

News from the Vine

★ 250 YEARS

July 2026



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Lincoln, NE 68506

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SUNDAY

10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Fellowship Hour

SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30 am (adult)
10:40 am (children)
(September – May)

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

MISSION STATEMENT

To Love and Serve Each Other
and All Creation

NEWS FROM THE VINE

A monthly publication of Vine Congregational UCC. Article deadline is the third Friday of each month. Please send news items to the church office.

A Word from the Pastor

“God’s kingdom is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field.”
Matthew 13:24

Can you believe it is now July? How quickly June has passed and in what will seem like a blink of the eye, August will be upon us. When my son was in his twenties, he asked me a question that went something like: “Dad, I know that time seems to speed up as you grow older, but is there an age at which time seems to stay constant and not continually keep speeding up?” My answer was, “No.” Hence the wisdom to this question is to be present in each moment and enjoy what is being offered.

As I have been looking at the scripture selections for July, I noted that they are referring to *“This is what the kingdom of Heaven is like.”* Jesus addresses the crowd as well as the disciples using as examples the soil and seed to try to explain God’s kingdom. This has led me to think about, *“in what type of soil am I planting seeds?”* and *“what kinds of seeds am I planting?”*

There are two types of gardens that seem to be most popular. Where space is more abundant there can be formal gardens planted, well-manicured with distinct patterns. Where space is much smaller, a more informal, naturalistic or cottage style often works. Both have their beauty! But both need proper soil for the seeds (plantings) to flourish.

In my current situation with very limited space for gardening, I chose the cottage style of gardening. After amending the soil so it would foster better growth, I planted a packet of mixed wildflowers. I chose these because the plants are pollinators. As I sit on my patio on warm July evenings, I find that the beauty of this garden is one of the ways my soul is nourished.

My garden is a physical representation of what Jesus was telling the crowds about the soil and seeds. The seeds that took root in the rich soil grew and became hardy, providing both food and pleasure. To the disciples, Jesus explains it is our heart that is the soil, and the seed is the word of God. If the soil is good and cultivated properly, then the seed will grow into what it is designed to be.

Vine Church represents the worker that prepares the soil for the seeds that God plants. Gardening is a year-round occupation. The gardener neither takes the summer off nor sits back dormant in the bleakness of winter. Each season has its work and focuses that need to be continually cultivated. As we enjoy the warmth and relaxed movement of the summer months, may we be mindful of the continual cultivation needed to ensure the seeds of God grow deep and strong within us. Amen

Pastor Steven

Mark Your Calendar

➤ Month at a Glance

Jul 10	Broadway Musical Annie – Pinewood Bowl
Jul 12	Ice Cream Social
Jul 13	Council Meeting
Jul 15	Brent Vernon Concert
Jul 19	Last Day Shred Vault Fundraiser
Jul 21	Men's Breakfast
Jul 25	VBS Vacation Bible School
Jul 25	Adult VBS
Jul 26	Hymn Sing Sunday

➤ A Brief Look Ahead

Aug 2	Backpack Blessing
Aug 9	Worship in the Park & Potluck
Aug 30	Hymn Sing
Aug 30	Listening Post



BIG DAY TOMORROW, HONEY. I BETTER SET
THE ALARM FOR DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT,

Ongoing Events

- **Men's Breakfast** meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 8:00 am at Village Inn (48th & Van Dorn).
- **Ladies Coffee Talk** meets every Thursday morning at 9:30 am. Join us for coffee and conversation.
- **Lunch After Church** is the third Sunday of each month in the fellowship hall (September – May).
- **Treat & Topics** is the last Sunday of each month in the fellowship hall (September – May).
- **The Church Council** meets on the second Monday of every month at 7:00 pm at the church and via Zoom.

Music Ministry

- **The Joyful Noise Bell Choir** is on summer break. The regular schedule will resume in September.
- **The Chancel Choir** is on summer break. The regular schedule will resume in September.

Give Online



Scan to learn
more about us!



Wishing you and yours a safe
and joyful 250th Independence
Day celebration!



Come lift your voices with us this summer! Instead of our regular worship service, we'll be coming together for a Hymn Sing - a joyful time of music, community, and praise. Hymn Sing Sundays are planned for the last Sunday of the month (July 26 and August 30). These special services will be crafted around various hymns and their stories.

This is a great opportunity to sing from the heart and celebrate the goodness of God through music. Bring a friend, bring your family, and come ready to fill the sanctuary with joyful voices of praise and thanksgiving! We can't wait to see you there!

🎵 "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth." – Psalm 96:1

BRANCHING OUT

Branching Out for July is toilet paper ~ one roll or a super-large bundle. All donations will go to Connection Point where there is always a need! Let's collect lots of TP!

Thank you for all the donations to We Can Do This. Your giving will make a difference for our kids and the community. The items on the table were our donations.



Join Us For a Sundae on a Sunday!

