

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY, AUGUST 9TH

\*6:30 a.m. Anita Taugher  
8:00 a.m. Dec. Members Martin/Amick Families

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10TH

\*6:30 a.m. Rose Hayes  
8:00 a.m. Roberta Milton

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11TH

\*6:30 a.m. Art Witucki  
8:00 a.m. Ann Brenner

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12TH

\*6:30 a.m. Elizabeth Laier  
8:00 a.m. John de Vega

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13TH

8:00 a.m. Claudine Houser  
\*5:30 p.m. Paul Till

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14TH

8:00 a.m. Richard Fitch  
5:00 p.m. Liv. & Dec. Malcolm Family

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15TH

7:15 a.m. Maureen Stevens  
9:00 a.m. Frank Hartman  
11:00 a.m. Philip Lutz  
6:00 p.m. For The Parish (Life Teen Mass)

\*CHAPEL



SERVERS' SCHEDULE

(It is YOUR responsibility to find a replacement)

Saturday, August 14

8:00 a.m. Alex Kraeutle, Chris Stump  
5:00 p.m. Greg Kaiser, Nicole Martino  
Nick Brand, Rachel Morken

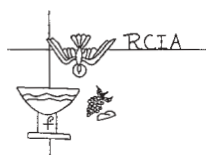
Sunday, August 15

7:15 a.m. Taylor Morken, Christian Craney  
Scott Campbell, Philip Gase  
9:00 a.m. Olivia Lebamoff, Andrew Blackburn  
Billy Khorshid, Catherine Stanley  
11:00 a.m. Annie Hunnicutt, Madeline Hunnicutt  
Jason Bobay, Sean Weigand

WEDDING BANNS

*"Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will guide these couples as they approach the sacrament of marriage."*

III Travis Troyer and Regina Wenzel  
II Justin McLeish and Beth Bly



RCIA

If you or someone you know would like to inquire about the Catholic faith, its teachings and traditions, please call the church office at 489-3537. RCIA is an on-going process and an Inquirer may begin at any time.

NO MORE MEIJER/KROGER BAGS, PLEASE!!!

Just to remind you that the Meijer/Kroger bag recycling program was canceled as of June 1, 2004 here at St. Vincent's. Your participation in this program was very much appreciated.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER SCHEDULES READY FOR PICKUP

Please stop by the Ministers' Sacristy and pick up your Eucharistic Minister schedule as soon as possible.

ST. VINCENT'S ADULT CHOIR

Have you considered singing in the Choir? The Adult Choir will begin on Thursday, September 9th, at 7 p.m. No prior choir experience is necessary, and all are welcome.



HOW ABOUT SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?

Are you looking for a way to join other adults  
— who want to grow in faith through study and prayer?  
— who care about each other?  
— who care about local and global needs?

Are you looking for a way to enter into parish life more deeply? A number of parishioners are now looking at the Small Christian Community option. If need be, we will pioneer a new community! We have 53 such communities living these values as they meet in homes on any given day of the week.

For more information, this is a great time to contact S Kay (489-3537 ext.207 or kjarema@yahoo.com.

NEWCOMERS REGISTRATION

Parish representatives will be in the Church Conference Room TODAY, August 8, after the 9 a.m. Mass to welcome and register new members to St. Vincent's.

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE REGISTERED IN MY PARISH

It is necessary that you be registered in the Parish for a number of reasons...baptism of a child, marriage, letter of recommendation for sponsors for baptism or confirmation, death, etc. We wish to encourage all who have not done so to register. We want to remind the newlyweds to register, as they are no longer included on their parent's registrations. Also, if you are moving, please phone the church office and give us that information.

RETRouvaille...A CHRISTIAN PEER MINISTRY FOR MARRIAGES

Are you unhappy in your marriage?  
Are you struggling in your marriage?  
Are you no longer talking about your differences?  
Are you thinking about separation or divorce?  
Are you separated or in the process of divorce?  
If you answered yes to any of the above, Retrouvaille can help. The next Retrouvaille Program begins with the weekend of September 10-12, 2004. For information, call (260) 485-1944 or (800) 470-2230. All inquiries are confidential.



