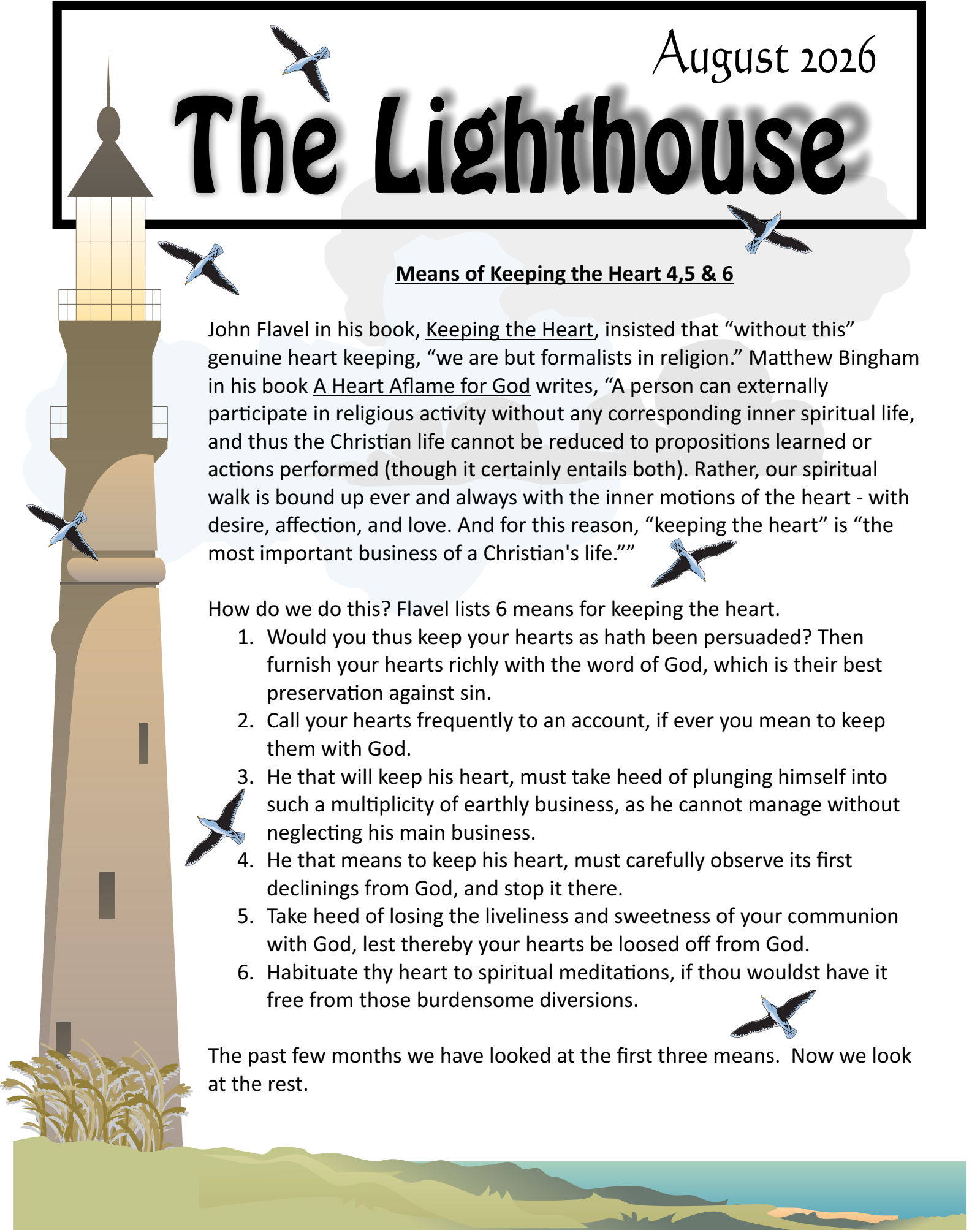




August 2026

The Lighthouse

Means of Keeping the Heart 4,5 & 6

John Flavel in his book, Keeping the Heart, insisted that “without this” genuine heart keeping, “we are but formalists in religion.” Matthew Bingham in his book A Heart Aflame for God writes, “A person can externally participate in religious activity without any corresponding inner spiritual life, and thus the Christian life cannot be reduced to propositions learned or actions performed (though it certainly entails both). Rather, our spiritual walk is bound up ever and always with the inner motions of the heart - with desire, affection, and love. And for this reason, “keeping the heart” is “the most important business of a Christian's life.””

