Non-Profit Org Permit #718

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — Ephesians 2:8 (NRSV)

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Fresno, California 93706 5955 South Elm Avenue

Return Service Requested

The Immanuel Chimes September 2023



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A mission of the North American Lutheran Church 5955 South Elm Avenue

Fresno (Easton), California 93706 Church (559) 237-7909 Email: office@immanueleaston.com

Pastor Taylor Stempniak

E-mail: ptmarie96@gmail.com

Read this newsletter online at: www.immanueleaston.com

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Inter-Generational Christian Education In Grace Hall At 9:30AM

Worship in Sanctuary At 10:30AM **Communion served every Sunday**

Together We Make Good Things Happen! 20th Year Hosting Caruthers Fair Food Booth To Earn Money for the Fresno Mission. The opportunity to help is this month! Call or Email the Church for a way or time slot to help make a difference!

Pastor's Page

As of September, 2023, I have been serving our congregation for three years. I was told in seminary that the average first call pastor lasts three years in the first congregation they serve. An extremely lazy attempt to google this statistic could not confirm it, but I had tucked it away in the back of my brain with Greek conjugation and the order of the seven plagues, just in case it was useful. As it turns out, I either slept in at seminary the day they went over what to do when your first call begins with the appearance of one of the aforementioned seven plagues in the form of a worldwide pandemic or they just forgot to go over that altogether. Suffice to say, nothing about our time together has been average, so if it's alright with you guys, I've decided I'd like to stick around for a bit longer. If it's not alright with you, please call the church office sooner rather than later. I have a lot of books and I should probably start packing. (Victoria is not going to like this joke, but I'm not going to let her delete it from the Chimes.)

I am so grateful for the patience and kindness that each of you has shown me over the past three years. I am grateful for the gentle correction you have provided, and I hope that as we embark on our next chapter together, you will continue to help me grow. I am only able to do that with your assistance. I hope you will offer ideas and feedback, and I hope you know three years into this not to be scared off by my face. (It just looks like that! I get it from my dad!) I promise, I am smart enough to know that I don't know everything. I want to continue to learn to be the best pastor I can be, and I hope that I am serving God's church better tomorrow than I am today. I hope I get to do that alongside you because you are the best co-workers in Christ that I could have.

I have, on occasion, over the past three years heard us described as a small congregation, but I want to take a moment to dust off a different factoid rattling around in the back of my head. According to Gallup, in the early 2000s, the average congregation was 150-200 people. In January of 2020, before the pandemic, the average congregation in the US was 75-80 people. First of all, we're not small. We're normal. Second of all, it's easy to allow comparison to steal our joy, and to tell ourselves that if we were just bigger or if we just had access to this resource or that staff member then we could accomplish what we want. So let me ask you a question. What can a congregation accomplish with a staff of 80 people? Sometimes, when the apostle Paul is addressing the church in scripture, he addresses his "coworkers in Christ." That's you guys. It's not just me, Victoria, Marcus, Eva, and Laurel. It's not just the council. It's each and every baptized believer of Christ who gathers in this space. So let's pray

2023 Caruthers Fair Entertainment Schedule

Main Stage Across from Immanuel

Wednesday, September 27

6:30 pm – Coronation

Thursday, September 298

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Fred McCarty

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM – Boomers

8:00 PM – 9:00 PM – Jeremy "Elvis" Pierce

Friday, September 29

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM – The Last Chance Band

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM – Dakota Crossing

8:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Country Rewind

Saturday, September 30

12:15 PM -1:00 PM - We Got The Beat

5:00-6:00PM –Happy Times Jazz

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM – Fresno Community Band

8:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Fortunate Son-Creedence Clearwater

Revival Tribute Band

Back Stage by the Barn

Wednesday, September 27 N/A

Thursday, September 28

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM – John Pemberton

8:00 PM – 9:30 PM – Richie Blue

Friday, September 29

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM – Auberry Road

8:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Q-Pop

Saturday, September 30

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM – Wishes for Fishes 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM – John Pemberton

