

August 2026


federated

The Spire

The Federated Church Newsletter

United Church of Christ  An Open and Affirming Congregation  A Creation Justice Church

SOW.
GROW.
BEAR
FRUIT.

—  —
FAITH ROOTED.
LIVES TRANSFORMED.
TOGETHER.



*They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit
in its season, and their leaves
do not wither. In all that
they do, they prosper.*

~PSALM 1:3 (NRSV)

federated 
grow





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From the Desk of Pastor Michael...

Cultivating the Kingdom

Summer has its own rhythm. Gardens begin to bear fruit. Children prepare to return to school. Vacations wind down. The days slowly begin to shorten. Before long, we'll find ourselves gathering school supplies, attending football games and choir rehearsals, and eventually, raking autumn leaves.

Church has seasons, too. This summer we've been listening to Jesus tell stories about seeds, gardens, fields, and bread. They aren't simply lessons about agriculture. They are invitations to imagine what a life—and a community—shaped by God's Dream looks like.

A mustard seed becomes a place where birds find shelter. A little yeast quietly transforms an entire batch of dough. A merchant discovers something so beautiful that everything else is reordered around it. A householder learns to bring out treasures both old and new.

These are not just stories about individual faith. They are stories about what happens when a people begin to share God's imagination. That is what the church is for.

Faith is more than believing certain things. It is learning to cultivate a way of life together. Every time we gather for worship, we are tending the soil. Every time we welcome a neighbor, we are planting seeds. Every shared meal, every conversation on the front porch, every hymn sung together, every game of softball, every act of kindness becomes another way God's kingdom quietly takes root among us.

The church is not a collection of programs. It is a garden. Some of us plant. Some of us water. Some of us pull rocks from the soil. Some of us gather the harvest. Yet, all of us belong to the same field.

As we finish our series over the next two Sundays—**Bear Fruit** and **Sow**—I hope you'll see these weeks not as the end of summer, but as the beginning of another season of growth. The harvest Jesus speaks about is never simply about grain. It is a community learning to share God's life with the world.

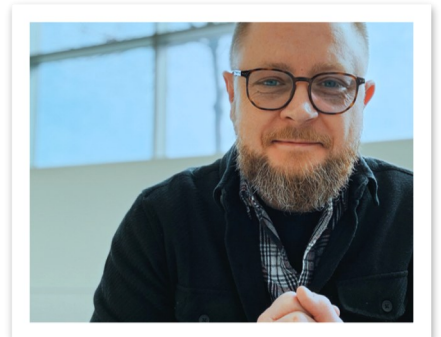
Perhaps that's why, after telling all these parables, Jesus speaks of a householder who brings out treasures old and new. Every generation receives the gospel as a treasure. Every generation is also called to discover fresh ways to embody it.

This August we'll gather on the front porch, around picnic tables, in worship, and in service. They may seem like ordinary moments. Yet the kingdom has always had a habit of hiding in ordinary things: seeds, bread, fields, tables, neighbors.

And perhaps that is God's own desire. Not simply that we attend church. But that, together, we become the kind of people among whom the kingdom can take root, grow, bear fruit, and be shared with the world.

Ours the Journey,

Pastor Michael



FRONT PORCH SERIES FINALE!

LEMONADE & Listening

A SUMMER EVENING OF



LIVE
ACOUSTIC
MUSIC



GREAT
FOOD



FRESH
LEMONADE



GOOD COMPANY
& CONVERSATION

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 5

6:00 – 8:00 PM



FEDERATED CHURCH
76 BELL STREET,
CHAGRIN FALLS



BRING YOUR INSTRUMENT
AND JOIN THE **JAM!**



ALL ARE WELCOME!

AUGUST 2026



**AUGUST
5**

FRONT PORCH JAM NIGHT

Bring a chair, your voice or an instrument, and enjoy an evening of live music and community.



**AUGUST
9**

ALL CHURCH PICNIC

One church. One picnic. One big day of food, games, and fellowship!



