Dranesville UMC Newsletter

June 2026

God'll Stand By You

The other day, I came across a clip from the television show America's Got Talent. It featured a singing family called "The Edgar Family," and their performance completely stole my heart. But as beautiful as their music was, it was their incredible story of redemption and grace that stayed with me long after the video ended. I just knew I had to share it with all of you.

The group is made up of a mom named Nikki, her husband Ryan, and Nikki's teenage daughter, Jaslyn. When they stood on that big stage, the love between them was absolutely glowing. But their road to getting there wasn't easy, and it actually started inside the world of faith.

You see, when Nikki was just fifteen years old, she was discovered as an incredibly talented Christian music singer. She signed a major record deal, began touring the country, and quickly became a bright young star in the church world. She was singing about God's love to thousands of people every week. Her well known hit was "Everylasting Place."

When Judgment Steps In

But when Nikki was eighteen, she made a mistake and became pregnant out of wedlock with her daughter, Jaslyn. Sadly, instead of surrounding this scared teenage girl with the grace and love of Jesus, the Christian music community at the time turned its back on her. Christian bookstores pulled her albums from the shelves, radio

Sunday Worship Children's Moment

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Come worship with us on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. In the Sanctuary or virtually via Zoom

Coffee hour following worship via Zoom or live

Adult Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

If you would like to join, please contact us at office@dranesvilleumc.org.

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God'll Stand By You (continued)

stations stopped playing her music, and she was heavily ostracized by the people she thought were her spiritual family.

My heart just broke hearing that part of her story. It is a painful reminder of what happens when legalism and judgment take the place of Christian charity. Nikki found herself completely cast aside, a young single mother trying to pick up the pieces of her life.

But praise God, that is not where her story ends! Nikki refused to give up. She moved to Los Angeles, worked hard, and rebuilt her life as a background singer. Years later, God brought Ryan into her life. Ryan didn't just fall in love with Nikki; he fully embraced little Jaslyn as his very own daughter.

In 2015, they realized that when the three of them sang together, something truly magical happened. They formed a family band, and eventually stood before millions on television to sing about unconditional love in America's Got Talent in 2016. When they harmonized, you could hear the years of healing, forgiveness, and joy pouring out of them.

As Nikki later shared, "I was a teen mom who was so incredibly hard on myself. I took the weight of judgment and opinions and wore it as my own … (but now) I would tell my younger self that I am so very proud of her, and that she's a great mom."

I wanted to share this with you all because it reminded me so deeply of the heart of the Gospel. Nikki's story shows us that no matter what mistakes we have made, or what judgments the world (and sometimes even the Church) throws at us, God is always in the business of making all things beautiful. He specializes in taking broken pieces and turning them into beautiful melodies.

It also made me reflect on the kind of church family we always have here. I pray that our church will continue to be a safe harbor, a place where anyone carrying shame, mistakes, or a broken past can walk through our doors and find open arms, unconditional love, and a community ready to help them rebuild.

If you have a few minutes this week, look up "Edgar Family America's God Talent" on YouTube. Their harmonies will bring a smile to your face, and their testimony will remind you just how powerful and restorative God's love truly is.

