

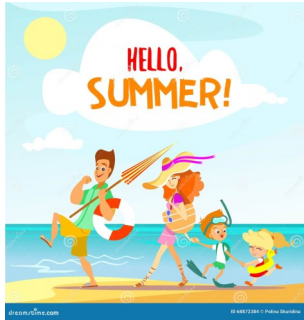


UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church Messenger

July August 2025

Pastor
Karen Griswold



Encouraging Word

Psalm 118:24

*"This is the day
that the LORD has
made; we will
rejoice and be
glad in it."*



Summer Love ~

~~ Deborah Ann Belka



I love the summer's rays,
shinning from the sun
the warmth of laughter
with children having fun.

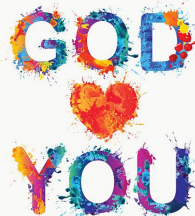
I love summer's breezes,
gently drifting in the air
the sounds of pure delight
when the weather is fair.

I love summer's laziness,
the strolls down the lane
the sound of peacefulness
upon summer's gentle rain.

I love summer's smells,
fragrant with memories
the happy thoughts wafting
of BBQ's, friends and families.



I love summertime,
it's smells, sights, its sounds
I love that God blesses me
when summer comes around!



~~~~~

## Serving for July & August

### Nursery

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| July 6  | Aug 3  |
| July 13 | Aug 10 |
| July 20 | Aug 17 |
| July 27 | Aug 24 |
|         | Aug 31 |



### Sound

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| July 6 Dennis McIntosh  | Aug 3 Ed Armentrout    |
| July 13 Ray Etgen       | Aug 10 Ray Etgen       |
| July 20 Dennis McIntosh | Aug 17 Dennis McIntosh |
| July 27 Elisa Lash      | Aug 24 Elisa Lash      |
|                         | Aug 31 Ray Etgen       |



### Greeting & Announcements:

July: Lauren Flora  
August: Julie Wilcox

### Screens:

Ed Armentrout / Kaylee Powell

### Videotaping:

Jim Hoffman / Bec Smith

### Children's Moment

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| July 6 Scott Griswold  | Aug 3 Scott Griswold  |
| July 13 Nancy Hamilton | Aug 10 Bill Warner    |
| July 20 Pastor Karen   | Aug 17 Penny Higgins  |
| July 27 Rob Painter    | Aug 24 Patty Kauffman |
|                        | Aug 31 Nancy Hamilton |

### Junior Church

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| July 6 Scott Griswold | Aug 3 Scott Griswold |
| July 13               | Aug 10 Brandy Powell |
| July 20 Brandy Powell | Aug 17               |
| July 27 Brandy Powell | Aug 24 Brandy Powell |
|                       | Aug 31               |

*We all serve with our presence  
in worship.  
Please join us this Sunday.*



## Calendar of Events



### JULY EVENTS

**July 1 9:30 AM** Tuesday Mornings  
**July 2 6:00 pm** Porch Talk - parsonage  
**July 5 6:00 pm** Small Group at Ancy & Bec Smith's  
**July 6 8:30 am** Deacons Meeting  
                                 Sacrament of Holy Communion  
                                 Finance Team meeting after Church  
**July 8 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
                                 **6:00 pm** Church Board Meeting  
**July 9 6:00 pm** Porch talk - parsonage  
**July 13** Congregational Meeting after Church  
**July 14-18 6:00 pm -8:30 pm** VBS - True North  
**July 15 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
**July 19 6:00 pm** Fish Fry at Lowell & Sandy Buck's  
**July 20** Education Team meeting after Church  
**July 22 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
**July 23 6:00 pm** Porch Talk - Parsonage  
**July 26 4:00 pm -7:00 pm** **Community Ice Cream Social**  
**July 27** Worship & Property Team meetings after Church  
**July 29 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
**July 30 6:00 pm** Porch Talk - parsonage

### AUGUST EVENTS

**Aug 2 6:00 pm** Small Group at Ancy & Bec Smith's  
**Aug 3 8:30 am** Deacons Meeting  
                                 Sacrament of Holy Communion  
                                 Finance Team meeting after Church  
**Aug 5 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
                                 **6:00 pm** Church Board Meeting  
**Aug 6 6:00 pm** Porch Talk - parsonage  
**Aug 12 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
**Aug 13 6:00 pm** Porch Talk- parsonage  
**Aug 17** Education Team meeting after Church  
**Aug 19 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
                                 Newsletter Deadline  
