

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

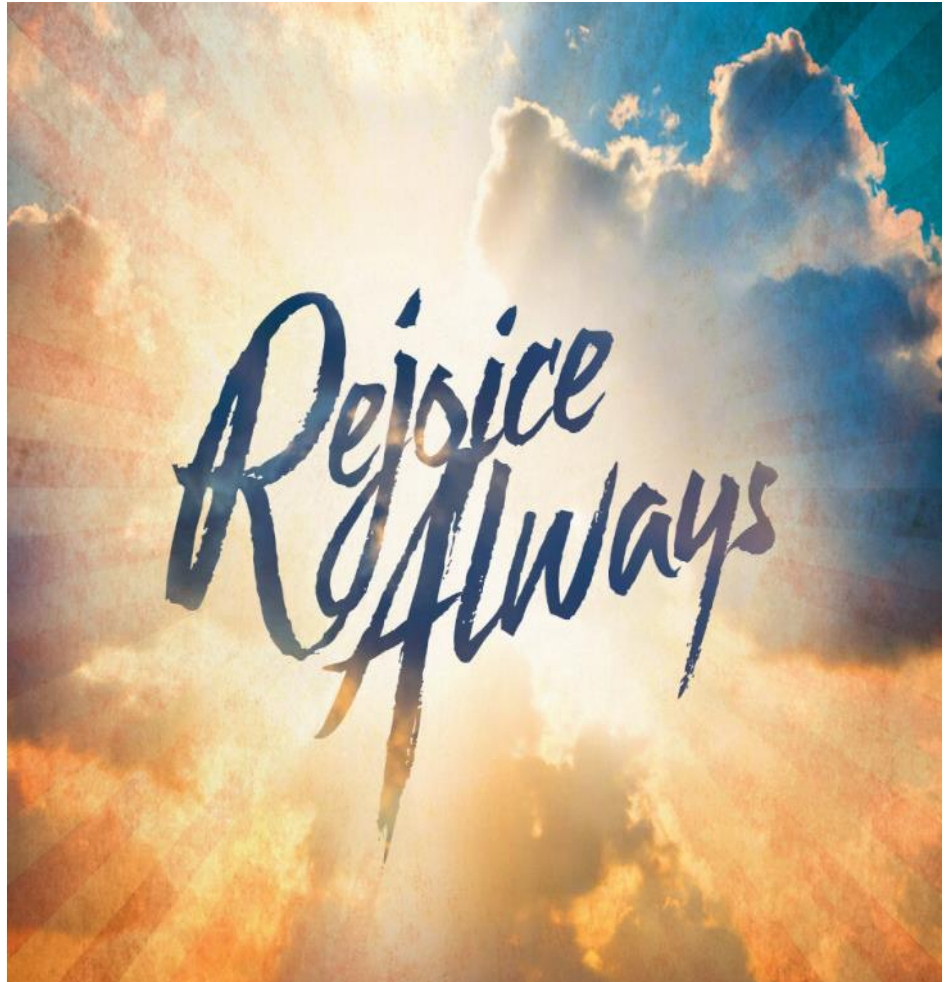
# Epiphany's Epistle



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## September 2024



EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
2375 GA Hwy 20 SE  
Conyers, GA 30013  
(770) 483-6222  
conyerselc.org  
staff@conyerselc.org

*Reverend David Armstrong-Reiner,  
Pastor*

***“Follow Christ, Live Faithfully,  
Serve All”***

## General Information



We are an active church with friendly people who are journeying with God through Jesus Christ. Come join us!

For more information, please call us at 770-483-6222, email us at [staff@conyerselc.org](mailto:staff@conyerselc.org) or visit our website [www.conyerselc.org](http://www.conyerselc.org).

### **\*Sunday Morning Activities\***

*Sunday Adult Forum - 9:00 a.m.*

*Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.*

*Worship Service is also streamed live via Facebook and the Epiphany YouTube pages*

### **\*Weekly Online Devotion\***

*Wednesdays - 7:00 p.m.*

*via Facebook Live on the Epiphany Facebook page*



### **DEADLINE!**

Sunday, September 22 is the deadline for information to be submitted for the October newsletter. You can email your news to the church office at [staff@conyerselc.org](mailto:staff@conyerselc.org). Thank You!

**OFFICE HOURS:** Please note that the church office hours will be 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, until further notice (except for adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances).

