

# THE VINEYARD

JULY - AUGUST 2026

LOCKPORT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## Summer Sabbath

*“God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day...”* - Genesis 2:2

Summer has a way of slowing the world down – longer days, warmer evenings, a gentler pace. And yet, even in this season, our inner lives can remain hurried. One of the gifts of Summer Sabbath is that it cannot be rushed. Sabbath refuses to be squeezed into the margins of our productivity. It insists on being lived in real time – quiet, unhurried, and whole.

Wayne Muller writes: “We do not stop when we are finished...We stop because it is time to stop. Sabbath requires surrender.” Sabbath is not a reward for finishing everything. It is a rhythm woven into creation itself. God rests – not because God is tired, but because rest is holy. Rest is part of the design.

Later, in Exodus 20:8, we are commanded: “Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy.” Not create the Sabbath. Not earn it. Remember it. Return to it. Receive it. Rick Rubin echoes this ancient wisdom: “Patience begins with acceptance of natural rhythms...The attempt to skip ahead ends up taking more time and using more energy.” Sabbath is accepting God’s rhythm over our own. It is the courageous act of stepping out of urgency and into presence. It is surrender – not of responsibility, but of control.

What do you need to stop in this moment to enter Sabbath? Where might God be inviting you to create space for holiness in this summer season? What control might you release so the rhythm of Sabbath can envelop your life?

(Thoughts from Rev. Ryan Henderson  
UCC Associate Conference Minister)

*As you embrace the joys of summertime,  
let this be a season of  
growth, rest and renewal.  
May you find peace, joy,  
and inspiration in every moment!*





## Our Mission Statement

*Open to God's Spirit,  
we reach out in Love to the World  
and invite All to journey with us*

An Open and Affirming Congregation



## HOW TO REACH US

### **Our Website:**

lockportucc.com

### **Church Office:**

80 Main St. - Suite H  
716-433-2545

lockportunited@roadrunner.com

### **Mailing Address:**

PO Box 427  
Lockport, NY 14095

Worship in the Park

*Feeding Our Neighbors*

Bible Study at LUCC

*Worship Walks on Water*

AI in the Church

*Investing in the UCC*

Missions Update

*Bible Journaling*



## THE VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport  
United Church of Christ

*The Vineyard is published  
ten times a year to keep  
members and friends  
informed about  
programs of the church  
and news of its people.*

Submissions Welcome

**Deadline for Next Issue:**

**August 16, 2026**

## *Worship in the Park*

Sunday, August 9 – 11:00 AM

On this morning, our Sunday service will be moving outside to celebrate the glory of God's creation in our worship. We will be gathering at the Veteran's Park in Gasport. (Directions to the park are below.) We have a shelter reserved, so we will meet rain or shine. There is parking and rest rooms very close to the shelter.

Following the service, we will be sharing a picnic lunch together. This year, we will try something a little different, with Pulled Pork as the main course. The meat, rolls, and drinks will be provided. We would like to ask our members and friends to bring a side dish to share to round out the feast – things like salads, beans, chips, desserts, etc. There will be a sign up sheet at the church for you to let us know what you can bring.

*We hope everyone will join us  
for this day of celebration and fellowship!*

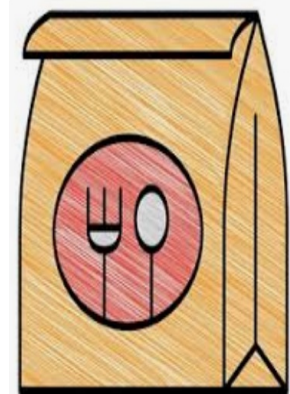


### **Directions to Roylton Veterans Park**

- Take **Route 31** east from Lockport.
- At the "V" where you see Crosby's store, (shortly before the elementary school), go **Left** onto **Telegraph Road**.
- The park is about half a mile, on your **Right**.
- Turn in through the chain link fence gate.
- You can't miss our shelter – there's only one.

## *Feeding Our Neighbors*

Many of our neighbors find themselves struggling to feed their families. To help alleviate some of that food insecurity in our community, we offer our free monthly dinner.



We will hold Neighborhood Dinners on **July 22 and August 26**. They are served from 5:00 to 6:00 pm at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and available as take-out or eat-in.

The menus have not been determined yet, but will certainly be delicious as always. Edna will be needing helpers to prepare and serve, so if you can volunteer to help please speak to Edna.



### LOOKING AHEAD

Just Peace Retreat  
Saturday, September 19  
10am to 12pm at LUCC

*Save the Date  
and Plan to Be With Us!*





at LOCKPORT UCC

### TUESDAY STUDY GROUP

Our Tuesday Bible Study group meets each week at **1:00 pm**. They are a lay-led group that discusses the lectionary scripture readings for the week. Please see Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

### DISCIPLE DISCUSSION GROUP

Our Disciple Group will be taking a break for the Summer. We will resume in September, with a whole new schedule of discussion topics. We meet on Thursdays, 5:30 to 7:00 pm.

