

News from the Vine

May 2026



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Lincoln, NE 68506

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💻 www.vineucc.org

SUNDAY

10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Fellowship Hour

SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30 am (all ages)
(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

Jesus repeated his greeting, "Peace to you!" And he told them, "Just as the Father has sent me, I'm now sending you." John 20:21 (The Passion Translation)

As we begin the month of May, there are two weeks of Easter Tide left before we move into the part of the year known as "common time". This year's Easter Tide (the resurrection stories) has taken on a new perspective for me, mostly because of the tragedy that has occurred in the Paul Allen family. What has taken on new meaning are the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples that first evening of the resurrection, "Peace to you!" and "I'm now sending you."

While Paul and I were back in Washington state to be with his family to mourn the unexpected death of his granddaughter, Zoe, I began thinking: What does "peace" mean or even look like during times of tragedy or great stress? As I visited with Paul's daughter Megan and son-in-law Kevin, I learned of how they have been supported in very unexpected ways that have helped them come to grips with the reality of their daughter Zoe's death.

They spoke of how known and unknown friends of Zoe have continually come forward, sharing their love and honoring Zoe's life through a variety of ways. In these conversations, I had the revelation of what Jesus is saying to us in these words, "Peace to you." Zoe was a person who practiced the unconditional love found in Christ to everyone she encountered. And through this lifestyle

shined a light of hope and love that deeply touched many people's lives. In turn, Megan and Kevin have been given unconditional support providing them with love as they are grieving, and a renewed hope that Zoe's life will continue on in the many lives that she has touched.

This is what Christ was demonstrating on that first evening. He showed up to comfort those who deeply felt the pain of Jesus' death. In the action of showing up to comfort them came an assurance that life continues beyond those darkest hours, no matter how uncertain the future looked like. The "peace" is found in the assurance that Jesus lives in each of them. That in their lives, they will be able to carry on the love and hope that Jesus taught and lived while among them.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, his commission to us is, "I now send you." We are the vessels of a risen Christ, commissioned to give that same "peace" to all that we meet. By living a life of unconditional love, we provide the greatest expression of a living Christ. As that expression, may we continue to be that "peace" by showing up for one another. Amen

