

Dranesville UMC Newsletter

July 2026

You'll be Free Indeed

Freedom is one of those words Americans feel in their bones. Every July 4th we celebrate it with fireworks and gratitude, and rightly so.

In everyday life, freedom usually means nobody is telling you what to do. You are free when nothing is blocking you from what you want. It is a very personal thing. More choices, more freedom. There is also the bigger version of this idea, the freedom of a whole people to govern themselves. That is exactly what July 4th is about. And then there is economic freedom, the ability to work, earn, and build a life without unnecessary interference. What all of these have in common is that they are defined by what you are free from. Not so much what you are free for. We'll get to that later.

The Constitution reflects this same thinking. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly. The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments protect us from arbitrary government power. The Fourteenth Amendment guards personal liberty from state interference. These are real, hard-won protections. Generations of Americans have fought to preserve and expand them. Legal freedom is freedom from overreach, from unjust prosecution, from silenced speech. These matter enormously.



John 8:36 is working in a completely different direction.

The setting is a debate in the Jerusalem temple. Jesus tells his listeners that everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. His

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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.*

You'll be Free Indeed (continued)

audience pushes back immediately. "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone." This is an ironic statement by people who are not self-aware since they were living under Roman occupation. But Jesus is not talking about political freedom. He is pointing to something the law cannot reach, an interior condition, a greater freedom far from political, societal, and economic influences.

His word for it is slavery to sin. Modern psychology might call it compulsion, or patterns we cannot seem to break, or the gap between who we want to be and what we actually do. Most of us know that gap personally.

Here is what John's Gospel observes. Jesus himself is completely free. Free from corrupted desires. Free from fear of oppressive power. He acts entirely out of love and truth. And when people spend time with someone like that, something shifts in them. They begin to experience freedom themselves. It is less like following a new rule and more like breathing different air. They see what freedom looks like. They're in relationship with someone completely set free.

John also notices the direction this freedom moves. It does not turn inward. It turns outward toward other people. The person set free by the Son finds that freedom is most fully lived in serving others, not in protecting or accumulating for oneself.

I pray that for the 250th anniversary of our country's birth, you draw closer to the one who enjoys complete freedom. Also remember that Jesus also has the power to set you free to love, serve, and to enjoy life in the way God made you to be. Happy 4th of July!

Pastor Keith

New Shutters for the Sanctuary

If you have been in the sanctuary lately, you may have noticed the new shutters. They have brought a warmth and beauty to the space that many of you have been kind enough to mention. More than a few have also asked how they might help cover the cost, and we are grateful for that generosity.

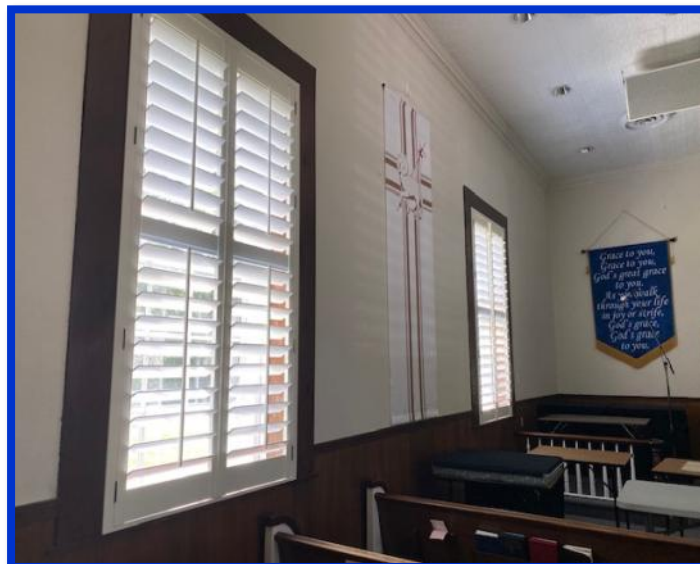
We owe a real thank you to Kristine Leach and Jane Conner, who took on the work of researching, selecting, and organizing the purchase. Their care and attention are part of why the result looks classic in our worship space.

For anyone who would like to contribute toward the cost, gifts of any size are welcome and appreciated. You can mark your offering "sanctuary shutters" or donate through our website under "Sanctuary Shutters".

Thank you, as always, for the many ways you care for this community we call Dranesville UMC.

