

# The Bridge

NEWSLETTER | BRIDGEPORT CHRISTIAN CHURCH | AUGUST 2023

## Minister's Moment

*When you are beginning something new, you can't always see where you're headed with it. You have to be okay with not knowing exactly how things will turn out. In knitting, you cast on your first stitch and follow a chart – a series of letters and numbers that to a non-knitter might appear cryptic and unreadable. The chart tells you which stitch to lay down in what order, but it takes a while before you can see anything adding up – before the pattern itself becomes visible in the yarn. Until then, you just move your hands and follow the steps. In this way, it's kind of an act of faith. – Michelle Obama, *The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times* (2022)*

Recently, I started listening to the audiobook of Michelle Obama's *The Light We Carry*. I wanted to read this book because I liked her first book so much. Admittedly, I think I am only on about chapter 3 at the writing of this newsletter. But, I had to wait to listen to this audiobook. It wasn't available when I wanted to start it in May. It just became available a couple of weeks ago. And I think that timing matters. I think I am reading this book at just the right time.

Michelle Obama wrote this book as we were coming out of the worst of the pandemic and grappling with the issues that we face today. She wrote this book, not because she has all the answers, but because she believes that it is important for people to work through fear, and find strength in community, and live with boldness. And just in the first few chapters, it has given me a new sense of hope.

Beloved, we are a community that believes in newness. When Jesus died and was resurrected, that was the beginning of a whole new world. Nothing was ever going to be the same after the resurrection. I imagine that was scary for Jesus and the disciples, but they continued on, not knowing exactly what the outcome would be. The outcome is the Church Universal that we still have today.

We are at the beginning of something new. Soon, the parts of the church damaged by the fire will be taken out and new things will go in. Our space will look a little different than it did before. And, that's okay, because we look a little different than we did before, too.

Newness is scary. Newness is hard. But newness opens up a whole lot of possibilities to us that we may not have had before. Like Michelle Obama says, we can't always see where we are heading, but we have to be okay with that. It is an act of faith to begin something new. And we can do it if we continue to work together and follow the call that God has placed on each of our lives and follow the call that God has placed on Bridgeport Christian Church.

Continue to pray for our church and community. Something new is about to happen.

Peace,  
Ann

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# Children, Youth, & Young Adults

Friends, this summer has been a blast at Bridgeport Christian Church for the children & youth. From swimming at Juniper Hills to VBS to unexpected surprises in Children's Worship & Wonder (aka Children's Church to-go), God has continued to bless our strong ministry to children & youth despite the church fire. On a side note, if you see one of our kiddos in the church (restaurant) on Sundays, interact with them! Did you know that one of the most significant reasons young people stay in church is a continuing connection with a senior adult? Connect with our young people and we'll keep seeing them!

## VBS

I can say with certainty that our young folks had a BLAST at Vacation Bible School! Our theme was "Hero Hotline," empowering all of us to understand that in order to lead as a hero, we must first follow. As a Christian hero, we must follow our hero, which is Jesus! Yes, VBS is a bunch of fun with water games, ice cream, and lots of silly behavior, but the most important lesson is that Jesus is our most important way of understanding how to live a life for God. Many thanks to all of the participants, parents, and our volunteers. I hope everyone has gotten some rest since VBS!



## Youth & Young Adults

More information on the youth will be coming soon from the Education committee.

I am seeking your help on how we might be able to form a young adult ministry in this congregation. If you have any ideas or know of young people who have been disconnected from the church for awhile (perhaps because of covid) and think they might want to come back, please reach out to me! With God's help, we can continue to grow our congregation and bring young people into the fold.



**Jackson Campbell**  
Coordinator of Children & Youth

## Bridgeport Choir News

August 2023

In July, I had the honor and privilege of participating in VBS. We usually think of "VBS" as meaning "Vacation Bible School", but I also think it would be appropriate to call it our "Very Best Service"—when we spend the week showing God's love through food and fun, learning and laughter, service and song, we are giving our Very Best Service to the children. The children are the future of the faith, the future of the church, and are the very ones who will offer their own VBS when they are adults, continuing the tradition with new children, yet to be. The message will be the same: Nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39). God bless all involved with the program and all the children who blessed us with their presence.

Love,  
*Laura Foley*



We will welcome the Rev. Molly Smothers to deliver the message on Sunday, August 6. Rev. Smothers is the Associate Regional Minister for Kentucky. Her position includes congregational development, Committee on Ministry, facilitating Districts 5 and 6, and planning the 2024 Regional Assembly.

