

August/September/October 2026

Saxonburg Memorial Church Summer- Fall Newsletter



GREETINGS FROM PASTOR DOUG

Does reading the Bible really make a difference in your life? The answer is a resounding YES! A few years ago, the Institute for Biblical Research did a study on the effects of reading the Bible. Here is what was revealed: Reading scripture at least four days a week is the key to spiritual transformation.

This study looked at the effects of reading the Bible daily verses sporadic reading. Here are the results:

If you read the Bible:

1 day a week – almost no measurable impact

2-3 days a week – some effect, but minimal

4 + days a week – this is where major transformation happens.

When believers consistently engage with the Bible, the changes are undeniable:

228% are more likely to share their faith

407% are more likely to memorize Scripture

59% are less likely to view pornography

30% are less likely to struggle with loneliness, depression, or anxiety



This study confirms that the Bible is the most powerful tool for spiritual growth – but only when it becomes a regular part of your life. Grab your Bible and read it!

Romans 12:2 reminds us, Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In His Grip,

Pastor Doug

pastordoug@saxonburg.org

CHURCH PICNIC

Sunday, September 20

Youth House Grounds

ONE Service at 10am. Picnic to follow.

⇒ **Lunch – pulled pork and fried chicken**

Last name begins with **A-M**, please bring a **SIDE DISH**

Last name begins with **N-Z**, please bring a **DESSERT**.

The church is providing table service, and lemonade and water to drink.

Fun and fellowship for all!

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY



Vacation Bible School “Rainforest Falls” persevered through heat, lack of plumbing, and clogged water fountains. Children had fun, made friends, and learned about the nature of God. Our team of helpers poured out hearts and energy while showing the love of Jesus. I am filled with deep gratitude for all of you helpers!

Dearly beloved Children of God,

It has been a pleasure serving alongside you this year and especially these past few months as we have welcomed about one hundred children into our church! Your support and faithfulness through giving of prayer, time, and talents has blessed many people and helped to plant seeds of faith into the hearts of many young people. The “Be Bold!” Pre-teen/middle school Sunday school has just wrapped up the summer session. Students were seen, heard, and challenged to think deeply and wrestle with faith questions—taking simple Bible story knowledge to a deeper level.

Blessings in Christ,

Carrie Allio, Director of Children & Family Ministries ~ kidsandfamily@saxonburg.org

SUMMER & FALL EVENTS:

Monthly Children’s and Family Celebrations:

- *August: Nature Explorer’s Club=Summer fun! Moraine Regatta (Moraine South Beach @ 10 am, August 1st)
- *August: Blessing of the Backpacks (August 23rd @ 10 am service)
- *September : All church picnic/Sunday School Kick-off (September 20th)
- *October: Kids carnival room during the fall fest (Saturday, Oct. 17th)



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- *November: Night in Bethlehem (Nov. 27th) –NO FLOAT; instead, we are creating an indoor “walk-through Bethlehem/living nativity + warm up center
- *December: Gingerbread House Night (TBD)



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

LITTLE BLESSINGS PRESCHOOL WEEK

The Preschool Pilot Program in June was a positive experience which provided much useful feedback. Nine families allowed us to bless their families with a variety of creative activities, Bible lessons, songs, games, and nutritious food. Currently we are proceeding with opening a preschool. This desire, put on the hearts of several requires additional time and effort on my part and several interested session members. It seems like the Holy Spirit is moving through these hearts to reach into the community by providing for a need for quality Early Childhood Education. I am currently fulfilling online requirements for licensure through the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education while session is considering details on the business end.

All of this work, I believe, has been in line with the word of God and the workings of the Holy Spirit. Jesus compared hearts to soil in Matthew 13. My prayer is that as we continue to broadcast the love of God onto the hearts of many, it grows and develops into fruit. When I think of children, I think of the investment into the future that we cultivate now. Join me in praying that the seed of the word of God and love of Jesus takes root and thrives as we faithfully nurture what we have been entrusted to care for.

