



Community of Christ Lutheran Church
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 27, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome

Vicar Natalie Downs

Musical Prelude

“Songs Without Words” by Mendelssohn

Eric Dickey

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful God, you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right.
In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life. Amen.

You belong to Christ Jesus, and you are God’s children through faith. In the cross of ✝ Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation. **Amen.**

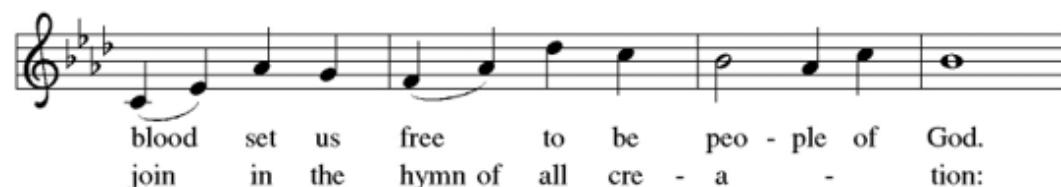
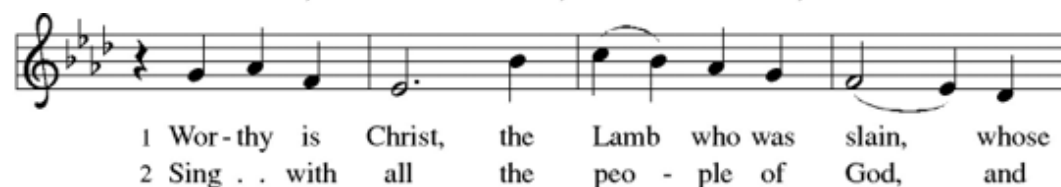
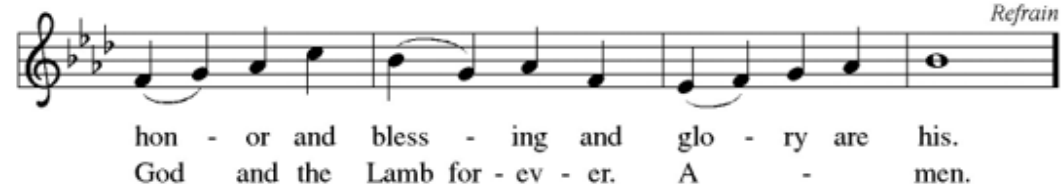
Gathering Hymn

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

ELW 742

Greeting

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C And also with you.**

Refrain*Refrain**Refrain*

Prayer of the Day

P Almighty and ever-living God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and you gladly give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour upon us your abundant mercy. Forgive us those things that weigh on our conscience and give us those good things that come only through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Childrens Sermon

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Genesis 18:16-32

¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then the LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹ I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know."

²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶ And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "Oh, do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹ He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "Oh, do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." **L The Word of the Lord. C Thanks be to God!**

The Second Reading: Psalm 85

Righteousness shall go before the LORD. (Ps. 85:13)

- ¹ You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
² **You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**
³ You have withdrawn all your fury
and turned yourself from your wrathful indignation.

⁴ **Restore us then, O God our Savior;
let your anger depart from us.**

⁵ Will you be displeased with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger from age to age?

⁶ **Will you not give us life again,
that your people may rejoice in you?**

⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

⁸ **I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn
their hearts to you.**

⁹ Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰ **Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

¹¹ Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

¹² **The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.**

¹³ Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.

L The Word of the Lord. C Thanks be to God!



The Holy Gospel: Luke 11:1-13

P The Holy Gospel according to....**C Glory to you, O Lord!**

¹ [Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”² He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

⁵ And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ ⁷ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will you give a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

P The Gospel of the Lord! **C Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

"Persistent Prayer"

Vicar Natalie Downs

Hymn

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”
(*Sung twice*)

ELW 752

The Apostles’ Creed

C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day, he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy

catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

P In solidarity with all creation, we join our voice to the voice of the whole church and pray for the needs of the world.

A brief silence.