With kind regards,

Keith Lee





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

Bible Study

Dranesvilleumc.org/connect

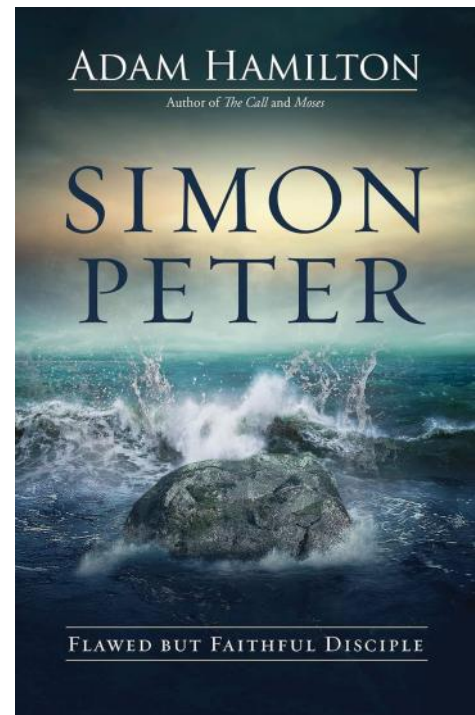
Tuesday and Thursday Bible Study

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.

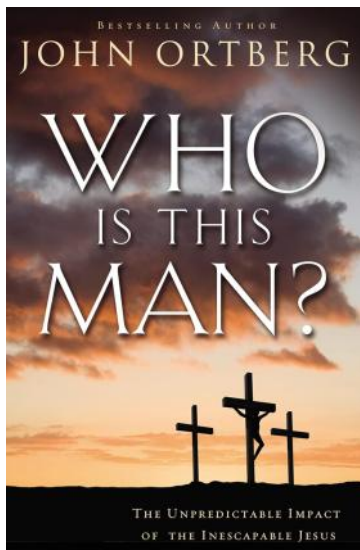
That's one way to describe Peter. Here's another: poor, uneducated, quick-tempered, and full of doubts and fears. Doesn't even sound like the same man. And that's the point of *Simon Peter*, a new book and six-week adult Bible study by Adam Hamilton. Peter was just an ordinary guy who heard and followed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

Sunday School will be meeting over the summer!



Come visit to find out what we're studying
Join us in the library or on Zoom at 9:00 am
any Sunday!

We will be finishing up *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.

Fellowship

Lunch with the Evergreen Group:



EVERGREEN
Lunch Group

July 12th 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.

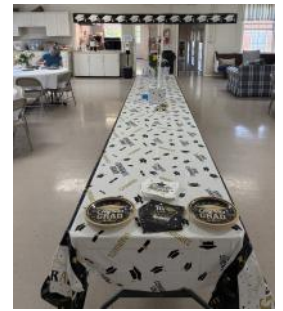
Wednesday Fellowship Breakfast



Please join us for a fellowship breakfast on
Wednesday July 22nd at 10:00am First Watch
12192 Sunset Hills Road Reston VA 20190
Please RSVP to Donna Carlo at 703 244-2911 or
mdgirlinva@yahoo.com



Graduation Celebration



Our Graduation Celebration was a success. One of the graduates was so appreciative, she offered to help us with organizing next year's Graduation Sunday! I think that is a first.

I also am deeply grateful for the way you all rise to the occasion every time. The food you each contributed was delicious. Thanks to Donna and Kathy for spending three hours decorating on Friday, and to the many, many people who stayed to clean up. I was out of there by 2:30! You are amazing.

Blessings to you all for a restful, fun summer.

Linda

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.

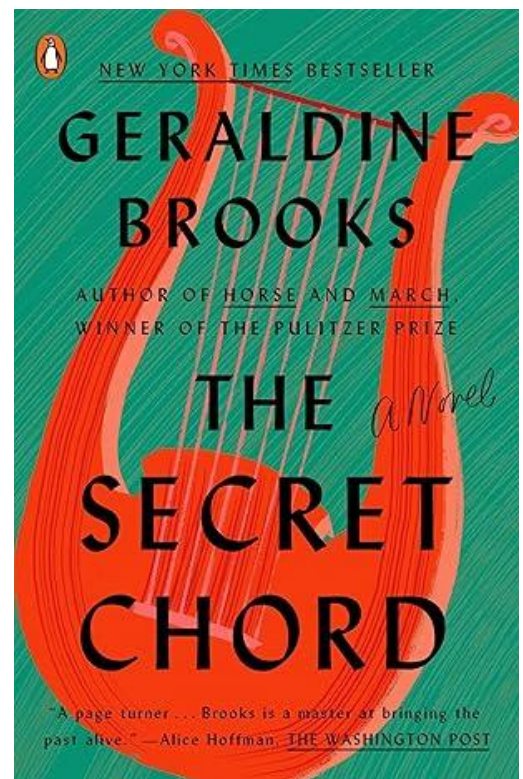
The Secret Chord provides new context for some of the best-known episodes of David's life while also focusing on others, even more remarkable and emotionally intense, that have been neglected. We see David through the eyes of those who love him or fear him—from the prophet Natan, voice of his conscience, 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.

