



United Church of Christ

The Church Messenger

October 2026

Pastor Karen
Griswold



The Black Dot

A teacher walked into her classroom wearing a brand new white t-shirt. She picked up a black marker and placed one small dot in the middle of it.

Then she stood before her students and asked, "What do you see?"

"A black dot!" the class answered almost in unison.

The teacher smiled, "Really, Is that all you noticed?"

The students looked at one another, confused.

"You're looking at a large white t-shirt," she explained. "It's clean, bright and almost completely spotless, yet not one of you mentioned all that white space. The first thing everyone noticed was one tiny black dot."

The room grew quiet.

"We often look at people the same way," she continued. "Someone may do a hundred kind things for us. They may support us, help us, show up when life gets difficult and stand by our side when we need them most. But the moment they make one mistake, that single mistake can suddenly become all we see,"

She pointed to the little black mark.

"We can remember one hurtful sentence for years while forgetting hundreds of kind ones. We can focus on one weakness in another person and overlook dozens of wonderful qualities."

"Sometimes, we do the same thing with our own lives. We may have our health, people who love us, a home, friends, opportunities and countless reasons to be grateful, yet spend the entire day thinking about the one thing that went wrong."

By then, the students were no longer staring only at the dot. They were looking at the entire shirt.

"I'm not saying the black dots don't matter," the teacher added. "Mistakes should be corrected. Problems need to be addressed, and hurtful behaviour should never be excused. But don't allow one dark spot to erase everything good surrounding it."

(see Final Thought page 9)

Encouraging Word

Matthew 7:12

"So in everything,
do to others what
you would have
them do to you,
for this sums up
the Law and the
Prophets."



Serving for October

Young People's Moment

4 Penny Higgins
11 Nancy Hamilton
18 Gina & Kayla
25 Rob Painter

Sound

4 Dennis McIntosh
11 Elisa Lash
18 Ed Armentrout
25 Ray Etgen

Greeting & Announcements

Phil Etgen

Videotaping

Jim Hoffman / Bec Smith

Junior Church

4 Penny Higgins
11 Julie / Olivia Wilcox
18 Penny / Gina & Kayla
25 Rob Painter



Screens

4 John Edwards
11 Ed Armentrout
18 Brandy Powell
25 Tim Wilcox

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

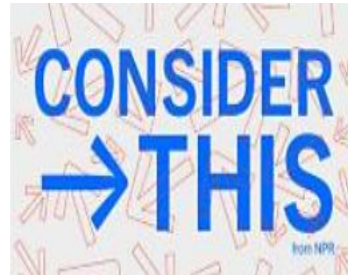
October

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Oct 1 10:00 am Missionary Aid meeting & luncheon
6:00 pm Pastoral Relations Team meeting
- Oct 4 8:30 am Deacons Meeting
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Finance Team Meeting
5:15 - 6:15 pm Scout meetings
- Oct 6 9:30 pm Tuesday Mornings - prayer
6:00 pm Church Board Meeting
- Oct 7 6:00 pm Living Well in the Midst of Grief & Loss
- Oct 11 9:00 am Youth 2nd Sunday Breakfast
Congregational Meeting
4:00 - 6:00 pm Scout Meeting
- Oct 13 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer
- Oct 14 6:00 pm Living Well in the Midst of Grief & Loss
- Oct 18 Education Team Meeting after Church
2:30 pm Otterbein Green Hills Service
5:15 - 6:15 pm Scout meetings
Newsletter deadline
- Oct 19 Newsletter deadline
- Oct 20 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer
- Oct 21 6:00 pm Living Well in the Midst of Grief & Loss
- Oct 25 Worship & Property Team Meetings after Church
4:00 - 5:00 pm Scout Meetings
- Oct 27 9:30 am Tuesday Mornings - prayer
- Oct 28 6:00 pm Living Well in the Midst of Grief & Loss



- 1 Steve & Lisa Tracey
4 John & Barbara Edwards
6 Lowell & Sandy Buck
7 Rick & Renay Fullerton
9 Kevin & Cindy Williams
12 Luke & Cassidy Ridenour
14 Matt & Megan Hunter
19 Steven & Nichole Klingler
21 Gabe & Autumn Swartz



Join us Wednesday evenings in October for "Living Well in the Midst of Grief and Loss." Julie Wilcox and

Pastor Karen will be the facilitators.

Living Compass Faith & Wellness Ministry provides resources, classes, coaching, education, training, and support to individuals, families, and congregations as they seek the wholeness God intends for all of us. Living Compass Classes seek to open authentic conversations focusing on heart, soul, strength, and mind. Join us as we explore these concepts in the midst of grief and loss.



- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 Bob McClure | 14 Sandy Buck |
| 3 Barb Trimble | 15 Dennis McIntosh |
| 4 Pete Crowe | 20 Haddie Stidham |
| 6 Brevin Loudon | 24 Emily Pedersen |
| 9 Kayla Tracey | 25 Gary Heath |
| 11 Michelle Moffitt-Greene | 26 Charlee Swartz |
| 11 Jeremy Greene | 26 Morgan Sullivan |
| 12 Gina Buroker | 27 Deanna McIntosh |
| 12 Jill Hoffman | 30 Whitney Etgen |
| 14 Analiese Henry | |



"Someday the kindness you give out will come back to you." Emery Allen

For the Journey a note from Pastor Karen

For the Journey...

October 2026



I've heard several folks say that this is their favorite time of year. Fall has a way of gently wrapping up summer, giving us space to pause, and preparing us for the colder Ohio days ahead. Some of us welcome mums, pumpkins, changing colors, and pumpkin spice everything. Others try to hold on to every last bit of summer. A couple of weeks ago I drove past the Bellefontaine City Pool—empty and quiet—and my heart sighed. It feels like summer has slipped by especially fast this year.

