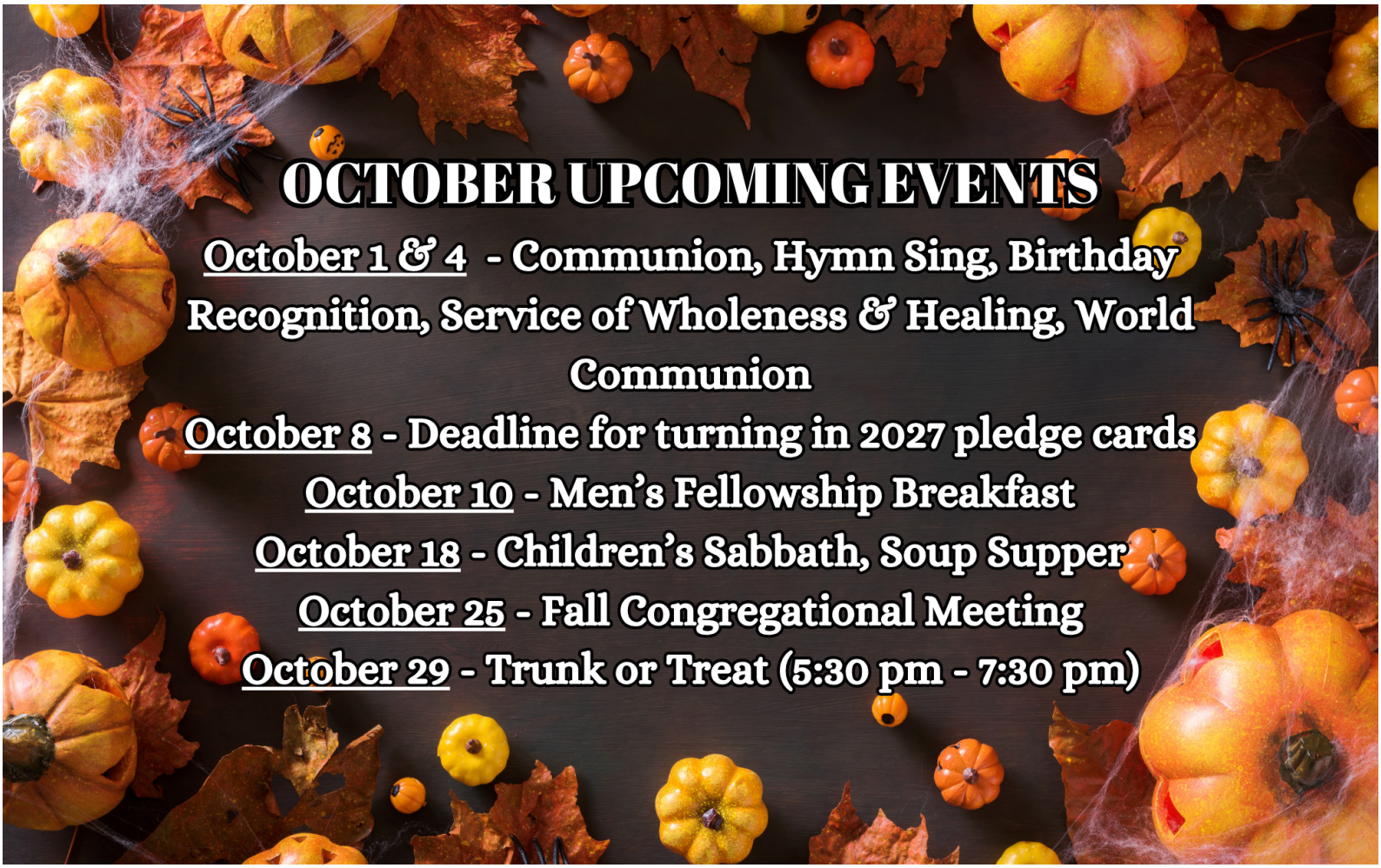


October 2026; Volume 60; Issue 10



From Pastor's Desk

UCC Nebraska Conference held its biennial Joint Annual Meeting in Sioux Falls, SD on September 18 & 19. There was a heaviness in air because (as one presenter stated) "this might be the last **Joint** Annual Meeting." Prior to the meeting, the Nebraska board of directors presented a resolution to have a comprehensive review of the Tri-Conference partnership.

