

River News

September 2023



From The Pastor's Pen

~ Pastor Sarah Flack

Dear River Community Church family and friends,

Something I have come to appreciate the more I study the Gospels is how Jesus prepared those He loved for the time He would leave them and return to His Father God in Heaven. He told them what would come to pass: that He would be killed, and be raised the third day (Matthew 16:21). He told them that He would be going away to prepare a place for them (John 14:2). He told them that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to teach them and remind them of Jesus's words (John 14:26). Day after day, Jesus told them what to expect. As each of these things that Jesus said would happen, happened, it became a witness to the fact that Jesus is a truth-teller and that He can be counted on. This was especially important as they faced trials.

In the Old Testament we read how God did the same sort of thing. He would remind His people of how He had cared for them in the past, and He would teach them how He would continue to care for them. Psalm 78 helps us see this in action. Here are the opening lines of that psalm:

1 My people, hear my instruction; listen to the words from my mouth. 2 I will declare wise sayings; I will speak mysteries from the past— 3 things we have heard and known and that our fathers have passed down to us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, but will tell a future generation the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, His might, and the wondrous works He has performed. 5 He established a testimony in Jacob and set up a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children 6 so that a future generation—children yet to be born—might know. They were to rise and tell their children 7 so that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God's works, but keep His commands.

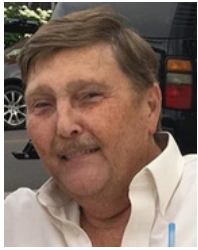
As events unfold overseas, our hearts hurt for Israel. It's times like these that testimonies from Israel's history become even more important because they are reminders of His power and presence in the face of terrible trials. God has also, through His prophets, planted words of comfort for such a time as this. Listen, for example, to the words of Isaiah 41:

8 But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham, My friend— 9 I brought you from the ends of the earth and called you from its farthest corners. I said to you: You are My servant; I have chosen you; I haven't rejected you. 10 Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand.

God can be trusted. His words are true, and He will do what He says. River Church, let's pray for those who are hurting, both here and around the world. And let's share the truth of who God is, what He has done, and what He continues to do so that hope can be found in the darkness.

Yours because of Jesus,

Pastor Sarah



Elder Ministry ~ Dean Wilkie

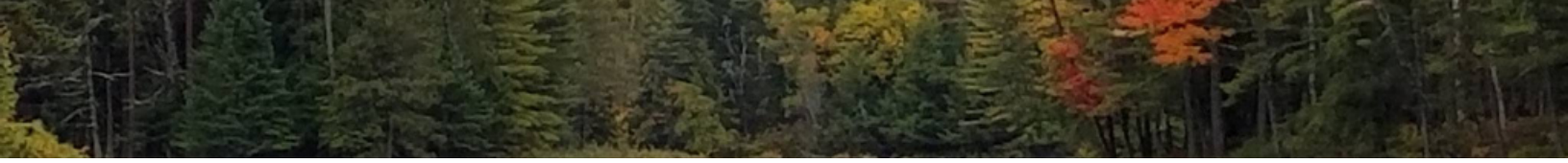
Greetings church of God, the beloved of God, called to be saints, who in every place call upon the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. Grace and peace upon you all.

It's September and our summer is gone. The structure and regiment of back to school is in session and routine has set upon us. A consistent daily discipline comes back to our life after a usual freedom of summer.

