



May 11 through May 17, 2025

Beloveds,

Last fall, I moved into the manse, delighted to see peonies and hydrangeas growing abundantly in the yard. Hydrangeas are one of my favorite flowers, and peonies were one of my grandmother's favorites, and so it made it feel like home.

I soon noticed that the peonies had a whitish mildew slowly covering all the green parts of them. Knowing from past experiences that this needed to be removed quickly lest it return and destroy this year's peonies, I set about slowly cutting down those stalks and tossing them in the back woods in hopes that this year's peonies would flourish.

While working on the peonies, I also noticed the hydrangeas were a bit too tall, and a bit too top heavy; the top bunches of flowers were beautiful, but a bit of a burden for the rest of the stem. As they too had begun to die off, I began working to "dead head" and trim the stems. But I didn't finish.

I got distracted, as having a small 2 year old helper around is likely to do, and it wasn't until last month that I had a warm enough day to finish preparing the hydrangeas for this year.

When I looked closer though, I realized the stems already had new leaves forming - I had to make some decisions. The stems that still had dead bunches of hydrangeas were easy to remove - the birds would soon claim many of them to build their nests. But some of these stems with fresh leaves were just too tall to have another load of beautiful flowers growing on them.

On some of those stems, I chose to cut below new growth so that the hydrangeas had a better chance of standing upright, not weighing down the stems, and allowing for nutrients to be better absorbed. It crushed me a bit to remove the tiny, tender green leaves, and I tried not to do it too much.

I also knew it had to be done. Even if they would still grow, it may prevent fuller growth for the plant and I have a responsibility to tend to these inherited peonies, hydrangeas and other lovely flowers that have surprised me by popping up this spring.

It is like this with faith as well. We grow in faith all our lives. We learn new things, experience new things, understand things in new ways... and sometimes we have to shift what we believed previously to allow for the truth of God to nourish and sustain us.

For me, I had to shift my focus on one very specific belief that I had over to how my decisions around that one thing impacted others. Realizing that it wasn't just about me or my close inner circle, but rather about the earth, about all of God's beloved creation, I had to shift my mindset from a single issue focus to looking at the big picture before I made a call on how I would participate in community.

I could have chosen to leave the new leaves on the tall hydrangea stems. They were already there, I missed the timeframe to prevent this. But, back in Illinois we inherited a hydrangea that was also left to grow too tall and too long - it was gangly, it took the flowers two or three times as long as our neighbors nearly identical plant (with shorter stems) to grow.

It was clear that holding onto the extra length, that extra growth, even hard won, was not serving the hydrangea as hoped, but rather had become a burden.

And so here, at the manse, I trimmed the overgrowth so that the rest of the hydrangea plants might have a better chance of flourishing.

What beliefs in your life are preventing growth? What ideas are burdening your plant down and preventing flourishing? Is it a view that is too secular? A view that is too narrow? A view that is too wide and undefined? Is it a view that prevents you from seeing your neighbor as a beloved child of God?

As we tend to our faith, to our relationships with God, and our relationships with one another, may we be granted wisdom to prune and fertilize the areas of the garden that need it most.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Kalyn



Worship

- We gather for worship Sundays at 10am
- 68 in church on May 4
- Children's Sunday School meets during worship following Children's Chat
- Communion on May 11

Congregational Care

- Story Time is on Wednesday, May 14 at 9:30 or 10:30 am
- Ruth Circle is on May 14 at 1pm
- Women's Tea is on Sunday, May 18 following worship
- Deborah Circle meets at Bruesters on May 19 at 6:30 pm
- **SAVE THE DATE: VBS IS GOING TO BE JUNE 9 - JUNE 13!! See page 6 for details**
- **Mark your calendars for the church picnic on August 17**

