

News from the Vine

November 2026

Vine Congregational United Church of Christ

1800 Twin Ridge Road
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

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." – Colossians 3:17

Here we are already at the beginning of November! I bet you are wondering, "Where has the time gone, it seems like just last week we were…" November, the month that we begin financial planning for next year's church budget. November, the month that we begin to pull out the winter clothes. November, the month that we realize that Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away!

November is also a time when we can slow down a bit and catch our breath before the rush of holiday activities. As the daylight grows shorter and the evening shadows lengthen, November can also be a time for reflection. In these reflections we can look at how we have met the challenges that the year has brought to us. How have these challenges changed us? We can reflect on what helped keep us centered throughout the year. Was it the friendships we have? Or did we find a centering through certain spiritual exercises that we do throughout the year? It can also be a time to reflect on those we love and on those we may have had to say, "good-bye" to. It is a time to reaffirm that which gives us our hope as we look to the coming year.

This is the month that we talk a lot about the word "gratitude." When we think about gratitude, we often think about what we have received. Yet, gratitude can also be found in giving. Scripture tells us that in all things we are involved in, we should do it in the mindset of Jesus and give thanks to God. We so easily give thanks to God for the blessings that we receive, but how often do we give thanks to God for the opportunities that we have in giving?

The greatest gifts that we can receive come in giving when the opportunity presents itself. Whether it is in giving of our monies, the sharing of our talents, or the time that we give to someone, these are all activities that we should do with the mindset that God is also involved.

So, come this Thanksgiving dinner, when you are thanking God for the many blessings that you have received, don't forget to thank God for what you have done or given in Jesus' name, for gratitude is found in receiving and in giving. Amen

Pastor Steven



Mark Your Calendar

➢ Month at a Glance

Nov 1	Pledge Sunday
Nov 1	Daylight Saving Time Ends
Nov 1	Raising Cane's Dine Out – Youth Fundraiser
Nov 7	Health Fair
Nov 7	Youth Group – Team Building Camp
Nov 8	All Saints Day Worship Service
Nov 9	Council Meeting
Nov 11	Youth Group – Wacky Wednesday
Nov 15	Annual Election and Provisional Budget Meeting
Nov 17	Men's Breakfast
Nov 20	Transgender Day of Remembrance Prayer Vigil
Nov 22	Thanksgiving Potluck
Nov 24	Hanging of the Greens
Nov 29	Season of Advent Begins

➢ A Brief Look Ahead

Dec 4-5	Christmas Market
Dec 13	Children's Christmas Program
Dec 17	Blue Christmas Service
Dec 20	Christmas Caroling
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Service
Dec 27	Christmas Fund Special Offering



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** meets every Wednesday evening at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall for practice.
- **The Chancel Choir** meets every Sunday at 9:15 am in the sanctuary for practice.

Give Online

Scan to learn more about us!

Connect with us:



Join us for worship as we celebrate the conclusion of our stewardship campaign and offer our pledges for 2027.

Join us for worship on Sunday, November 1. Together, we give thanks for God's abundant blessings and the ways our shared generosity sustains this community.

During our service, we will have a time of dedication to offer our financial and spiritual commitments for the coming year. Everyone will be invited to bring their pledge forms forward during worship. If you are unable to attend, please give your pledge form to the church office.

Your presence and support make a difference!

HANGING of the GREENS

Let us prepare God's house for the light which will come into the world.

Help us prepare the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons! Join us on November 24 at 9:30 am as we decorate the sanctuary and other church spaces. Volunteers of all ages are welcome, and refreshments will be provided.



Sunday, November 8 | 10:30 am
Remembering the Faithful

Join us as we honor and remember the saints who have gone before us. All Saints Sunday honors the impact each life has on another. We will read the names and light a candle in honor of family, friends, and our members who have passed since last November.

You are invited to bring a photograph of deceased loved ones you wish to honor. Please plan to take your photo home after the service.



Advent Is Almost Here: Prepare Your Heart

Advent begins Sunday, November 29. Join us each week for worship, prayer, and reflection as we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming. We will light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love as we await the light of Jesus with renewed expectation.

Let's Dine Out! Eat at Raising Cane's (403 N. 48th) on Sunday, November 1 from 12-4 pm, mention Youth Dine Out or apply code RCFUND96 to online or app orders and 15% of proceeds go to the Youth Mission Trip. No extra steps, no obligation -- just an easy way to support our youth. Thank you for your support!

