

August 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”

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

August 9th, 2026

Back to school can be a fun, scary, wonderful, and tough time for students as well as educators. Join us for a special time of prayer during our morning worship service on **Sunday August 9th**.

This isn't limited to students and school employees! Everyone is encouraged to bring in their backpacks/work bags to the service to be blessed.



We Need The
Following:

Everything!
6:35
PANTRY

You may
drop your
donations
off in the
Fireplace
Room.

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Submitted by: *Delta DePaulo*



Preschool resumes Monday, August 17th. We pray that Miss Morgan, Miss Sue, Miss Sarah, Miss Madeline and all of our students have a wonderful school 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

Contact us:

M-W: 8a—4p
TH: 8a—11p
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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

Our Church, our Community, our Country & World Conflicts

Sandoval First United Methodist Church

Family of Diane Adams

Keith & Sandy Ehrat—Joy in the birth of their fourth Granddaughter!

Keith & Sandy Ehrat’s daughter’s mother-in-law, diagnosed with a 2nd cancer & undergoing treatments

Peg Williams as she tends to Ken and her siter, Sue



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

AUGUST



1—Rhyane Taylor
2—Mitchel Daniels/
Mason Feltner/
Matt Rademacher
4—Hannah Konrad
Darrin Lurkins
5—Carter Burnam
Bob Kloster
6—Jace Bowen
7—Peg Clark
Megan Kern
Larry Peyton
8—Mackenzie Daniels/
Kelly Haze
9—Carrie Casey
10—Drew Schneider
11—Parker Clark
Nash Grapperhaus
12—Logan Barnette,
Daniel Hanna
13—Beth Kern
17—Dana Feltner
Carla Knebel
Anna Miller
Sue Roberts
20—Marty Johnson,
Ted Koonce
23—Joe Cearlock
Miranda Meyer
24—Easton Hanna
Joy Kloster
Amy Vieregge
26—Darrel Casey
28—Janice Kramer
29—John Blythe
Kelly Jones
31—Ben Stroble

Acolytes

2— Ryann Frailey
9— Brooklyn Burnam
16— Brayden Stombaugh
23— Parker Clark
30— Addi Flake

2—David & Angie Dugan

4—Carl & Lisa Shreve

5—John & Ellie Doyle

10—John & Jody Burnam

12—Mike & Mary Fulton

15—Gene & Ann Schwarm

19—Jack & Jan Johnston

21—Rich & Kim Well

23—Travis & Kelly Clark

31—Bruce & Lea Ann Rubin

Kingdom Kids

2– Trisha Miller
9– Trisha Miller
16– Kelly Clark
23– Sue Burnam
30– Trisha Miller

Video Tech

Travis Clark

Sound Tech

Patrick Myers

Offering Collectors

2– John Burnam
9– Gene Schwarm
16– Barb Paine
23– Jeff Endres
30– Barb Paine

Bus Ministry

2 **Driver:** Ed Taylor
Rider: Kim Taylor
Greeter:

9 **Driver:** Bill Warner
Rider: Kim Warner
Greeter: Sandy Stombaugh

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

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

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

Ushers

2– JD Vieregge & Josh Figgins
9- JD Vieregge & Rand Craycroft
16- JD Vieregge & Jacy Fulk
23- JD Vieregge & Greg Fulk
30- JD Vieregge & Max Durbin

Liturgist

Barb McCard

Greeters

*We are in need of greeters!!
If you would like to volunteer
please feel free to sign up today*



Summer is both relaxing and exhausting. Isn't that a strange combination? The days are longer, people seem a little happier, vacations come and go, and somehow our calendars still fill up faster than we expect. I love the changing seasons, and Scripture often reminds us that life has its rhythms—a time to plant, a time to grow, a time to harvest, and a time to rest.

I tend to think about those rhythms a little differently. Instead of farming, I picture a roller coaster. Every roller coaster begins with the slow climb. It isn't the fastest part. It isn't the most exciting part. It is the part where the anticipation builds because you know something is coming.

That's where I think we are as a church. The beginning of August always feels like that first climb. While the church doesn't follow the school calendar, our ministry often does. Backpack 2 School, our youth group kickoff, Wednesday night ministries, and many other opportunities are just around the corner. Before we know it, we'll be talking about the Fish Fry, Coats & Shoes, Thanksgiving, and Advent. The months have a way of moving much faster than we imagine.

What gives me so much hope isn't simply that our calendar is getting busy again. It's why it is getting busy. At the end of July, we gathered for our second Laity Round Table. Last year we came together to dream about the future of our church. This year we gathered again—not because we needed another meeting, but because we wanted to keep listening, refining, and asking where God is leading us next.