**AUGUST
13**

CAPTAINS GAME

Take me out to the ballgame!
Join us for a fun night with the Captains.

SEPTEMBER 2026



**SEPTEMBER
13**

RALLY DAY

Celebrate a new season of faith and community together!



THERE'S ROOM FOR YOU HERE.

Come as you are.
Stay as long as you'd like.
There's room for you here.

Men's Ministries Presents

Men's Cook-out



Tuesday,
August 18, 2026
At Frohring Meadow

From 6:00pm till 8:30pm

Included:

Italian or Bratwurst Sausages
Mexican Street Corn
Alabama Baked Beans

Bring a side dish or appetizer.
Bring your own drink(s) – cooler provided

Cost is \$5.00

Bring a Friend

Women's Ministry

Circle Our Circle groups will not meet in August. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and we'll look forward to seeing everyone again in September!

Sit & Stitch The Sit & Stitch Group continues to meet every Thursday at **10:00 a.m. in Room 340**. Join us for knitting, crocheting, and fellowship! We have plenty of needles and yarn available, and together we continue making prayer squares, prayer shawls, and blessing blankets. Whether you're an experienced crafter or just getting started, we'd love to have you join us.

Helping Hands Helping Hands will meet on **Monday, August 24, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Lower Level Meeting Room. Join us as we stuff and sew cancer pillows for Hospice of the Western Reserve. We are looking for **9" x 13" pillow-cases or neck pillow covers**, and we have patterns available. If you can't attend, you can make pillowcases at home and leave them at the Angel Desk. We are also accepting donations of **100% cotton fabric** (at least one-third yard). Even the scraps from these projects are put to good use—we turn them into cat pillows! Thank you for supporting this meaningful ministry.

Loaves & Fishes Loaves & Fishes will be held on **Sunday, August 30**. If you're able to bake cookies or provide snacks, please place them in the church kitchen by **9:00 a.m.** on Sunday morning and label them "Loaves & Fishes." Jim will likely be grilling this time of year, and if you're available to help serve, please give him a call. We are also collecting plastic grocery bags and Ziploc bags for the ministry. Thank you for your continued support and generosity!



Thank you for your continued support—we appreciate it! For more information contact
Lynne Kessell, 440-487-9104 or lynnekessell@gmail.com.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

ALL
ARE
WELCOME!

A SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION
OF AGING. A DEEPER PURPOSE.
GREATER POTENTIAL.

ON **THE GIFT OF YEARS** BY JOAN CHITTISTER

This book is a spiritual exploration of aging that reveals the profound purpose and potential of later life, showing how these years offer opportunities for deeper personal growth and fulfillment.



We will read a short passage each day, then come together to discuss points that stood out from the week's seven passages.

≡ **THURSDAY MORNINGS** ≡
10:00–11:15 A.M.

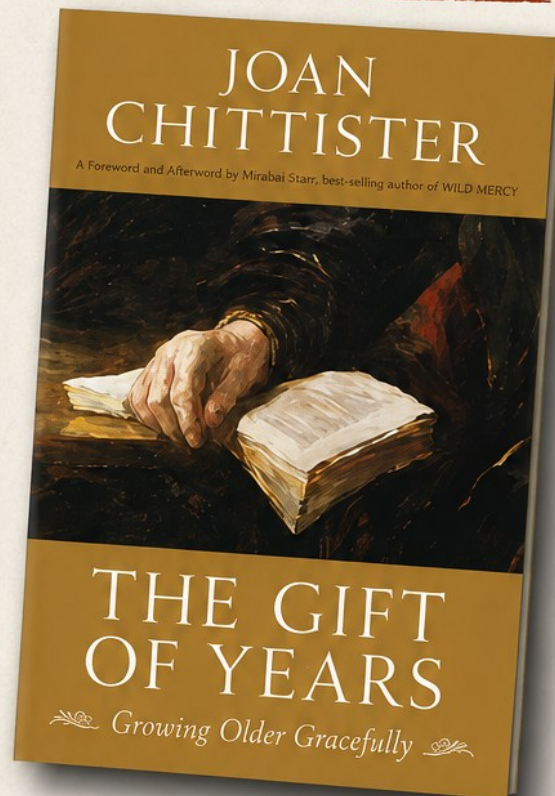
SEPTEMBER
3, 10, 17 & 24

(SKIP OCT 1)

