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## From the Pastor

We are finishing up a sermon series on outreach and evangelization. I started to take what I considered to be six ways of sharing our faith and devote a sermon to each one, but thankfully, I began to see that as a little much, so I decided to put them all into one sermon. However, I wanted to take each one and write about it in these articles.

The first one that I wanted to cover is what I call direct evangelism. This is the person who always is able to share the Gospel at the drop of a hat. Often times, when we think of someone gifted in evangelism, they are what I would call a direct evangelist.

Now, when I preached the sermon, I used Acts 2 (Peter preaching at Pentecost) to display a direct evangelist. However, if I could do that sermon over again, I would probably use the account of Phillip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-40 (You might want to read that.) instead of Acts 2, mainly due to the fact that when I refer to a direct evangelist, I am not necessarily referring to someone who preaches, but to someone who shares their faith in everyday life.

One important observation is that we tend to think that people who are gifted in this type of evangelization are not very good at building relationships. I know I used to think that. While it is true that people who are gifted like this must be careful that they do not disregard relationships, they often still may value relationships as an integral part of sharing their faith. It's just that they do it very fast, which can be very valuable if one does not have a lot of time to share their faith.

For instance, I noted during my sermon at General Assembly, one of the speakers drives an Uber around just so that he can share the Gospel. However, he didn't just start presenting the Gospel without a relationship. He would ask questions about their lives. What he especially was gifted in was finding ways to bring the Gospel into

their personal lives in a short amount of time.

I mentioned Phillip in Acts 8: He strikes up a conversation by asking the Ethiopian if he understands what he is reading from in the book of Isaiah. What I think is essential to the passage is verse 29, where the Holy Spirit told Phillip to go talk to the Ethiopian. This is something else that direct evangelists seem to be gifted at: listening and obeying the Holy Spirit.

Granted, there are some people who seem to be exceptional at direct evangelism. They are always finding ways and means to share the Gospel. Like each one of these areas, they might have an area of weakness, namely that they might rush things and not take the time to develop friendships. They must also be careful that they don't view people as objects to be won over as fast as they can so they can move on to the next person, and yet, there is something to be said that one can have the gift of meeting someone and within several minutes, they are sharing the Gospel.

Even if we don't feel like we are not gifted in this area, we can still strive to do more direct evangelism. If we could get over our fears, wouldn't it be nice to have the ability to share the Gospel whenever we see an opening, even if we don't feel like we are the most gifted in this area?

To do that, we need to be able to make sure we clearly know how to present the Gospel, such as three circles ([www.namb.net/evangelism/3circles](http://www.namb.net/evangelism/3circles)).

In short, be prepared, pray for opportunities to share the Gospel, look for those opportunities as you listen to the Holy Spirit's prodding, and be faithful to what God has asked you to do.



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You can also find us on Facebook.

Office Hours:

Mon, Wed, Fri: 12 - 3:30 pm

Tues & Thurs: 12 - 4 pm

Pastor's Hours:

Tuesday - Thursday

9:30 am - noon (flexible)

## Congratulations Dick & Shirley!

You are all invited to Seward's Farm on Sunday, Sept 3 from 3 - 5 pm to help Dick and Shirley celebrate 70 years of marriage. Light refreshments will be served.

## Young Lives Helps Local Teen Moms

In August, five people from Genesee County Young Lives went to Lake Champion in the Catskills for a Young Lives Camp, reports Jess Maskell, the Genesee County Young Lives coordinator. The group that went included Jess, one teen mom and her two kids, and Sandy Partridge from our church who was the childcare volunteer.

Young Lives works with teen moms to assure that they have a great teen experience while being introduced to salvation through Jesus. Childcare volunteers like Sandy can watch the children so the teen moms can have a Christian camp experience. Sandy assists with the program that meets monthly in Batavia throughout the year.

Young Lives receives support from our church Evangelism & Mission budget through Genesee County Young Life. That contribution also supports the Wyldlife program for middle school kids that meets monthly at our church.

They have some vendor events coming up at the end of August, then Young Lives Club will resume in October! They are always looking for new teen parents to support, volunteers to help with club, and prayer warriors. If interested please reach out to Sandy.



## Middle School Kids Enjoy Wyldlife

Wyldlife is the name of the middle school version of Young Life. Throughout the spring, a Wyldlife group of students from the Byron-Bergen and surrounding area has been meeting at our church. They had two meetings in June, trying to make sure they could fit as much in prior to the school year ending.

They started up again with a meeting in late August, gearing up for the start of the school year.