As I looked around the room, I realized something encouraging. This isn't just the work of one committee or one pastor. It is the work of a church that has decided to seek God's direction together.

Over the past year we've shared Wednesday evening meals, bringing together Youth Group, Choir, and anyone else who wants to gather around the table. We have continued our Bible Reading Challenge, Coffee, Christ & Cards, Bucket Buddies, Backpack 2 School, United Methodist Men, the Prayer Shawl Ministry, Coats & Shoes, our preschool, and our community food pantry. We hosted a wonderful concert and even introduced some great church T-shirts. I also believe that Bucket Buddies, United Methodist Men, and pickleball have become some of our best opportunities to invite new people into the life of our church (We just need to use them). And I'm sure I've left out a ministry or two. That's a good problem to have. Each ministry tells the same story: we are becoming a church that is increasingly focused on loving God, loving our neighbors, and serving our community.

That same spirit is reflected in some exciting staffing changes. We have welcomed Trisha Miller to help organize and strengthen our youth ministry for both our church and community. We have also reimagined Taryn's role so that we can once again build a praise team while continuing to celebrate the rich tradition of worship that has always been part of who we are. These aren't simply staffing changes. They are signs that we believe God is calling us to invest in the future rather than simply maintain the present.

As we begin this new season together, I hope you'll see what I see. The climb isn't something to dread. It's something to anticipate. The climb means we're moving.

As Paul reminds us in Galatians, "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Sometimes the climb is slow, but God is always at work.

Thank you for being part of this church. Thank you for praying, serving, giving, dreaming, inviting, and encouraging one another. Together, we are becoming a community that is growing in the love of Christ and learning every day how to share that love with the people God places in our path.

I can't wait to see what this next season brings.

-Pastor Curtis

Every Act of Service is a Ministry

In the church, there is no such thing as a "big" or "small" ministry.
The world measures importance by visibility,
but God measures it by faithfulness.

The one preaching on stage and the one quietly setting up chairs...
the one leading worship and the one praying behind the scenes...
the one seen and the one unnoticed.. all of it matters to Him.

Because ministry isn't about being recognized.
It's about being obedient.

God sees every act of service done with a sincere heart.
Nothing is wasted. Nothing is overlooked.

What you do for Him—no matter how hidden—has eternal value.
Serve with joy. Serve with humility.

Serve knowing that heaven sees what man sometimes doesn't.
And in God's Kingdom, faithfulness will always matter more than fame.

Contributed by: Andy Sidwell

Wednesday, August 5th 4pm-6pm

BACKPACK
2 SCHOOL

FREE HAIRCUTS!!!

- One Backpack Per Student
- Student must be present to receive a backpack
- All Students through 8th grade must be accompanied by an adult (Senior High School students may come alone)

Tools For School

Take your backpack to St. James Lutheran Church during Tools For School to receive free school supplies

Aug. 5th 4pm-7pm
Aug. 6th 10am-5pm
Aug. 7th 10am-5pm
Aug. 8th 9am-11am



First United Methodist Church Family Center
4th & Main St. Vandalia, IL

Workday & setup will begin Monday August 3rd at 3:00pm. Volunteers welcome!

Wednesday, August 5th, we will be hosting our annual **Backpack 2 School** event from **4pm to 6pm** at the **Vandalia FUMC Family Center**.

Tools for School will be held at **St. James Lutheran Church** on **August 5th (4pm-7pm), August 6th (10am-5pm), August 7th (10am-5pm) & August 8th (9am-11am)**

We would like to thank everyone that has donated financially, volunteered their time or contributed school supplies, undies and socks.

This church is blessed to have such a caring and generous congregation!

thank you! Thank you for the gift cards that have been sent to me during college this past year. I really appreciate the support this Church gives me. -Reid Well



Music Minute

The summer sure flew by! It's hard to believe that next month, choir will begin again. Sanctuary choir will be back in full swing with our first rehearsal on September 9th. 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).

We will have an informational Sanctuary Choir meeting on Sunday, August 30th after church.

We would love to have you join us! 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 test 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.

Something new beginning this month is that there has been a shift in my job responsibilities: I will now be leading Praise Team and Sanctuary Choir while I complete my last school year of seminary at St. Paul School of Theology (online). This means that Bell Choir will be on hiatus for the 2026-2027 school year. After discussing the musical needs of the church with Staff Parish, to shift from leading Bell Choir to Praise Team seems to be a greater priority currently. I am hoping to be able to add more responsibilities once I am finished with school, but am trying to balance work, school, and family this final school year. I am excited that Praise Team will be returning on Sunday mornings! Please see me if you have any interest in joining Praise Team as a regular, substitute, or occasional singer or instrumentalist. We will find a place for you!