THANK YOU FOR THE FOOD DONATIONS

Recently a food box for St. Vincent de Paul Society's pantry has been placed in the west wing of the Gathering Space. Your response has been GREAT! We will continue to regularly post items needed to supply the pantry. Our current needs are jams/jellies, paper products (tissue, toilet paper, paper towels), and laundry or dish detergents, although any donations are appreciated. Again, we wish to thank you for your support in helping us feed the poor of our community.

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING OUR COUNTRY

If you have a family member who is serving in Iraq/Afghanistan or anywhere in the military and would like prayers for their intention, let the church office know - 489-3537. Their names will be published in the bulletin weekly.



Keep in your prayers:

Sgt. Ryan Wenk, Afghanistan  
SRA Andrew Grashoff, Turkey  
Cpl Christopher Amstutz, Iraq  
Chad Killian  
Cpl. Brian Mockenhaupt  
Scott Krieg, Air Guard  
Sfc Daniel McCrady  
Sgt Ryan Wenk, Afghanistan  
Sgt Tom Mason

HELP US UPDATE OUR MILITARY SERVICE BULLETIN BOARD

We are asking for information for all our military service personnel. This will be used to update our military service bulletin board.

Please pick up one of the questionnaires located on the table by the church office.

**CHILDREN'S STEWARDSHIP**

"Helping mom when she had a hurt leg." Monica T.  
 "Cleaned play room." Lauren D.  
 "Unloaded dishwasher." Amy R.  
 "I took care of my brother." Emma G.  
 "Walked my dog." Lizzie G.  
 "Helping feed our animals." Melanie H.  
 "Helped get ready for guest." Kara C.  
 "I helped set my tent up." Kristina P.  
 "Helped Dad." Branden  
 "I cleaned my room." Ashlyn L.  
 "Helping my sister paint her room." Maggie M.  
 "Taking all the laundry downstairs by myself." Sarah K.  
 "I helped carry suitcases to the train." Page D.



**BAPTISMAL PREPARATION CLASS**

Attendance at two Baptismal Preparation Sessions is required before your child is baptized. They are Session I and Session II. You may attend Session II before Session I, if necessary. Each session will begin at 7:00 p.m. It is recommended that you attend before the birth of your child so that there will be no delay in setting a date for the baptism once the baby is born. Godparents, too, are welcome. Please call the church office to register for your sessions.

Session I (East Meeting Room)  
 August 26      September 9  
    September 23  
 Session II (Church Conference Room)  
 August 19      September 16

**Meetings of the Week**

SHEPHERDS OF CHRIST – Tuesday, August 10, at 6:30 p.m. in the Reservation Chapel  
 RCIA – Tuesday, August 10, at 7:00 p.m. in the Spiritual Center  
 ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT – Wednesday, August 11, at 8:00 a.m. in the Reservation Chapel  
 PASTORAL COUNCIL – Wednesday, August 11, at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Conference Room  
 MARDI GRAS – Wednesday, August 11, at 7:00 p.m. in the East Meeting Room

**ROSARY SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CRAFT SHOW**

St. Vincent's Rosary Society is sponsoring a craft show on Oct. 30. Anyone wishing to rent a table please call 637-8205 for any information.

**HERE COME DA JUDGE!**

St. Vincent Harvest House will tour the Allen County Court House on Monday, August 16 at 11:00 a.m. Only the Clinton Street entrance is open. We will meet at the new church lot at 10:00 a.m. and carpool since parking is not the greatest. We will probably have lunch afterwards at the Window Garden. Please call by August 12 (482-2085 or 483-7252).

**MOTOR COACH TRIP PLANNED BY HARVEST HOUSE**

Harvest House seniors are sponsoring a motor coach trip November 3, 2004 thru November 6, 2004. This four-day trip thru southern Indiana and into Kentucky will include Caesars Casino in Elizabeth, IN; Bardstown, Stephen Foster's Home; dinner and entertainment at the Old Stable, Shaker Village; Carly Hurlley at Renfro Valley, KY; Country Jamboree Show and many more sights and events. This trip is of good times, excellent food and great fun. For more information, please call Jane Smith at (260) 637-8889.

**SCC PASTORAL FACILITATORS' TRAINING – SEPT. 18, 2004**

The next Small Christian Community Pastoral Facilitators' Training is Saturday, September 18, from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. in the Church Conference Room.

