

# *August Updates 2026*



2026 Vacation Bible School  
The kids gathered at the  
Bluffton YMCA, then walked  
to the Buckeye for  
stories (told by Pastor Jeremy),  
games, music, crafts, and snacks.  
Thanks to all who helped!!



# From the desk of the Pastor

The Summer season is in full swing, with our days getting hotter, pools and ponds being heavily used, the United States celebrating it's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, camping and vacation trips being taken, and trips to the Dari Freeze or any place that has ice cold treats being visited regularly. Summertime as a kid, for me, was often spent riding my bike with my friends, heading to the community pool with my summer camp, watching cartoons, family vacations to Fenwick Island, DE, and playing soccer with my travel team.

Yet every year I would look forward to that one week of Vacation Bible School held at our family church, Grace UCC in Lebanon, PA. The fond memories of taking part in the Marketplace VBS, where we would get dressed up in ancient garb, which was really just torn up bed sheets and fabric, march with our tribe from the 12 Tribes of Israel, basket weave, make mud bricks in plastic kiddie pools, learn about spices, braid our own leather belts, and listen to the 'Old' Storyteller. This year I get the chance to be that storyteller at our own Summer Camp Themed VBS and I am very much looking forward to it.

One of the aspects of Vacation Bible School which I always find fascinating is that no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, *everyone* is welcome to participate in this missional work. Everyone can serve a role in either teaching, guiding, leading, crafting, serving, feeding, and sharing God's love with the youth of our community. In particular with the Community VBS here in Bluffton, we get children who come from all denominations and backgrounds in our community, joining together into a melting pot, of sorts, as One Body and One Christian Family. It is a week where we lay aside our denominational differences and simply *be* the Body of Christ.

This year in particular we are going to address the lesson of when children were being brought to Jesus and the disciples, thinking Jesus had better things to do with his time, were denying those parents from bringing their children. In that story, Jesus becomes "incensed" or "angry" that the disciples would do such a thing. He then proceeds to point out that children are welcome into the kingdom just as much, if not more, than those adults who were gathered around that day. The innocence of a child, he pointed out, was a precious commodity and one which held children in even higher regard in the mind of God as a result. He goes on to admonish those who would cause children to stumble or to deny them entry into the Kingdom, claiming it better for a millstone to be tied around your neck and be thrown into the sea, than to cause one of these children to stumble.

When teaching children, and adults alike, I always think about this particular warning. And so, I ask myself, “How can I be more like a child, full of innocence and wonder, and less like a stumbling block?” It is my hope, as it always is, that our VBS will touch the lives of those children who participate, as well as those adults who journey beside them, in helping them to find and express their innocence and their desire to learn more about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. And may this Summertime be a time of renewal of mind, body, and Spirit for us all.

Blessings,  
Pastor Jeremy

### Emmanuel August Softball Schedule

August 2 - 5:00pm **Emmanuel** against SRK Grey

August 9 - 4:00pm **Emmanuel** against Borg

August 16 - Softball tournaments at Village Park  
(Times TBA)



### Women's Outreach

**August 16** Women's Outreach will be meeting Sunday, following worship to plan for upcoming year. Come with some ideas to share

**\*\*\*Joint Service on August 30 at Emmanuel \*\*\***

Picnic following worship

Sloppy joes and shredded chicken sandwiches provided

Bring a side

Cake Walk, Games, Fun & Fellowship

Bring a cake or something for the cake walk

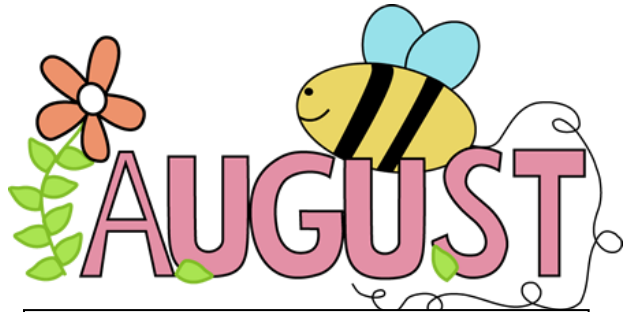


**Confirmation class will be starting in September.** Confirmation class will be starting up in September. If you have a child between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade who would be interested in joining the class please let Pastor Jeremy by September 1



### August Birthdays

08/02 Rose Burkholder  
Dyllan Worcester  
08/03 Lee Caskie  
Sharl Steiner  
08/05 Lucy Mann  
Keri Caskie  
Kim Lehman  
Julius Agner  
08/07 Sara Jane Matter  
08/08 Bill Locke  
08/10 Deanna Hackworth  
Kim Worcester  
08/11 Chris Ruhlen  
Eddie Shepler  
08/13 Riley Stark  
08/14 Aaron Lutz  
08/16 Brandy Aller  
08/17 Kadreye Scoles  
Kinzer Scoles  
08/25 Alexis Mummert  
08/26 Jaelyn Caskie  
08/29 John Motter  
08/31 Levi Shepler  
Sherry Stratton



