St. Paul Lutheran Church & School

Newsletter

Volume 31 Issue 8
September 16 2026

Turning Point Revisited

A year ago this week, I was enjoying a "stay-cation." I avoided the office, put the other guy in the pulpit, and did almost nothing productive. Summer is all well and good, but this pastor was burned out. If I were the kind of person to do so, it would have been soap-operas and bon-bons all week. However, on Wednesday, September 10, I hopped into the car to pick up kids after school and heard the radio guys say, "Pray for Charlie Kirk."

"What??" I yelled to the radio as the show went to commercial. The next few hours I spent checking and re-checking updates on what happened, and the next day I wrote the monthly church newsletter article in a fit of catharsis.

Today, on the 1-year anniversary of Charlie's assassination, I re-read that published article, and am doubling down on it. (Certain paragraphs of what I wrote last year are in italics; the rest is new.)



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This week 25 years ago, I was in AP English class when a hall monitor barged in and said, "Turn on the TV. A plane just flew into the World Trade Center." After watching the South Tower fall live, then hearing about the Pentagon, Shanksville, and the North Tower, the rest of the school day was wasted for everyone. The entire world seemed to freeze in time. Sports were canned. Everyone went home. Work was cancelled as my part-time job closed for the day. The next day, I stopped at the gas station on the way to school and bought a newspaper, which I still have to this day. For the next few weeks, you couldn't turn your head in any direction without seeing an American flag. For a short time, we all had something in common: bad guys want us dead; we won't let them.

24 years later …

While fielding questions at a Turning Point USA event, founder and CEO Charlie Kirk was shot in the neck and killed. He was murdered in broad daylight, in cold blood, in front of thousands of people. Charlie leaves behind a wife and two young children.

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SAVED
by Jesus,
SENT
to serve.
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Turning Point Revisited

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He wasn't running for office. He wasn't calling for violence. He was murdered for the crime of encouraging debate and the free exchange of ideas. It was a political assassination, and anyone who says otherwise is either ignorant or lying. Yet it was also a spiritual assassination, and I am confident to call Charlie a Christian martyr. [The most recent Synodical convention in 2026 passed a resolution that, while not explicitly calling him a martyr, clearly identified Charlie as such while encouraging the church to recognize martyrdom around the world. You don't have to agree, but my friend and I sitting in the gallery couldn't help but suggest that the desire to remember martyrs never would have been brought up without Charlie. And if you think he can't be called a martyr because of his politics, then there would have been literally zero martyrs for about a thousand years of the Holy Roman Empire.]

If you are unfamiliar with Charlie and his work, [you do by now, so I won't elaborate.] …

Two things always struck me about Charlie Kirk: first, he was not some attention-seeking pundit whose goal was to make a name for himself. On the contrary, when TPUSA began, Charlie didn't even have a camera. Imagine it! In the 2010's, when YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter was making self-aggrandizement (a propos of nothing) en vogue and binge-watching reels a way of life, Charlie was setting up tables at colleges to debate students, challenge established narratives in favor of free thought, and establish local chapters for the betterment of a society that is eating itself alive. The cameras, clips, and posts were added later in service to freedom of thought. In a world where most conservative students deliberately hide their views in order to appease their liberal professors, Charlie gave them a voice.

The other (and more important) thing that struck me about Charlie was his faith in Jesus Christ. He routinely declared to his burgeoning crowds that Jesus Christ is Lord, and the most important thing you can ever do is give your life to him. When asked what he would want to be remembered for most, he said his faithfulness to Christ. One of the last things he posted on X was "Jesus defeated death so you can live." And he was shot and killed moments after referring to Scripture.

Immediately after Charlie's death, people were literally celebrating. One year later, there are trends on the internet doubling down, and videos of mockery and tattoos of bullets on necks are circling the internet. Erstwhile conservative pundits like Candace Owens concocted complicated conspiracy theories about his murder that would make even Lindsey Clancy's supporters blush. Over in New York City, the mayor just handed a commemorative 9/11 pen to Ramzi Kassem, a lawyer who defended the brother-in-law of a 9/11 hijacker. The "together we stand, united we fall" banners of the early century are now a relic of eye-rolling, "Ok Boomer" Facebook posts.