Rev. Smothers is from Lexington and graduated from Transylvania University with degrees in Philosophy and Humanities. She has a Master of Divinity degree from Lexington Theological Seminary, where she was awarded the Welch Award for New Testament Studies. She has completed all classwork necessary for the Doctor of Divinity degree.

Rev. Smothers has served as Senior Minister with congregations in Cythiana (1995-2000), Mount Sterling (2000-2004), and Morehead (2004-2015). In June 2015, she moved from full-time ministry to serve in interim capacities, including churches in Independence, Owensboro, Georgetown, Maysville, Harrodsburg, and most recently in Flemingsburg.

Within the denomination, Rev. Smothers has taught several classes on Homiletics for the Commission on Ministry School, served for years on the Committee on Ministry, and has been an officer in local ministerial associations. She has led workshops for Disciples Women's Fellowship, Regional Assembly, and with many other congregations.

She has served on the board of the Morehead public radio station (WMKY), worked with ALLYance on the MSU campus and Morehead Fairness, and has worked in regional theater.

Rev. Smothers is married to Leon Smothers, who is retired from state government after a long career with the Division of Water; he has served on the board of many national organizations dealing with water and conservation. They recently moved from a 24-acre farm in Rowan County to Danville. They have three adult children and three grandchildren.



COKEBURY'S  
**HERO  
HOTLINE**  
Called Together  
to Serve God!



**VBS 2023**

# Green News

## How Climate Change is Making Us Sick

Reprinted from Climate Connections –  
a collaboration between Grist and the Associated Press

People around the world are living longer, healthier lives than they were just half a century ago. Climate change threatens to undo that progress.

Across the planet, animals — and the diseases they carry — are shifting to accommodate a globe on the fritz. And they're not alone: Ticks, mosquitos, bacteria, algae, even fungi are on the move, shifting or expanding their historical ranges to adapt for climatic conditions that are changing at an extraordinary pace.

Deforestation, mining, agriculture, and urban sprawl are taking bites out of the globe's remaining wild areas, contributing to biodiversity loss that's occurring at a rate unprecedented in human history. Populations of species that humans rely on for sustenance are dwindling and getting pushed into ever-smaller slices of habitat, creating new hotspots for diseases to jump from animals to humans.

Meanwhile, the number of people experiencing extreme repercussions of a warming planet continues to grow. Climate change displaces some 20 million every year — people who need housing, medical care, food, and other essentials that strain already fragile systems that are growing ever more stressed.

All of these factors create conditions ripe for human illness. Diseases old and new are becoming more prevalent and even cropping up in places they've never been found before.

"This is not just something off in the future," Neil Vora, a physician with the nonprofit Conservation International, said. "Climate change is here. People are suffering and dying right now." Research shows that climate change influences the spread of disease in a few major ways.

To escape rising temperatures in their native ranges, animals are beginning to move to higher, cooler elevations, bringing diseases with them. That poses a threat to people living in those areas, and it also leads to dangerous intermingling between animal newcomers and existing species.

Erratic weather patterns, such as periods of extreme drought and flooding, create conditions for diseases to spread. Cases of cholera, a water-borne bacterial disease, skyrocket during the monsoon season in South Asian countries. Valley fever, a fungal-borne infection caused by spores that grow in the soil in the western U.S., proliferates during periods of rain..

Cases of disease linked to mosquitos, ticks, and fleas tripled in the U.S. between 2004 and 2016, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Research shows more than half of all the pathogens known to cause disease in humans can be made worse by climate change. The World Health Organization estimates that, between 2030 and 2050, just a handful of climate-related threats, such as malaria and water insecurity, will claim a quarter of a million additional lives each year.

The world has the tools it needs — wildlife-surveillance networks, vaccines, early-warning systems — to mitigate the impacts of climate-driven disease. Some of these tools have already been tried on a local scale to great effect. What remains to be seen is how quickly governments, NGOs, medical providers, doctors, and the public can work across borders to develop and deploy a global plan of action.





The annual Spellapalooza fundraiser for Thorn Hill Education Center is August 11th. Besides many spelling teams, you will see some very familiar Bridgeport faces helping out.

Once again, we are asking our church family for donated baked goods. Our bake sale is a big money maker. If you want to donate, you can bring your goods to Thorn Hill between 2 pm and 5 pm. If you cannot deliver, please call Diane D. or Hollis and we will pick up.

