A Different Kind Of Life
(the way we will win the right to share Jesus with people)
By Rev. Ralph Kieneker

Allowing your faith in Jesus Christ to define you—i.e. letting people know that you are a Christian and proud of it—brings with it certain stereotypes, mostly negative. Conservative, stuffy, uptight, rule oriented, holier-than-thou, judgmental, self-righteous and boring are simply a few descriptors that come to mind. The problem is that these stereotypes are all wrong.

If we are following Jesus and beginning to develop His same character, then we should be known as free, gracious, humble, accepting, reflectors of God’s goodness, intriguing, encouraging, and hopeful—for I am absolutely convinced that this latter list is a more accurate description of Jesus. So why is it that Christ-followers are labeled by the negative characteristics?

I will grant you that part of the fault lies with Christians. Some of us have been or are exemplifying a deficient form of Christianity, and it is definitely deficient. (Joy, love, grace, peace, and humility are supposed to characterize us, and when lovelessness, judgmentalism, frustration, envy, resentment and pride are being formed instead, something is definitely wrong.)

There is also a second reason that Christianity is negatively pigeonholed by non-Christians, and I would argue that it is the main reason. A vibrant, healthy, robust Christianity is offensive to the world. We preach Christ crucified: a scandal to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:23). If we take Jesus seriously—both his teachings and life—we will smell a scent of scandal pervading His story.

The apostle Paul called it the scandal of the cross (Gal. 5:11). The principle is expressed everywhere in Jesus’ teaching. The first shall be last and the last shall be first. Those who try to save their life will lose it, but those who lose it for my sake will be saved. He who is least among you is the greatest. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Blessed are the poor, the meek, and those who mourn. Unless you become like little children you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. What we see at work in Jesus’ teaching is the principle of turning the world’s value system on its head. Don’t be concerned about being the first, the greatest, the brightest, or the most successful for all of these things are a stumbling block to real life and lead to death. Instead recognize that you are the last, the least, the lost, the little and the already dead—only when you accept this reality can you be saved.

(cont. p. 2)
A Different Kind Of Life (cont.)

This is at the very core of Jesus’ teaching, and he meant every word of it. Not only did he mean it, he modeled it. **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant... he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!** (Phil. 2:6–8). Is it any surprise the world is offended by Jesus? Nobody wants to claim: “I’m a loser, the last, the least, or lost (especially men), that I don’t really deserve to be saved.” We live in a world of moral deserts and pride of place; it is insulting to be counted among the losers.

And yet, how can we ever know the sweet smell of grace if we have not recognized our need for grace? Only when we stop trying to be first will we realize that love is not about being first or last but is about not counting. Only when we stop trying to earn our greatness will we realize that true success in not an achievement but a gift received from the Creator and then used for His purposes. Only when we realize that we are really and truly lost can we know that we have been found. Only when we realize that we are dead can we experience the power of Christ’s resurrection at work in our lives. Only when we realize that we have led small, insignificant lives because we have given infinite value to finite things and finite value to infinite beings, can we be lifted up into true greatness.

We live in a time where there can be real hostility and resentment towards the name of Christ. The message of the Gospel is becoming more and more offensive in our increasingly secular society. If we live out our Christian convictions, there is an increasing likelihood that the world will see us as fools, crackpots, naïve like children, and even scandalous. But Jesus knew this would be our experience. He prepared us by warning and praying for us. “If the world hates you,” Jesus said, “it hated me first.” His advice to us, “Do not worry!”

Jesus wants us to be different. In the face of hate he wants us to show love. In the face of scorn he wants us to demonstrate acceptance. He calls us to be a Community of Difference. It is going to be hard. Many people believe that they have been there, done that, and it didn’t really suit their tastes. As we enter into this new epoch of history – a Post-Christian age – we are going to have to break down all the negative stereotypes and prejudices. We are going to have to prove we are truly different; different from their presuppositions and different from the deficient understanding of the Christian life. Instead of knocking on a door and sharing some words, we need to be focused on living a life of love and friendship, praying that God’s light will shine into their hearts and minds. The goal is where they want to know what is different about us. When they start asking, that’s when we know we have won the right to share Jesus.

