



The Transformer

Our Mission is... *“To transform lives through the power of Christ”*

Volume XXV, Issue 5

May 2025

Blessings That Count!

| Date | Worship SS | |
|-------------|-------------------|-----|
| 04/06 | 38 | 12 |
| 04/13 | 29 | 12 |
| 04/20 | 35 | N/A |

Offerings

| 04/06 | |
|--------------|---------|
| General Fund | \$1,117 |
| Benevolence | \$505 |
| 04/13 | |
| General Fund | \$1,655 |
| Missions | \$150 |
| 04/20 | |
| General Fund | \$2,720 |



If you would like Home Communion please let Rocky or one of the Elders know and we will set up a time to get that to you.

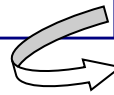
Rock’s Ramblings

The Final Celebration

There are moments in life we celebrate. For instance, we celebrate the birth of a child, a baby shower and then every year with a birthday party. We celebrate the beginning of a marriage with a wedding and a reception and then yearly with an anniversary. We celebrate retirement with, well, I am not exactly sure this one is consistent. We celebrate years at work, safety, major achievements and Fridays. Some of those major achievements are the end of one season of life and the beginning of another. One of those is graduation, at least the major ones; I’m not sure Kindergarten, 6th or 8th grades mark a huge distinction in life, but others do: High School to college or work, college to graduate school or work, graduate school to more studies or work. There is one more graduation that we all experience that is more important than any of the others, yet one that we often try to put off as long as possible, wishing we never had to experience it, death; which I think in part is only natural since God created us for life without death and death is the last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 20:14; 21:4).

I know it might seem a bit odd to think about death as a graduation, but I think I can make my point. In fact, I think that recently as a culture we have begun to speak of it in terms that subtly make the point for me. Well, maybe not death itself, but the event that marks the end of the life of a loved one or friend. We for a long time referred to that as a funeral, and we might have had a funeral dinner or, in some traditions, a wake (Concise Oxford English Dictionary – [especially in Ireland] a party held after a funeral). As a minister, there are two things I try to do at a funeral: offer words of comfort, and remember and reflect on the deceased; which is what we do when we celebrate a graduation. Now, there is the more modern phrase we use for these events: A Celebration of Life; and I have found the only difference is that people want this to be a little less somber (i.e., upbeat music instead of dirges; and more laughing and smiles than crying). If graduation is the celebration of the end of one part of life and the beginning of another, then a funeral is a graduation ceremony from life as we experience it now to the life we will experience from the moment of death onwards through eternity.

Think for a moment about graduation from high school or college. There are preparations we need to



make. First, there is making sure that you have completed all the necessary courses and have at least the minimum number of credits. Oh, don't forget all the finals and maybe even a Thesis Paper that has to be submitted. Then, there is renting a cap and a gown. Someone has probably made arrangements for a ceremony, and you might make plans for a party. Then, you make a processional march and a recessional march with a lot of words spoken and someone giving you a diploma. Then, there is a party with food and beverages of different types (cakes, cookies, sandwiches, veggie trays, punch, and whatever else you please), and people bringing up the past to celebrate your achievement.

Well, so there are preparations that need to be made. I'm not talking about funeral details, internment arrangements or meal choices; we may or may not be a part of those choices. Rather, I am thinking about making sure that we are prepared. We must make sure that we have accepted the offer of grace extended by God through the blood of Jesus Christ so that we have the gift of eternal life (John 3:16). Then we must make sure that we continue to be obedient to the teachings of Jesus (1 John 2:3; 3:1-3). This also means that we are to invite as many people as we can to join us in eternity with God (Matthew 28:18 – 1; Acts 1:8). Then, when we face the final enemy in this life, death, we will be prepared to meet Jesus as our Lord and Savior and to be with Him for eternity (2 Cor 5:6 – 8; Phil. 1:21 – 24; 1 Timothy 4:8). Then, we will move learning to serve Him and worship Him here and now to serve and worship Him for all eternity, as John tells us in Revelation 22:1 – 5, specifically part of the verse where he writes: *“The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.”* (NIV)

When we face the tests of this life, we must remember that each may be our final test, and we must live prepared. While death is not our friend, it isn't the powerful enemy that must be avoided at all costs. For if we die in Christ, we are blessed to be in His presence. It is a graduation from this life into the next (or from the part of life lived on the earth now,

into the next part where we await being ushered back to the earth for the rest of eternity) in much the same way that we graduate from one stage of life into the next, where we hope to use or build on the information, skills and wisdom we have previously learned and earned.

So, when I die, have a graduation ceremony. And yes, we can mourn the passing of what we know in the passing of one we know – parents especially mourn and celebrate the moving on of their children as they graduate and move from one stage of life to the next – but we celebrate knowing that what the promises of God are for those who are in Christ Jesus for the life to come. We, too, can look forward to our final celebration as we gather around the throne of God in eternity.

Longing for the final (and by far the best) celebration!

Rocky



| April 2025 | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |



| June 2025 | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | Joy & Kerry Lourash | 2 | 3 |
| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | | | | | Brenna Woolery | Tim & Eileen Wiggins |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Rocky & Brenna Woolery | | | Peggy Brown Kevin & Sue McKee | | | |
| 25 | Memorial Day | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| | | | | Roger Beals | | |

Baccalaureate here at the church
 Sunday, May 4, at 5:00pm

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Organization



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Landon Woolery