AM Loving God, create in your church a desire for union with you in prayer. Raise up leaders to teach Christ's devotion to prayer and model Christ's way of prayer, until all people experience prayerful intimacy with you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM Reveal to humanity the sacredness of all creation. With the breath of your Spirit, realign the balances of nature. Grant persistence in prayer and action for the sake of the earth, our common home. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM Teach rulers of the earth to sing of your ways, caring for the lowly and having no preference for the powerful. Direct the heart of every person to seek your will on earth as in heaven. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM We lift up in prayer all those affected by the flooding in Texas; the victims, their families, and the first responders offering aid. We also pray for all whose prayers are cries for help. Lord give your good gifts, and satisfy their deepest needs, especially for; **Tom Jennings, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O'Konski, Luke Holtz, Lisa Boltz, Ron Hetherwick, Jake Cope, Virginia Dillon, Staci, Martina Benton, Amy Meagher, Kian Schumaker, Lynne Lark, Becky Giesler, John Vartanian, Paul Ladd, Larry, Andy, Clara, Rochelle, Mary Beth, Barb Wieman, Tom Druschel, Hollie Roark, Dorothy Petrell....** and all that we remember in silence. Gather them to your constant, loving presence, that they may rest in the confidence of life with you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM Center, the ministries of this assembly on prayer and service. Guide our relationships in the wider community, being ready to assist those who seek help. Strengthen feeding, clothing, and housing ministries and community partnerships. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM We give thanks for all who have gone before us, especially Jerry Wieman. May we trust your steadfast love and continue in hope until we are united with all your saints. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P Trusting in your lovingkindness, we place our prayer and hope in you, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it. A “gluten-free” host option is available upon request as well.

Sharing of the Peace

P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C** **And also with you!**

Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

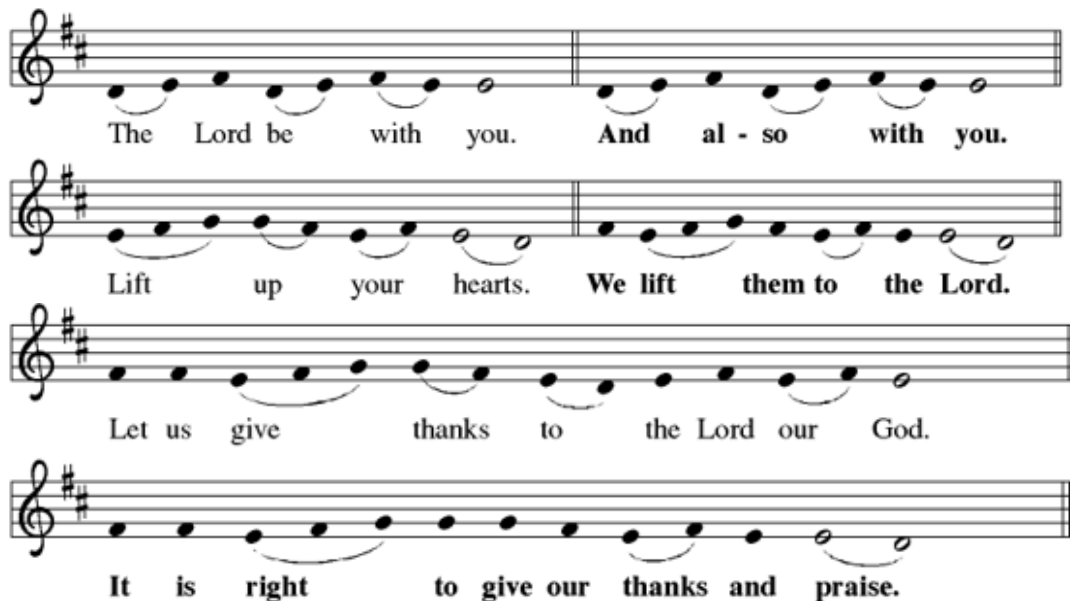
The congregation continues to stand during Tithes and Offerings if you are able.

Our Tithes and Offerings *Bring your gifts to the Altar, or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

Offering Prayer

AM Creator God, in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good, and the harvest is plentiful. Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth and our labor, that we may work for the good of all, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving



The Great Thanksgiving is presented as a four-line musical score. Each line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are simple, mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some beamed eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, aligned with the music. The first line has a double bar line after the first phrase. The second line also has a double bar line after the first phrase. The third and fourth lines end with double bar lines.