If you would like to join us then, we would welcome new folks! If you would like more information, please speak to Cyndy.

### BIBLE 101 CLASS

Pastor Hope leads a Bible 101 class **Twice a month on Sundays**, following the morning worship service. This is a basics of the Bible course for anyone who is new to the Bible or wants a refresher. If you are interested in joining, please see Pastor Hope to get homework/study materials.

*Happy Summer  
to Our Shut-in Members*

**Lucinda Hohle**  
Absolut Care  
4540 Lincoln Dr.  
Gasport, NY 14067

**Linda Layer and  
Kevin O'Connor**  
Mt. View Assisted Living  
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.  
Lockport, NY 14094

**David Payne**  
Lockport Rehab &  
Health Care Center  
909 Lincoln Avenue  
Lockport, NY 14094



### *Worship Walks on the Water*

Our Worship Walks continue on **Wednesdays, 10-11:30am**, starting at Wide Waters.

Together we walk and talk, pray and play, and be on the lookout for God to show up around us. (see Pastor Hope if you have any questions)





## AI in the Church

With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), y'all might be wondering if your pastor (that's me) would ever use AI to do the work of ministry. The answer to this question can be found in this article. Because AI is being used more and more and more within many different workplaces, organizations, and businesses, y'all need to know where I stand on the topic. In other organizations, AI has been used to help organize data, to summarize data, and to gather data quickly. Its use is becoming more and more common in these times.

While some find AI to be a helpful resource to use in their work, research, and daily life, I do my best to not use AI whatsoever (as much as it can be avoided). This is because using AI is incredibly harmful to the environment and world that God has given us. The data hubs that are used to manage and maintain AI consume too much water, use massive amounts of electricity (leading to an increased cost in utilities), and produce electronic waste (often containing hazardous substances like mercury and lead). Simply put, AI is not good stewardship of the world that God has given us.

Because of this, y'all need to know that **your pastor will not be using AI** in sermon writing, devotional writing, policy and protocol writing, bible study, newsletter article writing, or any other possible written work I do in ministry. Not simply because of the environmental harm done in using AI, but I will not use AI for these other reasons as well:

- (1) Sermon writing is one of my favorite tasks of ministry. It keeps me close to God as I do my job in leading the church. Using AI in preaching would be a violation of my ordination vows, the ministerial code, and the calling that God has for my life.
- (2) Y'all hired me to be your pastor. AI was not hired to do my job. AI was not hired to do the work of ministry in this church. Using AI to do the work of my ministry as a pastor is poor stewardship of the gifts that God has given me.
- (3) Serving as your pastor, I have spent time with you, done life with you, served with you, prayed with you, grieved with you, learned with you, journeyed with you in life and ministry. Because of this, I know all y'all. AI doesn't know you, like your pastor does. AI is a poor replacement for a pastor.
- (4) As a seminary trained ordained clergyperson, I have spent a lot of time in preparation to become a pastor. Like a lot of time, years and years and years! Because of this, I can say without hesitation that AI is no replacement for seminary, clinical pastoral education, or any other educational preparation needed in the credentialing requirements to become an ordained pastor in the UCC.

For all these reasons and more, know this: Your pastor will not be using AI to do her job. Not now. Not at all. Not ever. This is my promise to all y'all and to God.

*Abundant Blessings,  
Pastor Hope*

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

## July Birthdays

- 3 Mike Derby-Cuadrado
- 8 Sam Corrieri
- 10 Daunt Stenzel
- 17 Barb Carlson
- 31 Margaret Stenzel

## August Birthdays

- 3 Easton Rongo
- 5 Ashley Zuercher
- 6 Bryan Gritzmacher
- 7 Linda Rongo
- 7 David Payne
- 14 Charles Roberts
- 20 Sue Cruickshank
- 22 Dan Holler
- 23 Cyndy Corrieri
- 31 Luca Pellegrino

## Anniversaries

- 8-8-1981 Jim & Linda Rongo
- 8-18-1962 George & Sue Cruickshank
- 8-27-1977 Larry & Karen Henn
- 8-27-1977 Steve & Emily Hall



## Our Church Cemetery

Plots in St. Peter's Cemetery are available for \$800 each. If you would like to purchase plots, just call Dan Holler and he will be happy to help you with that.

## CAMPFIRE CHURCH 2026

Campfire Church is returning for its FOURTH summer season! All are welcome to come find church around the campfire.



