REWS PEWS

AUGUST 2025

Summer Breeze

The dog days are here but we'll soon bid farewell to our lazy summer ways as we head into fall routines. Pleasant Grove's schedule is certainly filling up for these next few weeks!

Pastor Paul Klepees is thinking about new habits as we head into the back-to-school whirlwind. Daily Bible reading is a habit that nourishes the soul. Read about his suggestions for cultivating a Bible habit on page 2.

Pastor Paul is focusing on the book of Hebrews in August. Get a sneak peek at his sermon plans this month on pages 6-7.

Macy Storts, our new pastor of care and connection, joins us at *News from the Pews* with her debut column on page 9. This month she's paying special attention to the apostle Paul's exhortation to do everything in love.

Also on page 9, you'll find our plans to Fill The Cart with peanut butter and jelly. All donations will go to our food pantry and our Feed the Children program.

NextGen Minister Kris O'Neal is musing about the difference grace makes in our lives. Turn to page 11 to read how this year's camp T-shirts sported more than a slogan — grace, he says, is a

way of life. Embrace it!

After you see the packed calendar on page 5, you'll want to peruse the announcements on page 13 to get your bearings on when some activities are returning after summer break. You don't want to miss the Hog Roast this month — and get the scoop on the cool trip Pastor Paul is taking soon.

We have camp photos from UNITE to show you on pages 16-19. The Pleasant Grove youth contingent was 83 strong this year. Relive the fun!

Our first KFJ Summer Day program in July was a rousing success. Check out what the kids were doing all week on pages 22-25.

Our outreach efforts at Pleasant Grove include love and support for the bereaved. Read what our caring Bereavement Committee does and how you can help on page 27.

As always, dear reader, you are the reason for *News from the Pleasant Grove Pews*. Share your news, events, photos and suggestions with Kathy Casteel at kcasteel@ktis.net and Betsy Bell at mammabell003@gmail.com. We can't wait to hear from you!

PLEASANT GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

3686 State Road E Auxvasse, MO 65231 Office: 573-387-4822 MyPGUMC.org

Our Mission: To know Jesus Christ and to make Him known.

PASTOR
Paul Klepees
pastor@mypgumc.org

PASTOR OF CARE & CONNECTION Macy Storts macy@mypgumc.org

NEXTGEN MINISTER Kris O'Neal nextgen@mypgumc.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Kayla O'Neal admin@mypgumc.org

For prayer requests, our Prayer Tree number is 573-808-0093, email mfansler@hotmail.com. For announcements or Information Tree: nalinville.church@gmail.com.



News from the Pleasant Grove Pews is published monthly by Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church.

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PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT FRONT: SPENCER, PAUL, GIBSON BACK: MARGIE, EZRA, AND MAVERICK KLEPEES

Back to School, Back to the Word

By Pastor Paul Klepees

As August approaches and the buzz of back-to-school preparations fills the air, we come to a season of new beginnings and fresh routines. Amid the hustle of buying supplies and adjusting schedules, there's one foundational practice we must prioritize: incorporating Bible reading into our daily lives.

In the rush of modern life, it's easy to neglect spiritual nourishment. Yet the Bible offers timeless wisdom, comfort, and guidance for every season we face. Psalm 119:105 reminds us, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." When we engage with Scripture daily, we invite God's presence to illuminate our steps, guiding us through challenges and uncertainties.

Just as students need consistent study habits for academic success, we need regular

EVERY WORD OF GOD IS FLAWLESS:

HE IS A SHIELD TO THOSE WHO

TAKE REFUGE IN HIM.

PROVERBS 30:5

spiritual disciplines to grow in faith. Joshua 1:8 encourages us, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." By immersing ourselves in Scripture daily, we align our hearts with God's will, fostering spiritual growth and resilience.

Here are some practical steps for daily engagement:

- Set aside time: Carve out a specific time each day for Bible reading and reflection, whether it's in the morning, during lunch breaks, or before bed.
- Start small, stay consis-

tent: Begin with a manageable reading plan or devotional. Even a few verses each day can enrich your spiritual journey. If you are looking for a place to start you will find Upper Room devotionals available in the sanctuary or through the church office.

- Reflect and apply: Pause to reflect on how Scripture applies to your life.

 Journal insights, prayers or actions inspired by what you've read.
- Share and discuss: Engage in Bible study groups or share insights with friends and family. Discussing Scripture deepens understanding and strengthens community bonds.

As we embrace the new school year and its rhythms, let's prioritize our spiritual well-being alongside academic and professional pursuits. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Trusting in God's Word guides us through transitions and challenges, anchoring us in faith and hope.