## 5 Ways to Give ...

- ✓ Bring your contribution with you to worship service on Sundays.
- ✓ Mail in your contribution to Epiphany Lutheran Church, 2375 GA Hwy. 20 SE, Conyers, GA 30013.
- ✓ Click on the DONATE tab on our web page at [www.conyerselc.org](http://www.conyerselc.org)
- ✓ Consider automatic giving. Contact the church office to find out how to set this up.
- ✓ Click on the QR code to give electronically.



## *From Pastor David*

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*“Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.” (Romans 12:15)*

As I sit here, struggling with what to write, I feel an emptiness. Like so many of you, I am in shock at the death of Sheila Sipe. And though we believe and trust that she is with the God she loved, we feel the loss of her presence with us and all that she meant to us.

Over my ten years with you, we have lost many pillars of this church. I think back just over the past few months as we mourned the deaths of Bruce Ahlstrand and Brigitte McMillan. What makes Sheila’s death so difficult is the suddenness and unexpectedness of her passing.

And as I struggle with what to write, let me offer up these words, which I say as much to myself as to you.

First, give yourself space to grieve. Let yourself feel the pain and the loss as hard as that might be. Do not fill that space with platitudes that do not work – like “She’s in a better place” or “Time will heal.” While they may be true, those words deny what we experience and feel.

Second, let us be there with one another, and especially with Ken and Brayden. If you can cook a meal for them, cook a meal. Offer a hug to them when you see them. Offer a hug to one another. Pray for them. Pray for us. Let us offer one another a ministry of presence.

Third, celebrate what Sheila meant to you and what she meant to this church. She loved her God. She loved this church. She did whatever she could in so many different ways to let this church thrive in its worship and love of God. She served on council, the worship committee (which she chaired), the endowment committee. She was a worship assistant and sang solos for the church. She came up with the volunteer schedule each month and trained those new to their positions. When we needed someone on the Covid Task Force to figure out what steps to take, Sheila was there. When the Lutheran Church celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, Sheila was there. I knew that if Sheila said she would do something, that work would be done and it would be done excellent.

We will never be able to fully fill Sheila’s shoes. But we can let her example inspire our own participation and service. As we reflect on her example, may it challenge us with how we can serve in the church and be God’s hands and feet in this place and in this world.

Finally, as we grapple with the suddenness of her death, may we be reminded of the shortness of our lives. None of us know how long we have on this earth. We have been given this precious gift of life. May we marvel and give thanks for this moment in which we live. And may we live fully each and every day, knowing that we do not know which day or moment will be our last.

We will celebrate Sheila’s life on Saturday, September 21, at 11 am. Keep Ken, Stephanie and Brayden in your prayers. Keep Epiphany in your prayers. May we continue to serve God in the same way we saw Sheila serve God.

In Christ’s love,  
Pastor David

# Congregation News & Activities

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## *Welcome to a New Face at Epiphany!*

James Hilden-Minton is a recent graduate of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (MDiv, 2024) and an endorsed candidate for ministry of Word and sacrament in the ELCA. He is also a graduate of UCLA (PhD Mathematics, 1995) with a 27-year career as a statistician in financial services. In 2022, he retired from Bank of America after 13 years of service. He will serve as vicar (intern) from August 2024 to July 2025, after which he may be approved for first call and ordination.

Vicar James had begun his seminary studies on a part-time basis at Columbia Theological Seminary (2005-2010) as a new dad and while working fulltime, but retirement freed him to finish the second half of the MDiv at LTSS on a fulltime basis. Most recently James has served at Mt Zion-St Luke Lutheran Church, Oglethorpe, GA as an interim Synod Authorized Minister (2024) and at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lilburn, GA as a field ed student (2022-2023).

Vicar James grew up as a Pentecostal Christian in the Assemblies of God but lost his faith as a young adult. After a decade of struggle, faith re-emerged having taken on a more contemplative expression. As a layperson, James has been led to share his contemplative practice through small group leadership and writing contemplative music. Additionally, as a trained yoga instructor, James has taught yoga integrated with Christian spirituality in church settings since 2014. In 2017, he partnered with Pastor Crispin Ilombe-Wilondja to form Good Samaritan Lutheran Ministries, Stone Mountain, a mission congregation of refugees and other immigrants from central Africa. This context cultivated in James many pastoral skills, even learning Swahili, and reaffirmed his call to pastoral ministry.