Pastoral Facilitators: Our parish requires you to attend one training session during the time of your service as leader of the Small Christian Community. You are welcome to send persons who are willing to serve in the next few years also.



**RIGHT TO LIFE UPDATES**

At 7-8 weeks after conception the baby swims freely in the amniotic sac. Babies swallow amniotic fluid and hiccups have been observed at this age. Taste buds and teeth buds are beginning to form and different stimuli may evoke an opening of the mouth or other response from the baby. Babies start to feel pain at this point. In the US approximately 208,000 babies a year are killed by abortion at six weeks or earlier.

**IS THERE ROOM?**

A woman in her early 60's, with multiple challenges (and also multiple gifts) is looking for a loving family to welcome her into their household, with the assistance of Easter Seals ARC's Adult Foster Care program. Might you be experiencing a nudge by God to open your home and heart to welcome a special new member. For more information, please call Rita at 424-4989.

**Something to Think About**



**CHILDCARE NEEDED**

We are seeking in-home childcare for our 17-month old with Down Syndrome and a kindergartner. We are looking for a responsible and experienced person who has reliable transportation, certification and a genuine love for children. The hours are approximately 7:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call 489-9870.

**Advertisers of the Week**



**McCOMB & SONS**  
 Serving From Six Locations  
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**Solution SOURCE INC.**  
 Computer Systems & Network Consulting  
 Web Design Services  
 Jim Leazler, Owner  
 Telephone: (260) 438-1770

Please patronize the companies that support our bulletin.

**PRO-LIFE UPDATES**

"Similarly, euthanasia and assisted suicide are never acceptable acts of mercy. They always gravely exploit the suffering and desperate, extinguishing life in the name of the "quality of life" itself."  
 — Living the Gospel of Life

**REVITALIZE YOUR FAITH**

The next Men's Christ Renews His Parish weekend will be held on September 11 and 12. This is an unbelievable way for you to renew your faith and make new friends. Please do not miss out on the wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth and fellowship. The weekend will fill up fast,

so contact one of the invitations coordinators today: Mark Lapp (485-9540) or Trent Graber (693-1848).

**WOMEN'S CHRIST RENEWS HIS PARISH FOR SEPT. 25-26**

Are you looking for a way to revitalize your faith and make new friends? Sign up for the next Women's Christ Renews His Parish on the weekend of September 25-26, 2004. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth and fellowship. Contact Peggy Nicola at 483-6576.



**CHRIST RENEWS HIS PARISH NEEDS NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR**

We will be discerning individuals for the Committee's service position of newsletter coordinator. If you have been on a past Christ Renews' team and feel called to serve in this three-year ministry, which includes attending



the Continuation monthly meetings and helping with both the Men's and Women's weekends twice a year, please send a letter to Harold Karp 12019 Crossway Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46814 or hkarp@esssexep.com. In this letter answer the following questions: What is your previous team experience and ministry? How did you hear this call? How do you feel you could best serve this Committee? For more information regarding this ministry, call Harold at 625-3488.

## YOUTH MINISTRY CALENDAR

August 7-8 College Retreat: Ready, Set, Go  
 August 8 Fr. Mark back  
 August 11 LIFETEEN Family Reunion  
 August 12 Pray at Abortion Clinic  
 August 14 Core Member University  
 August 15 Parent Meeting, 5:15 p.m.



## PARENTS OF TEENS

Do you want your teen to be involved? A great way is by you being involved. Come see how you can be part of LIFETEEN, Sunday, August 15, at 5:15 in the East Meeting Room (with the glass doors off the Gathering Space). We will finish in time for Mass. If you are unable to attend but would like information on ways to be involved, contact Cindy.

## IT'S A LIFETEEN FAMILY REUNION

On Wednesday, August 11, at 6:00 p.m. at the Life House. For all who have been part of our family through the years: priests, core members, teens, parents, music ministers, those who pray for us, gift contributors, K of C, and those who have fed us. Gather your family, some lawn chairs or a blanket, a side dish or dessert to share and come celebrate with us. Drinks, meat, and our infamous "wet slippery-slide" provided.