Blessings in Christ, Ralph

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On Sabbatical - Thank You!

**By Rev. Dan Wodrich**

I want to thank my West Side Church family for your support and approval of my upcoming Sabbatical. What a wonderful gift to receive from you! I am very much looking forward to it – April 24 through August 14.

As you may well know, Sabbatical is derived from the Hebrew word, “Shabbat” (or Sabbath) which means “to cease.” A **Sabbatical leave from ministry has been described as a release from the routine of the call for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of the ministry leader.** I must admit I’ve been feeling pretty tired for awhile and am hoping and praying that this Sabbatical “ceasing” will provide for the rest, refreshment, and renewal I need.

Laura and I are looking forward to some special family time both in town and away; some time for recreation and restoration around the yard and in our home; and time to quiet down to read, reflect, listen, converse, pray, and seek to discern the Lord’s leading for life and ministry on the other side of the Sabbatical. I would appreciate your prayer for me in this regard. Please know that I’ll be praying for you while I’m away.

May our Lord have His way with each and all of us, according to His Word. Every blessing to you and yours in Christ.

Dan
When Jesus declared Good News the News wasn’t “Ok, when you die, everything is going to be ok.” He said things like, “I’ve come to set captives free! The lame walk! The blind see! I’ve come that you might have life, more and better life than you ever imagined!” The implication was very much a change in how we were experience life right now! At the same time, Jesus claimed to be leading us into eternal life. This meant that He came to conqueror death so that we will live forever. It is true we don’t have to worry about death, because death is not the end of the story. But eternal life was not just about living forever, it was also a better quality of life, the life of heaven (goodness, beauty, joy, no more death, no more sorrow, and no more pain) on earth. But again, eternal life was not just future, this new and better life was always intended to at least be experienced in part right now.

Trusting in Jesus has always meant following Him into a new life beginning today. The salvation He offers is not otherworldly. He wants to help us overcome every obstacle that gets in the way of living under His goodness and love. Over the next seven weeks, we are going to deal with some of the most challenging obstacles to the more and better life Jesus is leading us towards. The path of following Jesus is not always easy. The healing he offers is often not a quick fix; it often means walking through pain and suffering, but real change and transformation is possible!

- **April 23** - The First Step but Not the Last
- **April 30** - Overcoming Pride and Selfishness
- **May 7** - Overcoming Anxiety, Stress, and Frustration
- **May 14** - Overcoming Discouragement, Failure, and Shame
- **May 21** - Youth Sunday
- **May 28** - Overcoming Anger, Impatience, and Irritability
- **June 4** - Overcoming Judgmentalism

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**Looking For A Summer Opportunity?**

West Side Church is looking for college-aged applicants for a summer ministry training program with children and youth.

The “Summer Trainees” are provided guidance and instruction within a supportive community, learning ministry skills through engaging with children and youth within the church. If you are interested in exploring more about this experience, please visit [www.westsidetraineeministry.wordpress.com](http://www.westsidetraineeministry.wordpress.com).

Please note: At the completion of the summer program (which runs from June 15-August 17, 2017), each Trainee will be awarded a scholarship towards their following year’s tuition.
All-Church Camp-Out - June 30-July 4 - “Wild n’Rugged”

Traditions: They never change, right? Well here is one of West Side’s longstanding ones: the annual 4th of July All-Church Camp-Out at Ingalls Creek known as “Wild n’Rugged.”

In the beginning (1986), we only had running water from a pipe and the stream (both cold) and one pit toilet with your choice of tent or trailer camping—and no electricity. The upside was the amazing number of stars that could be seen! The initial years saw the installation of additional pit toilets and a solar shower. We ate dinner under a giant tarp and hiked. There was swimming in the creek for those who liked freezing water. And the kids slept all the way home after playing hard all weekend! A few years later there was a treehouse, a septic tank and FLUSH TOILETS! We also installed a stage with a fire pit, a pavilion with a permanent roof and a prayer trail. We also made big plans for a lodge (which was just completed 5 years ago), hot water, and electricity. Who did all this work? Well, that was a big part of camp activities: anybody who came up to camp was welcome to pitch in.

