

Summer is over.

I mean, I know it's not officially over – there is still almost a month until the “official” beginning of fall. And, there are still two weeks until Labor Day, the long weekend that tends to mark the unofficial end of summer festivities (I try to spend every Labor Day weekend making as much of my food as possible on the grill or on the smoker – so, next time you see me, feel free to ask me about what I've been grilling recently).

But even though it's still officially August, for many of us, it feels like Summer has ended – because school is back in session. WJCC schools began today; William and Mary students have returned to campus and will begin classes in a few days, and other local schools begin this week. The awesome teachers and leaders of Williamsburg UMC's amazing preschool, KMO, are back this week getting ready to begin the school year in September. If you don't have kids at home, you might think this is prime vacation time – a great time to slip away to the beach while avoiding the summer crowds – but, before we know it, fall will be in full swing.

As we move out of summer and into the fall, the rhythms of church life are also changing. We are at the start of our program year (which tends to align with the school calendar), and there's lots to look forward to. We've got a variety of Bible Studies launching soon – a Covenant Bible Study, led by Deacon Troy Sims, which is a yearlong study of the whole Bible led by Deacon Troy Sims, a study of what it means to faithfully engage with poverty as a Christian, and our Wednesday Evening Pastors' Bible Study, all of which kick off in September. We've also got an opportunity for new people to get connected at Pizza with the Pastors, on Sunday, September 20, after 11:00 AM worship, as well as a brunch for college students on August 30, and even a churchwide picnic later this fall.

Our Kids and Youth Ministries will return to engage in many of our awesome opportunities – from Messy Church to our children's and youth music programs, which include a new choir for our youngest children. We will also launch some great new opportunities including a monthly group for 3rd-5th graders and our new, expanded, Sunday evening youth programming for young people in grades 6 through 12.

The fall also means a return of our choir, and our orchestra, and all sorts of other opportunities to praise God through music.

The end of summer marks one time of the year that is filled with the anticipation of new beginnings. As we see energy building and folks getting connected, it is exciting to witness all the ways that God is showing up, and we are being Christ's Body together at Williamsburg UMC. Be sure to check out the various opportunities to get connected with other congregants, both in this newsletter and on the church website.

God is up to something in and through Williamsburg United Methodist Church, and as we witness lots of new people getting connected at Williamsburg UMC – **with 15 new members joining the church in August, about 15-20 kids in children's worship each week, new exciting programs for children and youth, and new inspiring opportunities to serve and connect with our community** – we are excited to see where God will lead us next, and I'm happy that we get to take this journey together.

It's a gift to be part of this church together! I'm looking forward to what this new program year will bring!

Peace,

Pastor Brian