

FEDERATED NEWSLETTER

September 2026; Volume 60; Issue 9

SEPTEMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

*SERVICE OF WHOLENESS & HEALING IS POSTPONED TO OCT. 1 & 4

SEPTEMBER 6 - DEDICATION OF SAALFELD BENCH; COMMUNION; HYMN SING; BIRTHDAY RECOGNITION

SEPTEMBER 7 - OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

SEPTEMBER 11 - CHURCH BELLS RING 25X AT 9:29 AM (PG. 16)

SEPTEMBER 12 - MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

SEPTEMBER 13 - EDUCATION HOUR KICKOFF; POTLUCK; CHANCEL CHOIR COMMISSIONING; TEACHERS & STUDENTS COMMISSIONING

SEPTEMBER 16 - YOUTH TRANSFORMED

SEPTEMBER 20 - ACOLYTES & YOUTH USHERS COMMISSIONING; BELL CHOIR COMMISSIONING

SEPTEMBER 27 - BIBLES FOR 3 YEAR OLDS & 3RD GRADERS

Guest Article :"Below the Surface"

[For this month's main article, I asked our pulpit supply preacher for July 26, 2026 to share his sermon. Due to technical difficulties, that day's worship service was not available for live-stream or online viewing. Grace and peace, Edward]

It was a spur-of-the-moment thing, I didn't plan it, but when my two grandsons were visiting this spring, I read them a bedtime story. They are almost 12 and 10 years old, and veterans of playing Fortnight and Minecraft on their tablets and PS5—but I was probably nostalgic for the times when they were little boys snuggled in the trundle bed and would ask Papa to read them a story (the reality was they were stalling going to bed!) But I asked them this time, and they graciously obliged. Randomly, I picked a story called "The Happy Prince" by the famous Irish writer Oscar Wilde—I didn't even know he wrote children's stories! It was a tale with talking birds and a talking statue and journeys to help people, and clueless VIPs. They listened intently, asked questions, and even wanted to see the few pictures. Wilde wrote the story in 1888 and was famous for his social justice themes which he subtly included in the Happy Prince. The boys and I talked after I finished, and they "got it"! They got the moral lessons about friendship and empathy in a greedy world and then told the whole tale in detail to their parents the next morning!

I had exposed my grandsons to a **parable**: a symbolic story that teaches a moral lesson or religious principle. This was one of the most powerful methods of teaching used by Jesus to reach the people outside the synagogues; in Matthew 13:35, Isaiah was quoted: "I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world."

The Gospel of Matthew is rich with Jesus' parables, and we have been on "The Parables Tour" lately in the Lectionary. Today's scriptures include **five** different parables about the kingdom of heaven.

But what does Jesus mean by kingdom? In his day, the people lived under Roman rule, and there were influential "governors" that had authority over certain regions. Authority was enforced by violence and economic and military control. But according to commentator Dallas Willard, "the place is not a geographic place but anywhere the presence of Jesus affects life." These are really representations of what is important to God, as manifested by His son.

I think these five parables of the kingdom, the mustard seed, the yeast/leavening, the buried treasure, the priceless pearl, and the net of fish are pretty familiar to us and what they might symbolize about the Kingdom of heaven, especially to common people of that time:

· Tiny seed grows into a life-sustaining tree: great things grow in God's kingdom from humble starts

- A small amount of leavening creates a large amount of nourishment: A little bit of God multiplies into greatness
- Finding a hidden treasure: God's kingdom can be found when you aren't really looking
- Merchant finding the best pearl: the value of God's kingdom way surpasses our expectations—it is the most valuable thing
- The net of good and bad fish: it does matter to God what kingdom you choose

I think those are pretty typical, conventional, Sunday school interpretations of these scriptures. But what caught my attention from the commentary were references to the first 4 kingdom parables as "subversive"! Scott Hoezee said they speak to the "hiddenness" of the kingdom of heaven, and that maybe there is more below the surface of what Jesus was saying.