I am looking for a few people to team teach the K-2 Sunday school class. “If anyone has wondered, “what would it be like to teach Sunday School”, this is a great opportunity to try it out. There are three short term commitments that could fit into busy schedules. Sessions can be broken into Fall term (Sept.-Nov. '26), Winter term (Dec.-Feb. '26-27), and Spring (March-May '27).

Additionally, we have been invited to reapply for the Angel Tear Grant!!!! I will be working on that for next year's program funding and for the opening of a preschool. This past year, the grant through the Angel Tear Ministry offset costs and increased the budget of the children's and family ministry by \$9,000.

LIVING WATERS YOUTH GROUP

Mingle on Main – End of Summer Outreach

Living Waters is excited to be part of **Mingle on Main!** We'll be there each month bringing fun, food, and fellowship to the community.

 **When:** The **third Thursday** of August

 **Where:** Mingle on Main

What We'll Be Doing:

-  **Dunk Tank** – Come join the fun and make a splash!
-  **Hot Dogs for Sale** – Fresh, tasty, and ready off the grill
-  **Water for Sale** – Stay cool during the summer heat

Youth Group will continue with the summer schedule, meeting on the first and second Fridays of each month from 6:00–8:00 p.m. On the third Thursday of each month, we will meet at Mingle on Main from 5:00–8:00 p.m. There will be no Youth Group meeting on the last Friday of the month. We would greatly appreciate your help if you are interested in volunteering!

BIBLE STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Tuesday Bible Study

Women's Bible Study will start on Tuesday, September 15th in the Bride's room at 7pm. We are continuing with the David C Cook Bible In Life series. We will also meet on the following dates:

September 22nd and 29th
October 6th, 20th, and 27th.

Thursday Care & Share Study

Care & Share bible Study will resume in the Bride's Room on September 24. We will continue to study Charles Stanley's book *Relying on the Holy Spirit: Discovering Who He Is and How He Works*.

Women Dine Out

"WDO" continues to meet the **last Monday of the month**. We are currently meeting at the Fieldhouse Restaurant @ 6pm. Our next meetings are August 31st, September 28th, October 26th.

Sewing Group

The Sewing Ministry meets Mondays from 1-4 pm. We prepare items for our annual fall festival, special quilts for baptism of children, and various other projects throughout the year. Please call the church office you are interested in learning more about the sewing group.

MEN'S MINISTRY

Wednesday Breakfast

Each **Wednesday at 9 am** a group of guys meet for food and fellowship at Kelley's restaurant.

FAMILY MINISTRY

Family Bible Study - August 23rd, September 20th, October 18th

Usually on **Third Sundays at 5 pm** we meet for a brief study, followed by dinner and a relaxed hang out time. Tons of kids keep each other occupied while the adults have their own fun! Usually at the Byerlys' house, but rotates around. Everyone welcome - talk with Dan or Melissa to find out more!

OTHER EVENTS IN CHURCH LIFE

RECENT PASSINGS:

Janice Tocco went to be with our Lord on April 30th.

Pat Herman went to be with our Lord on July 29th.

May God grant them eternal rest.

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Bob Young is RETIRING!

After 14 year of faithful service, we say goodbye to our Financial Director with heartfelt gratitude.

While we will certainly miss your presence, we are thankful for the years you have shared with us!

BACKPACK PROGRAM

As many of you know, this ministry supports children in the Knoch School District by providing food, clothing, and essential items throughout the year. Unfortunately, donations in 2026 have been significantly lower than expected in comparison to 2025. We are now facing a short fall that threatens our ability to continue at our current level. As of June 2026, we have spent twice as much on items as of June 2025. The cost of food has doubled since last year.

Even with the help of the Angel Tier Grant, we do not have sufficient funds to maintain our commitment to providing healthier food options, backpacks, shoes, and coats for the children of the families who rely on assistance.

We are asking for your immediate help please. You can support this mission in two ways:

-Monetary donations for deacons to purchase food in bulk, please have cash or check in envelope and labeled for "BACKPACK".

Food donation items can be placed on the table in the narthex. We will be providing a list included in the bulletin two times per month. It will include a list of 4-5 foods in a full easy to read page with photos. You can carry it to the store and buy a few items to help the children.

All donated food items can be placed on the table in the narthex.