Pastor Steven

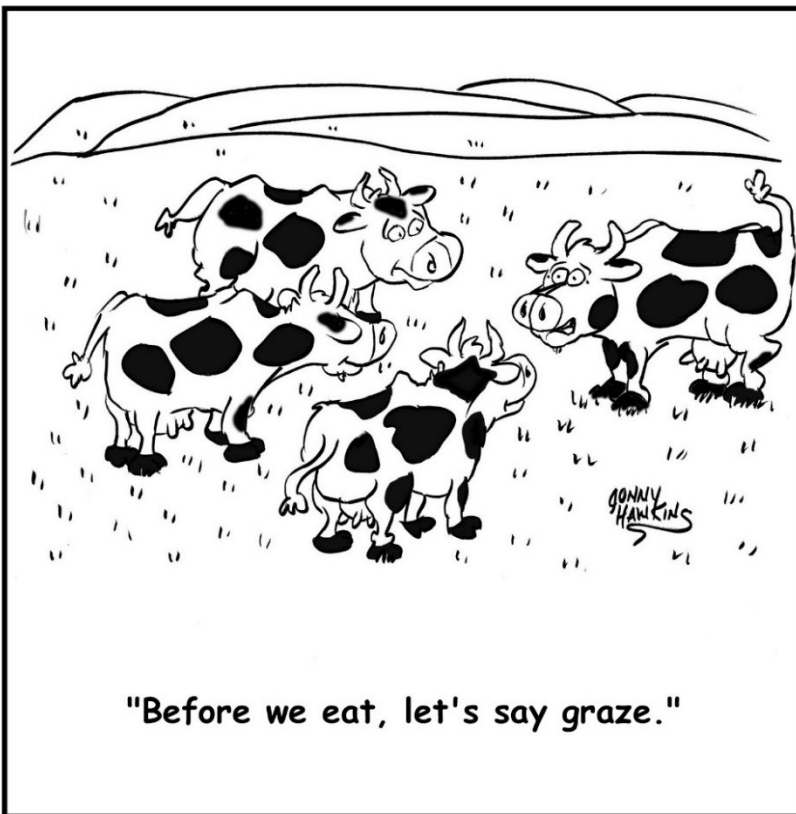
Mark Your Calendar

➤ Month at a Glance

- May 2 Bring Plant Sale Items 10:00 – 2:00
- May 3 Plant & Bake Sale
- May 10 Graduation Sunday
- May 11 Council Meeting
- May 17 Celebration Sunday
- May 17 Adventure Mini-Golf Youth Group Fundraiser
- May 19 Men's Breakfast
- May 24 Pentecost Sunday
- May 24 Strengthen the Church Offering
- May 25 Memorial Day
- May 31 First Listening Post

➤ A Brief Look Ahead

Jun 12 – 13 Star City Pride Festival



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 through April).
- **Treat & Topics** is the last Sunday of each month in the fellowship hall.
- **The Church Council** meets on the second Monday of every month at 7:00 pm at the church and via Zoom.

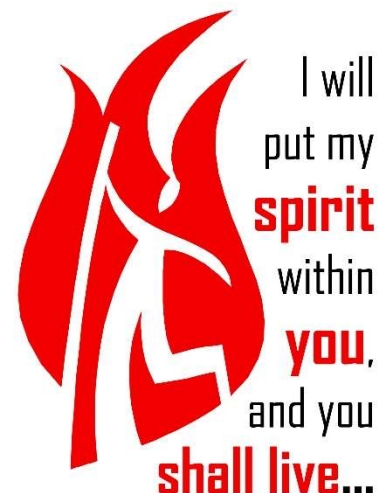
Music Ministry

- **The Joyful Noise Bell Choir** practices every Wednesday evening at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall.
- **The Chancel Choir** practices every Sunday morning at 9:15 am in the sanctuary.

Give Online



Scan to learn more about us!





Sunday, May 17 | 10:30 am

Join Us For Our Annual Year-End Celebration!!

Come celebrate the conclusion of another vibrant program year and journey into summer with worship, music, fellowship, and desserts! Together, we will rejoice in the blessings of the past year and celebrate the children, youth, and adult learning ministries, the music ministry, and all of our volunteers.



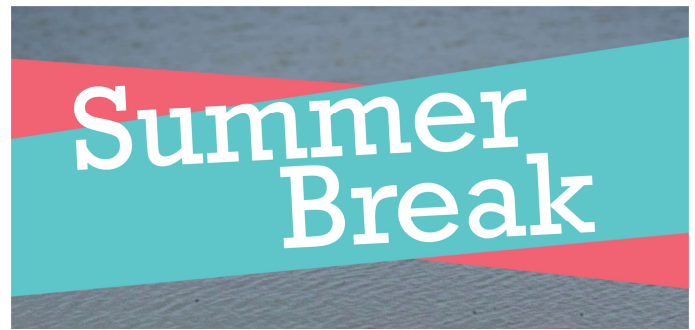
PENTECOST SUNDAY

Pentecost is a time of renewal and revival! Please join us on Sunday, May 24 as we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church! Come experience the fire and power! You are invited to wear red clothing, scarves, or accessories to commemorate the tongues of fire and the burning love poured out on the church. Let's fill the pews with red!

We Can Do This & Vine

Vine will be providing We Can Do This with storage space for non-perishable food items. This organization, one of the recipients of our local mission giving, needs additional storage and requested our help. They will provide shelves to create an organized space for their inventory in a portion of the lower-level conference room.

Providing space for shelf-stable goods to help feed children furthers Vine's outreach efforts and also connects us with the latest initiative of Justice in Action to address the problem of food insecurity.



Summer marks the conclusion of the 2025-2026 church program year. During the summer months, the learning and music ministry take a summer break to allow the leaders, participants, and students time to unplug, get away, and recharge.

We hope that the summer break will bring a renewed vigor and excitement when we resume in the fall. We will resume these ministries on the Sunday after Labor Day, September 13.

JOYFUL NOISE *Bell Choir*

The Joyful Noise Bell Choir rehearses in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 pm. Our final rehearsal before summer break is May 13, and our last performance is May 17. We are always excited to welcome more members to our choir--no experience is necessary! Thank you to our current bells members for a fun and successful year, and we hope to see you again in the fall! We will start rehearsals again on September 2!

