

To All Those Striving for the Crown that Will Not Perish:

I hope you are all having a good week although I know many of you are caught up as we are with the first day of school this week. Wesley is so excited he's going to burst. Charlie is as nervous as you expect anyone started High School to be and Ruthie is just annoyed that she has to start waking up before noon again. As for Erin and myself we are just hearing "Sunrise Sunset" playing on loop in our heads.

Although I have not forgotten (if not always followed) my advice from last week's letter. That although this week has been filled with many practical concerns, I have been mindful of not letting the immediate concerns of this world distract me from focusing on what is truly important. So much so that I wanted to expand on that thought more this week. If I asked you what are Wesley's 3 simple rules or the general rules of Methodism I would hope I'd get an answer close to: "Do no harm, Do all the good you can, and Stay in love with God" However that is not how Wesley worded the last phrase. We have modernized that one and I feel that we may have lost something in the translation. What Wesley wrote was "to attend upon all the ordinances of God."

In our modern parlance that may be better translated to keep up with our spiritual disciplines or practices. Wesley illuminated what these practices were. While many of the practices you expect were there: attending worship, receiving communion, being in prayer and studying the Word there were others that we might not initially think of as spiritual practices. These included visiting the sick and prisoners. He knew from his own experience that often one of the best ways to fill spiritual full was in fact to pour out the Spirit on others. In that same vein he included family prayer and Bible study to this list. I often find myself closest to God when I see the Spirit of God at work in my children. Also, it's kind of hard to be doing something you know you shouldn't be doing when you just taught your 5 year old that it's not something that God thinks is beneficial to us. He also lists accountability and acts of charity in this list. Faith is not a journey we are meant to walk alone. We grow in our bond of fellowship much quicker and deeper when we are out serving others together than sitting in worship together. Also doing no harm to your or anyone else's spiritual wellbeing is a lot easier when you have someone you trust with your struggles who truly cares for your soul. So if God feels far away or if today feels mundane rather than miraculous by all means pick up your Bible and send out a prayer but also consider picking up your phone and calling someone you know is having a hard time or reach out your hand that you may raise up a stranger. You'll find that God never went anywhere and He's closer than you think.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

If you would like to schedule an event at the church, contact Steph at 309-848-4050 or [portbyronfirstumc@gmail.com](mailto:portbyronfirstumc@gmail.com). She will provide you with the building agreement, policies, and forms to book the date on the church calendar.

**MONTHLY DONATIONS BLESSED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: *Immediate Food Pantry Needs*** - The Upper Rock Island County Food Pantry at Messiah Lutheran Church has immediate needs for paper products: Paper towels, kleenex, toilet paper & laundry detergent. Also, salad dressing, boxed meals, spaghetti, ravioli, pancake mix and syrup. *Be sure that your donations are within the "best by/best use" expiration date and that the item has not been opened. The food pantry cannot accept items that are expired.* Thank you for your continuing support of this ministry!

**MONTHLY DONATIONS BLESSED ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: *Wish List for the Mission Welcome Kits***: The Mission Committee is preparing ongoing Welcome Kits for new residents at Whispering Hills. The following items are needed: shampoo, body soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, dish soap, small laundry detergent, cleaning wipes, small all-purpose cleaner, single-roll paper towels, and a 4-pack of toilet paper. Thank you for your donations and support of this local mission!

### **LISTENING TOURS WITH PASTOR KREY & KATHY MAHRAUN:**

Now that we are getting back into the full swing of things we would like to invite everyone to join Kathy and myself in a series of listening tours. This is a chance for me to get to know all of you a little better and for us to talk about our vision for our shared ministry here in Port Byron. We are currently scheduling four of these meetings: Monday, Aug. 18th at 10am, Friday, Aug. 22nd at 1 pm, Sunday, Aug. 24th at 2pm and Wednesday, Sept. 3rd at 7pm. There will be a sign up sheet in the back and if these prove popular enough we will add more dates.

**Saturday, August 16<sup>th</sup>** – Safe Gatherings Due to low availability, the Safe Gatherings training at Vibrant Coffee and Kitchen in Bettendorf has been canceled. Please have your training renewed and completed **before** you begin to serve again.

If you need a partial or full refund for your training, please print your receipt and submit it to Pastor Becky.

Please print or email Pastor Becky your Safe Gatherings certificate of approval when you receive it.

**Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>** - Youth Leader Training 6-8pm

**Thursday, Aug 28<sup>th</sup>** – UWF Meeting 1:30pm at the Church. Program will be about the local food pantry.

**Friday, August 29<sup>th</sup>** - 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter after the home football game until 11:30 pm in the Pavilion. Ice Cream Floats and Sundaes!

**Sunday, Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>** – UWF 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Meal will be after worship

**Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>** GROW Kick off! Doors open at 6:30, Dinner at 7:00, Discipleship/Activities 7:30-8:30. Open to ALL students in 6th-12th grade. All students are encouraged to invite friends!

**Thursday, Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>** - 6-8pm Kid Min Leader Training

**Sunday, Sept 7<sup>th</sup>** Children/Youth Discipleship Groups Kick off at 9:30 am

**Sunday, Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>** – Consecration Sunday. More information coming.