Vicar James and his wife, Kira, married 33 years, live in Avondale Estates, GA, with their young adult daughter Zoe, a computer science major at GSU. They are members of St John's Lutheran Church, Atlanta, having joined in 2005. They enjoy fussing over their three cats and taking family vacations (which the cats do not appreciate but seem to forgive).

Vicar James may be reached at [Vicar.James@conyerselc.org](mailto:Vicar.James@conyerselc.org) or 404-304-4763.

# Congregation News & Activities

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## ***Introducing Every Step Walking Fellowship***

*“Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.”*

Genesis 5:24

*So how’s your walk?* This question could just as well be about your spiritual life as it is about your mobility and physical health. From ancient times, regular walking has been associated with longevity and health as well as living out our lives faithfully with God. Micah 6:8 counsels us to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.” Especially in times of adversity or poor health, we need to be reminded that, as the Good Shepherd, God walks with us every step.

Walking is among the most gentle, accessible and essential forms of exercise. It not only preserves our mobility, but keeps our hearts healthy, clears our mind, reduces stress, helps control type 2 diabetes and weight, and fights cognitive decline. Walking also helps us connect personally and communally with the wholeness of our souls, the goodness of creation, and the presence of God living among us. When Jesus called disciples to “come, follow me,” he meant it quite literally. Jesus and his disciples walked (and rowed) everywhere, and he taught them along the way. Their walk together was a visible sign of God’s peace and healing.

Combining gentle exercise with spiritual devotion is transformative, healing and invigorating the mind, body and spirit. To this end, we are forming a new ministry, ***Every Step Walking Fellowship***. Weekly gatherings will include 20 minutes of safe & gentle indoor walking, 20 minutes devotion, sharing & prayer, and an optional 20-minute “extra mile” of moderate outdoor walking. Other activities may include community walks and hospital walks. Open to all regardless of physical limitations, we take special care to accommodate mobility and other health challenges. Every step toward health does matter, and God is with us every step.

***Every Step Walking Fellowship*** will gather weekly at the Fellowship Hall of Epiphany Lutheran, Conyers, Thursday mornings @ 9:30AM starting September 19. Contact Vicar James, [vicar.james@epiphanyelc.org](mailto:vicar.james@epiphanyelc.org), 404-304-4763.



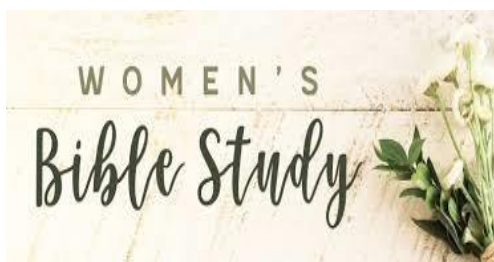
# Congregation News & Activities

## **SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASS**

Join us as we continue our alternating series of classes at 9 a.m.  
in the Fellowship Hall:

**Contradictions in the Bible** - What do we do when passages do not line up?

**The Not-So-Minor Prophets** - An overview of the last twelve books of the  
Old Testament



*The Women's Bible Study meets on the  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month and  
will be studying Luther's Small Catechism.  
Come join us as we learn about our Lutheran faith.*

## **MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

Thursday Mornings  
8:00 to 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship Hall

*Pastor David leads a discussion on the  
upcoming Sunday's lessons.*



We now have a program in place to visit shut-ins and anyone else who would like communion and are unable to attend church. We are visiting 2-3 times a month on a rotating basis. If you have not been visited yet, or would like a visit, or know of someone who would like a visit, please let Evelyn Brown know. You can reach her at 404-825-4615 or e-mail her at [evbrown56@gmail.com](mailto:evbrown56@gmail.com).

# Congregation News & Activities



## Fellowship Committee Update

The Fellowship Committee continues to be busy. We recently completed a cleanup project in the kitchen and we noticed one of the refrigerators wasn't working properly and thanks to Bill Schroeder, who repaired it for us, it's working fine now. He is an amazing jack-of-all-trades!

It was heartwarming to see the smiles as people filled their plates at the recent ethnic potluck. The Hoppin' John, the macaroni and cheese, the wild rice salad, and the carrot salad were outstanding! Our next potluck will be celebrating Oktoberfest. More information to come.