It might help to know that Nebraska Conference formed a partnership with Iowa and South Dakota Conferences in 2018. The Tri-Conference was established as two of the Conference Ministers were retiring. Rather than replacing those positions, it was considered financially prudent to have one Executive Conference Minister and several Associate Conference Ministers covering the three regions. However, there has not been a dedicated Associate Conference Minister for Nebraska since January 2021 (currently there is one Executive Conference Minister and one Associate Conference Minister for Iowa). It was determined that additional funds would be needed from the Nebraska Conference in order to have a part-time Associate Conference Minister. In short, the original model for the Tri-Conference has not been kept for several years.

Nebraska Conference shared plans to discuss and vote on the resolution (to review the partnership), which led to other conferences making plans to also vote on similar resolution. At each conference's separate Annual Meeting on September 19th, the respective resolutions passed. For Nebraska, the deadline for review process will be February 28, 2027. This means that after the comprehensive review is completed, the Nebraska Conference could decide to break away from the partnership with neighboring conferences (although there is a one year notice for terminating relationship).

With this realization, there was a heaviness in the air when the three conferences met together. The Executive Conference Minister encouraged attendees to be in a spirit of wonder. In response, numerous people shared. A repeated comment was the feeling of appreciation for relationships that have been formed. Underlying most responses was a feeling that this would be the last time together (as Tri-Conference). But I wondered if severing the partnership was the only option for fixing our current problems. After further reflection, I shared my thoughts with the Executive Conference Minister with the statement below:

> I wonder what it was like the late 1950s after the United Church of Christ was formed. Did the various streams meet separately at General Synod? Did they maintain separate financial accounts? Did they see themselves first as E&R (Evangelical and Reformed) or Congregationalist or one of the other streams? Maybe it took a while before it sunk in that they were United Church of Christ.
>
> Serving in a federated church, I've learned that it's not easy coming together. Within the history of Federated Church (Columbus, NE), there used to be practices that made the division between our two denominations very clear. There used to be separate membership rolls and new members had to decide which denomination they wanted to join (that bylaw was removed in the 1990s, now we have one membership rolls and report half our number to each denomination).

(Continue on next page)

There used to be separate meetings for each denomination along with combined congregational meeting; partly due to the fact that there were separate financial accounts. There used to be a bylaw that required alternating between the denominations in calling a pastor (removed that bylaw in the 2000s). Thankfully, we are more of one church with two denominations than two congregations working together.

I would agree that the current arrangement for TCM does not seem to be working well and serious assessment is needed. But I wonder about the assumption that if this is not working then we need to go back to being separate conferences. I wonder why not become more of one conference - that seems more in line with what it means to be United Church of Christ.

With appreciation for learning to work through differences,
Edward

P.S. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions

Message From Church President

Why October Matters for Our Federated Church

For many people, October means pumpkins, leaves, and Halloween. It also has many of us looking toward Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year. But for us as a federated Presbyterian/UCC congregation, it should also be the month we remember the Protestant Reformation.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther publicly challenged abuses in the church, calling Christians back to the heart of the gospel. That event became a symbol of a wider movement —the Reformation—that helped shape both the Presbyterian and UCC traditions.

Along with Luther, other leaders like John Calvin and John Knox passed down convictions that still shape our shared life today:

- Scripture at the Center
- Grace, Not Achievement
- Christ at the Heart
- Glory to God, Service to Neighbor

Both of our traditions also affirm that the church is called to ongoing renewal. In our Presbyterian language, "reformed, and always being reformed according to the Word of God," and, in UCC language, "God is still speaking."

As we observe Reformation Sunday this October 25, we are invited to give thanks for this shared heritage and to ask how God may be reforming us now—deepening our faith, widening our welcome, and sending us to serve in Christ's name.

THEN we can start thinking about Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year.

Bob Arp
Governing Council President

Note from Music Ministry

There is something wonderful about hearing music return to the halls and sanctuary of Federated Church each fall. After a summer of special music, September brought our regular ensembles back together, and our new season is now well underway.

For Bells of Joy, this year began with something especially exciting. After being completely refurbished over the summer, our four-octave set of Schulmerich handbells returned home, looking and sounding beautiful. On September 20, Bells of Joy shared them in worship for the first time since their return. It was exciting to hear them ringing in the sanctuary again and to begin what we hope will be many more years of music from these instruments.