This program makes a real difference in the lives of local children, and with your support, we can continue care for them in a meaningful faithful way.

Thank you for your continued support, generosity and compassion.

God Bless,

Judy Farney, Backpack Program Director



Apple Dumping & Apple Butter Help



It's almost that time of year for our dumpling and apple butter making, and we could use your helping hands! Join us as we peel, stir, roll, and laugh our way through making our delicious apple dumplings and apple butter. Whether you can help for an hour or the whole day, your time and talents are greatly appreciated. Come help make one of our favorite church traditions a success! Please be on the look out for important dates this September.



October 17th

8-2 pm

Our annual Fall Festival is fast approaching! We are asking for everyone's help to make this another successful year. We need handcrafted items, baked goods, gift baskets, canned goods, gently used items, and most of all, your presence. Invite friends, neighbors, and family. There is something for EVERYONE! The Fall Festival is an event that gives every church member a chance to participate in a short term event. We would love for you to be part of this outreach, so please come join us! Keep a look out in the bulletin for ways to HELP!

MUSIC MINISTRY

* Thursday Nights are Music Nights! * **Choir at 7:00 pm, starting Sep 4** * **Band at 8:00 pm** *

JOIN THE CHOIR - Begin September 3

SMPC's Sanctuary Choir sings September through early June. We meet on Thursdays at 7:00 pm, beginning September 3. The choir sings in the 10:00 service at least two Sundays per month. Join us to help lead our congregation to praise the Lord in song!

POP-UP CHOIR - Sunday, September 13 at 9:30 am

On Sunday, September 13, EVERYONE is invited to join the choir. We'll meet at 9:30 am, rehearse a not-too-difficult piece for 20 minutes, and sing it at the 10:00 service! That's the whole deal. Join in.

SENIOR LIVING HYMN SINGS – 1st Thursdays at 6:30 pm

The first Thursday of most months, the choir gives up our rehearsal time to go and encourage our neighbors living in local senior living facilities. Anyone can join for these! No prior rehearsal is required. The important thing is sharing yourself to shine the light of Jesus' love. Save these dates!

August 6: Concordia Haven 2

October 1: Location TBA

No September Hymn Sing due to the startup of choir rehearsal for the season!

CHILDREN'S CHOIR – Grades 6 and Under

The next children's choir session will be for the Christmas Cantata. Check the details below.

Advent Session (Cantata): Rehearsals Sundays Nov 8 – Dec 6 from 1:00-1:45 pm

Dress Rehearsal Thu, Dec 10. Sing in Cantata Dec 12 & 13.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA CHOIR – Rehearsals begin Sun, Oct 11 at 2:00 pm

We'll meet Sundays at 2 until performances on Dec 12 & 13. Due to the size of our cantata choir, rehearsals are held downstairs in fellowship hall. Please contact Dan if you'd like to sing. Tell and invite friends – *New singers are always welcome! 6th grade and up.*

**** SAVE THE DATES—CHRISTMAS CANTATA ****

Saturday, December 12 at 7:00 pm

Sunday, December 13 at 4:00 pm

IN THE LIGHT WORSHIP BAND

The band meets Thursdays, right after choir at 8:00 pm. We're always open to new musicians joining us - singers and players alike! We have fun making music, studying God's Word, and praying together. Feel free to crash rehearsal on Thursday nights!

CONCERT SERIES 2026-2027 SEASON

Due to a big increase in the number of musical acts performing during and around the Saxonburg Artisan Market weekend this September, we are waiting until October to begin the series this year. Stay tuned for the season schedule to be announced soon!

MUSIC MINISTRY

PRAYER, PROCLAMATION, and PRAISE

Music that Worships a Holy God in a Wholly Biblical Way

What is worship music? “Praise” is a word that comes to mind. In today’s American evangelical Church culture, this word is often associated almost exclusively with music, and thereby the function of the music of worship is likewise associated nearly exclusively with this word – praise. And the idea is good; we certainly ought to praise the Lord in song! My goodness, the Psalms alone are replete with exhortations for us to do just that. But is this good thing – to praise our great God – the singular function of our music in worship? I think there is more...