This month, as we gear up for a new season, let's commit to daily Bible reading. Together, let's seek God's wisdom, find strength in His promises and grow deeper in our relationship with Him.

ANNUAL HOG ROAST



PLEASANT GROVE AUGUST 24, 2025 5:30 P.M.

Kick off the new year for KFJ & Limitless!

PLEASANT GROVE MEN'S GROUP

JOIN US ON TUESDAYS AT

PLEASANT GROVE

3686 STATE ROAD E AUXVASSE, MO

AUGUST 5 & 19 7 P.M.

> CODY JONES 573-826-0926 BRANDON CRAWFORD 573-220-5347

CALENDARSEVENTS

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M.	SISTERS IN FAITH (TERRY GILMORE'S 4 HOUSE) 7 P.M.	YOGA 8 A.M. MEN'S GROUP 7 P.M. BOARD MEETING 7 P.M.	6	7	8	9
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M.]]	YOGA 8 A.M. 12	L.I.F.T. (SARAH PECK'S HOUSE) 6-8 P.M. QUILT GROUP 6:30 P.M.	14	15	16
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M.	18	YOGA 8 A.M. 19 MEN'S GROUP 7 P.M.	20	BABY GRACE PICKUP 11 A.M2 P.M. SERVE FOOD BOX PICKUP 11 A.M2 P.M. COMMUNITY LUNCH 12 NOON	22	23
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M. HOG ROAST 5:30 P.M.	25	YOGA 8 A.M. 26 BOARD MEETING 7 P.M.	27	28	STH QUARTER POST-GAME PARTY	30
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M. YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8:30 P.M.						



Lessons from the Book of Hebrews

By Pastor Paul Klepees

As we journey through life, there are moments when parting words hold great significance — offering the highest ideals and final guidance we wish to pass on to others. These moments are often the most impactful, providing a summary of what truly matters. The book of Hebrews, particularly toward the end, serves as a beautiful example of this. In the final chapters, we find powerful instructions for living a faithful Christian life, exhortations and reminders that encourage us to reflect on what it truly means to walk in faith.

In August, we will explore the profound lessons found in the book of Hebrews through our sermon series, "Final Instructions: Lessons from the Book of Hebrews." This series will highlight the most important aspects of our walk with Christ, offering guidance for self-reflection and growth in faith.

Seeking a Homeland (Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16) In our first message, we will look at Hebrews 11, which opens the door to a conversation about faith and longing. This passage highlights how faith shapes our vision and directs our lives toward something greater than the here and now. It reminds us that, like those faithful before us, we are "seeking a homeland." We are reminded that our ultimate home is not of this world but of a kingdom that awaits us, a place that our faith has set before us.

Leaning on a Great Cloud (Hebrews 11:29-12:2) In the second message, we dive into Hebrews 12, which speaks to the great cloud of witnesses — our ancestors in faith who have gone before us. Their

examples of faithfulness and perseverance are not just stories of the past but powerful motivators for our own journey today. We will reflect on how their examples can spur us onward, encouraging us to run the race of faith with endurance.

Unshaken (Hebrews 12:18-19)

In week three, we'll focus on Hebrews 12:18-19, where we are challenged to examine the essentials of our faith. How do we identify the temporary from the eternal? In a world full of distractions, we will consider what it means to live unshaken, standing firm on the lasting promises of God while letting go of the things that pass away.

Known by Our Love (Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16) Our final message in the series will focus on Hebrews 13, where we are called to be known by our love. Love is the mark of a true disciple of Christ, and this passage offers practical guidance on how to allow love to define our relationships with one another. We'll explore how love should be the foundation of our Christian identity and the way we interact with the world around us.

As we reflect on these "final instructions" from the book of Hebrews, we will be invited to examine our own faith journey, allowing these teachings to shape and refine us. May this series inspire us to live lives marked by faith, love and perseverance — reflecting the love of Christ in all we do.

We look forward to seeing you this August as we explore these lessons together!



join us in the gym

8:00AM

Every Tuesday

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT JULIE HUFFMAN

jfhuffman@hotmail.com

(First yoga session is FREE)

KALEB AND MACY STORTS WITH BOONE

Jump Right In

BY ASSOCIATE PASTOR MACY STORTS

It's my pleasure to be joining the Pleasant Grove family as associate pastor of care and connection! This is really a surreal era in my life. I have always wondered what it means to become a pastor for the United Methodist Church, and now I get to live that out and serve God with each of you. Through this journey, I have learned that God's plans for our lives are far greater than what we can imagine.