Ohio has taught me to be flexible, to trust that change can be good, and to believe that what's around the bend might hold something wonderful. Faith and Ohio have that in common.

Throughout Scripture, we read story after story of how God provides in every season. God works through prophets, kings, and ordinary people to bring change, flexibility, community, and hope. When we listen to our stillspeaking God, we hear compassion woven with reconciliation. In every season, God prepares our hearts for the widening of the Kingdom. It is in this spirit that we learn to trust God with every season of our lives.

Howard Thurman offers this wisdom:

“Listen to the long stillness: New life is stirring new dreams are on the wing new hopes are being readied: Humankind is fashioning a new heart Humankind is forging a new mind God is at work. This is the season of Promise.”



May this season remind you of the promise of the good harvest the Holy Spirit cultivates. And as the days grow cooler and the colors deepen, may you sense God's quiet nudge to explore where your own gifts might blossom.

Perhaps you feel drawn to pray for others in ways seen and unseen. Perhaps you offer help with a steady presence or a willing hand. Perhaps you bring healing through listening, comforting, or tending. Perhaps you encourage simply by showing up with kindness and hope.

Whatever stirs in your spirit, may you gently follow it. And may you discover, in your own way and your own time, the fullness of God's kingdom already unfolding around you—and within you.

Journey Well Beloved Journey Well,

Pastor Karen

Thank you

To the people of West Liberty United Church of Christ, the family of Sean and Kelsey Crowe are very grateful for your prayer support during a time of unbearable grief over the loss of 3 month old Emmett to SIDS. The prayer support from friends and total strangers has been overwhelming and kept us going. We are humbled. Thank you.



WL United Church of Christ Outreach Committee –

On behalf of WL-S high school, thank you for your recent donation of kleenex and cleaning wipes. While our students might be bigger, these items are always in need! Thank you for supporting us! It is truly a blessing.

Molly Smith, HS Counselor
Candace Watson, Secretary



This comes with sincere appreciation.

Dear Church Family and Pastor Karen,

Many thanks for your prayers, cards, and “check-ins” during my shoulder surgery. Your kindness and thoughtfulness is much appreciated!

Warm regards,
Robin Godwin

Church DEACONS

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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
Carol Edgecomb	James Kaelin	Christina Porter
Tony Grant	Lakyn Parrish	Deb Pattee-Chiles
Todd Harbour	Cheryl Wolford	Emily De Luca
Dave Daulton	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



“Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness.” Seneca



Missionary Aid News



September 3, 2026

Our new president, Lauren opened our meeting by reading the Missionary Aid constitution.

Treasurer reported \$1,684.61. There was a contribution to CWS Tool & Blanket for \$750.

The historical society is interested in history of "Christmas Pie" in church cookbook. Judy will enlighten them and us, as it's her mother's recipe.

Judy's devotions were on the "Willows", which refers to Psalm 137 - "How Shall we Sing the Lord's Song by the waters of Babylon".

Lauren & Sandra led us in singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness".

Motion was made to give \$150 to the school for our September project.

Lauren's program was taken from Luke's Gospel - "Anna". She was a prophetess. She was married for 7 years - then a widow for 84 years. She was one of the first to see Baby Jesus and realize he was the fulfillment of God's promises. Anna's words were never recorded but she gave thanks to God and spoke to all who were looking forward to redemption of Jerusalem.

Judy & Sandra were the committee for the day. Pastor Karen had prayer for those who are in need and healing.

Meeting closed with the Aid Benediction.

Twelve members, and one guest enjoyed a delicious buffet.

Jane Moffitt, Secretary



Neighbors in Need October Special Offering

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's justice ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

Through this offering we express our deep commitment to reaching out and touching our neighbors with justice and compassion. This allows us to speak prophetically to those in power and to advocate for a society where all people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. In the spirit of Christ, we will seek to confront evil in the world and to alleviate suffering. We will do this through direct service as well as advocacy.

Offering envelopes will be available in the pew holders and may be placed in the regular offering.

Education Team

Junior Church

We continue with the Fall Quarter: Warm and Cozy - The stories are all about the many ways that God cares for God's people, shows 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.

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)

Youth 2nd Sunday Breakfast

We had 16 youth for our first 2nd Sunday Breakfast! We discussed upcoming projects, events, and the Christmas Program. Thanks to those that helped prepare our breakfast.

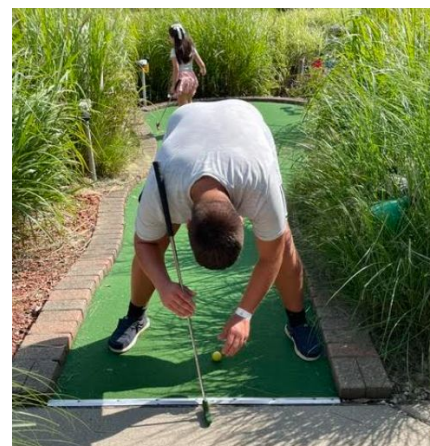
Family Event at Young's Dairy

We had a great group for a fun afternoon at Young's Dairy. See pictures below:





Young's
Jersey Dairy



Family Fun Day at Young's Dairy

"What we all have in common is an appreciation of kindness and compassion."
Richard Gere



Final Thought

Before the lesson ended, she left them with one final thought:

"The next time you're tempted to judge someone by a single mistake or decide your entire day is terrible because of one difficult moment, remember this shirt. Don't look only at the black dot. Notice all the white space around it."

Our minds naturally notice what is wrong. Wisdom is learning to see the whole picture instead of allowing one negative moment to overshadow everything that is still good.



May your day be filled with good thoughts, kind people, and happy moments.