This is not a political newsletter. This is a Christian pastor writing to his own Christian congregants. But part of being a Christian pastor in any time and place means reading the tea leaves of a shared life and pointing them to Jesus, and avoiding anything that smacks of "politics" means avoiding anything that speaks to our common life as Americans. While some of us have different opinions on public policies, on certain people in office, on the quirkiness of certain pundits, on the government in general, this needs to be said:

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." (John 15:18)

Obviously, a country who is terrorized and attacked is not distinctly Christian. A political figure who is assassinated is not distinctly anti-Christian. You can probably hate America without hating Jesus. However, America was a better place when there were more Christians in it. Our land enjoyed a more peaceful coexistence with a plurality of views when most people thought church was at least good idea, even if they didn't believe in it. It is undeniable that Christian values were at least broadly upheld as self-evident. Twenty-five years after Ground Zero, the world—and our country—is a more dangerous place to be a professing Christian. The law of God is shouted down as politically incorrect. The gospel of Christ is rejected and mocked. The phrase, "I disagree," is often replaced with violence. What is a Christian to do?

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Turning Point Revisited

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The same thing the church has always done: hold the line. Never forget. Raise your family in the truth. Keep the End in mind.

For a couple decades now, mainline churches have pussyfooted around controversial topics and/or avoided them entirely. The result has been a world that is ignorant of sin and privileges literal terrorism for the sake of avoiding offense. Jesus, on the other hand, tells the "underprivileged" man at the pool of Bethesda to "sin no more, so that nothing worse may happen to you" (John 5). He tells the woman caught in adultery to "sin no more" (John 8). To the disciples referring to the tower of Siloam, he says, "unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13). Read any single letter of Paul and he'll lay out the proper way of life for a Christian. A watchman who fails to cry out is guilty of the ensuing bloodshed. The Laodiceans in Revelation 4 are lukewarm, so "I will spew you from my mouth."



Whatever the time and place, this much I know is true for the Christian church: bad guys want you dead. "But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24). And there's hope available for everyone. To the perishing world, we say:

Like God himself, we do not delight in the death of the wicked, but that everyone come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. We abhor violence and bloodshed, but we will bear the cross and suffer it if it brings you to Christ. We will use our words to try to convince you, trusting in the Spirit's work as we pray, praise, and give thanks for the one who first saved us from the wrath to come. Please do not shoot us. But if you do, I can only hope to be remembered as someone who was faithful to his Lord Jesus Christ.

-Pastor Matyas

Calling all Veterans

Calling all Veterans! We want to celebrate you! Please join us on Wednesday, November 11th, 2026 at 7:45am in our school gymnasium, for light refreshments and coffee. Then at 8:15am, we will present a program honoring YOU! Veterans are welcome to bring a guest and any memorabilia you would like to share with us. There are invites to fill out, on the table in the narthex (back of the church). Please fill one out and return it to the office, by no later than October 19th. Thank you and we look forward to celebrating and honoring you.



From the Principal's Office

Last April, our family purchased a mini-van. Hats off to Dennis, my husband, who did all of the heavy lifting regarding the sales transaction. Thanks, hubby, you're the best. A week after getting the keys, I went to the gas station to fill up the tank. I twisted off the cap and was surprised to discover a $2 bill paper clipped to a business card with a handwritten note: I wanted to pitch in on your first fill up (smiling face) Thanks again.

I was floored, dumbstruck, mouth opened, stunned. I have never met Derrick Warner from Garber Chevrolet in Midland, but his small act of radical hospitality has stuck with me.