The Chancel Choir has also returned to its regular rhythm of Wednesday rehearsals and Sunday worship. There is a lot of music ahead of us this fall, and as we begin looking toward the seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, our Wednesday evenings will only get busier!

Something else new is happening this year as well. Federated Church Music Ministry now has its own Facebook and Instagram pages. We've begun sharing photos, videos, rehearsal moments, and glimpses behind the scenes of what goes into making music at Federated Church. My hope is that these pages become more than simply another place to post announcements. Music Ministry is really about people; people giving their time, learning together, laughing together, working through the occasional wrong note, and ultimately using their gifts to help lead worship. Social media gives us an opportunity to share a little more of that story with our congregation and our community. If you're on Facebook or Instagram, I hope you'll follow our pages, interact with our posts, and share them with friends. Every like, comment, and share helps introduce someone else to what is happening here.

More importantly, there is always room for another musician. Our season may have started, but that doesn't mean the door has closed. If you've wondered about singing with Chancel Choir or ringing with Bells of Joy, come talk to me. You are also welcome to share your talents through one of our first or fifth Sunday special music opportunities. There are many ways to be part of the Music Ministry without making a year long commitment.

We've had a great beginning, but we're really just getting started. I'm excited about the music ahead of us and grateful for everyone who sings, rings, plays, supports, listens, and encourages us along the way.

See you in worship, and maybe at rehearsal!
Stuart Gausman
Director of Music Ministry

Appreciation for Memorials

Thank you to all who made a donation to the Memorial Funds for Kay Castner, Donna Doolittle, Charlotte Griffith, John Hahn and Joie Taylor.

Your thoughts and kindness are appreciated by the families of our loved ones who have passed.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY

We kicked off the 2026-27 Sunday School year with a carnival theme celebration, held on September 13th. The Christian Education and Youth Ministry Committees hosted Carnival Games in the Narthex during Education Hour, our teachers and students were commissioned during worship and the Membership and Growth Committee hosted a potluck following the service. Thank you to all who contributed to this fun day of fellowship and worship!



















Sunday School 2026-27

9:00 am - 9:50 am Sunday Mornings

Preschool Class

Staff Deb Gaeth & Anjel Garcia-Lopez

Our Two or More (Preschool) curriculum utilizes hands-on activities to introduce biblical principals to our youngest learners.

Kindergarten - 3rd Grade Class

Teachers Ashli Porter, Megan McHugh & Allison Hast

The Two or More (All Kids) curriculum features hands-on, interactive lessons in which the kids become active participants in God's story.

4th - 6th Grade Class

Teachers Nicole Miller and Aysha Cook

The BE BOLD! curriculum encourages students to ask questions like, "Is it ok that I sometimes doubt God?" and "Does God care how I use my free time?"

Confirmation Class

Pastor Edward & Brenda Sand will utilize the Big Questions curriculum from the PCUSA to guide students on their journey to confirmation.

High School Class

Teachers Max Porter & Lisa Perrin lead lessons and discussions on topics that are relevant for today's teens.

TRANSFORMED YOUTH



Transformed Youth meets Wednesdays from 6 - 8 pm at Federated Church All students 3rd - 12th Grade are WELCOME! Each week we will share a meal, have a special intrest session, and traditional youth group activities including music, devotionals and games.

Our first session, PUPPETS TRANSFORMED, runs through October 28th with a performance during worship on Sunday, November 1st.

EVENTS

10/18
Children's Sabbath
Service Project at Ed Hour
Children's Bells in Worship

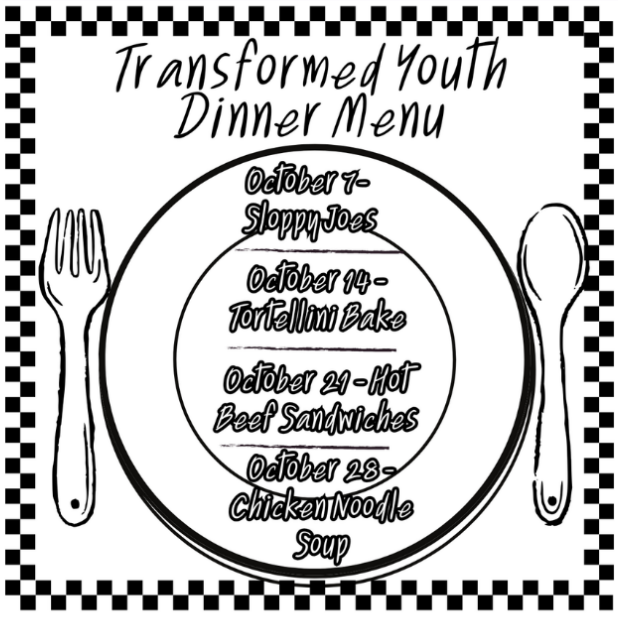
10/29
Trunk-o-Treat
5:30 - 7:30 pm - South Parking Lot