**Aug 20 6:00 pm** Porch Talks  
**Aug 24** Worship Team meeting after Church  
**Aug 26 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings  
**Aug 27 6:00 pm** Porch Talks  
**Aug 31** Property Team meeting after Church



July 11 Mark & Sandra Morris  
 July 17 Graham & Ashley Higgins  
 July 20 Jimmy & Kari Hoffman  
 July 27 Zech & Grace Wilcox  
 July 29 Jerry & Debbie Dillon

*Happy Anniversary*

August 4 Kevin & Dawn Wilbur  
 August 19 Chad & Rhonda Mullins  
 August 19 Darin Laurie Leach  
 August 21 Matthew & Ashley McIntosh

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 8 Virginia Gregg  
 July 8 Grace Wilcox  
 July 9 Megan Hunter  
 July 9 Carole Wilson  
 July 16 Kevin Williams  
 July 17 Taylor Cook  
 July 18 Gaye Earick  
 July 18 Autumn Swartz  
 July 23 Rosie Michael  
 July 23 Zech Wilcox  
 July 24 Patrick Harr  
 July 24 Kenny Harr  
 July 31 Steven Tracey



### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 3 Kristi Buck  
 August 8 Nate Cook  
 August 8 Delanie Baustert  
 August 10 Cindy Williams  
 August 14 Judy Harr  
 August 14 Jessie Henry  
 August 17 Michele Etgen  
 August 18 Steve Buck  
 August 20 Kaden McIntosh  
 August 22 Sharon Cooper  
 August 24 Kevin Wilbur  
 August 27 Harper Williams  
 August 27 Graham Higgins  
 August 29 Mollie Etgen  
 August 29 Chad Mullins  
 August 31 Darry Plank

*"Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher a storm, but to add color to my sunset sky." Rabindranath Tagore*



Julie Wilcox discussed Mental Health Month with us in May. The following are some key notes for us to remember and use in our daily lives.

### Mental Health Awareness Presentation for the WLUCC

Life is stressful, and ongoing stress takes a toll on our wellbeing, both our physical health and our mental health. Living in a rural area increases our risk for developing mental health symptoms. Rural adults experience higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to adults living in larger urban areas. People living in rural areas have higher rates of suicide. Rural males have the highest rate of suicide which is a trend we have seen since the year 2000. Youth living in rural communities have increased thoughts of suicide and increased plans for suicide.

Below are some tips that can help all of us decrease our stress and increase our resilience to manage the challenges in our lives, improving our mental wellbeing. This information is from Dr. Aditi Nerurkar who is a physician with a master's in public health and is a Harvard stress expert. The information is from her debut book called "The 5 Resets: Rewire Your Brain and Body for Less Stress and More Resilience."

**Rest and recovery.** Get clear on what matters most. Is it spending more time in nature, volunteering, making a difference in other people's lives? Is it spending more time on spiritual practice, exercising or more time with friends or family. Having a clear picture of how you want to spend your time will help you increase the behaviors that matter most to you.

**Find quiet** in a noisy world by changing your relationship with technology. Studies show on average that people spend more than 4 hours of the day on their phone, which is more than 28 hours a week. Fifteen percent of people grab their phones as soon as they wake up. Set boundaries with your phone by limiting your alerts and notifications. Place your phone outside of your reach to resist the urge to look at your phone. At night put your phone as far away as possible to prevent you from grabbing it when you wake up. Lastly, give yourself time to ground yourself before picking up your phone in the morning. This will give you some time to focus on the things that really matter.

**Tap into the mind and body connection.** You already are connecting your mind and body. This happens whenever your heart starts racing, you have difficulty breathing, or you experience tight muscles. Our mind and body are in constant communication. One way to gain some control over this mind/body connection is through regular deep breathing exercises. One exercise is Stop, Breathe and Be: Stop and pause, focus on breathing, and allow yourself to just be, before doing something stressful. This will help you handle any stressful event that you are facing. Another way to improve the mind/body connection and reduce the stress response is daily movement. Find ways to sit less and move more. When watching TV, try standing rather than sitting. When talking on the phone try walking around while you talk. These are great ways to sneak in some movement.

~~ Continued on next page