I have shared the $2 bill and handwritten note story with a handful of entrepreneurs, small business owners, large business owners, and sales people. They nod encouragingly. They get it. What you do for people after the sale is finalized, the deal is sealed, the job is finished, the contract completed, speaks volumes. Everyone expects you to be kind during the transaction. They don't expect the kindness to keep coming.

There are three key principals to radical hospitality: noticing guests, offering personal attention, and providing excellent follow-through. Providing excellent over the top follow through is the part that is most radical for me. I know how to notice and offer personal attention, I don't often think about following up after the "deal is closed". During our first Staff Meeting of the school year, I shared my gas station story with the St. Paul teachers. We then took time to handwrite and sign encouraging cards to our newest batch of St. Paul Alumni. We mailed off 8 cards to two different high schools letting these young 9th graders know that we are proud of them, we appreciate them, and we are thankful for them.

Fulfilling our mission of teaching, experiencing, and sharing Christ's love allows us to keep the kindness coming. 8 names went on the whiteboard, 8 staff members gladly handwrote a message. Everyone in the staff meeting signed the cards. I addressed them. Mrs. Schimm mailed them. They were sent with purpose, kindness, and love. It was an act of radical hospitality. It was a joy.

At least one of the cards found its way to its recipient. I know because that recipient eats supper at my kitchen table. He appreciated the card. He was pretty chill about it. I don't think it impacted him the same way that the $2 bill hit me, but I am glad we did it. Small, meaningful, intentional acts have a way of making a culture shift in powerful ways. May our acts of radical (or completely normalized) kindness be a blessing to others.

-Principal Mrs. Valerie Matyas

The **Mission** of St. Paul Lutheran School:
We will teach, experience, and share Christ's love, equipping disciples for a life-long walk with Jesus.

HONEY Sunday is right around the corner!



September 27th and Oct 4th Women in Mission will be taking orders at the back of church and in the ministry center for 8 oz bottles of honey (from the Danzig Honey Company). You may use the QR code on the insert in the bulletin to order with credit /debit card. ($10 per bottle) Or you may pay cash or check ($10 per bottle) and order before or after church on Sept 27th or Oct 4th. If you order with cash or check $3 per bottle stays with our group to be used for missions. The Boys and Girls Ranch will mail you the honey when it is available, usually early November. You will need to have the address of who you are sending it to when you place an order. Contact Heidi Schultz if you have any questions at (989) 450-0975.

Angie Kargbo from Dakota Boys and Girls' Ranch will be at St Paul on Sunday , Sept 27th to speak about this special ministry at the Adult Bible Class between services.

Thank You - 15th Annual JME Memorial Run/Walk

The 15th annual JME Memorial Run/Walk was a great success! 135 racers participated. We are sincerely grateful for the JME sponsors who made this event possible. Thank you to the Frankenlust Fire Department for ensuring our safety on the road.

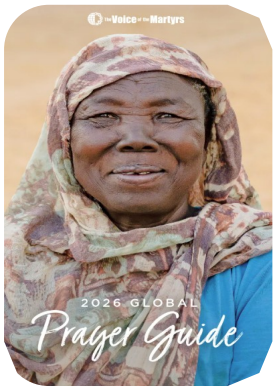
Following the race, families enjoyed concessions, face painting, bounce houses, crafts, and good old-fashioned fellowship. It was a beautiful day spent together. Donations and our Dunk Tank Fundraiser raised $500 to help make next year's event possible.

A special thank you to Gary Behmlander for the delicious Italian Ice, St. Paul PTO for sponsoring the craft table, and also to Principal Matyas for the face painting. We are grateful for everyone who volunteered at the event, especially Megan Kusterer and Drew Meylan. We could not have done this without you!

– With appreciation from the Garcia and Glasser families



PRAYERS FOR HOSTILE NATIONS



"Dear Heavenly Father,

We praise you for persecuted Christians whose faithful witness in hostile areas inspires us to a greater obedience to Christ.

When our brothers and sisters in Christ are persecuted by family, friends, neighbors, and community leaders, grant them your peace that surpasses all understanding, and guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Rather than showing hatred toward their persecutors, may they have the strength to forgive them and show them the love of Christ.

