



First United Methodist Church
127 N 4th St
Vandalia, IL 62471



Submitted anonymously: M.M.



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Office Closure	2
Come to the Table	
Thank You	
Food Pantry	
Prayer Concerns	3
Shut-Ins	
Scripture Challenge	4
Pastor's Message	5
Music Minute	6
Poem	
Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Serving this month	7



September Pews News

First United Methodist Church of Vandalia:

*"Planting and nurturing seeds of faith,
cultivating devoted disciples of Christ,
and feeding souls for the glory of God"*

VANDALIA FUMC
YOUTH GROUP
KICKOFF
Party

JOIN US FOR:
WILD FOAM ADVENTURES
SNOBIZ SNOW CONES
FOOD & DRINK
DUNK TANK
& MORE!!!

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH
6PM-7:30PM
@VANDALIA FUMC PARKING LOT



YOUTH GROUP RESUMES EVERY WEDNESDAY!!
STARTING SEPTEMBER 16TH, GRADES K-12 WELCOME

Church Staff

Pastor: Curtis Flake: rev.cflake@gmail.com, 217-273-4432
Administrative Assistants: Sue Miller & Jaicob Arndt
Church email: vandaliafumc@outlook.com
Choir & Praise Team Director: Taryn Flake: taryn.a.flake@gmail.com
Children's Ministries Coordinator: Trisha Miller
Preschool Director: Morgan Tessman
Custodian: Andy Sidwell
Family Center Custodian: Rich Well

Happy Labor Day 2026

The church office will be closed Monday, September 7th
in observance of Labor Day.

thank you!

I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate the card from your prayer group. Please pass it along that it is a blessing to know how many people are praying for me. The prayers are working as my numbers keep dropping and I'm feeling pretty good!! Only 3 treatments!!

-Patty Jennings

Come to the table

REVELATION 19:9

Please join us **Wednesday nights 5:30-6:30** for our community meals in **Wesley Hall**. Menu:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| September 9 | Fall Beginning Day!!
Hamburger/Hot Dogs, Assorted Chips, Cookies |
| September 16 | Ham & Turkey Sliders, Assorted Chips, Cookies,
Fruit Cup |
| September 23 | Chicken Nuggets, Mac & Cheese, Pudding Cup,
Fruit Cup |
| September 30 | Mostaccioli, Garlic Brad, Cookies, Fruit Cup |

6:35
PANTRY

FUMC is scheduled to help at the food pantry
on Thursday, September 11th, 4:30pm.
Please arrive by 4pm.

*We Need The
Following:*

Everything!

September



- SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**
- 1—Sharon Castle
Kiralyn Hayes
Mandy Pearson
 - 2—Kari Hagy
Dorothy Ann Jenkins
Kim Warner
 - 5—Arlene Hoffman
Heath McDowell
 - 6—Brandi Gathe
 - 8—Mike Beckett
Shannon Tarkington
 - 11—Piper Doyle
TJ Warren
 - 12—Taryn Flake
Gaynelle Scott
 - 14—Carolyn Daniels
Jacy Fulk
 - 15—John Campbell
 - 16—Dave Milam
 - 17—Chase Konrad
Katie Myers
 - 18—Harold Johnson
 - 20—Barb McCart
 - 21—Gretchen Bland
Brandon Craycroft
Rebekah Miller
Bonnie Tjaden
 - 25—Jaime Warren
 - 26—Ava Bowers
Max Durbin
Lance Guffey
 - 28—Rand Craycroft
Phyllis Rames
 - 30—Nick Lurkins
Lucas Miller



- SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**
- 1—Tim & Jamie Michel
(19 years)
 - 14—Andy & Monica Schwarm
(13 years)
 - 17—Caleb & Michelle Miller
(15 years)

