

ST MARK'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



NEWSLETTER • AUGUST 2026 • VOL. 24, NO. 8



"In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." (Mark. 1: 16, NRSVUE)

Family of St. Mark's,

After 36 newsletters for the church, this is the first one that isn't being written easily. Perhaps it's the uncertainty of the world, the busyness of life, or the intense heat with a lack of rain, but I imagine that I am not the only one feeling like this. We live in incredible times, as I say almost every Benediction during our services, and with nigh-endless distractions, I wanted to give some smaller, practical ways to reignite your faith and focus on Christ more effectively.

1) **Go back to the physical Bible!** There is something special about having a book in your hands, if not for the hundreds of years and innovations to make it possible! Finding a cozy, quiet place and reading some of the Bible, whether something prescribed or randomly flipping a page open, can help remove the distractions of the day and let you focus on how God is speaking to you.

2) **Quiet Time!** Time without a phone, without music or the TV on in the background. As I've had this discussion with several friends and parishioners, the first few times can be difficult, as our attention-craving brains try to fill any moment available with stimulation, but I guarantee that even a five-minute break can do wonders for your morale.

3) **Wind Down Without Screens:** This one is perhaps the most difficult, hence why it does not get a fun exclamation point afterwards. We have enough evidence that the blue light that is invisibly transmitted through our electronics is not good for sleep health, mood, or attention spans. Physicians recommend a minimum of **two hours** of no screens before bed, and yes, I wish I was joking too. If you're like me and can't do two hours, maybe even an extra 30 minutes to an hour may show immediate changes, as I have seen in my own life with better sleep and morning focus.

Lastly, I'm not a doctor, but I do know that spending time in quietness with God is never a bad idea. Consider getting a physical notebook as well and jotting down what thoughts, dreams, and hopes God plants in your mind during trying these!

Merry Kingdomtide,

Rev. Samuel R. Plymale, Senior Pastor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS	2 -4
YOUTH MINISTRY	5
BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES	5



HISTORY CORNER

August in
Methodism – The

Founding of Kingswood School.

On August 11, 1769, John Wesley opened the new Kingswood School near Bristol, England, fulfilling a vision that Methodist renewal should nurture both the mind and the soul.

Established primarily for the children of Methodist preachers and the families of coal miners, the school reflected Wesley's conviction that Christian discipleship required education as well as evangelism. He believed that a well-formed faith was strengthened through disciplined learning, moral character, and a lifelong pursuit of wisdom grounded in Scripture. More than two and a half centuries later, the founding of Kingswood School reminds Methodists that the work of making disciples extends beyond the pulpit and into the classroom. As we remember this milestone, we give thanks for Wesley's enduring commitment to shaping lives through faith, knowledge, and the hope that each new generation would be equipped to serve both God and neighbor.

GRIEF SHARE

Please join us in our upcoming fall session of Grief Share. During this program, participants will view a 30 minute video filled with helpful guidance, discuss grief-related issues, and gain personal recovery tips through a workbook. This session will run from August 20th- November 12th. There are two sessions to choose from 10:00 - 11:30 AM or 6:30 - 8:00 PM. We will be following Botetourt County Public Schools closings in the event of inclement weather. If you have any questions, feel free to pick up a Grief Share pamphlet located in the Narthex and/or reach out to Courtney Ashby at (540) 598-8373.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Meetings resume on September 24 at 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The St. Mark's Men's Fellowship will meet Monday, August 10 at 7 pm in the fellowship hall. We will have discussion and view Ray Vander Lann videos.

YOU ARE INVITED!



So, here's the thing..... Every week, kids are discovering who God is through stories, games, crafts, laughter and LOVE! It's beautiful! It's a little chaotic and it matters more than you realize. Children's ministry isn't about being

perfect. It's about showing up, loving children well and helping shape the faith of the next generation at St. Mark's UMC and beyond! This is real kingdom work, right here, right now. Honestly, we would love to do it with you!

You are invited to:

- Teach or aid in Preschool or Elementary-aged Sunday School on Sundays from 11am - 12 noon.
- Lead FROGS and Tadpoles from 4 pm to 6 pm, on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.
- Lead Children's Worship during Worship services on a rotational basis.
- Help in the Nursery during Worship Service and Sunday School hour on a rotational basis.

Please respond to this invitation by 8/23 to Lee Ann Critz at leeanncritz@yahoo.com or at 540-580-3905! I would be happy to talk with you personally about what is involved!

**The time commitment is minimal; however, the reward is great – knowing that you have made an eternal difference in a child's life!

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS!

All children and youth are invited to bring their BACKPACKS to the 10 am Worship Service on Sunday, August 9th for a special blessing for the new school year! Please come, bring your backpack and bring a friend!

SAVE THE DATE

TAME will hold the Rise Against Hunger meal packing on Saturday, September 19. Put it on your calendars now!

PECANS

We still have some pecans available for purchase. Get them now for all your summer baking needs!