Have you noticed some new faces that have joined us recently? Be sure to welcome these new folks and introduce yourself.

Julie Peterson & Margaret Hill  
Co-Chairpersons

## WOMEN IN GOD'S SERVICE (WINGS)

After a short summer break, WINGS (Women IN God's Service) met on Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. The first "We Care" packages of the 2024-2025 school year were assembled and mailed to the college students of Epiphany. This is our 19<sup>th</sup> year of keeping the young adults of our congregation connected to the church while they pursue a higher education. We enjoy sending the students such things as cards, letters, inspirational quotes, gift cards and snacks throughout the year. A second care package will be assembled in early October. All women of Epiphany are invited to join us. Not only do we enjoy this service project, we also enjoy a time of fun and fellowship with each other.



Denise Baker / Debbie Buckner / Heather Moore / Merri Kuykendall

## Social Ministry

Our Social Ministry project for September is donations to The Refuge Center. The Center needs the following items: diapers size 0 to 6, clothes size infant to 3T, wet wipes, bottles, sippy cups, blankets, baby shampoo, lotion and wash cloths. There will be a tub in the Narthex for these items and we will take them at the end of the month.



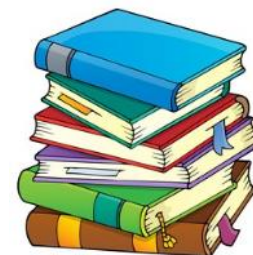
# Congregation News & Activities



*Thanks again to all who contributed to The Refuge Center's annual Baby Bottle Campaign. Our contributions for this year's campaign totaled \$1,413.75.*

## WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The Epiphany Women's Book Club will meet at 7 pm on Tuesday, September 17 in the church library. We will discuss "The Dictionary of Lost Words" by Pip Williams. All women of Epiphany are invited. For more information call Evelyn Brown at 404-825-4615 or e-mail her at [evbrown56@gmail.com](mailto:evbrown56@gmail.com).



## Meals On Wheels Needs Your Help!

A short 1.5 to 2 hour commitment is all it takes on a Saturday morning to ensure that people in need in our community receive a meal. Has not knowing what's required held you back from volunteering? If so, you are welcome to either ride along to see how it all works, or I can give you a complete written explanation. Just contact Tim Lohr at 404-807-2192, or by email at [timlohr@icloud.com](mailto:timlohr@icloud.com). Otherwise, you can simply write your name on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

\*Tim Lohr

## Did you know Kroger has a Community Rewards Program?

This program makes fundraising easy by donating to local organizations based on the shopping you do every day. Once you link your Shopper's Card to an organization, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Card. Here's how it works:



**1. Create a digital account.** A digital account is needed to participate in Kroger Community Rewards. If you already have a digital account, simply link your Shopper's Card to our account code so that credit for all your transactions will apply toward Epiphany Lutheran Church.

**2. Link your Card to an organization.**

- Sign in to your digital account at: [www.kroger.com/account/communityrewards/](http://www.kroger.com/account/communityrewards/)
- Enter Epiphany's Organization Number: LR632 under "Find an Organization".
- Click the "Enroll" button under Epiphany Lutheran Church

**3. Your organization earns.**

Any transactions moving forward using the Shopper's Card number associated with your digital account will be applied to the program, at no added cost to you. Kroger donates annually to participating organizations based on your percentage of spending as it relates to the total spending associated with all participating Kroger Community Rewards organizations.

Thanks for your participation!



## QUILTING AT EPIPHANY!



Many of you may not know that Epiphany Lutheran Church has hosted two quilting groups at the church for many years. Both groups meet in the fellowship hall and both groups are inviting anyone who is interested in quilting to come out and join them. One group meets in the mornings — The Early Bird Quilt Guild and one group meets in the evenings — The Cotton Boll Quilt Guild. Contact the church office at (770) 483-6222 if you have any questions and you will be directed to a representative from the appropriate group.

The *Early Bird Quilt Guild* would like to extend an invitation to the church members to attend our September meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. Come enjoy some refreshments and make new friends. Our guild meets on the second Wednesday of each month except for July and August. We hope to see you there.

*Early Bird Quilt Guild*

### COTTON BOLL QUILT GUILD

**Come and join us! Make new friends, learn new skills and have a lot of fun!**

Our Mission: We strive to preserve the tradition, culture, and history of quilting and to promote the knowledge of the art of quilting through continuing education. We are also committed to supporting our community through monetary and other donations to local charities.

