



United Church of Christ

The Church Messenger

September 2026

Pastor Karen
Griswold

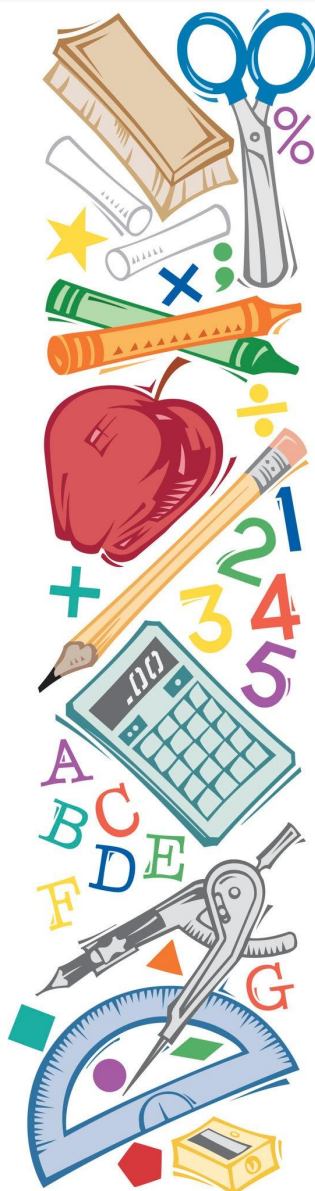


Encouraging Word

Proverbs 3:13

"Blessed are those
who find wisdom,
those who gain
understanding."

Seeking
Wisdom
and
Compassion



Back to School Prayer

Dear God,

As we send our children back to school, we pray for Your protection and guidance. Keep them safe from harm, both physically and emotionally. Help them to find friends who will support and encourage them. Give them wisdom as they face challenging situations. And help them to always remember that You are with them, no matter what.

We also pray for our teachers and school staff. Give them strength, patience and knowledge as they work with our kids each day. Help them to be role models of Your love and grace. And bless them with all the resources they need to provide a top-quality education for our children.

Finally we pray for all the parents out there who are sending their kids back to school. May we find comfort in knowing that You are holding them all in the palm of Your hand. And may we trust that, despite any challenges that come our way, You will always be with us and see us through.

Amen.

Serving for September

New Calendars have been posted for Junior Church and Young People's Moment in the overflow room. Please consider signing up to serve.



Greeting & Announcements

Lauren Flora

Videotaping

Jim Hoffman / Bec Smith

Sound

6 Dennis McIntosh
13 Ed Armentrout
20 Elisa Lash
27 Ray Etgen

Screens

6 John Edwards
13 Brandy Powell
20 Ed Armentrout
27 Tim Wilcox

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

September

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sept 1 9:30 am** Tuesday Mornings - prayer
Sept 2 6:00 pm Porch Talk
Sept 3 10:00 am Missionary Aide meeting
Sept 6 8:30 am Deacons Meeting
 Sacrament of Holy Communion
Sept 8 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer
 6:00 pm Church Board Meeting
Sept 9 6:00 pm Porch Talk
Sept 13 9:00 am Youth Second Sunday Breakfast
 1:00 pm Family Day - Young's Dairy
Sept 15 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer
Sept 16 6:00 pm Porch Talk
Sept 19 Newsletter deadline
Sept 20 Education Team Meeting after Church
Sept 22 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer
Sept 26 6:00 pm Small Group at Andy & Bec Smith's
Sept 27 Worship & Property Team Meetings
 after Church
Sept 29 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer



Anniversaries September

- 5 Rob & Denise Painter
 7 Steve & Kristi Buck
 7 David & Tara King
 9 Andy & Penny Higgins
 22 Bob & Cyndi McClure
 28 Jim & Thresa Hickman

Pastor Karen Named "Citizen of the Year"

By the West Liberty Lions Club

Our Citizen of the Year is someone who's quiet strength and steady compassion have touched countless lives in our community.