11/1
Puppets TRANSFORMED
10 am Worship

11/6 - 11/7
Calvin Crest Overnight Retreat
7th - 12th Grade

12/12
Christmas Pageant Practice
10 am Sanctuary

12/13
Christmas Pageant
10 am Worship





Bible Presentation

On September 27, 2026 Bibles were presented to our 3 year-olds, 3rd Graders and Confirmation Students.

Three year-olds receiving story Bibles: Caroline Cook

Third Graders receiving the The Action Bible (graphic novel): Dominic Oran, Kai Norton-Taylor, & Myla Bender

Confirmation Students receiving Bibles: Ellie Porter, Emma McHugh & Payton Swierczek

Homestead Presbytery / UCC Living Waters Prayers

September 6 **Auburn**
Prayers are requested for the well being and prosperity of the Auburn congregation. May they continue to grow as a caring and nurturing Christian community, as well as individuals, focusing on prayer, Bible study and worship.

September 13 **Bancroft**
Thoughts and prayers for the Bancroft congregation and community as they have disbanded and closed their doors.

September 20 **Beatrice**
Prayers are requested for the well being and prosperity of the Beatrice congregation. May they continue to grow as a caring and nurturing Christian community, as well as individuals, focusing on prayer, Bible study and worship.

September 27 **Cedar Bluffs**
Prayers are requested for the well being and prosperity of the Cedar Bluffs congregation. May they continue to grow as a caring and nurturing Christian community, as well as individuals, focusing on prayer, Bible study and worship.

UCC Living Waters Association:

- Scribner First Congregational UCC (Scribner, NE 68057)
- Stanton New England Congregational UCC (Stanton, NE 68779)
- Tilden Peace UCC (Tilden, NE 68781)
- West Point Trinity UMC/UCC (West Point, NE 68788)

Ushers, Liturgists & Attendance Report

Ushers: Bill Royer, Georgia Behlen and Tim Warren

Liturgists: Jackie Marker, Katie Claus, Julie Graham, Sue McClure and Alison Wagner

Attendance Average for the Month of September

Thursday Service: 14
Sunday Service : 93
Online viewers: 177

September - Joys & Concerns

- Congratulations to Korbin Kudera and Sarina Janssen, who exchanged wedding vows on Saturday, August 29th at Clarkson New Zion Presbyterian Church.
- Pray for Lauretta Dixon whose health has declined due to Parkinson's Disease. Congratulations to Lily Jelinek on her Doctor of Nurse Practitioner (DNP) degree from Nebraska Methodist College on July 31st. Lily is the granddaughter of Jan Pickrel.
- Pray for Val Rathje who had surgery on Monday, September 14th.
- Pray for Marcine Jacobsen as she is recovering from a broken bone caused by a fall.
- Pray for Sheila Arasmith as she undergoes CAR-T therapy for her cancer treatments.
- Congratulations to Alex Mares on achieving the prestigious designation of Master Sommelier. This is the wine industry's highest and most coveted title and requires knowledge and successful passing of three examinations covering tasting, theory and service. Alex is the wine and beverage director at the Bourbon Steak Restaurant at the JW Marriott "Essex House" Hotel, located on the edge of New York City's Central Park. Alex is the son of Larry and Sue Mares.
- Pray for Peg Rupprecht who had knee replacement surgery on September 21st.
- Pray for John McClure as he recovers from surgery.

Activity Spotlight - Church Service Ushers

Federated Church has many activities during the year that are sponsored by the congregation – planning, setting up, attending, clean up, promoting, speaking, reading, serving, going above and beyond to do something special for Federated Church.

This month's activity spotlight features the ushers at church services.