Nowadays at the “Wild n’Rugged” camp-out, we have indoor showers and flush toilets, refrigeration, bunk beds, electrical hookups for trailers, a basketball court, never-ending coffee, and a pancake breakfast! But what hasn’t changed is the hikes, the Talent Show, s’mores and wop-wops, eating under the pavilion next to the creek, and the chance to wander through the woods and be alone with God.

All are welcome to join us at this year’s Wild n’Rugged All-Church Camp-Out: June 30-July 4. You can come for a day or stay for all of them! Ingalls Creek is only a 2 1/2 hour drive from the Tri-Cities, so you will be home in time for fireworks, which we can’t do at camp. You can bring your tent or trailer to relive the original camping tradition, or rent space in the Lodge for a “tame and pampered” experience. Leavenworth is just 20 minutes away, and opportunities exist for river rafting and horseback riding. Look for more information and sign-ups in June and save the date!

2017 Special Easter Offering - The Paul’s (India)

The Missions Council would like to thank the congregation for your overwhelmingly generous giving to Aalichamy and Christeena Paul for their Bible translation and literacy work in seven languages in India. The 2017 Special Easter Offering total was approximately $5,800. This will go far in helping them to print the Bibles and primers that they have developed. Many people will be blessed in India as they will be able to read God’s word in their own languages!

Update - West Side Preschool and Marcus Whitman Deacon Preschool Partnership

Word is out that the West Side Preschool is a great program, and we’re pleased to share that all of our Pre-K and 3-year-old classes are filled for the fall—there are also names on the waiting lists for next year. There are a few openings for 2-year-olds in our Wednesday morning and Tuesday/Thursday afternoon classes.

Thank you for your giving in support of the scholarships for Marcus Whitman Elementary siblings. We now have 6 students signed up for next year. Our Marcus Whitman contact was extremely helpful in identifying students that were age-eligible for the openings we had. Four of our students will be in the 3s program and will benefit from this extra year of preschool experiences.

In April, one of our students declared as he entered the classroom: “It’s time to get messy and to make mistakes!” That attitude of a willingness to get involved, be adventurous, and learn in the process is what we seek to develop in each of our students.
Join us for west side’s Night at the Ballpark:

- Tailgating
- Dust Devils Baseball Game
- Only $8 per person

And our own Worship Director, Patrick Smith, will be singing the National Anthem! Stay tuned for more details!
### May 2023 Calendar

**Sunday**
- **Worship:** 8:15am Contemporary Service-WSS
- **YOUTH SUNDAY:** 8:15am Service-WSS
- **Worship:** 8:15am Contemporary Service-WSS
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Trainee Mtg 5:30pm-WSN**
- **HS Life Group 6:00pm-the Critchlow's (W Richland)**
- **Prison Fellowship Mentor Training 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Boy Scouts Mtg 6:45pm-WSN**
- **Cross Currents 7:00pm**

**Monday**
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Library Work Party 10:00am-WSN**
- **P2P-Person to Person Lunch 12:00pm-WSN**
- **HS Life Group 6:00pm-the Critchlow's (W Richland)**
- **Prison Fellowship Mentor Training 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Boy Scouts Mtg 6:45pm-WSN**

**Tuesday**
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Library Work Party 10:00am-WSN**
- **P2P-Person to Person Lunch 12:00pm-WSN**
- **HS Life Group 6:00pm-the Critchlow's (W Richland)**
- **Prison Fellowship Mentor Training 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Boy Scouts Mtg 6:45pm-WSN**

**Wednesday**
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Library Work Party 10:00am-WSN**
- **P2P-Person to Person Lunch 12:00pm-WSN**
- **MS Youth Group 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Girl Scouts Mtg 6:00pm-WSN**
- **ESL/Citizenship Classes 6:30pm-WSN**
- **MS Life Group 5:30pm-Hassell's Cross Currents 7:00pm-WSN**