TRUSTEE UPDATES

•**THANK YOU, ST. MARK'S!** Because of the generosity of our church family, community, donors, shoppers, and an incredible team of volunteers, our **2026 Trustees' Yard Sale** was a tremendous success! **Final Net Proceeds: \$4,733** These funds will go directly toward the **Trustees' Capital Improvements and Church Repair Fund**, helping us care for our church home for years to come. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who: donated items, baked treats, volunteered countless hours, helped set up and clean up, shopped and invited friends, prayed for the success of the event. Together, we accomplished something wonderful for St. Mark's. We are truly blessed by such a caring and generous congregation. **Thank you for helping care for our church home!**

- We will have a Fall Pansy Fundraiser. Please see the attached flyer for all information.
- Thank you to Mark Ashby and our mowing teams for working so hard to always keep the church grounds looking nice.
- Thank you to Fred Mattern and other volunteers that helped to change the air filters around the church.
- Parts have been ordered for the FLC refrigerator repair and work on that should be completed in the next couple of weeks.

JOYFUL JOURNEYS

Joyful Journey Travels has one more 3 days - 2 nights trip for 2026. To get in the Christmas spirit we will be traveling to Wheeling, West Virginia, to celebrate the FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS. The cost is \$554 per person double occupancy and \$743 per person single occupancy. The package includes: 2 nights lodging, 2 breakfasts, 2 dinners, including a Holiday Dinner Show, Oglebay Park Festival of Lights Tour, Colonel Ogelbay's Mansion Museum, Winter Fantasy Displays, The Glass Museum and Artisan Center, Tour of West Virginia Independence Hall, Kruger Street Toy and Train Museum, Souvenir Gift, Luggage Handling, Taxes and Meal Gratuities, Motorcoach Transportation and Driver's Tip. **Registration and payment in full is due September 3!** For information and Reservations contact JOYFUL JOURNEY - ST. MARK'S UMC, Julia Greer, 19 Cedar Ridge Dr. Daleville, VA. 24083 (540-330-7933). No texts please. Leave your name and phone number and Julia will return your call. Trip details can also be found on the church website. We hope that you will join us in this celebration preparing for Christmas.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Did you know you can support St. Mark's United Methodist Church every time you shop at Kroger—at no extra cost to you? By enrolling in the Kroger Community Rewards program and selecting St. Mark's as your organization, Kroger will donate a portion of your eligible purchases to the church. All funds we receive through this program go directly toward our Building Fund. We encourage you to please consider enrolling and making St. Mark's United Methodist Church (TE560) your organization of choice to help support the ongoing care and maintenance of our church facilities. Thank you for your support!



United
Women
in Faith

UWF NEWS

JULY -- Has passed us by. We took off the month of July to relax meeting-free and enjoy the very, very hot lazy days of summer.



AUGUST -- WAIT -- Summer isn't over! **On Monday, August 10 at 11:30 am**, we will come together for our annual August Luncheon. No business, just laughter and a good meal. **Join us at OLIVE GARDEN at Valley View**

Mall. If you want to carpool, meet at the CHURCH at 11:00!

SEPTEMBER:

Monday, September 14 -- 11 am -- Bring your own lunch

We will be planning our **UWF SUNDAY and getting ready for Sunday, September 20**. We will also be looking at other possible programs for 2026-2027.

Sunday, September 20

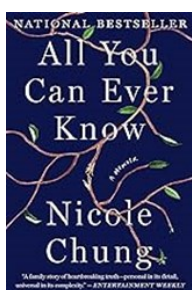
United Women in Faith Sunday

This **Special Sunday Service** will be led by our St. Mark's United Women in Faith. Our speaker will be our own **Jean Alfano**. Jean has served on the Local and District level before coming to St. Mark's. We look forward to her message. On this Sunday, WE will celebrate our Reading Program, Candle Burning, Special Mission Recognitions -- and more.

ALL LADIES ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR ALL EVENTS!

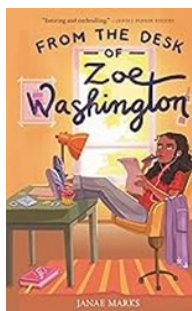
UWF READING PROGRAM

Just a reminder August 31 is the deadline to accomplish your goals for the UWF Reading Program. I'll be reaching out to you closer to that date to confirm books read in order to report to the Valley Ridge District in a timely manner. Lots of books and CD's in the library – so continue to read and grow spiritually and SHARE what you are reading!!! Any questions, contact Linda Koloda 540-353-7117 Here are a few reviews and suggestions from the UWF library.