Recently, my family and I spent a weekend at Lake of the Ozarks where we caught up with some family friends who have a 10-year-old son who loves swimming. But he was a little hesitant to jump off the dock into the water. His older brother encouraged him by saying, "You can do it! Once you do it you won't want to stop ..." That stuck with me. It reminded me that living faithfully with Jesus is like jumping off the dock into the water for the first time — once you do it, you won't want to stop!

One of my favorite Scripture passages is 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 when the Apostle Paul leaves the people of Corinth with this reminder: "Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." The last verse, "Let all that you do be done in love," is a simple statement, but it's not easy. To choose love is the most counter-culture thing we can do in a world that tells us not to. Thankfully, the love of Jesus gives us a love that is filled with so much grace we don't know how to process it all.

Friends, when the world tells us to settle for something other than what true love is, we can turn to Jesus who reminds us daily how much we are loved and how we love others. Will you all join me in letting all that we do be done in love? We have the perfect example to follow, so let's get started on loving God, loving our neighbor and loving ourselves now!

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE.

FILL THE CART

PB&J: ALWAYS A WINNER

WHOEVER IS KIND TO THE

NEEDY HONORS GOD.

PROVERBS 14:3

The go-to snack that never goes out of style: PB&J. Peanut butter and jelly is the quintessential comfort food. And it's not just for kids — everyone loves a good PB&J. You've got your protein, your fruit and your carbohydrates to balance for the perfect sandwich. Peanut butter is a staple of the American diet, loaded with nutrients such as vitamin E. magnesium, iron, selenium and vitamin B6. It's a necessary component for food pantries everywhere. At Pleasant Grove, we distribute this American essential at our mobile food pantry site for SERVE's food bank and include it in our weekend food packs for students at Hatton-McCredie Elementary School.

This month, Pleasant Grove will Fill The Cart with jars of peanut butter and jelly. The donations collected will be split between the food pantry here and Feed The Children, Pleasant Grove's supplement to the Buddy Pack program that sends food home with hungry kids for the weekend.

That's a plan where everyone



SERVE and Baby Grace

Pleasant Grove is a mobile site for SERVE food pantry and Baby Grace.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 11 A.M.-2 P.M.

(We are open every third Thursday of the month.) If you are in need of a food box from SERVE, please stop by! You can register that day and participate in the food pantry.

The Baby Grace store offers free diapers, wipes and gently used or new clothing for ages birth through 5 years.

COMMUNITY LUNCH

The Discipleship Sunday School class invites you to join us for a homemade meal.
Stay for a game of cards, dominoes, or bring a suggestion!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 12 NOON





KICK-OFF MARK YOUR CALENDARS! SEPTEMBER 17th





LIMITLESS YOUTH GROUP

Wednesday Nights Starting September 17th 7-8:30 PM Bible Study Every Sunday 6:30-8:30 PM

Questions? Contact Kris O'Neal 417-718-4772

nextgen@mypgumc.org Facebook.com/Limitless-111981087297092





PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT FRONT: KOURTNEY, KIERSTYN BACK: KAYLA, KRIS O'NEAL

Embrace the Grace!

BY NEXTGEN MINISTER KRIS O'NEAL

In 2 Corinthians 12:5-10, Paul shares how God's strength is made perfect in weakness. He even says, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." That kind of humility — admitting weakness and even delighting in it — is not weakness at all, but a doorway to growth and grace.

I've learned to delight in constructive criticism, because I can't fix what I don't know is broken. I don't want to be defensive — I want to be better. And I try to offer feedback the same way: not to tear down, but to build up. As a youth pastor, coach, manager and Christian, I've seen how a well-timed, grace-filled word can change a life.

It's also a reminder not to judge others too quickly. Your understanding of a situation is shaped by your life experience — and others may not have lived that chapter yet. That's where grace comes in.

This summer at camp, our shirts boldly said, "Embrace the Grace!" That's not just a slogan. It's a way of life. Grace means we admit our weaknesses, give others room to grow, and let God's power work through it all.

So, here's the challenge for all of us: when you feel weak, when you face critique, when others seem to be falling short — embrace the grace. Let that be your strength.

AND HE SAID UNTO ME, "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR

THEE: FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS."

- PLEASE JOIN US ON -

5th QUARTER

at Pleasant Grove Church

Every HOME football game for pizza, games and fellowship!

Kris O'Neal nextgen@mypgumc.org 417-718-4772

Sisters in Faith Gather

Terry Gilmore will host Sisters in Faith on Monday, Aug. 4, in her home west of Hatton at 2875 County Road 240. The gathering begins at 7 p.m. For more information about Sisters in Faith, contact Angie Raebel at 573-416-6438 or email Plote.hogan@gmail.com.

