



Community of Christ Lutheran Church

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 17, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome

Pastor Stephen Bond

Musical Prelude

“Chanson” by Gordon Young

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.**

Hymn

“How Firm a Foundation”

ELW 796

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.





1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless-ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to



hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Prayer of the Day

P O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Childrens Sermon

"Blessing of the Backpacks"

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Jeremiah 23:23-29

²³ Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴ Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. ²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, “I have dreamed! I have dreamed!” ²⁶ How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? ²⁷ They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. ²⁹ Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? **L The Word of the Lord. C Thanks be to God!**

The Second Reading: Hebrews 11:29, 12:2

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so, they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

^{12:1} Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. **L The Word of the Lord. C Thanks be to God!**



The Holy Gospel: Luke 12:49-56

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

[Jesus said:] ⁴⁹ “I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

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

Sermon

Vicar Natalie Downs

Hymn

“Open Your Ears, O Faithful People”

ELW 519

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 Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near.

A brief silence.

AM Raise up faithful leaders for your church around the world. Inspire global missionaries with a spirit of accompaniment, as they walk alongside our partners in the gospel in solidarity, interdependence, and mutuality. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM Safeguard rivers and lakes from pollution. Sustain the work of conservationists, policy makers, and advocacy groups seeking to protect freshwater sources. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM Bridge divisions across partisan lines. Strengthen cooperative efforts among lawmakers who enact policies that protect our neighbors who are most vulnerable. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM Embrace all who suffer in isolation: for those who are incarcerated or detained, those who are fleeing from unsafe environments, and those who are sick or homebound, 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, Dorothy Petrell, Kian Schumaker, Laura Reimer, Tom Druschel, Matt Jurrus, Greg Urbanski, John Turkal, Jeff Bucher, Paul Ladd, Julie Paulsen, David Perry, Connie Baker, Len Cimney, Miles McGinnis....** and all that we remember in silence. Reassure them of your care at all times and places. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM Guide the leaders of this congregation. In these late summer weeks, inspire their planning for a new program year ahead. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration and support for their work. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM With thanksgiving, we remember the cloud of witnesses who surround us, especially Nancy Smithmyer. By the example of their faith, enable us to run with perseverance the race set before us, until that day when we join their unending praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them, through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion. **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.

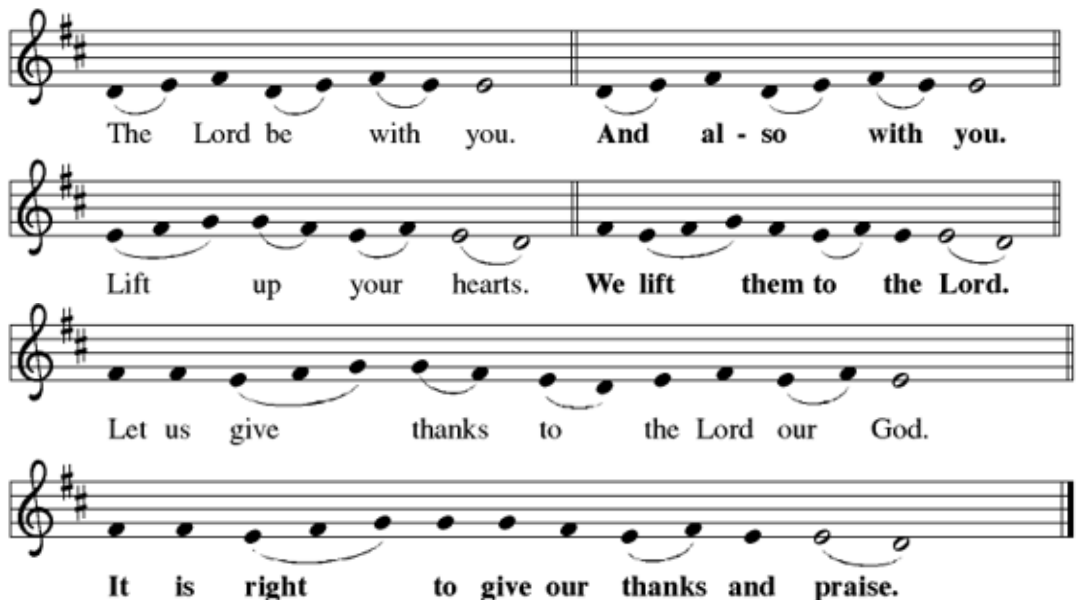
The congregation continues to stand during Tithes and Offerings if you are able.

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 musical notation consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are connected by slurs, indicating a continuous melody. The lyrics are written below the notes.

