

INFORMER

Immanuel Lutheran Church



Students greeted by teachers, staff and the Day School Commission on Immanuel's first day of school.

Pastor's Greeting

Rooted and Built Up in Christ

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Well, it's that time once again as the warm summer months transition into cooler fall weather. Apart from the weather, other noticeable transitions take place in our lives as well, including worship life, daily routines and schedules, and for many a return to school.

The Bible passage below is the theme verse for Immanuel Christian Academy's 2026-27 school year. The overall theme "Rooted In Christ" is emphasized throughout the school year in our classrooms, activities, events, and especially our weekly chapel services. ICA faculty and staff will not only teach core subjects, but more importantly, what it means to be Rooted in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ICA is blessed with qualified, skilled, and faith-filled teachers, staff, and assistants. The work our teachers perform in these formative years establishes and builds up faith in these precious children. Please be sure to keep them in your prayers remembering how valuable they are carrying out the work of the Lord. Encourage them with cards, emails, or even a small gift to show how much we appreciate what they do for God at ICA.

continued on page 9

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving"
(Colossians 2:6-7)

Inside This Issue

Meet the Changemakers

This month, we shine the spotlight on Stewardship Chair Michael Mannella, Food Pantry volunteer Karen Mulvihill, and teacher Jessica Coleman, all valued members of Immanuel's ministry.

Cardinal Connection

More than reminders and ads! Stories, interviews and student work. This month, meet 8th Grader, Thomas Skinner.

Testimonials

How do we impact our community? Look for little love notes sprinkled throughout the Informer.

STEWARD AT HEART

For Michael Mannella (Mike), serving at Immanuel is about much more than holding a leadership position, it is about being part of a church family and using the gifts God has given him to serve.

Mike currently serves as Stewardship Chair and has been part of the Immanuel family for 15 years. When he moved to Brookfield, he began searching for a Lutheran church and found his church home at Immanuel. Over the years, what he has come to enjoy most is simply having the opportunity to serve.

Mike's path into church leadership began rather simply: someone asked him! He prayed about the opportunity and felt God leading him to serve. Through that experience, he says serving at Immanuel has taught him one important lesson: humility.

Faith has been an important part of Mike's life since childhood, and his maternal grandfather had a particularly strong influence on his faith journey. His grandfather faithfully took him to church every Sunday and modeled a wonderful prayer life. Perhaps even more influential was the positive, faith - filled attitude his grandfather maintained throughout his own illness and as he faced death. This example left a lasting impression on Mike and the way he approaches his own faith.

Mike's favorite Bible verse is Psalm 55:22, which reminds us to cast our burdens upon the Lord and trust in His sustaining care. His favorite hymn, "How Great Thou Art," similarly reflects his appreciation for the greatness and faithfulness of God.

When Mike looks at Immanuel



today, he believes one of our congregation's greatest strengths is its unity. Ask him what he values most about being part of the congregation, and his answer is simple, "we are a family". When asked to finish the sentence, "Church feels like family when..." he answered, "Always."

Looking toward the future, Mike hopes to see growth at Immanuel, particularly by welcoming more young people into the life of the church. One way he believes every member can contribute to the life and future of the congregation is by volunteering. His encouragement to others is simple: get involved and serve.

Some of Mike's favorite Immanuel memories come from the choir. When he first joined, fellow choir members were surprised by his singing ability—especially when they learned he had never sung in a choir before! It turned out to be a wonderful fit. His favorite Immanuel tradition is the annual Palm Sunday cantata, and perhaps it is no surprise that a music lover's favorite piece is Mozart's Requiem. His musical tastes aren't limited to classical music, though, he is also a big Bruno Mars fan.

Outside of church, Mike enjoys watching sports, especially his grandson's baseball games. And there is no question which side of Chicago's baseball rivalry he falls on: he is definitely a Sox fan!

Given a completely free day, however, Mike is perfectly happy relaxing and doing nothing. There is also another side to Michael that fellow members may not know. He describes himself a bit like Cliff from Cheers because of his impressive supply of seemingly useless trivia facts. So, if you ever need an obscure fact during coffee hour, you now know whom to ask!