December 4 and 5, 2026
Friday 4 pm – 8 pm ★ Saturday 9 am - 4 pm

The Vine Christmas Market is our biggest and most successful community event, creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for people to shop for hand-created treasures, enjoy seasonal foods and take in the music and lights of the season.

Vendors will offer unique handcrafted and high-quality wares in a re-imagined European market square. The Vine booths will offer:

- Greenery tabletop arrangements, as well as cut greens to do it yourself, along with an expanded selection of decorative items for inside and porches.
- Candy, cookies, pickles and relish, breads, jam and jellies, and seasonal treats.
- Home soft goods, including table toppers, accessories, and cold-weather gear.
- Holiday decorations and décor.

But the Christmas Market committee can't do it alone – we need your help!

Bring out your favorite recipes and bake some sweet bread (mini loaves work best), bars, cookies or candy. Anything sealed in a jar is also welcome!
Help to package all these creations on Wednesday and Thursday before the sale. We get many compliments on our packaging and displays – you can help us maintain that high standard.

Volunteer to help put together greenery arrangements the week of the sale. All the materials are provided. We assemble the creations in a garage and decorate them in a classroom at church.

If you create with yarn, thread, wood, paper or found materials, we need your creations to sell in the Vine booths. Please bring them to church by Sunday, November 15 to give us time to sort, price and display them. Items that don't sell will be returned to you.

Music is a big part of the holiday season, and we need your talents to present musical interludes during the Market. Put a duet together, play an instrument, participate in a group carol sing – let's have fun with the possibilities! Talk to Barb Smisek.

Be a part of the excitement on Friday and Saturday Dec. 4th and 5th by signing up to take a shift staffing our booths or - new this year - grill and sell brats outside. Meet new people and old friends while helping them find gifts, treats and food. We'll have signup sheets in the Narthex.

Before all this starts, help string lights on the booths after worship on Sunday, Nov. 29. Lunch provided for lighting workers!

Watch for signup sheets and be a part of the process – we need your participation!

For questions and further information please contact your Christmas Market team:
Becky Wright, Joan Humphrey, Phyllis Schuessler, Mona Beatty, Barb Smisek, and Gertrud Finkbeiner.



Sunday, November 22 | 11:30 am

Please join us for our annual Thanksgiving potluck as we gather around the table together to share warm fellowship and give thanks for the abundant blessings of God.

Please bring your favorite holiday side dish, salad, or dessert to share. The signup sheet is in the fellowship hall to coordinate dishes. The turkey, rolls, beverages, and tableware will be provided.

There is always plenty to eat, so invite a friend, or anyone who could use a place to belong, a good meal, or a little extra joy this holiday season!

Host a Sunday Fellowship Hour!

Food, Fellowship, and Fun! We are looking for individuals or families to host our Sunday morning fellowship hour in November. Hosts provide a light snack (finger foods that can be easily eaten off a plate or napkin while standing). It's a fun and simple way to serve. The signup sheet is in the fellowship hall on the volunteer opportunities board.

Congratulations on Our 5-for-5 in 2025!

Congratulations to us for being a "5 for 5" congregation! We support all 5 of the UCC's denominational offerings and were recognized with a certificate at the JAM (Joint Annual Meeting) in September!



Friday, November 20 | 7:00 pm

A Gathering in memory of those lost and victimized by Anti-Trans Violence.

You are invited to share the news of this special service of remembrance with friends and families who have LGBTQ+ members. We will remember the victims by name and light candles to represent the light that they once shared.

Vine Christmas Market Volunteer Opportunities How to help?

Monday, November 23

Assist and guide the Scouts by bringing up the booth facades at 6:30 pm

First week of December

- String lights on the booths: Nov. 29 after worship
- Cut greens: Monday, Nov. 30
- Finish greenery arrangements (add decorations to containers of greenery): Tues. – Thurs. anytime
- Package for the sweet shoppe, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 11:00-2:00 & 2:00-5:00
- Package for the bakery, Thursday, Dec. 3, 11:00-2:00 & 2:00-5:00
- Kitchen prep: Friday, Dec. 4, all morning

During the event hours

- Kitchen service (taking orders, plating food)
- *New*: Staff the grilling station preparing traditional German brats in the parking lot
- Handle sales and customer service in church booths
- Musical performances ongoing during event hours

Congregational Meeting

Provisional Budget & Elections Meeting
Sunday, November 15

The meeting will be held in the fellowship hall immediately following the worship service.

Please make every effort to join your fellow members of Vine for this important congregational meeting. By being present and engaged, you contribute to the growth and well-being of the congregation, and you play a vital role in shaping the future of your church.

