

# WAKONDA NEWS

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

I'm so incredibly grateful to you church, for supporting Mazie Stilwell, Susan Thies, and myself in the Bethany Congregations program. We recently completed this 18-month program of six retreats grounded in wise practices for our congregation, intentional leadership development grounded in prayer, and engaging prayer practices throughout the whole process.

Three of our retreats were held on zoom, to be good stewards of our resources; while three retreats were held in person, to truly engage in the relational aspect of this work.

Some of the wise practices were a faithful approach to church stewardship and finances. With the realization that tithes and pledges, while faithful response and practice of gratitude from our congregants, is not always going to achieve our budgetary needs and goals. We explored other means of financial practices which still align with our faith values.

We spent time learning the power and value of storytelling and its ancient role with the faith community. We told parts of our own story in every gathering, feeling the boost of love and support as our stories were heard and held by the circle of witnesses and friends.

We dug deeply into prayer practices not only as the very foundation of our work, but also the sustaining practices of the church. Check-ins and personal sharing, followed by prayer allowed us to worship fully engage the storytelling wisdom. We observed 18 hours of communal silence together. We prayed for one another, and we prayed for our congregation.

All three of us experienced a spiritual shift through this experience and we're excited to bring some of these practices into the life of Wakonda. You have already witnessed some of this work through the intentional planning and caring leadership Susan and Mazie have offered through the Inclusive Church process. We also hope to bring some of these practices into our leadership gathering event this summer as we onboard our new leaders for the church.

Church, Wakonda is doing great things and meaningful work. I'm grateful to have leaders who want to do this work, grounded in a deep spirituality; but most of all, I'm moved by a congregation who sees and understands the value of this work. Thank you for your support not only financially in our participation in this program, or time away from the congregation, but for joining us in prayerful, faithful action to do this work. It's a joy to be church with you.

Peace,  
Pastor Robyn



Wakonda Christian Church  
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50321  
515-285-8394  
Office Hours  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Sr. Pastor Robyn Bles

*Small Group Link*  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4598748094>  
April 2026  
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## Easter Sunday Brunch

Begin the Easter celebration early, with an Easter Brunch and Capital Campaign Celebration. Join us in our newly remodeled Thomason Room Easter Sunday at 9:00 a.m. Please bring a brunch item to share and hear the good news of our accomplished projects, Wakonda's generosity and faithfulness, and thank our volunteers who went above and beyond in achieving these goals. We still have one year left in receiving our financial gifts, but we want to celebrate the good news of these completed projects.

### Community Conversation Invitation

We're hosting community conversations to hear what is troubling you. What are the worries keeping you up at night? What are the immediate hardships facing your family, your neighbors, your community? Some examples shared by members of Wakonda are:

- The lack of progressive levels of care for Seniors on the south side of Des Moines.
- The difficulty in attaining a doctor appointment in a timely manner
- A grandchild's inability to attain substance abuse support.

We're gathering this information to achieve the greater good for Des Moines. Susan Thies, Richard Guentert, Brents Oliphant and Pastor Robyn have all been trained by AMOS to host these conversations. AMOS: A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy is a collective of Faith-based and community focused organizations who collaborate to better the wider community. With member organizations through the Greater Des Moines Metro, and as wide as to include Perry and Madrid, we're hoping to discern what goal we can accomplish together, where we couldn't alone.

Your voice and hardships matter, and we'd like to see what we can do about helping. Please consider joining one of the four following conversation gatherings. These gatherings will run 30-60 minutes depending upon the number of participants.

- Tuesday, April 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the Youth Room
- Sunday, April 12 at 9:00 a.m. & following worship in the Thomason room.
- Wednesday, April 15 at 6:00 p.m. in the large meeting room.

### April Worship

**Easter Sunday, April 5**

***The Good News is .... Alive in the World***

Matt. 28:1-10

**April 12: Laity Sunday**

**Brents Oliphant Preaching**

John 20:19-29

**April 19, Luke 24:13-35 (Emmaus)**

**"How Did You Not Know?!"**

**April 26: Camp Sunday, Acts 7:33**

### Upcoming Opportunity

Sunday, May 3, Rev. Dawn Ingram joins us to speak about Immanuel Pathways, a program located in Urbandale which focuses upon supporting Seniors throughout Des Moines in accessing the support and care they need. If staying in your home is your wish, Immanuel Pathways has programs available to provide laundry, cleaning, or meal support. They have transportation to doctors' offices, or community fellowship opportunities.