A few more Mike favorites? Christmas is his favorite holiday, summer is his favorite season, and red is his favorite color. He chooses coffee over tea and Divine Service over contemporary worship. His dream destination is Italy, his favorite local restaurant is Tony's in Brookfield, and his favorite cheese is Havarti. When it comes to food, pizza earns the title of favorite —and at coffee hour, anything chocolate is sure to get his attention.

Above all, Mike recognizes God's blessings throughout his life. He says he is especially thankful to God for his family and feels blessed all the time.

After 15 years at Immanuel, the word Mike repeatedly comes back to is family. It describes what he values about the congregation, when he feels at home at church, and ultimately how he sees Immanuel. Through prayer, humility, service, music, fellowship, and perhaps a little useless trivia along the way, Michael continues to use his gifts in service to his church family.

Thank you, Mike , for being an important part of the Immanuel family!

Stewardship Moment

THROUGH FAITH, WE
UNDERSTAND THAT OUR
PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO
SERVE AND GLORIFY GOD.

Gracious and loving God,

Thank You for bringing our students, teachers, and staff safely through the first weeks of this new academic year. As we settle into the routines of this first month, we ask for Your continued presence and guidance within our Lutheran school community.

For our students: Lord, grant them eager minds and joyful hearts. Help them adjust to new classes, make kind friends, and feel Your comforting love when they are anxious or tired. May they grow not only in academic knowledge, but also in the grace and truth of Your Word.

For our teachers and staff: Bless them with an abundance of patience, wisdom, and strength. As they pour out their time and energy day after day, refresh their spirits and help them find deep joy in serving the children placed in their care.

For our families and community: Give parents and guardians peace of mind and open lines of communication with the school. Make our school and church a true place of refuge, safety, and encouragement.

Continue to guide our steps, bless the hearing and teaching of Your Word, and let Your peace reign in our classrooms throughout the year.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

A Month of Prayer

The fellowship of prayer consists of caring people who pray daily for members in the church and school. Please pray for both their known and unknown needs. This month: Our students and their families.

Please also pray for our Immanuel members who are home-bound

Joe & Lisa Chioda
Clyde Lane
Joan Rundgren
Gloria Rubietta
Dorothy Westphal



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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DAILY BIBLE READING

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Matthew 5:1-12 | 20 Proverbs 10:1-32 |
| 2 Matthew 5:13-26 | 21 Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 |
| 3 Matthew 5:33-48 | 22 Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:16 |
| 4 Matthew 6:1-15 | 23 Ecclesiastes 5:1-20 |
| 5 Matthew 6:16-23 | 24 Ecclesiastes 7:1-25 |
| 6 Matthew 6:24-34 | 25 Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14 |
| 7 Matthew 7:1-12 | 26 Psalm 37 |
| 8 Matthew 7:13-29 | 27 1 Corinthians 1:1-17 |
| 9 Matthew 13:1-23 | 28 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 |
| 10 Matthew 13:24-43 | 29 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 |
| 11 Matthew 13:44-58 | 30 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 |
| 12 Matthew 25:1-13 | |
| 13 Matthew 25:14-30 | |
| 14 Matthew 25:31-46 | |
| 15 Proverbs 1:1-33 | |
| 16 Proverbs 3:1-35 | |
| 17 Proverbs 4:1-27 | |
| 18 Proverbs 8:1-36 | |
| 19 Proverbs 9:1-18 | |
| 20 Proverbs 10:1-32 | |

Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures gives. - Romans 15:4 As you read the Bible each day, allow the Scriptures to speak to you. This daily "dialogue" between you and the biblical text will reveal new understandings about God, and about yourself.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Karen Mulvihill has faithfully served with our food pantry since 2020, but her desire to help those in need began many years earlier. Back in the days of Dorcas, there had always been an interest in starting a pantry, but the church was unsure where to begin and lacked adequate storage space. That ministry of care eventually began by distributing hygiene kits to people in need.

Through her years of service, Karen has learned from many of the pantry's regular guests. They have reminded her that the need within our community did not disappear after the pandemic and how grateful people are to receive a helping hand.

Karen describes the atmosphere during busy pantry shifts as energetic and exciting. With music playing, volunteers working hard and even a little dancing, serving together is both meaningful and fun.

Most importantly, volunteering at the pantry reminds Karen why we are here; to love God and serve God's people. Her invitation to anyone who has considered volunteering but has not yet taken that first step is simple: "Come have fun with us!"