Blessings and warmth,

Pastor Keith

Bible Study

Tuesday and Thursday Bible Study

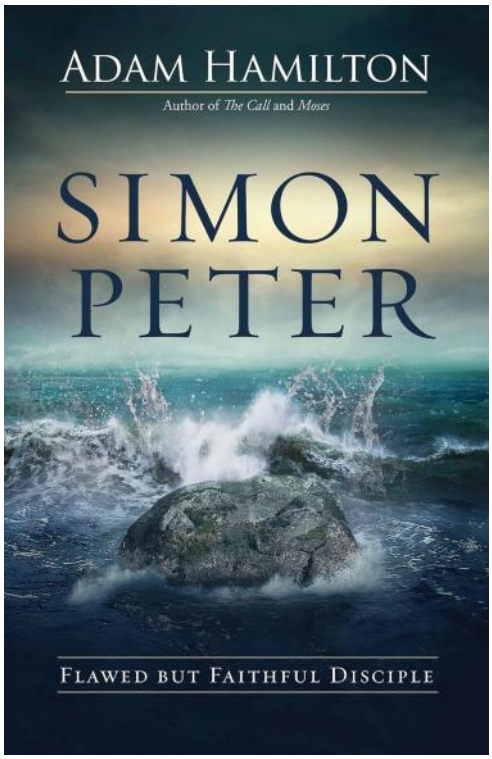
Dranesvilleumc.org/connect

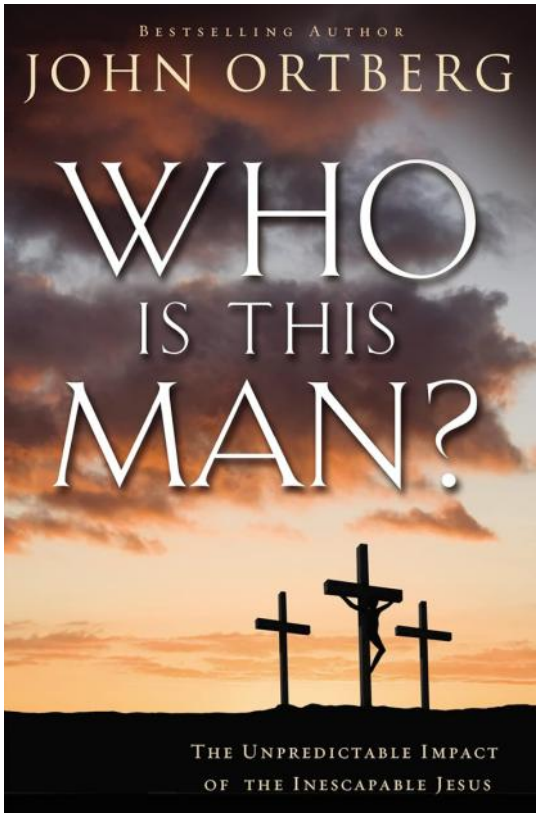
Tuesday Evening: 7pm OR Thursday Morning: 10am

Simon Peter--an ordinary fisherman who heard an extraordinary call. He left everything to follow his teacher and possessed a passion that would change the world.

That's one way to describe Peter. Here's another: poor, uneducated, quick-tempered, and full of doubts and fears. Doesn't even sound like the same man. And that's the point of Simon Peter, a new book and six-week adult Bible study by Adam Hamilton. Peter was just an ordinary guy who heard and followed God's extraordinary call.

Discover how you, too, have special gifts, talents, and abilities that God can use to make a difference today.





Adult Sunday School

Who Is This Man?

John Ortberg

In *Who Is This Man*, John Ortberg explores the paradox of Jesus, history's most familiar figure while simultaneously the man no one knows. Who Is This Man traces Jesus' incredible life and legacy from his days on Earth to the present moment, showing us:

- How his vision of life continues to haunt and challenge humanity
- The ways his influence has inspired movements in art, science, government, medicine, and education
- How his lessons about dignity, compassion, forgiveness, and hope continue to influence humanity

Join us in the library or on Zoom at 9:00 for this five-week series starting Sunday May 31, 2026.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 13-16

8:30AM-12:00PM

Join the Fun at Dranesville UMC Vacation Bible School!

1089 Liberty Meeting Ct
Herndon VA 20170

A week filled with friends and fun activities. Lessons and activities for art, music and technology. Classes divided by age group. Space limited so register soon.

ages 3-9
$50/child

Registration begins March 22nd:
dranesvilleumc.org/vbs

Graduates 2026

Ben Clark

Ben has successfully defended his doctoral dissertation titled “Environmental monitoring of pathogens and antimicrobial resistance: Insights from North Carolina, USA and Lampung, Indonesia” to be awarded a PhD in Civil Engineering from North Carolina State University. During his time as a graduate student, Ben conducted research with the intent to protect communities across the world from the burden of diarrheal disease. Ben traveled extensively in North Carolina, Malawi, and Indonesia to complete his research.

