

The Union Press

"To know Him and make Him known"

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REMINDER:
Deadline for
Newsletter Articles
Is SEPT. 20th

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

DRAWING NEAR THROUGH GOD'S WORD

The oldest living tree on record, a bristlecone pine in California named Methuselah, is believed to be nearly 4,850 years old. Foresters will tell you that trees like this did not get old by growing fast. As one forestry expert has put it, "A tree that grows quickly rots quickly and never has a chance to grow old." The trees that last are the ones with slow, steady growth and deep roots.

The Christian life works the same way. God is not in the business of quick fixes or five-week transformations. He is patiently, faithfully doing the lifelong work of conforming His people to the image of Christ. And like any good gardener, He has given us ordinary means by which that growth happens. Of these means, none is more foundational than His Word.

Let's consider Palm 1.

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Two Ways to Live

Psalm 1 opens the entire Psalter, and in doing so, opens our eyes to a basic truth about human life: there are only two paths before us. Contrary to what our culture often suggests that all roads are equal, Scripture insists there is a way of righteousness that leads to blessing, and a way of wickedness that leads to destruction.

Left to ourselves, none of us naturally choose the way of righteousness. If you feel frustrated with your own spiritual growth, if you wish you knew your Bible better, prayed more fervently, or bore more visible fruit, take heart: the very desire to grow closer to God is not natural to the fallen heart. That longing is itself evidence that the Holy Spirit is already at work in you. The blessed life begins not with our effort but with God's gracious initiative, turning our hearts toward Himself.

So, what does this "blessed" life look like? We might assume it's something we've seen on Instagram with the #blessed; vacations, promotions, and picture-perfect families, but when Jesus described the blessed person in Matthew chapter 5 the look quite different: blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger for righteousness. The blessed person of Psalm 1 is happy not because of earthly success, but because they have come to know and rest in the covenant favor of God.

Guarding the Heart, Delighting in the Word

Psalm 1 traces a subtle lure of sin through a slippery progression: from walking, to standing, to sitting; from counsel, to way, to seat; from the wicked, to sinners, to scoffers. Sin rarely announces itself. It begins by shaping our thinking,

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then our habits, and finally hardens into settled opposition to God. As the Puritan John Flavel observed, "The greatest difficulty after conversion is to keep the heart with God. This is the great business of a Christian's life." Everything we allow to influence us, our habits, our entertainment, the company we keep, our fears and ambitions, is shaping our hearts in one direction or another. Guarding the heart does not mean withdrawing from the world; it means measuring every voice by the truth of God's Word.

This is precisely why verse 2 matters so much: "his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law, he meditates day and night." The word translated "law" is the Hebrew torah, which means not merely a list of rules but the whole of God's instruction, His revelation of Himself, His purposes, and His promises. Some dismiss Christianity as a religion of restrictive rules, but this misunderstands both the gospel and the freedom it gives. The gospel is not about rules, but grace, and freedom isn't the absence of authority but flourishing within God's good design. Think of children trying to play a game where everyone invents their own rules; the result is not freedom but confusion. God's law and God's Word gives us the instruction and freedom within which life actually works.

Why We Need the Spirit to Delight in Scripture

Now, we can say the Bible is important. We can point to 2 Timothy 3:16, that Scripture is "breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." But no amount of argument from a pulpit or a newsletter page can persuade the heart of the Bible's divine authority. That conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit alone.

This is a deeply Reformed conviction: Scripture is self-authenticating, and it is the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit that persuades and assures us of its infallible truth. Left to itself, the natural heart resents God's authority and finds His Word tedious. But when the Spirit gives us new hearts, He opens our eyes to see the Scriptures for what they are, our very treasure, containing everything we need to know for God's glory, our salvation, and a life that honors Him. What was once obligation becomes delight. We begin, as the psalmist says, to meditate on it "day and night."

Christian meditation fills the mind with the truth of God's Word and lets it dwell there, shaping our affections and our thinking. Picture the difference between dipping a tea bag once and calling it ready, versus letting it steep until the water is transformed. When we meditate on Scripture, we steep our minds in God's Word until His thoughts begin to reshape our own.

Let's consider a simple pattern for Christian mediation:

Begin your day in God's Word, even briefly. How much you read may depend on the season of life the Lord has given you, but the goal is not quantity; it is getting into the Word early, before the day's demands crowd it out. Pray over the passage, asking the Lord for understanding. Take one verse, one idea, and carry it with you through the day, watching for it to surface in the ordinary moments you encounter. Return to it again in a quiet moment before sleep. Then wake and begin again.

Over time, and often imperceptibly, this steady rhythm does its slow work, the same way roots deepen, and rings widen in an old oak tree.

The One Who Fulfills Psalm One

If we're honest, Psalm 1 exposes us before it comforts us. None of us has perfectly avoided the counsel of the wicked or fully delighted in God's law. So, who is this blessed man the psalm describes? Ultimately, it is not us. It is Christ. He is the truly planted tree, the perfectly fruitful man, the one who walked the path of righteousness in full obedience to His Father, delighting to do His will at every step where we so often stumble.