**Thursday**
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Library Work Party 10:00am-WSN**
- **P2P-Person to Person Lunch 12:00pm-WSN**
- **MS Youth Group 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Girl Scouts Mtg 6:00pm-WSN**
- **ESL/Citizenship Classes 6:30pm-WSN**

**Friday**
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Library Work Party 10:00am-WSN**
- **P2P-Person to Person Lunch 12:00pm-WSN**
- **MS Youth Group 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Girl Scouts Mtg 6:00pm-WSN**
- **ESL/Citizenship Classes 6:30pm-WSN**

**Saturday**
- **Church Office Closed 9:00am-12:00pm**
- **Library Work Party 10:00am-WSN**
- **P2P-Person to Person Lunch 12:00pm-WSN**
- **MS Youth Group 6:00pm-WSN**
- **Girl Scouts Mtg 6:00pm-WSN**
- **ESL/Citizenship Classes 6:30pm-WSN**
### Sunday

- **Study**: 6:10am [Richland]
- **Worship Team**: 7:00pm [WSN]
- **Christian Yoga with Annette**: 5:15pm [WSN]

### Monday

- **Fellowship Mtg**: 1:00pm [WSN]

### Tuesday

- **Support Group**: 10:30am [WSN]

### Wednesday

- **Alpha Prison Ministry**: 6:30pm [WSN]

### Thursday

- **Girls' Craft Weekend**: 3:00pm [WSN]

### Friday

- **Fun Folks Over 50 Potluck**: 5:00pm [WSN]

### Saturday

- **Fun Folks Over 50 Potluck**: 5:00pm [WSN]

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**Vacation Bible School: Operation Arctic**

**July 10-14, 9:00 am-12:00 pm - NOTE Date Change!!**

Get ready to explore the super-cool Arctic wonderland at **Operation Arctic VBS**!

Due to the snow days and our changing school schedules, **VBS has been rescheduled to July 10-14**. All children ages 4 years old to 5th grade are invited to join us on our thrilling expedition where we’ll uncover the coolest book on the planet: the Bible! Get ready to plunge into this “cold world” and God’s awesome Good News! We’ll have a flurry of fun and a blast of friendships at **Operation Arctic VBS**!

Your registration includes a cd with all the Arctic music, a bandana, wrist bands, snacks, and fun!

**Register by May 31:**
- $15/child or $20/family

Register June 1-26:
- $20/child or $25/family

Register after June 26:
- $25/child or $30/family

Limited scholarships available

Registration forms available online and on the Information Boards in both narthexes for **Operation Arctic VBS**!

Join our fun team of **Operation Arctic volunteers** (ages 13+) - training dates TBD!

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**Save the Dates for Vacation Bible School:**

**July 10-14**

**9:00 AM-12:00 PM**

**For Kids 4 Years Old-5th Grades!**

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**Operation Arctic**

*Exploring the Coolest Book on the Planet*
Men’s Ministry

**FOF (Fun Folks Over 50) Potluck Dinner**  Fri., May 5, 5:45 pm, WS North Narthex. Come learn how federal restrictions on refugee resettlement in the US is affecting our Tri-Cities’ World Relief office. What can we do as a church and as individuals to answer Christ’s call to love and serve our “neighbors”? Bring a main dish, salad, or dessert. Also, bring your own table service—and a friend.

Sarah Squares, spouses of Sarah Circle ladies, lunch Wed., May 10, 11:30 am, Sterlings Restaurant (2500 Queensgate Dr-Richland). NOTE—new location!

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Senior Adult Ministry

**FOF (Fun Folks Over 50) Potluck Dinner**  Fri., May 5, 5:45 pm, WS North Narthex. Come learn how federal restrictions on refugee resettlement in the US is affecting our Tri-Cities’ World Relief office. What can we do as a church and as individuals to answer Christ’s call to love and serve our “neighbors”? Bring a main dish, salad, or dessert. Also, bring your own table service—and a friend.

**P2P (Person To Person) Lunch**  Mon., May 8 and 22, 12:00 pm, WS North Narthex. Join our group of retirees for a homemade lunch, lots of table talk, and laughs.