"Some people are making such thorough preparation for rainy days that they aren't enjoying today's sunshine." William Feather



## Mental Health Awareness Presentation for the WLUCC - continued

**Do one task at a time.** Take breaks throughout the day. Studies show that only 2% of people can effectively multitask. When we multitask, we are actually task switching by moving back and forth between tasks which can be stressful for the brain. Multitasking weakens our attention and productivity. One thing that helps is called time blocking: Do one task, take a short break, do another task, take a short break. Being intentional about breaks such as taking a walk, stretching, or deep breathing can help us to de-stress as we go through our day. This helps to avoid that buildup of stress that can accumulate as the day progresses.

**Quiet the inner critic.** When feeling stress you hold onto negative experiences. Your inner critic is actually trying to keep you out of harm's way during times of stress. This has been vital to our survival by protecting us from threats. However, if we are experiencing chronic stress our brains are going to hold onto negative thoughts that are no longer helpful and that can be detrimental. One way to hush this critic is to focus on the positives. Change your thinking from negative to positive through a daily exercise of gratitude journaling. Every night before you go to bed write down 5 things for which you are thankful. This only takes about 5 minutes and over time it helps your brain shift focus from negative things to positive things. This is called cognitive restructuring and is an evidenced treatment intervention.

Additionally, there has been some focus on the benefits of Awe. Experiencing awe and wonder around us shifts us into a new mindset. Awe triggers the release of oxytocin and calms our nervous system. It helps put things into perspective. Our problems feel smaller, and our hearts feel lighter.

Finally, Dr. Aditi Nerurkar encourages us to make no more than 2 changes at a time which she calls "The Resilience Rule of 2." Doing more is unsustainable and even positive changes can be stressful for the brain. Starting with only 2 changes will increase your likelihood of succeeding in adding positive behaviors into your daily life.

### Church DEACONS

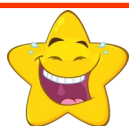
|                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Lucille Burden | luburden@yahoo.com         |
| Kathy Etgen    | 8ketgens@gmail.com         |
| Phil Etgen     | etgen645@hotmail.com       |
| Lauren Flora   | luflo1983@gmail.com        |
| Penny Higgins  | aphiggins89@gmail.com      |
| Julie McIntosh | mcintoshja2010@hotmail.com |
| Rob Painter    | rdpainter@centurylink.net  |
| Darry Plank    | planda31@yahoo.com         |
| Andy Smith     | ajsmith3768@yahoo.com      |
| Julie Wilcox   | zechy65@gmail.com          |
| Tim Wilcox     | zechy65@gmail.com          |
| Bill Warner    | wswarner60@gmail.com       |



When I left home last Thursday for a doctors appointment, I had no idea that I would be going directly to the hospital, but here I still am. A couple days after my arrival, Joann O'Brien made sure I had my prayer quilt. I can't begin to tell you what a comfort it has been, and frankly a joy for many others when I told them the story of how I got it. Whenever I wrap it around me, I feel the prayers of each of you who tied a knot and said a prayer. You will never know what a blessing this has been.

Thank you, and God Bless.

Vicki Lingrell



"Laughter is a sunbeam of the soul." Thomas Mann

***For the Journey . . . a note from Pastor Karen***

## *For the Journey...*

July 2025