That is one of the very reasons that I actually enjoy autumn. Then there's cooler temperatures, cleaner more breathable air, the sky is a more vibrant blue, and the color of God's paint brush comes to the trees; it's just such an enjoyment to the eye. But it always brings back memories for me of the fall harvest. That fulfillment of the promise of the planted spring seed. I've shared many times before, or you've probably heard me reminisce; growing up, there were some lean times. As a young person and teenager, I'd go down cellar and sit in mom's canning cellar looking at all the food she had diligently preserved. Most ALL the vegetables from the garden, hundreds of quarts of tomatoes, some whole, others thickened and seasoned for sauce. Or the little potatoes ("marbles") that wouldn't keep well, were canned for future soups or stews. The onions were hanging from nails in the rafters, potatoes in the bin on one side and squash n cabbage on the other, often they had purchased apples that were sitting in bushel baskets to one side. Half of one the shelves was canned beef or chicken, and the top shelf was full of jams/jellies, Harvard beets, and bread n butter pickles (an annual ritual we all had a hand in making). I would sit there aware times were rough and the dollars were stretched mighty thin - but I don't remember ever feeling that we went without anything! I remember any time I went down cellar to get a jar of something for my mother, I would look at that stockpile of food and think, well at least we won't go hungry. Now there was a childhood naivety there, not fully realizing the multitude of other expenses that would have to be paid to keep us secure in our humble abode. But at least I knew that I wasn't going to be like some little child in Ethiopia, wondering where my next meal was coming from!

Well now you've had a large dose of my personal reflection let me get to the point of the newsletter. As good as that canning cellar was, as comforting and reassuring as a visible manifestation of the fulfillment of the promise of a planted seed and the harvest to come; we have a promise in Christ Jesus that is "better than" all of my fond memories and reminiscence.

In the book of Hebrews scripture is full of all the 'better than' promises and fulfillments that we have in Christ Jesus. There is the superiority and supremacy and sufficiency of Christ; if the blood of bulls/goats was atonement to purify the flesh yearly, Jesus, is the one n done final blood sacrifice to have to be made for sin, making him a 'better than' sacrifice and better redemption. Jesus is a better priesthood and mediator for us than could be obtained before and he brought with him a 'better than' covenant replete with better promises with full and final forgiveness.



All through the book of Hebrews, we can read of the places where we find that Jesus, son of God, our Savior was: so much 'better than' the angels (who were mere messengers even they worship him). He was better than Moses the lawgiver at Sinai, 'better than' the Aaronic priesthood (who had to first offer sacrifices to atone for their own sins before they could sacrifice for the people). As mediator of a better covenant he gave us a 'better than' law upon our hearts, and he was a 'better than' example of faithful obedience.

Hebrews opens in the first verse with; "*Yahweh, at various times and various ways spoke in times past by the prophets; but has now spoken to us by His Son*". Let's carefully add some words for effect - God has now spoken to us {in such a one as His Son, heir of all things}. Jesus' gospel message to us promised that we would be heirs of his promises, that gives us a 'better than' inheritance. Please take the time to read the book of Hebrews, it is such a great book, all the books of God's word are great; but some just speak to us in richer ways at different times in life. In Hebrews, we see that Moses, was a servant who faithfully obeyed God concerning the tabernacle and creating a center of worship, he was faithful to his household. In Hebrews we see Jesus the Son, was faithfully obedient to his father's mission and faithful to his household of faith (the church). Both of them pointed to the sin of humanity and the need for sacrifice to reconcile the people. Jesus, offered so great a salvation bringing many sons (souls) to glory. We also see Jesus, is the great high priest he was sinless and his priesthood is an eternal service, unchangeable, he is always making intercession for us. The OT priest could not sympathize with your weakness but were in all points tempted as we are. Jesus, was in all points tempted as we are but He was an Overcomer even overcoming death. Jesus offers us a 'better than' Hope; he's the anchor of our soul; anchored secure behind the veil in the very presence of The Almighty. The anchor that will hold in the storm, never allowing us to Drift away off course.

We have looked at the 'better than' of the letter to the Hebrews, from chap 2 - chap 10 so far. There's so much more but I will begin to wrap this up with chap 11, the "heroes of faith" or the "Faith Hall of Fame" chapter. This shows us, many believer's obedience to God, regardless of their circumstances or the consequences, so once again we see a 'better than' witness or testimony of the believers. Chap 11:6, we read "*I'm not sure what the future holds, but I know WHO holds the future*". My prayer for whomever is reading this today is; that you truly know your Lord and Savior, Who holds the keys to all our future and if you don't, go follow him, because he gave us another promise. "*Ask and it will be given unto you, seek and you shall find, knock and the door (of understanding) will be opened onto you.*"

My closing verse is Chap 12:1-2,

"Therefore since we are surrounded by so great (better than) a cloud of witnesses, let us lay our sin down, Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking onto Jesus, the author (originator) and finisher (perfecter) of our faith."