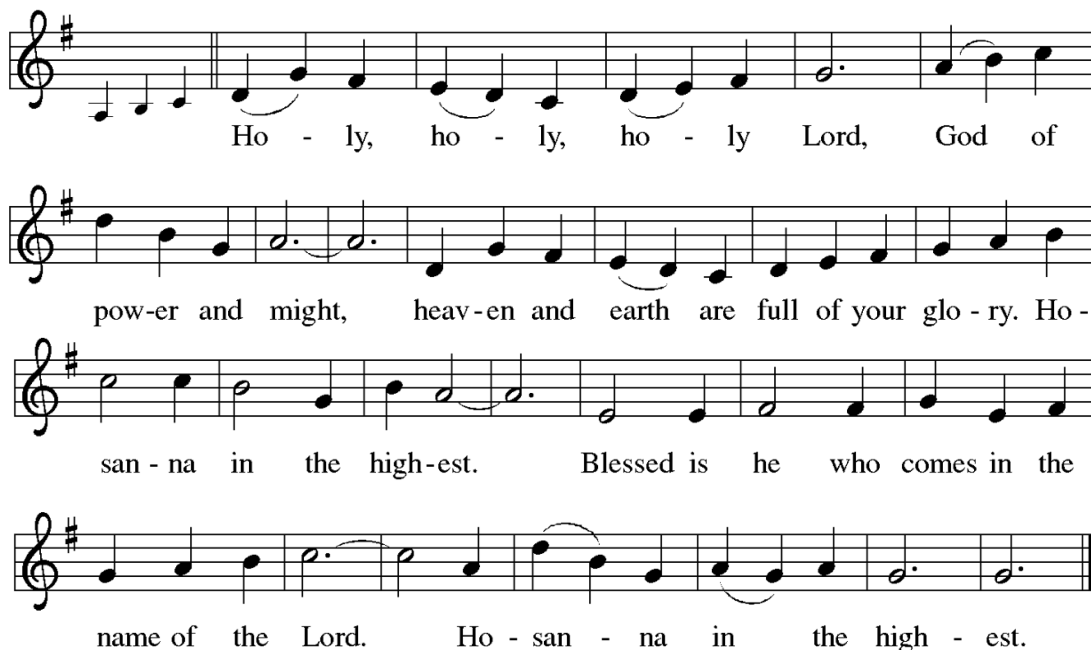
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*The Eucharistic Prayer Continues.....



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray... **C** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Communion Hymns

“Lamb of God”

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Hymn

“Bread of Life from Heaven”

ELW 474

“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”

ELW 779

Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

AM Mothering God, you gathered us to your table and we drank deeply of your grace. Send us out by your Spirit to love our neighbors as ourselves and proclaim your love in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

P The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit ✝ bless you and give you peace. **Amen.**

Dismissal

AM Go in peace. Live by the Spirit. **Thanks be to God!**

AM And next week, **bring a friend!**

Making Jesus Known”

This is the Day the Lord has made! We will rejoice in it! We are glad that you have joined us for worship this weekend! May the Lord bless His Word and Sacrament and draw us near to Him! Welcome to Community of Christ!

Hard Sayings of Jesus—Summer Sunday Adult Forum

Join us on Sunday mornings after worship for the summer edition of our Adult Sunday School class. We'll gather in the council room (also the Thursday afternoon Bible study room) at about 10:15 a.m. for a new series that will take a look at some of the difficult sayings and actions of Jesus to explore what they mean (or what they don't mean) and to unpack some otherwise complicated and challenging teachings of Jesus. What did Jesus mean when he said, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom?" What about when Jesus said, "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword?" Why did Jesus overturn the moneychangers in the Temple? And what could be going on when Jesus told his disciples to leave behind parents, family, and children for the sake of following him? We'll be looking at a different passage and a different "hard saying" each week, so come when you can, and join the conversation, each Sunday this summer, here at Community of Christ!



Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in August: Rare Birds--Introducing Lesser-Known Prophets

You probably recognize the sound of a robin in your yard, or the sight of a bright red cardinal at your feeder. Those birds are plentiful and familiar to many people in this part of the country. But every so often, you'll spot something you've never seen before or hear a peculiar bird song and wonder what it came from--and who knows, maybe you've gotten to see a yellow warbler or an indigo bunting for the first time, or maybe a heron

or an eagle! To be honest, there are times in our study of the Bible where it might feel like we are spotting rare birds like that, too. We probably have a decent familiarity with the Gospels, or with some of our favorite passages in Paul's letters or the psalms, and maybe a few favorite Old Testament stories from childhood Sunday School memories. But then there are those books whose names sound strange and unfamiliar, with names like "Obadiah" or "Habakkuk" that we don't remember reading before. Who are these people, and what did they have to say? What did their voice

contribute among the more familiar sounds of robins and wrens like Isaiah or Moses? That's where we're headed in our next Thursday afternoon Bible study series, starting August 7th at 1:00 p.m. Our series on Amos that has run for most of the summer so far has now concluded, and we'll be taking one week off before our Thursday Afternoon Bible study will pick up again on a new series, just for the month of August. This short four-part series is a study of those "Rare Birds" from among the minor prophets--and we'll get a chance to survey several of them, find out what their message and ministry looked like in their own time, and then explore what they have to say to us in our own day, too. Everybody is welcome, and you don't need to bring anything but a Bible--meet us in the Bible Study/Council room starting on August 7 at 1:00 p.m.!

Summer Spiritual Practice group "In The Presence of God"

This summer, as part of Vicar Natalie's internship project, we will be offering a weekly Summer Spiritual Practice group. The goal of this group is to learn a variety of ways to pray and draw close to God and to contribute to the NW Ohio Synod's theme of the Year of Listening. The spiritual practice group will meet on **Thursdays from 6:30-7:45 p.m.** in the fellowship hall **ending on August 28th** (no class July 3rd). There will be a variety of pastors from the community who will help teach and lead the spiritual practice, including Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, Pastor Sarah Schaaf (NW Ohio Synod), Pastor Warren Clifton (Hope United Methodist - Whitehouse), Pastor Matt Musteric (St. Peter's Lutheran -Martin/St. Luke's Lutheran- Curtis), Vicar Jacinda Jones (St. John's Lutheran - Findlay), Pastor Chris Hanley (Glenwood Lutheran Church - Toledo), Pastor Meg Boger (Zion Lutheran - Waterville), Laurie Mauro, Pastor Steve Bond, and Vicar Natalie. Some spiritual practices include Taizé worship, centering prayer, praying with beads, visio divina, praying the labyrinth, Legos as spiritual practice, art, walking meditation - prairie meadow, improv, hymn singing. This is an *intergenerational group*, meaning all ages are encouraged and welcome to attend! For some practices, kids will break off into a separate group. Sign-ups for this event will be available at the kiosk or on SignUp Genius on our website at www.commofchrist.org by clicking the "Worship & Events Signups" button starting in May. We request that you RSVP for the dates you are planning to attend, so we can plan for supplies. If any kids will be attending, please enter how many and their ages, or 0 if not applicable.

Kids Summer Reading Program This summer, Community of Christ will be offering a summer reading program for kids. All summer, the Gathering space will house a bookshelf with ten different faith-based picture books for kids to read throughout the summer. Kids are encouraged to pick up a reading checklist, which lists all of the books to read. They can check out up to two books per week by signing out the books on the cards found inside each book and placing them in the "check-out" slot at the

bottom of the bookcase. When they are finished reading and return the books, they can take a sticker from the bookshelf and add it to their reading checklist to keep track of what they have read. Once they have read all the books, they can see Vicar Natalie for a prize! The books we are reading include: Found: Psalm 23, Where God Lives, The Apostles' Creed: For All God's Children, Miracle Man: The Story of Jesus, Who is My Neighbor? Maybe God is Like That Too, The Marvelous Mustard Seed, God's Holy Darkness, God Created, What is the Bible?

LAST DAY TO ORDER!!!!