The minutes of the last meeting, the proposed 2027 budget for expenses and mission, and the ballot for officer elections will be emailed prior to the meeting. We will not have hard copies of documents at the meeting. If you prefer hard copies, please print prior to attending the meeting or you may a contact the church office for copies.

See Page 12 for the Official Call and details.

Pastor's Vacation

Pastor Steven will be out of the office from November 11 through November 17. If you need a pastoral visit during this time, please let the church office know.

KAMP KALEO

$100,000 Year-End Kampaign

Kamp Kaleo has set a goal to raise $100,000 by the end of 2026 to help fund upkeep of the beautiful camp site and essential camp programs.

Let's help them meet their goal of raising $100,000 for the fourth year in a row. Vine will collect donations through December 20. Please make checks payable to Vine Church with "Kamp" in the memo line. Vine will generate one check for the Kamp.

Thank you for your continued support of Kamp Kaleo.

The **Lincoln Good Life Halfsy Marathon** is Sunday, November 8, so you may need to plan your drive to church accordingly. You can check the marathon course and timing at The Course - Good Life Halfsy.

The church office will be closed on Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 in observation of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Fall Back – Time Change Reminder
Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday, November 1. Turn your clocks back one hour before bed on Saturday night and enjoy that extra hour of rest!



Joyful Noise Bell Choir will not have practice on Wednesday, November 25 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Practices will resume the following week, on Wednesday, December 2.

Neighbors in Need. During October, we collected $355 for the Neighbors in Need. Thank you to everyone who participated! Your generous donations will appear on your giving statement.

There will be no **Treats and Topics** during the month of November.



Welcome New Members!

We would like to take a moment to extend a warm welcome to our newest member, Janet Maurer. Be sure to introduce yourself if you have not done so already. It is such a joy to see new members join the Vine family. Welcome to Vine!

NEW CHOIR DIRECTOR

We are happy to announce that Christine Valish is our new Choir Director. Please join us in welcoming Christine. If you haven't yet met Christine, please introduce yourself!

The chancel choir is already enjoying getting to know Christine who sent an introductory email to the choir members before our first rehearsal together, and has given permission for it to be shared with all:



While I had the pleasure to meet a few of you at the October 4th service, here's just a little about me... Hello! I am the current vocal music teacher at Culler Middle School here in Lincoln. This year will be my 17th year in education, having done all things from teaching mostly high school choral music, accompanying on piano, directing show choir bands and musicals, to teaching a drumline on the south side of Chicago. While I've moved around a bit over the past 20 years, I grew up in Schuyler, NE.

MISSION Distributions

Through the generosity of our congregation, we collected and disbursed nearly $3,000 for the third quarter mission disbursement. Our gifts to these important causes can be felt locally, nationally, and worldwide. Thank you for your ongoing support.

• O.C.W.M.	$ 2,742.03
• CUE Mid America Seminaries	$ 219.36
	$2,961.39

From the MODERATOR

At our October meeting, Council members reviewed the first draft of the 2027 expense budget in preparation for the annual budget and elections meeting on Sunday, November 15.

The new disposal is installed in the kitchen. The cost was covered by money from the Shred Vault fundraiser and the Garden Market, and the SCRIP committee volunteered to fund the remaining balance of about $600. Thanks to all who made this possible!

If you have a question or concern, please contact me or a Council member.

Joan Humphrey

Council members: Phyllis Schuessler, Jim King, Gertrud Finkbeiner, Diane Robie, Rick Heiliger, Alex Gross, Karen Hemmerling and Bruce Baker. Cathy Anderson, Church Clerk



Health Fair ~ a Free community event on Saturday, November 7 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm in the fellowship hall. Come and learn about services and resources available to you and your family. See bulletin boards for additional information.

Please invite family, friends and neighbors.

Scrip celebrated 30 years!!!!

On October 4, the Scrip program celebrated 30 years of providing a fundraising opportunity to our congregation by having various vendor gift cards available for purchase.

Here is an example of how it works: we buy a $100 gift card at a 10% discount ($90), sell it the you for the $100 face value; and you use it at the store. The $10 profit is kept in the Scrip account for future needs. The Committee uses the profits for expenses and projects which are not funded in the church's annual budget.