Blessings beloved, through Christ Jesus.

In His service Dean.



Grief Ministry
~ Laura Schafer

The Fall Season of Grief

“He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.” John 15:2

Grief often makes us feel numbed, shocked and empty. It can be the darkest of pits where we feel alone and isolated. Life as we know it has ended, and all we want to do is escape the hurt and pain.

One of God’s examples of healing can be found in the fall. In the fall we discard the beautiful summer flowers and the plants in the garden. If the snow and ice come too soon, the weight on the trees that still have leaves can cause them to be crushed and fall down. It is the same with our grief, if we give in to our grief and depression it is too much for us to bear and we can become crushed.

As fall is a way for nature to prepare for new leaves in the spring, grief helps us prepare the way for healing.

Like the fall leaves, let your old dreams fall away to make room for the new ones that will come. Prune away the pain, the old dreams, the thoughts of the way things should have been for the new way things will be. There is no mistaking it will be different, but still a life God has planned for you.

Think of grief as a time of replanting, making room for new sprouts to bloom. It may be a different “plant” than before, but it can still be a “beautiful plant.”

Lessons learned in grief can help us to weed out the negative and trim the dead branches and foliage from our lives.

Let go of the hurt, pain and the thoughts of the way things should have been and prepare for God’s glorious spring in your life.



Women's Ministry - The Circle ~ Wendy Falzano & Charlotte Frese



The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands." Psalm 19:1

You are invited to our **Annual Pie Making November 18, 2023 9:30 a.m.** (Please note the change in time for this event. We are starting earlier to allow enough time to finish by noon.) There will be a signup sheet on the Women's Ministry Bulletin Board, or contact Wendy or Char. We need to have a head count, by November 5th so we can make sure we have enough apples and to get you. The list of spices / ingredients and tools to make your pie. (if you are gluten free, you get to bring your own GF flour!)

We always schedule this around the Thanksgiving holiday so you have a pie for your dinner at home or to bring to that dinner away. (But be warned, it has been the experience of many that the pie seems to disappear before Thanksgiving gets here!). It freezes well too!. If you don't need the apple pie for any of your holiday gatherings, I hear there is a Community Dinner at the River Community Church in Clayton the third Monday of every month and they are always looking for desserts! Come join us for some pie making fun!!

Our gathering in October will be substituted by the ABW (American Baptist Women's Conference) scheduled on that same day. Come and have breakfast or a beverage. The meeting is free and open to all. Breakfast can be purchased off the menu.

American Baptist Women's Fall Meeting

Saturday, October 21st @ 9:30 AM

at the Hilton Garden Inn in Watertown

Breakfast and meet American Baptist Missionaries Matt & Lori Mann.

(Maybe bring a friend and offer to buy their breakfast.)

Some memories from our last gathering....

Our August gathering began with Char Frese reading a devotional from Proverbs 29 reflecting on how, as Christians, we may hold on to jealousy, pride, unforgiveness or some other sin that can keep us from the full fellowship with Jesus.

We then had a visit from our very own Vanna (aka Nancy Carey) who led us in the Wheel of Fortune. Nancy did an awesome job of creating phrases from Biblical trivia. The ladies split into two teams of five. Team A with MaryAnne McGreevy, Edy Kempney, Lillian Green and Karin Sheppard competed against Team B with Xia Hazelwood, Patsy Kidwell, Pat Dennis and Sharon Questel. Having even teams, Char stepped in the role of "Pat Sajak."

Team A won and were each awarded a bag of popcorn and an envelope with real cash! Team B members were each given a consolation prize, the choice of a piece of Russel Stover CHOCOLATE! (All prizes were donated by Nancy.)

What a great time of laughter and, yes, some competition! Thank you Nancy for all the work you put into creating this game for us! (and even for dressing for the role of Vanna 😊)

If you have an idea for a service project, game, craft or any other interest, contact Char or Wendy. We're always looking for new ideas.