Epiphany UCC  
@ 7pm;  
Rain or Shine!

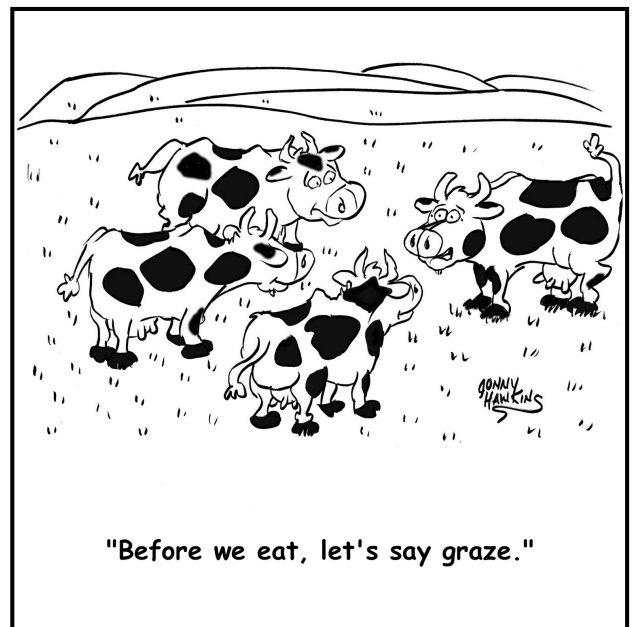
June 3 & 17  
July 1, 15 & 29 August 12 & 26



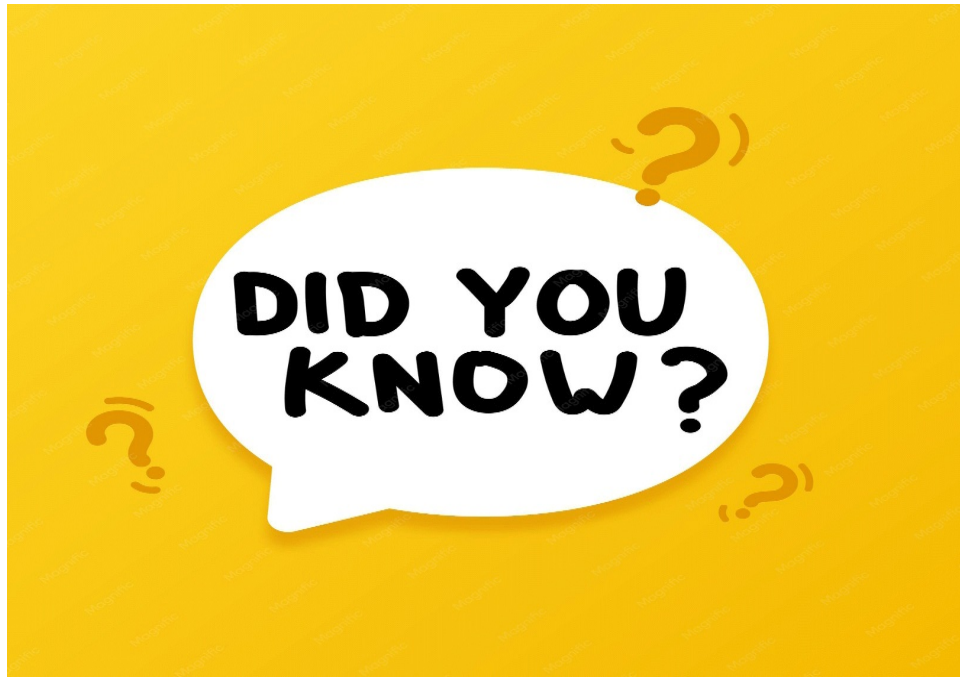
## General Fund Financial Summary

May 18 thru June 21

Income from	
Pledges & Offerings	2,355.00
Other Income	21.00
Total Income	2,376.00
Total Expenses	7,087.17



"Before we eat, let's say graze."



## Investing in the UCC

Y'all, I have some good news to share with you. While I was at the UCCNY Annual Meeting, I learned some amazing things about the financial resources available to UCC clergy, congregation members, and congregations.

Did you know that the UCC has its own federal credit union? Yup – it does! Generations United Federal Credit Union is a ministry of the UCC and membership is available to all UCCers!! Y'all, this means congregation members and congregations too. Why is this good news, Church? Here are a few reasons why it is good news:

1. Church members have a ton of resources available to them to grow in their personal financial wellbeing. Generations United FCU offers credit card balance transfers, investment opportunities, and more.
2. Churches can join too! Membership in the Generations United FCU provides no minimum balance accounts, ethical investment opportunities, and non-predatory credit card options.
3. Churches can invest. With the options available to churches, we can invest in justice-oriented causes that do good work in the world around us. But there's more, y'all! Available to congregation members and churches are certificates that can be scaffolded (3/6/9/12 months) to earn money to build an emergency fund or to cover for decreased offerings over the summer or in the declining membership.