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Compassionate Caregivers Support Group

The Compassionate Caregivers Support Group meets monthly for fellowship, education, support and encouragement. If you are the full-time caregiver of a loved one or the relative of a loved one with Alzheimer’s or other Dementia, you are invited to join us. This group serves as a safe place to learn and share your thoughts and feelings with others.

This month, we will meet Thurs., May 25, 10:30-11:30 am, WS North Room 2-4. Questions? Contact Jan Jacobson, Bev Baird, or Paul Dionne.

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Women’s Ministry

**Knitters Group**  Wed., May 3, 1:00 pm, WS North Room 2-4. Bring your projects.

**Morning Glory Bible Study**  Thursdays, 9:00-11:00 am, WS North Room 2-4. All ages are welcome to join us to get acquainted, pray, and enjoy morning coffee. Come study ‘The Sermon on the Mount: a concise statement of Jesus’ teachings on how to live in the reality of God’s present kingdom. Need child care? Contact Patty Wilburn, Joan Swinth, or Ann Forsythe.

**Sarah Circle Lunch**  Wed., May 10, 11:30 am, WS North Narthex. Please join us for lunch as Rev. Shari Grover, Assoc. Director of Children & Family Ministries, will share her story and vision for West Side. Please continue to bring gifts for our missions outreach including Project Warm-up. Please call Edna Sehmel (509.946.9044) to let us know you will join us. See you there!

**Chick Flicks**  Sat., May 20, 7:00-9:00 pm, WS South Room 105. There’s nothing better than a good dessert with friends followed by a great movie. That’s what Chick Flicks is all about! Invite your friends to watch “Letters to Juliet”: An American girl discovers a love letter that changes her life in this romantic comedy in Verona, Italy—the city where Romeo and Juliet first met. Questions? Contact Laura Swanson (509.430.8323) or Debbie Mellinger (509.375.1389).
Happy Spring! - Children & Family Ministries

Sun., May 7 - Presentation of Children’s Art Work: Join us at all three services (8:15, 9:45, and 11:15 am) as the new children’s art work is presented—it will be displayed in WS South entry way. Don’t miss seeing what Maja Shaw and the children created during Wednesdays@West Side this past winter/spring, symbolizing how we all are important parts of this Church family. Thank you to Maja for her leadership during this project with our children.

Sun., May 14 - Mother’s Day: Come hear the little ones’ sweet voices at the 9:45 and 11:15 am services as our Cherub Choir sings for Mother’s Day! And thank you to our faithful Edna Sehmel for her patient leadership of this choir—her loving care for the children is very appreciated!

Mon., May 15 - Parent Connection Playgroup: Join us for our next kids’ playgroup from 9:00-10:30 am in WS North Koinonia Café. This will be our LAST regular gathering until summer. Join us for some relaxed time while the little ones play. All are welcome!

Youth Sunday - May 21: Our youth/children will be leading all three (8:15, 9:45, and 11:15 am) worship services! We’re looking for Scripture, usher, sing, and help us lead our church family in worship! Please mark your calendar for these special services and see Patrick Grover if your child would like to help.

Sun., May 28 - Park Day: All children and youth - join us for this fun Sunday at 9:45 am as we walk to Frankfort Park for our Children’s Gathering Hour! We’ll play and laugh in God’s creation. And we’ll enjoy special snacks and games as we get to know one another! Your kids won’t want to miss this event, so mark your calendars today. Permission forms required.

Wed., May 31 - Early Bird Registration Deadline for Operation Arctic VBS: Only $15/child or $20/family! Registration forms available on the information boards in both narthexes as well as online (see complete details on p. 7).

2017 Summer Camp

Don’t forget to make room in your summer calendar for camp! These are the dates we will be sending Trainees to Camp Ghormley:

- Primary 2 (gr. 2-4) ➤ July 2-5
- Mid-High 2 (gr. 6-8) ➤ July 30-Aug. 4
- Junior 2 (gr. 5-6) ➤ July 23-27
- Senior High (gr. 9-12) ➤ June 25-July 1

YOUTH SUNDAY

May 21 • 8:15, 9:45, 11:15 AM
Mark your calendar!
Who are your Parish Deacons? Parish Deacon contact information is conveniently listed in the front of the church phone directories (available in the Church Office—usually printed every other month). Your Parish designation is listed under your name like this [5].