CHANCEL CHOIR

The Chancel choir will perform on Sunday, May 3 and the last rehearsal and performance before summer break is on May 17. A huge thank you to the choir members for their dedication over the past year and for stepping up to ensure that the music continued, working together in perfect harmony.

GRADUATION SUNDAY



Graduation Sunday: Faith for the Road Ahead

Join us on Sunday, May 10, as we recognize our 2026 graduates and pray for God's guidance in the seasons ahead. If your graduate will be attending this special service, please let the church office know by Sunday, May 3 so we may plan accordingly.

Listening Posts

FROM THE MODERATOR

At the congregational meetings in November 2025 and February 2026, the moderator and treasurer shared detailed information on church finances and encouraged discussion on revenue and expenses.

At their April meeting, the Council scheduled two new opportunities to continue these congregational discussions and information sessions, on the 5th Sunday in May and August. These Listening Posts will review the current finances and address any questions from participants, as well as encourage all of us to consider options for increasing church revenue.

I hope you will be able to attend these Fifth Sunday Finance Listening Posts on May 31 and August 30. Your participation and input are important.

Joan Humphrey, Moderator



Spring weather has come and gone a few times already this year, but at last it is time to share plants and pastries at our annual plant and bake sale! We hope you will have things to bring, from kitchens, yards, or garages.

On Sunday, May 3, in Fellowship Hall immediately after worship, we'll have plant starts and a variety of divided perennials (hostas, ornamental grasses, sedum, etc.) as well as a good supply of a variety of house plants. Also welcome are lawn- or garden-related décor, tools, and supplies for which you no longer have a use.

If your preferred area of contribution is in the kitchen, then please consider bringing things for the bake sale. Bring your cookies, bars, cake, pie, bread, or whatever is your specialty packed or wrapped, ready for sale.

Bring your donations on Saturday, May 2, between 10:00 and 2:00 pm, or on Sunday morning before worship. Invite your friends and neighbors to dodge the marathoners, join us for Sunday morning worship and stay to shop for plants and a tasty treat to take home!

Joan Humphrey and Jean Jordan and collaborators

Welcome New Members!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members, Karen DeVries and Greg Wiltshire. Be sure to introduce yourself and make them feel at home. It is such a joy to see new members join the Vine family. Welcome to Vine!





Planting Seeds for the Future

Kamp Kaleo has set a goal to raise \$75,000 to build a new playground and gathering spaces, with the goal of completing it all by next spring. The most immediate part of the project is to raise money now for 10 new picnic tables, which would be installed for use during this year's camping season.

The tables are \$1,200 each, and the Vine Council encourages us to raise the money for one of them. Vine will collect donations through May. Please make checks payable to Vine Church with "Kamp Table" in the memo line. Vine will generate one check for the Kamp. Together, we can bring this vision to reality!



Youth in 5-12 grade are invited to join us for youth group.

Crafty Wednesday - May 6

We will meet at the church from 6:15-7:15 pm to make friendship bracelets for our summer mission trip!

Animal Shelter Tour - May 27

Meet at the capital Human Society Piloch Adoption Center 6500 S 70th St. at 5:50 pm for a tour and to learn how we can volunteer or help their mission. We will be done by 7 pm.

Family Fun @ Mini Golf Fundraiser - May 17

Gather your family and/or friends and head over to Adventure Golf between 1:00 - 5:00 pm on Sunday, May 17. Tell them you are there to support Vine Youth and we will get a portion of the proceeds. The fun will be on par!

Thanks,
Karen



SENT FORTH IN

LOVE

The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your gifts will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. The offering is divided, with 50% staying regionally within our conference and 50% supporting the National Ministries.

This special offering will take place on Sunday, May 24. Please make checks payable to Vine Church with "Strengthen the Church" in the memo line. Special offering envelopes are in the narthex. You may also give online at vinechurch.org/giving or scan the QR code in the weekly bulletin or on the bulletin boards. Donations can be made any time during May.

WALKING STICKS

On Saturday, April 18, the youth group helped George decorate walking sticks that will be donated to Kamp Kaleo.



MISSION Distributions

We disbursed nearly \$7,000 for the first quarter mission distributions! Your generosity provides essential funding for local, regional, and national ministries that spread love and justice. Thank you for your support.