As a local pastor she brings comfort, guidance, and hope to those who need it most. Her work with Alzheimer's Association reflects her deep commitment to supporting families through some of their hardest moments, and she has walked beside many friends and loved ones as they faced illness - always with a calm, positive presence that brings peace simply by being there.

Lion Karen Griswold's kindness is constant, her service is heartfelt, and her impact is felt far beyond the walls of her church, or of our Lions Club!



- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Beau Humphrey | 18 Torrie Greene |
| 5 Austin Dillon | 18 Kari Hoffman |
| 5 Betty Murphy | 19 Olivia Wilcox |
| 5 Linda Harr | 24 Gunner Buck |
| 6 Avery Mullins | 27 Mike Flora |
| 6 Hope Stidham | 27 Dustin Walborn |
| 10 Nolan Ridenour | 29 Wyatt Etgen |
| 13 Georgia Byers | 29 Barbara Edwards |
| 18 Harrison Sutherin | |



"The wisest mind has something yet to learn."

George Santayana

For the Journey a note from Pastor Karen

For the Journey...

September 2026

Summer has a way of drawing us together. We gather in classrooms, fellowship halls, front porches, riverside, and in sanctuaries, each space becoming a reminder that faith is lived aloud in relationship. We support one another, celebrate one another, and carry one another. And in all of it, people quietly offer their gifts: teaching, baking, organizing, singing, encouraging, praying. Every gift becomes a thread in the fabric of our shared life.

This summer has been quite eventful and heartfelt. You could feel it—in the laughter of children at **Vacation Bible School**, in the shared joy of our **ice cream social**, in the holy stillness of **baptisms**, and in the hope filled faces of our **confirmation students**. These moments don't just fill a calendar; they shape a community.

These are the moments we strive for—moments where joy abounds, where service feels natural, and where God's presence feels unmistakably near. It is a deep joy to serve together, to watch faith grow and to witness how the Spirit knits us into one body.

Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:22-23 that life in the Spirit bears fruit: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control**. This summer, we have seen those fruits ripen in real time.

May we continue to live this Spiritfilled life—not only in summer's bright days but in every season ahead. God is moving among us, and it is exciting to be part of the story.



As we look back on this active, joyfilled summer, may we also look inward. Let us remember to drink in richly the Spirit of God, the One who guides our journey and shapes our life together. The Spirit is not only present in our big events and celebrations; the Spirit is present in the everyday moments—morning coffee, shared meals, quiet prayers, gentle conversations, and the stillness that settles at the end of a long day.

Our God is Still Speaking. Still guiding. Still nudging. Still comforting. Still calling.

May we continue to listen—to the whisper of the Spirit in the ordinary, to the voice of God in the simple, to the holy invitations woven into our daily lives.

Thank you, it is a joy to serve together, to grow together, and to live this Spiritfilled life as community!

Journey Well Beloved—Journey Well,

Pastor Karen

God
is still
speaking,

Thank you

Words truly can not thank you, the church family, the churches, community, everyone who played a hand in the event!! (Last night's Ice Cream Social) Everything was so perfect and such an amazing turnout. The food was soooo good and the pies oh my goodness!! My only regret was having to leave early! Truly to you all and you Karen, Thank you so Much!! We Love You ALL!

and

We want to take a moment to simply say thank you.

To our community, our families, our friends, and every single person who had a hand in making these incredible benefits possible - thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Whether you donated, volunteered, attended, shared our story, prayed for us, sent encouraging messages, or wished you could be there, please know that every act of kindness has meant more than we could ever put into words.

During one of the hardest seasons of our lives, you have reminded us that we are not walking this journey alone. The love generosity and support you've shown our family have truly humbled us, and we will never forget it.

From our entire family, thank you for standing beside us. We are beyond grateful and incredibly blessed.