Recap of the information presented during the reception:

Total Scrip Sales	$2,622,844.02
Gross Profit on Sales	$121,266.35
Total Distributions	$76,586.35

80% of the distributions were to the following:

$28,808.17 Renovations: lower level, sanctuary & west side

$11,467.22 Youth: Kamp Kaleo registration fees, fees to attend National Youth Event

$10,439.22 Electronics: TVs, Cameras, Computers

$6,271.40 Repairs: Office furnace, A/C repair, accessible door handles, boiler repair.

$4,947.95 Music: Sheet music purchases, robes, refurbish bells.

It is truly amazing how using the Scrip program accumulates funds for our church. Using gift cards purchased through Scrip for your everyday purchases (i.e., groceries, prescriptions, dining in or take out) and for gift giving for birthdays, graduations, or Christmas, really adds up. We also have access to a wide variety of vendors that we don't keep in stock but can order for you.

To all of you who use the scrip program...THANK YOU! If you haven't yet participated, we encourage you to give it a try. We're in the Fellowship Hall every Sunday and happy to answer your questions.



Notes of THANKS

We would like to thank everyone at Vine for all the cards, calls and real concern over Ivan's and my recent medical issues. Vine is a church family, and this has been proven to us over and over again. Sincere thanks to everyone!

Ivan and Karen Lichty

I would like to thank everyone for their support during this difficult time and remembering Steve. All the cards, texts, and calls were appreciated more than you know.

Jennie Ress

A Clear Winner in the German Brat Taste Test!

You tasted, you voted, and we appreciate it! On October 18, Vine took the German bratwurst taste test to determine the best brat for this year's Christmas Market.

The winner was the Dietz and Watson Bratwurst with twice as many votes as the other contenders.

Thank you for participating in the brat testing - we appreciate your time and palate!!



Got Pecans? Got Walnuts?

Get your fresh pecans and walnuts at Vine! Our annual pecan and walnut sale will start November 22 or sooner, based on delivery dates. The cost is $15 for a 1-pound bag of premium pecan halves and $7 for a 1-pound bag of English walnuts.

Pecans and walnuts are great this time of year for baking, snacking, or giving as holiday gifts! This is your chance to stock up! Pecans & walnuts will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.





Priester's Pecans may be refrigerated or frozen in the bags they are packaged in and will stay fresh in the freezer for up to 2 years.

BRANCHING OUT

Branching Out for November will continue to collect items for Friendship Home through Sunday, November 16. Shopping lists are available on the collection basket in the narthex. If you want to purchase a gift card for gas or groceries, you may shop at the SCRIP table. You may either buy a gift card or donate money to help purchase a group card. Please make checks payable to Vine SCRIP.

The annual Vine mitten tree will be available after Thanksgiving. Hats, gloves/mittens, scarves and warm socks for all ages will decorate the tree. Items may be new or very gently worn.

Christmas Program

This year we will be combining with some of the other churches in the United Youth Program for a Christmas program. The program will be Sunday, December 21 at 4:00 pm at First United Methodist Church.

Most parts will be walk-on roles: participants will arrive that day for a walkthrough and then change into costumes. More details will be shared later. Auditions for the few speaking roles in the program will be held Sunday, November 22, at 1:00 pm in the sanctuary at Vine.

YOUTH GROUP

Serve at People City Mission

There are two opportunities to serve meals at PCM this month. Sunday, November 15 from 11:00 - 1:30 pm and Wednesday, November 18 from 4:30 – 7:00 pm. Please sign up on the signup genius or scan the QR Code if you are interested, because spots are limited.

Wacky Wednesday

Join us on Wednesday, November 11 as we explore gratitude. We will gather at Christ UMC (4530 A Street) at 6:00 pm for dinner (grilled cheese & veggies) and we will help break down tables before our activities. We will be done around 7:15 pm.

CAMP Fontanelle
A Great Plains UNITED METHODIST CAMP

Youth in grades 6–12 are invited to test their teamwork skills on the low ropes course and zipline on Saturday, November 7, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm at Camp Fontanelle, a UMC camp near Fremont.

We will meet at Vine Church at 8:15 am, and travel together for an adventure! Snacks and lunch will be provided. Please come prepared for outdoor activities by dressing appropriately - wear comfortable clothes (and layers for warmth), tennis shoes, and bring a water bottle. Pre-registration and a permission slip are required, so be sure to sign up.

Scan the QR Code to register.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.
Psalm 136:1, NIV

Looking to the future for Vine Church and the Nebraska Conference

How does Vine Church fit into Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)
Think of our Vine home as similar to our personal home. We spend time and money caring for both. However, our two homes are not isolated islands; each is part of a wider whole. Imagine concentric circles. Our personal home is part of a city, county, state, and nation; our Vine home is part of the Heartland Association (southeastern Nebraska), the Nebraska Conference, the Tri-Conference Ministries (TCM), and the national United Church of Christ (UCC).