- O.C.W.M. \$5,286.09
 - CUE Mid America Seminaries \$422.89
 - One Great Hour of Sharing \$1,208.00
- TOTAL: \$6,916.98**

The best gifts for spring's special moments!



This spring, as you celebrate teachers, grads, moms, dads, and more – earn for Vine by shopping with SCRIP gift cards. Stop by the SCRIP sales table any Sunday morning to continue your support for this program!



Scripture Reader

NEEDED

A Scripture reader is needed for June 14. Please consider sharing the word of God with the congregation. The signup sheet is in the fellowship hall on the volunteer opportunities board.

BRANCHING OUT

We Can Do This will be our Branching Out focus for May. We voted recently to include this organization in our Vine mission budget. Their focus is feeding kids on weekends and in the summer when there is no school lunch available. One of the ways they provide food for kids is to stock four food pantries that are available to kids. We will be helping provide simple lunch items that children can prepare themselves. Grab a shopping list from our collection basket to help you buy and donate their requested items only.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Monday, May 8 and May 22 through May 26.

LINCOLN MARATHON

The 49th Annual Lincoln Marathon is on Sunday, May 3. You may need to adjust your route to church. For detailed information about the course and timing, please visit www.lincolnmarathon.org.

Need a Vine Church T-shirt?

Shirts are forest green with tan logo. The price is \$15 per shirt, any size. Please make checks payable to Vine with "T-Shirt" in the memo. Contact the church office for available sizes.

Save the Date

Lincoln's Star City Pride Festival and parade is on Friday, June 12 and Saturday, June 13. Vine is hosting a booth, enabling us to connect with fellow Lincolnites and share information about Vine Church and what it means to be an Open and Affirming congregation.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Congratulations Confirmands!!



Handbells

Our Sunday school children played the handbells on Sunday, April 19.



Easter Sunday



UCC Devotional

Where We Will Be, Rachel Hackenberg

Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O river, that you turn back? O mountains, that you skip like rams? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Almighty, who melts rocks into water. - Psalm 114:5-8 (adapted)

Of the many wonders of Artemis II's mission, one was its flight path toward the moon. In order to circle the moon successfully, Artemis II had to chart a course toward where the moon wasn't. It had to set its trajectory toward an empty point in space, trusting that the moon in its ever-shifting orbit would arrive at that point precisely when Artemis II arrived for its lunar flyby.

Very much like passing a soccer ball toward an empty space on the field, confidently setting the ball on its path toward no one, trusting your teammate to run into the open space where the ball is going.

Or like jumping into a seat on the spinning teacup ride at the amusement park ... while the whole ride is in motion ... while each teacup spins at a unique pace. (Kids, don't try this at home.)

What if the teacup ride malfunctions? What if your teammate gets tackled on their run? What if a solar flare short-circuits the space vessel?

What if the seas flee? What if the mountains leap? What if the rocks melt?

We trust patterns that predict where things are going—the moon, the tides, the soccer ball, even the people around us—but a pattern isn't a certainty. Where we think we'll end up based on our daily patterns isn't likely to be where we'll actually end up.

For all the comfort I find in trusting that God meets me where I am and as I am in the now, I am even more reassured by the knowledge that God will also meet me where I will be—even though I don't yet know where or when or how I will be.

Prayer: Christ be beside me, above me, and within me. Christ be beyond me, in whatever may be, in the wonder of not yet.

Bible Quiz

Which respected Pharisee and teacher of the law, said that if the gospel truly comes from God, no one will be able to stop it spreading?

- A. Paul
- B. Nicodemus
- C. Theudas
- D. Gamaliel

Answer: D (Acts 5:38-39)

Graduation PARTIES

You are invited to attend the following graduation parties:



Khloe Cuttlers open house celebration on Friday, May 8 from 5:00 – 8:00 pm at the Raymond Fire Station (4210 W. Raymond Rd).



Zion Pearson open house celebration on Saturday, May 16 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm at Vine Church in the fellowship hall.



Mother's Day: A Legacy of Love

Mother's Day invites us to honor mothers, mother-figures, and all women who have nurtured, guided and loved us. We celebrate not perfection, but faithfulness shown in countless quiet moments. May we give thanks for the love that shapes hearts and points us toward God's grace.