

August 2026

Garden Gleanings

A monthly publication of the Garden Community Church

Mystery Trip

The Women's Ministry planned a full day of surprises for the ladies of the church on July 25. 24 ladies met at the church at 8 a.m. and set off blindly or faithfully following the lead car for a day full of surprise destinations.

The first stop was Sheila's Garden Market in rural Galva. The committee provided cinnamon rolls and coffee to enjoy while Sheila, the owner, told us about her business. Then she showed us her flowers gardens where she grows flowers for area flower shops.



From Sheila's, the caravan headed north to Lindsborg. The first stop in Lindsborg was the Smoky Valley Roller Mills. The group was given a tour of the flour mill that was built in 1898 and restored to operating order in 1981.



Following the mill, we ventured across town to the Birger Sandzén Memorial Art Gallery. After hearing about Sandzén's life and looking at his art pieces we headed to downtown Lindsborg for lunch. Ladies were able to have lunch where they wanted at the several different restaurants in town.



After lunch, the group was divided into two groups. Half went to the Hemslöjd, which has handcrafted Dala Horse signs. We were shown how they are painted. The other half went to Small World Gallery to hear from Jim Richardson a world-traveled National Geographic photographer. Then the groups switched. Following both sessions, there was time to do some shopping and browsing in downtown Lindsborg.



The final stop of the day was White's Foodliner, which is the grocery store in town. The Foodliner sells specialty Swedish foods and they gave us samples of what they sell and ship all over the country.



Thank you to the Women's Ministry for planning a fun day of surprise adventures!

Additional *Mystery Trip* pictures



The Music & Worship Committee once again helped organize our annual Hymn Sing on July 26. The congregation was asked to give song suggestions for the evening and then each worship team helped lead a section of selected songs. The evening finished up with snacks and fellowship in the fellowship hall.



BUSY BAGS

The Busy Bag corner has had a makeover. The intended age groups have been labeled to help parents and newcomers alike, but, as always, feel free to use them in a way that best serves your family during worship. The clipboards hanging up top give older children a chance to begin note-taking and a few sheets to help keep them busy as well. The younger elementary kiddos have both clipboards and activities in their bags. Preschoolers have a variety of quieter toys to choose from, as well as a basket of books.

Is something in the bags becoming a nuisance? Are there items your kids just love? Feedback is appreciated on what your family finds helpful.

~Carla Murphy



Library News

These hot days of Summer are great days for taking a break inside where you have air conditioning and can catch a few moments reading. Or even better, sitting by a mountain river in the shade of a tree with a good book like we did in our Kyrgyzstan days!

Where ever you are, **READ!** Here are a few books recently placed in the Adult Library.

- R** - Relax with a light-hearted fiction: A Journey By Chance, by Sally John. Leaving California, a broken relationship, and job to move to a Midwest small town brings much change, healing and joy.
- E** - Enjoy: A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, by W. Phillip Keller, An older book, but what enjoyment to be reminded again of our loving Good Shepherd who so carefully watches over us, his sheep.
- A** - Analyze: So What's the Difference?, by Fritz Ridenour, Looking at 20 worldviews, faiths, and religious in comparison to Christianity.
- D** - Dig Deeper: Unexpected News: Reading the Bible With Third World Eyes, by Robert McAfee Brown. We read the Bible through our own cultural lenses, but seeing how different cultures view it helps us also get a better understanding of God's Word.

~Denise Goossen

Children's Library Summer Reading Challenge Recap

For the month of July, kids were encouraged and challenged to read more books! The summer reading challenge was a bit different this year, but kids were still excited about participating. Depending on the age of the child, two different challenges were given. Kids 5 years old and younger were challenged to read a total of 30 books. While kids 5 years old through 2nd grade were challenged to read a total of 600 minutes. Incentives are always great motivators, so kids were all able to receive a small prize once they reached the halfway point and then received a larger prize for completing the challenge. There were 11 kids that completed their reading trackers – great job, kids! I hope you enjoyed all the stories you read, found a new favorite book or series, and hopefully you were able to spend time reading together as a family too! If you discovered a new book, author, or series during the challenge that you would like to see added to the children's library, please let me know!

Also, be sure to check out the top of the bookshelves that now display all the new books that have been recently added to the children's library!

~Katie Hanzlicek



We enjoyed another year of the summer reading program and six young people reached the halfway mark, with three completing all fifteen challenges. Way to go! Some challenges brought them outside to read, while others pushed them to read a new genre. One of the challenges was to write a review of a book from the Teen Library so go check out their recommendations posted on the shelves. (Psst, adults can read from the teen library, too!) Great job, teens!

~Carla Murphy

Vonnie's Views

As I was looking through some of my older *Garden Gleanings* articles, I came across this one from August 2020. For a little “look back,” I offer you this slightly edited piece. Six years have passed, and that season is behind us, but the questions raised in this piece are worth revisiting. What gives our lives significance? What will remain when our earthly lives are over? And where do we find hope in the face of death?