This is the good news that transforms Psalm 1 from a burden into a comfort: because we are united to Christ by faith, His life becomes ours. In John 4, Jesus offers the Samaritan woman "living water," telling her that whoever drinks of

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it "will never be thirsty again," for it becomes in him "a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Intrigued the woman leans in and asks "Sir, give me this living water. I want this water. I do not want to be thirsty anymore."

This woman's response reveals the beautiful simplicity of the gospel. Christ has made himself available to us. He offers us living water that can be found only in Himself, that we would not thirst, that we would drink of him and be satisfied. All we need to do is ask. Lord give me this water.

God wants his people to flourish by sinking our roots deep into Christ our living water.

The Fruit That Follows

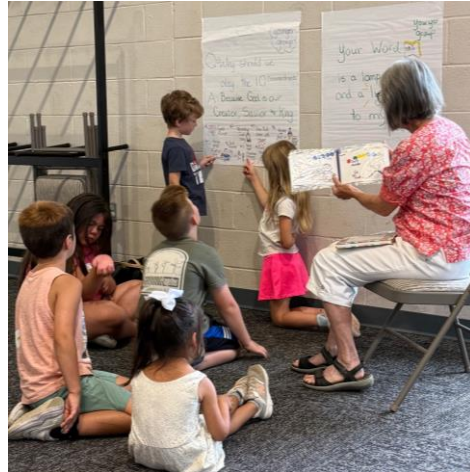
God tends to work more like a patient farmer than a magician performing fireworks. He plants His Word like seed and, in His time and by His ordinary means, brings forth fruit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as he forms us into the image of his Son. But God is faithful, the good work he begins he will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

By God's grace, may we sink our roots deep into Christ through His Word, trusting that the One who planted us will also cause us to flourish, that we might be old and strong, like oaks of righteousness planted by streams of water.

The Trustees go to new heights to fix the ceiling in the Memorial Hall!



A huge THANK YOU!!! to everyone who helped make this year's Vacation Bible School a success!



SEPTEMBER




2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 7:00 Trustee Mtg	2 10:00 Prayer Mtg	3	4	5 9:00 UPW Meeting & Cookie Tray Assembly
6 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship COMMUNION	7 Labor Day	8	9 10:00 Prayer Mtg	10	11 6:00-8:00 pm Family Night	12
13 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	14	15	16 SOLANCO FAIR	17 SOLANCO FAIR	18 SOLANCO FAIR	19
20 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21	22 Autumn Begins	23 10:00 Prayer Mtg 7:00 Session Mtg	24	25	26
27 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	28	29	30 10:00 Prayer Mtg			



LECTIONARY PASSAGES

September 6th – 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149:1-9;
Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

September 13th – 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114:1-8;
Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

September 20th – 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45;
Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16

September 27th – 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16;
Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

FOOD BANK

SPAM, Triscuits/ Wheat Thins crackers, mayonnaise, mustard, seafood soup/chowder (cans), assorted soups (cans), diapers (size 5, 6, and 3T, 4T, 5T), fruit cups, pudding cups, granola bars



Solanco Fair Sept. 16-18



- 2 Arienne Wrigley
- 5 Tyler McCardell
- 8 Jordan Reyburn Jr.
Robert Slodki
- 9 Jean Williams
- 12 Jesse Holmes
- 14 Kenny Beiler
- 16 Jimmie Ann Graver
- 20 Holly Reyburn
Anna Reyburn
- 21 Carl Weicksel
- 23 Jared Kent Scotten
- 24 Sabrina Miller
- 25 Jeffrey Jackson Jr.
Andrea Dougherty
- 26 Judy Phillips
- 30 Julia Wade

GREETERS

- 6 Sandra Looney
- 13 (OPEN)
- 20 Robin Church
- 27 (OPEN)



October 18th
10:00 am Worship
Service

(More Info Coming Soon)

Union Presbyterian Church
5637 Street Road,
Kirkwood, PA 17536



VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.UNIONPRES.COM

BACK 2 SCHOOL TRAYS



Once again, the Women of Union will be gathering to assemble cookie trays.

The activity begins, Saturday, September 5, 2026 after the 9:00 AM UPW meeting. The women will be creating Back 2 School Cookie Trays for the school aged children of our community. Each cookie tray will be a tangible gift designed to communicate God's love to each student. Each tray will contain a card, informing the student that their name has been placed on a laminated apple. This laminated apple will be placed on UPW's refrigerators to be a visual reminder to pray daily for that particular student. Pastor Jeremy has composed a Back 2 School Prayer Guide to help facilitate this prayer effort. Many cookies are needed for this project. If you would like to donate baked or bought cookies for this important community outreach, please sign up on our Church's Community Board.



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