After graduation, Ben consulted with Stanford University and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in Dhaka followed by a brief vacation in Singapore with his father, Rich. Ben is currently taking two months to reflect on his PhD experiences while being enrolled in an Indonesian language school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Hans Vollmecke

Hans Vollmecke graduated from the Citadel on May 9th, 2026, Magna Cum Laude, with his bachelor’s degree in Finance.

Upon graduating, Hans will continue his service in the Army National Guard and has recently accepted a job offer doing tech sales at Memory Blue, located in Tysons Corner Virginia.

Beck Barber

Beck graduated from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology with a Bachelors of Science in Mechanical Engineering .

Beck graduated with Honors, all accomplished while participating in Baja SAE; a collegiate design competition in which teams are tasked with designing and building a single seat off-road buggy to compete in various races.

Beck will be taking a break after graduation, and will discern the next steps.

Megan Sansalone

Megan graduated from Brunswick Community College with an Associates Degree in Nursing. For a decade, Megan has been working in the hospital field. She started at New Hanover Hospital in Wilmington, NC, working as an ER Tech. She put herself through EMS certification courses - Basic, Intermediate and ultimately became a Paramedic. She worked for Brunswick County EMS for several years before returning to NOVANT hospital in Wilmington, NC. While working full time as a Paramedic in the Emergency Department, Megan went back to college and participated in a first of its kind “Paramedic to Nursing” bridge program at the college. Her pinning and lamp lighting ceremony took place on May 7th and the cap and gown graduation was celebrated on May 8th.

Megan will continue to work in her current paramedic position until the end of June. She intends to keep up her paramedic certification. After taking the NCLEX exam in June, she will be moving back home to Northern Virginia to be closer to family. Megan has accepted a position to work as an RN in the Observation Unit at INOVA Loudoun Hospital starting August 17, 2026.

Derek Huenneke

Derek is graduating from South Lakes High School on June 5th, 2026, with an International Baccalaureate Career Program (IBCP) diploma with an emphasis in Business.

As part of his graduation requirements, Derek completed more than 50 hours of community service, many of those on the DUMC Mission Trip to Asheville, NC in 2025, helping with LINK and The Closet, and projects at DUMC.

Derek played baseball at South Lakes on the Junior Varsity (9 & 10 grades) and Varsity (11 & 12 grades) teams, primarily as a pitcher. He played travel baseball with the NOVA Bears for 6 years. Derek participated in the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) club and was inducted into the National Honor Society.

Derek will be attending the University of Tennessee in Knoxville this fall, where he plans to study Business Analytics, with a minor yet to be decided.

Sasha Rosemary Geel

Sasha is the daughter of Peter and Anneke Geel, and granddaughter of Rosemary and Rodger Geel. After spending her freshman and sophomore years at American Community School of Amman, Jordan, Sasha is now graduating from Langley High School with an Advanced Diploma and with a Service Distinction.

Sasha competed on the Varsity Swim Team at American Community School and has a passion for dance. She performed in multiple productions of ballet/ contemporary dance with Ravel Dance Company (Reston, Virginia) and with Dance Hall (Amman, Jordan)

Sasha plans to take pre-requisites at NOVA Community College with a view to transferring to JMU to enter their School of Nursing and to study in their World Languages Department.

Fellowship

Lunch with the Evergreen Group:

June 14th at 12:00 pm in Sterling
at The Bungalow Lakehouse Restaurant.
The third week this month!

Please see Pete Hause for details and to RSVP or call 703-430-7166.

Wednesday Night Community Pot Luck

Memorial Day Cookout: May's Wednesday Community Dinner

Game Day – Sunday, June 28 following worship!

We will have board games, puzzles, pizza, and Pastor Keith's famous wings -- bring your family, friends, and neighbors for a fun afternoon of fellowship! If you own Monopoly or other fun games, please bring them.

