



First United Methodist Church

127 N 4th St
Vandalia, IL 62471



Submitted by: Delta Depaolo

OCTOBER 2026

PEWS NEWS

NEWSLETTER

www.vandaliafirstumc.org

CONTACT US:

Office Hours:

M-TH: 8a-4p

F: closed

Phone:

618-283-3684

Email:

VandaliaFUMC@outlook.com

Website:

VandaliaFirstUMC.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Music Minute
Womens' Support Group
WJLY Fall Festival

2

Columbus Day
6:35 Pantry
Charge Conference
& Other Announcements

3

Scripture Challenge

4

Pastor's Perspective

5

Prayer Requests,
Joys & Concerns
Shut-Ins

6

Come to the Table
Visit the Parsonage!
Confirmation Class Info

7



The 2026 Youth Kickoff Party Was a hit! FUMC would like to give a big "Thank You" to everyone that helped make it possible. What a great way to start the year!

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



You are still welcome to join Sanctuary Choir this year!

A couple of highlights from the music schedule:

Sunday, October 4th is World Communion Sunday, so we will be singing songs that promote unity and peace among the nations.
On Sunday, October 25th, Lisette Ehrat will be playing the organ, and Olivia & Jacob Jenkins will be leading us in some praise songs. This coverage, while I will have been in Kansas City for the week for seminary, is sure to be enjoyable.

October Music Schedule:

- Sunday, October 4th @ 8:30 AM – Praise Team Sound Check
- Monday, October 5th @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice
- Wednesday, October 7th @ 4:30 PM – Sanctuary Choir practice
- Sunday, October 11th @ 8:15 AM – Praise Team Sound Check @ 9:00 AM – Sanctuary Choir Sound Check
- Tuesday, October 13th @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice
- Wednesday, October 14th @ 4:30 PM – Sanctuary Choir practice
- Sunday, October 18th @ 8:15 AM – Praise Team Sound Check @ 9:00 AM – Sanctuary Choir Sound Check
- Tuesday, October 27th @ 5:00 PM – Praise Team practice



**Musically,
Taryn Flake**

Women’s Support Group

Sometimes, when you feel overwhelmed, it is so good to know you are not alone.
The Holidays are coming soon and sometimes they are the hardest.
Our Women’s Support Group will start on **Monday, October 5, 2026 @ 3:00pm in Wesley Hall. We will meet the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month.** Anyone can join and you don’t have to dress up! Come as you are and everything discussed in this group is confidential!



SHARE-FROM-OUR-HEARTS 2026
FALL FESTIVAL
at the **WJLY RAMSEY RADIO STATION**
Saturday, October 10
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Let's celebrate 36 years of the transforming power of Christian Radio WJLY!
Come with your family and friends to celebrate and support WJLY in an extraordinary way.
Listen to WJLY 88.3 FM on Friday and Saturday, October 9 - 10, for SHARE-FROM-OUR-HEARTS!

- Kids' Activities & Bounce House
- Fall Yard Games
- Hayrides Through the Woods
- Face Painting
- Crafters & Demonstrators
- Family and Friends Photo | Free
- Petting Zoo
- Kid Kart Rides
- Lunch Wagon | By Donation

LIVE MUSIC
12:30 PM
Bob Culbertson & Friends
followed by
Natalie Fuller

SCAN TO DONATE

RAISING FINANCIAL SUPPORT
FOR THE POWERFUL MINISTRY OF WJLY



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

October 7th	Walking Tacos, Shredded Lettuce, Shredded Cheese, Sour Cream & Salsa, Cookies/Fruit Cup
October 14th	Hot Dog/Bun, Assorted Chips, Pudding Cup, Fruit Cup
October 21th	French Toast, Sausage Links, Hash Brown Patty, Fruit
October 28th	Fall Activity (TBD)

Come Visit the Parsonage!

Pastor Curtis, Taryn and his family would like to invite the church family to a Parsonage Open House on **Sunday, October 11, from 4:00–6:00 p.m.**
As a church family, we spend a lot of time together in the sanctuary, classrooms, fellowship hall, and throughout the many ministries of VFUMC. This afternoon is simply an opportunity to open our home and spend some time together in a more relaxed setting.
Come by, take a look around, enjoy some fellowship, and stay for a little while—or just stop in to say hello! We would love to have you join us and share in an afternoon of conversation and community.
Everyone is welcome, and we hope you’ll stop by!

Confirmation Class Informational Meeting

We are preparing to begin another year of Confirmation at VFUMC! Confirmation is an opportunity for young people to explore their faith, learn more about what it means to be part of the church, ask questions, and consider what it means to claim their faith as their own.
Confirmation is typically offered for students in 7th–12th grades. If you have a 6th grader whom you believe is ready to participate, please talk with Pastor Curtis. We are happy to have a conversation about whether this is the right time for them.
An informational meeting for youth and their parents will be held immediately following worship on **Sunday, October 11.**
At this meeting, we will talk about what Confirmation will look like this year, what will be expected of students and families, and answer any questions you may have. If you are considering Confirmation for your child, we encourage you to attend—even if you are not yet sure whether Confirmation is right for them.
Youth and parents/guardians are invited to join us after worship on October 11.