Men's Group Meets

The Pleasant Men's Group will get together for its Tuesday meetings at 7 p.m. on Aug. 5 and 19 at the church. The group is continuing its study of The Bible Project YouTube series. For more information, contact Cody Jones at 573-826-0926 or Brandon Crawford at 573-220-5347.



Lift Up the Joy

Sarah Peck will host Ladies in Faith Together (L.I.F.T.) on Wednesday, Aug. 13, from 6 to 8 p.m. in her home at 3450 Trophy Ridge Road in Fulton. The group will begin a series on "Joy in the Journey." This

month's topic is "Joy in Every Season."

PigOut

The annual Hog Roast is set for Sunday, Aug. 24, at Pleasant Grove. Festivities begin at 5:30 p.m.; we'll eat at 6. Enjoy the food and fun as we kick off another year of Kids For Jesus and Limitless youth group.



Bible Study Turns the Page

The Tuesday morning women's Bible study resumes Sept. 9 with a fall series from author Kristi McLelland called *Feasting on God's Word*. The group meets every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. and all women are invited. The

book is \$20; order your copy from Kayla O'Neal in the church office, 573-387-4822, or from Becky Stevens, 573-915-9596.

Kudos for Pastor Paul

Pastor Paul Klepees has been selected by the United Methodist Church as one of the 50 Young Emerging Clergy in Methodism. This group of rising leaders in the denomination will participate in a series of educational opportunities over the next year, including a "History of John Wesley and Methodism" tour of England Aug. 14-21. Pastor Macy Storts will cover pulpit and pastoral needs during Pastor Paul's absence.



Youth Programs Reboot

org.

or email nextgen@mypgumc.

Pleasant Grove's youth programming is gearing up again after summer break. Youth Bible Study returns on Sunday, Aug. 31. Kids For Jesus restarts next month on Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 6 p.m. Limitless youth group is back in action every Wednesday, starting Sept. 17, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. For more information on our youth ministries, contact NextGen Minister Kris O'Neal at nextgen@mypgumc.org.



PRAYWITH US

Let's support and uplift each other through the power of prayer.

Ways to Request Prayer

- Submit your prayer requests through the PG App by tapping Contact and the Prayer tab. Fill out the brief form and submit.
- On our website, MyPGUMC.org, click on the Prayer Request graphic on the home page or click on Prayer Concerns under the Stay Connected menu (MyPGUMC.org/stay-connected/prayer-concerns).
 Fill out the brief form and submit.
- 3. Contact the church office at 573-387-4822 or Pastor Paul Klepees at 816-752-3635.
- 4. Call the Prayer Tree at 573-808-0093 or email mfansler@hotmail.com.



UNITE 2025

Pleasant Grove teens spend a powerful week encountering God in a fresh, personal way.

Pleasant Grove brought 83 youth and 14 leaders to UNITE camp at Central Methodist University in Fayette last month. With a theme of Encounter! campers enjoyed dynamic worship, music and prayer mixed in with scavenger hunts, talent shows, games, sports and a variety of classes. The emotional week brought new perspectives to campers and leaders alike.















































KFJ SUMMER DAY

A summer school week like no other!

Pleasant Grove hosted a unique summer school session last month called KFJ Summer Day. Under the direction of Caitlin Nichols, Summer Day was open to students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Each day of the one-week session kicked off with high-energy fun in the gym as kids arrived and got moving.

"Once everyone was gathered, we headed to the sanctuary for an interactive, kid-friendly sermon led by one of our awesome pastors," Caitlin says. "After some powerful prayer to start our day, it was time to dive into learning — history, English and language arts, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) — one exciting subject at a time!"

Between subjects, students re-

charged with outdoor play, enjoying sunshine, a bounce house and the playground. Midday meant sharing lunch together, followed by creative outdoor play such as chalk art, relay races and splash-worthy water games.

"Morning and afternoon snack time sparked great conversations about how Jesus might guide us through life's situations," Caitlin adds. "We wrapped up each day with more outdoor fun as we waited for our families — tired, happy and full of new memories!"

Caitlin, who has more than 20 years' experience in education, spent 11 years teaching in elementary classrooms and is the current program director for the Columbia STEM Alliance, where she manages the Girls in STEM program and

designs curriculum for a variety of classes and events. "So, crafting creative, engaging learning experiences is kind of my thing!" she says.

Caitlin enjoyed help from paraprofessional Christy Lewis, pastors Paul Klepees and Macy Storts, intern Colbie Fielder and volunteers Gabe Nichols, Chris Spradlin, Margie Klepees and Gibson Klepees. Missouri Conference NextGen Ministries and Callaway County Social Services also provided support.