A Few of Karen's Favorites

- Color: Purple—but she really loves all colors!
- Cheese: Gorgonzola
- Coffee or tea? Coffee, also her favorite fellowship treat!
- Cubs or Sox? Sox, although that is really her husband Ed's favorite team!



STOCK THE SHELVES

- Stuffing Mix
- Instant Potatoes
- Pasta
- Instant Oatmeal
- 1lb Rice

IMPORTANT PANTRY DATES

Sept. 12th -Pantry Day 9:30am
Sept. 14th - Food Bank
Unloading 4:45pm

HOLIDAY PANTRY SCHEDULE:

Holiday Meal Fundraiser:
Oct. 4th -Dec. 19th
Thanksgiving Distributions:
Nov. 14th & Nov. 20th
Christmas Distributions:
Dec. 12th & Dec. 18 th

Join the Pantry Today!

Join us on the second Saturday of every month at 9:30am or speak to Jayne for more details.



jsiou@immanuel-hillside.org

WHAT VISITORS SAY ABOUT US

"As I walked into the house, there was a smile across everyone's face. They asked me, 'Where did you get this from?' The kids looked at the snacks and cereal in amazement, saying, 'Those are my favorite!' and 'Thank you, Dad!' I looked toward heaven and told Him, 'Thank You,' but I also had to reach out to you, Jayne. Thank you for being the salt of the earth. I thank your church for what they have provided for me and my family. I thank every worker and caregiver to the public, for you are truly servants of the Most High. May God continue to grant you all mercy and open doors that no man can shut. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you." — August Pantry Participant

SPECIAL THANK YOU! To Eliza Schulz, for receiving and donating the Thrivent-Gift Card and to Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church Westchester for the Sam's Club Gift Card, both used to purchase much-needed staple foods this month! God continues to bless our Food Ministry in so many ways, using so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ, To God be the Glory!

BY THE NUMBERS



In Kind Donations
Food Rescued
8,500lbs



Food Ministry
Service Events
7



Families
Served
136



Food Ministry
Partners
3

Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9).



From the Principal's Desk

ICA BEGINS NEW SCHOOL YEAR ROOTED IN CHRIST

Immanuel Christian Academy is excited to begin another wonderful school year! Our theme for the 2026-2027 school year is "Rooted in Christ," inspired by Colossians 2:6-7.

We are grateful to welcome back our returning students and families, along with 19 new students who have joined the Immanuel Christian family. Our classrooms are once again filled with learning, laughter, prayer and excitement. During the first weeks of school, our students have been learning classroom routines, building relationships and practicing kindness, respect, responsibility and God's love toward others.

We are especially thankful for our dedicated teachers and

staff, who have worked diligently to prepare for the new school year. Their commitment to providing a nurturing, Christ - centered education is a tremendous blessing to our students and families.

We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to the members of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, generosity and continued support of our school ministry. Your partnership helps ICA educate, nurture, and prepare students academically and spiritually.

We are excited that our Annual Benefit Dinner and Auction is coming up! This special event supports student scholarships

the continued growth of our school. Church members who are interested in serving on the planning committee are invited to join us. Please email Principal Carnita Nash at cnash@immanuel-hillside.org for more information.

Please continue to keep our students, families, teachers, staff, and school leadership in your prayers. We look forward to a year filled with growth, achievement, joyful fellowship, and countless opportunities to share the love of Jesus.

Blessings,

Carnita Nash, Principal



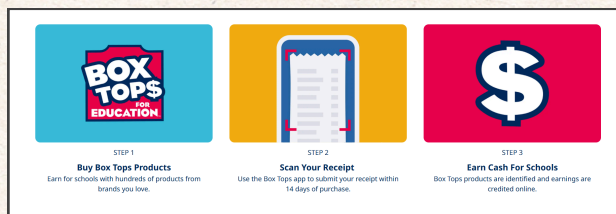
What Students Say

"Everyone at Immanuel is so kind, from the students to the teachers. Every day when I'm at school I learn something new and have fun while I'm doing it. The teachers help me with my work so I know what to do. My favorite thing about Immanuel is the family-like environment and that everyone knows each other."