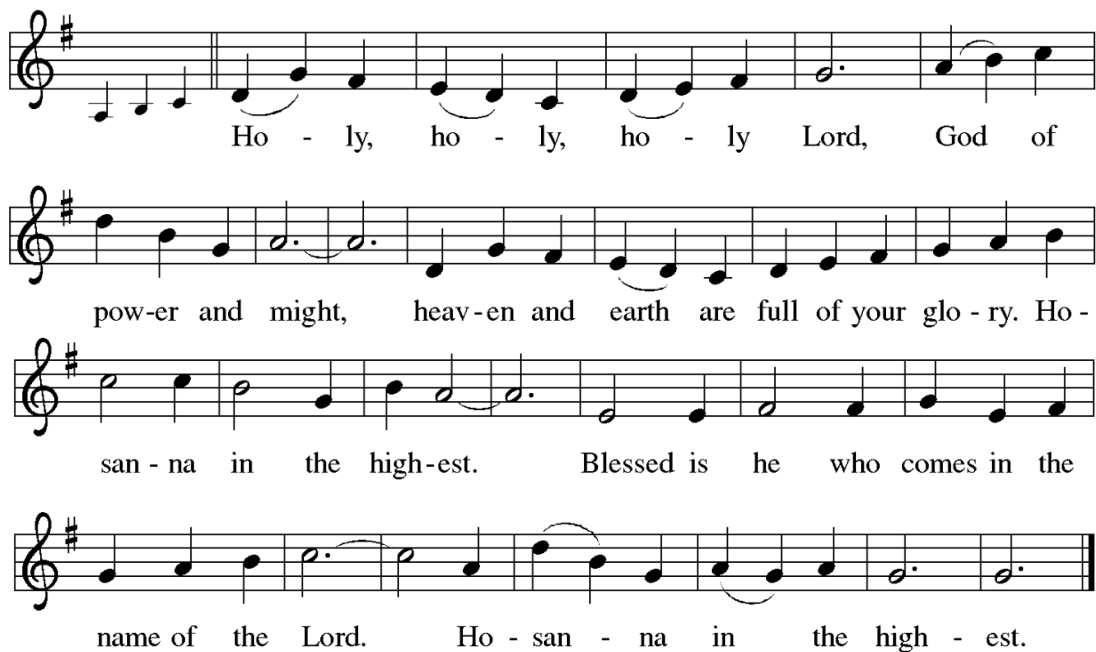
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

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.....**



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

“Come, Let Us Eat”
“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

ELW 491

ELW 490

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? This is what we are learning about in our Thursday afternoon Bible study series, at 1:00 p.m. This short four-part series is a study of those "Rare Birds" from among the minor prophets--and we'll 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.!

Spiritual Practices

As part of Vicar Natalie's internship project, we have been 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 gathers on Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Please continue to join us from now until Thursday, August 28. Each week we have a pastor from the community 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 are available at the kiosk or in SignUp Genius at www.commofochrist.org by clicking on the “Worship & Events Signups” button. 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.

You're Invited to Our Spiritual Practices End-of-Session Picnic!

Join us for a picnic celebration during our final session on Thursday, August 28! We'd love to see you there as we wrap up the season with great food and fellowship. Please sign up at the kiosk or on Sign Up Genius so we can plan accordingly. A free will offering will be accepted to help cover the cost of the meal. Any extra funds will go toward supporting our concert ministry. We can't wait to celebrate with you, thank you!

Blessing of the Backpacks TODAY, August 17

As we get ready for the start of a new school year, we invite you to join us for the “Blessing of the Backpacks” in worship today. Like we did last year, we'll take a moment during the children's sermon to dedicate a new school year to God's care and ask for God's blessing on our students, teachers, staff, and administrators. Students (and teachers!) are invited to bring their backpacks this morning, as we pray together for God's blessing and get a special gift you can put on your backpack, bookbag, or briefcase to remember God's presence with you throughout the school year!

The Ladies' Lunch, Friday, August 22nd, at 11:30 a.m. This month we will be at the Firepit Grille, 7723 Airport Hwy, Holland, 43528. Please sign up at the kiosk so I know how many are coming. Since this is a little further away, if you would like a ride, please indicate that as well or call me. Bring a friend! Call Becky King with any questions at 419-349-7319.



One of our ongoing mission partners in the Toledo area is Salem Lutheran Church, the oldest Lutheran congregation in Toledo and an ongoing presence for good in the Old North End neighborhood of Vistula. You may well have read about or participated in their weekly Tuesday night meals for the community, helped with Trunk or Treat in their parking lot, planted trees across the street, or participated in the Angel Tree gift giveaway for kids in the North End. You might have also

seen or heard about their new monthly initiative called “Breakfast Church,” where they offer a free breakfast as part of Sunday worship once a month. In other words, our friends at Salem are doing good work all the time to feed neighbors, invite them to worship in ways that nurture both body and spirit, and to care for their community.

And we are blessed to get to connect with that good work where Christ is present at many points throughout the year. So, here's one more way you can help support our mission partners at Salem in the various ways they work to feed neighbors around them and reflect God's goodness in their neighborhood. We have these new stickers that will be available, and we'd invite you to take one for a suggested donation of \$5.00 each. We'll take all the proceeds and send them along to the food ministries at Salem. These stickers feature an original art design and the message, "Abundance is meant to be shared," which comes from the Gospel reading we'll hear in worship on Sunday, August 3, from Luke's Gospel (Luke 12:13-21). You can pick one up from the table in the Gathering Space, make a donation in the box on the table beside the stickers, and know that you are directly helping to feed neighbors, and to share the good things God has placed in our lives, which is exactly what those good things are meant for. We hope you'll boldly put one of these stickers on something you wear or carry around with you as a way to start a conversation, prompt a moment to share your faith with someone, or to remind you both of God's generosity and our call to share the abundance God puts in our lives.