A sincere thank you to Bill Royer for continuing to serve as Head Usher for Federated Church. Bill very rarely misses a Sunday service and is always making sure there are ushers to serve the congregants as they enter the Sanctuary. He makes sure all the attendance forms are completed and submitted, contributions received are organized and turned into the church office, all "donation" envelopes are in order and available for congregants, and many other tasks as they arise. Thank you Bill.

Along with Bill we have several wonderful people who assist with ushering. Even our youth help from time to time. Thank you to all the great individuals who are present at worship services and volunteer to help with ushering as needed.

Garage Sale Report

The Federated Church garage sale has three goals: service, fellowship, stewardship.
Service: the garage sale provides low cost, quality goods to the community, and money raised is returned to the community through donations to organizations that serve people
Fellowship: Many members of our church family work together to make the garage sale happen. Through working together new acquaintances are made, old acquaintances are renewed and relationships are built.
Stewardship: We are called to be stewards of God's earth. By finding new uses for things we no longer need, we are "keeping it out of the landfill."

The 2026 Federated Church Garage and Bake Sale was held July 18, 2026. Many, many members of our church family pitched in to make this happen. The amount of money taken in was a little over $14,000. Donations were made as follows:

Community Housing: $2000 was given to Habitat for Humanity

Hunger: $1000 was given to the Food Pantry
$2000 was given to A Place at the Table
(the organization that provides a backpack of food to go home for the weekend with students who are experiencing food insecurity at home and depend on school lunches for a major part of their diet.)

Crisis Intervention: $1000 was given to the Center for Survivors
$2000 was given to the Rescue Mission
$2000 was given to the Federated Helping Hands fund

General Welfare (crisis prevention):
$500 was given to Youth and Families for Christ
$1000 was given to Centro Hispano
$500 was given to Cloud 9 Celebrations (an organization that creates social activities for our special needs population.)

Supporting Our Elderly:
Prairie Village, Meridian Gardens, Emerald Court, Edgewood Villa and Cottonwood House were each given $100 to be used for resident entertainment.

Our Church: $1500 was designated for Christmas gifts for staff and a special project.

Last year, we kept some money in reserve with the intention of being able to help in the event of an unexpected, unpredictable situation. That money is still available so we were able to disperse $14,000 and still have reserves "in case".

Many thanks to everyone who helped make this event a success. If you donated, helped sort and price, brought baked goods, worked the sale, shopped at the sale, helped with clean up, put up a yard sign, or told your friends and neighbors about the sale, you helped. And your help is so appreciated.

Linda Wheatley and Kathy Leischner
Co-chairs for 2026 Garage Sale

2026 Adult KAMPS

CAMP SPOTLIGHT:



MEN'S RETREAT

OCT 23-25

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Jeff Hagaman

"Reconnecting with All Our Relationships Through Nature."
Caring for and about creation is a template for how we get along with everything. A cultivated awareness of our natural surroundings fosters a humble curiosity about where we find ourselves and how we relate with our important and not so important relationships. Through guided inquiry and prayer we will gain insight into how well we find ourselves in many layers of community.



KAMP KALEO

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE

FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER VISIT: WWW.KAMPKALEO.COM
OR CALL KAMP AT 308-730-0333
IF CAMPERS ARE UNDER 18 THEY NEED TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

Please join us to

Celebrate

seven years of

OPERATION EDUCATION NAIROBI

FREE soup meal

Sunday, October 18
right after church

A thank you to the congregation
for all your support
Julie and Katie



Social Concerns and Missions Committee is collecting LEASHES, PINE SOL AND BLEACH for PAWS & CLAWS Oct.,Nov.,Dec . 2026

Social Concerns & Missions - Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child has launched! Just some information--on the outside of the box you may choose a boy or girl and what age you would like and also a QR code to scan if you want to follow your box to see where it lands. Inside the boxes are ideas for what to put inside and a list of items you may NOT include. As prices are rising and the cost of shipping is so high, we ask that you include $10 to ship your gift. **The boxes are due back at the church by November 1st.** They will be taken to Schuyler and from there to a distribution center. Also, you may track your box by scanning the label to see where your box is delivered. Thank you to so many for helping so many!

Any questions, call Katie Claus 402-910-4479, Marilyn Abrego 402-910-2778, or Alison Wagner 402-564-176-2585.