**When: The second Tuesday of each month  
(August through May)**

**6:00 PM**

**Annual Dues: \$25.00**

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for meeting and workshop updates and for information about speakers, etc.!



**NAMI**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Rockdale & Newton  
Counties GA**

Supporting Rockdale, Newton, Jasper, Walton, Butts, & Morgan Counties.



**1st MONDAYS**  
**6:30 to 8:00 PM**

**NAMI Family Support Groups are peer-led for adults who are supporting loved ones with mental health challenges. We meet monthly to share our experiences and offer each other hope and empathy in a non-judgemental space.**

**There are two ways to participate in our FREE Monthly Support Groups.**

***In-person*** at the **Grit & Grace Addiction Recovery Support Center**  
located at **1400 Parker Rd. SE, Conyers GA, 30094**

OR

***by Phone or Video using Zoom***



**<https://tinyurl.com/NAMIRnFamilySupportGroup>**

Visit us online at **[namirockdalenewton.org](http://namirockdalenewton.org)**

Call the NAMI HelpLine (M - F, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., ET.) at  
**1-800-950-NAMI (6264)** for support and connection to resources.

***During a Mental health or substance use crisis Call 988  
or the Georgia Crisis and Access Line at 1-800-715-4225.  
If you dial 911 ask for a mental health trained police officer.***

# Birthdays & Anniversaries



- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Bob Ard           | 22 Evelyn Brown    |
| 2 Brent Moore       | 24 Nathaniel Oates |
| 3 Ross Harper       | 26 Mason Moore     |
| Martha Houser       | Valerie Slade      |
| 5 Delaney Atkins    | 27 Barbara Bentley |
| 8 Mariah Taplin     | George Tatarchuk   |
| 11 Grant Lubick     | 28 Bruce Hefner    |
| 12 Darrin Jones     | Sarah Schlueter    |
| 15 Mike Jones       | 29 Janet Wright    |
| Deidre London       | 30 Paula Pyatt     |
| 19 Michael Thompson |                    |
| 21 Lin Gailey       |                    |
| Julia Mumford       |                    |
| Bailee Stanley      |                    |



	Date	Years
Bobby & Mary Lou Gomes	1	28
Stephen & Colleen Simmons	1	51
Kevin & Renee Houser	5	37
Don & Debbie Buckner	10	47
Art & Stephanie Schlueter	18	31

*Did we miss announcing your birthday, anniversary or special event? If so, please email the church office at [staff@conyerselc.org](mailto:staff@conyerselc.org) so that we may update our records. Thank you!*

## Altar Flowers 2024

Calendars will be posted in the Narthex soon so that you may sign up for a date that you would like to honor a family member, friend, or to give glory to God. You will be able to purchase one flower arrangement for \$25.00. We will only have altar flowers present if they are purchased by a congregation member. Call the church office at 770-483-6222 if you have any questions.



# *Council Meeting Minutes - August 11<sup>th</sup>*

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## **Presentation from members of Telic Empowerment and the meal occurred before Call to Order: 11:25**

Bettina Newton, Lisa Lake, and Tyisha Davis were here to represent Telic Empowerment. They have participated in the VBS for Special Needs that we present annually. They are a 501C3 organization that provides services for the Special Needs population from 3-30 years of age.

They were formed by a group of mothers trying to find support for their own special needs children. They now provide services for families like themselves, like a support system, and identification and access to resources. They serve the Rockdale, Newton, and Dekalb areas. Their mission is in their name. They provide services in the areas of Teaching, Empowering, Listening, Including, and Caring. These services are free to the clients. Expenses are paid for by donations (both by individuals, and corporate sponsorship), as well as grants. Lisa is the Executive Director. Tyisha is the Resource Director (she handles the website and investigates the requests for services – to see if they have resources to assist). Bettina is the Program Director (she administrates the support group. It meets monthly - both in person, and by a virtual option).

They are looking for an office space as well as a room to store their program materials. They are currently operating out of their homes. They currently offer 3-4 events per year. Cap for attendance would be limited to the space available. They are currently not able to pay monthly. They did provide us with their financials, and met with their accountant to inquire if they could add a rental fee to their budget. They have offered to co-host the VBS-SN in 2025.

