



WAKONDA NEWS

From the Pastor's Desk

Wakonda Christian Church
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Office Hours
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Sr. Pastor Robyn Bles

Small Group Link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4598748094>

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Pajamas tucked under my arm and toiletry bag in hand I shuffled up the stairs to bathroom; I walked into cabin bathrooms; I nestled my items in the hotel bathroom next to my friends' things. For three weeks I laid my head down in different rooms filled with different people. Including my summer vacation to California, all these church trips meant I was only 3 hours away from being in all 4 time zones of the continental United States in a span of 6 weeks.

I have always loved that the work of the church is expansive – I just didn't imagine I'd be doing so much of it in a span of month. I knew which suitcase belonged to me, even if I didn't always know where I was going to sleep that night. As much as I missed my home and my family, I also knew I was exactly where I was supposed to be. That's what we aim for as the church – to be a place of radical belonging.

I know our kids at VBS felt like Wakonda was a place for them. From the decorations and delicious meals prepared just for them, they knew they belonged here.

I know our youth felt like they belonged to Wakonda, as they went out from this place to discover the wider presence of God. They found God in the mountains, in the urban farms, and in the people in that place striving to make the environment a place for all to belong.

I know the beginner campers were a little nervous at first – this wasn't home. This was the first time many of them stayed overnight away from any family members. Was camp a place for them? Through silly songs, bedtime stories, wild games, and the kindness of their own hearts I saw how these 8 & 9-year-olds claimed camp for

themselves. They belonged here.

And finally, at General Assembly I saw old friends rush to hug one another. I held my church camp friends in my arms as we embraced the camp counselor who helped each of us hear our own call to ministry. We belonged to one another way back then, and now, on our different paths and ministries that look wildly different from another, we belong to each other still.

Our world is in a wild transition where we're beginning to see our differences as a way of belonging. I am like you, and therefore we belong to one another. These descriptors are vital to defining who we are; and sometimes, in our celebrations of these intersections, some feel left out. We're learning how to do this in real time. It's clunky and awkward at times; and yet, in our efforts to celebrate the individual, we cannot forget the wider whole.

Mother Teresa tells us that the problem in the world is that we have forgotten something vital: "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

In all the many places I traveled with the church this summer, I saw dramatic differences in personalities, temperaments, perspectives, time zones, and climates. It would be easy to silo these out into separate categories. But instead, through the lens of God's love, we are called to see the ways we are all part of God's cherished belonging – to God, and to one another.

Thank you Wakonda for being a place of belonging. It's a joy to serve with you.

Peace,
Pastor Robyn

August Worship

Join us as we uncover an intimate picture of unconditional love in a broken world. Father Greg Boyle is the founder of Homeboy Ministries and in his latest book *Cherished Belonging*, he tells hilarious and heartfelt stories about the power of belonging to change people's paths. We will share scriptures and stories from the book and explore how we might be called to love like this in our context. Reading *Cherished Belonging* felt like a collective exhale, and I pray this series will feel that way too: both a challenge to do the work that is ours to do and a reminder that God believes in us, loves and welcomes us in extraordinary ways.

Cherished Belonging

August 3 *Under the Big Top*

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-9 & Isaiah 54:1-3

August 10 *It's Getting Crowded in Here*

Luke 8:26-39

August 17 *Many Threads, One Tapestry*

John 4

August 24 *A Window to God*

Luke 13:10-17

August 31 *A Place to Belong*

Luke 14:1,7-14

Music Notes...

Hi, Wakonda.

We've just passed the halfway point of Summer. So while we're enjoying the many activities this season brings, it's good to take a glance forward to the school year.

Please be on the lookout for an "All Things Choir Related" meeting, likely on a Sunday after church in August. This will be an opportunity for you to come and learn all about your choir, ask questions, make song suggestions, and find out how you can join. Believe it or not, you don't need any experience, and if you can't make it to rehearsals on Thursday nights, we'd still love to have you join us when you can.

Meanwhile, we'll have Dave Hawkins, Dave Lund, Paul Sebring, and Clay Corey singing a quartet number, and Wyatt Uthe will be playing a song on guitar in the upcoming weeks. You won't want to miss these performances!