Just a reminder, our Gatherings are the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10-12. So, if the 3rd Saturday of the month works in your schedule on any given month, stop in and join us. It can be for all or part of the gathering. Whatever may work for you.

Our focus is not so much on what we do but that each gathering offers the opportunity to get to know each other better and perhaps share some joys, pains, laughs, tears, praise, concerns, love and encouragement.

All women are welcome!

All ideas are welcome!

Co-leaders are welcome.

We are here for you!!

Also, if you feel that you want to meet outside the "usual" Circle gathering for a Bible study or for some other social time with other women, reach out to Wendy and she will do her best to see how we can make that happen. Sometimes as we move into winter and colder weather, we feel isolated and are feeling the need to meet with others. Perhaps you would love to have a game or movie night, or just some quiet time to chat and share. Maybe a "family fun night". Our God, Yahweh, is all about relationships...our relationship with Him first, then with others, and wants all of us to be part of his family.

Paul reminds us in 1 Cor 16:23 Our Master Jesus has his arms wide open for you.

For more information, suggestions, or questions about any of the gatherings or organizing a gathering, contact Char Frese (315)221-1303 or Wendy Falzano (518)526-6149.



Worship Ministry ~ Terence Falzano

Contained in one of the worship songs that we sing titled "the Lord's prayer" is a phrase which we are all familiar with. The phrase is "thy kingdom come" from Matthew chapter 6:10.

This concept expresses a multitude of different principles. The first is it's a very powerful petition or a prayer that literally changes this world and other worlds; it is a prayer that changes the structure of the cosmos.

1. The kingdom of God is divine nature. The word for kingdom is "basilica" meaning the word for king or the reign of the king including all of the territory of his realm. God's territory includes all of the universe.
2. The kingdom of God phrase is Messianic in nature, revealed through the person of Jesus Christ. Matthew 12:28, Jesus said, if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
3. The phrase kingdom of God is revolutionary in that when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied the kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, Nor will people say here it is or there it is because the kingdom of God is within you. Luke chapter 17 verse 21.

4. The kingdom of God is diametrically opposed because there are two kingdoms at work in the world. Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 12: *for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places.*
5. The kingdom of God is missionary as such the kingdom of God comes to destroy the kingdom of Satan. Romans 16:20: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. 1 John 3:8: the reason the son of God appeared, was to destroy the works of the devil.*
6. The kingdom of God is progressing in that it is going to burst forth into a new heaven and a new earth Revelation 21:1: *and then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven in the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*
7. The kingdom of God is responsive. When we pray "your kingdom come", we are praying for faith to see what is not yet here, knowing that God responds to our prayers, the kingdom will come through prayer itself. Prayer becomes the engine of the kingdom of God.
8. The kingdom of God is personal, and it requires a response or better yet, tangible action. Joshua chapter 24: 14 - 15: *now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him, and sincerity and faithfulness, put away the gods, that your father served beyond the river, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord and if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day, whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

When we really pray with our very soul, and believe that Christ is answering our petition "your kingdom come", we are saying a prayer that will supernaturally change our world.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR HYMNS?

Dentist's Hymn.....	Crown Him with Many Crowns
Weatherman's Hymn.....	There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
Contractor's Hymn.....	The Church is One Foundation
The Tailor's Hymn.....	Holy, Holy, Holy
The Golfer's Hymn.....	There's a Green Hill Far Away
The Politician's Hymn.....	Standing on the
Promises! Optometrist's Hymn.....	Open My Eyes That I Might See
IRS Agent's Hymn.....	I Surrender All
The Gossip's Hymn.....	Pass It On
The Electrician's Hymn.....	Send The Light
The Shopper's Hymn.....	Sweet Bye and
Bye The Realtor's Hymn.....	I've Got a Mansion, Just Over the Hilltop
The Massage Therapists Hymn.....	He Touched Me
The Doctor's Hymn.....	The Great Physician

AND for those who speed on the highway – a few hymns:

55 mph	God Will Take Care of You
75 mph	Nearer My God To Thee
85 mph	This World Is Not My Home
95 mph	Lord, I'm Coming Home
100 mph	Precious Memories



Breaking The Chains Biblical Recovery Ministry
~ Ken & Michelle Kavanagh



Reach For The Lord

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.