We pray that you will give them opportunities for fellowship with other local believers, and that they will be encouraged and strengthen in faith. We also pray that they will know they are loved and cared for by the global body of Christ.

In Jesus name, Amen."

The above prayer was taken in its entirety from the Voice of the Martyrs 2026 Global Prayer Guide. This article was written by Sydra Krueger advocating for the persecuted church world-wide.

We are also asking for prayers for the people of Nepal. As we all know that nation is struggling through a terrible, horrific time right now. Personally, we know someone from Nepal, so Dr. Adakhari is in our thoughts and prayers until we know more. He has relatives living in Nepal. We do not know how they are at all. May our Lord be with them. May He guide, provide and protect them at this time.

Submitted by Sydra Krueger advocating for the persecuted church worldwide.

St. Paul - Valley Lutheran High School Homecoming & Tailgate

Friday, September 25

Tailgate Begins 4:30 p.m.
Homecoming Parade - 5:45 p.m.
Football Game Kickoff - 7:00 p.m.

All St. Paul Church & School families are welcome!
We will be providing grilled hot dogs, plates, napkins and cutlery.
Please bring a dish to pass, your own non-alcoholic beverage, lawn chairs or blankets for seating. Look for our school tent with the St. Paul signs around it. It will be set up between the driveways at Valley.

Staying for the game? ***This year extra home stands will be available for seating! The VL student section and band will be seated on the high jump area leaving their regular area open for home seating! Track seating will only be open if overflow is necessary.***

Does your child have an EVENT PASS from a VL camp this summer? Use it for complimentary family admittance to the game! Tickets are $7, available for purchase online at www.vlhs.com/tickets, or with cash at the gate.

We are looking forward to a fun filled evening with our St. Paul Lutheran School Family!

Coming to Friday's VL Homecoming Football Game?

Two Important Updates for This Year's Festivities!

Extra home stands available for seating!

*The VL student section and band will be seated on the high jump area leaving their regular area open for home seating! Track seating will **only** be open if overflow is necessary.*

Multiple gates will be open for various ticketing.

Check the map at www.vlhs.com/HCtailgate for all information!

Acolyte and Reader Schedule for October 2026

Acolytes:	*8:00 a.m.*	*10:30 a.m.*	*Readers:*	*8:00 a.m.*	*10:30 a.m.*
Sun., Oct. 4	Heidi Haas	Flynn Ramseyer		Schott Engelhardt	——
Sun., Oct. 11	Cylis Kusterer	Jack Kusterer (Choir 1/2 Sings)		——	Jeremy Warren
Sun., Oct. 18	Heidi Haas	Brenna King		——	——
Sun., Oct. 25	Mason Daniel (Choir 3 & 4 Sings)	Tye Riley		Ben Helmreich	Howard McMullen

Altar Guild and Ushers in October 2026

Altar Guild:
Lynn Strawn
Dorothy Helmreich
Sally McMullen

8 a.m. Ushers: Group #2
RANDY APPOLD 239-2072
Weston Appold
Greg Behmlander
Daryl Appold
Rylan Appold

10:30 a.m. Ushers: Group #5
WAYNE STIEVE 525-4871
Terry Burkhard
Richard Doan
Dave Maxwell
Eric Zielinski

Head Usher:
Dale Jezowski (327-7613)

Family Elder List

	Family Name:	***Elder:***		***Family Name:***	***Elder:***
A - Ba	Anderson-Bass	Brian Appold	Ki - L	King-Lutz	DJ Bourdow
Bb - Bz	Bebow-Bush	Mike Appold	M - N	MacLeod-Newsham	Scott Weiss
Ca - E	Campbell-Engelhardt	Jeremy Begick	O - Sb	Olson-Sawicki	Jeremy Warren
F - G	Fehn-Gwizdala	Ben Burnison	Sc - T	Schaefer-Trogan	Howard McMullen
H - Kh	Haas-Kernstock	Billy Cmeyla	U - Z	Ulbricht-Zimmer	Eddie Switek

Your elder should be able to answer any church related questions you may have, or they can find the person who can answer your question.