Immanuel's Caruthers Fair Food Booth

It's fair time—prayer time folks, This year marks our 20th year that Immanuel has hosted a food booth at the Caruthers Fair. I first thought this was the craziest idea ever. Ye of little faith. It was my first year working as office secretary. When this was proposed at the church council meeting I was certain a few of my fellow church members had lost their minds. I thought they had no clue what they/we were in for. Now I wonder how I could of doubted God is with us. Our church members trusted God and knew He would make this a good thing. The council took the opportunity and said YES we don't know why but we do know GOD IS WITH US and in this! The church volunteers gathered and learned how to be a restaurant at the fair and the booth was a success! The church decided that the money should go to a place God would bless and good things would rise forth and prosper from. That place was The Fresno Rescue Mission, which has now become so much more than just a rescue mission.

Through the help and support of organizations and churches like ours the now named: Fresno Mission has embarked on sharing God's love through Bible studies and discipleship programs to help solve the problems that plague those who are lost, alone, or mentally ill. To hear the work of God through the disciples voices each year at the Easton Community Thanksgiving Eve Service is powerful. It's hard not to shed a tear or drop a jaw when listening to the stories from these amazing disciples that have worked through the Bible with the love and guidance of The Fresno Mission. I have seen and heard God's miraculous work from those Thanksgiving testimonies. God is powerful through the support and guidance that The Fresno Mission gives to those who come to share on Thanksgiving Eve. It is very humbling. Our walk on this Earth is different for each and every one of us and we are never to take one day for granted.

There are so many ways to help with this project, most importantly is to remember this mission project in prayer. This is our teamwork, our shared duty, our love for our brothers and sisters who need the word of God shared with them. This is our work not for us but for those who do not know God. We are called to make Christ known.

Sign up sheets for volunteers will be out for all four Sundays in September. Save some time, take a day off from your normal work if you can, wear your most comfortable close toed shoes and come spend some time in Immanuel's Caruthers Fair Food Booth. You will be glad you did, and you just might want to come back again and again. There is a God given adrenaline at that place. I can't be the only one that feels it. Can I?

together as coworkers, how do we want to serve the Lord in the next chapter?

There's a lot of directions we could take this—the social hall, attendance, programs. I want to see us move and develop in each of these areas as well. The part of my brain that loves stats and tidy numbers to tuck away and pull out is so tempted to put a timelines and goals to each of those areas and say, "We're going to do it by this date! Or have this many people! Or this much money!" But what would it profit me as a pastor to have a beautiful building and full pews if our congregation wasn't praying for each other? What would it profit you to have a thriving praise band and full pews if our children didn't know the stories of the Bible? I want us to have goals. I want us to be bold in what we ask of God. I just want us to put the first things first and trust God to lead the way. He will lead us just like he lead the Israelites through the desert with fire and cloud. It may take longer than we would like and we may go with much grumbling about the lack of garlic and leeks and how long it takes, but if you will allow me for a second, to lean on our brother Moses—in this next chapter, we go following God, we go together, we go supporting one another, we go carrying the word of God into the dessert where we dwell. These are the goals I propose for myself, and for you, my beloved coworker in Christ:

- 1. **Pray for your church daily**. Pray for her people. Pray for her leaders. Pray for her building. You can be specific. You can be vague. Be still and listen afterwards.
- 2. **Read scripture often**. Some of you are already in it daily, keep up the good work. Maybe pick one book of the Bible to dig into for a while. Some of you don't have that habit—you can start by just reading scripture once a week. Pick a verse to memorize. John starts his Gospel with the proclamation that, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Spend some time with God during your week. Let him change your life. Let him work in it and in our church.
- 3. Carry the word of God with you. The Israelites walked around with the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant. As you are going into the world, share the word of God in thought, word, and deed, just as Christ asked of the apostles during the Great Commission. You've been baptized, so you've been qualified.
- 4. **Follow the Shepherd.** We're walking through the valley of the shadow of death together as silly, scared, sanctified sheep. If we spend time in prayer and in the word of God, then I truly believe the Holy Spirit will guide, protect, and lead us. The rod and staff of our Lord and savior will comfort us.

