

**(Continued from page 1)** The bus took me to Knoxville for the Military Entrance Processing Station where I had been a few months back setting my then future up for the next two years which would become four. I spent the night in Knoxville, arose, caught the bus to the airport and was on a flight from Knoxville to Memphis to El Paso, Texas. It was there where I met many young boys like me who had raised their right hands and joined the Army. We were at Fort Bliss, Texas in El Paso for that glorious unforgettable time in life called “Basic Training.” Out in the Texas town of El Paso I met a Drill Sargent. He was not a beauty and he was not at Rosa’s Cantina” (if you know the song).

We all have moments in our lives that are special and dear to us. We all have people in our lives that have been and are special and dear to us. In this time of Covid-19 may we draw closer to those special and dear to us. May we draw closer to our special and dear friends in Christ’s Church. Yet, having said that it is more difficult to draw closer from a distance.

Zoom Bible Studies are not the same as being present with each other and the same goes for Facebook Worship. It is not the same but it is all we have at present. The years that I was far away from my parents, believe me, we did keep in touch and then it was the expensive long-distance phone call. Had I lived 100 years ago it would have been the letter. One thing for which to be thankful are the technological advances that allow us to inter-act even if only through electronic means.

A good thing about Christianity is that it teaches us to love everyone because everyone is created in God’s image, yet to love everyone is impossible, only God can do that. Perhaps it is better to love those who come into our orbit of associations. This may be difficult at times. Nevertheless, God’s presence, the Holy Spirit, is continually with us uniting us to Christ and each other in the bond of peace and love. May we not think of it as a closed fellowship but one open to others as God is with us.

Keep hanging on to our bonds of friendship and love. Although these bonds may seem ruptured due to social distancing, do know that our connection with God is never ruptured. The Holy Spirit keeps us in close contact with God and yes, each other. There will come a day when we will physically gather together to worship God together in the beautiful sanctuary that God has gifted us with. If you wish for prayer, call me or call a sister or brother in Christ’s Church. We have been called to live out our faith in this community of Christ’s Church we call First United Methodist Church of Galax. I would add Virginia but I do not think there is another Galax in the world. We are unique!

Pastor Mark B. McFadden

## MEMORIALS/HONORARIUMS

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## AUGUST CALENDAR

### AUGUST ALTAR GUILD WOMEN:

Rebecca Cardwell and Babette Nuckolls

## NATIONS FOR WHICH TO PRAY:

August 1—Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe  
August 8— Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea  
August 15—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger  
August 22—Liberia, Sierra Leone

### Sunday, Aug 2, (Ordinary 18, Proper 13) (Holy Communion)

Scripture: Genesis 32:22-31

Focus: Struggling with God

### Sunday, Aug 9 (Ordinary 19, Proper 14)

Scripture: Genesis 37:1-4, 21-28; 45:1-15

Focus: Breaking the cycle of violence and revenge

### Sunday, Aug 16 (Ordinary 20, Proper 15)

Scripture: Matthew 15:1-20

Focus: Purity

### Sunday, Aug 23 (Ordinary 21, Proper 16)

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Focus: Discerning and distinguishing spiritual things

### Sunday, August 30 (Ordinary 22, Proper 17)

Scripture: Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:24

Focus: Following Christ

### Sunday, September 6 (Ordinary 23, Proper 18) (Holy Communion)

Scripture: Romans 13:8-14

Focus: Putting on Christ

## PRAYER LIST:

**NEW ADDITIONS: Alice Anderson; David Wade; Buster Hoops (Mark's uncle in hospice care; Alice Anderson; Susie Blevins, Glenna's mother, under hospice care.**

Maggie Amburn	Susie Floyd	Trish Moore
Audene Bogert	Brenda Gravely	Jane Naylor
Clare Boyer	Ronnie Gravely	Bud Nelson (Cancer)
Skip Boyer	Keith Helton	James Rollins
Tracy Brannock	Angie Hill	Jo Rudy
Gardner Brannon	Tommy&Rhonda Jones	Barbara Sawyers
Christine Briscoe	Keri Grimes Keith	Sadie Schaeffer
Max Brown	Don Knox	Rexene Spraker
Steve Burcham	Penny Kyle	Tim Spraker
Ruth Ann Cox	Rubie Larrowe	Sandy Ward
James Duncan	Pam Leadbetter	Edith Wilson



August 2020

*"I am the vine...you are the branches"*

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**INVITING—FORMING—SERVING**

## PASTORAL PONDERINGS

Welcome to August and as far as I know there are no major holidays in August. It is the time in which this region returns to school, and that indeed will be on a different ordering than in times past. I am already having withdrawal with the thought of no late summer and autumn football at all levels from High School to College to Professional.

I did not think the Covid-19 shutdown would last as long as it has, and now it even looks to last longer. I am running out of Netflix and Hulu shows to watch and binge watch. Looking on my telephone on Sunday mornings for broadcast is not the same as looking at “people in the pews.” And what about sit-down meals at restaurants? This year since March has certainly brought more than its fair share of unusual times. Is it time to wax nostalgic?

There is one day I always remember in August. It is August 2 and specifically, August 2, 1983. I remember a quick bite at McDonalds around noon on that hot Sunny August day. My mom and dad, younger brother, and sister were with me. Up to that time I had always been with my family, apart from Scout camp weeks, a few church camp weeks, and two weeks at my cousin in Atlanta. This time was different, very different. I was excited yet fearful because from that day on, my course in life was of my own choosing and it was about to unfold.

I remember hugging my brother, sister, and my mom who was crying. I was trying not to cry and doing a good job of it. I shook my dad's hand and my heart sunk. I hugged him and he hugged me. My heart was heavy but I held back the tears. I had my bus ticket and they drove me the short distance to the bus stop. I hopped on that Greyhound Bus and waited for it to depart. I could see my family members out the window in front of the family car and they waved and I waved back. As the bus departed they sang, “Thank God and Greyhound, he's gone.” Well that last part I made up. **(Continued on page 2.)**