"Our first adventure was a total success!" Caitlin says. "We picked up some great insights along the way and can use those lessons to make our next round even better. The potential for growth is huge, and we're just getting started!"

















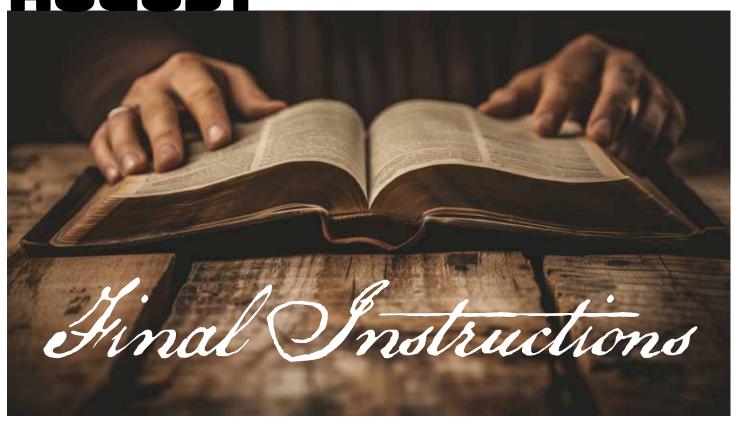


PROVERBS 22:6



JOIN US FOR A NEW SERMON SERIES

AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



For Those Who Grieve ...

The Pleasant Grove community has mourned the loss of several friends and family this past year. When news of a death in our extended church family occurs, the Bereavement Committee springs into action, easing the way for the grieving as they deal with funeral plans.

The mission of the Bereavement Committee is to minister to family and friends by serving a meal after the funeral of a loved one. These meals are for members and nonmembers alike and they aren't always at Pleasant Grove. Over the past year, the committee has helped with meals at services for Harlan Borman, Riley Pipes, Jean O'Neal, Debbie Ludwig, Candy Stewart, Joan Dohrer, Preston Mills, Polly Crawford, Don Hanson, Bryan Crawford, April Thomas and Larry Kuehner.

"We feel it is important to show our love and support in their time of loss," says committee chair Margaret Fansler. "This ministry shows the love of Jesus through us to people who are hurting."

Half a dozen volunteers coordinate and serve the meal supplied by those on a list of people willing to donate food. The church usually supplies the meat, drinks and table service; others off-site or catered may need less help.

"If you are on the list, you will not have to bring food every time," Margaret says. "There will be times when we may need extra help serving and cleaning up. If you are willing to help with that, you will be contacted if you are needed."

Committee members include Neda Shryock, Sandy Montgomery, Terry Pope, Mary Ann Shafer and Becky Stevens. If you'd like to help with this ministry, please sign up in the church office.

Festival of Sharing Quilt Auction

The Festival of Sharing is accepting donations for its annual quilt auction. The online auction, set for Nov. 2-8, raises funds for the Church World Service Blankets Program, which helps people rebuild their lives after disasters. Last year's auction raised \$6,494. Mail or drop off donated quilted items to the Missouri Conference office at 3601 Amron Court, Columbia, MO 65202, no later than Friday, Aug. 15. Details, donor forms and size requirements are at www.FestivalOfSharing.org/quilt-auction.

BLESSINGS

BRING THE WHOLE TITHE
INTO THE STOREHOUSE
... AND SEE IF I WILL NOT
THROW OPEN THE FLOODGATES OF HEAVEN AND POUR
OUT SO MUCH BLESSING
THERE WILL NOT BE ROOM
ENOUGH TO STORE IT.

MALACHI 3:10

Join us in our mission to know Jesus Christ and make Him known. Your generosity enables us to help more and more people experience a life-changing relationship with Him. We are truly grateful for your donations and hope the convenience and simplicity of our ways of giving are helpful to you.

1. Try scanning our QR code.



- To use mobile giving, download the "Church By Ministry One" app to your mobile device. Search for Pleasant Grove by entering the zip code 65231.
- 3. Online giving can be found at www.mypgumc.org/donate.
- 4. Text "GIVE" to 573-312-2909.
- Cash and checks can be placed in the offering plates during worship services or mailed to the church office at 3686 State Road E, Auxvasse, MO 65231.
- 6. Give through your Venmo account through our electronic giving platforms.

Consider becoming a recurring giver. Church statistics show that churches with high numbers of recurring givers experience the most growth.

If you need assistance or have questions about our digital giving methods, please reach out to Kayla O'Neal in the church office Monday through Thursday, by phone at 573-387-4822 or email admin@mypgumc.org.