Both homes have financial obligations to those larger, concentric circles—city, county, state, and federal for our personal home and association, conference, TCM, and national UCC for Vine. Individual churches voluntarily send money to the Nebraska Conference, which in turn sends money to TCM and the national UCC so that they can function. A major difference between our two homes is that we have no choice in funding the concentric circles of our personal homes; we are taxed by law to fund them. Our church home chooses to send money to its wider circles. Even though we covenant (an ethical and moral obligation, not legal) with those wider circles, we can choose how much to fund them or to not fund them at all. Therein lies the challenge.

What is the Tri-Conference Ministries (TCM)?
Nine years ago, the Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota conferences decided to consolidate office personnel and administrative functions to reduce costs for all three conferences. That agreement resulted in the Tri-Conference Ministries (TCM), with a single office in Des Moines, Iowa.

The Financial Challenge for the Nebraska Conference under TCM
For many understandable reasons, funding across Nebraska for Our Church's Wide Mission (OCWM) has declined in recent years. The Nebraska Conference, however, is assessed a specific amount to support the TCM, regardless of how much or how little money it receives. To fulfill its obligation to TCM, the Nebraska Conference has taken significant amounts of money from its reserves. Additionally, the original TCM agreement called for the Nebraska Conference to have one, full-time Associate Conference Minister and to conduct a periodic review. Neither has happened.

What is Tri-Conference Ministries (TCM) Task Force
Earlier this year TCM Conference Minister Rev. Roberto Ochoa initiated a TCM Task Force consisting of 21 members, seven from each of the three conferences. I volunteered to be on that TCM Task Force. Initially, we were to spend two years studying the current TCM situation and envisioning a different future.

However, the Nebraska Conference Board of Directors (including Vine's Rev. Steven Mitchell and Sue Shear) concluded that the present financial situation could not wait two years to be amended. The Board drafted an urgent Resolution directing the Nebraska members of the TCM Task Force to envision a future specifically for the Nebraska Conference and to report back to the Board by February 28, 2027. That Resolution was presented at the Nebraska Conference Annual Meeting in Sioux Falls, SD, on September 19, 2026—Vine's Jim King and Rick Heiliger were our delegates. The Resolution passed.

Vine Church and the Nebraska Conference depend on each other.
It is vital for Vine Church to have a stable and effective Nebraska Conference to assist us in the search and call process for new pastors, in resolving conflicts, and with ongoing pastoral care. It is vital for the Nebraska Conference to have Vine's support through our OCWM contributions. I will update you as I learn more. Questions? Comments? Please let me know.

Thanks,
Bruce Baker
TCM Task Force Member

Pet Blessing

Many participated in the annual pet blessing on Sunday, October 11. The celebration was met with enthusiastic pet parents excited to have their animal companions participate in the beloved tradition.








Vine Connect

One of the Vine Connect groups met for coffee, cake, and conversation. They have planned another gathering for next month. If you want to join Vine Connect, please contact the church office.



Pizza Boxing

Thank you soooo much to everyone who has joined the Pizza Boxing Party in October. This month the team included: Monica and Jon Wright, Megan and Thad Huenemann, Becky Wright, Sherry Huenemann, Kathy Bennetch, Mary Higgins and Damon Scaggs, and Karen Bratton. This month we earned an additional $3,200 (the last home game in October is on Oct. 31, so I am projecting). Each week we box between 7,000 and 8,500 pieces of pizza, so by October 31 we will have boxed an estimated 40,500 pieces of pizza and raised $6,700 for the church.

The last home game of the season is Nov. 21 if you want to join us and then watch some of the Ohio State game.

Thanks, Karen Bratton



Official Call to the November 15, 2026, Congregational Meeting

Provisional Budget Meeting and Election

All voting members of Vine Congregational United Church of Christ are hereby called to the Annual Provisional Budget Meeting and Election at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the worship service on Sunday, November 15, 2026, to consider and act upon the agenda items below. If you regularly receive email communication from Vine Church, you will receive a Zoom meeting invitation via email prior to the meeting and are welcome to attend using Zoom.

1. Approval of minutes of the February 15, 2026, congregational meeting
2. Election of officers, Council members, and delegates for 2027
3. Provisional approval of the 2027 Expense Budget
4. Provisional approval of the 2027 Missions Budget
5. Other business appropriate to come before the meeting