- 5th Grade Student

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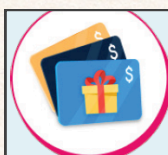
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"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him." — Colossians 2:6-7

RAISE RIGHT GIFT CARD FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is as simple as shopping and dining at your favorite places RaiseRight works with your routine, not against it. ICA earns money when you buy gift cards, shop online, dine at participating restaurants, or book travel. Get started by visiting RaiseRight.com/Enroll or download the RaiseRight mobile app. **Enrollment Code: 9D337C6F55761**



Get more out of your routine spending

You're already buying groceries, gas, and meals. What if paying with gift cards made it easier to afford what matters most?

FAITH, FAMILY & A HEART TO HELP

This month, we're shining our Student Spotlight on eighth grader, Thomas Skinner! At 13 years old, Thomas is beginning an important final year at ICA, and he is approaching it with energy, growing maturity, and some big goals for the future.

Thomas's favorite subject is math, but this year he would also like to strengthen some other skills. When asked what new thing he would like to learn, Thomas first responded, "Good question!" before deciding that he would like to improve in English and cursive. Academically, his biggest goal for eighth grade is to excel in his studies. Thomas recognizes that he is getting older and maturing, and he feels that it is time to take his academics seriously and really care about doing his best.

Faith is also an important part of Thomas's life at ICA. His favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13 (ESV): "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." One of the things Thomas has learned about God is that God loves us and remains in control, even with all the craziness, chaos, and bad things happening in the world.

Thomas also understands that faith is demonstrated in the way we care for others. He believes one of the best ways he can serve is by asking people if they need help, being there when they do, and especially taking the time to listen. Today, Thomas says he is particularly thankful for his family and for the generations who came before him. He is thankful that God created his family and his ancestors, recognizing that without them, he would not be here today.

When asked what makes ICA special to him, Thomas gave an answer that gets right to the heart of our school community: "People here care about me." In fact, when asked who at school makes him smile, Thomas didn't choose just one person—he chose all of the teachers and staff.



Thomas delivering ICA packed lunches to Housing Forward Client in Maywood

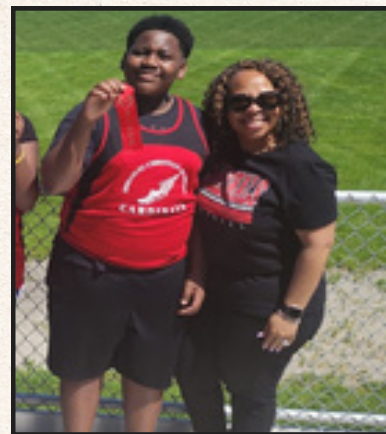
Of course, there is much more to Thomas than academics! He is especially good at basketball, while track and field is another favorite school sport. He also loves a good game of Kahoot. One of his favorite ICA events is Christmas Fun Night, when he gets to spend time with staff and church members, sing, and naturally play more Kahoot! If Thomas were given the opportunity to become the teacher for a day, he would choose to teach art.

Thomas has plenty of favorites outside the classroom, too. His favorite color is copper, his favorite cheese is mozzarella but his go-to snack is Fruit by the Foot, his favorite song is Havana, and his favorite book is Charlotte's Web. His favorite animal is the capybara, although if he could have any animal as a pet, he would choose a horse. Give him any superpower and he'd pick super speed. And when it comes to spending time with his family, Thomas especially enjoys going to the movies.

His friends would probably describe him with one word: energetic. Thomas, however, admits there is one activity that makes this energetic eighth grader especially happy—getting to sleep!

As for life after eighth grade and beyond, Thomas isn't limiting himself to just one possibility. When he grows up, he says he would like to be "a lot" of things, but a few careers currently stand out: rapper, lawyer, or camp counselor. Wherever God leads him, Thomas has plenty of time to discover the gifts and talents he will carry into his future.

As Thomas begins his final year at ICA, we look forward to watching him continue to mature, grow in his faith, challenge himself academically, and make plenty of memories along the way. Have a fantastic eighth-grade year, Thomas!



Thomas & Mrs. Nash at Walther Track Meet Spring 2026

| ICA Events



BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT
September 3, 6PM



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY
September 13, 9:30AM



GRANDPARENT'S DAY
September 18, 9AM



PICTURE DAY
September 22, 8AM

PRESENT WITH PURPOSE

For Jessica Coleman, teaching is much more than a profession—it is a calling. She has taught at various times throughout the past 22 years and is now beginning her second year at Immanuel Christian Academy, where she teaches second and third grade.