What are the Psalms? They are the Biblical collection of music for worship in the early church. They are songs that were sung as part of worship in the temple, in synagogues, and in the early Christian Church. So it is right that we look to them both as Holy and inspired Scripture, and also as models for songs and hymns that we bring to sing in worship alongside the Psalms (Eph 5:18-20, Col 3:16-17).

- 1 Hear me, Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
 - 2 Guard my life, for I am devoted to you;
You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you.
 - 3 have mercy on me, Lord,
for I call to you all day long.
 - 4 Bring joy to your servant,
for to you, O Lord,
I lift up my soul.
- ~Psalm 86:1-4

This Psalm is a prayer. It is even given a special title in Scripture to show that it is, “A prayer of David.” We can come to the Lord in prayer, not only with our words, but with our music as well. As we sing “Lord I need you, oh I need you. Every hour I need you. My one defense, my righteousness, O God how I need you,” and “Spirit of God, descend upon my heart, wean it from earth – through all its pulses move. Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art, and make me love Thee as I ought to love,” may these words be a prayer from within our hearts to God on high!

Sometimes we pray for deliverance, sometimes for strength, other times for faith, and still other times we come earnestly to plead Christ’s intercession on our behalf, because we cannot stand before God without Him. Whatever our circumstance, we should be always willing to take it to the Lord in prayer, even in our songs.

To be clear, words matter. In worship of God, engagement of the mind matters as much as emotion (Mark 12:30, Rom 10:12). Yet God gave us music to touch a part of our human experience where words alone cannot venture. To God alone be the glory!

In the coming weeks and months, as we come into His presence with singing each Sunday, consider what might be the purpose of the music we are singing together. Is it to praise God? Is it to proclaim the Word of the Lord? Or is it, perhaps, to pray together? Allow that determination to affect the mindset you bring to your singing as we worship our great God together in Spirit and in truth. May our songs rise to Him as a pleasant offering before His throne on high.

In service to Christ and His Church,

Dan Byerly, Director of Music Ministry ~ music@saxonburg.org

ARK CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE!

The most recent ARK Campaign is currently underway, and your contributions are being received on a regular basis through your designated tithes & offerings. The balance in the ARK Fund at the end of last calendar year was \$5,000. Through July 12, 2026, the balance has risen to \$20,000.

Your ongoing support of this important campaign is greatly appreciated.

Ark Capital Campaign Continues

The capital campaign to replace our main building's boiler, air conditioning and windows (among other things) is continuing. For those who have already given to this campaign, we are so thankful for your generosity! We are hoping to begin some of the work on the building's systems during the summer months due to the urgency.

Coming this fall will be the official naming of the campaign as well as finalized details of the scope and fundraising goals.

There are three ways you can give: 1. You can designate an amount on the ARK line of your giving envelope. 2. You can write "ARK" on the memo line of your offering check. 3. If giving online, select "Building Fund" as your designation.

Thank you for your partnership in this important work!

Jon Haverstick and Dennis Hinderliter, ARK Campaign Co-Chairs



OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Saxonburg's Mingle on Main

Every third Thursday May through September! 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Organized by the Saxonburg Area Business Association (SABA).
August 20th and September 17th



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

MAIN STREET, SAXONBURG

The Saxonburg Artisan Market is a community event where local artisans, makers, and performing artists highlight and share their unique talents with visitors to Saxonburg, PA. Stop by the church fellowship hall to view the art show, and to grab some of our famous APPLE DUMPLINGS!

For the latest updates, check: www.saxonburgbusiness.org/artisanmarket

MISSIONS

VETERANS' DINNER

This year Missions will be hosting a **Veteran's Dinner**, **Monday, Nov. 2 at 6 pm** in the Fellowship Hall to honor those who have served or are serving our country. Look for more information on our website www.saxonburg.org or in the church bulletin. Reservations are needed by Oct. 19th.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We can't believe it is time to talk about Operation Christmas Child already, but it is...

We will begin our annual international project, Operation Christmas Child, We have an insert in this newsletter with suggestions on what to purchase for your box.

If you are not a shopper, there is another way for you to participate. You can build your own Shoebox online at:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline>

Look for more information in the September and October bulletins.