See you soon!

Seth

Preschool Update

We are in the middle of our very first summer season at the preschool! Our staff have done a fantastic job, and we are thrilled with the success of the summer, so far. We are particularly grateful to our amazing staff for pivoting very quickly due to the resignation of our director, Jen Van Der Hart. Jen closed her year with us by setting up the summer season with lesson plans and qualified staff. Madee Carter, a former Wakonda teacher, parent, and alumni, has stepped in as our Summer Director. Madee has done a great job supporting our teachers, connecting with interested families, and even doing some recruitment at local farmer's markets.

We are thrilled to announce the hiring of our next Wakonda Preschool Director, Amela Sabic. Amela comes to us with over ten years of Director experience, the last five years having founded and led her own Montessori preschool. She comes with the experience and drive to take our preschool to the next level – and she's glad her two-year-old can also join the ranks at Wakonda. Amela begins August 4th. Please join us in prayers of support and thanksgiving for our growing preschool.

Celebration Sunday Mark Your Calendar!

Hello Wakonda! Please join us Sunday, September 7th at 10AM for our Celebration Sunday service. We'll celebrate being back as a congregation after a busy summer. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for outdoor worship and a side dish or dessert (no peanuts) to share for our potluck lunch. Meat, drinks, and table service will be provided. Youth are invited to bring a backpack for a special backpack blessing.

This will be a time of fun and fellowship. Outdoor activities will be available including a bounce house and face painting artist.

September Save-the-Dates

Sunday, Sept. 7
Celebration Sunday

Wednesday, Sept. 10
Wednesdays at Wakonda begins

Sunday, Sept. 14
Sunday School begins

Sunday, Sept. 28
Wakonda visits the Iowa Arboretum
(more details to follow)

Summer Sunday School

Join us for our final Summer Sunday School, on August 24. Our Inclusive Church Team will present the hopes and plans of their work. Come with your questions and interest in exploring the ways Wakonda can become an even more welcoming and inclusive congregation. We'll gather in the Thomason room at 9:00 a.m.

August Birthdays

3 George Stilwell
5 Seth Hedquist, Patty Sebring
6 Max Reckling
12 Linda Hawkins
14 Pearl Stilwell
21 Rich Hein
25 Kristi McIntosh
28 Susie Bohlender
29 Dick Myers

New Address

Carson Harvey
555EFGS/APG
OPC1277 Box 101
APO AE 09877

From the Youth

Thank you Wakonda! Thank you for the fabulous goodie bags for our mission trip travelers! They had notes of love and appreciation from you and goodies for the long day of travel. Everyone appreciated it so much! Hopefully you were able to hear about their trip in Sunday School!

Upcoming Event
August 17 - Snack and Splash Pad 4pm

Bible Study

Wednesday morning Bible Study is taking a summer break for Pastor Robyn's church travels. Our weekly Bible Study has resumed. All are welcome to join this fun and enriching discussion on the upcoming sermon text. We gather in the comfort of your own home, on zoom, at 10:30 a.m. Follow the link to join us on July 23rd.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4598748094>

What's Happening at Wakonda

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Spiritual Formation Mtg.	4	5 10:00 a.m. Chit Chats	6 10:30 a.m. Bible Study via ZOOM	7 11:30 a.m. W.O.W.	8	9
10 8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	11	12 10:00 a.m. Chit Chats	13 10:30 a.m. Bible Study via ZOOM	14	15	16
17 8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	18	19 10:00 a.m. Chit Chats	20 10:30 a.m. Bible Study via ZOOM	21 1:00 p.m. Coloring Group	22	23
24 8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	25	26 10:00 a.m. Chit Chats	27 10:30 a.m. Bible Study via ZOOM	28	29	30
31 8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	Sept 1 Labor Day Office Closed	2 10:00 a.m. Chit Chats	3 10:30 a.m. Bible Study via ZOOM	4 11:30 a.m. W.O.W.	5	6 8:00 a.m. B.O.B.
7 <i>Celebration Sunday</i> 8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	8	9 10:00 a.m. Chit Chats	10:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. Bible Study via ZOOM	11	12	13