Let's talk about how the Generations United FCU can help you in your financial wellness journey. I joined . . . will you?

*Abundant Blessings,  
Pastor Hope*



*While we have no specific special offerings in July and August, we do have a couple of ongoing mission projects you may want to lend support to.*

### *Undue Medical Debt*

Every penny you add to our little collection box on the table at church helps to alleviate medical debt for people who are living with the burden of crushing debt from medical bills. Just sharing some of your change can make all the difference, because this organization is able to buy \$100 worth of debt for every dollar donated.

So far this year, we have collected \$208 . . . . That equals \$20,800 worth of debt paid off!!!

### *Helping the Unhoused*

A few months ago, we decided to join in the effort to assist the homeless folks in Lockport. A new initiative was started this past winter – The Lockport Homeless Alliance – and we have been working through them.

The Lockport Homeless Alliance is a coordinated, volunteer-driven initiative launched in late 2025 by city leaders to combat a growing unhoused population in Lockport. The alliance aims to move homeless individuals off the street by connecting them with essential support services.

One of their key efforts is Street Outreach. Volunteers regularly visit encampments around Lockport to distribute relief supplies these folks need. This is also a chance to make contact, and help them connect to other agencies for housing support, addiction treatment, and mental health services. To do this, they coordinate with organizations such as Lockport CARES, the Beacon Center, Social Services, and others.

As you might imagine, their needs change based on weather conditions. Here is a list of the items they are in need of as we enter the summer season:

#### **Warm Weather Needs:**

bug spray, sunscreen, aloe vera, and sturdy athletic sneakers or work boots

#### **General Needs:**

personal care products, first aid supplies, individually packaged snack bars and cookies, bottled water, socks and underwear, blankets and sleeping bags

#### **Walmart Gift Cards:**

Cards allow volunteers to purchase whatever is needed most at the time

If you would like to contribute to this effort, there is a collection box at the church for your items. Cash donations are also welcome – we turn the cash into Gift Cards.

*Thank You for your support !!!*

# Bible Journaling

Have you ever heard of Bible Journaling? It has become a fairly popular method of reading and studying the bible. This can be a meaningful way to have a more personal interaction with scripture.

There are a few different ways this can be done. It can be as casual or as intensive as you choose – anything from occasional note taking as you read the bible, to more detailed, intentional record keeping and study.

## ✧ Use a Journaling Bible

Journaling Bibles are available for this purpose. Their main feature is that they offer pages with wide margins (1.5 to 2 inches) which can be used to make notes about the passages on that page. They come in traditional or spiral bound editions, in numerous translations, with a variety of artistic cover designs.



## ✧ Use a Companion Journal or Notebook

Using a separate journal or notebook is another option. This allows for unlimited space to make your notes and record your thoughts as you read.

## ✧ Casual Note Taking

You may simply choose to start a habit of taking a few notes as you engage in your normal, everyday reading of scripture – things you want to remember about that passage.

## ✧ Read Through the Entire Bible

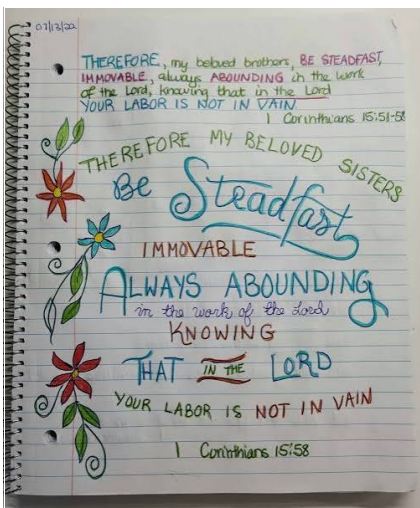
But if you've ever thought you'd like to read through the entire bible, this may be an effective way to do that. For many people, making written notes as you read is helpful to better understand and retain what you read. A journal or notebook might be better for this, so that you are not limited on space to write.

## ✧ Make it Personal

If you want to make a study of reading the entire bible, you may want to include a short summary of what is contained in each chapter as you read it. But don't forget to make personal notes as well. How does the passage speak to you; how do you interpret it's meaning; is it comforting, challenging or instructive; does it raise other questions for you, etc.

## ✧ Be Artistic!

Use drawings, stickers, or pictures to decorate your journal. This can be another way to express your personal feelings about that passage.



*So, if you think this might be for you, give it a try! Don't pressure yourself to become a scholar, just keep it fun and meaningful for your personal exploration and deepening of faith and understanding. Happy Journaling!*