The average attendance is around 12 students, with attendance at 20 for the largest. Every meeting has been a blast, with kids excited to continue to come. The kids include a number of our church family who are in that age range, plus at least half who are local residents who aren't affiliated with any church. The club features a number of crazy games that keep the kids engaged, then a gospel message presented by one of the leaders.

They will continue to meet once a month, generally the last Friday of the month. In October, they are planning a weekend trip to Saranac Lake, a Young Life camp in the Adirondacks, with Wyldlife students from throughout the area.

The full leadership team includes experienced staff and volunteers, including Justin Pretko as mission staff, Mo, David, Jackie, and Hannah as volunteers. All have had experience as YL and Wyldlife leaders. There may also be a couple of new leaders who are recent graduates from the Rochester West YL Club who are staying local.

Max Herbert, the regional director who has also been assisting with the Byron-Bergen club, says "I am so grateful for Bergen Pres for opening your doors to us and being so supportive of our efforts! The youth room has been a perfect fit for us and to have a location that everyone is familiar with has really been such a gift."



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## **TAG (August: Bergen's Best Month)**

August was once again Bergen's best month of the year. It all began with VBS on August 1st. It was a great time of worship, spiritual development, and games for the teens and all the kids in attendance. Over the three nights of VBS about 15 teens showed up to enjoy the event. The next important week for the TAG teens began the evening of Sunday, August 13th. That was the first day of the Bergen Christian Sports Camp at Hickory Park. The sports camp ran for three nights (we were rained out on Tuesday) and 70 kids attended over the course of the week. Participants in the camp played soccer, basketball, baseball, and vintage Catalino games. Sandy Partridge once again provided delicious snacks each night and Tom Jones manned the water station. With Chris Wright taking care of any medical needs, we were in great shape. Everyone had an awesome time and learned more about God's plan for their life. Many of the younger TAG teens attended the camp, and over 15 older TAG teens volunteered to help as group counselors and station leaders. Altogether, over 30 people volunteered to help with the camp. What a blessing and a great way to shine God's light in Bergen! On Thursday, August 17th many teens also volunteered their time to help feed people in need at the BEPC Foodlink distribution. Even during such a busy week, with Sports Camp ending the previous evening, the teens were still willing to give up their time to help those in need.

Our TAG youth group will be meeting on the following Sundays from 6:00 PM-8:00 PM in the Teen Room: September 3rd and September 17th. Please keep all the teens of our group, and in Bergen, in your prayers. Continue to pray for God's protection and guidance in their lives!



Bergen Sports Camp - 2023

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## **Food Collection on September 3**

Don't forget that the first Sunday of the month continues to be the time we collect food for the Salvation Army. As Todd Rapp from the Batavia Salvation Army shared with us in August, the food we collect and contribute to their food pantry is a vital part of the ministry to many folks who live in our county.

Breakfast cereal, pasta and peanut butter are still among the top of the list for needs for these families

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## **Foodlink Cares for Our Neighbors**

The August 17 shipment of food was the largest our site has received in a few years. There were plenty of fruits and vegetables to bless our neighbors. Nearly 200 families received food. Any "surplus" food at our distribution site is taken that afternoon to food pantries in surrounding communities.

The weather forecast had been for rain that afternoon, but God continues to be faithful by pushing the clouds away after just a few drops.

Thank you to the more than 40 volunteers who make the event happen. We couldn't do it without you.

The truck driver, Daniel, from Foodlink was new to the organization. He had been on the job less than two weeks. He was challenged by some of the process to unload the truck, but was happy to stay with us to pray as we always do before we start the distribution.

Our next distribution is Sept. 21. Volunteers of all ages are always welcome.

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## **Foodlink is September 21**

As always, we need a full supply of our faithful volunteers to serve our neighbors in need. Please arrive by 2:45 pm to be ready to begin unloading the truck at 3 pm. Volunteers, please park in the Methodist Church parking lot across the street.

Thanks to all who make these events possible.



## Vacation Bible School



### Make your ways known to me, LORD; teach me your paths. Psalm 25:4

This year, VBS was held 3 evenings - August 1-3 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. At 5:00 p.m. each evening prior to the VBS program, a family dinner was provided in the Fellowship Hall. This was well received by parents and kids, as well as our volunteer group.

The kids enjoyed the fun game theme: Twists and Turns-where Following Jesus Changes Everything! During the Opening and Closing Rally kids learned high-energy songs that tied in with the daily Bible verses. Pastor Brandt as 'MC' led each evening. He engaged kids in various group challenges as well as highlighting our Missions of the week. Pastor Brandt challenged the kids to donate a total of \$50, to be sent to EduNations - a youth education ministry in Sierra Leone that our church sponsors. The kids rose to the challenge and donated a total of \$591. What a blessing and how exciting it was that so much money was donated in only 3 nights. Kids had the opportunity to learn more about this mission and view videos of students at their schools in Sierra Leone. The teen group donated the most and had the pleasure of 'pie'ing Pastor Brandt. Sixty-three food items were also donated to the Salvation Army Food pantry.