OCTOBER
8, 15 & 22



IN THE HEALING ROOM
AT FEDERATED CHURCH
76 BELL STREET, CHAGRIN FALLS



**PLEASE PROCURE
BOOK ON YOUR OWN.**

We will make sure that Fireside Book Shop has several copies, or you can obtain online.



QUESTIONS OR FOR
FURTHER INFORMATION,
CALL
JUDY BAGLEY-BONNER
440-478-0159



Scan
for more
info!

JOIN JUDY BAGLEY-BONNER AND JANE KENNEWEG AS THEY LEAD THIS PROGRAM.



Allergy Notice

For the safety and inclusion of our church community,
we strive to keep our potlucks **NUT-FREE**.



We also ask that you be mindful of other food allergies. If your dish contains common allergens (such as dairy, eggs, wheat, soy, sesame, fish, or shellfish), or if you are unsure about ingredients, please speak with a member of the kitchen or hospitality team.



If you have food allergies or concerns, please check with a member of the kitchen or hospitality team before eating.



While we make every effort to share ingredient information and support a safe environment, all food is prepared by volunteers, and **we cannot guarantee that any item is free from allergens or cross-contact.**



*We value the safety, dignity,
and inclusion of all who gather here.*



**Thank you for
helping us care
for one another.**

Fellowship Treats

Federated members take turns bringing treats for Fellowship Hour each Sunday, as scheduled by the Congregational Care Commission. Of course, anyone is welcome to bring treats at any time!

Please bring ready-to-serve treats in disposable containers. Healthy food choices are especially welcome. *Please no nuts.* Thank you for helping to make our Fellowship time delicious and enjoyable!

- August 2– last names beginning with L & M**
- August 9– last names beginning with N, O, P, Q, & R**
- August 16– last names beginning with S & T**
- August 23– last names beginning with U, V, W, X, Y, & Z**
- August 30– last names beginning with A & B**