How do we do this? Flavel lists 6 means for keeping the heart.

1. Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been persuaded? Then furnish your hearts richly with the word of God, which is their best preservation against sin.
2. Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.
3. He that will keep his heart, must take heed of plunging himself into such a multiplicity of earthly business, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main business.
4. He that means to keep his heart, must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.
5. Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetness of your communion with God, lest thereby your hearts be loosed off from God.
6. Habituate thy heart to spiritual meditations, if thou wouldst have it free from those burdensome diversions.

The past few months we have looked at the first three means. Now we look at the rest.

4. He that means to keep his heart, must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.

If you notice a crack in the wall of your house, it is best not to ignore it. Small cracks become bigger ones. The same is true of your heart. Don't neglect sinful thoughts that will soon turn into sinful actions. Remember, it is small sins that become big sins. The drunkard didn't set out to become one when he had his first drink. Flavel says, "...little sins neglected, will quickly become great and masterless: The greatest crocodile once lay in an egg; the greatest oak was once but an acorn... Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!"

5. Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetness of your communion with God, lest thereby your hearts be loosed off from God.

The heart is a hungry and restless thing; it must have something to feed upon. If it is not satisfied with the things of God; then it will feed on the things of this world. *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."* (1 John 2:15–17, ESV)

Rather...

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" (Psalm 34:8, ESV)

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4, ESV)

When our hearts feed on the things of this world they remain hungry and restless. We were created to "glorify God and ENJOY HIM forever."

6. Habituate thy heart to spiritual meditations, if thou wouldst have it free from those burdensome diversions.

A problem we have is how we fill our time in the moments (even hours) when we are not engaged in the solemn duties like worship, Bible study, and prayer. Where does our mind go in those spaces "in between"? Or, how do we fill that time? Turning our minds to the Lord in those moments and hours will go a long way to assisting us in keeping our hearts with all diligence.

"I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?" (Psalm 77:11–13, ESV)

Grace & Peace,
TIm

Missions Conference!

Our church is having a Missions Conference in September! Please save the dates: **September 25 through 27**, Friday evening through Sunday.

We'll be hearing from **Dr. Jody Collinge** and **Jon & Karen Schmidt**.

We've supported both for many years, and they've both been to missions conferences here. But it's been too long since we've seen them! You may have read about each of them in a Meet the Missionaries article in previous newsletters: Jody in the [September 2025 newsletter](#), and Jon & Karen in the [July 2025 newsletter](#).

Please be in prayer about the upcoming Missions Conference, that God would use it for His glory and our encouragement!



And now, an update from our missionaries Derek & Shannon Ebbers in Romania...



Thank you for praying us through the valley of the shadow of death. Prayers from around the world have gotten us this far and will keep us serving in Romania as long as God sees fit to allow us.

God knows what he is doing!

I'm sure he does, but I must admit I have struggled recently. Life is confusing and the past few months have left me wondering what is next. I am a planner. I delight in making plans for tomorrow, next week, month, and in five years. I'm sure I am not the only one!

A heart attack led to a changed perspective, has challenged, and given me comfort that I have been worrying about many things (Martha Martha) and have often forgotten what is truly important. A literal 'wake-up call'. Now I am thankful when I wake up in the morning! Take a moment and consider waking up this morning.

What's next you may ask?

We can't say for sure and realize that it was prideful to think that we could continue plugging along as usual.

Shannon and I answered God's call to move to Romania 21 years ago and we are convinced that He will let us know just as clearly when it is time to transition. Right now, we are convinced that our time in Romania is not over. We still see God using our service to the Kingdom in Brasov, Romania.