Those are my goals. Thanks for coming to the staff meeting. The harvest is plentiful, let's get to work.

Blessings, Pastor Taylor

Journey

So this month I'd like us to think about the importance of praying through the grieving process. To be honest, when someone close to us passes our first thought may not be to pray. Or maybe that's just me. If you've been in charge of affairs when someone transitions to eternity, you know that there is a seemingly unending list of things to be sure get done. If there was no pre-planning on the deceased's part, there are the immediate issues of planning a funeral. Burial or cremation. What clothes to bury them in. Open or closed casket. What quality of casket. What cemetery. What kind of service, church service or graveside or both? What scriptures. What songs. Pallbearers to decide upon. When you get all that taken care of then you start with who needs to be notified. Social security, life insurance, pension, doctors and on and on it goes. Here's a little plug to help those who remain. Even if you are middle aged and healthy make a list of scriptures you identify with, songs that speak to you. Take time to go to the funeral home and pre pay and discuss your burial preferences. Make a list of your accounts and policy numbers, SSI number. Who your phone service is with, car and home insurance carriers. Make a list, then tell someone where that list is. That would be a great gift to your loved ones. And of course make a living will. Immanuel has a wonderful booklet to help with this process. Call the church office if you would like a copy.

Anyway, back to praying. If you are a believer, then you know the importance of prayer. It shouldn't be an afterthought it needs to be the first thought. As someone dear to you approaches that transition, pray for freedom from pain. Pray for peace for that loved one. They say that hearing is the last sense that shuts down. Even if they are unconscious, speak to them, tell them how much you love them. Remind them of good times and memories that you've shared with them. Pray out loud to God next to them for God to surround them and hold them. Tell them that you will be sad but that you will also be alright, that you will miss them and that you will carry on. It was important for me to tell Cindy that she could let go and let God take her home, that I would take care of the kids. After they pass, pray that God will bless them and hold them tight. Ask God to hold you tight as well. When you feel like crying ask God to cry with you. Ask him to comfort you and reassure you that your loved one is also being

Immanuel's Trustee Report

Our church has been undergoing quite a few changes this summer. At the Semi-Annual Meeting we voted to paint the outside of the Sanctuary. It's a much needed, 10 year overdue project. At time of print the painters are scraping away all the old paint and sealing all the cracks in the stucco and, two new fiberglass doors have replaced the wood doors that were rotted by years in the sun and rain. New and repaired rain gutters will be installed as well as new plastic protection over the stained glass crosses. Praise be to God for the gift from Florence Johnston's estate that helped fund this project.

Water safety has been an off and on issue for Immanuel. Many years ago Immanuel began sharing water with the Easton Presbyterian church. Since they run a preschool their water testing requirements are the most stringent. Since we use their water we must conform to the same requirements. Currently the test results conclude slightly higher than allowed test results for nitrates and DBCP. Both of these contaminants need different types of filtration to remove. Immanuel is working with Easton Presbyterian Church and KJ Water Services to filter the water that enters our buildings for drinking. This project includes separating the flow of irrigation water from building water so that we filter only drinking water. This is where we are in the process. For now, we will drink bottled water and hope the project comes together as quickly as possible without too many snags. The trustees thank you for your patience and will keep you updated on the process.

Words of Wisdom

7 RULES OF LIFE

- 1. SMILE: It always works out in the end!
- 2. BE KIND: You have the power to make people feel good!
- 3. DON'T GIVE UP: If it doesn't work the first time, find another way!
- 4. DON'T COMPARE: Everyone's on a different journey!
- 5. AVOID NEGATIVITY: Avoid negative thoughts, situations and people!
- 6. MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR PAST: Focus on being present and creating a better future!
- 7. TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY & MIND: One struggles to survive without the other!

Thank you for your Love and Prayers

Prayers for the family of Murray Cline McCann. Murray passed away on July 29, 2023. He grew up at Immanuel before he traveled the world. He worked in New Your City and Beverly Hills as an interior designer. He was the son of Murray and Gladys McCann. He is survived by his sister, Sharon Duckworth and many nieces, nephews and friends. A memorial service and a celebration of his life was held at Immanuel on August 26th.