Mrs. Coleman's own children helped inspired her to become a teacher at ICA. She also fell in love with the experience of sharing, learning together, and watching the organic growth and transformation that take place in students.

Her favorite part of teaching at ICA is being able to bring her whole self into the classroom. "I can bring the part of me that shares my faith, the part that is fun, and even the parts that are challenging," she explains. "I have an opportunity to influence these kids."

Mrs. Coleman's faith shapes every part of her teaching. She believes God has called and entrusted her to tend to the hearts and minds of her students. Knowing that she is accountable to Him inspires her to care for each child intentionally and to bring joy into the classroom every day.

Her favorite Bible verse is Psalm 145:18.

Mrs. Coleman encourages her students to grow in faith by striving to be a living example before them. She talks openly about God and her own faith journey, prays with her students, and shares honestly about both the exciting and disappointing moments of life. She wants

them to see what it looks like to trust God through every season.

Bible is Jessica's favorite subject to teach, but she also enjoys creating memorable experiences throughout the school day. This year, she is especially excited about introducing LEGO desk pets and reading necklaces. One of her favorite classroom traditions is community-building circles, something she has used at the collegiate level and now brings into her elementary classroom. These circles help students listen, share, connect, and grow together.

Would her students be surprised to learn anything about her? Probably not! Jessica describes herself as an open book—transparent, vulnerable, and honest with her students.

Her students make her smile when they ask for a hug or when she sees their faces light up as they learn something new. For Jessica, the best part of teaching is simply "sharing life with little people."

If her students could use one word to describe her, she hopes it would be: Present.

We thank God for Mrs. Coleman and the faith, joy, honesty, and love she brings to her classroom each day.

"The Lord is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth."
Psalm 145:18

Just for Fun

- Favorite childhood subjects: Math, Writing, and especially P.E.
- Coffee or tea: Both!
- Favorite childhood book: Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
- Dream vacation: A Mediterranean cruise around Italy or anywhere with a beach
- Favorite season: Fall, for the changing colors, chilly air, and a good fire
- Food she could eat repeatedly: A Gene & Jude's hot dog or a folded New York-style pizza slice served on a white paper plate with garlic
- Favorite colors: Pinks, purples, and shiny metallics
- Favorite ICA event: The Parents vs. Athletes Basketball Game
- Favorite sports team: Baltimore Ravens
- Favorite school supplies: Ticonderoga pencils and U Brands soft-touch felt-tip pens



Mrs. Coleman with her children and students.

Pastor's Message continued from page 1

Speaking of things cultivated, two other important ministries of Immanuel demonstrate how we are "Rooted In Christ." The Old Schoolhouse Community Garden is once again reaping a bounty, one that is shared with so many in need. Also, the ministry of Put Your Hands Together food distribution remains steadfast in its outreach to Hillside and surrounding communities. In this newsletter you will find the amazing story of one such visitor to PYHT and the impact it had on their family. That story is confirmation that what we are doing for the Lord is truly a blessing from God. There is great joy in sharing what God provides. These ministries are extensions of God's love for all people no matter the color of their skin, language spoken, ethnic background, or social status.

Let us pray: "Thank You, Lord, for giving us the opportunity to serve You through these vital ministries. All glory, honor, and praise be to You. In Jesus' name. Amen."

In the Fellowship and Love of Christ,

Pastor Steve Deombeleg



"Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous. Do not be
afraid; do not be discouraged, for the
Lord your God will be with you
wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?

A Life of Faith, Music and Service

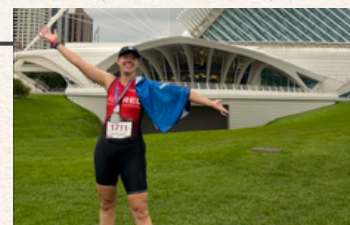
Heather Hempel graduated from Immanuel in 2000 after spending nine years as a student here. She continued her education at Timothy Christian High School before earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees in violin performance from DePaul University.