Gerhard and I enjoy going out for supper on Friday evenings. During the COVID shutdowns, one of our favorite outings was to drive through Braum’s in Newton and then head across the street into Greenwood Cemetery to find a shady spot to eat. Afterward, we enjoyed walking around the cemetery, reading the gravestones.

The gravestone pictured was one of the more interesting ones we came across. The large obelisk has a title on each of its four sides. Pictured are the sides listing “Education” and “Careers.” The two sides not pictured are “Avocation” and “Family.”

The “Avocation” side indicates that the deceased played for KU in the 1948 Orange Bowl, was a private pilot (even listing his flight hours), and owned two planes, with details about each. The “Family” side lists all of his children, grandchildren, parents, and siblings. Interestingly, a wife is notably absent from the list.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon asks haunting questions about life “under the sun.” If all there is to life is swallowed up by death, then what do our lives even mean? Did this man’s resume on a tombstone make any difference to his current state?



No. He is dead and buried; everything listed on the stone is history. The man died in 2016 at the age of 90. Ten years after his death, his family still remembers him, but in 50 years, few will recall what he looked like or much of anything about him other than what is engraved on the stone; even that will be abstract, not personal.

Solomon makes the surprising statement in Ecclesiastes 7:2, “It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting...” Why is it better to go to a cemetery or to a funeral than to a party? Because, Solomon continues, “...death is the destiny of everyone...the living should take this to heart.” Ecclesiastes 7:4 further elaborates, “The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.”

We all carry a terminal diagnosis, whether or not we acknowledge it. Our mortality has a shattering effect on the meaning of things that seem so important to us right now. Where do we find significance? What gives us dignity? If few will remember us in a very short time, what then is the point?

An excellent little book I was reading at the time was *Remember Death: The Surprising Path to Living Hope* by Matthew McCullough. McCullough observed that people typically deal with the knowledge that we will die in two ways: denial or despair. As an alternative to these options, McCullough unpacked the gospel against the backdrop of death. He writes:

“The gospel offers a liberating, life-giving alternative to denial and despair...Death says you are less important than you’ve ever allowed yourself to believe. The gospel says you are far more loved than you’ve ever imagined. You are not too important to die. But you are important enough that God gave his only begotten Son, so that if you believe in him, you will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).”

A gravestone with a resume is narcissistic, but so is denying death. We must respond to death. Death should shake us up. Death should sober us and deeply move us. Death should, by God’s grace, reorient our entire lives away from triviality and toward eternity.

This is why Solomon said the wise go to the house of mourning. Six years after I first wrote these words, the reminder is still worth taking to heart. Take a moment to read Romans 8. Think realistically about your own death, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, our Living Hope.

September

Prayer Calendar and Memory Verse

Memory Verse: Romans 10:9—That is you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1 Pray parents have wisdom with each child, teaching & training in the way they should go.	2 Pray for Cassie Albin.	3 Pray for Noah Goossen.	4 Pray for Greyson & Lincoln Hanzlicek.	5 Pray for Elise Harms.
6 Pray for Katherine Harms.	7 Pray grandparents help instill godly values and discipline in their grandkids.	8 Pray for Enora, Colton & Daniel Huxman.	9 Pray for Luke & Olivia Janzen.	10 Pray Christian teachers have discernment & insight.	11 Pray for Elisabeth Kitto.	12 Pray for Alexis, Brayden & Callie Klaassen.
13 Pray for Josh & Matt Koehn.	14 Pray for our Sunday School teachers to rightly handle the Word of God.	15 Pray for Karlee, Harper, John & Weston Kohls.	16 Pray for Kaycee Mason.	17 Pray for ears to hear and hearts to understand for each of us.	18 Pray for more young people to be drawn to attend church.	19 Pray for Noble, Valiant & Wisdom Murphy.
20 Pray for Kylee, Brett & Jenna Nelson.	21 Pray for Henley & Daxton Orpin.	22 Pray for Layton & Javan Pyle.	23 Pray for Esther, Cora, Abigail & Peter Quick.	24 Pray for Avery, Alli, Anah & Aubree Schrag.	25 Pray for Adrienne Selzer.	26 Pray for Jaxson Smith.
27 Pray for Daniel, Tito, Filipe & Gabriel Goossen.	28 Pray for Lucas, Levi & Annika Kunkee.	29 Pray for Zephaniah & Selah Hansen.	30 Pray God continues to raise up workers from among us to serve Him.			

August 7, 2026

Good Evening!

Thank you for praying for us and the work of Harvest Radio! We are currently in the US for the summer thanking our supporters and giving updates about the ministry of Harvest Radio. It has been a privilege to share in several Churches already, and we have a busy August coming up.



Please pray for us to communicate well about what the Lord is doing through Harvest Radio, as well as the needs we have.

We have also made many wonderful memories with our families, and enjoyed time spent with them. We had a special week with our kids and spouses, first participating in a crazy paddle race on the Missouri River (guys paddling, girls ground crewing), and then a few days near Branson.



We are also grateful for our staff that keep things going well at Harvest Radio in our absence. We plan to return to Brazil the middle of September.

Thank you for standing with us!

Elwyn & Linda Goossen