problems, but God never meant for you to handle them on your own. That's why he built a support group of people around you—the church—who are right there in the fight with you. You're not alone.

**"A church family helps you fortify your faith."** Fortify means to strengthen, to reinforce, and to develop. When you're in relationship with other people in God's family, you get the right support. They encourage you to create the right priorities, helping you decide what's trivial and what matters most. This clarifies your values and fortifies your faith. So many worldly attractions clamor for our attention! Sometimes, we might succumb to the immediate...and we might lose sight of God's purpose for our lives. Belonging to a church family helps us focus on God, face life's

problems, praise together, and steer us back to the narrow road that JESUS leads. We want to make a difference...

With our 'Care & Share' group, we want to reach out and check the pulse of our family. What more can we do and/or provide to help all of us grow to be more like Him? We'd like to pray with you, and take to heart your concerns. It's the lifting up of one another, that Jesus talks about.

So, let's continue to unite in spirit and love. Let's enhance Grace Fellowship like never before. AMEN!!

We look forward to meeting with you!

~Duke Foster





# AROUND THE CHURCH

## RECIPE BY MARY KUNTZ

### Risotto Alla Cucamonga

#### INGREDIENTS

1 medium sized onion, finely chopped  
1/4 c butter  
1 c regular rice  
1 can beef consomme  
3/4 c. water  
1/4 c California dry sherry  
1 c grated Parmesan cheese

#### DIRECTIONS

Saute onion in butter until tender and golden.  
Add rice, saute until golden.  
Stir in consomme, water and sherry.  
Bring to boiling, lower heat, simmer, covered 25 minutes  
or until all liquid is absorbed.  
Add cheese. Stir gently but well.

I usually double the recipe or order to have leftovers as it is delicious "leftover".



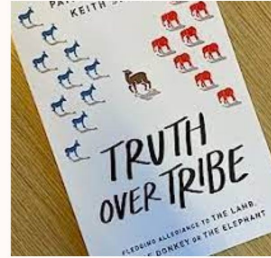
"This is a real "family favorite" with all my sons and their adult children and it is frequently made by them as well. It is fast, simple, and delicious!"

~Mary Kuntz

## Book Review

### TRUTH OVER TRIBE

BY PATRICK MILLER & KEITH SIMON



Can we be people of conviction without fracturing our families, ending friendships and splitting churches? If you feel exhausted by tribalism and divisions, you may be encouraged by this book.

In part 1, "How Tribalism Hurts You," the authors show clearly how tribalism (us versus them mentality) —evangelical or some other kind—ruins relationships, increases anxiety, incentivizes inauthenticity, creates enemies, and blinds us.

Part 2, which shows why Facebook feeds of "personal truths" encourage tribalism, might have material that will be new to many. For example, Miller and Simon show how algorithms of the Big Tech company Meta—owner of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp—**deliberately emphasize divisiveness** to gain user attention and increase time on those platforms, which makes them more attractive to advertisers.

Part 3 encourages us to show generosity and kindness, cross tribal lines, and listen better.

**"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."**

How do we decide what's so compelling that a Christian would speak up? When we're pressured to bow down and put some other god before God, we must be ready to enter the fiery furnace, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in chapter 3 of Daniel. But what about situations that aren't as intense?

I encourage you to read this book if you feel like a political orphan. If the title is off-putting, I also encourage you to read this book, as stretching ourselves beyond our comforts is essential. While I didn't love everything in this book, I learned a lot. — Cierra Pera

Mission continued.



## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD COLLECTION

October 22 – November 19, 2023

*We invite you to join our Grace Fellowship family as we participate with Operation Christmas Child, a project of the international relief organization, Samaritan's Purse. Our mission is to open doors around the world with shoeboxes filled with items such as small toys, hygiene items, plastic water bottles, a back pack and school supplies, as a means of reaching out to children in their own communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ.*

*Children receive the opportunity to learn about the love of God through the Greatest Journey discipleship program. Remember that prayer is the most important thing to put in a shoebox.*

*Since 1993 Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 209 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 170 countries and territories. In 2023 Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoebox gifts to reach another 11 million children.*

*Grace Fellowship has participated with Operation Christmas Child since 2007 (16 years). We are thankful and blessed by every child whose heart has been touched by Jesus for His kingdom through these little shoeboxes.*

*Remember to not include: candy, toothpaste, gum, damaged items, war related items, chocolate or food, seeds, drink mixes, liquids, lotions, vitamins or glass containers such as snow globes. It also helps tremendously to remove plastic and cardboard packaging from items.*