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September 16, 2026
Volume 31—Issue 8

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Church Phone: 989.686.7140
School Phone: 989.684.4450

Pastor:
Rev. Dr. Dennis Matyas
Pastor:
Rev. David Schultz
Principal:
Mrs. Valerie Matyas
Office Manager:
Mrs. Nicole Burnison

Newsletter articles for the next newsletter are due on Wednesday, October 14, 2026. You may submit articles to the email address below or drop them off in the office.
Website: www.stpaulbaycity.org
Email: office@stpaulbaycity.org

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2026
(APPROVED)

Chairman Weston Appold called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Matyas led us in an opening prayer.

Council Members in attendance include Weston Appold, Judy Spielhaupter, Lynn Hendrick, DJ Bourdow, Jason Kusterer, Pastor Schultz, Valerie Matyas, Pastor Matyas, Roger Hendrick, Jean Begick, and Leeta Theiss.

Acknowledgement of Blessings - Council acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the great turnout at school registration, and for the inspiring turnout of youth at the Jr High Youth Gathering in Frankenmuth.

Minutes - A motion passed approving the minutes from the July 9, 2026 Council Meeting as written.

Treasurer's Report - Weston shared the following information from Treasurer, Andy Wiess. We are $5,000 ahead of budget through July. On the school side, we were over budget approximately $10,000 due to a billing error from the cleaners and the purchase of new textbooks. The Ministry Center loan balance is $661,000. YTD we show a deficit of $110,000, which is still under what was budgeted. *A motion passed* to approve using funds from the Building Fund to purchase a new riding lawn mower for approximately $6,000. The old mower will be sold and the funds from that will be put back into the Building Fund to offset a portion of the new mower's cost. The Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit.

Committee Reports

Gifts and Memorials - Our communion ware is 75 years old and is showing its age. The lid for the flagon does not sit properly any longer, and the chalice is in danger of breaking. The Altar Guild is requesting approximately $3,220 to purchase a new flagon, chalice, paton, and ciborium. *A motion passed* to approve the Altar Guild's request. Ideas for the future storage of the retired communion ware will be entertained.

BOARD REPORTS

Board of Elders - DJ Bourdow reported on the following:

1. Membership Changes
    a. Deaths: None
    b. Transfers in: Jason, Tami Sivy and son Jonah will be confirmed this Sunday
    c. Baptisms: Isla Kirby and Corrine Rajeski.
2. They have finished studying the Formula of Concord. They will begin studying the Smalcald Articles.
3. Pastor Matyas was back from Phoenix and gave an update/synopsis of the 2026 LCMS National Convention.
4. After reviewing the calendar for Advent this year, some dates are being adjusted.
5. Pastor Schultz reported that school prep is proceeding well, along with confirmation preparation.

Board of Trustees - Weston shared the following information from Chairman Greg Behmlander:

1. The railing outside the Church is being replaced.
2. The barn demolition is being planned. Work to empty out the barn is proceeding.
3. They received a bid on the light pole work at school but there are still questions to follow up on.
4. They will be looking at the storm windows at the Schultz home.

Board of Education - Judy Spielhaupter shared the following:

1. The BofE has begun reviewing the Parent Handbook. The finished copy will be ready for print for the 2027-2028 school year.
2. As of August 5th, 135 students have paid the enrollment fee for the upcoming school year.
3. School registration took place on August 12th. There was a fantastic turnout, and the process was well received.