Prayers for the family of Larry Pedersen who grew up attending Immanuel and passed on August 18th after a battle with cancer. He was the son of Henry and Evelyn Pedersen, brother in law of Joy Pedersen and the uncle of Scott Pedersen. He was the nephew of Carl Jensen and the cousin of John Jensen, Ellen Vike and many more. A funeral service and a celebration of his life was held for Larry at Immanuel Saturday, August 19th.

Sympathy love and prayers for the family of Diane Mehrten she passed away peacefully on August 28th in her home. A Memorial Service and Celebration of Life will be held at 11:00AM on Saturday October 7th at Immanuel.

Thank you all for your prayers for Austin and Rachel Bratton, we sent an email prayer request out for this couple, Laurel Jacobsen's grandson and his wife. Austin and Rachel were vacationing in Lahaina, Maui when the wildfires broke out. They were blessed by God's protection in so many ways. Their accommodations ended up being 4 miles from downtown Lahaina. They were able to receive sporadic use of their cell phone, and with the help of his mother via text from Kingsburg found a helicopter pad that transported stranded folks to the other side of the Island. There they were able to get food, help with the evacuation process and enjoy some time with the evacuated kids on the beach. They experienced kindness from strangers, showed kindness to strangers and found peace in prayer and song. They arrived home safely on their scheduled flight. Please continue to pray for the people of the island of Maui. The devastation and loss is inconceivable.

Thank you to the Thursday morning Men's Bible Study who donated \$250.00 to the American Red Cross for the Maui Fire Relief Fund.

Thank you Immanuel for your prayers and condolences for my sister, Valarie Cooper during her brutal 8 month battle with cancer and after her passing. She passed away on August 6th at Clovis Community Hospital. Pain gone and Heavenly home. Please keep her husband and granddaughter in your prayers for peace and comfort during this difficult time. Valarie was preceded in death by her daughter, Allison Daly. I appreciate everyone who reached out to me.

comforted as Jesus shows them that room he said he would prepare for them. Read the scriptures and ask God to speak to you through those readings. Take periods of time when you can be alone and just listen for God to speak to you. He will, I promise you. If you give him a chance to get a word in edgewise, he will speak to you. Pray each day that you want to hear from him, then be quiet. Pray that God will give you direction. Pray that he will lead your steps. Ask him to give you opportunities to serve others. Pray that he will give you courage to follow him.

Praying has at least two effects. One is that it draws you closer to him. Another is that it gives him an opportunity to draw closer to you. Pray that God will give you strength to get through the day.

The more you give yourself to the practice of prayer the more you are going to feel God's presence in your life. What could be better than feeling God in your life every day. Join groups that begin and end with prayer. Immanuel offers online prayer communities they offer second Sunday after church prayer groups. Every month Chimes offers prayer focuses for the week.

Your Pastor would love to pray with and for you. Catch a deacon before or after service and ask them to pray with you, we are sworn to confidentiality. The church has an online prayer chain, sign up with Victoria to be included in that.

The grieving process is hard. But the grieving process is made easier with prayer. Pray when you are sad and lonely and pray when you are happy and feeling full of memories that make you smile. Include God in every step of the day. It's literally why God created us, to be in relationship with him. Prayer helps us fulfill the reason we were created.

I will pray with you anytime. Email me at deaconofbutter@yahoo.com. Call me 559-930-4812.

As always, I love you John.

"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"

Written by Joseph M. Scrivner in 1855.

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bare. What a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer.

News Notes:

Happy milestone birthday this year to: **Gail Hansen** for her 92nd on the 14th, to **Leona Rosendahl** for her 87th on the 18th.

Happy 40th anniversary to **Dan & Joan Lindsey** on September 10th!

Women's Ministry continues to recycle. If you would like to be part of this ministry hauling recyclables in and donating the money to the Women's Ministry board, please contact Victoria Salwasser at the church office. It's simple, bring your recyclables to the social hall on Sundays. (sorted by CRV plastic with labels on plastic and aluminum)

Thank you to Immanuel for donating \$615.39 to the Pregnancy Care Center Change for Babies. This year their campaign raised \$112,062.00! They are very grateful for our support!