Boy Shoebox Gift Suggestions

A gift-filled shoebox can be the first present a child ever receives, so it is important to uniquely pack each gift and make it **FUN**, **FULL**, and **PERSONALIZED**—praying for the child and adding a photo and personal note.

A “WOW” ITEM

- Small backpack
- Soccer ball and pump
- Stuffed animal
- Hobby kit
- Large toy truck or car
- Other large toy



PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toothbrush
- Washcloth
- Comb and brush
- Nail clipper and file
- Water bottle
- Flashlight



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- Pencils, sharpener, and erasers
- Pencil container
- Pens
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Notebooks
- Index cards
- Calculator
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Glue stick
- Small adhesive tape
- Drawstring bag



CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

- Flip-flops or shoes
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Wristwatch
- Clothing and undergarments
- Winter cap, scarf, and mittens



GAMES & ACTIVITIES

- Puzzles
- Coloring books or pads
- Dry watercolor set
- Binoculars and compass
- Musical instruments
- Chalkboard and chalk
- Jump rope
- Stickers
- Games



TOYS

- Small ball
- Building blocks or LEGO® sets
- Slinky® or yo-yo
- Toy cars
- Plastic animals
- Magnets
- Interactive toys
- Other small toys and figures



DO NOT INCLUDE

- Soap
- Food, candy, or gum
- Toothpaste
- Used or damaged items
- Scary or war-related items
- Wearable traditional camouflage
- Seeds or organic matter
- Liquids
- Medication
- Money
- Breakable items
- Matches, fire starters, or aerosols
- Knives, saws, or razor blades

Wondering if an item will fit in an Operation Christmas Child preprinted shoebox?

Cardboard dimensions: 12 x 7 x 4.38 inches

Plastic dimensions: 13 x 7.5 x 4.7 inches

For more shoebox packing suggestions, the latest resources, and Follow Your Box labels, visit samaritanspurse.org/occ

VIEW SOLICITATION DISCLOSURE INFORMATION FOR SAMARITAN'S PURSE ONLINE AT SAMARITANSPURSE.ORG/DISCLOSURE.



Girl Shoebox Gift Suggestions

A gift-filled shoebox can be the first present a child ever receives, so it is important to uniquely pack each gift and make it **FUN, FULL, and PERSONALIZED**—praying for the child and adding a photo and personal note.

A “WOW” ITEM

- Small backpack or purse
- Doll
- Soccer ball and pump
- Stuffed animal
- Jewelry making or hobby kit
- Large toy



PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toothbrush
- Washcloth
- Comb and brush
- Nail clipper and file
- Water bottle
- Flashlight



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- Pencils, sharpener, and erasers
- Pencil container
- Pens
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Notebooks
- Index cards
- Calculator
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Glue stick
- Small adhesive tape
- Drawstring bag



CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

- Flip-flops or shoes
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Wristwatch
- Costume jewelry
- Hair accessories
- Clothing and undergarments
- Winter cap, scarf, and mittens



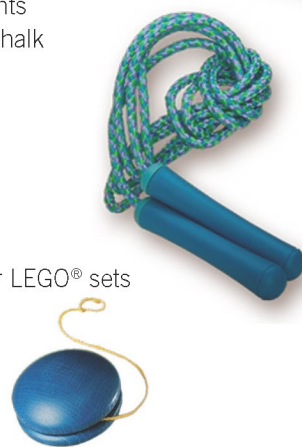
GAMES & ACTIVITIES

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- Binoculars and compass
- Musical instruments
- Chalkboard and chalk
- Jump rope
- Stickers
- Games



TOYS

- Small ball
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SAXONBURG MEMORIAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

***“To Shine the Light of Jesus Christ; to Discover, Experience, and
Share His Love with our Community and World.”***

Worship Times: 8:00 AM Traditional — 10:00 AM Blended / Contemporary

www.saxonburg.org
 [@SaxonburgMPC](https://www.facebook.com/SaxonburgMPC) 

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Sign up to receive our monthly E-mail Newsletter!

Just go to www.saxonburg.org and fill out the form at the bottom of the page.