

GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
128 East Baltimore Street
Greencastle, PA 17225
(717) 597-2983



Pastor: Rev. Mark Ruzicka
Choir Director: Patty Stepler
Organist: Susan Alsip-Lawson
Ministers: All Those Present

Abiding in Love
Service Prayers for the Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 2, 2021

Acts 8:26-40 Psalm 22:25-31 1 John 4:7-21 John 15:1-8

WE WELCOME GOD'S PRESENCE

WELCOME

VIDEO
Forgetting Love
by Freebridge Media

Welcome to Grace Church where we are God's people.

**United through Jesus Christ on a journey to grow, to share our faith
and serve others in the Greencastle area and the world.**

PRELUDE MUSIC

**Tell Me the Story of Jesus
-Sweney/Becket**

CALL TO WORSHIP

As we gather, may we open our hearts to receive newness of life.
We come with hope for renewal.

In our time of worship, may we be inspired by God's wisdom.
We come seeking to learn and to draw closer to God.

Come, let us worship, as the beloved children of God!

***PRAISE SONG**

**Your Only Son (Lamb of God)
518**



Your Only Son

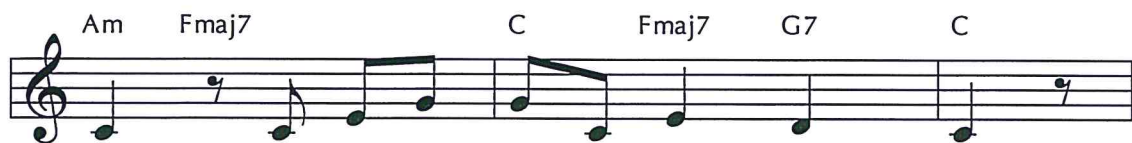
Lamb of God



1 Your on - ly Son, no sin to hide, but you have
 2 Your gift of love, we cru - ci - fied; we laughed and
 3 I was so lost, I should have died, but you have



sent him from your side to walk up - on this guilt - y
 scorned him as he died; the hum - ble King we named a
 brought me to your side to be led by your staff and

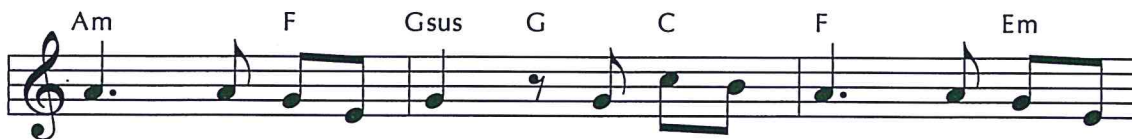


sod, and to be - come the Lamb of God.
 fraud and sac - ri - ficed the Lamb of God.
 rod, and to be called a lamb of God.

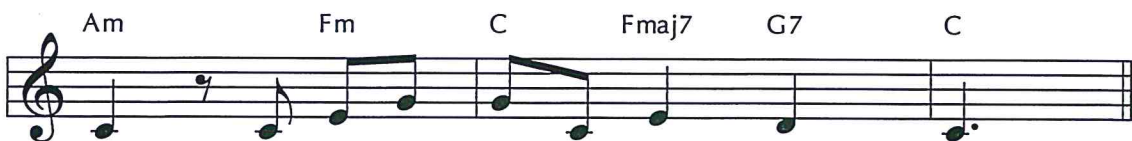
Refrain



O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the



ho - ly Lamb of God! O wash me in his pre - cious



blood, my Je - sus Christ, the Lamb of God.