The Russ Dunbar Memorial Blood Drive was a great success! Thank you to all the Blood Donors on August 27th. The next one will be on November 5th!

Pastors Jonna Bohigian and Alek are going to Co-Pastor the same church! Update on Pastors Jonna and Alek Bohigian, they will be installed on October 8th at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in San Jose as Co-Pastors. Both will work together as pastors for this LCMC congregation. They look forward to working with their new church growing God's Kingdom together while raising their children, Dax (2) and Xander (8 months).



Congratulations to Planet Easton!

The local chapter of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) held their 20th Year Celebration with a potluck in the Social Hall on Monday August 21st. Planet Easton has met every Monday, at Immanuel (with the exception of the Pandemic months when they met weekly via Zoom) for 20 years. Thank you to Planet Easton to working together to save lives. NA meetings are every Monday night in Grace Hall at 7:00PM. If you would like more information about Planet Eaton NA meetings please contact Mitch Faccinto one of the founding members at 559-903-6624.

Prayers of the Church

For Christ's Church: Eternal God, we thank You for Your Church through which the gospel of Jesus Christ has been manifest in every age.

Members and their families serving in the military: Erica Botello, Canaan Campbell, Joey Brewer, Henry Clark, Ryan Freitas, Michael Hansen, Leah Linger, Connor Mannix, & Matthew Tigchelaar.

Those unable to travel about: Gail Hansen, Paul Pedersen, & Kenneth Selzer, Bonnie Terkelsen.

Those in need of prayers for recovery from falls, cancer, overall poor health caused by diseases and malfunctions, our brothers and sisters in need of healing from The Great Physician: Gordon Bennetts, Sandy Britter, Ed Bordin, Donnie Cathey, Gaye Cissel, Margaret Fletcher, Kristen Gibson, Ed Gomez, Pat Griffin, Jan Kersgaard, Kay Jensen, Paul Jones, Donna Kennedy, Darel Mehrten, Marie Meneses, Marcus Miranda, Gloria Payne, Patti Price, Bob Reynolds, Richard Smith, Rebecca Stempniak, Pastor Taylor Stempniak & Keitt Wilson.

For those morning the loss of loved ones: The family of Diane Mehrten. The family of Larry Pedersen. The family of Murray Cline McCann. The family of Valarie Cooper.

For people dealing with loneliness and depression. For those battling the illness and the health care providers tending to those in need.

Please pray for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes program The first lunch is August 30th at Immanuel. Lunch will be served to students outside in front of Grace Hall. High School students volunteer to come to Immanuel and move chairs and tables outside to serve the 100-150 students who come over for lunch and a message about God. This school year Immanuel will prepare and serve on November 29, December 6, 13, March 20, April 3, 10,17, 24. If you would like to help prep and serve lunch on any of these dates please contact Ericka Gardner.

Please continue to pray for our youth ministry in Easton as we continue to look for youth ministry opportunities with Easton Presbyterian church. Wednesdays from 12:25-1:00PM would be a great time to come to Immanuel even if it isn't our turn to serve. High school is hard, this is a perfect opportunity to show the students that we are the church and we care about them. It can be as simple as just asking there name and sharing yours. I strong handshake and a smile comforts all who receive. Most importantly a connection to God through the smile in your eyes fills everyone's heart, even teenagers. Try it once, then try it twice.