*Pick up your shoe box(es) in the foyer starting Sunday October 22.*





# Spotlight on Missions

## Operation Christmas Child

### The Greatest Journey in Mongolia

Buyankhishig, a church leader says “Light, sky, land, and water appeared out of nothing. Next came vegetation, animals, and mankind. God called forth all these things simply by speaking: Let there be ...” (Genesis 1) While the story of creation may sound familiar, it is an entirely new concept for many boys and girls in Mongolia. At Living Stone Church in Nalaikh, just an hour’s drive outside of the capital of Ulaanbaatar, children are hearing this amazing Bible story and many others through The Greatest Journey. Each of the 12 lessons proclaims Good News that confronts commonly held secular and animistic world views in Mongolia. The first class on creation is particularly revolutionary.



Buyankhishig continues: “The first lesson is always exciting for me to teach, because it is a very different idea that the world was created by God. Mongolia was a communist country, and Darwin’s theory was taught – that our origin is from a monkey.” The truth from God’s word is sticking in the minds of the boys and girls who join the program. Munkhbold, 11, and Enkhriilen, 9, were among children who received Christ into their lives during The Greatest Journey course at Living Stone Church in Nalaikh, Mongolia. Munkhbold had attended church for seven years before he enrolled in the discipleship lessons, but the 12 Bible stories became the tool God used to change his life. Now he is bringing his four younger sisters to Sunday school and also telling his classmates, friends, and neighbors about Jesus. They are also sharing God’s Word with the parents.





# PRIME TIMER'S AUGUST LUNCHEON

## THE SOUTH PACIFIC

By Elene Cook

Prime Timer's "sailed" to the "South Pacific" on the most recent cruise to gather together in Barrett Hall, which was transformed with palm trees and an erupting volcano! A culinary feast awaited the senior natives after learning behind the scene trivia. Richard and Janice Cavaliere shared their lives with us and Sam Aronovsky gave us a "behind the set" tour of the musical. Best of all, we enjoyed gathering together. Mark your calendar for the next "prime event" on October 14th and watch for details soon!





# YOUTH NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER  
EDITION

WHAT'S  
NEW?

## Senior Spotlight & New Youth Room!

The youth group at Grace has been on a break over the last few months. In the meantime, we secured a change of use permit for the upstairs storage room! It can now be the NEW YOUTH ROOM!

Mike Stromberg and Dan Conely spent many hours finishing the walls, texturing, and painting earlier this summer.

We still have many projects to complete and we were gifted a sum of money to accomplish this! Thank you so much to our generous donors, the Henry's, whose trust included money for our church. What a wonderful legacy to leave for the next generation of the church.

We have created a list of projects that need to be completed and taped them to the upstairs doors! If you can help with a project please let Steve and Cierra know. If you can only do part of a project, that is great, any bit helps! Head upstairs and take a look and pray with us over this special space and the hearts of our youth that will occupy it.

## How can you pray for our Seniors?

-Courtney Pera

As we move into our last year of high school, we as seniors have a few prayer requests we would love to share with our church families. The main thing we would all love and appreciate prayer for is guidance and clarity this year. We all have a lot of big decisions to make about our futures this year, and guidance to make the best one for ourselves is something we are all looking for. This goes for deciding if we want to go to college or not, and if we do, guidance of where to apply and later where to choose. And if we're not, then guidance on a different path forward. Peace is another thing we are all praying for this year. Peace in all the stressful moments of the school year, whether that's from work, school work, sports, and/or family life. We would also love prayer for our friends who are not involved in a church, and that they would be opened up to giving a youth group or church and deeper relationship with God a chance. We are all looking forward to a great last school year and deeply appreciate your prayers, love, and support.







# The Family Zone



## NEW ADDRESSES

### Weibe

5919 NW Favian Ave  
Port St. Lucie, FL  
34986  
4wiebe@gmail.com

### Hansen

will send new  
address  
when it is  
established by  
the post office



## Farewell For Now

### Wiebe's moving to Florida

When we moved to Amador County in 2004, we never imagined we would still be here almost 20 years later, but here we are and are heart broken about having to leave for a time. Grace Fellowship has been our church home and family from the time we arrived. We have seen a lot of changes at Grace and a lot of dear friends move or move on, but this is where we have felt called to serve and fellowship and love the "Grace Family". We have been blessed to have been able to raise our two sons, Aaron, and Nathan here and enjoy the beauty of Amador County and all it has to offer.

We have been able to serve in so many areas over the years: Children's Ministry, Missions Board, Greeters, Rest Home Ministry, Worship Team, and the Elder Board.

