



## From the Pastor

Ah September! A month of new starts. The planning for the Labor Day weekend starts. Cooler weather starts. School starts. Everyone back to work from vacations starts. And it's the start of planning for National Back to Church Sunday which is on September 17.

Yes, September is the start of all kinds of things, but back to church? Yes. People have been gone. Programs have been on standstill. Only Vacation Bible School, as for most churches, was the primary summer activity. But now, planning for events will take on a fresh seriousness.

Quite a few big events are coming up: Fall Harvest, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas. Even smaller ones like weekly dinners and gathering events designed to meet new people and reestablish connections with those familiar to us. This all takes careful thought to be successful in reaching out to the community around us.

When you think about it, a church can be a very busy place. It can easily become tedious and tiring. That is why we constantly need to remind ourselves of our mission and why we do what we do. I guess that's a question that each of us needs to answer for ourselves. Why do we do all this? Whom are we doing it for? Who gains from all this work? And what is the difference that we make to those around us? Would anyone miss what we do if we stopped?

I think I can answer all five questions with one word: JESUS. If everything we do is not for the sake of Jesus, then we are probably doing it for the wrong reasons and seriously missing the point. This is why we need to keep Jesus in the forefront of everything. As Scripture reminds us, *"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne"* (Hebrews 12:2, NLT).

Now, let's start September by dreaming big!

Blessings,

Pastor Melody A. Duncan