(Psalm 56:3)

When I was young, and even into my teens, I found security in my parents. Not everyone can say this due to different family situations, but I was fortunate enough to have wonderful parents who took care of their family and loved them. I knew that they would always be there for me, feed me, clothe me, help me and comfort me. When I was sick during the night, I would call my mother from my bed until she woke up and came and laid down next to me. During the day as I laid on the couch trying to recover from a cold, my dad would bring me soup and crackers. My mom would buy me orange juice which I always wanted whenever I was sick. These memories, even today, are a comfort to me.

During difficult times when we become fearful, we can tend to be like little children who want to be comforted. We want to be held and assured not to be afraid, that everything will be ok. My mom used to have a saying that she said all the time, "it'll all come out in the wash". I used to chuckle when she said this but I understood the concept. The phrase basically means not to worry, that everything will work out. I now sit and think about the phrase and look at how we do laundry. We throw dirty clothes and materials in the washer, pour in some soap, and wash the items. The washing machine agitator moves the clothes around to wash and get out the stains in the laundry. The agitator emulates the age old motion of handwashing. When we hand wash a piece of clothing, we have to rub the material together, agitating the stain, to get it to come out. The word agitate simply means to shake or move briskly, to move to and fro. There is another meaning - to disturb emotionally. So when we wash our clothes, the stain and dirt is being disturbed, agitated and shaken briskly to remove it from the material so it can become clean again.

Everyday many people are being emotionally disturbed and shaken. They spend their days worrying until the situation passes. You or someone you love could be struggling with an illness, a family situation, financial difficulty, or the possibility of losing a job. You could have lost your home due to a job loss or a storm. It's at these moments we can become like little children, worried and concerned, wanting to reach for something or someone to comfort us. Some reach for the wrong things which can only calm their fears temporarily, but never bringing true peace. But we have the chance to reach for the one person who can calm our fears just as our parents had...Jesus. We have the chance to reach for the one thing that will bring permanent comfort and guidance...the Bible. All of these situations are a part of life, but it always makes me wonder what the Lord wants us to learn from the situation and that maybe we are in the Lord's washing machine. Sometimes we must become agitated and disturbed to remove what needs to be removed within us. Sometimes, just like a washing machine, we might go through the delicate cycle or the normal cycle in cases of light or normal dirt on our clothes. Other times, the stains may be tough and ground in, and we have put our clothes through the heavy cycle. Sometimes the stain and dirt comes out, and sometimes we have to send it through again, adding more detergent and stain remover. Who is our stain remover? Jesus. Who can wash us clean? Jesus.

There is no time like the present to take a moment and think about what you've just read. Is there anything that needs removing from your life or from yourself? Are there any changes you need to make? Is fear overwhelming you? This is called a self-inventory. Sometimes it's good for us to inventory ourselves. We tell people in our program to do this on a daily basis. Look at both the good and the bad to keep a healthy balance. If there are things that must be removed, then turn your eyes from the current situation and turn them upwards towards Christ and lay your fears, burdens and sin before Him. Philippians 4:6-7 states:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Breaking The Chains cont...

I encourage you to take some time today to think about where you are at this time. What could you change in yourself to become a better parent, worker, spouse, neighbor or friend and even a better Christian. In times of trials and uncertainty, what are you reaching for to calm your fears and concerns? Is it healthy or unhealthy? Next, take a moment to talk to God and present these things before Him. If you need to repent to Him, do it. If you want to give Him thanks and praise, do it. If you are worried and scared, tell Him. When you have Jesus in the midst of your storm, in your boat, you have nothing to fear.

"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4).

Doors of the Bible: The Tomb's Door



The Tomb's Door

*"He is not here, for he has risen,
as he said." (Matthew 28:6)*

After being crucified, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day just as he promised. On that morning, an angel descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb.