During the Bible Story rotation, kids learned about Jesus and one of His closest friends, Peter. The daily themes were: "**Jesus is Trustworthy**"-even when I doubt; "**Jesus is Forgiving**"-even when I sin; "**Jesus is Worth Following**"-even when it gets tough. Other rotations included outdoor games and a Bible memory rotation where kids memorized and learned the

meaning of bonus scripture as it related to the Bible point of the day.

On August 6, the kids and parents were welcomed back to the Sunday worship service/VBS finale. The kids sang the songs they learned during the week. Pastor Brandt's sermon was based on Acts 10-Peter told Cornelius about Jesus. This was the final theme of VBS- "**Jesus is For Everyone**", including me.

After the worship service, an indoor picnic for families was held in the Fellowship Hall and an outdoor bounce house was enjoyed by all the kids.

We averaged 43 kids/teens per evening with a total of 50 different kids/teens registered throughout the week. For the first time during VBS, we offered an Adult/Parent group led by Judy Bailey.

VBS could not have run as smoothly as it did without the 26 volunteers who offered their time and gifts before and during the week of VBS. With the support of the Session and the E & M ministry team, we decided to do VBS a little differently than in years past. As a church, we are looking at ways in how we can reach out effectively to families with the Gospel. We are so grateful and blessed with how our VBS came together. As a VBS team we will continue to assess all the changes we made this year as we anticipate beginning planning in January for next summer's VBS. We encourage anyone who would be interested in serving on the VBS team to reach out to any current team member.

Giving God all the Glory,

**VBS team:** Pastor Brandt and Marty Hammack, Judy Bailey, Julie Foeller, and Bethany Berggren



## Welcome Back to Sunday School

**September 10: 9:15 am - 10:15 am**

### Classes available for all -- Children to Adult

We will be continuing our study in the New Testament using **the Gospel Project** curriculum. The Gospel Project is a weekly Bible study that helps all ages dive deep into the big story of the Bible—God's plan to rescue His people through His Son, Jesus Christ. We will be continuing where we left off in the spring in the Series title: **'From Heaven to Earth.'**

Class locations:

- Elementary Age in downstairs KFC room with Chris and Dave Wright
- Pre-teen/Teens in downstairs session room with Chad Caccamise
- Adult Bible Study in the room off of the Fellowship Hall (previously known as 'choir room') with Rob Willhoft-lead facilitator

We continue to be blessed by our faithful teachers/facilitators each week. If anyone is interested in assisting with the Elementary class on an as-needed basis, please see Julie Foeller or Chris Wright.

***Adults.....Maybe you haven't attended a Bible study in a while or ever...or maybe you feel you are not able to commit to attending each week-Each week is generally a stand-alone lesson. Please know that you will be richly blessed whenever you come. Digging deep into God's Word with other believers affirms and clarifies its truth. It can be challenging but so rewarding. ALL ARE WELCOME!***

***Please see Rob Willhoft with questions re: Adult Bible study or Julie Foeller for youth classes.***

## Sewing With a Purpose

Sewing With a Purpose will meet on Tuesday, September 12, in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30.

We will have "Show and Tell," so some of our new members can see what SWP creates to share God's Love.

We will also tack or secure red rose appliques to the forest green mittens for the lady veterans. We need about 6 people for this activity. (hand sewing will be needed for this activity)

Another group will pair up the mittens so they are ready for distribution to the Veteran Ministry. We need about three people for this activity (no sewing required)



Men's gloves on left need to be tied together.

Women's gloves on right, with red rose applique, needing tacking in place.

There will be stations available to work on several other projects to include: teddy bears for Domestic Violence, knitted veteran hats, flannel hearts, and flannel eye protections.

Some of the projects do not require sewing skills, so please come to fellowship with our group.

## Fattening the Flock with Fellowship

Our after church time of feasting and fellowship is wonderful. We will continue to have this event every Sunday after worship service, with the exception of times there is a special church breakfast, lunch, or other Sunday church gathering. Accordingly, on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Fattening the Flock will not be held. Instead, we would like to encourage everyone to gather at the Seward's barn that afternoon.

## Help needed for Fattening the Flock!!

There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board leading to the dining room. We are looking for help in set-up, clean-up, and with food. Ideas of food you could bring include: tuna/egg/chicken sandwiches, crackers and cheese, fruit salad, Jell-O, potato or pasta salad, and breads or desserts. Thank you for any and all help you might be able to provide!