Liturgist

Lea Ann Rubin

Offering Collectors

- 6— John Burnam
- 13— Gene Schwarm
- 20— Barb Paine
- 27— Jeff Endres

Video Tech

Rand Craycroft

Sound Tech

Patrick Myers

Bus Ministry

6 **Driver:** Max Durbin
Rider: Deb Durbin
Greeter:

13 **Driver:** Ed Taylor
Rider: Kim Taylor
Greeter: Sandy Stombaugh

20 **Driver:** Bill Warner
Rider: Kim Warner
Greeter:

27 **Driver:** Max Durbin
Rider: Deb Durbin
Greeter: Sandy Stombaugh

Acolytes

- 6— Harper Burnam
- 13— Ryann F.
- 20— George H.
- 27— Hannah Stombaugh

Ushers

- 6— JD Vieregge & Josh Figgins
- 13— JD Vieregge & Rand Craycroft
- 20— JD Vieregge & Jacy Fulk
- 27— JD Vieregge & Greg Fulk

Greeters

- 6— Joyce Staff
- 13— Joyce Staff & Peggy Williams
- 20— Rich & Kim Well
- 27—



Music Minute

We would love to have you join Sanctuary Choir this year! Choir normally sings on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month. We meet 2 Wednesdays a month at 4:30 PM (the Wednesdays before the 2nd and 3rd Sundays). This allows are volunteers to enjoy dinner and help with youth group later that evening.

Something new this year, to accommodate people still at work or traveling, is that I will send out the recording to practice at home. If you can't make the Wednesday choir rehearsal, you can practice on your own and then join us for the 9:00 Sunday rehearsal. You can pick up the choir music the Sunday before. We hope this will allow more people to be able to join our voices in praise to God on Sunday mornings. If you would like to try out participating in Sanctuary Choir, you would be welcome to join us any week. Even a commitment of singing with us once a month would really help our small choir grow! We could really use YOUR help – yes, yours! You don't have to read music to participate. I'm happy to discuss this option further with anyone who is interested at any point in the year.

September Music Schedule:

- Tuesday, September 1st @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice
- Sunday, September 6th @ 8:30 AM – Praise Team Sound Check
- Tuesday, September 8th @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice
- Wednesday, September 9th @ 4:30 PM – Sanctuary Choir practice
- Sunday, September 13th @ 8:15 AM – Praise Team Sound Check
@ 9:00 AM – Sanctuary Choir Sound Check
- Tuesday, September 15th @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice
- Wednesday, September 16th @ 4:30 PM – Sanctuary Choir practice
- Sunday, September 20th @ 8:15 AM – Praise Team Sound Check
@ 9:00 AM – Sanctuary Choir Sound Check
- Tuesday, September 29th @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice



The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 10:2

FCH/Long Term Care: (650 West Taylor)

Arlene Hoffman (Rm. 510)
Sharon Lee (Rm. 706)
Margaret Carroll (Rm. 610)
Larry Peyton (Rm.405)
Sara Clark (Rm.707)
Pete Burnam (Rm.608)
Retha Burnam (Rm. 708)

Willowbrook: (1124 Sunset dr)

Edith Knebel

Brookstone: (1607 W. Fillmore)

Jean Stombaugh (Apt. 35)

New Joys and Concerns

Joy in hearing Children in Church

Joy in having the Praise Team back!