John the Baptist calls Jesus "the Lamb of God" when he sees Jesus coming for baptism at the Jordan River (John 1:29, 36). Sacrificial lamb references appear in Acts 8:32 (quoting Isaiah 53:7) and 1 Peter 1:19 as well as in twenty-eight triumphant "Lamb" mentions in Revelation.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Cultivating God,
we come as Your children to grow and learn,
because You are our divine vine grower.
As Your branches, we ask You to nourish us for continued growth.
May You transform our hearts and minds
as we hear Your Word, sing Your praises,
and engage in holy dialogue through prayer.
We want to bear good fruit through the vine of Jesus Christ.
In Whose name we pray, Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, giver of life,
We confess the times when we fail to love our neighbors
as we love ourselves.
Abiding God, forgive us when we reject love from others,
and shut down completely.
We also confess the times when we did not tend to our own needs,
and we denied ourselves of Your forgiveness and grace.
Many times we have refused Your invitation to grow closer to You.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

Silence

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might live through him.
In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us
and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
In Jesus, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

WE RECEIVE GOD'S GIFTS

SCRIPTURES

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.)

So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home;
seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."

So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah.

He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"

And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?"

Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to some water;

and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?"

He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away;

the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region,

he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;

everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.

So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear;
for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

We love because he first loved us.

Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars;
for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen,
cannot love God whom they have not seen.

The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

CHOIR ANTHEM

Lord of the Dance -Hart



WE ASK GOD TO OPEN THE BIBLE TO US

WE READ GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

John 15:1-8

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.

He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.

Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me as I abide in you.

Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine,
neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from
me you can do nothing.

Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers;
such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish,
and it will be done for you.

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my
disciples.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

This is the Word of God for the People of God!

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

SHARING OF PRAYERS, CONCERNS, JOYS AND CELEBRATIONS

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND REFLECTION

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever.
Amen.**

WE GIVE BACK TO GOD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Today we are invited to become deeply attached, close,
and loyal as branches who are connected with Jesus Christ, our vine.

In other words, we are to bear fruit with a spirit of love by helping each other, reaching out to each other, and encouraging each other in our daily faith pilgrimage.

Let our offering lift up one another
in God's love that abides in times of hopelessness, brokenness and failure.
Let our offering be a thanksgiving of God's love that abides within us
in times of hopefulness, forgiveness, unity, and peace.
Let us offer ourselves in gratitude and with generosity.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Wonderful Words of Life
-Bliss/Smith

***WE SING A SONG OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD**

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Generous God,
We offer You the fruits of our time, talents and resources
in celebration of all that we have been given.
Loving God, we ask a special blessing on the fruits we have given
back to help meet the needs of Your beloved community.
May the gifts nourish the community to
grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.**

Holy Communion

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

May God be with you.
And also with you.

Bring your hearts to the One who loves you.
We offer them so God may plant fruit-bearing seeds in them.

Lift songs of praise to our God.
**We will join our hearts and voices in proclaiming,
"God has done it!"**

O God, we praise You today for Your Word and Spirit are active in this
world,

calling forth life out of nothingness,
planting seeds in the world and our souls,
pouring clear water onto the earth and the baptismal font.

You showed all of this to us, with delight in Your heart,
but we did not understand what we were seeing,
and so chose death and sin
to be our guides in this life.

Though we loved You last, You loved us first,
sending your prophets to declare all You had done,
but still we continued to abide
in the tangled briars of temptation.

So You sent Jesus to us,
the One who would bear Your fruit
of salvation and be the hope for all Your children.

With those who came before, are here now, and those who will come after
us,

we lift up our praise to You.

Holy, holy, holy are you, God of eunuchs and evangelists.

All creation bears fruit in glorifying you. Hosanna in the highest!

**Blessed is the One who comes to abide in us.
Hosanna in the highest!**

As You revealed to us, Love is your language of holiness.

And Jesus Christ, is the true Vine of Your heart.

He came to set us free, to set all things right, and make all things new.

Truly this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

We proclaim and celebrate the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Abide in us at this Table.

Pour out Your Spirit on the gifts of the bread and cup,
and on Your children gathered in this place.

The broken bread reminds us
that You love us first...and to remind us to put the needs
of the hungry, the searching, the hurting, the lonely before our own.

The cup of grace nourishes us
to join the Vine of justice and pour ourselves out for the life of the world
too.

Through the broken bread, we participate in the body of Christ.

Through the shared cup, we participate in the new life Christ gives.