Dawn will speak more broadly about their many programs, and the affordable ways to access this care, during the Sunday school hour at 9:00 a.m. She'll also preach in worship about the spiritual support and care provided.

Mark your calendar and plan to join for your own long-term needs, or the need and care of someone you love.

## Vacation Bible School - Save the Date July 6-9!

### Youth Happenings...

W@W spent an evening serving at DMARC! They are partnering with the Animal Rescue League and have taken on pet food. We moved a LOT of dog food to be sorted and made available for pickup. They made Wakonda proud by working hard and serving others!



**THANK YOU!**

**Donations Needed!**



Youth Mission group needs regular plastic water bottle packages!  
Bring to church by **Friday May 1.**

# SUMMER 2026 CAMP DATES

FAMILY CAMP	JUNE 5-7
GRAND 1	JUNE 13-14
JR 1	JUNE 14-19
CHI NON-RUSTIC	JUNE 14-19
CHI RHO 1	JUNE 21-26
CYF 1	JUNE 21-26
BEGINNER	JUNE 29-JULY 1
JR 2	JULY 5- 10
GRAND 2	JULY 11-12
CHI RHO 2	JULY 12-17
CYF 2	JULY 12-17
ADAM	JULY 19-24
ADVENTURE	JULY 26-31
JR 3	AUGUST 2-7

Registration Opens  
November 1, 2025

Watch for more  
information and the  
registration link!

2026 Camp Sessions will begin on  
Sundays with 4pm drop-off and  
conclude on Friday with a 2pm pick-up



## Preschool Happenings in April

We've had such a joyful month of learning, exploring, and growing together! Here's a peek at what's coming up in our lesson plans!

### **Theme of the month:** *Bugs*

We'll be exploring the magic of Spring through stories, art, and hands-on activities.

### **Creative Corner:**

- Egg stamping art with sponges
- Bunny craft with cotton balls

### **Math & Science Fun:**

- Counting/tracing numbers
- Water play with cups/dishes for sensory table
- Exploring different types of bugs with magnifying glass

### **Language & Literacy:**

- Storytime: Easter/themed books
- Letter(s) of the month: Hh & Tt

### **Social Focus:**

- Staying calm and handling emotions

### **Movement & Play:**

- egg/bunny tic tac toe
- Five senses at circle time

### **Other activities:**

- Show & Tell is every Friday!

## Music Note

Happy Easter, Wakonda!

May the story of the Risen Christ bring you awareness of your own holiness and light in this world.

Seth

## Inclusive Church Updates:

Our regular meeting time is the first Sunday of the month at 4 p.m.

Our next meeting is the second Sunday because the first is Easter. April 12 and May 3 at 4pm are the next two.

We gather in the Cord Room. Anyone is welcome, and as always, please direct any questions to Susan Thies or Mazie Stilwell

### **\*Save The Date\***

May 3 is a special event, especially for the whole congregation. We're hosting Rev. Greg Neal, Senior Minister of Grace United Methodist Church. Grace UMC is a thriving congregation hosting a medical clinic for the community, a weekly meal, and a sought-after preschool program. Grace is a welcoming and Open and Affirming Congregation. Intentionally naming this type of welcome is a key part to the whole congregational thriving. Rev. Neal is also openly gay and in a loving and committed marriage. He plans to share with us the ways this level of welcoming is important to Grace, as well as his own experience as a faithful Christian within the wider LGBTQ+ community.

# What's Happening at Wakonda

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 29 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	30 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	31 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	April 1 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM	2 Maundy Thursday <b>11:30 a.m.</b> W.O.W. <b>6:00 p.m.</b> Worship	3 Good Friday	4 <b>8:00 a.m.</b> B.O.B.
5 <b>9:00 a.m.</b> Brunch <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	6 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	7 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	8 <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W & OWL	9	10	11
12 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship <b>4:00 p.m.</b> Inclusive Church Gathering	13 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	14 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	15 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W & OWL	16 <b>12:00 p.m.</b> Sack Lunch <b>1:00 p.m.</b> Coloring Group	17	18 <b>7-11 a.m.</b> Lions Pancake Breakfast
19 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	20	2 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	22 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W & OWL	23	24	25
26 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	27	28 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	29 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W & OWL	30	May 1	2 <b>8:00 a.m.</b> B.O.B.

## April Birthdays

**4** Ann Mitchell      **5** Diana Babberl      **7** Chris Jessen      **15** Ben Jessen  
**19** Lynda Haupert      **22** Sue Slater      **25** David Brown