Michelle Moffitt-Greene and Family



Dear Church Family

Words cannot express how blessed I am to have you in my life serving Christ together.

Your lunch for my 90th birthday was such a surprise and a blessing as I saw all the delicious food prepared so graciously. The food was delightful. I thank the ones who prepared the lunch. We surely have talented cooks at West Liberty UCC.

I so appreciate reaching my 90th birthday as the Mother and Grandmother of 5 generations of family. My life has been blessed and I thank God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that I have been given the opportunities to serve. Thank you so much for being part of my journey.

In His Love, Rosie Michael

VBS Kids and Volunteers,

Thank you so much for the blessing bags to give to our families who have just suffered the loss of a loved one. They will all find comfort in knowing the children put them together with love just for them.

Rick, Kurt, Jill
at Jennings Farley & Seeley

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

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	Trudy Bradley	Renay Fullerton
Marcus Taylor	Carol Edgecomb	James Kaelin
Christina Porter	Tony Grant	Lakyn Parrish
Deb Pattee-Chiles	Todd Harbour	Cheryl Wolford
Emily De Luca	Michelle Moffitt-Greene	
Andy Smith	(Trimble's grandson)	

Our Service Men & Women

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

* Denotes Reserves

Our Wonderful Church Family,

Thank you so much for your calls, cards, thoughts and prayers over my knee surgery. I certainly felt your love!

Kathy Etgen

"The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways."

~ Robert Greene



Dear Pastor Karen and Members of West Liberty United Church,



On behalf of the Charles Musyoka Matuku Foundation, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for your generous support of Joseph Mutinda and his educational journey.

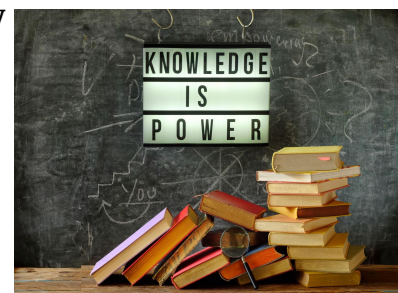
Your kindness and compassion are making a profound difference in Joseph's life. Because of your support, he is able to pursue his education with renewed confidence, hope, and determination. Your contribution helps provide essential learning resources, academic support, and opportunities that will positively shape his future.

Education is one of the most powerful tools for transforming lives, and your investment in Joseph's future extends far beyond financial assistance. It is a meaningful expression of encouragement, faith, and belief in his potential. Knowing that caring individuals and a supportive church community are standing behind him inspire him to work hard and strive toward his dreams.

We are truly grateful for your partnership and for sharing in our mission of empowering young people through education. Thank you for helping create brighter opportunities for Joseph and for giving him the chance to build a better future for himself and his community.

May God richly bless you and the entire West Liberty United Church family for your generosity, compassion, and commitment to making a lasting impact.

With sincere appreciation and heartfelt thanks,
Monica Ellis
Founder & President
Charles Musyoka Matuku Foundation



Thank you to everyone who came to the Fish Fry. We had a record turnout and appreciated all the help, the awesome food and the Lions Club for fixing fish!

Thanks for coming!
Lowell & Sandy

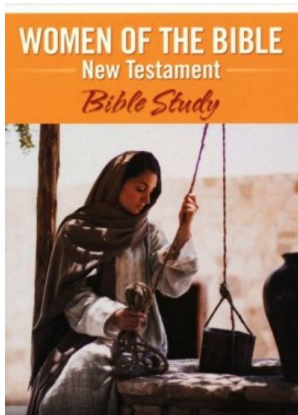
FISH FRY



If you missed it you missed a great time! The Church Thanks Lowell & Sandy for being the wonderful hosts of the fun evening!!