Wondrous Wednesdays

federated 
grow

12

13

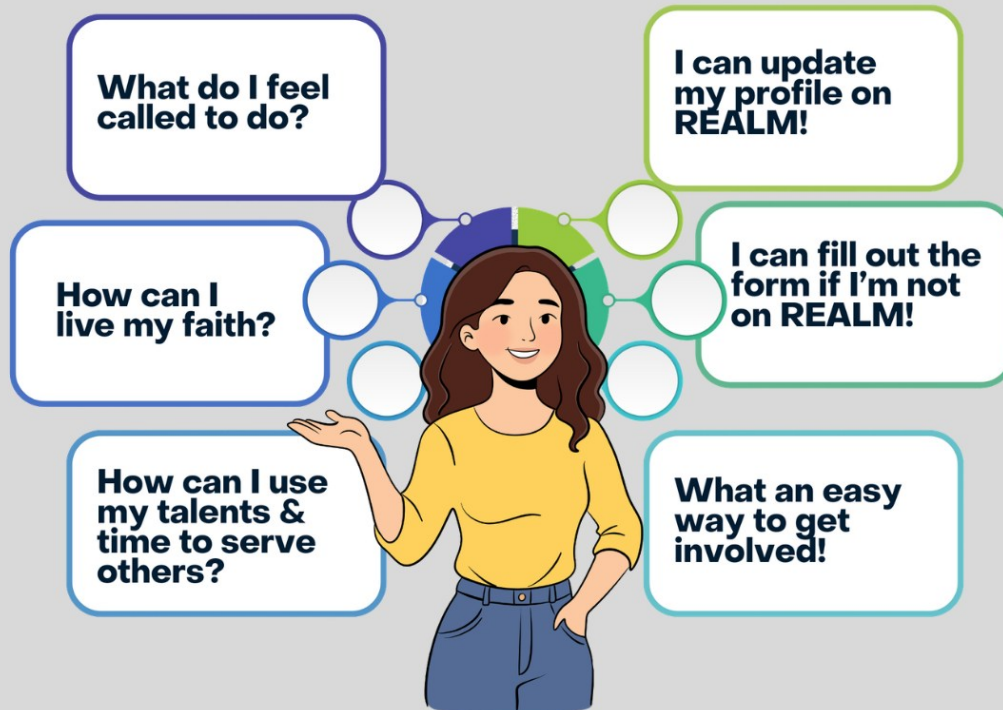
save the dates

wondrous
wednesdays this fall

september 16th,
october 21st,
november 18th &
december 16th

20

How do you share your time and talents?



The Generosity Commission Needs You!

We are continuing to update REALM . Part of those updates include the skills & interests areas of your profile.

Staff, Commissions and Committees use this information to invite people to participate, volunteer and get involved.

You can sign into you REALM profile-click EDIT - click PERSONAL INFORMATION and update your skills and interests there.

In the month of August, we will also have paper copies of the form available for you to complete and return to us. We we will update your profile.

THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!

AUGUST 2026

PRIMETIME!

AT FEDERATED CHURCH

COMING ATTRACTIONS

PRIMETIME GOES TO THE GOODTIME III

Thursday, August 20th
11:30-4:00

Watch your email for
details about the trip!



AUGUST PRIMETIME MEETING

Monday August 24th
3:00-4:00pm in the Lounge

We NEED you and your
great ideas. All are welcome
and we encourage you to
join us!

GOODTIME III CRUISE & LUNCH

Thursday, August 20th, 10:30-
3:00pm

We are trying something NEW
this year! We will have lunch
and a fun trip on the
Cuyahoga and Lake Erie.
Cost is \$51 pp

PRIMETIME GOES TO THE GOOD TIME III

- Thursday, August 20, 10:30-3:30
- Meet at the Family Life Center
- Lunch & Cruise are \$51 per person
- Please sign up on REALM by 8/10

We will be served a plated meal - please
let me know if you need a vegetarian
option!

**MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ALL OF THESE
EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON REALM OR BY
CONTACTING THEA AT
TMOZINGO@FEDCHURCH.ORG OR
440-247-6490**

Confirmation 2026–2027: *The Way*

IS YOUR STUDENT READY TO TAKE
THE NEXT STEP IN THEIR FAITH JOURNEY?

Confirmation: The Way is an invitation for students entering grades 8–10 to explore the Christian faith through Scripture, worship, conversation, service, mentorship, and meaningful relationships.

Confirmation is not simply a class—it's the beginning of a lifelong journey of discipleship, supported by the entire church community.



GROW IN SCRIPTURE

Discover what it means to follow Jesus and live out your faith every day.



BUILD COMMUNITY

Grow through meaningful relationships, mentorship, and belonging.



LIVE ON MISSION

Put faith into action through service and loving others.

Students who have not yet been baptized are warmly welcomed and may choose to be baptized during the confirmation journey.



PARENT & STUDENT ORIENTATION



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026



12:00 PM – 1:00 PM



FELLOWSHIP HALL

Questions?

Contact Rev. Michael Howard
mhoward@fedchurch.org



COLORADO KIDS 2026

"BUILDING THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR FAITH"





Social Justice Advocacy Ministry (SJAM)

A ministry for action as we live into our call for Care and Justice for all of God's people and creation

Federated Social Justice Advocacy Ministry (SJAM) presents:

Stopping Violence against Women and Children in OH: Current Efforts in 2026

Monday, August 17th at 7 pm

Federated Church, 76 Bell St., Chagrin Falls
Fellowship Hall

Join us for a very informative Speaker Night as we hear from two women who will share stories and educate us on their initiatives.



Stephanie Lowry,

Child Marriage Survivor and Mentor
with **Unchained At Last**, an organization
dedicated to ending underage marriage.