Today, Heather shares her love of music as a professional violin teacher and a member of the Chicago Camerata Orchestra. Music, however, is only one part of her busy and joy-filled life. She leads three Bible studies, competes as a triathlete, and recently celebrated the tremendous accomplishment of qualifying for the national triathlon competition.

Heather also remains deeply involved here at Immanuel. She volunteers with the Altar Guild and food pantry, sings in the

choir, and shares her musical gifts by playing violin during worship. She loves being active in the church and treasures the close relationships she has developed here, thanks to Jayne Siou.

When Heather looks back on her years as an Immanuel student, the school musicals remain among her favorite memories. She performed Tom in Tom Sawyer and played the Scarecrow in The Wizard of Oz. Her favorite subject was reading, and her favorite teacher was Mrs. Musgrave, who taught literature in a way that opened Heather's eyes to a larger world, especially through books such as *The Giver*. Heather also credits her father, Mr. Hempel, with helping to shape her faith and relationship with God. Through his teaching at ICA, he made the Bible come alive and showed his students



Heather at the Triathlon National Championships

that knowing and following God could be exciting, he "made God cool!"

Heather loves teaching, performing with the orchestra, competing as an athlete, and serving her church. Her life is a beautiful example of how the foundation built at Immanuel can continue to inspire a lifetime of faith, service, learning, and joyful involvement.

A Few of Heather's Favorites

- Food: Thai peanut chicken
- Cheese: Blue cheese
- Hymn: "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"
- Bible verse: Joshua 1:9, her confirmation verse
- Favorite Immanuel subject: Reading
- Favorite Immanuel teacher: Mrs. Musgrave
- Favorite school tradition: The school musical



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playground.



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SEPTEMBER



Are the demands of daily living preventing you from recharging your “faith battery”? In John 15, Jesus tells us that, in order to bear the fruit of faith, we need to stay connected to Him. Only when we remain in Jesus will our faith grow. Buffeted by the winds of daily living, it is a constant struggle to remain attached to Jesus. However, with God’s strength we can set aside time daily to read and study His Word and to pray, and to worship regularly so we can remain in Him.

2026

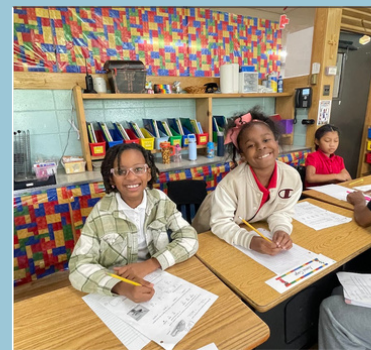
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 5:30 Day School Commission	2 9:30am Chapel 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	3 6pm Back to School Night 	4 - No School Teacher PD	5 
6 9:30 Worship HC 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:15 Bible Study	7 - No School 	8 5:30 pm PTL Meeting 6pm Church Council	9 9:30am Chapel 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	10	11	12 11am Food Pantry 
13 - Christian Ed. Sunday 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:15 Bible Study	14 Raise Right Scrip Orders Due	15	16 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	17	18 Grandparent's Day Celebration Chapel 11:30 Dismissal 	19
20 9:30 Worship HC 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:15 Bible Study	21	22 Picture Day 	23 9:30am Chapel 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	24	25	26
27 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:00 Voters Meeting 	28	29	30 9:30am Chapel 7:30pm Adult Choir Practice	 1 - Gloria Rubietta 1 - Reason Estelle Jeffries 3 - Joe Chioda 3 - Lapricka Duff 4 - Sheila Railing 8 - Zariah Thomas 9 - Grace Hadler 9 - Patty Pygman	9 - Avignon Peters 10 - Maxwell Railing 10 Jessica Coleman 15 - Du'saja Marion 17 - Tim Bell 17 Lisa Chioda 18 - Pastor Steve 19 - Mindy Ondrovic 19 - Arlene Gasperich 21 - Selena Kahn 22 - Bill Scheitler	26 Clyde Lane 26 Corie Woodruff 28 - Omie Lane 29 - Joan Rundgren 29 - Kamryn Perry 30 - Suzie Lepe 30 - Christine Thorner 



Lunch Time



Chapel



Classwork



Naptime

BACK
To School



Friends



All School Activities



First Day of School



Learning Together

SEPTEMBER INFORMER 2026 VOLUME 22 ISSUE 2

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