<u>FCH/Long Term Care: 650 West Taylor)</u>	
Arlene Hoffman (Rm. 510)	
Sharon Lee (Rm. 706)	
Margaret Carroll (Rm. 810)	
Larry Peyton (Rm.405)	
Sara Clark (Rm.707)	
Pete Burnam (Rm.608)	
Retha Burnam (Rm. 708)	
	<u>Willowbrook: (1124 Sunset dr)</u>
	Edith Knebel
	<u>Brookstone: (1607 W. Fillmore)</u>
	Jean Stombaugh (Apt. 35)
	Jan Johnston (Apt. 36)

New Joys and Concerns

Joy in hearing Children in Church
Our Church, our community and our country

Barb & Herschel Ambuehl, Patty Donaldson’s mom & dad-The tumor is growing and broke her mom’s jaw
and her dad has health issues in addition to taking care of Barb

Carolyn Daniels, Joy in having her friend, Peg Harris attend church with her

Rick Eyman, Joy for family attending church & Granddaughter’s baptism

Gene Schwarm, Praise for good results from heart cath.

Kathy Taylor, recovering from another knee surgery & hoping to find out what is wrong!

Patti Woods (balloon lady), Undergoing chemo & immunotherapy every 3 weeks for 4 treatments



Brianna Barnett
Marti Bingham
Gretchen Schneider Bland
John Campbell/Home
Darrel Casey
Sara Clark
Ava Cooper
Julia Crowe
Carolyn Daniels
Linda Daniels
Cheri Darr
Rob Dillingham
Keith & Sandy Ehrat’s daughter’s MIL
Lisette Ehrat’s sister-in-law, Theresa
Jeff Endres
Kevin Eyman
Tammy Leidner Fallert
David Floyd

Larry Gehle
Roger Grimmert
Sue Harrison
Steve Hoover
Patty Jennings
Jennfer Kinney
Bob & Joy Kloster
Ray Kramer
Krey Leesman
Jen Liebold
Austin Long
Joyce Lowry
Jason Mouser
Jeff Mueller
David Rademacher
Marie Rhodes
Ryley Savage
Anna Syniuk

Donna Taylor
Heather (Jones) Thompson
Tracey (Sandy Ehrat’s daughter’s MIL)
Brenda Usher
Les Vaughan
Victoria & Family
Carole White
Suzanne Wilkerson
Jeff Williams
Ken & Peg Williams
Hudson Winters
Lonna Woodruff
Patti Woods
David York

Vandalia FUMC will be closed in
observance of Columbus Day
Monday October **12th**



First Methodist Men are
on duty for 6:35 Pantry
on **October 29th**



United Methodist Men’s Fish Fry

Thursday, November 12th, 2026
4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
(or while supplies last).
DRIVE-THRU ONLY.
First United Methodist Church,
Vandalia, IL

★ **FREE WILL DONATIONS** ★

- All proceeds from this event are
- applied to the coats and shoes
- program which has provided for
- Fayette County children and
- youth in need for over 25 years!

Thank you for your support!



This year’s
All Saints Day
will be
Sunday,
November 1st



OUR FUMC DONATED
\$586.35 TO THE
BABY BOTTLE
CAMPAIGN THIS YEAR!

Thank you all for
your support!



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENT

When you see somebody at church
that you **haven’t seen** in a while,
your assignment is not to interview
them, it’s to **LOVE** them.

Stop meeting people at the door with,
“Where you been?” “What happened?”
“Why haven’t you been coming?”

You don’t know what they had to **survive**
just to make it back into the room.

Everybody returning to church doesn’t
owe you a **testimony, timeline,**
or **explanation....**

Contributed by: Andy Sidwell



Onward!

Last month we began again. In the September newsletter article, I promised you an answer to “why?”. Why read what we just read? What follows are my answers and I am hoping that a month “in,” you have your own answers to accepting the challenge.

As you have no doubt figured out, I believe it is important to read scripture every day. Scripture. Not just a devotional passage written by someone but rather words from God’s instruction book, the Bible. Likewise, I believe it is important to read the gospels top to bottom at least annually. By doing so, we are more likely to commit key verses to memory. You know that feeling that overcomes you when you can complete the passage in your mind as it is being read to you? That’s what we are going for. Considering the senior saints who are members of this church, I’m sure some of you have already achieved this intimate knowledge of scripture. I’m still working to get there.

But why? Why does this seem important? My answer is that so often I wonder “am I hearing the will of God?” or “am I hearing my own wishful thinking?” How can I know?