Andrea Gutka,

Chief Executive Officer **WomenSafe**,
an emergency shelter and resource
center for survivors of domestic
violence in Northeast Ohio.

There will be a Q and A and we will also learn how we might become involved.

This evening will provide critical information and a path forward to take action.



For more information contact
sjamfedchurch@gmail.com

SOCIAL
JUSTICE
ADVOCACY
MINISTRY
federated
act

Social Justice Advocacy Ministry (SJAM)

A ministry for action as we live into our call for Care and Justice for all of God's people and creation

The mission of the Social Justice Advocacy Ministry is to be a voice and witness to God's love for all people and creation and to advocate for justice for those who are marginalized, discriminated against and denied their inherent rights as children of God and citizens of our nation and world. We strive to become well informed, provide opportunities to educate ourselves, balanced with opportunities to take action. Live Our Faith!

To learn more or receive our emails, please contact sjamfedchurch@gmail.com

Next Meeting: Sunday, August 16, 2026, 11:30 AM

LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM

Come and join us! ALL ARE WELCOME!

Coming up:

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A VERY IMPORTANT AND INFORMATIVE SPEAKER NIGHT

MONDAY, AUGUST 17TH AT 7 PM IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

**Topic: Stopping Violence against Women and Children in OH:
Current Efforts in 2026**

We will hear from two women who will share stories and educate us on their initiatives.

- **Stephanie Lowry**, Child Marriage Survivor and Mentor with **Unchained At Last**, an organization dedicated to ending underage marriage.
- **Andrea Gutka**, Chief Executive Officer **WomenSafe**, an emergency shelter and resource center for survivors of domestic violence in Northeast Ohio.

See flyer for details.

What we can do in the meantime to support these organizations

For Womensafe, bring any of these supplies to the Speaker Night:



CURRENT NEEDS LIST

- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Conditioner
- Body Lotion
- Reusable icepacks (plastic preferred)
- NEW small-XL women's underwear
- NEW men's underwear (all sizes)
- 2X men's clothing
- Curly/textured hair products
- Aloe Vera
- Anti-bacterial cleaning spray
- Twin bed comforters
- Wireless headphones/earbuds
- Phone chargers AND WALL BLOCKS (all kinds)
- Diaper Genie bags

Social Justice Advocacy Ministry (SJAM)

A ministry for action as we live into our call for Care and Justice for all of God's people and creation

For UNCHAINED, Learn more about the legislation they are working on to end child marriage in Ohio

UN-arrange a marriage.
RE-arrange a life.

UNCHAINED
at last

www.unchainedatlast.org

Let's End Child Marriage in Ohio: Pass SB341/HB670

Child marriage is a serious problem in Ohio. The marriage age is 18,¹ but an alarming legal loophole (that remained after legislators updated the marriage-age laws in 2019²) allows courts to enter a 17-year-old into marriage if the spouse is no more than four years older.³

Continued Dangers in the Current Law

- Some 69% of the minors who married in Ohio before the 2019 law passed (when the law did not specify any minimum age for marriage) were aged 17.⁴ Thus the 2019 law protected only 31% of those impacted by child marriage.
 - Indeed, 52 minors were entered into marriage between 2020 and 2024, under the new law.⁵
- The judicial review process, even with its many supposed safeguards,⁶ puts the onus on terrified teens whose parents are forcing them to marry to figure out how to signal their predicament to the court without facing repercussions at home.
- Limiting the spousal age difference does not decrease a teen's risk of being forced to marry⁷ nor mitigate the significant harms that result from marriage before age 18.⁸
- A 17-year-old is automatically emancipated when the juvenile court approves their marriage,⁹ and they may lose their parents' support,¹⁰ regardless of the teen's financial circumstances. This can easily force the teen to become financially dependent on their spouse, which is a risk factor for domestic violence.¹¹ It also incentivizes parents to force their child to marry so the parent can evade a child support obligation or child custody battle.
- The law continues to legalize and encourage the trafficking of minors under the guise of marriage.¹²

To continue reading, [CLICK HERE](#)

Reach out to local representatives and senators with this **email**

campaign link: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-state-legislators-we-must-end-child-marriage-in-ohio/?source=direct> link&



Eco-connection

Taking time to connect with and appreciate nature benefits our health and well being in many ways. It decreases blood pressure, stress hormones, and anxiety; it increases immune function, relaxation, and mood. But it also benefits the natural world, because when we have a deep connection and love for plants, animals, and the earth, we'll want do everything we can to help and protect them.