For example:

- Mustard was a weed—nobody planted it. It does provide habitat for other life, but it is not a crop or the cedars of Lebanon. Maybe it indicates that the kingdom of heaven is **overlooked**, but makes a difference.
- Yeast or leavening was not seen as that good of a thing—it was associated with decomposition and even sickness. Leavening was like a starter culture-not pure yeast—and you had to get just the right amount for it to work. Maybe it indicates that the kingdom of heaven is **risky**, but worth it.
- The treasure found in the field was just stumbled upon, but the finder realized the value and committed to obtaining it. Maybe it illustrates finding the kingdom of heaven is **unplanned**, but it prompts action.
- Merchants at that time were respected like used-car salespeople today, seen as taking advantage and greedy. But finding the most valuable pearl caused the Merchant to liquidate all his merchandise to obtain it. Maybe it shows the kingdom of heaven's value is so great that it is **life-changing**.

The fifth parable in this scripture passage indicated that the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, catching all different kinds of fish, but there will be sorting, good from bad fish. This is not a "subversive" parable, with hidden meaning, but a clear message Jesus repeated often that if you don't recognize the kingdom, or reject it, there are ultimately **consequences.**

So Jesus may have been telling the crowds (and us) more about the kingdom of heaven than what's on the surface. The examples he used may not really resonate very well with us anyway: planting seeds, leavening bread, digging up treasure in fields, searching for pearls, fishing with nets.

What are the modern versions of these parables? I challenge you to look for signs of the kingdom today, in our community and in our lives.

Praise be to God! Amen.

Steve Heinisch

Message From Our Church President

Fall is in the air. Children are back in school, crops are nearing harvest, and Husker football and volleyball are once again bringing people together across our state. Here at Federated, this season also means our Nominating Committee is hard at work discerning who will serve as our lay leaders in the coming year.

Federated has been richly blessed with members who give of themselves to keep our church healthy and vibrant. The familiar call to share our Time, Talents, and Treasures is very real here. How do you give? Perhaps you share your time and talents through music ministry, teaching, landscaping, serving on a committee, or offering your gifts in one of many other roles. Perhaps your ministry is primarily through treasures—financial contributions, donations of food or supplies, or other material gifts. In whatever way you participate, your involvement is vital to the life of our church.

With that in mind, I have a specific request: the Nominating Committee is seeking members who are willing to serve on several key committees for the coming year. Would you prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to this kind of service? If you are interested—or even just curious—please contact a member of the Nominating Committee or the church office. Your willingness to serve can make a real difference in the ministry we share together.

Blessings, Bob Arp [next page includes information for our various committees]

Activity Spotlight - Diaper Changing Station

This month's activity spotlight features the volunteers at the Diaper Changing Station. A sincere thank you to the Membership & Growth committee and many others who made this a successful event. There was a lot of planning, scheduling and time to make this event happen. There were approximately 27 people who took advantage of having our Diaper Changing Booth at the 2026 Columbus Days. Our booth also provided coffee, water, kids activity items and children's books. Each book had a Federated Church label inside the cover and a special bookmark. It was suggested that next year we include some adult books. There were a lot of interest in books by all ages. The coffee is always appreciated, we are the only ones providing coffee on Saturday morning – and everyone loves it.

The weather unfortunately did not cooperate with the event – high winds, rain and cooler temperatures, but the volunteers of Federated Church were there to provide services to mothers. THANK YOU to all the great people who worked for and at the Federated Church Diaper Changing Station.

GOVERNING COUNCIL, ORDER OF ST. ANDREW AND COMMITTEE SUMMARIES

Please prayerfully consider serving a term on any church committee beginning in 2027.
Below are summaries of the GC, OSA and Committees with openings.

Governing Council (3 year term, meets monthly)
Manages the affairs of the church, policy makers of the **c**ongregation.

Order of St. Andrew (3 year term, meets monthly)
Makes visits and assists with care ministry to congregation members and community.

