



Westover Reflections - August 2026



“And the people of Israel also wept again and said, ‘Oh we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.’”

-Number 11:4b-6

“...and looking up to heaven, He said the blessing, broke the loaves and the two fish, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied...”

-Matthew 14:19b-20a

As I am writing this missive-in mid-July-for the August newsletter, I am thinking of the things in my life that I have sought to do and, now, want to do. I spent 7 total years between undergraduate and graduate school preparing for this work of ministry that I have surely loved-even on days when I was left shaking my head and losing sleep. The churches, and the people, I have been honored to serve have by and large been wonderful. Of course, I am not suggesting by any stretch of the imagination that one pleases everyone all the time. **And that is okay!** Because there are times when even ***“an old dog learns a thing or two”*** and we move forward, knowing that some things take time. Besides that, I have always viewed myself as a ***“servant to the servants of God.”***

You have perhaps heard me say that I am a ***“wanna-be-Mandolin player,”*** as well as ***“wanna-be guitar player.”*** But I have had fits and starts at it. My wife says that I am better than I think I am, but I am not anywhere near what I want to be. In part because I know that it takes over **1200 hours** of practice before one can be a ***true musician***, which is to say that one cannot have bursts of activity frequently interrupted by periods of inactivity. ***Some things take time.***

We all know this! Whether it is transforming oneself into living a healthy lifestyle, building a home and a family, repairing a highway (When will we ever be done with the near-by roadwork?), or being the Church-none of these things happen overnight. ***Some things take time.***

Of course, we know that some things, like mastering a musical instrument, can cause us to be tempted to abandon it. We begin the process with a ***view of the end in mind***-the attainment of better health, completion of a course of study, mastering a dream. But after beginning the journey, we sometimes do not continue. There is the realization of the effort required-the time, the energy, the cost. So, we revert to our old way of doing things...sometimes minus the dream. ***Some things take time.***

The Israelites, trekking through the desert, rejoiced at their freedoms from slavery, at their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, and at the food God provided seemingly out of nowhere. But after a while, they grew disillusioned of their goals and tired of their diet. They remembered the abundant food from their days of slavery, **and they complained!** They had forgotten that ***some things take time.***

Why, even Moses complained. He could handle the heat, the sweat, and the manna, but he was having a tough time with nagging complaints. He told God that he wanted out of the deal because he simply couldn't meet all the expectations. He forgot, for a moment, that ***some things take time.***

The longest projects, the best of our dreams yet unfulfilled, will always require time. And some are the times when we must concentrate on each incremental step that will move our goals forward. To be sure, it not always easy, even in the best of situations.

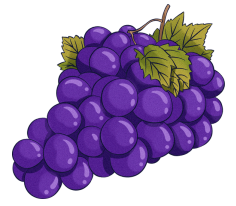
But we are the Church. We have seen what can be done when a small group of people can dream big things, knowing that some things take time. Stay encouraged in all things, my friends.

***Still in His Peace,
William***



First Fruits of Worship!

by Bruce Smith, Director of Music Ministries



Hymn Story: “His Eye Is On The Sparrow”

“I sing because I’m happy. I sing because I’m free.”

One of the most inspirational hymns in our Christian faith is the amazing “His Eye Is On The Sparrow”. In this hymn we are reminded of just how much God loves and cares for us. It encourages us to sing with happiness, sing with the joy of the freedom we have in Christ.

The hymn was birthed in the spring of 1905 by Civilla Martin, wife of Walter Martin, an evangelist living in Elmira, New York. While living there in Elmira, the Martins became close friends with a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for nearly two decades, and her husband was confined to a wheelchair. Despite their intense suffering and severe limitations, they possessed a remarkable and unwavering joy and hopefulness.

When Civilla asked how they maintained such a positive spirit in their circumstance, the bedridden Mrs. Doolittle replied, “How can I be discouraged when my Father watches the sparrows, and I know He loves and cares for me?” Moved by her profound faith, Civilla used these words to open this amazing poem of faith.