## Calendar

Online calendar: [tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr](https://tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr)



### Weekly/Monthly

- First Sunday of the month – S A Food Collection
- Sundays, 10:30-11:45 am – Morning Worship
- Wednesdays, 6:00 pm – Prayer for Door of Hope
- Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 am – Son Risers
- Saturdays, 11 am – Kid's Quest
- Newsletter Deadline on the 25th of each month
- Last Saturday of the month – Door of Hope Coffee House @ 6 pm (September 30<sup>th</sup> this month)

### Other Events in September:

- September 2 - KQ visit to Seneca Park Zoo @ 10 am
- September 3 - Fellowship Meeting @ 12:15 pm
- September 3 - TAG @ 6 pm
- September 4 - Labor Day - no office hours
- September 9 - KQ Capture the Flag @ 11 am
- September 10 - Sunday School for all Ages @ 9:15 am
- September 10 - Back-to-School Bash
- September 12 - SWP @ 9:30 am working in the Fellowship Hall & Choir Room
- September 13 - Sessions @ 7 pm
- September 14 - Pastor Brandt @ Reformation Society
- September 15 & 16 - Brandt @ Presbytery
- September 17 - E&M Meeting @ 12:15 pm
- September 17 - TAG @ 6 pm
- September 21 - Foodlink @ 4 pm
- September 22 - KQ Game Night @ 6:30 pm
- September 24 - Luncheon following Service
- September 24 - Worship Committee Meeting @ 12:15 pm
- September 26 - Deacons @ 7 pm
- September 29 - Young Life Wyldlife Club @ 7 pm
- September 30 - Kid's Quest @ 11 am
- September 30 - Door of Hope Coffee House @ 6 pm

## VBS Anniversaries & Birthdays

### September Birthdays

- 3 - John Wise
- 15 - Janet Wise
- 17 - David Hahn
- 18 - Duncan McNear
- 25 - Neva Lattimer
- 27 - Tom Jones
- 28 - Rob Willhoft
- 28 - Cheryl Saville
- 29 - Amy Stacy

### September Anniversaries

- 1 - Jim and Amanda Wilson (22 years)
- 2 - Paul and Neva Lattimer (56 years)
- 6 - Rob and Faith Willhoft (43 years)
- 9 - David and Susan Brownell (34 years)

### October Birthdays

- 6 - Debbie Sheldon
- 13 - Delores Seward
- 15 - Joan Dermody
- 16 - Chris Hollenbeck
- 18 - Mandy Wilson
- 25 - Richard vonBergen
- 25 - Dale White
- 26 - Maddie Buckland
- 30 - Ruth Morse
- 31 - Chad Caccamise
- 31 - Diane White