Summer has arrived and an increase in outdoor activities has returned. I pray that you are able to take some time to enjoy the summer breeze, look up at the stars, and enjoy the beautiful creation.



When I think about summertime memories, my fondest memories are of times spent with friends and family. Whether it is at a family reunion, graduation party, outdoor concert or play, or just sitting on the porch for a good conversation. Moments like this are a treasure to behold. My great grandfather Lee Woodhouse was a superb storyteller; he had a Scottish brogue which made the stories all that more interesting. His unique style was captivating to a child. My great grandfather was like salt and light to me---he flavored my world and was a guiding light.

When Jesus shared his wisdom in the Sermon on the Mount, he was teaching the crowds and reminding them to be salt and light to the world.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” - Matthew 5: 13-16 (NIV)

We will explore this passage a little more this summer in an upcoming sermon series. Meanwhile, enjoy the warm glow of God’s love rain or shine!

Please contact me if I can be of assistance to you. 937-360-6341

Journey well beloved, Journey well-  
Peace, Pastor Karen



By Brandy Powell

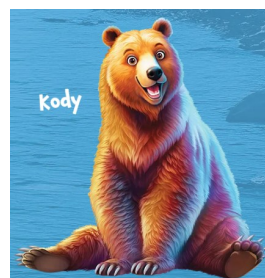
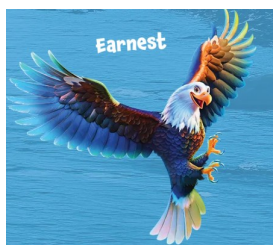
## Nursery-6th Junior Church

VBS is almost here!! Are you registered to join us for True North? Kids and volunteers can register today at [myvbs.org/westlibertyunitedvbs](http://myvbs.org/westlibertyunitedvbs). Join us for an Alaskan adventure evenings July 14-18 from 6:00-8:30pm. This year we will hold both the opening and closing in the UCC sanctuary!!



Point kids to Jesus, a faithful friend we can always trust.

Guide kids on the ultimate Alaskan adventure where northern lights glow over majestic mountains, racing rivers, and glistening glaciers. As kids trek the tundra, they'll explore how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. Pointing them toward Jesus, True North VBS shows them that he is a faithful friend we can always trust. He's our True North!



## In Unison (4rd - 7th grades) and Unity (2nd grade and younger)

All ages are invited to participate in church-wide events listed below in the Upcoming Events. They can also participate in some of the local mission projects July 20-23. Check with Rob Painter for details on age requirements. Youth can also help out at the Ice Cream Social by carrying trays to tables, cleaning up tables, or general running of errands from inside the church to the serving tent.



An after church youth group event is in the works for October. More details will come in the September newsletter.



## United in Christ (8th-12th grades)

Our oldest youth will be participating in service projects during the days July 20-23. Adults are also welcome to join us for these projects if you are looking to do some service work. Contact Rob Painter for details.

Monthly meetings will resume in September. We can't wait to see you there!

## Upcoming Events:

July 14-18: VBS  
July 19: Church Fish Fry  
July 20-23: Mission Projects  
July 26: Community Ice Cream Social  
August 9: Hickman Slip-n-slide/Hayride  
August 23: (tentative) Clippers game





Dear Church Family

We would like to invite you all to our woods for a FISH FRY on Saturday, July 19 at 5:00 pm at 302 West Newell St. in West Liberty. Just come up the driveway and follow the markers. In case of rain, it will be held at the church.

Members of the West Liberty Lions Club will be fixing the fish. It will be the same as the ones they put on for the community.

We will be furnishing the fish, the drinks, and all of the paper products, but would appreciate a covered dish to be shared by all. Not to worry, the woods will be sprayed for ticks and mosquitoes. Also, transportation down into the woods will be provided for those who need it.



Lowell and Sandy Buck

P.S. Since the Lions Club is fixing the fish, they need to know how much fish to order. Could you please try to let us know if you plan to attend and how many by 7/12/25. Call 937-465-2772 or email [lowellbuck@gmail.com](mailto:lowellbuck@gmail.com)