Our Church, our community and our country

Sandoval First United Methodist Church

Praise for Kelly Clark for 23 years of marriage to Travis

Family of Dorothy Schultz



Barb Ambuehl	Keith & Sandy Ehrat's	Krey Leesman	Heather (Jones) Thompson
Brianna Barnett	daughter's	Jen Liebold	Tracey (Sandy Ehrat's daughter's MIL)
Marti Bingham	mother-in-law	Austin Long	Brenda Usher
Gretchen Schneider	Jeff Endres	Joyce Lowry	Les Vaughan
Bland	Kevin Eyman	Jason Mouser	Victoria & Family
John Campbell/Home	Tammy Leidner Fallert	Jeff Mueller	Wayne-Jan Johnston's brother-in-law
Sara Clark	David Floyd	David Rademacher	Carole White
Ava Cooper	Larry Gehle	Marie Rhodes	Suzanne Wilkerson
Julia Crowe	Sue Harrison	Sydney Rosborough	Jeff Williams
Carolyn Daniels	Steve Hoover	Ryley Savage	Ken & Peg Williams
Linda Daniels	Patty Jennings	Ann Schwarm	Hudson Winters
Cheri Darr	Jennfer Kinney	Andy Sidwell	Lonna Woodruff
Rob Dillingham	Bob & Joy Kloster	Anna Syniuk	Patti Woods
	Ray Kramer	Donna Taylor	David York

September 2026 Newsletter Article

Congrats! & Welcome!

If you have been accepting the Scripture Challenges since September 2025...Congrats! You have completed a full year of reading verses from the Bible. Some were short, only a few verses. Others were quite long. Remember the 30-Day Gospel Challenge, where it all started last September? More on that in a moment. If you have not accepted the challenges or were "hit and miss" over the year...Welcome! No better time to start than with this month's (along with October's) challenge. You will be joining the devotees who have reported familiarity with the Bible has increased and habits of daily Bible reading has been built.

Last September we started with the 30-Day Gospel Challenge from which grew the monthly Scripture Challenge. Reading all four gospels in a 30-day month was, well, a lot. It was like drinking from a fire hose. While most of the selections took 20 minutes or so (for a fast reader) it was still a major commitment. So you know that I am listening, most challenges which followed included much shorter passages.

That brings us to an all new Gospel Challenge. You may remember that in the July newsletter article, I mentioned looking for my One Year Chronological Bible, finding it and then not finding any United Methodist authored books on my shelf which lead me to Adam Hamilton and the Living Unafraid devotional which along with an adult Sunday School Class request inspired the July challenge. I digress! Back to the Chronological Bible. My plan was to present verses from the four Gospels chronologically, with my Bible as a guide and to stretch it over two months which seemed a much more realistic challenge.

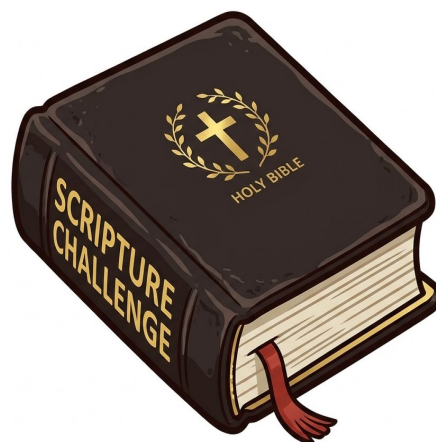
So, equipped with the reading plan from my chronologically organized Bible, I set out to put together the two months' worth of scripture. Well, it took hours and the only research I did was to locate the Bible and follow the plan. When I finished the challenges of September and October, I thought to myself, this is too much! Some of the most die hard challenge devotees my get discouraged with the flipping back and forth of a verse here and a verse there. It is much easier to complete, which I have done several times, when the verses are all printed out for you in a Bible dedicated to presenting this format.

But, the work was done. No turning back! I still liked the idea of "over two months." Then it came to me (a God-thing I am sure!) Just mix it up a bit but keep the readings following one after another through the gospels. So, this month and next, there are two versions of the Gospel Challenge, one chronological and one gospel by gospel. You choose! Either works. We all end up in the same place—having completed the reading of the gospels in 61 days.

Perhaps I should have started with the "Why?". Why read through all four gospels again. I'll save that for next month's newsletter article. Happy reading and remembering regardless of the format you choose.

*In Christ's love,
Ann*

Part 1, Version 1



Part 1, Version 2



Scan these with your phone's camera for links to the scripture or feel free to pick up paper copies from outside the Church office!

Finding Our Fall Rhythm

There is something about September that changes the rhythm of our lives.