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 For information about St. Vincent's Youth Ministry,  
 contact Cindy Black at 489-3537 Ext. 228 or  
 e-mail Cblack@SaintV.org. I  
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## DWENGER FOOTBALL FANS

Come join Coach Svarczkopf for a pre-season "Chalk Talk". This will be an opportunity for an inside look as this year's team and have a chance for some fellowship. Wednesday, August 18th, 7:00 p.m. at K of C Hall, 601 Reed Road. Refreshments will be available. Questions? Call 486-6467.

## In Concert



## FORT WAYNE WIZARDS

### PRESENT CHRISTIAN CONCERT

Today, Sunday, August 8, at 2:00 p.m. the Fort Wayne Wizards will sponsor a post-game Christian concert featuring BIG DADDY WEAVE. The Wizards have a wonderful double-header planned in Memorial Stadium. Come enjoy all of the action that Wizards

baseball has to offer including on-field promotions and games. After the game, Big Daddy Weave will play a concert featuring all of your favorite songs including "In Christ", "Fields of Grace", and "Audience of One". For more information about these activities or group rates, contact the Wizards at (260) 482-6400.

## ATTENTION: ST. VINCENT PARENTS

St. Charles School has openings in our Kindergarten Program for the 2004-2005 school year. Our kindergarten classes are held at Our Lady of Good Hope Parish. If you have questions or to register, please call 485-5289.

## BACK TO SCHOOL

Shop and save at Saint Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, 1600 S. Calhoun Street. School uniforms, boys' and girls' white shirts and blouses, pants, shoes and much more. Prices from \$2.50 to \$4.50.

## SCRIP SALE NOTICE

Scrip will be available every Sunday during the summer from 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. and after Lifeteen Mass. Thanks for your support!

## FALL REGISTRATION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

First grade students or any new students in grades 1-8 who will attend Religious Education classes for the 2004-2005 catechetical year must be enrolled. Those who attended this past year in grades 1-7 will automatically be advanced to the next grade level. Classes begin on Sunday, September 19, at 4:00 p.m. and on Wednesday, September 22, at 6:00 p.m. Call 489-3537, Ext. 204.

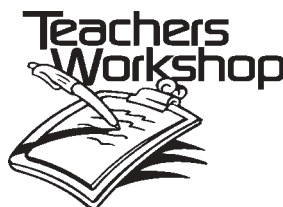
## FALL REGISTRATION FOR PRESCHOOL

Children ages 3, 4, and 5 (by September 1) who will attend preschool Religious Education during the 9:00 or 11:00 Mass must be enrolled. Classes will begin on September 19. Please call 489-3537 ext. 204.

## CALL FOR CATECHISTS

We have had a slow but steady response to the call for catechists. While some openings remain for Wednesday, the Sunday positions have all been filled. Due to increasing numbers, several sections have been added on Wednesday in order to keep the class sizes small. This, of course, means that we need additional volunteers. The commitment requires approximately 4 hours a week, i.e. 90 minutes of class time and 2 hours of preparation (in the comfort of your own home!) for each class.

Workshops will be held in the fall to assist the newcomers or those who would like a refresher course. Along with using the newly adopted text,



catechists are encouraged to supplement with material about the Blessed Mother and the saints. How can you be of help to us? Presently we have openings in grades 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 on Wednesdays. Please pray about this important ministry. If you have questions, feel free to call, come in and look over the materials, and then make your decision.

Children in grades 1-8 who do not attend our parish grade school should be enrolled in Religious Education classes.

## DID YOU GET YOUR FIRST COMMUNION PICTURES?

First Communion pictures are available in the Religious Education office. Those not claimed will be handed out to the children during the first Religious Ed class in September.

## SCHOOL NEWS: ORIENTATION DAY

The orientation day is set for Monday, August 16. Parents and students can stop by the school anytime between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. At that time students will receive their homeroom information.



Back to School

## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL AT ST. VINCENT'S

Wednesday, August 18th, is the first day of school from 7:45 - 11:30 a.m. and the dress code is in effect.

## EMPLOYMENT OPENINGS AT SCHOOL

We have one opening for a teacher's assistant in the 4th grade and two openings for teachers' assistants in the Junior High. If you are interested, please send a resume to the school office.

## SEVENTH GRADE ORIENTATION

AUGUST 16, 2004 4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

- Come meet your Jr. Hi teachers
- Locate your homeroom and locker
- Practice your new lock combination
- Learn how to read class schedules
- Get together with classmates while you snack on munchies and drinks
- Please enter through DOOR 8

See you there!