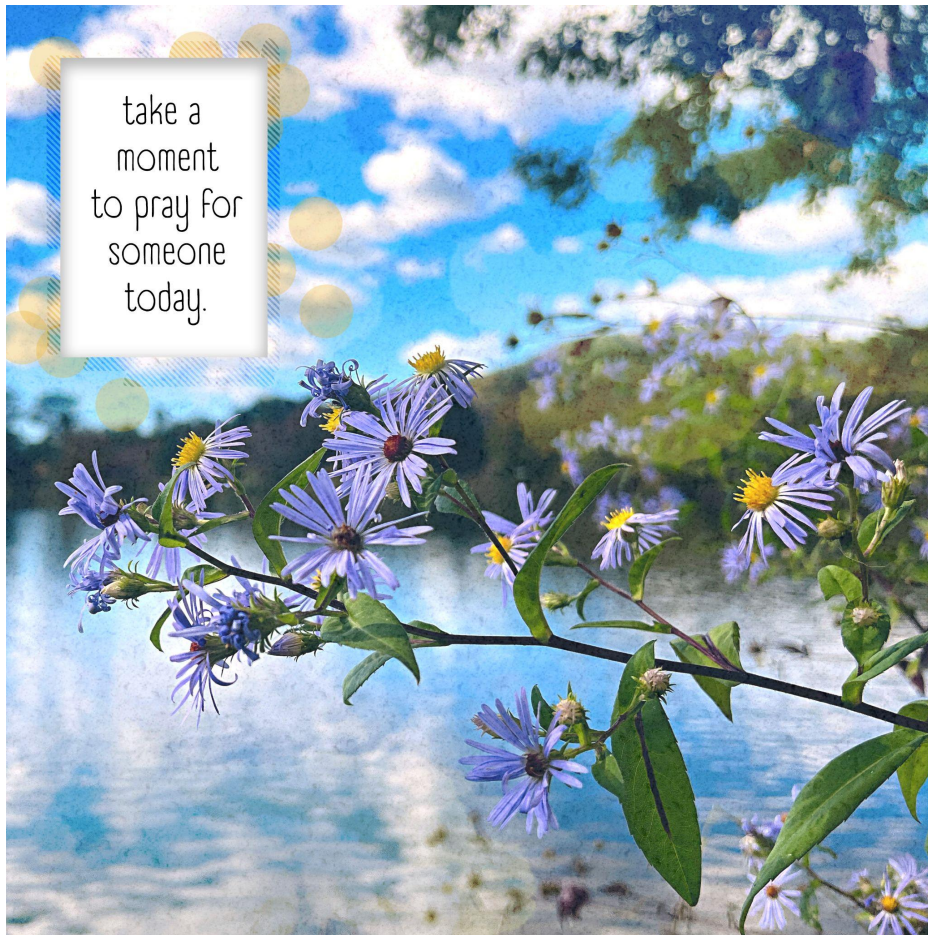
Missions

Manna is on Tuesday, May 20 at the House of Prayer Church. We need volunteers to bake cakes, to help serve and to help clean up. Those who can serve should be at the House of Prayer by 5:15; those who can clean up at 5:45. If you can help or have questions, please contact Linda Duganich at 724-622-7929 or lindaduganich@gmail.com

Operations

Year to date expenses \$74,558
Year to date collections \$64,040

The choir will be ending their season on Sunday, May 18. We are looking for volunteers who would like share their talents with us this summer. Do you like to sing, play an instrument, dance, read a poem? Any other way that you like to praise God. If so, please sign up for a Sunday or two on the sign up sheet located outside the choir room. Any questions, please see Chris Mathias.