4. A total of 30 Wildcat T shirts are being delivered to the homes of the Y5/K and all other new students in grades 1-8. The Board thanks Thrivent for its support.
5. Staff updates:
    a. We had no other candidates for the Part Time 2nd Grade position. Mrs. Dent will teach the 1st/2nd grade split with Kelly Kusterer as the classroom aid. It is the current recommendation of the BofE to split the 1st and 2nd grade classroom for the 2027-2028 school year due to projected enrollment.
    b. The staff retreat will take place August 16-18th at Cran Hill Ranch. The pastors, lead teachers, office manager and principal will attend.
    c. Teachers will spend August 21st in professional development related to the new ELA and math curriculums.
6. Terry Gehrman will handle the brunt of responsibility and delegate responsibility with the Rec Committee to fill the Athletic Director position.
7. The school is switching from FastDirect to Digital Academy.

Board of Business Management - Lynn Hendrick reported on the following:

1. Kelly Schimm is due in November. They are still looking for candidates to replace her.
2. There are 4 action plan items resulting from accreditation that they will be working on that needs to be completed by 2031.
3. Health insurance through the Concordia Plan has been approved for renewal.
4. They are reviewing monthly responsibilities.
5. They will begin analyzing the BofBM handbook and reviewing and updating it a section at a time.
6. They will be researching the need to still have an Audit Committee, with the existence of the Business Management Board.

Board of Youth - Jason Kusterer reported on the following:

1. The Jr High Youth retreat in Frankenmuth was a great time filled with growth, fellowship, and faith. Fundraising will start soon for next year. They will begin meeting again the Sunday after labor day.
2. The SNYG had a quiet summer. The Schultz, Matyas, and Cmeyla families will be mapping out meeting plans for the new school year. There are no big gatherings planned for 2026-2027. The first big thing on their agenda is Roll Call on October 25th. They will also be looking for Thrivent Grants to offset the banquet costs.
3. Sunday School starts the Sunday after Labor Day. Tiffany List is still looking for teachers and helpers this year.
4. 4 students will be confirmed this year. At this point, the midweek grade 5/6 class is a manageable size.
5. They will be distributing scrip gift cards to the various Youth helpers for all their hard work this last year.

Board of Discipleship - Chair Leeta Theiss shared that there have been a lot of visitors this summer and they are sending out a good number of follow up postcards.

Unfinished Business - None

New Business - Constitution Review. We will begin monitoring and reviewing sections of the Constitution and By Laws at each Council meeting. The last time we submitted our Constitution to the Michigan District was in 1998. The goal is to keep a list of changes that need to be addressed so that they can be approved at the May Voters Meeting, and sent to the District to be approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. and Pastor Schultz closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Begick, Secretary

Next Council Meeting - Thursday September 10, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church & School Calendar — October 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 NOVEMBER Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30				**1** [- - Parent Teacher Conferences - -] 11:30 AM Half Day - Early School Dismissal 6:00 PM Board of Education	**2** Office Closed No School	**3**
4 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Celebration & Praise with Communion	**5** 6:30 PM Ladies Aid	**6** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Elders Meeting	**7** 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study	**8** 6:30 PM Church Council	**9**	**10**
11 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Worship with Communion - **Choir Grade Y5/K Sings**	**12** 6:30 p.m. Board of Business Management	**13** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir	**14** Newsletter Articles Due 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study	**15** [Teacher Conferences - No School] Office Closed No School 12:00 PM JOY Group 6:00 PM Women in Mission	**16** Office Closed No School	**17**
18 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Worship with Communion	**19**	**20** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir	**21**	**22** 2:00 PM Blood Drive	**23** School Pictures	**24**
25 Reformation Sunday Roll Call 8:00 AM Worship with Communion - **Choir Grades 3 & 4 Sing** 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Worship with Communion - **Roll Call** 12:00 PM **Roll Call Dinner**	**26**	**27** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir	**28**	**29** 6:00 PM Youth Board Meeting	**30** Reformation Day 11:30 AM Half Day - Early School Dismissal VIP Day Book Fair Open Shopping for Church members & School parents 6:00 PM Trunk or Treat (School)	**31** 6:00 PM *RAIN Date Trunk or Treat (School)
[- School Book Fair -]						