## ST. VINCENT'S SCHOOL HAS CLASS OPENINGS FOR THE 2004-2005 SCHOOL YEAR:

We are registering students in grades one (1) through eight (8) for the 2004-05 school year. Please call the school office at 489-3537, ext. 212, for more information.



### COACHES – YOU ARE NEEDED!!

St. Vincent's Volleyball Teams are looking for and need two (2) coaches – a coach for the 6th grade and one for 8th grade. Also, we need a cross-country coach. If you would like to coach one of the teams, call Paul Cassabon at 750-3011 or call 489-3537 Ext. 218.

### 6TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL PRACTICE

Practice will begin on August 17th and 19th from 4:30 – 6 p.m. Physicals are required before starting practice. Any questions, call Bev Tomlinson 627-6477.

### 7TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL PRACTICE

Practice will begin on August 10th at 3:30 p.m. in the Activity Center. Anyone interested are welcome. Remember to bring all paperwork, medical forms, physicals. Any questions call Joyce at 637-2315.

### ST. VINCENT ATHLETIC BOOSTERS NEEDS A VOLUNTEER

Need volunteer to coordinate the concession stand during volleyball season. Please contact Mary DePrez at 471-1113.

### PARKVIEW YMCA REGISTERING

#### PLAYERS FOR FLAG FOOTBALL

Registration is now being taken for Parkview YMCA Flag Football. Practice begins August 16th and games begin September 11th. Practices are during the week and games are played on Saturdays. This is a co-ed league for grades PreK-8. The fee is \$30 for members and \$60 for non-members. Call Ruth Minkoff, Youth and family Director at 497-9996, ext.305.

### PARKVIEW YMCA SUMMER DAY CAMP

The Parkview YMCA is currently accepting registration for Summer Day Camp. Our quality program will offer your child: arts and crafts, swimming, rock climbing, taking field trips, gym activities and the chance to meet new people, have fun and take away memories that will last a lifetime. Register NOW at the front desk of the Parkview YMCA. For more information, please call Kristen Washington, Program Services Director, Parkview YMCA at 497-9996 ext. 316.

### PARKVIEW YMCA PRESCHOOL

Parkview YMCA is excited to announce that preschool will be starting on August 23, 2004. There will be classes for students ages 2-3 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and students ages 4-5 on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. All classes will meet from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. For additional information, please call Ruth Minkoff, 497-9996 ext. 305.

### WBCL RADIO'S ROMANIA 'LIKEWISE' PROJECT

WBCL will be collecting new or gently used coats and brand new shoes and boots. They will be collecting and broadcasting live in the following locations from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.:

- Tuesday, August 24  
WBCL Studios  
1025 W. Rudisill Blvd.
- Thursday, September 2  
Anchor Room  
4530 Lahmeyer Road



Items may also be dropped off at the WBCL Studios any time between Aug. 24 and Sept. 2. (Just ring the doorbell if it is after business hours).

### VOLUNTEER FOR THE "CLOTHES CLOSET"

The Franciscan Center, Inc. "Clothes Closet" is in need of volunteers. If interested, please call Doris Bermes at 744-3977.

### INTERNATIONAL PILGRIM STATUE COMES TO FORT WAYNE

St. Henry's and Sacred Heart Parishes will host the International Pilgrim Statue at Sacred Heart Parish on Gaywood between McKinley and Pettit Sept. 3-4, First Friday at 6:00 p.m. Mass followed by a prayerful all night vigil that will end with first Saturday devotions with Mass at 8:00 a.m. September 4. Confessions heard until 9:30 p.m.

### ST. VINCENT EMPLOYERS-UNEMPLOYED LINK

Realizing that many people in our parish and area have lost their jobs and are looking, we want to help. We are asking you, as owners and managers of businesses in the area to:

— Send by TUESDAY MORNING, IN WRITING OR E-MAIL (stvincchurch@hotmail.com)

1. An open position you are aware of
  2. The name of the company and address
  3. The contact person and how to reach him or her
- God is in every part of our journey!

### KITCHEN HELP WANTED

Mozzarelli's Pizza is looking to hire full and part-time dependable employees. Must be able to work in a fast-paced environment. Experience not necessary, but is a plus. Stop in to fill out an application. 1820-A West Dupont Road. No phone calls, please.