The resurrection confirmed that Jesus Christ was exactly who he claimed to be—the Son of God. This spectacular miracle also demonstrated his power over sin and death, guaranteeing the hope of eternal life to all who repent of their sins and believe in him.



SUGGESTED EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES

Consider the following items when putting together your emergency food supplies:

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food (up to 3 months or more is better)
- Choose foods your family will eat.
- Remember any special dietary needs.
- Avoid foods that will make you thirsty.
- Choose salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.

Following a disaster, there may be power outages that could last for several days or more. Stock canned foods, dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils.

The following items are suggested when selecting emergency food supplies. You may already have many of these on hand.

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables and a can opener
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter
- Dried fruit
- Nuts
- Crackers
- bottles of water, juices, etc
- Non-perishable pasteurized milk
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

Flood, fire, national disaster or the loss of power from high winds, snow or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food. Knowing what to do before and after an emergency can help you reduce your risk of illness and minimize the amount of food that may be lost due to spoilage.

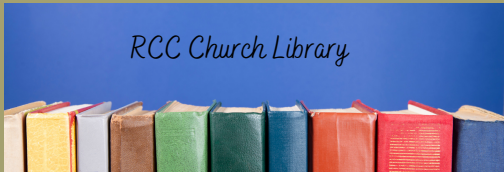
TIPS:

- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F for two hours or more.
- Do not eat foods from cans that are swollen, dented or corroded, even though the product may look safe to eat.
- Discard any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.
- When in doubt, throw it out!



Thank you to all who assisted with the funeral service for Bud Dier. There was much to be done and with everyone's help we were able to provide what was needed for the family. Bud's family was very appreciative and thankful during this difficult time.

Someone's pulling guard duty!

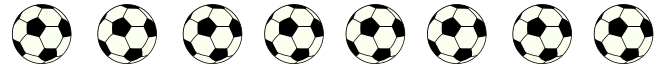


If you have not had a chance to look over our church's reference library, please take the time when you have a few minutes during office hours. If you plan on donating books to the library I recommend visiting the library before dropping off books to see if they are books we are able to accept. The goal is to keep the church library full of books that will help us all grow in our spiritual walk.

If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Questel.

Thank you and God Bless.

UPWARD Soccer





- 09/12 Jacob Burns
- 09/19 Dean Wilkie
- 09/23 JD Flack
- 09/23 Amy Turcotte
- 09/26 Kim Collins
- 09/28 Sarah Flack

- 10/02 Billie Lawrence
- 10/04 Bob Gumm
- 10/17 Lynne Spears
- 10/22 Wanda Collins
- 10/23 Asher Flack
- 10/27 John Frese



- 09/06 Paul & Lauren Whitney

- 10/1/2022 Justin and Cassey Crandall
- 10/10/2020 Stephen & Jackie Dettmer
- 10/31 Bob and Chris Gumm



River Community Church had a visitor in the fellowship hall. He has since been taken to his new home.



Recipes

by: *Laura Schafer*

BBQ Little Smokies Crock Pot Recipe

- 9 (30) oz packages of little smokies
- 3 cups BBQ Sauce
- 2.25 cups grape jelly

Place little smokies in crock pot. Pour grape jelly and BBQ sauce over the smokies. Stir to combine. Cook on low for 2-3 hours or on high for 1.5 hours. Stir and serve.

Glazed Kielbasa Bites

- 3 13oz packages fully cooked Kielbasa
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup ginger ale

Cut Kielbasa into 1 inch pieces. Place in Crock Pot. Sprinkle brown sugar over the top of the kielbasa. pour ginger ale on top. Cook on low 4-5 hours or high 2 hours.



August Church Events

August was a pretty busy month at RCC. Below are some of the events that went on!

Church Picnic/Mortgage Burning



Worship Ensemble in Clayton and Cape Vincent



RCC Community Dinner



More Church Events

September Community Dinner



Church Flower Beds

We would like to thank everyone who made our church beautiful by working on the flower beds. A special thank you to Ken Kavanagh for cleaning them up in preparation for winter.