Federated Church's Helping Hands Fund

Did you know… *"In the spring of 1975 Federated Church hosted and helped organize the Helping Hands Organization of Columbus…"* This gathering collaborated the efforts of a number of community groups and created low-cost housing, as well as a number of other wonderful outreaches to our community. This is where our "Helping Hands" funds were started!

In September we helped 4 people with gas and 4 people with food.

Weekly Email from Church Office

Do you receive our weekly MailChimp email? If you don't, but would like to, please contact the office and we will get you added to the list!

Funeral Committee #1

Funeral Committee 1 Co-Chairs: Chris & Tim Warren, Marilyn & Jesse Abrego, Doris & Roland Augspurger, Anita Hahn, and Carol Bottum.
Committee Members will be contacted by the Co-Chairs.

Meal on Wheels

Make sure to sign up for 2026 Meals on Wheels Schedule!
Please contact Kathy Leischner
if you can deliver for approximately one hour each day
during Federated's scheduled week!

Center For Survivors

The Center's needs often change due to shortages or surpluses of certain items.
Please call ahead if you have questions regarding needs, 402-564-2155.
At this time, the Center is in need and accepting donations for the following:
NEW personal hygiene products: shampoo, conditioner, liquid body wash, deodorant, makeup removing wipes, facial tissues, toilet paper, and paper towels.

Keep Columbus Beautiful

Keep Columbus Beautiful is an affiliate of
Keep America Beautiful.
To find out more information
go to https://kcbne.com

Erna R. Badstieber Paws & Claws Adoption Center

Paws & Claws Adoption Center (The Platte Valley Humane Society) is located at 2124 13th Street. The hours are Monday through Friday, Noon to 4:30pm, and Saturdays Noon to 3:30pm.
You can call 402-562-5683 to meet your future pet! Regular needs include: Clorox, Pine Sol, Paper Towels, Old Linens, Stamps, Copy Paper, Gift Cards from Grocery, Hardware and Farm Stores.
They have a number of animals available, go to https://www.pawsandclawsne.org!


South Dakota


Fat Mike


Tennessee



10/01	Renee Norris	10/18	Steve Dewald, Sharon Kuncl, Tim Rathje
10/02	Brianna Brockhaus	10/19	Ruth Lind
10/09	Sue McClure	10/22	Linda Wheatley
10/11	Sarah Bettenhausen, Ron Lambert, Steve McClure, Ellie Micek	10/23	Jenna Mares
10/12	Pat Anderson, Alex Garcia Lopez, Allie Gotschall	10/26	Mark Hegi
10/15	Stephanie Johnson	10/31	Diana Gartrell

If you see a mistake or missing information on the birthday list, call the church office so we can update our records.

Financial Summary (August 16 - September 15, 2026)

INCOME	
General Fund:	**$45,083.94**
Contributions	$45,083.94
Memorial:	**$665.00**
Undesignated	$530.00
Music	$135.00
Designated Fund (Savings):	**$770.00**
Garage Sale	$270.00
Helping Hands	$225.00
Education Hour	$275.00
Other Income (Savings):	**$2520.00**
Future Year & Misc.	$2520.00

EXPENSE	
General Fund:	**$31,683.18**
Homestead Presbytery, UCC Living Waters Assoc. & OCWM	$876.60
Custodial Supplies	$440.37
Utilities	$2,943.62
Board of Pensions	$3,441.47
Bookkeeping Fee	$550.00
Repair on Bell Tower	$3,654.00
Grounds Care	$248.00
Equipment Maint./Upgrades	$1615.68
Advertising	$44.00
Staff Salaries (Aug.21 & Sept. 4)	$16,169.53
Office/Administration	$546.17
Youth Mission/Ministry/ Church School/Confirmation	$928.73
Designated Fund Expense:	**$16,340.14**
Helping Hands	$100.14
Annual Carpet Cleaning	$2,240.00
Garage Sale Dispersement	$14,000.00

FEDERATED CHURCH
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COLUMBUS, NE 68602-0564

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October 2026 NEWSLETTER

October 2026; Volume 60; Issue 10

Green = Presence

During the majority of the church year, which is commonly called "ordinary time", the color that you will find is green.

Because the color green is so often associated with life, the use of green during the seasons and the times when there is "nothing special" going on in the life of the church (no big festivals or holidays) reminds us that God is present among us, breathing life into us and into our church.