Christian Education Committee (3 year term, meets monthly)
Provides Christian educational opportunities for all who wish to grow in faith, spirit and discipleship.

Finance & Property Committee (3 year term, meets monthly)
Develops & implements goals/procedures/policies for the financial wellbeing of the church and its properties.

Membership & Growth Committee (3 year term, meets monthly)
Identifies status of members/potential members, provides fellowship opportunities, recruits and coordinates volunteers for church activities.

Nominating Committee (1 year term, meets as needed)
Presents annual slate to the congregation at the Fall Congregation Meeting of recommended names for elected offices and committee members.

Personnel Committee (3 year term, meets monthly)
Serves as relations liaison with staff and the congregation. Hears requests and concerns of all staff; seeks to build positive attitudes toward work of the church by both workers and members.

Social Concerns & Missions Committee (3 year term, meets monthly)
Develop opportunities for the congregation to fulfill the work of the church in our community, country, and throughout our world, by utilizing their talents, time and treasures.

Stewardship Committee (3 year term, meets as needed)
Offers education and action to enable the congregation to give of their time, talents, and treasures for the work of the Church.

This year's **Nominating Committee** members are Bob Arp, Steve Heinisch, Anita Hahn, Clark Grant, Kathy Leischner, Deb Curry and Rogalyn Stevens. Please contact a member to voice your desire to serve on any of the above listed committees.

From Music Ministry Director

September brings a new season of music to Federated Church! After a summer filled with special music from members and friends of our congregation, we are excited to welcome back our regular ensembles and begin another season of making music together.

Our first rehearsals for both the Chancel Choir and Bells of Joy Handbell Choir will be Wednesday, September 9. Bells of Joy will rehearse at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by Chancel Choir at 7:30 p.m. in the Choir Room. If you have ever thought about joining either group, this is a wonderful time to come and see what we're all about. You don't need to be a professional musician, and you don't need to make a commitment before walking through the door. Come to a rehearsal, meet the group, make some music with us, and see if it might be something you enjoy. New members are always welcome!

We are especially excited to welcome our Schulmerich handbells home from their summer refurbishment. After receiving some much needed care and maintenance, they are ready for seasons of helping us make a joyful noise together.

Although summer is upon us, special music isn't going away. Beginning in September, special music will continue as part of our regular first Sunday worship services, as well as our occasional fifth Sundays too! These Sundays give us an opportunity to hear from soloists, instrumentalists, small ensembles, and others who would like to share their musical gifts in worship. If you have enjoyed participating in Summer Special Music, or have been thinking about giving it a try, I hope you'll consider being part of one of these Sundays during this season.

Our first Sundays will also continue with musical elements that have become familiar parts of our worship together: our hymn sing and birthday recognition. There is something special about hearing the congregation choose and sing our favorite hymns together, and celebrating everyone who's birthday month it is. We look forward to continuing that tradition throughout the year.

Whether you want to sing, ring, play an instrument, or simply enjoy being surrounded by music, there is a place for you in the Music Ministry at Federated Church. I am looking forward to seeing familiar faces, welcoming some new ones, and beginning another wonderful season of music and worship together!

Stuart Gausman

Director of Music Ministry

UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY

9/13/2026

Ed Hour Kick-Off

9 am Sunday School
10 am Worship
11 am Potluck

9/16/2026

Transformed Youth Group

6-8 pm
3rd - 12th Grade & Friends

9/20/2026

Acolyte & Usher Commissioning

Ushers (K-3rd Grade)
Acolytes (4th - 6th Grade)

9/23/2026

Transformed Youth Group

6-8 pm
3rd - 12th Grade & Friends

9/27/2026

Bible Presentation

3 year olds, 3rd graders and confirmation class

9/30/2027

Transformed Youth Group

6-8 pm
3rd - 12th Grade & Friends

More Information: brenda@federatedcolumbus.org

STEP RIGHT UP

ED HOUR IS BACK!

JOIN US FOR A CIRCUS-THEMED KICK-OFF EVENT AS WE CELEBRATE THE START OF A NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR!