Parish Deacons share in the provision of care and service to those in our church family who are in need. The word “parish” means “alongside dweller” or “neighbor” and we want to be and become a good neighbor to you!

Parish Deacons collaborate with pastors, support staff, and various ministries in our church to provide for and facilitate assistance in many forms—from practical help like arranging meals, giving rides, doing yard work, helping move, etc.—to connecting folks with our Benevolence team for situations of financial need—to arranging for hospital visitation—to praying with and for you—among others.

Please contact your Parish Deacon if a need arises.

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**Hello From Malawi - Update From The Holms**

Rochelle Holm recently wrote: “Hello and Happy Easter from Mzuzu, Malawi (Africa). With three weeks of constant rain, we are ready for rainy season to come to an end here soon. Please pray for the rains to provide food security for the many people that rely on rain-fed farming. Thank you for your dedicated prayers and financial support for our family.”

For more updates from Malawi, please visit our blog at http://holminafrica.blogspot.com/.

Grace & Peace,
Tyler, Rochelle, and Mphatso Holm
Mzuzu, Malawi

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**What Parish Are You In? - Deacon’s Parish Ministry**

Who are your Parish Deacons? Parish Deacon contact information is conveniently listed in the front of the church phone directories (available in the Church Office—usually printed every other month). Your Parish designation is listed under your name like this [5].

Parish Deacons share in the provision of care and service to those in our church family who are in need. The word “parish” means “alongside dweller” or “neighbor” and we want to be and become a good neighbor to you!

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Please contact your Parish Deacon if a need arises.
RightNow Media: Free 24/7 Access to Online Video Resources

Our West Side Church family has a subscription to RightNow Media which enables our members and attendees to have free access anytime to online video resources produced by RightNow and over 100 major Christian publishers and ministries. Essentially, it’s a Netflix for Bible studies with videos for kids, students, singles, parents and married couples by teachers like Tim Keller, Dallas Willard, and John Ortberg among others. All the content can be accessed from a phone, tablet, TV or computer.

If you would like access to these video resources, please email Jim Morris (jemrcm@aol.com). He will arrange for you to receive an email from RightNow Media, providing you with access instructions.

Thanks! - All-Church Spring Clean-Up A Success

On Mar. 25, there were 18 people who showed up to help at our All-Church Spring Clean-up. It is a blessing that so much was accomplished: Jim & Karen Sanders worked on the roses at WS South; several guys helped take out and load the old water heater from the boiler room so it could go to the dump; Heidi Kemp, Ginny Strickler, and Carolina Bullard tackled the weeds; Chris Kemp mowed the vacant lot; Kevin Avila, Doug Teachout, Jerry Strickler, and Kraig Krisher worked on installing tree rings (removing grass, laying down ground cloth, putting down bark); Dave Van Leuven and Mike McElroy checked and replaced filters in AC units; Patrick Smith cleaned AC filters and mats with his power washer; Todd Curtis probably had the dirtiest job—cleaning out the gutters in the WS North courtyard!; Ralph Kieneker and Patrick Grover swept and filled in on various jobs; Dan Wodrich and Susan Carbaugh resealed the stained glass windows.

Thank you one and all!

Property Committee:
Jerry Strickler,
Mike McElroy,
Susan Carbaugh

Thank you to Patty West for donating the American flag given in honor of her father, Robert Monroe, who served in the Navy. The Boy Scouts flew the colors for us.
Don’t Forget To Mark Your Calendar!!
May 6 - Roger Knight “Celebration of Life” Service
May 12-13 - Ladies’ Craft Weekend
May 14 - Mother’s Day
May 15 - Parent Connection Playgroup
May 20 - Chick Flicks: Letters to Julia
May 21 - Youth Sunday
May 29 - Memorial Day - Church Office CLOSED
May 31 - Early Bird Registration for VBS

Want to receive our newsletter via email?
Contact Wendy Puz (wpuz@westside1.org or 509.946.4656).