Sharl & Nancy Steiner  
enjoying their summer







# August



**Sunday**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wed.**

**Thurs.**

**Friday**

**Sat.**

|                                                 |                                                           |                                                               |                            |                                                      |                                                   |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Allen County Fair<br>August 21-29               |                                                           | August 30<br>worship<br>10:30am and<br>potluck at<br>Emmanuel |                            | Allen East<br>Bluffton<br>schools<br>open<br>Aug. 31 |                                                   | 1<br><br>Pastor gone           |
| 2<br>Worship 9am<br>Pastor gone                 | 3<br>Office<br>opened 8-1                                 | 4                                                             | 5<br>Office<br>opened 8-1  | 6                                                    | 7                                                 | 8<br>Fellowship<br>Hall in use |
| 9<br>Worship 9am<br>Fellowship Hall<br>in use   | 10<br>Consistory<br>6:30pm<br>Office<br>opened 8-1        | 11                                                            | 12<br>Office<br>opened 8-1 | 13                                                   | 14                                                | 15                             |
| 16<br>Worship 9am<br>Women's<br>Outreach        | 17<br>Office<br>opened 8-1                                | 18                                                            | 19<br>Office<br>opened 8-1 | 20                                                   | 21                                                | 22                             |
| 23<br>Worship<br>9am<br><br>30<br>Worship 10:30 | 24 Office<br>opened 8-1<br><br>31<br>Office<br>opened 8-1 | 25<br>Senior Citizens<br>day at the fair<br>(60 and older)    | 26<br>Office<br>opened 8-1 | 27                                                   | 28<br>Veterans<br>admitted<br>free at the<br>fair | 29                             |

## **News from Heartland Conference:**

# **Don's Final Report:**

### **Report On Nov-August 2026 by Don Giesmann**

Almost ten months ago I was called to be the Designated Interim Association Minister for NWOA. Here is my report to date.



".....Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

Some 67 churches with 13,000+ members comprise the Assn. The covenant heart of our fellowship are our local churches, a foundation of the United Church of Christ. Our fellowship is diverse. It has been a JOY to serve you and to experience the Lord's amazing grace in countless ways. Thanking the Lord and thank you.

Highlights include:

\*After 20 years of Rev. Busch's service and 27 years of Joan's service, transitional changes are naturally taking place.

Preparing for the future, files have been updated, the office reorganized, and outdated stored items have been cleaned out. Improvements were made around the building. You as an Association own the building located in Tiffin.

\*Preparations are being made for the new Interim Assn. Minister, Pastor Jon Komperda. We welcome Pastor Jon to his new call which will be effective in early August. Pray for him, get to know him, and encourage him in his new  $\frac{3}{4}$  time call.

\*I have enjoyed working with our churches, pastors, search committees, Assn. Committees, and more. Currently I also teach a Zoom Class on "Christian Caregiving" for our Lay School.

\*Ministering with Kim Nye and Deb Long has been delightful. We have been so blessed by their faithful service and creativity. They work hard, show the love of the Lord, love you, and both have the gift of humor and joy!

\*Encouraging churches has been my major focus, helping churches find pastors and pastors to find churches. Helping with issues that come up and building relationships.

\*Highlighting the work of Winebrenner Seminary and other seminaries has been helpful.

\*The annual meeting held at Trinity UCC in Tiffin reached a lot of people.

\*Thankful for other Associations and our Conference. Mission opportunities for example and ministries like the disaster relief. Thankful for our sister denominations like the Disciples of Christ, the ELCA Lutherans, and the Presbyterians.

\*I have particularly worked closely with the Church and Ministry Committee and with the Assn. Cabinet and all of our Committees.

\*The COP minister groups have been very successful.

\*Required leadership training events have helped many.

\*This year's ordinations and installations have been blessings.

\*The weekly VINE newsletter was revised, expanded, and the increased circulation.

\*Pastor profiles have increased and are increasingly sent out.

\*We have a large number of retired ministers and spouses. They are a tremendous group of people ! Our fellowship is so blessed!

\*Your staff and I help churches/individuals with questions, resourcing, and prayer.

\*If you know me you know I believe in returning calls, emails, messages, requests as soon as possible.

\*The new Marshallese Church plant is going well. A new mission outreach.

\*More search and call help will be available through the new Great Lakes Call Center.

\*Assn. Committees are active and these various teams do all kinds of ministry.

\*The Assn. Office is a daily source of information, help, encouragement.

\*The financial reports and audit are in order. Thank you for your financial gifts!

\*Making wonderful new friends is a blessing.

SOME FUTURE IDEAS PERHAPS as the Lord leads.....

- \*\*Our northern churches and our southern churches could do more together.....regional get togethers, fellowship suppers, retreats
- \*\*Alternate the annual meetings geographically between northern and southern
- \*\*Consider more ways to use grants and scholarships
- \*\*Establish teams that specialize to help our churches- worship/music, youth outreach, Christian education,
- \*\* Consider calling a part or fulltime Church revitalization minister
- \*\*Further enlist our retired pastors and spouses to help
- \*\*Work with seminaries and universities to have continuing education events for credit or auditing
- \*\*Do more to help small and rural churches
- \*\*Develop an expanded prayer/care ministry
- \*\*Establish a task team to promote youth, college, Young adult expansion

I have thoroughly enjoyed my service with the Association. Thank you for your prayers , encouragements, new friendships, kindnesses, and desserts!  
Christ's love, caring communications, compassion, creativity.

Winston Churchill said it well...."We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Ministry is a calling not a job. In the time of Augustine it was said, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things love." Christ centered living is a goal for all of us. Amen!

Thanking the Lord for you, blessings,  
Don

Dr. Don J. Giesmann  
Designated Interim Association Minister



**August 2**  
Matthew 14:13-21

**August 23**  
Exodus 1:8-2:10

**August 9**  
Genesis 37:1-28

**August 30**  
Romans 12:9-21

**August 16**  
Genesis 45:1-15