***“Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home”***

She answered these questions right away with the next lines describing just what Jesus provides to us...

***“When Jesus is my portion, my constant friend is He
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.”***

She based her poem on the scripture from Matthew...

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care.^[a] ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:29-31

After writing the poem, Civilla mailed the lyrics to a well-known gospel composer, Charles H. Gabriel. Gabriel quickly set the words to music. The hymn made its international debut shortly after in England at a massive evangelistic event known as the Torrey-Alexander revival. Over the decades, "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" has become one of the most beloved and recorded gospel hymns of all time. While it has been performed by many—including Mahalia Jackson, Whitney Houston, and Lauryn Hill, Over the decades, "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" has become one of the most beloved and recorded gospel hymns of all time. While it has been performed by many—including Mahalia Jackson, Whitney Houston, and Lauryn Hill—the song is perhaps most deeply associated with the singer and actress Ethel Waters. Waters performed it frequently and even titled her 1950 autobiography, *His Eye Is on the Sparrow*, after the song.

At times when we feel we are alone and uncared for, when Jesus seems far away, we just need to sing the song of joy that Civilla Martin penned declaring those inspirational words...

“For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches over me.”



VBS Thank you!

Wow, “thank you” does not seem sufficient for the small, but dedicated group that put **so many hours** into making VBS such a great time for the children! Fifteen kiddos, aged 3 to 13, enjoyed Bible stories, food, crafts, music, games and rocket science while learning about God’s love for us. Whether you made tshirts or banners, baked cookies, prayed for us, decorated, taught Bible lessons or crafts, cooked, took pictures, helped launch a rocket, led music, set up, cleaned up or any other task, please know that ***you are appreciated!*** What a blessing to be able to share God’s love with these energetic young ones! ***Thank you for letting your light shine and making a difference in the world!***



Dinner & game night

Game night is back on August 21st! Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a spaghetti dinner at 6:30, followed by Bingo and any games you’d like to share.



Mark your calendars:

Saturday, August 1 **UMM and UWF breakfast, followed by UMM workday** 9:00 AM
 Saturday, Aug 1 **Craft Circle** 10:00 AM
 Saturday, Aug 1 **Lunch** (bring your own) 12:00 PM
 Saturday, Aug 1 **UWF Book Study** 12:30 PM
 Sunday, Aug 2 **Communion** & bring items for the blessing box
 Tuesday, Aug 18 **Trustees Meeting** 5:00 PM
 Friday, Aug 21 **Dinner & game night** 6:30 PM

United Women of Faith & United Methodist Men

The **UMM workday** was rained out last week, and has been rescheduled for August 1st. Prior to the workday, here will be a **combined breakfast for UMM and UWF** at 9:00 AM. ***Breakfast will be provided and everyone is welcome!***



Craft circle is back after taking a break for July 4th and VBS. We’ll meet in the Wesley Hall on Saturday, August 1 at 10:00 AM. Have you ever tried diamond art? If so, come help show everyone how fun this can be! If not, come and learn while we make beautiful bookmarks. Even if you don’t want to craft, ***you are welcome*** to join us for fellowship!

Bring your **lunch** and we’ll eat together about noon.



United Women of Faith will continue their **book study** about 12:30. We’re in chapter 3, “Zelophehad’s Daughters, the Unnoticed Ones.” If you need a book, please contact Clara Worsley.

Please come join us for a morning of some of the best fellowship around.

Happy BIRTHDAY

- 1 Mary-Margaret Brooks Rice
- 2 Joy Driver
- 3 Cameron Harrison Preston

- 4 Alan Daniels
- 10 Billy Carter
- 10 Justin Gibson
- 10 Sarah Gibson

- 18 Phil Epley
- 18 Jackie Whitley
- 27 Bruce Danskin

- 28 Rebecca Daniels
- 29 Jeremy Wade Carter