Adam Hamilton in his book Living Unafraid answers that question this way: “The challenge we have as human beings is that God usually speaks in a whisper instead of a shout. We sense God nudging us as we’re reading scripture and the words seem to address our life situation. God whispers as we’re listening to a sermon or a song, praying or meditating, and the message seems to strike a chord in our hearts. Other times, we hear God speaking through friends and family. But none of these are the ‘handwriting on the wall’ or the audible voice that gives us certainty. So, we consider the calling in the light of scripture. We look for wisdom in the ministry and message of Jesus.”

The ministry and message of Jesus. We see Jesus throughout the Bible but his specific “ministry and message” is laid out for us in detail in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Why return to where we started? For me it is because I want to be able to recite from memory passages from the Gospels, to be able to bring them to mind in those moments I most need them. I want to turn to the “ministry and message of Jesus” to discern whether I am hearing God’s will. I want to overrule my own wishful thinking by testing it against scripture.

In Christ’s Love,
Ann

Part 2 Version 1



Part 2 Version 2



In this Chronological Gospels’ version of the September Gospel Challenge you will find “parallel or synoptical passages.” These are passages are ones which contain identical content and are mainly found in the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It should be noted that although John’s gospel is quite different from the other three, it does contain passages that are parallel to those gospels.



What If We Stopped Worrying About Getting It Right?

By “we” I mean “I,” but hopefully it is helpful for you as well. I never think that I suffer from perfectionism. It doesn’t really feel like my personality. Except then I look around at projects that I have spent hours thinking about only to be discarded. Half-cooked plans that I didn’t see through. Projects that I decided weren’t worth it, or weren’t the right time, or were too much work, or weren’t beneficial enough, etc. Which begins to make me think that I have a problem. And it probably isn’t so much an issue with perfectionism as it is a fear of failure. Or, better yet, not wanting to waste anyone else’s time.

The Bible has a lot of Scripture around agriculture. Parables about scattering seed. Maybe a favorite is the indiscriminate sower who scatters seed even in the places where it isn’t most likely to grow (Luke 8:4-15). There is another little parable in Mark 4 that I think is easy to overlook. Jesus says: “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.” I love that last part: “He does not know how.” The person plants the seed. Then they wait. They go about their lives. And somehow, while they aren’t paying attention, the seed begins to grow.

I feel like if you could pull the common thread through so many of these biblical images, it would be this: we plant, and God gives growth. And if we aren’t planting, we are hindering what God plans to do through us. I have a passion project that isn’t really a project because I can’t convince myself to take the time to do it. I have had this goal of starting a Christian podcast. It even has a name, a theme, and a handful of episodes outlined.

The name is **Unfinished Faith**. The point is to have conversations around the idea that faith isn’t finished. We wrestle with doubt. We have more questions than can be answered in an hour on Sunday. And we still have a life to live while we figure it out. There are also some faith questions and church questions that don’t get answered on Sundays from the pulpit. Or, said in fewer words, we have conversations at the intersections of faith and life. Why hasn’t it happened? Well, it probably goes back to the title: “What if we stopped worrying about getting it right?” I doubt that I am alone in this.

Churches can spend a lot of energy worrying about whether we’re doing everything exactly right. Are we growing fast enough? Are we doing enough? Are we reaching enough people? Are we getting the programs right? And perhaps the better question is: What if instead we concentrated on being faithful? Our current church mission statement echoes some of the Scriptures shared earlier. It says that the Vandalia First United Methodist Church is, “Planting and nurturing seeds of faith, cultivating disciples of Christ, and feeding souls for the Glory of God.” Notice the language: planting, nurturing, cultivating, feeding. There is work for us to do. But there is also something we cannot do. Paul puts it beautifully in 1 Corinthians 3. He is talking about the work of ministry, and he says: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

I think there is freedom in that. We are called to plant. We are called to water. We are called to nurture and cultivate. But we are not called to manufacture the growth. What if instead we concentrated on being faithful? Do you remember elementary school? Your teacher gave you a cup, some soil, and some seeds. You planted the seeds, placed the cup in the windowsill, and waited. You waited what seemed like forever because a lot of growing happens where you can’t see. Then somebody’s cup sprouted. It probably wasn’t yours. And you worried that you did it wrong. Some classmates started fiddling with their cup. Others had faith and patiently waited. And sure enough, if you didn’t mess with it too much, they all began to grow. We need to remember that growth often happens slowly and invisibly—like seeds. It doesn’t seem to matter if it is personal growth, congregational growth, or church growth. It all happens slower than we would like. But God gives the growth. So perhaps the invitation for us is not to stop caring about whether we are doing things well. It is not an excuse to be careless or to stop trying.

Instead, perhaps it is an invitation to stop being so afraid of getting it wrong that we never plant anything at all. We might try something that doesn’t work. We might start something that doesn’t last. We might plant a seed and never get to see what grows from it. And that’s okay. Because our job is to be faithful planters and faithful waterers, trusting that God will continue to be the faithful grower. So today, I pray that God reminds us to plant. To water. To nurture. To cultivate. To take the next faithful step even when we aren’t sure exactly what will happen. And if you made it this far and that podcast sounds like a good idea, tell me to stop getting in God’s way and do it already.