Outreach Invites You to “Be The Evidence of God’s Love” with New Apparel



The folks at the Outreach Committee invite you to be faithful—and fashionable!—while we also raise money for a neighborhood cause this summer. We invite you to order one of these new t-shirts with an original design that says, "Be the evidence of God's love" on the front, and has our Community of Christ logo on the sleeve! We'll be taking orders through July and hope to have shirts available in August and definitely in time for Blue Jean Sunday at summer's end! These will be a great way to share your faith, encourage someone to show God's love, and help a good cause. The profits will be sent to Neighborhood Bridges

of Anthony Wayne Area for their weekend backpack food program for school students. Shirts are \$15.00. You can order in person **TODAY** by cash or check or use the electronic sign-up on Sign-Up Genius.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4EAEAA2AA0F8C34-57071426-community>

If you have any questions, please contact one of the Outreach Committee members. Thank you! Committee Chairman: Greg Myers, Committee Members: Shelly Hayes, Rose Ackerman, Robin Fritz, Kristen Schuchman, Kari Swagler, Cindy Smigelski, Tammy Myers, Cammie Abraham, Pastor Steve

Concert Committee Invites YOU to hear the Garms Family Acoustic Gospel Concert—TODAY!! July 27 at 4:00 p.m. This summer, the Concert Committee is pleased to host the Garms Family, a musical ensemble and family that “bands together to love on people with live music, honest stories, and God’s Word.” On the afternoon of Sunday, July 27, at 4:00 p.m., join us in the worship space for a concert featuring piano, drums, fiddle, banjo, bass, mandolin, and more. A free-will offering will go to the performers as they make their tour, sharing music across the country, but no tickets

are required. We hope you'll take time out this July for an afternoon of good music as we welcome the Garms Family this summer! ***If you can help move the altar and set up or clean up after the concert, please sign up at the kiosk. Thank you!***

SAVE THE DATE – SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH!

Let's lace up those walking shoes to help love, unity, and inclusion shine brightly in our community. Community of Christ has been asked to join a multi-faith initiative and walk in support in the Toledo Pride parade on Saturday, August 16th, at noon. Last year, more than 300 people from over 30 different local faith communities joined together, highlighting a message that we all Love Out Loud and we are Better Together. Think of this as a chance to say by our presence and our walking feet, "God's love is for you!" to people who might just be aching to hear that they are beloved. Even if that's all our presence can do for someone else, that might just be the starting point for the Spirit to move in amazing and gracious ways. Please consider joining the Outreach Committee and walking to promote inclusion for all in the world that God loves. **Additional Details:** "The organizers of our multi-congregational group (with about 30 participating congregations and faith groups from the greater Toledo area) have asked us to gather in front of the mural on 18th and Adams around 11:30 a.m. For those who want to ride together from Community of Christ, we'll depart at 10:45 a.m. from the church to get a space to park and get to the meeting point. For any who ordered shirts earlier in July, when those are in, we'll have them picked up and notify you when you get yours at the church. We'll also share these details via email with everyone who has signed up, whether at the kiosk or online, and if you have any questions, needs, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Steve or Kari Swagler."

2025 Building Loan Fund			
	Income	Expense	Diff.
Jun	\$16,323	\$12,563	\$3,760
YTD	\$87,407	\$79,878	\$7,529
2025 General Fund			
	Income	Expense	Diff.
Jun	\$33,139	\$34,088	(\$948)
YTD	\$207,273	\$220,606	(\$13,333)

Church Office Hours
8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
(Monday through Friday)

Please note.....

Hours may vary with vacations.

Please call ahead ☺

Garms Family Acoustic Gospel Concert
TODAY!! July 27 at 4:00 p.m.
Summer Story Time
Tuesday, July 29, 10:00 a.m.
LWR Quilters
Tuesday, July 29, 10:00 a.m.
Thursday Bible Study
Thursday, July 31, 1:00 p.m.
Spiritual Practices Series
Thursday, July 31, 6:30 p.m.



**Sunday mornings, @ 9:00 a.m.,
both in person and Facebook Live**



Did one of our Bible readings capture your attention today? Was there a story you could picture in your mind? Did a phrase from a hymn or a thought from the sermon start some new ideas or inspire some reflection? Did a Scripture passage spark a question for you to think about? Use this space here as an open canvas for your faithful imagination: you can draw a picture of something you pictured, write a question, take notes from the message

or scriptures, or doodle your faith into a visible form here. Then, either take it with you or leave your thoughts and images here to be shared in an ongoing collection here at Community of Christ!