GAMES ~ PRIZES ~ FOOD ~ FUN

COME ONE, COME ALL AND DISCOVER THE AMAZING WONDERS OF GOD'S LOVE!



SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

9 AM - SUNDAY SCHOOL
10 AM - WORSHIP
11 AM - POTLUCK



FEDERATED CHURCH
2704 15TH STREET, COLUMBUS | 402-564-2812


YOUTH TRANSFORMED
Wednesday Nights
6–8 PM
Beginning September 16
Grades 3rd–12th
BE TRANSFORMED
ROMANS 12:2
FEDERATED CHURCH YOUTH GROUP
Meal • Devotional/Bible Study • Games •
Contemporary Music • Special Interest Sessions:
Puppeteering, Art, Ukulele, Gaming & More
Come join us!

Homestead Presbytery/UCC Living Waters Prayers

◆ August 2 *Wakefield*

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

◆ August 9 *Wayne*

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

◆ August 16 *Wymore*

We continue to maintain our yoke with Steele City, including joint services and activities. We enjoy opportunities of outreach in our local community, including summer celebrations for our town and neighboring towns. Summer is always a time to watch the crops grow with the abundance of God's blessing. Pray that we rise to the task of loving our neighbors and offering the hand of Christ.

UCC Living Waters Association:

◆ Omaha First Congregational UCC (Omaha, NE 68131)
◆ Omaha Northwest Hills UCC (Omaha, NE 68134)
◆ Pierce UCC (Pierce, NE 68767)
◆ Plainview First Congregational UCC (Plainview, NE 68796)
◆ Ralston UCC (Ralston, NE 68127)

◆ August 23 *York*

We request prayers for the vitality and health of our congregation at First Presbyterian York as well as God's comfort to the families and friends of two individuals who have recently passed. We pray for God's protection for our children and teachers as they start their upcoming school year in the next few weeks. We pray for God's love and mercy to all who struggle, all who feel isolation, all who are sick, and all who are in need of shelter, food, and help. We lift prayers of thanksgiving for our Certified Lay Pastor, Penny Schulz, who has joined us in January of this year. We pray that God guides her and strengthens her on this journey with us.

◆ August 30 *Alexandria*

The Alexandria Presbyterian church seeks prayers for our upcoming Bible School which serves not only children who are part of our church family, but children from the community who worship elsewhere or may not have church homes. We appreciate prayers for our community library story hour program, as well as for the volunteers who make it happen. We ask for prayers for our local fire and EMS providers, also volunteers who are ready to help those in need. Please pray for our Sunday School which will resume in the fall, and the children it helps to learn about the Lord.

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 August (through 8/28/26):

Thursday Service: 13
Sunday Service : 88
Online viewers: 214

August 2026 - Joys & Concerns

- 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.
- Congratulations to Dan & Lizzie Johnson on the birth of their son, Rhen Aerni Johnson, on August 1, 2026. Grandparents are Guy & Linda Wheatley.
- Pray for Kathy Johnson, sister-in-law to Stephanie Johnson, who will be having surgery on her ribs.
- Pray for the family of Gary Mihulka of Seattle, WA. Gary passed away on August 12, 2026, he is the cousin to Alison Wagner.
- Pray for the family of Donna Doolittle, former member and employee of Federated Church. Donna passed away on August 16, 2026. Her funeral was Friday, August 21 in Gretna, NE.

Membership & Growth - Small Groups

Do you enjoy concerts, plays, or any upcoming arts and events in Columbus? However do you stay home because you do not want to attend alone and would rather go with others? Here is your chance to go with others. The Membership and Growth Committee is getting a group of people together to attend these events. If you are interested, please contact Ruth Lind and leave your name, phone number and email address. I will add your name or names to the list and will contact you when the next event comes up. If there is something you would like to see or attend, please give us your ideas.
Please contact the church office if you need Ruth's contact information.