School has started. Sports schedules fill the calendar or settle down, depending on what season of life you are in. Work settles back into its regular routines. Family vacations become less frequent, and suddenly it seems like everyone has somewhere to be and something to do.

And as our community gets back into a rhythm, so does Vandalia First United Methodist Church.

We have a busy fall ahead of us—but it is the good kind of busy.

One of the first signs of fall around our church is the sound of little feet upstairs. After a quiet summer, it is wonderful to have the pitter-patter of preschool feet back in the building. Our preschool has been a part of the ministry of Vandalia First for 46 years. Sometimes I think we forget what a remarkable ministry that is. We have a wonderful group of teachers, students, and families, and we are grateful for the life and energy they bring to our church.

Then on Wednesday, September 9, we really get things moving.

Our Youth Group Kickoff, Wednesday night meals, and Sanctuary Choir all begin that evening. Wednesday nights are an important part of the life of our church because they give us an opportunity to do something the church has always done well: gather around the table, build relationships, learn about our faith, and have some fun along the way.

Wednesday nights are also a great entry point for inviting people to church. Youth have Youth Group. Those interested in fellowship and singing have choir. And everybody eats.

I am particularly excited about our youth ministry. Vandalia First has a special gift and a unique opportunity to teach so many young people from our community about Jesus. Just as importantly, we have the opportunity to provide a safe place where young people can grow friendships, ask questions, be themselves, and have fun. That is a ministry worth celebrating—and worth supporting.

And don't forget the choir! We are always looking for more voices. You don't have to know exactly what you're doing or make a big commitment before you give it a try. Show up, talk to one of the choir members, or reach out to our choir director, Taryn Flake. There is always room for another voice.

Of course, not everything is starting in September. Some of the ministries that help keep us connected throughout the year are continuing as well.

Our monthly Bible Reading Challenge continues, and you'll find more information about this month's challenge elsewhere in the newsletter. I hope you'll consider joining us. There is

something powerful about not only reading Scripture ourselves, but knowing that others in our church family are reading and growing alongside us.

Bucket Buddies continues to provide a wonderful opportunity for the women of our church to gather around food, fellowship, and Bible study. And our United Methodist Men continue to gather around food, fellowship, and a devotional while finding ways to serve our church and community. Before long, we'll be talking about the Fish Fry and Coats & Shoes—which means the calendar is going to get even busier!

You've heard me say it before, but I really believe that Bucket Buddies and United Methodist Men are some of the best entry points into our church for adults who are looking for a place to connect. Sometimes finding your place in a church doesn't start with a worship service. Sometimes it starts with a meal, a conversation, a Bible study, or simply sitting around a table with people who are glad you're there.

But I want to be careful about celebrating a "busy" church simply because it is busy.

A full calendar isn't necessarily a sign of a healthy church.

What excites me is what can happen through that calendar.

People sitting around a table and getting to know one another.

Young people discovering that church can be a place where they belong.

People opening the Bible and discovering something new about God.

Voices joining together in song.

Women and men building friendships and growing in faith.

Children filling our hallways with laughter and little footsteps.

People serving their neighbors because they have discovered the love of Christ.

That's the good kind of busy.

So as our community settles into the rhythm of another school year, I hope you will find your place in the rhythm of Vandalia First.

Maybe that means joining the choir. Maybe it means coming to Wednesday night dinner. Maybe it means bringing a young person to youth group. Maybe it means joining the Bible Reading Challenge, Bucket Buddies, or United Methodist Men. Maybe it simply means finding your way back through our doors on Sunday morning. And, of course, there are plenty of other ways to connect that aren't mentioned here.

Whatever it looks like, there is a place for you here.

My prayer is that all of these activities will be more than things we put on a calendar. I pray they become opportunities to encounter Christ, to build meaningful relationships, to serve our community, and to grow together as God's people.

It is going to be a busy fall at Vandalia First.

And I think it is going to be the good kind of busy.

I can't wait to see what God does with it.

-Pastor Curtis