And we join in spirit with the Roman centurion in the Gospel who said,

**"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word...and my soul shall be healed."**

Sharing Elements

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR COMMUNION

**We thank You, God, for inviting us to this table
where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all
Christ's gifts.**

**Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another,
and let us show forth Your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ
our Savior. Amen.**

WE GO OUT CARRYING GOD'S LOVE

***BENEDICTION**

Let us go forth renewed in God's abiding love.
And let us go forth rejoicing in the Good News of Jesus Christ,
whose love will never let us go.

Let us go forth in God's Spirit to love and serve our community.
Amen.

***PRAISE SONG**


Be Thou My Vision
450



450


Be Thou My Vision

Capo 1: (D) E^b (G) A^b (D/F#) E^b/G (A7) B^b7 (D) E^b




1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true Word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise;
 4 High King of Heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

(A) B^b (D) E^b (G) A^b (A) B^b




naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

(G) A^b (D) E^b (F#m7) $Gm7$ (G) A^b (A) B^b



thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tower;
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

(Bm) Cm (D/F#) E^b/G (G) A^b (D) E^b



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heaven - ward, O Power of my power.
 High King of Heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

These stanzas are selected from a 20th-century English poetic version of an Irish monastic prayer dating to the 10th century or before. They are set to an Irish folk melody that has proved popular and easily sung despite its lack of repetition and its wide range.

POSTLUDE MUSIC

Postlude in G Minor -Smith



Abiding in Love: Service Prayers for the Fifth Sunday of Easter Year B, was written by the Rev .Dr. Sheila Harvey Guillaume, pastor of Union Congregational United Church of Christ in West Palm Beach. Communion liturgy written by Thom Shuman at lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com. All adapted by Mark Ruzicka.



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Contributions received week of 4/18

Regular Offering: \$624 Loose Change Offering: \$145 Roof Fund: \$10

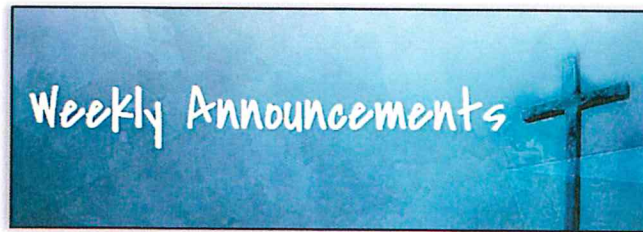
Sunday Worship Attendance – 4/25

In-House: 37 Facebook Check-Ins: 6



Pastor Emeritus

The Reverend Ralph S. Geiman, 1967-1995



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

Pastor: Rev. Mark Ruzicka Cell Phone: 717-504-2923
GUCC Office Phone: 717-597-2983
officegucc@gmail.com www.graceuceegreencastle.com

Greeters/Ushers: Tammy Hockenberry & Mildred Minnich
Reader: Patty Stepler
Communion Servers: Marg & Jeff Stouffer

Health and safety measures continue to be kept in place, which includes using face masks, fresh air flow, social distancing and hand sanitizing. Please sit in pews marked with a blue ribbon to help social distance. Please continue wearing your masks while entering, exiting and moving around during service. At your own discretion, you may remove your mask once seated. We still need to be extremely cautious. Our choir will be singing weekly anthems during service, so please sit back a few pews from the front so we all can be safely distanced while they perform. Beginning today, we will be passing the trays for you to receive the elements during communion Sundays. We will also pass the trays to collect offerings.

Live streaming of the services will continue to be available on our Facebook page for those who would prefer to continue watching from the comfort of your home. If you are unable to view our live streaming and would like access to a recording of the service, please contact Elaine at the office and we will provide a copy of the bulletin, Pastor Mark's sermon, and a recording.

Church Worship Services/Meetings/Events/Fundraisers: We ask all our members and volunteers to kindly continue wearing your masks during all church events, activities, fundraisers and meetings.

Scripture Readers: We need a volunteer to read our scriptures **next Sunday, May 9**. There are also a few more open spots in May and June. Please see the sign-up sheet on the table in the front vestibule.

Greeters/Ushers are needed for May and June. Please see the sign-up sheet located on the table in the front vestibule.