My job as an Aircraft Maintenance Manager for a Bay Area Corporation has mostly allowed me to work from the Stockton Airport, but for the past two years, I have had to commute to Florida, where they moved part of the operation. In July, the plan was for me to be able to continue my career in Stockton, but God evidently had other plans; the entire operation is now being moved to Florida, so here we go.

My verse for the past two years has been Prov 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your path." But more recently, it has been Prov 16:9: "We make our plans, but the Lord directs our steps." Our plan (unless He has other plans) will be to work and live in Florida for the next 3-5 years until I can retire, then move back here where our heart is, so we'll see...

We do not understand why He wants us there, but we will trust Him and pray that He will make it clear to us how we can serve Him there.

If anyone happens to find themselves in Florida, we would love to have you visit us.

We Love you all and will miss you dearly!!

The Wiebe's

## Beauty From Ashes

Recently, Jeff and Cheryl Hanson – long time members at Grace – have moved to their new home in Placerville, CA. We are sad to see them go, but we are excited for what God has for them in the future!

The Apostle Paul often ended his letters commending faithful coworkers who served the Lord well. Jeff and Cheryl have played such a meaningful role at Grace over the years, they are worthy of such a commendation. When I was the Youth Pastor at Grace, Jeff and Cheryl joined Martha and I in the work. They opened their home, served cheerfully, and were a great source of encouragement to Martha and me.

Jeff served as a deacon at Grace and eventually, if not reluctantly, accepted God's call to serve as an elder for a six-year term. Jeff and Cheryl were involved in a Precept Bible study with Pat Reis (another person of rich commendation!), Jeff started a Friday AM prayer group which still meets today, and he led the Rest Home ministry for many years. Cheryl served in our Stephen Ministry for several years and was inspired to earn her Bachelors degree and later a Masters in Counseling. She has a heart to help people heal from trauma – especially those who serve in emergency services (i.e. Law Enforcement, Fire Fighters, Paramedics, etc.).

Both Jeff and Cheryl preferred to serve in the background and shunned the spotlight. May the Lord bless them in their new journey together as they have been such a rich blessing to so many in Amador County. We will miss them both!



# September 2023



*Would you like to be prayed for by a dedicated team of people? Would you like to receive updates on prayer needs and be a part of that team?*

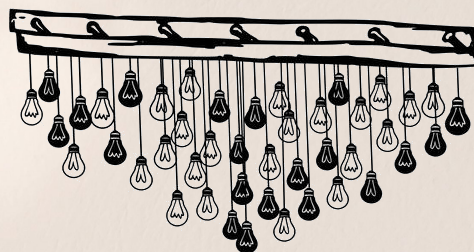
*If so, please email*

***[prayer@graceofamador.org](mailto:prayer@graceofamador.org)***

*In your email, you can submit prayer requests, ask to be updated when new requests come in, or both!*

## Happy Birthday

1—MARK JOHNSON  
2—PATRICIA PARKYN  
4—ELKE PIETERSE  
5—JOEL ALLEN  
6—STEVE HAUSER  
9—MARTY HOOPER  
11—HANNAH KRIESHOK  
13—DAN CONLEY  
14—KATHLEEN FUENTE  
15—SUE BRADY  
16—JO STROMBERG  
21—SHEELA HOOPER  
23—DANA KRIESHOK  
26—MIKE GARRISON



## BE THE LIGHT

MATTHEW 5:14



## MANY GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT

## Happy Anniversary

11TH — MIKE & JANE SNYDER



Are we missing your birthday or anniversary?  
Please update it in the Church Center directory  
app or let the office know.

Thanks!



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# September 2023



## MONTHLY PLANNER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	28 <b>Office closed for Labor Day</b> 6:00pm Women's Growth & Support Grp	29	30	31	1 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	2
3 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	4 6:00pm Women's Growth & Support Grp	5	6	7	8 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	9
10 9 am Sunday School 9am Grace 101 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts 5pm Evening in the Park	11 6:00pm Women's Growth & Support Grp	12 9:30am Men's Bible Study	13 6:30pm-8pm Marriage Course	14	15 6:30 am Men's prayer meeting	16 9-12 Church work day
17 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	18 6:00pm Women's Growth & Support Grp	19 9:30am Men's Bible Study	20 6:30pm-8pm Marriage Course	21 7-8pm Dessert Night	22 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	23
24 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	25 6:00pm Women's Growth & Support Grp	26 9:30am Men's Bible Study	27 6:30pm-8pm Marriage Course	28	29 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	30