OSA - Recognition of Veterans

Order of St. Andrew will be recognizing our Veteran congregants during service on November 8 this year. If you or your loved one served in any branch of our country's military, please let us know by filling out the form below or contacting the church office. Thank you for your service and God bless!

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Branch of Service _____

Please return to the church office by Oct 25, 2026



Social Concerns and Missions Committee is collecting LEASHES, PINE SOL AND BLEACH for PAWS & CLAWS July, Aug., Sept. 2026

Social Concerns & Missions - New Project

The Social Concerns and Mission Committee is beginning a new international project beginning in September called Operation Christmas Child. Some of you are familiar with this Samaritan's Purse project. We will explain the program in September, but basically it is a faith based program where children are sent a box for Christmas, many who have never had a Christmas gift of any kind. Items that are encouraged are school supplies, toys, clothes, etc. Since these items and summer clothes are on sale now, this is a very good time to buy them. They need to fit into a shoebox. There is also an Amazon site specifically offering items for this project. More information to come!

Federated Church's Helping Hands Funds

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 August we helped 6 people with gas and 2 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.

Meals 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!


Iowa


Chatty


Catnip



9/01	Beckett Oran	9/10	Reagan Gausman, Violet Graybill, Miranda Micek, John Petersen, Val Rathje, Payton Swierczek
9/02	Debbie Curry	9/17	Roland Augspurger, Matt Miller
9/03	Elsie Ita	9/22	Anna Young
9/04	Brenda Wardman, Fred Wunderlich	9/24	Renee Bellum, Sunnie Yang
9/05	Annette Griffith	9/28	Myla Bender, Dave Fulton

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

Financial Summary (July 16 - August 15, 2026)

Income	
General Funds:	**$26,113.84**
Total General Fund	$26,113.84
Memorials:	**$9,134.00**
Undesignated	$6,929.00
Kitchen Fund	$100.00
Music	$1,805.00
Landscaping	$250.00
Designated Funds (Savings):	**$14,350.70**
Music Ministry	$49.94
Garage Sale	$13,525.75
H.I.S Puppets	$100.00
Disaster Relief	$500.00
Helping Hands	$75.00
Neighbors in Need	$50.00
Education Hour	$50.00

Expenses	
General Fund:	**$18,373.86**
Homestead Presbytery, UCC Living Waters Assoc. & OCWM	$876.60
Custodial Supplies	$25
Utilities	$2,876.94
Board of Pensions	$3,441.47
Bookkeeping Fee	$550.00
Gym/FH Floors Cleaning	$2,215.00
Building Maintenance	$112.00
Printer/Copier Expense	$587.25
Advertising	$55.00
Staff Salaries	$7,314.04
Office/Administration	$240.61
SALT Adult Education	$79.95
Memorials:	**$7,505.43**
Electronic Sign	$7,505.43
Designated Funds Expenses:	**$2,522.74**
Helping Hands	$40.02
Mileage reimbursement	$322.24
VBC	$278.20
Electronic Sign	$1,247.28
OGHS	$300.00
Pentecost	$335.00

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Observe the Moments of Silence With Us [from 9/11 Memorial & Museum website]
Every year as part of the official commemoration ceremony held at the World Trade Center for victims' families, we observe six moments of silence marking the key events of 9/11. [times revised for Central]
7:46 a.m.: Hijackers deliberately crashed American Airlines Flight 11 into floors 93 through 99 of the North Tower.
8:03 a.m.: Hijackers deliberately crashed United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 77 through 85 of the South Tower.
8:37 a.m.: Hijackers deliberately crashed American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon, near Washington, D.C.
8:59 a.m.: The South Tower collapsed.
9:03 a.m.: After learning of the other attacks, passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 launched a counterattack on hijackers aboard their plane to try to seize control of the aircraft. In response, the hijackers crashed the plane into an empty field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.
9:28 a.m.: The North Tower collapsed, leaving the 16-acre World Trade Center site in ruins and collateral damage affecting all adjacent properties and streets. The rescue effort commenced immediately.