A Word from Missionary Aide



We will begin our studies of Women of the Bible - New Testament on September 3rd at 10:00 am. We would love to have you present at our meetings. Either come just for the meeting or bring something to share and enjoy the potluck luncheon following the meeting. Our projects for the year are:

September - West Liberty Salem School Needs
 October - WL Cares Food Pantry
 November - Family Thank Offering Dinner
 December - Sock & Mitten Tree
 February - Quillows and Valentine Bags
 March - Soteria House
 April - Blessing Bags
 May - CWS Blankets



Watch the announcements for further information.

United Church of Christ,

Thank you for your faithful support of The CWS Blankets program. We are so grateful to have you as a partner in this important ministry. Your \$750 donation will help to provide the gift of warmth and hope to 75 people.

Thank you
 Tiffany



Rosie's Birthday Surprise



*Happy
 BIRTHDAY*



Happy 90th



"The gateways to wisdom and learning are always open." Louise Hay

Education Team

Vacation Bible School

We had about 30 kids attend VBS each night this year and over 30 volunteers that made it possible! The kids learned all about God's love through our Rainforest Falls theme this year. Thank you to all of our volunteers who made VBS a great success for the kids this year! You can see all the fun at the link to our google drive here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xDkHHrGY9IfYpA_VZW3reIKNaADogVF2

VBS Rainforest Falls



"You learn something every day if you pay attention." Ray LeBlond

I CAN DO THIS!



Family Day Event

The Church will be sponsoring a family day event to Young's Dairy on September 13th. Youth (under 21) will have their activities covered by the Church. We will be leaving at 1:00pm from the Church. Anyone of any age is welcome to attend, feel free to bring your entire family. Adults attending who can transport youth, please let Rob Painter or Pastor Karen know by September 7th.

Second Sunday Youth Breakfast

The Church will begin hosting a Second Sunday Youth Breakfast on the 2nd Sunday of every month. It will be for youth who are confirmation age (middle school/early high school). We will meet at 9:00am for breakfast and devotions. This will also provide youth with a chance to plan for upcoming activities. The first Second Sunday Breakfast will be September 13th. Please let Rob Painter or Pastor Karen know by Sept 7th so arrangements may be made.



Junior Church Fall 2026

We will continue using the Big Faith Curriculum published by Cokesbury. Our sessions begin with a moment of worship that includes prayer, scripture and offering, often led by a child.

F - FUN: engage with fun themes that connect faith and play.

A - ADVENTURE: explore Bible stories that teach us about our faith.

I - IMAGINATION: use imagination to connect stories of our faith through the Bible

T - TRUSTED THEOLOGY: learn about faith through grace-based theology

H - HOME & HEART CONNECTION: develop a faith that encourages spiritual growth in every aspect of life.

Fall Quarter: Warm and Cozy - The stories are all about the many ways that God cares for God's people, show children a variety of ways that God's love and care show up not only for the people in the Bible but for us today.

September "God Shows Us Compassion"

"But you, My Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy; you are very patient and full of faith love." Psalm 86:15)

September 6 Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 37:1-36)

September 13 Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 39:1 - 40:23)

September 20 Joseph Saves the Day (Genesis 41:1-57)

September 27 Joseph and His Brothers Reunite (Genesis 42:1-46:34)



October "God Cares for Us"

"God is the one who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort other people" 2 Corinthians 1:4

October 4 God Cares for Abraham (Genesis 15:1-6)

October 11 God's Awesome Care (Psalm 8)

October 18 God's Instruction and Care (Exodus 19:1:20-21)

October 25 God Cares for Us Always (Jeremiah 29:11-14)



November "Run the Race"

"So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us." Hebrews 12:1

November 1 Joshua's Bravery (Deuteronomy 31:1-6; Joshua 1:1-9)

November 8 The Israelites Cross the Jordan (Joshua 3:1-4:24)

November 15 Ruth Helps Naomi Endure (Ruth 1:22)

November 22 Daniel Faces the Lions (Daniel 6:1-26)

November 29 Preparing for a King (Jeremiah 23:5-8)



Baptism at Mad River