We do not feel that we are in a position to offer them space at this point in time, but would love to have them if their circumstances change.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order @ 12:10 PM. In attendance were Pastor David, Vicar James, Peggy Lawrence, Michael Thompson, Riki DeLamar, Abby Harper, Tim Lohr, Kathy Roston, Anita Smith, Nancy Stover, Deidre London, and guests Don Harris and Furman Rogers.

The group had Sharing time. Because this was Vicar James first meeting, and he has only been here a couple weeks, we each identified ourselves, how long we have been with Epiphany, and how the past month has been.

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

The Minutes from the previous meeting (6/23/24) were reviewed: There was one correction. Deidre's name was spelled incorrectly. Motion was made to accept the minutes with this correction by Deidre London and seconded by Anita Smith to accept the Minutes. Motion carried.

### **AGENDA:**

The agenda for today's meeting was presented and reviewed. Request was made by Vicar James to add another item under the Pastor's report for the Vicar's report. Motion was made to accept the agenda as presented with this addition by Nancy Stover. Motion was seconded by Kathy Roston and carried.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

1. FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Sharon Skinner
2. TREASURER - Tracy Parker

Operating income for July was \$23,773.77 with \$2481.66 in designated funds. Total expenses were \$44,646.84. This amount is misleading. There was a passthrough amount from the Insurance Company that went to the roofers. Actual expenses should be \$17,243.27. Michael Thompson identified that there has been a significant decrease in the water bill since the water leaks were fixed. Motion made to accept this report as submitted by Michael Thompson and seconded by Abby Harper. Motion carried.

# *Council Meeting Minutes - August 11<sup>th</sup>*

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## **VICAR'S REPORT:**

No written report. Vicar James informed us that the Vicar's oversight committee meets the first Monday of each month. This is chaired by Evelyn Brown. Other members are Julie Peterson, Bertie Thomas, Nathaniel Oates, and Tommy Lane. He reported that he will need to come up with a project in the next couple of months in the area of outreach and/or evangelism.

## **PASTOR'S REPORT:**

See written report.

We need to create a Funeral planning booklet that walks folks through the process, step-by-step.  
We plan to contact Synod to have a speaker come out to talk about estate planning classes.

Statistics: (June 24 – August 11)

Worship: 5 Sundays

Hospital Visits: 1

Member Visits: 0

Counseling: 2 pre-marital

Life Passages: Committal for Bruce Ahlstrand, Memorial service for Brigitte McMillan

Pastors Meeting: 1 Pastor Preaching

Committee Meetings: Worship Planning, Endowment Committee

Education: 3 Men's Bible Study, 5 Adult Ed Classes

Other Meetings/Events: Community Resource Network (8/5), VBS-SN (7/21-25), 2 Phoenix Pass

Graduation (6/25), Met with TELIC Empowerment, met with quilting groups

Community Visits:

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

Building Issues update:

Lights - We have several lights out. Problem is not the bulb; it is the ballast. Peggy and Pastor will do a walk-through with the two Bruces to make a list of things that need attention in the building. We have roughly \$4000 available earmarked from the endowment fund to apply towards these issues.

Air Conditioners - Air condition bill is extremely high. This may be because we have at least one unit down, so the others are having to work harder to 'pick up the slack'. Abby will have Ross do an assessment to determine what we have, what we need; and present us a list of options.

Roof - After the roof was done, we noticed a new set of lights out in the sanctuary. An electrician was contacted to identify the issue. We are waiting his return to fix the problem. The roofing company will pay for the repair.

Organ - Still pending for the Schlueter's to come out and look at the organ.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

No New Business.

## **REPORTS:**

PRESIDENT – No written report.

VICE PRESIDENT – No written report.

# *Council Meeting Minutes - August 11<sup>th</sup>*

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## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Discipleship – No written report.
2. Outreach – See written report.
3. Nurture – See written report.
4. Administration – No written report.
5. Worship – No written report. We have new acolytes and a full-time crucifer. If you would like to be a Worship Assistant, please see Sheila Sipe.

COLUMBARIUM REPORT: None.

The September Council Meeting will be held 9/22/24 after the Sunday service. Riki and Peggy will provide lunch. Pastor suggested after next month, we utilize the Sign-Up Genius platform to sign up. There was a motion to adjourn and was carried.  
Session closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rikita S DeLamar