August 24, after Worship: LEGO Faith Builds and Youth Facilitator Meet and Greet: You may have already seen the news that our new Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Facilitator, Bryce Hinegardner, began a new venture in ministry here at Community of Christ and neighboring congregation, Providence, earlier this summer in mid-July. If you haven't already, please read Bryce's self-introduction in this newsletter. We invite you to a coffee hour after worship on Sunday, August 24, in the Fellowship Hall for a chance to meet and talk with Bryce if you haven't had the chance yet, over some light refreshments. We will ALSO be offering an opportunity for kids of all ages to do a LEGO Faith Build during that time, where we'll take some time to build and make things out of LEGO bricks and to talk about how they might connect (no pun intended—well, maybe a little) to our faith and relationship with God. Since our Spiritual Practice session on the Thursday before will be LEGO building with Pastor Chris Hanley (from Glenwood Lutheran in Toledo), we wanted to give an extra opportunity to build, play, and reflect some more just in case you can't make the Thursday evening event in the busyness of getting back to school year routines, or in case you went and had so much fun you wanted to build more! So, join us after worship service with Bryce and guided LEGO Building! Hope you can join us! (Please note there will not be an Adult Sunday School Forum on this day, so you can come to the Meet and Greet!)

Anthony Wayne Area Youth Back-to-School Back Yard Party—August 24

As we get ready for the new school year, Community of Christ is teaming up with several other area congregations for an AWESOME back-to-school event for youth in grades 7-12 with outdoor games, water activities, refreshments provided by local food

trucks, music, cornhole, and prizes! It's all coming up on Sunday evening, Aug. 24, from 6:00-7:30 p.m., and food and drink are provided for all who attend! This is a great event to invite your friends to, as well. We'll have several water games to keep cool in the weather, so bring a towel and apparel you can splash around in. Join us here at Community of Christ for this second annual event—sign up at the kiosk or through the Sign-up Genius on the church website! This will be a great time, and we hope you'll join the fun and hang out with us!

Tuesday Ladies Bible study: September is quickly approaching, so that means we will be starting sooner than we think! The first day of class will start on **Tuesday, September 9th @ 8:30 am**. This fall, we will be reading “The Mothers & Daughters of the Bible Speak” by Shannon Bream. Please purchase the book and the workbook that goes with it as soon as possible. I am asking you to read the first chapter, “Jochebed and Miriam,” and complete the first chapter in the workbook so that when we meet on the first day, we can dig into the study. The workbook is not difficult and will enhance our discussions. Also, Vicar Natalie will be joining us for some of the lessons and will lead the discussion. This is a change from what we have done in the past, but I think it will be a great change of pace for us. Invite a friend & be sure to sign up at the kiosk so I can know how many will be attending. Questions or concerns? Call Becky King @ 419-349-7319. See you in September!

Bridges of Hope Clothing Drive: Bridges of Hope needs warmer clothing as the seasons change! If you have any *gently used or new* adult-sized hoodies or sweatshirts, your donations would be greatly appreciated. Please place items in the collection box located in the hallway. Thank you!!



School Kits

It's that time of year again! We are collecting school supplies for **"Project Promise - Build Kits of Care"** through Lutheran World Relief. These kits allow students of all ages in third-world countries to attend school. **Donations will be collected through September 7.**

With Back-To-School Sales getting started now is a great time to pick up the items needed to fill our backpacks.

We would like to fill 50-60 backpacks again this year. Each backpack requires the following

items:

(New Items Only Please)

(4) 70-sheet notebooks - (Wide or College Ruled) No loose-leaf paper.

(1) 30-centimeter ruler or one with both centimeters and inches on it.

(1) pencil sharpener

(1) pair of blunt scissors (safety scissors)

(5) Unsharpened pencils

(5) black or blue ballpoint pens (No gel ink please)

(1) box of 16 or 24 count box of crayons

(1) Eraser (approx. 2.5" in size)

Please do not donate anything with the American Flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

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

Please note.....

Hours may vary with vacations.
Please call ahead ☺

VM Cookie Baking
Tuesday, August 19, 9:00 a.m.
LWR Quilt Ministry
Tuesday, August 19, 10:00 a.m.
Thursday Bible Study
Thursday, August 21, 1:00 p.m.
Spiritual Practices Series
Thursday, August 21, 6:30 p.m.
Ladies' Lunch
Friday, August 22 nd , at 11:30 a.m. Firepit Grille

****Band Rehearsal for Blue Jean Sunday – Sunday, August 24 @ 10:15 a.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!