- A VARIETY OF ICE CREAM & TOPPINGS
- ICE CREAM CONES
- BROWNIE SUNDAES
- STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE SUNDAES

You're Invited! Join us for sweet treats following our morning worship service. Everyone is welcome!

Donate Your Old JEANS

Cleaning out your closet? Donate your old jeans for a Christmas Market project!

Do you have old pairs of jeans hiding in the back of your closet that you no longer wear? Crafters are starting to work on some handmade items for the Christmas Market and would appreciate donations of jeans. The condition isn't important, as only parts of the jeans will be used. All sizes will be useful, including children's sizes, and colors other than blue denim are welcome. Just drop them by the office or contact Becky or Gertrud. Thanks!

I am kind Vacation Bible School For Kids Age 4-12

July 25 | 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Lunch Provided

VBS is a convenient, fun, one-day activity-packed day filled with crafts, games, lunch, and more. This year's VBS program is a collaboration between Vine, Bethany Christian Church, and Northeast UCC and will be held at Vine Church. Plan to include Vine VBS as a part of your summer activities. Drop-off begins at 8:45 am.



Registration is open and encouraged!
Use the QR Code to register today!
Registration forms will also be in the
narthex. Registration due by July 20.



Kindness

Supernatural Fruit of the Holy Spirit!

ADULT VBS

This 3-hour, interactive, session will focus on the depth of biblical kindness, moving past superficial politeness into radical, Spirit-led transformation. Do you agree the world needs more kindness? Come and explore how Jesus did it and what kindness looks like today.

Please join me on Saturday morning, July 25th from 9-12. Lunch provided. To attend, please add your name to the signup sheet in the fellowship hall on the volunteer opportunities bulletin board.

Thanks,
Barb Smisek

Save the Date

Save the Date – Sunday, August 9th! Joint Worship in the Park! Bethany Park shelter will be the location for our worship service followed by a potluck picnic. More information will be provided in the August newsletter.

Quarterly Giving Statements

The second quarter Giving Statements will be emailed the first week in July. Please review your statement and report any discrepancies to Sheri in the office. **Thank you for giving generously!**

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Strengthen the Church special offering. We collected \$265. Thank you for your generosity!

Kamp Kaleo Planting Seeds for the Future

We raised \$1,700 for the Kamp Kaleo "sponsor a picnic table." Thank you to everyone who contributed to this special offering.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Happy 250th Independence Day! The church office will be closed on Friday, July 3. The office will also be closed on July 10.

STAR CITY CHORUS

Pastor Steven and Jeremy Duck traveled to New York with the Star City Chorus, the Lincoln, LGBTQIA+ mixed choir. They performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Monday, June 29.

Lincoln First Christian Church **Kamp Kaleo Rummage Sale**

July 31 to August 4 - Preparation
August 6 to August 8 - SALE!!!
August 8 & 9 - pack-up

The Kamp Kaleo Rummage Sale Fundraiser is scheduled for August 6 – 8 at the First Christian Church (430 S. 16th St.) in Lincoln. All proceeds to benefit Kamp Kaleo and its campers.

If you want to donate items, they will accept all kinds of household items in clean, usable condition. They will NOT accept outdated baby equipment, non-digital TVs, computer monitors, clothing, encyclopedias, hymnals, exercise equipment, or heavy furniture.

Donations will be accepted at the church gym:

- Saturday, August 1 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Sunday, August 2, Noon-4:00 pm
- Monday & Tuesday, August 3 & 4 from 9:00 am 4:00 pm
- Evenings arranged by appointment.

They are seeking lots of volunteers. Please reach out to D'Arcy Blosser or Sue Shear, if you are able to help!

Let's support Kamp Kaleo and shop for treasures or volunteer to help with the sale. Share the sale dates with your friends, families and neighbors!



Wednesday, July 15 | 7:00 pm

Join us for a night of music, stories, and laughter for the whole family!

Please plan to attend this special event for the whole family! The concerts of Brent and his pal, Sam, are filled with uplifting music, stories, humor, and puppetry. With a variety of creative offerings, his presentations are intergenerational - connecting with all ages, from children to seniors! Brent's concert is sure to delight audiences of all ages!

For over twenty-five years, Brent & Sam have travelled the country sharing their faith in heartfelt and entertaining ways. Brent is also a children's book author and illustrator.

Admission is free, with a goodwill offering. Find out more: www.brentvernon.com.





Leapin' Lizards! Everyone is invited to join us for the production of the classic Broadway musical, *Annie* at the Pinewood Bowl on Friday, July 10. Gates open at 5:30 pm and the show starts at 7:30 pm.

Tickets are \$18 for adults in advance or \$20 at the gate. You may purchase tickets online or at the customer service counter of any Lincoln Russ's Market.

Please bring a lawn chair and/or blanket and either bring a sack dinner or plan to eat from one of the vendors at the park.