### October Anniversaries

- 1 - Jake and Michelle Buckland-Seward
- 26 - Dick and Cheryl Saville



Judy Baily & Rob Willhoft enjoy some game-time during VBS



# Church Finances

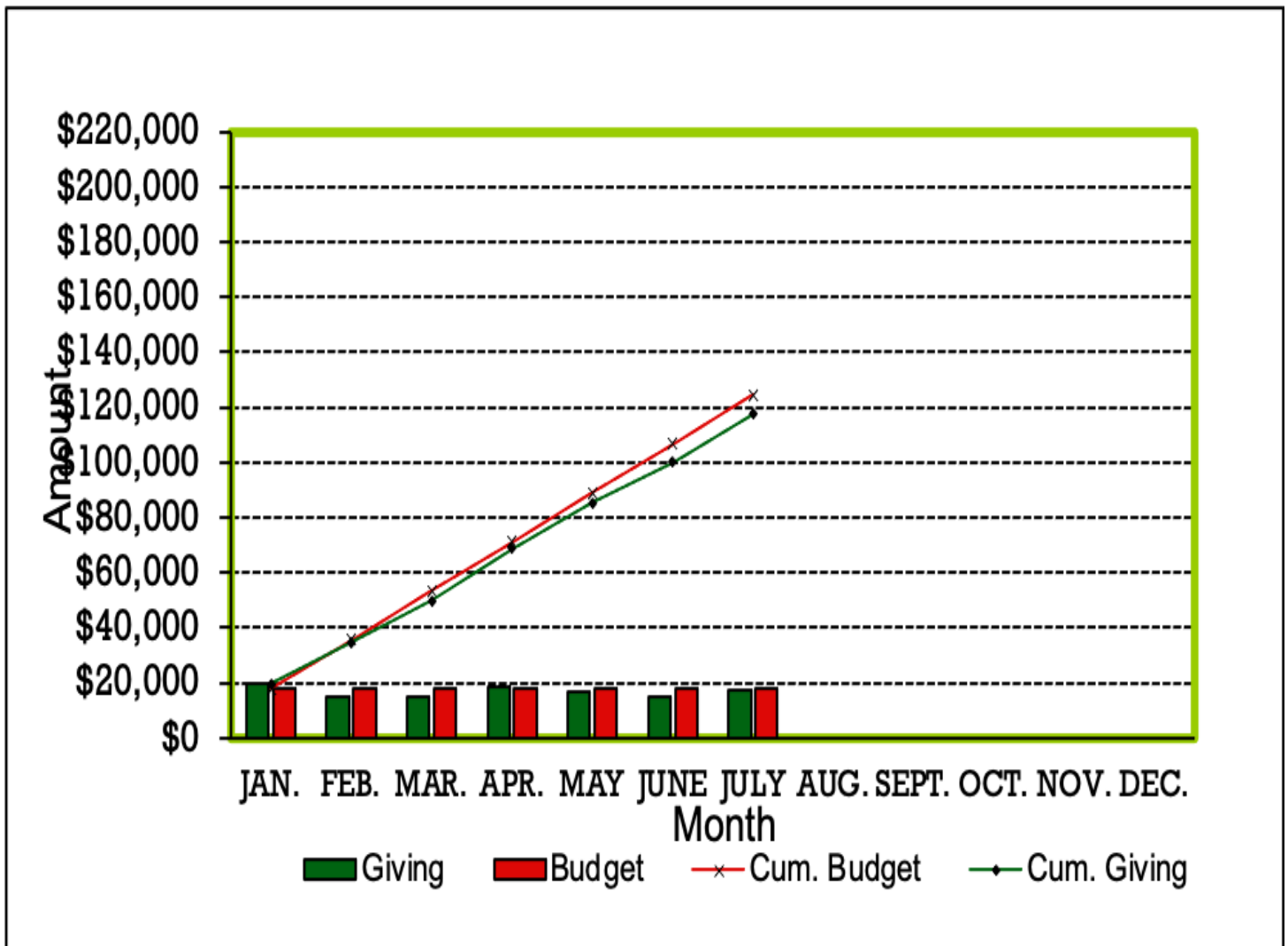
## June 2023

*"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."*

*Malachi 3:10*

Giving for July was good, \$17,397, one of the highest of the year and close to the monthly target of \$17,777. The monthly average for the year thus far remains higher than that for 2022 at the same time of the year. Expenses were \$16,821, typical for a summer month. A relatively low draw, \$2,000, was needed from the AIF to meet expenses.

With the Organ Fund drive now officially ended, gifts were still received that amounted to \$602.75. That brings the total of Organ Fund money in hand to \$51,299. That sum will allow us to pay the final bill from Parsons, expected to be about \$45,000, with \$6,000 or more left to pay much of the tithe we customarily set aside from similar fund drives.



## MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – JULY 2023

### OPERATING FUND

#### Income

Sunday offering:	\$12,823.00
Net Online Offering:	\$1,567.34
<i>*note – online offering reflects \$50.72 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i>	
Amortized one-time gifts:	\$3,007.00

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<i>Total New Receipts</i>	<i>\$17,397.34</i>
<i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i>	<i>\$473.47</i>
<b>Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts)</b>	<b>\$17,870.81</b>

#### Expenses

Gross Expenditures for the month	\$16,820.86
Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses	
• None	\$0.00

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<b>Net Expenditures for the Month</b>	<b>\$16,820.86</b>
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Accumulated Income Fund Transfer Needed to cover Expenditures	\$2,000.00
Extra Monthly Amortized Gift Overdrawn from the AIF	\$0.00
Monthly Amortized Gift Left in Accumulated Income Fund	\$1,007.00

**OPERATING FUND BALANCE \$42.95**

### DESIGNATED FUND

Opening Balance (from previous month)	\$12,691.97
New Designated Receipts	\$6,103.58
Total Designated Expenditures	\$2,008.99

**DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE \$16,786.56**

**TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund) \$16,829.51**

### OTHER FUND ACTIVITY

#### Accumulated Income Fund

• June Withdrawal	-\$2,000.00
<b>Current Balance (7/31/2023)</b>	<b>\$18,257.94</b>

#### Henry/Hill/Dawe/Claus Fund

• Snell kids camps	-\$732.50
<b>Current Balance (7/31/2023)</b>	<b>\$26,060.91</b>

#### Organ Fund

• July Deposit	\$602.75
<b>Current Balance (7/31/2023)</b>	<b>\$51,298.61</b>