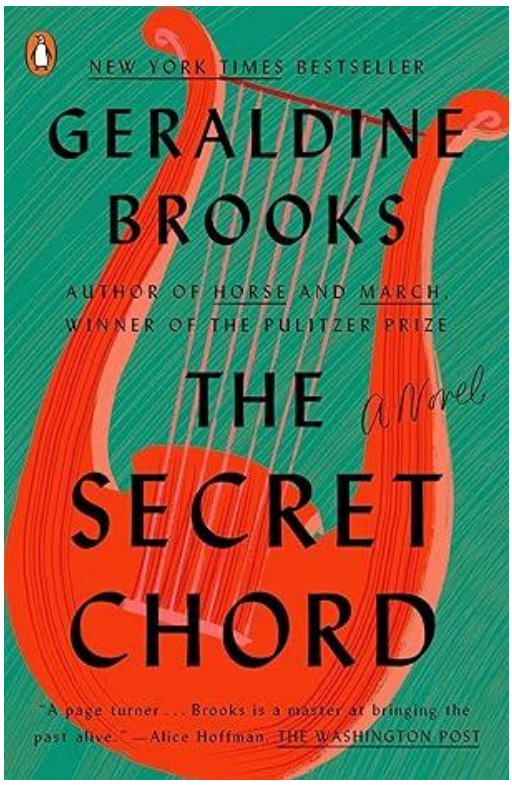
DUMC Book Club—July 8th

Dear Dranesville Book Group participants (and those who like to read along...):

Thanks for another great book discussion in May! Becoming Madame Secretary, a historical novel on the life of Francis Perkins was a big hit with the group as were Kathy Bank's cookies! We were impressed with all that Ms. Perkins stood for and accomplished and yet remains a lesser-known figure in U.S. history.

Our next gathering is July 8th at 7:00pm, with another piece of historical fiction. During the Tuesday Bible Study this past week, Mark McEwen highly recommended Brooks' work on King David, the Secret Chord.

July 8th Selection: The Secret Chord by Geraldine Brooks



Peeling away the myth to bring the Old Testament's King David to life in Second Iron Age Israel, Brooks traces the arc of his journey from obscurity to fame, from shepherd to soldier, from hero to traitor, from beloved king to murderous despot, and into his remorseful and diminished dotage.

The Secret Chord provides new context for some of the best-known episodes of David's life while also focusing on others, even more remarkable and emotionally intense, that have been neglected. We see David through the eyes of those who love him or fear him—from the prophet Natan, voice of his conscience, to his wives Mikhal, Avigail, and Batsheva, and finally to Solomon, the late-born son who redeems his Lear-like old age. Brooks has an uncanny ability to hear and transform characters from history, and this beautifully written, unvarnished saga of faith, desire, family, ambition, betrayal, and power will enthrall her many fans.

September 9th Selection: Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

Several of us have purchased a copy (now in paperback) and are willing to pass it along! The line for copies at the library appears to be moving as well.

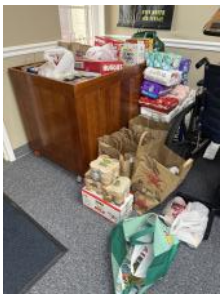
Theo of Golden is the endearing story of a curious old man who quietly moves into a southern city and, for reasons unknown to anyone but himself, undertakes a campaign of anonymous generosity. Theo's love for people, combined with his fondness for books, art, birds, and story, unite in a colorful expression of outreach and affection. Stories are shared, friendships are born, and lives, in response to his inexplicable kindness, are affirmed and transformed. The old man, no stranger to sadness and loss, quickly becomes a welcome presence in the community, but his new friends and neighbors wonder, who is Theo? And why is he here? Beautifully written stories of kindness and neighborliness are always timely, but perhaps especially so now.

Meet Theo of Golden. He's happy to meet you.

Mobile Food Pantry: Next: June 9th

Register online for the latest updates. Join us on the **2nd Tuesday of each month** (light rain or shine) from 9:30 am – 12 pm (or until the food runs out) in the rear parking lot at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church. Join Team Dranesville and wear your Dranesville

GROCERY CARD DONATIONS 5/24/26 $690.00!!



EVEN 4 OTHERS collection June 28th

Some of the top needs are Jelly, Dried beans, Canned fruit, Canned corn, peas, carrots, potatoes, Boxed potatoes, Toilet paper, Paper towels, Cleaning products, Toiletry items, etc.