After you purchase your ticket, please add your name to the attendee sheet in the fellowship hall on the volunteer opportunities bulletin board, so we can plan accordingly and try to save spots to sit as a group!



Kamp Kaleo Adult Camps

Experience camp life as an adult. Kamp Kaleo offers something for everyone. This year Kaleo is introducing a men's retreat and a women's retreat. Registration is open on their website.

See bulletin boards for additional information or visit kampkaleo.com.

QUILT KAMP - AUG 13-16
WOMEN'S RETREAT - AUG 28-30
CULINARY KAMP - SEPT 10-13
WORK IN PROGRESS KAMP - SEPT 10-13
MEN'S RETREAT - OCT 23-25



The response to the Shred Vault fundraiser has been great. Thank you to all who have already used the service to clear unneeded documents from your homes.

One question you might have: What actually happens to the documents after I drop them off?

You gather your sensitive documents — anything with your name, account numbers, Social Security information, medical history, or financial details. You fill Shred Vault bags with those documents and bring them to any Shred Vault kiosk in our area. From there, Shred Vault handles everything. The documents are shredded, certified, and documented. You receive a Certificate of Destruction, and every bag is recycled.

It takes about five minutes, and no appointment is needed. And here is what it does for Vine: Shred Vault contributes \$5 to our congregation for every bag you deposit. Download their app to make your deposit, and they contribute \$5 more. That's up to \$10 for a single Shred Vault Bag deposit.

If you have questions we haven't answered, feel free to reach out. If you're ready to get started, pick up a bag from Vine and find the kiosk nearest to you: shredvault.com/shred-vault-locations

In addition, ask your neighbors, friends and family if they could use this service, and give them an envelope of bags, too! **Remember, this fundraising promotion ends July 19th.**

Rick Heiliger and Joan Humphrey

Scripture Reader NEEDED

We are looking for a volunteer to read the Sunday Scripture on Sunday, July 12. Please consider bringing the Word to life. The signup sheet is in the fellowship hall on the volunteer opportunities board or let Sheri know.

Birthdays and Anniversary Celebration

Barry & Karen Hemmerling invite you to celebrate their 75th birthdays and their 55th wedding anniversary on Saturday, July 25th from 3:00-6:00 pm at the Salt Mine City Brewing Company (801 R St. #100). They have requested no cards or gifts; only your presence.



Jesus

paid for our sins not only in part but in full.

So if the Son sets you free,
you will be free indeed.

John 8:36

Vine Congregational UCC Foundation

The Vine Congregational UCC Foundation Board held their quarterly meeting April 27, 2026, and shared the following:

- Approved newly revised Expectations, Duties, and Responsibilities for Board Members and Officers
- Elected officers for 2026
 - President – Bill Huenemann
 - Vice President – Barry Hemmerling
 - Secretary – Jon Rhem
 - Treasurer – Mark Jeter
- Continued our discussion on ideas for supporting the financial needs of Vine Church. Set a goal to formalize ideas at the next board meeting.

Thanks.

Bill Huenemann, President

Art Gallery Display

Andy Cruz Acosta's art was on display at the Clements Noyes Art Gallery & Studios during the month of June. Congratulations to Andy on his first art show.



UCC Devotional

So Brave, by Jennifer Ruth Lynn Garrison

What are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. - Psalm 8:4-5 (NRSV)

Over the winter, not late but already dusk, I took my six-year-old grandson to the river near our house. He does not love the dark, but he does love to throw rocks into the water, so he chose the joy of the activity over the fear of the night.

As he flung one after another, he congratulated himself. "Good one!" he said. "You're so brave!" Finally, the stars started to blink to life, our sign that it really was truly dark, and we held hands on the way back to our car.

Several months later, I had the honor of baptizing a lively three-year-old. We blessed the water together, then I put three small handfuls of water on his head.

"In the name of the Father," I said. "Oh!" he reacted.

"And the Son," I said. "It's wet!" he said.

"And the Holy Spirit," I said. "So brave!" he declared, before holding my hand down the aisle and doling out high fives all around.

We give up saying it aloud, don't we grownups?

But listen. It really does help. Say it next time you are trying to throw joy into the dark or are surprised by the unexpected. Say it out right now and see how it changes whatever you are doing next.

After all, you are practically almost an angel. You just need to be reminded, sometimes by your own sweet, small voice. And then, holding hands, you are ready to head back out into the world.

Prayer: I am brave. So brave. So very very very brave. Amen.

Bible Quiz

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of God's people as seeking and achieving freedom. The freedom we Americans have to worship without government restriction has deep roots in our Judeo-Christian heritage.

Which Bible verse about freedom is inscribed on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia?

- A. "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10, KJV).
- B. "And ye ... had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbor" (Jeremiah 34:15, KJV).
- C. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Galatians 5:1, KJV).
- D. "As free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16, KJV).

Answer: A