Communion Servers are needed for June. Sign-up sheet is located on the table in the front vestibule.

Upper Room Devotional Booklets – We have a few more May/June prayer brochures available. They are located on the front table in the vestibule and by the elevator area. You are welcome to take home a copy today.

Chancel Choir – Please join us for choir rehearsals on Wednesday evenings, 7:15pm, in the sanctuary. Contact Patty Stepler with any further questions.

Congregational Group Email – Don't miss out on any church updates! Contact church office if you are not currently on our email list so we can add you today.

Grace's Free Closet is open and full of Spring & Summer clothes! Stop by to say hello! Starting this month, the Closet will also be open on Friday's. Their new hours are Monday, Wednesday & Friday, from 9:30am till 12:30pm. Please 'like' their Facebook page - Grace's Closet Greencastle or contact Nancy Myers to keep updated on any changes.

Facebook: Please join our Facebook page to keep updated on activities and connect with others in the community. The live streaming of our worship services will continue to be available to view on our Facebook page, Grace United Church of Christ. Please comment or say hello on our live stream so we know you are watching with us! You can find us at:
<https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGreencastle/>

Offerings/Donation – Beginning this month, we will be passing the trays to collect offerings. You can still mail them to GUCC, at PO Box 448, Greencastle, drop off at the church office, or you can donate online through our website.

GUCC Website: Please look us up on the web to see the history of our church! You can download our weekly worship programs and our newsletters, Grace Notes from the website at: <https://www.graceuccgreencastle.com>

Grace United Church of Christ Scholarship Applications that have been received will be reviewed by our scholarship committee. The recipients will be announced in the future. Educational Sunday is scheduled for June. If you have any questions regarding these scholarships please contact Lorna Thomas or call the church office.

Save the Date! We will be holding our **Hidden Treasures Yard Sale / Bake Sale / Bagged Lunch Sale during Sidewalk Sales Days** this summer! This is a church fundraiser that will be held on July 9th from 8am to 4pm and July 10 from 8am to 1pm. As you or your family and friends are spring cleaning this year, please set aside your "hidden treasures" for our sale. We will accept your donations beginning the last week of June. Please make sure these are gently used items that are in good working order. We are not accepting clothing or books for the sale but those items are always welcome at Grace's Closet. Thank you for supporting this event!

Heirloom Mirrors – Long-time member, Jeff Stouffer, has been making high quality custom hardwood mirrors for over 35 years. Jeff has a long background creating custom wood projects. Jeff is donating his talent, time and materials by selling his custom heirloom mirrors to benefit GUCC. Please visit our website for more details about Jeff's talents and ordering information about these beautiful custom mirrors. You will find this information on the Groups & Activities page, under Jeff Stouffer Heirloom Mirrors. Feel free to call Jeff or the church office with any further questions, or to place your order. We thank everyone who has ordered mirrors and plaques to help support GUCC!

Boost Your Day with Breakfast - May 15, 7am to 10:30am. Menu includes scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, biscuits & sausage gravy, pancakes, choice of orange or apple juice and coffee. Cost: \$8 for adults, \$5 for youths 6-12 yrs., and free for children 5 yrs and under. Tickets are now available. Please see Tammy Hockenberry in the the social hall after worship or contact Chet Nye or church office for tickets!

Activities & Fundraising will be meeting on Monday, May 3, at 7pm, in the social hall. Everyone invited to join us! We need volunteers to help with our upcoming events!

Consistory & Committee reports for April are due to the church. Please submit them if you haven't done so. You can drop off to the office, or send via email. Agenda packets will be sent via email once all information is received. The next Consistory Board Meeting is scheduled for May 16, at 8:30am, in the social hall.

Worship & Spiritual Life Committee has cancelled their meeting for May 9th. Their next scheduled meeting will be held on June 13th, 9am, in the social hall. Please see Cathy Keefer for further information.

Information & Directory Updates – Members on this committee are still in the process of contacting those who haven't turned in their updated information sheet for our new directory. Once completed you will receive a copy of our new directory. This will help each of us to stay connected and support our church family. Contact Cathy Keefer or call the church office for further details.