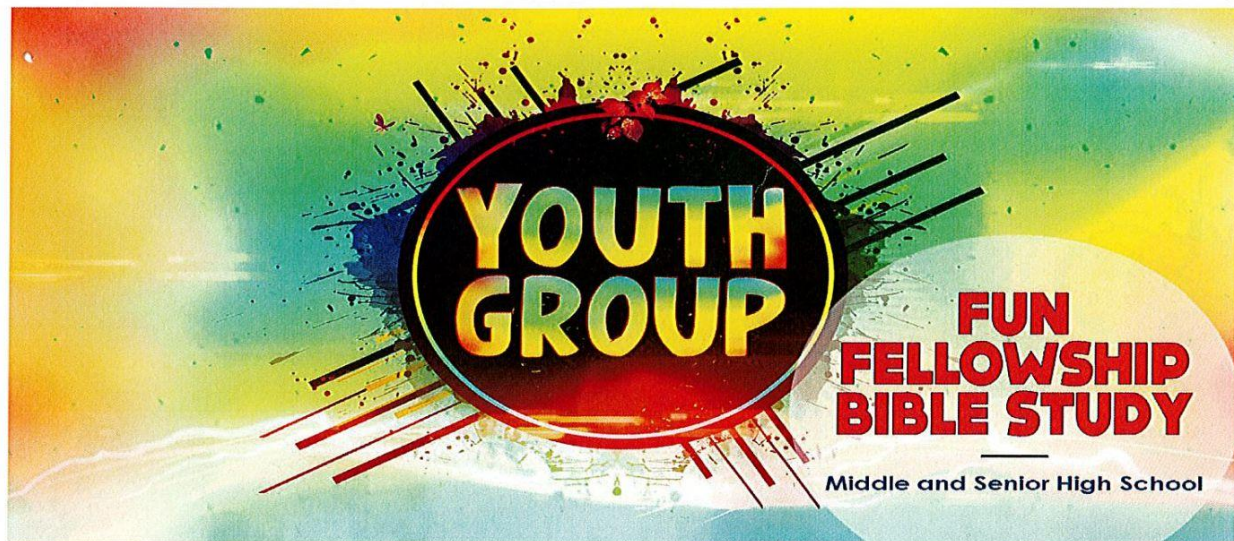


- Taffy's sister-in-law is out of ICU. Surgeries are still to come but the hope is that rest will help
- Thomas's mother has passed from the brain aneurism—her organs are being donated for transplant
- Marcia Davis, cousin-in-law of Jeff Davis and Diane Gennaro, is in hospice.
- Chris and Alyssa Gennaro had a healthy baby boy.
- Pastor Kalyn is finished with treatment. Her mother's surgery went well.
- Ken has a new job.
- DJ Fox got the job!



<u>Anniversaries</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>
Ken & Lois Kearns 5/3	Michaela Knox 5/7	JoAnne Polizotto 5/15	Ed Lawson 5/24	Mark Mitchell 5/29
Lynn & Ber Smith 5/11	Shelley Summy 5/8	Ray Atwell 5/19	Nick Hoth 5/27	Sofia Cronin 5/31
Simon & Megan Hunsberger 5/14	Jack Nan 5/9	Kim Hughes 5/20	Bob Hurni 5/27	Ava Diccico 5/31
Michael & Linda Duganich 5/15	Bryan Magee 5/10	Jeff Barth 5/21	Victoria Guiney 5/28	Patrick Smith 5/31
Paul & Karin Magee 5/29	Dolly Kerlin 5/15	Wendi Rybicki 5/22	Chris Mathias 5/29	





**May 18 – Flag Football (weather permitting)
Followed by a Pizza Party! Bring your friends!
Meet at the Church 7:00 – 8:30**

**June 6 - Elevate Trampoline Park
Cranberry – Fridays Teen Night 7-10
As we get closer I'll need a count. Chris
has volunteered to drive van. We can
only fit 10 kids.**

We will meet at Church 6:00



It is that time of the year VBS! I am looking for the following to help decorate the church for our VBS week, June 9-13. If you have any of the following to give or loan me, please let me know. Contact Christina @ 724-622-5882

- Old license plates
- Old/new road maps
- Toy cars, area rugs with roads
- Old vacuum hoses or other “gas pump” style hoses
- Traffic Cones
- Coolers, picnic basket
- Car Wash Supplies (empty containers)
- Empty, recycled bottles of car maintenance supplies (windshield wiper fluid, oil, etc.) for safety, make sure no chemicals are present.