..... ♥
Connecting takes more than just spending time in nature; we need to be with nature.

And to find small ways to do it on most days, not just once in a while.
..... ♥

Here are a few ideas:



- Slow down; silence your phone.



- Widen your field of vision to notice what's around you, then look closely at one thing right in front of you, focusing on details.



- Use all your senses.



- Allow yourself to feel gratitude, wonder, amazement.



- Find a sitting place and go there regularly, getting to know the nature around you through the days and seasons.



- When you can't be outdoors, explore nature through photos, paintings, music, prose, poetry, audio meditations, etc.

When we connect with nature, we *care*.

When we *care*,
we *protect*.



Here is a simple 2-minute tree appreciation experience



- 1 Choose your tree.
- 2 Walk up to your tree, examining the bark, noticing texture, color, patterns.
- 3 Put both hands on the tree, noticing the feel of the bark on your skin.
- 4 Keeping your hands on the tree, lean in to the bark and breathe in the scent of the tree; it may surprise you.
- 5 Listen to the sounds around you.
- 6 Notice how your body and mind feel being in connection with the tree.
- 7 Before leaving, thank your tree.





Fryderyk Chopin
INSTITUTE OF OHIO



Visions Kamil Pacholec

**PIANO WORKS BY CHOPIN & LISZT &
DEBUSSY**

The Fryderyk Chopin Institute of Ohio presents a special summer concert **held in the Sanctuary at Federated Church** on **Sunday, August 9, at 4:00 PM** featuring Polish pianist Kamil Pacholec, finalist of the prestigious International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw and laureate of the International Paderewski Piano Competition in Bydgoszcz. Praised for his brilliant command of the keyboard, Pacholec brings a program that explores the piano as an instrument of storytelling, tracing a path from poetic introspection to vivid scenes of nature, fantasy, humor, and spiritual transcendence. Though spanning the Romantic and Impressionist eras, these works are united by their extraordinary ability to transform literature, visual imagery, and human experience into sound. Mark your calendars and join us for the special event!

For more details and ticket info, please visit <https://www.chopinohio.org/upcoming-events>

Ticket page for Federated Church: <https://www.chopinohio.org/events/summer-piano-series-featuring-kamil-pacholec-1>



Contact Us!

www.fedchurch.org
fedchurch@fedchurch.org



Phone: 440.247.6490
Fax: 440.247.2516
76 Bell St. | Chagrin Falls | OH | 44022

Facebook: facebook.com/thefederatedchurch

Instagram: [@federatedchurch](https://www.instagram.com/federatedchurch)



OUR STAFF IS HERE TO HELP YOU

CLERGY

Michael Anthony Howard, *Senior Pastor*
Judy Bagley-Bonner, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

Administration Staff

Beth Rutkowski, *Senior Director of People and Operations*
Brooke Strong, *Director of Communications*
Thea Mozingo, *Director of Generosity*
Oliver Mason, *Director of Youth and Families*
* **Susi Kawolics**, *Bookkeeper*
* **Marty Culbertson**, *Director of Missions*
* **Allison Hutchins**, *Administrative Specialist*
Jake Magalski, *Properties, Maintenance & Grounds Lead*

Music Staff

Joshua Konow, *Director of Music Ministries*
* **Marcia Snavelly**, *Organist*
* **Pat Haynish**, *Director of Children's Choir*

Children's Ministries Staff

* **Jannine Mason**, *Children's Activities Leader*

* denotes part-time staff



federated

**Hope to see you
this Sunday!**

10:00 AM
In person and Online