Member

Updates:

Mary Ann Myers is currently wheel-chair bound and has two excellent caregivers giving her assistance. She would appreciate regular phone calls from any members. She can be reached at 717-597-7717 or maybe drop her a note at 358 Teaberry Drive, Greencastle, PA 17225.

Bud & Marley Walck are also basically homebound and rarely go out unless someone is able to take them. Please reach out to them with a phone call or thinking of you note to help brighten their days. Their address is 12798 Ridge Road, Greencastle, PA 17225, home # 717-597-7817, cell # 717-360-4206.

Frances (Pickel) Diehl is a shut-in at Shook Home, Room 106A, 55 South Second Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201. Feel free to drop her a little hello note!

Church Weeding – As the spring flowers, trees and shrubs are blooming we need your help to keep our flower beds at the front entrance of the church looking beautiful. Please see the sign-up sheets on the table in the front vestibule to lead a hand to help us weed and trim! We know it's not easy, especially on a hot day, but your help is greatly appreciated!

Women In Christ Banquet (formerly called the Mother/Daughter banquet) will be held on May 10, with dinner starting at 6:30pm, in the social hall. All ladies are invited, Aunts, neighbors, friends, Mothers, Daughters, Grandmothers and Great Grandmothers! Cost is \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for youths ages 3-10, and free for children under 3 years. To register, see Lorna after service on May 5 and May 9, contact Nancy Myers at 717-460-3021, or stop by the church office during the week.

Congregational Meeting will be held following worship service on May 23. The purpose of this meeting is to present information regarding the painting/sealing of the sanctuary roof. If you would like your building fund offering to go to this project, please note "Roof Project" on the outside of your building fund envelope.

Strengthen The Church Offering – (STC) This offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised will support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. The theme this year is RENEW. We will be receiving STC offerings on Sunday, May 23. Please see special offering envelopes on the table in the front vestibule and by the elevator area if you would like to make a donation.

Volunteers are needed to help run the camera during service for live streaming our worship on Facebook. It's easy to learn! Please see Steve Miller for further details!

Grace Notes, our newsletter, has been sent out to everyone on our email list, and will be hand delivered to those who requested to receive a printed copy. Extra copies for members and guests have been placed on the table in the front vestibule and by the elevator area.

May 9, 10am, Communion Sunday:
Greeters/Ushers: Barry & Carolyn Shoemaker
Reader: TBA





Keep & Till

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports grants which make a difference in the lives of people across the United Church of Christ. The Keep & Till Congregation in the Central Atlantic Conference honor's rural life and faith by focusing on agrarian rhythms, ecological concerns, and creation care. Keep & Till received a grant to stabilize and improve their community garden during the pandemic.

Pastor Samuel Chamelin explains the impact of the grant: "The quarantine made in-person activities more difficult, but it also helped us to understand the value of gathering together. While Keep & Till elected not to worship in-person in any capacity, we did continue to meet in the garden, masked and socially distanced, to continue our ag work (which is spiritual work also). This exposed us to new friends and neighbors in a way that we did not expect."

The grant literally funded the renewal of the garden. Mulch enriched the soil. A 250-gallon trough increased the water capacity. Organic pest control improved the overall yield of the garden.

But most significantly, people in the neighborhood came out to spend time in the garden. Pastor Samuel saw a renewal in people. "When a tornado destroyed the tool shed, one of those new families stepped

forward to offer their old shed, in good shape. We had community members come out to hang with us and assist, and they brought real help to the garden project. Then, they noticed that we had issues with weeds and poison ivy. The family used their flame thrower to eliminate the problems. Later, we discovered that others were mowing some particularly weedy areas. And then, finally, we realized neighbors were helping each other harvest food for their tables. In this way, Keep & Till truly became a member of the community. Though our interactions were not how we might hope them to be, we saw growth in our community, integration with the surrounding neighborhood, and stories of generosity and sharing."



**Gifts to the
Strengthen the Church Offering
Renew the
United Church of Christ.**

Renew!