### WILL CLEAN HOUSE OR OFFICE

Dependable. Call Sharon at 489-9448.

### HOUSE CLEANING

Reliable parishioner will clean and do light yard work. Reasonable hourly rates. References available. Please call Michelle at 489-6921 or 246-1920.

### PLANNING AN ALL-CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL REUNION

The next planning meeting for the all-Central Catholic High School reunion will be Monday, August 23, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Bishop Dwenger library located at 1300 E. Washington Center Road in Fort Wayne. All classes are urged to send a representative. For more information, contact Mary Lou (Thieme) Morris '65 at (260) 485-6164 or Sylvia (Allen) Tjaden at (260) 493-7479.

### BISHOP DWENGER CLASS OF '94

This 10-year class reunion will be held on Saturday, August 28th, 2004 in the Blue Room of the Allen County Memorial Coliseum from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. RSVP required by August 15th. E-mail Tom at Ludwig.com or call Margo Ludwig at 485-1568.

### TUITION ASSISTANCE ENVELOPES

When you use your Tuition Assistance envelope found in the monthly packet of collection envelopes, you help provide a Catholic school education for children whose parents need financial help. Tuition for one child in our grade school is \$1,830.00; for two children, \$3,034.00; and for three or more, \$3,953.00. This past year, we gave \$44,061.69 in financial assistance. Thank you very much for supporting our parish grade school.

### MEN WANTED

We want to issue an invitation to all eligible men of the parish to join the Knights of Columbus – St. Vincent's Council. The Knights is a service organization of Catholic men which is involved in both our church and our community by helping the less fortunate, supporting our youth programs, our seminarians, and the Right to Life effort. Knights work as volunteers when needed at St. Vincent's and on projects within our community. In addition, we relax and enjoy each other and ourselves at dances, hayrides, dinner theater and other such social events.



You can be as active in the Knights of Columbus as your time allows. You might choose to be an officer in our organization or limit your participation to flipping an occasional pancake at one of our Sunday parish breakfasts.

If you want to join us or want more information first, please call Steve Lybrook, membership director, at 497-0427. We look forward to welcoming you to our council.

### FREE MINISTRY TO TRAVELING CATHOLICS

For nationwide Mass times and locations: Call Mass Times (1-410-676-6000) or Internet www.Masstimes.org. Also, (800) 627-7846 – need to find a church.

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# GOOD NEWS

## Nineteenth Sunday In Ordinary Time

Wis 18:6-9/Heb 11:1-2,8-19 or Heb 11:1-2,8-12/Lk 12:32-48

*Paige Byrne Shortal*  
*sundaybulletin@liguori.org*

The tomatoes are coming in; new ripe ones every day now. I start waiting for them around the end of June, checking the plants, measuring their growth. I used to eat tomatoes year-round and I enjoyed them well enough, more as a colorful addition to a salad or a moist texture in an otherwise dry sandwich. But I didn't eat them for the taste. I didn't know they had taste until we moved to the country and my husband started growing our own.

Those tomatoes in the store just don't measure up - even the expensive ones that are reported to be "vine-ripened" and "home-grown." Unless they're sitting in a cardboard box on the counter at our local market, there home-grown somewhere, but not my home. And while I mourn the shortness of the tomato season, maybe it's that very limitation that makes a tomato special.

Along with tomatoes, the sure sign of summer's end is the back-to-school ads. I confess the summer always feels too short to me. I love the long days with my children: the guilt-free reading and leisurely dabbling about. I worry that some schools are growing our children like supermarket tomatoes; forcing them to ripen on an arbitrary schedule. They might look like tomatoes and feel like tomatoes, but the taste is bland and mushy.

If we want bland, mushy people, then we should measure each child by how well they fit in, how well they adapt and adjust. What if the things that are "wrong" with us, that make us "different," are the very traits placed in us by the Creator who doesn't make mistakes? If we want home-grown, perfectly ripened children, then upon meeting each child we should ask, "What blessing is God sending us today? What does this child bring to our world that no one else can bring?" If we could let them ripen in their own time, maybe they wouldn't have to spend their middle age wondering who they are and what they might have been.

It's just something to think about with your next BLT.