AROUND THE CHURCH

New Window Shutters in the Sanctuary!

Cell Tower Work

So high up!

Best Buddies Walk Wrap-up

Last month, the Best Buddies Friendship Walks shattered records and advanced inclusion across Virginia and DC. Thanks to the incredible dedication of our participants, donors, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners, our Richmond and Washington, DC Friendship Walks raised more than $433,000 to support local Best Buddies programs.

Together, nearly 2,300 walkers came out to celebrate friendship, leadership, and inclusion while helping create opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout our region. Every dollar raised helps fund life-changing one-to-one friendships, leadership development, integrated employment, and inclusive living programs. Thank you for helping us build a more inclusive world—one step at a time.

Tom Hitchings

BEST BUDDIES®

Friendship, Jobs, Leadership, Living & Family

bestbuddies.org/vadc

a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization

May was an exciting and busy month for Troop 1018. We camped in Cumberland, Maryland, and did a 15 mile ride on rail bikes through the historic railway that connects Frostburg with Cumberland. The scouts pedaled the "bikes" on the railroad tracks. Unfortunately, It rained but the scouts had a great time. The Troop also supported Aaron Sasso's Eagle Scout service project. They constructed cabinets for the Potomac High School's marching band that will house the color guard's rifles and flags. The project took place over several weeknights and weekends with scouts pitching in to get the job done. Finally, we want to give DUMC a big "thank you" for the kind donation of funds to the troop. The donation will help us continue to provide great scouting programs that teach character, leadership, and citizenship.

Bill Malyszka, Scoutmaster Troop 1018
scoutmaster@troop1018.org
(571) 241-1061

GALILEE DREAMERS

Galilee Dreamers (galileedreamers.com) was established ten years ago by activists in Baltimore and partners at the International School at Oranim College in Tivon, Israel, to create a program to promote peace and shared society in the Galilee. The target population is high school students. There are currently 10 participating schools.

Jewish and Arab teenagers in Israel grow up in separate neighborhoods and towns, attend schools where different languages are spoken, and have very little (if any) experiences of authentic encounters with the "other" that could dispel prejudices and misconceptions. There are virtually no frameworks nurturing mutual respect and collaboration. Through meaningful interactions and dialogue, Galilee Dreamers facilitates connections between Jewish and Arab students, fostering mutual understanding, empathy, and collaboration. This approach contributes to breaking down barriers and promoting a sense of unity among young people from diverse backgrounds.

The three year program (grades 10-12) includes a trip overseas in which our students engage with other high school students to role model respectful conversation, answer questions about the complexity of life in Israel, and hopefully present the promise of a better future for all Israelis. In past years, students have visited communities in the United States, Canada, Germany and South Africa. In Baltimore, they have been hosted by the Park School, Beth Tfiloh Dahan High School, Pikesville High School, Western Tech, and Krieger Schechter.

The Galilee Dreamer's Mission:
To nurture mutual respect and meaningful connections among Jews and Arabs in the Galilee through dialogue, leadership training, and experiential learning, resulting in a long-term commitment to a shared society.

Dranesville

United Methodist Church

"Making disciples of Jesus Christ by feeding body, mind and soul."

June

7	Holy Communion
	Graduation Celebration and Lunch
9	Mobile Food Pantry
14	Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm
21	Father's Day
28	Even 4 Others Collection for LINK
	Family Game Day after worship

GIVE Online!

July

5	Holy Communion
8	DUMC Book Club
12	Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm
13-16	DUMC Vacation Bible School
14	Mobile Food Pantry
26	LINK Grocery Card Collection

Every Week Join Us In Study and Prayer:

Dranesvilleumc.org/connect

- Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School in person and via Zoom
- Tuesdays at 8:00 a.m. Prayer group is meeting virtually via Zoom
- Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. Bible Study is held via Zoom

To get connected to any of the virtual meetings, please contact the church office by e-mailing office@dranesvilleumc.org or leave a message at 703-430-3137 anytime.

Office closed Fridays in July & August
Office hours: Tuesday—Friday 8:30 am—12:30 pm