



John Omerod,
Pastor



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THE PARISH VISITOR AUGUST 2026

From the desk of Pastor John

August seems to be vacant for holidays. If I say January, you will respond: New Year's Day and Martin Luther King Day. February draws a quick: Valentine's Day. Skipping ahead, July is automatically associated with July 4, and the continuing wondrous celebration of the 250th year of our nation. September brings Labor Day.

October: Halloween. November: family dinners over turkey and pie. December: Christmas Day, the birth of hope. Few people associate August with any major holiday, but if you take a closer look, you will find that August 6 is marked on many calendars as the Hiroshima Day of Remembrance. Other holidays, for the most part, are joyous. August 6 is not. It is a reminder of atomic bombings on the other side of the world we would rather forget: the leveling of Hiroshima (and Nagasaki) in 1945 and the human cost of nuclear weapons. It is a day of mourning, reflection, and a call to peace in our time. A call to peace is evident in Isaiah 55:1-5 with its themes of restoration, grace, and divine invitation.

Restoration: Isaiah provides the vision of abundant water, milk, and wine that point to renewal and joy. For Hiroshima, they can be symbols for the restoration of life, hope, and dignity.

Grace: Isaiah assures us that "you will not be charged" for gifts of life and joy. Grace is free. The verses are reminders that peace and hope aren't earned, but are offered freely.

Divine invitation: Isaiah calls all who are thirsty to come to God's abundance. As much, Hiroshima Day is a call to all humanity to come to a vision of peace, healing, and reconciliation.

God's invitation, grace, and restoration are calls to human compassion, lasting peace, disarmament, and healing. August 6 is dedicated to remembering the human cost of war—any war—and the hopes for peace in 2026 and beyond. God bless you as you strive to take up the active call to make compassion and healing happen.

A letter from Jim Ashby

I shared some news with the congregation on 7/5 and want to let all of you know what I shared. I was always active in my home Church (Spring Valley UCC) growing up where our youth group performed the Church Services a few times a year. When I was 16, I was called by God to enter the ministry. I was excited and met with my guidance councilor who helped me search for Seminaries. Unfortunately, we could not find any Seminary that did not have a prerequisite of a 4-year degree and a 4-year degree was not in the cards for me, so I dismissed the call. I was called several more times over the last 50 years, but always found a reason (or excuse) that I was not ready or the call wasn't real. I think I was driving my wife crazy with my constant "back and forth" finding excuses that convinced me that my call was not actually from God. Finally, she told me, "If God is calling you, then STOP ignoring him and do something about it!" That is all I needed to hear. Knowing that I had the support of my wife and God speaking to me, through her, I made the decision to act on my call. I met with Kathy Lawes on 7/3 and told her of my decision and I have her support and encouragement. I will meet with the Committee on Ministry on 9/3 so they can confirm my call and put me in "Member in Discernment" status.

Once this takes place I can register in a seminary (on line) and pursue my License to serve in the UCC. I look forward to this journey and will keep you informed of my progress along the way. I am sorry this has taken me 50 years to get to this point, but in God's time it is just a blink of the eye.

I want to thank the members of the ECUCC for the encouragement and support you have always shared with me. I ask for your prayers as I embark on my journey.

In Christ,
Jim Ashby

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



- 1 - Austin Planthaber
- 2 - Pastor John
- 4 - Melissa Peters
- 5 - Wade Thompson
- 12 - Lorri Dugan
- 14 - Donita Bartoszek
- 18 - Kolt O'Donnell
- 20 - Joyce Landmeier
- 21 - Ellie O'Donnell
- 21 - Charli O'Donnell
- 21 - Eric Hatfield



ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC SUNDAY, AUGUST 23rd

In the Fellowship Hall
Following the Worship Service

Join us for great food, games and fellowship! As always, we will also have the annual raffle. Items may be brought to the church on Sunday or to the office during the week.

There will a "potluck" lunch. Sign up sheets will be posted soon. The main meal item will be provided. We hope that we will see you there!

Volunteers for August



August 2nd

Worship

10:15am

Communion

Change Up Sundae

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Jim Ashby
Coffee: Volunteers needed

Lock-up: Treasurer
Servers: Moderator, Treasurer, Worship

August 9th

Worship

10:15 am

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Jim Ashby
Coffee: Church Council

Lock-up: Operations

August 16th

Worship at

10:15am

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Jim Ashby
Coffee: Marcia Lee & Kim Augustine

Lock-up: Outreach

ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC ON AUGUST 23rd

August 23rd

Worship

10:15 am

**ANNUAL
CHURCH PICNIC**

**(In the Fellowship
Hall following the
Worship Service)**

**Church Picnic in the Fellowship Hall
following the worship service**



- Worship at 10:15
- Potluck Luncheon
- Raffles and Games



August 30th

Worship at

10:15am

**Collection for
Nick Ashby
Memorial Fund at
Eden Seminary**

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Jim Ashby
Coffee: Volunteers needed

Lock-up: Teaching and Learning

August 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1
2 Worship at 10:15 am <i>Sacrament of Communion</i> <i>Change Up</i>	3	4	5	6	7 Pizza Night at Lifespring in Aurora at 6pm 	8
9 Worship at 10:15 am	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Worship at 10:15 am	17 Executive Council Meeting at 6:30pm	18	19	20	21	22
23 Worship at 10:15 am <i>Church Picnic to follow</i>	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Worship at 10:15 am <i>Collection for Nick Ashby Memorial</i>	31					

THANK YOU TO OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY OF BIG ROCK



HINCKLEY AREA FOOD PANTRY
"NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS"

Thank you to anyone and everyone that is contributing to our current Food Drive. It has always been a huge success! All of the food and money being collected will benefit those in need.

The food pantry is located in Waterman. Their address is:

190 W. Lincoln Highway.

Their mailing address remains: PO Box 463, Hinckley, IL 60520
Phone or Text to 815-286-7275 for more info.

Pizza Night at Lifespring



Pizza Night at Lifespring will be Friday, August 7th at 6p.m. Volunteers are needed to provide salad, desserts and drinks. If you would like to help, please contact Melissa Peters.



ENGLISH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST

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"A FAMILY OF BELIEVERS, A
COMMUNITY OF SERVICE"
2026 VISION STATEMENT

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