As always, if you are gifted musically, we would love to arrange somewhere for you to serve in our Sunday morning services. Please see me if you would like to assist in this way.

Musically,
Taryn Flake

Laity-

We would like to thank EVERYONE that attended, or communicated in other ways, to our Wednesday roundtable discussions. We feel like sharing together is the only way for us to move forward with an effective plan for this 2027 year. We were able to put together a list of 15+ new ideas or enhancements to what we currently use in our outreach programs. We are working on a tight schedule for starting implementation, and we will continue to need your help throughout the coming months.

Our 2026 year has been a continued path of excellence for our Church and our missions:

- We have enhanced the Backpack to School Event, Wednesday Youth Programs, Bible School, Youth Kick Off Events, Social Media presence and Youth Closing Events
- We have started the Scripture Challenge, Wednesday Night Meals, Praise Concert, Coffee, Christ and Cards, T shirt handouts for youth and adults
- We have maintained Bucket Buddies, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Food Pantry, Methodist Men, Pickle ball, Men's Morning Fellowship, Methodist Preschool
- Thank you to the Church Council, our Leadership Team of Deb Durbin, Barb Paine, Shannon Lurkins, Pastor Curtis and our Laity Representatives for all their hard work last year and we will be looking for others to step up in Year 2 of our continual Christian growth and development.

As we move into the new school year, we are excited for the possibilities of enhanced opportunities for our church. It will take ALL OF US to help in some way during the second year of this process.

Thank you all for your support.

IGRC Laity Representatives – Gene Schwarm & Rich Well



"Aren't We All!?!"

The scriptures in this month's challenge may seem familiar, especially if you were in church or watched online when Gene shared the message on July 12th. I attended the May 31st service at the Nashville, IL church when Gene shared this same message. As I often do, I took notes that Sunday morning. Those notes, along with Gene's actual sermon manuscript, contained each scripture reference that you find in this month's challenge. It was perhaps the easiest scripture challenge I've pulled together so far. Thank you, Gene! You did all the work.

Gene began developing the message on what the Bible has to say about humility weeks before he wrote the final draft of the sermon. Simon Peter has long been a favorite of Gene's. He has been captivated by Peter's roller coaster journey from impetuosity in his early days as a disciple described in the Gospels to his later days of humble servanthood reflected in Peter's own writing. So, it was Peter who inspired Gene to search for and find these scriptures on humility.

When conducting a service for another church, Gene often uses the self-deprecating introduction of himself by saying, "My wife, Ann, likes for me to accept the invitation to conduct a service for a church. She says I am a much nicer person when I am preparing the message by spending time "in the word" and really studying my Bible." To which I respond, "Aren't we all!"

As we learn what the Bible has to say about humility, I anticipate we will all be "much nicer" since we will be spending time with the Lord in His Word again this month.

In Christ's love,
Ann

Humility

"For those who exalt themselves shall be humbled and those who humble themselves shall be exalted."

These are the scriptures Gene revered in his message "Who will be exalted?"

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Luke 18:9-14 – Who will be exalted? | 16. Matthew 18:1-4 – Become Like Little Children |
| 2. Psalms 18:27 – Rescue | 17. Matthew 26:31-35 – Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial |
| 3. Psalms 147:6 – Support | 18. Matthew 26:69-75 – Peter's Denial |
| 4. Proverbs 3:34 – Opposition & Grace | 19. John 21:15-17 – Peter's Restoration |
| 5. Proverbs 18:12 – Haughtiness | 20. 1 Peter 5:5-6 – Clothe Yourself in Humility |
| 6. Proverbs 11:2 – Wisdom | 21. Jeremiah 9:23 – Don't Boast |
| 7. Proverbs 29:23 – Honor | 22. Proverbs 27:2 – Let Others |
| 8. Matthew 5:3-12 – Beatitudes | 23. Isaiah 45:9 – Don't Argue |
| 9. Proverbs 22:4 – Long Life | 24. Romans 12:3 – Don't Think |
| 10. Proverbs 149:4 – Victory | 25. Romans 12:15 – Know it All! |
| 11. Psalms 25:9 – Teaching | 26. Philippians 2:3 – Thinking of Others |
| 12. Matthew 16:13-19 – Peter's "Up!" | 27. James 3:13 – Good Works |
| 13. Matthew 16:21-23 – Peter's "Down" | 28. Matthew 20:28 – Jesus Came to Serve |
| 14. Matthew 14:27-29 – Peter Walks on Water | 29. Mark 10:45 – Jesus Life as a Ransom |
| 15. Matthew 14:30-31 – Peter Doubts | 30. Matthew 23:12 – Be Humbled |
| | 31. Luke 14:7-11 – Jesus Teaches about Humility |

