

Newsletter Article for September 2025

Dear Friends in Christ:

I am delighted that the Summer is almost officially over. July, which I call the month of Misery, lived up to my name for it. It was wicked hot. Thankfully we got quite a bit of rain. Our sister in Christ, Charlotte Staehle, passed away early in the month and we had her funeral mid month. It was poorly attended by our members. She had just made it to be 100 years old earlier this year, but had been in cognitive decline for a decade, and ended up at Grandell Nursing Home in Long Beach the last 5 years.

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis. Requiescant in pace. Amen.

Early in August our cleaning crew (mostly Janet, Linda D. and Pat) took on the Dieterich Annex stage and did a great job of clearing out much of the stuff left behind when the preschool closed. They also attempted to reorganize the stuff the three 12-step programs store up there. Sisyphus would be so proud! We owe them a debt of gratitude.

August turned into such a nice month that I am considering changing the name of the month back from Tragedy to something less negative. Perhaps next year I will call July Tribulation and August Testing.

We had weak attendance for our Summer worship services due mostly to people traveling, but the classical sin of *acedia* is strong with us. Priorities make or break a congregation. Giving remained good because of heroic giving by some of our members.

I enjoyed having worship in the Dieterich Annex for the months of Misery and Tragedy, but not everyone did. The temperatures for last two Sundays in August were so nice that we moved back to the sanctuary. It does save us having to reset the space every week as our twelve step programs, Lifeline Screening, and VBS used the space.

We had Vacation Bible School August 18-22. It was an easy week as all of the kids were well-behaved and even the staff and helpers were well-behaved. Our numbers continue to go down, but we still had around twenty kids. Continue to pray for our members and friends suffering from falls, accidents, strokes, and surgery.

As we look into September, we will have Rally Day with the installation of Sunday School teachers and the blessing of the backpacks on September 7. Sunday School will start on September 7. There will be a sumptuous feast on the green. If no one signs up we will have the potato chips and hot dogs that were left over from VBS, but it is still early.

Council meets again on September 9 at 7pm.

In worship, we will move back to Ian's through-written setting of the liturgy although we have been using his Great Thanksgiving since August 3. Catechism will start on September 11 at 7pm. Friday Night Bible Study will start up again on September 5 at 6pm.

Yours in Christ,

John Shepherd McKenzie