ALL YOU CAN EVER KNOW: A MEMOIR details the life of Nicole Chung. Born prematurely, Chung was placed for adoption by her Korean parents and raised by a White family in a sheltered town. But as she grew up—facing prejudice her adoptive family couldn't see and finding her

identity as an Asian American and as a writer—she wondered if the story she'd been told was the whole truth. Chung tells of her search for the people who gave her up, which coincided with the birth of her own child. *Nurturing* Hard Copy and CD

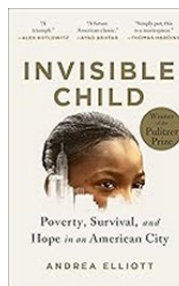


FROM THE DESK OF ZOE WASHINGTON This is a

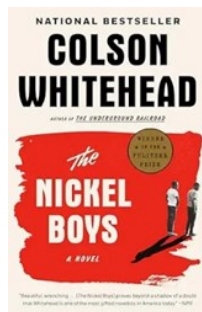
captivating story full of heart, as one courageous girl questions assumptions, searches for the truth, and does what she believes is right—even in the face of great opposition. When Zoe

Washington gets a letter from her father, Marcus, on her 12th

birthday, she doesn't know how to react. After all, she's never met or heard from Marcus, and he's been in prison for a terrible crime all these years. But Marcus says it's a crime he never committed, and her grandmother agrees. Soon, Zoe begins to learn about inequality in the criminal justice system, and she sets out to find the alibi witness who can prove his innocence. *Leadership* Hard Copy and CD



INVISIBLE CHILD: POVERTY, SURVIVAL AND HOPE IN AN AMERICAN CITY This book follows eight dramatic years in the life of Dasani, a precocious and imaginative girl living in a homeless shelter in Brooklyn. The author weaves the story of Dasani's childhood with the history of her ancestors, tracing their passage from slavery to the Great Migration north. As Dasani comes of age, New York City's homeless crisis has exploded, deepening the chasm between rich and poor. She must guide her siblings through a world riddled by hunger, violence, racism, drug addiction, and the threat of foster care. *Education for Mission* Hard Copy



THE NICKEL BOYS When Elwood Curtis, a Black boy in 1960s Tallahassee, is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, he finds himself trapped in a chamber of horrors. Elwood's only salvation is his friendship with fellow "delinquent" Turner, which deepens despite Turner's conviction that Elwood is

hopelessly naive, the world is crooked, and the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years and warped the lives of thousands, *The Nickel Boys* dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys unjustly sentenced. *Social Action* Hard Copy



WONDER AWAITS encourages children of all ages to use their senses and everyday activities to see miracles of creation. Kids are encouraged to get close, get dirty, look carefully, look up, make art, make friends, be brave, be curious, be present,

and be amazed, all activities adults should do too. *Spiritual Growth* Children's Section Hard Copy



The youth had a great trip in early July serving the community of Nashville. We were able to serve in several ways this year. We started the week at a Soles4Souls warehouse sorting donations. Soles4Souls helps those in need worldwide by diverting new and used shoes and clothing from landfills, turning excess into relief for those in crisis, opportunity for communities, confidence for kids, and a healthier planet for all. Tuesday and Thursday morning we helped in two different community gardens; Bell Garden and By Faith Farm. At Bell Garden, we weeded and lined new raised beds working alongside 2 students who chose the garden as their senior service project. Thursday at By Faith Farm, we helped harvest and weigh squash, zucchini, peppers, and beans. Both locations donate all of their produce to local food banks. Tuesday afternoon we worked with a project called Dream Streets where we packaged “rescued” food from local grocers and restaurants that were going to be thrown out. Then we took the food to a local neighborhood in a “food dessert” meaning the closest grocery store is over a mile away and most residents don’t have consistent or reliable transportation. The team set up tables and sorted the produce so that the residents could shop for the items they wanted. This is a service that Dream Streets does 7 days a week since most of the food must be used the day it is delivered. This was probably a favorite for our girls who served. They enjoyed working hard and meeting the people who were grateful for new faces alongside their regular team. Of course we also had plenty of time for fun, too! We spent one afternoon at the mall and at dinner at The Cheesecake Factory and drove downtown on Broadway to see the lights and hear some music in addition to our nightly worship, devotions, and games. I cannot begin to express how proud I am of our girls, not only for taking time out of their summer break to serve others, but also how hard they worked without complaint. The week we were in Nashville was one of the hottest weeks of their summer and we did not work in the air conditioning! We were tired and sweaty at the end of every day and we loved it.

For more information, please come listen to them talk about their experiences on Youth Sunday, August 16th!

Looking ahead, we will have lunch and a pool party after service on 8/16 and another spaghetti lunch on 8/30 after Sunday School to start raising funds for our trip next summer. We will have our first regular meeting on 9/13 at 4.



TO ALL WHO CELEBRATE THIS MONTH

Newsletter Deadline is 9 am the 20th of each month Bulletin Deadline: Thurs. 9 AM St. Mark's United Methodist Church 19 Cedar Ridge Drive Daleville, VA 24083 Phone: 540-992-3030	E-mail: Rev. Samuel Plymale: samuelplymale@vaumc.org Amanda Dillard: stmarksumcdaleville@gmail.com Lee Ann Critz: leeanncritz@yahoo.com Jessica Graham: jessicagraham109@gmail.com Deborah Wiley: dwiley4music@gmail.com Website: www.stmarksmethodist.com
--	---

Office Hours: Amanda is in the office Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays **9:30-12:00**.
 Lee Ann is usually in her office on Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning at 9 am.
 Pastor Samuel is in office Tuesdays . He is also regularly available by text (434-218-2688) and email (samuelplymale@vaumc.org)

[illegible]