## A Word From Missionary Aide

The poem "Taking Time" by Kay Andrew is a prayer for these lazy hazy days of summer.

Lord, let me take time to see the flowers that grow by  
the side of the road,  
Let me take time to lend a hand to lighten another's load,  
Let me take time to hear the sound of happy children at play,  
And let me take time to visit a friend who might be lonely today,  
Let me take time to share my thoughts with those who  
are dear to me,  
And let me take time for a quiet hour to spend, Lord,  
alone with Thee.



## Community Ice Cream Social

This years Community Ice Cream Social is Saturday, July 26th 4 pm to 7pm. The recipient this year is 5 week old Hudson Alig, son of Bob & Jenna Alig and grandson of Bill Alig. Hudson was born at 23 weeks and given a 2% survival rate with a birth weight 1.4 oz. He was recently re-admitted to Children's Hospital.

We are looking for volunteers as in the past and requesting 8 pies per Church. (no cream pies please). Also accepting donations payable to West Liberty Ice Cream Social. If you are interested in volunteering or donating pies, please notify Tim or Julie Wilcox or you can text Tim at 937-441-8571




"To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides." David Viscott




RECOGNITION OF OUR GRADS



**Kolbie Swartz**  
 Daughter of Autumn and Gabe Swartz  
 Graduated from West Liberty-Salem


**Analiese Henry**  
 Granddaughter of Jim and Jill Hoffman  
 Daughter of Brett and Jessie Henry  
 Graduated from Salem Christian Academy



**Tripp Hoffman**  
 Grandson of Jim and Jill Hoffman  
 Son of Jimmy and Kari Hoffman  
 Graduated from Trebein Elementary




**Josiah Stidham**  
 Great Grandson of Joe Buck Sr.  
 Grandson of Wayne and Nancy Hamilton  
 Son of Andy Stidham  
 Graduated from West Liberty-Salem  
 He will continue with his business, Stidhams Property Care LLC




**Baylie Plank**  
 Granddaughter of Darry and Paula Plank  
 Graduated from Grace College, Warsaw, Indiana  
 She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education, General Education K-6, and Early Intervention Specialist.  
 She is currently teaching in Warsaw and is getting married in June. She will also work on completing her Master's.



**Troy Bradley**  
 Son of Tyler and Trudy Bradley  
 Graduated from West Liberty-Salem  
 He will enter the workforce



**Jack Eggleston**  
 Grandson of Judy Legge  
 Graduated from The Ohio State University  
 He earned a degree in Marketing.



**Dana Anderson**  
 Niece of Scott and Karen Griswold  
 Graduated from Rush Medical Center in Chicago  
 She earned a Doctorate as Nurse Practitioner.  
 She will be an associate professor at the medical center.



**Kaleigh Wilcox**  
 Granddaughter of Bill Warner  
 Daughter of Tim and Julie Wilcox  
 Graduated from Ohio University  
 She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.  
 She will work at Nationwide Children's Hospital on the Medical Surgical Unit as a RN. Kaleigh is living in Marysville.

**Ongoing Prayer List**  
 If you have any updates to the prayer list, contact Kathy Etgen 937-597-8260 or office@wlucc.org.

**Those Dealing with Ongoing Illness or Difficulties**

|                                 |                  |               |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Klara Pedersen                  | Rick Fullerton   | Jamie Thomas  |
| Chuck Buck                      | Vicki Lingrell   | Trudy Bradley |
| Dennis Plank                    | Michelle Moffitt | Mike & Sandy  |
| Carol Edgecomb                  | Christina Porter | Alycia Brehm  |
| Marcus Taylor                   | Lakyn Parrish    |               |
| Andy Smith (Trimble's grandson) |                  |               |

**Our Service Men & Women**

|               |                |                 |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Cody Flora    | Skyler Heilman | Zech Wilcox     |
| Michael Ropp* | Corey Hartzler | Tracy Harr      |
| Nick Burden   | Samantha Ropp* | Darren McIntosh |
| James Powell  |                |                 |

\* Denotes Reserves