Please pray for us. We need monthly donations to maintain our budget and one-time donations to help cover unexpected and travel expenses. July is a challenging month. Vacations and changing routines often result in our receiving about 50% of our budget.

We will see some of you this summer. This trip did not turn out according to my plan. We arrived 10 weeks later, I spent almost four weeks in the hospital and rehab (in Romania), visited multiple cardiologists (never thought I would see one), have more doctor visits ahead, suffer from a lack of energy, and take a handful of

medication every day. Yikes, how things have changed. And yet we trust that this is God's best for us right now.

My next doctor appointment is mid-August after which we should know more regarding the future.



Have a quick look at what Adi and Aida say about church. Thanks for watching.

Click anywhere on the picture of Adi and Aida!

Thank you for supporting the church in Brasov, Codlea.

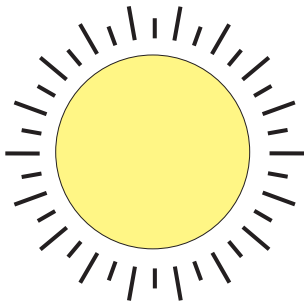
Many thanks from our family for the opportunity to represent you in Romania. It is a delight and a great encouragement to share with many of you what God is doing in and through us. Blessings to you all!



BIRTHDAYS for AUGUST



John Chaney 6th



Charlotte Rhett 11th



Mannuel Diaz 26th

Ken Gosnell 29th



Dates to Remember for August

August 1 Men's breakfast at 8:00 a.m.

August 2 Communion



August 3 Men's Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor

August 9 Monthly Luncheon after the worship service, please bring a dish to share

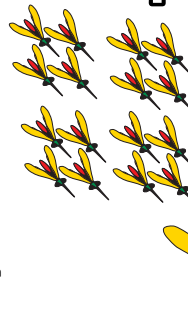
August 10 Session Meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the library

August 13 Circle Meeting at 11:00 a.m. at the home of Fran Bagby

August 17 Deacon's Meeting at 5:45 p.m.

August 17 Men's Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor

August 22 Baby shower for GiGi VanderKooy at 10:00 a.m. in the parlor





**1340 Beach Boulevard
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530
228.374.6880
firstpresbiloxi.org**

[A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America.](#)

Pastoral Staff

Tim Horn (Senior Pastor)	662-313-8445	tim.horn@firstpresbiloxi.org
Dean Rydbeck (Pastoral Care Minister)	337-351-5294	dean.rydbeck@firstpresbiloxi.org
Kyle Palmer (Pastoral Intern)	228-860-7412	kyle.palmer@firstpresbiloxi.org

Church Staff

Jeff Harrison	Music Director
Janet Misner	Interim Pianist
Kim Clark	Secretary
Greg Mann	Facilities Manager
Kerri Willson	Nursery Coordinator

Elders

David Allen	228-547-1007	david.allen@firstpresbiloxi.org
Ben Bowden	228-596-5007	ben.bowden@firstpresbiloxi.org
John Chaney	228-238-4379	john.chaney@firstpresbiloxi.org
Mike Clark	228- 326-3213	mike.clark@firstpresbiloxi.org
Jeff Harrison	228-596-6600	jeff.harrison@firstpresbiloxi.org
Aaron Smith	601-214-0918	aaron.smith@firstpresbiloxi.org
Ken Pennell (Elder Emeritus)	601-674-1637	ken.pennell@firstpresbiloxi.org

Deacons

Andy Bagby	228-547-5334	andy.bagby@firstpresbiloxi.org
Jonathan Blakeney	228-327-1781	jonathan.blakeney@firstpresbiloxi.org
Phil Harding	410-310-2389	phil.harding@firstpresbiloxi.org
Steve VanderKooy	228-990-1933	steve.vanderkooy@firstpresbiloxi.org
Ben Willson	910-274-1464	ben.willson@firstpresbiloxi.org