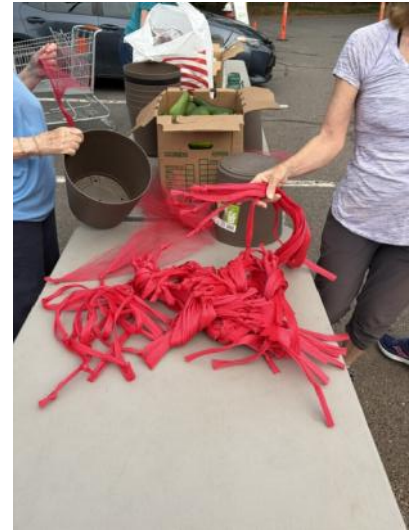
Theo of Golden is the endearing story of a curious old man who quietly moves into a southern city and, for reasons unknown to anyone but himself, undertakes a campaign of anonymous generosity. Theo's love for people, combined with his fondness for books, art, birds, and story, unite in a colorful expression 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: July 14th

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 UMC T-shirts while packing food for those in need.



425 ITEMS COLLECTED FOR JUNE!!

Grocery Card donations for July

This month please donate **grocery gift** cards from your favorite grocery store to give to families in need. Buy Grocery store cards \$25 or under so that LINK can include them in the grocery bags that are delivered to the families. **Contribute by July 26th.** To write a check, make the check payable to “Dranesville UMC” with “LINK” in the memo line.





**Gabriel
Homes**

The 31st Annual Gabriel Homes Golf Tournament

Join Us on Monday, September 21, 2026

Register here:

www.gabrielhomes.org/get-involved/gabriel-homes-annual-golf-tournament/

Join us, Monday, September 21, 2026, for a beautiful day golfing & supporting adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD). Email Gabriel Homes if your

Dear Dranesville United Methodist Church,

Evergreen Country Club in Haymarket, Virginia, is excited to host our 31st Annual Gabriel Homes Golf Tournament on Monday, September 21, 2026.

You each have a special place in your heart for Gabriel Homes residents living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Thank you for your past participation in this beautiful tradition on the third Monday in September to golf on behalf of those with disabilities. We have held this tournament since 1995 and celebrate the amazing outpouring of generosity in support of our residents who meet challenges every day with joy and determination.

I thank each of you for supporting this year's tournament. We could not keep up the great work of Gabriel Homes without you. Please join myself, our board members, staff, and residents on Monday, September 21, 2026, for a fun day for a great cause.

Blessings,
Msgr. Bob Cilinski
Gabriel Homes Board of Directors



SAVE THESE DATES

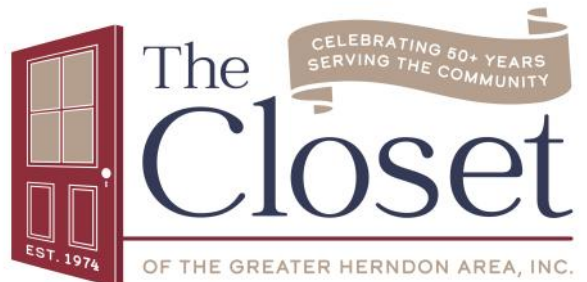
July 4th – Store closed for holiday

July 18th – Kids Day at The Closet (Lots of toys!)