September Celebrations

Birthdays

- 2-Kaylee Hollenbeck
- 3-Mike Mehrten
- 5-Meghan Anderson
- 7-Kailie Allred
- 8–Jennifer Hartwig
- 9-Violet Jensen
- 11-Mike Bennetts
- 14-Gail Hansen
 - -Susie Tews
- 18-Leona Rosendahl
- 20-Linda Avedisian Emmerson Gardner
- 22-Janet Messenlehner
- 24-Rhonda Watkins
- 25-Debbie Pilegard Amy Hansen Randy McFarland
- 27-Allyson Nielsen
- 28-Sarah Pilegard

Baptismal Birthdays

09-Frances Hansen

- 15 Sandra Johnson
- 18-Carter Hollenbeck
- 21-Bethany Gardner
- 23-Tomas Perez
- 26-Leah Pettitt Linger
- 30-Elijah Terrones





Wedding Anniversaries

2-Pastor Paul & Linda Demant (50) 10-Dan & Joan Lindsey (40)

Prayer Focus for the Week

Week of 9-4-2023. Focus on the labors we are given. Colossians 3:23/24 NIV. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the LORD, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the LORD as a reward. It is the LORD Christ you are serving.

Week of 9-11-2023. Focus on forgiveness. Ephesians 4:32 NIV. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you.

Week of 9-18-2023. Focus on praising God. Psalms 26:13 NIV. My feet stand on level ground; in the great congregation I will praise the LORD.

Week of 9-25-2023. Focus on working together in community, Caruthers Fair. 1 Corinthians 12:6 NIV. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Easton Community Water Meeting from 6:30-8:00 PM on October 3rd in the Immanuel Social Hall Hosted by Self Help Enterprises

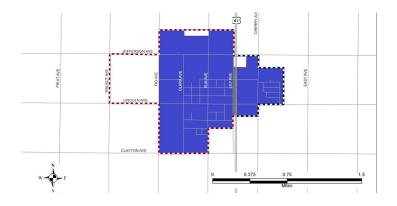
Self Help Enterprises (SHE) is currently working with 85 disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley assisting them in providing reliable, safe and affordable drinking water to all their members. As a Community Development Specialist, we are catalysts in seeking funding and providing technical assistance to communities working towards community- wide and permanent safe water solutions.

Goal for Easton:

With current drought conditions, perhaps it is time to reassess Easton's water status. Many domestic wells in the area are going dry and many have numerous types of contaminations. At the meeting we would like to hear from local residents about how they feel about their water.



Would they consider a community-wide water project as a solution? As a community member, what is their solution to Easton's water status. Do they believe there is even an urgent enough issue to deal with Easton's Water. The overall purpose of the meeting is to get a feel for the community's sentiment on proceeding with a water project. We would also present the idea of forming a community committee that will facilitate communications with SHE Staff, project consultants and the Easton community. Volunteers for the committee would also help with surveying the community and other outreach efforts.



SEPTEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 12:00PM Easton Food Distribution at Easton Pres.	2
Fair Booth Volunteer Sign Up 2:30AM Sunday School in Grace Hall 0:30AM Worship & Communion 1:30AM Fellowship Outside	4 Labor Day!	5 10:00AM Women's Bible Study	6 FCA Lunch 7:00PM Women's Clothing Swap in Grace Hall	7 6:00AM Men's Bible Study	8	9
10 Fair Booth Volunteer Sign Up No Sunday School Today 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship Outside 11;45AM Congregational Prayer	11	12 10:00AM Women's Bible Study 6:30PM Council Meeting	13 FCA Lunch	14 6:00AM Men's Bible Study	October Chimes Deadline	16
17 Fair Booth Volunteer Sign Up 9:30AM Sunday School in Grace Hall 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship Outside	18	No Women's Bible Study	20 FCA Lunch	21 6:00AM Men's Bible Study	22 Autumn Begins	23
24 Fair Booth Volunteer Sign Up No Sunday School Today 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship Outside After fellowship time: Cookies Plating For JD Foods.	25 9:00 AM Cookie delivery to JD Foods.	26 No Women's Bible Study Soda & Bread pick up Trailer Supply Sort 5:00-8:00PM Corn Shucking at the Fair!	27 Caruthers Fair FCA Lunch	28Caruthers Fair 6:00AM Men's Bible Study	29 Caruthers Fair	30 Caruthers Fair
October 1 Caruthers Fair Move-out 9:30AM Sunday School in Grace Hall 10:30AM Worship & Communion 11:30AM Fellowship Outside	2	3 10:00AM Women's Bible Study	4 FCA Lunch	5 6:00AM Men's Bible Study	6	7