September 5th – Annual Fashion Show

October 16th & 17th – Everything Christmas Sale

December 12th – WINTER MARKT



Check Out Some Good Friends of Ours:

Volunteer Spotlight

Bill and Candi's Decades of Faith in Action

For Bill and Candi, the mission of the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) has resonated since they first heard it in the late 1980s. When Bill heard SoSA founders Ken Horne and Ray Buchanan speak at United Methodist Men gatherings, he was moved to act. The ideas were simple but staggering: millions of Americans are food insecure, yet a massive surplus of food exists. SoSA bridges that gap for mere pennies per serving. "That message is as true today as when

I first heard it," Bill reflects. Over the next thirty years, Bill and Candi made gleaning a family affair. From North Carolina to Virginia, they harvested sweet potatoes, apples, and corn. They led youth groups into the fields and served as committed regular financial donors, providing steady financial support to ensure the longevity of this work.

When they moved from Virginia to Tennessee and joined Christ UMC in Franklin, they were surprised to find the church hadn't yet hosted a potato drop. They set out to change that immediately. In March

2023, they coordinated the church's inaugural drop. What started with the help of a grant has blossomed into a congregational staple; for the past three years, Christ UMC has written the potato drop into its annual budget.

Their most recent drop on February 28, 2026, marked their fourth consecutive event, drawing between 100 and 200 volunteers. For Bill and Candi, the excitement never fades. "Each year, as a truckload of potatoes arrives in the church parking lot, we are excited to know that, within a few hours, a large group of volunteers will bag produce which will be transported to local feeding agencies," they share.

"Within a day or two of the drop, tens of thousands of servings of food will be on the plates of persons who otherwise might have to do without."

For those moving to a new area without an active SoSA presence, Bill's advice is simple: start small and speak up. Invite neighbors to a nearby gleaning, or ask your mission committee to host a SoSA speaker for a "mission moment."

Through their physical labor in the fields, their financial partnership, and their championing of SoSA in their congregation, Bill and Candi show that whether you are bagging potatoes in a parking lot or donating to the cause, every effort helps SoSA turn surplus into abundance for all. ■



A 30-Day, Fundraising Challenge that raises \$1,000 when your team works together to help feed people in need

Take the challenge! Encourage your class, faith community, group, organization, or business to adopt a bushel of fruits and vegetables to support the gleaning and feeding work of the Society of St. Andrew.

Learn More:
EndHunger.org/abfn

Dead Robot Society

— CARPE DIEM —

May 31, 2026

Dear Members of the Dranesville Mission Team,

Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$330 and for your continued support of the Dead Robot Society.

When we received your letter, our first reaction was gratitude—not only for the financial contribution, but also for the encouragement and confidence it represents. Knowing that members and friends of Dranesville United Methodist Church continue to believe in our students and their potential means more than we can adequately express.

For many years, the Dead Robot Society has been fortunate to have supporters who understand that robotics is about much more than building machines. Our students learn how to solve difficult problems, work together as a team, overcome setbacks, and persevere when things don't go as planned. They come from different schools, backgrounds, and experiences, but they are united by a shared passion for learning and creating. Along the way, they develop skills and friendships that often last far beyond their time on the team.

As mentors, we have the privilege of watching students grow from uncertain beginners into confident leaders, engineers, programmers, and teachers of the next generation of team members. The support we receive from community partners like Dranesville UMC helps make those transformations possible.

This year marks our twenty-fifth year of teaching engineering through Botball robotics. During that time, our students have competed with teams from across the United States and around the world, earning two World Championships and a second-place finish at last year's Global Conference. While we are proud of those accomplishments, what matters most is the impact the program has on the young people who participate. Every season, we see students discover talents they didn't know they had and gain confidence that carries into college, careers, and life.

Your congregation's generosity helps ensure that we can continue providing these opportunities. More importantly, your support reminds our students that their community is cheering them on. It tells them that their hard work matters and that there are people beyond our team who are invested in their success.

Please extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in the Mission/Ministry Breakfast and contributed to the love offerings. We are honored to be one of the organizations you chose to support, and we are deeply grateful for your friendship, encouragement, and partnership over the years.

May God bless your congregation as richly as you have blessed our students.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude,
Jon, on behalf of the students, mentors, and families of the Dead Robot Society


Jon M. Grasmeyer
President, Dead Robot Society
Jon@DeadRobots.com



Dranesville

United Methodist Church

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

Office closed Fridays in July & August

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
- 22 Fellowship Breakfast 10am -First Watch, Reston
- 26 LINK Grocery Card Collection

August

- 2 Holy Communion
- 9 Guest Speaker
- Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm
- 11 Mobile Food Pantry
- 23 Even 4 Others Collection

GIVE Online!



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