Cookout at 5 pm and spellers up at 6. Silent auction and baked goodies. Join the fun!!



### Kentucky author's Pulitzer-winning novel is the BCC book club's August selection

The BCC book club will revisit a favorite author when we read "Demon Copperhead," the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by native Kentuckian Barbara Kingsolver, as our August book.

Described as a reimagining of the Charles Dickens classic "David Copperfield," "Demon Copperhead" is the story of a boy in Appalachian southwest Virginia, born to a teenage single mother in a single-wide trailer, navigating a world of poverty, drug abuse, and a broken foster care system, armed only with his caustic wit and his indomitable will to survive.

A native of Nicholas County, Kingsolver is the author of numerous novels, including "The Poisonwood Bible," which was our first selection when the BCC book club launched in 2012. Kingsolver is the subject of a profile in the August issue of Kentucky Monthly magazine.

The book club's next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 29. The location will be announced at a later date. For more information about the book club, or to be added to our email list, contact Ted Sloan at [tsloan76@bellsouth.net](mailto:tsloan76@bellsouth.net).



### BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY AUGUST 6 IN WORSHIP

We will celebrate the beginning of another school year with the Blessing of the Backpacks on Sunday, August 6 at the end of worship. We invite all youth and college students to bring a backpack with them (or something that represents school) to be blessed by Jackson Campbell on that Sunday.



# BCC Recovery Report

ServiceMaster continued its work to move several items from the church building into storage and clean the building during July. In-Line Consulting & Engineering Services submitted a detailed report that we will use to guide us in the recovery process.

A representative of the organ maintenance company came to BCC in the middle of the month to inspect the organ and pipes. We have been in contact with contractors and electricians.

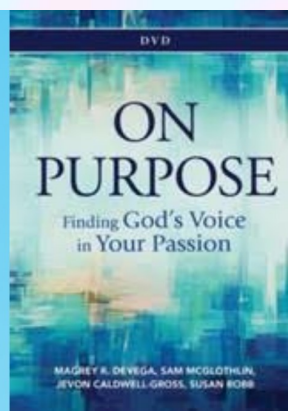
The recovery working group is working on scheduling a meeting in mid-August to discuss next steps.

We continue to enjoy the hospitality of our neighbors at The Evergreen Southern Kitchen for Sunday worship. We urge you to show your gratitude for their kindness by patronizing their restaurant and gift shop.

While we were unable to use the church building, we hosted a successful Vacation Bible School in the Education Annex and on the church grounds. Our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who made this work under trying circumstances. We also hosted a well-attended church-wide picnic on July 26 at the Salato Center (game farm).

Please contact property chair Casey Hayden or Pastor Ann if you need to get into the church building for any reason.

The work of the church goes on even as our building is off limits. Please bless our efforts with your time, your treasure, and your prayers.



## Bible Study

Monday afternoon Zoom Bible Study will resume on Monday, August 21 at 2 p.m. We will do a four-week study on the book *On Purpose: Finding God's Voice in Your Passion* by Magrey R. deVega, Sam McGlothlin, Jevon Caldwell-Gross, and Susan Robb.

Cokesbury.com shares, "We are hungry for a sense of purpose, direction, and calling in our lives. That's as basic an ingredient to the human experience as they come. We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We want to participate in something that has eternal merit and lasting impact. We do not want to live a shallow, hollow existence. We yearn for deeper meaning, for deeper purpose within our lives. We want to be more than we are. In *On Purpose: Finding God's Voice in Your Passion*, authors Magrey deVega, Sam McGlothlin, Jevon Caldwell-Gross, and Susan Robb help us see God's purpose for our lives, how to open ourselves to God's voice, and how to take the first or next step to follow God's call. Reading this book and exploring life choices alongside others, individuals will learn how to channel their passions, hear God's voice, and live the life they were meant to live."

Join us on Mondays at 2 p.m.! Below is the Zoom link. Please let Pastor Ann know if you are interested in this study so she can add you to the emails.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86208001052?pwd=RzhBQUJyeUE5Qnc5UUVV1Wlh2ZXRpZD09>

Meeting ID: 862 0800 1052  
Passcode: 050301

## Calendar of Events

August 2—8 Ann Vacation

August 6— 10:30 am In-person and Online Worship

August 7— 11:00 am Membership Committee Meeting (Zoom)

August 9—7:00 pm Administrative Board Meeting (Zoom)

August 13— 10:30 am In-person and Online Worship

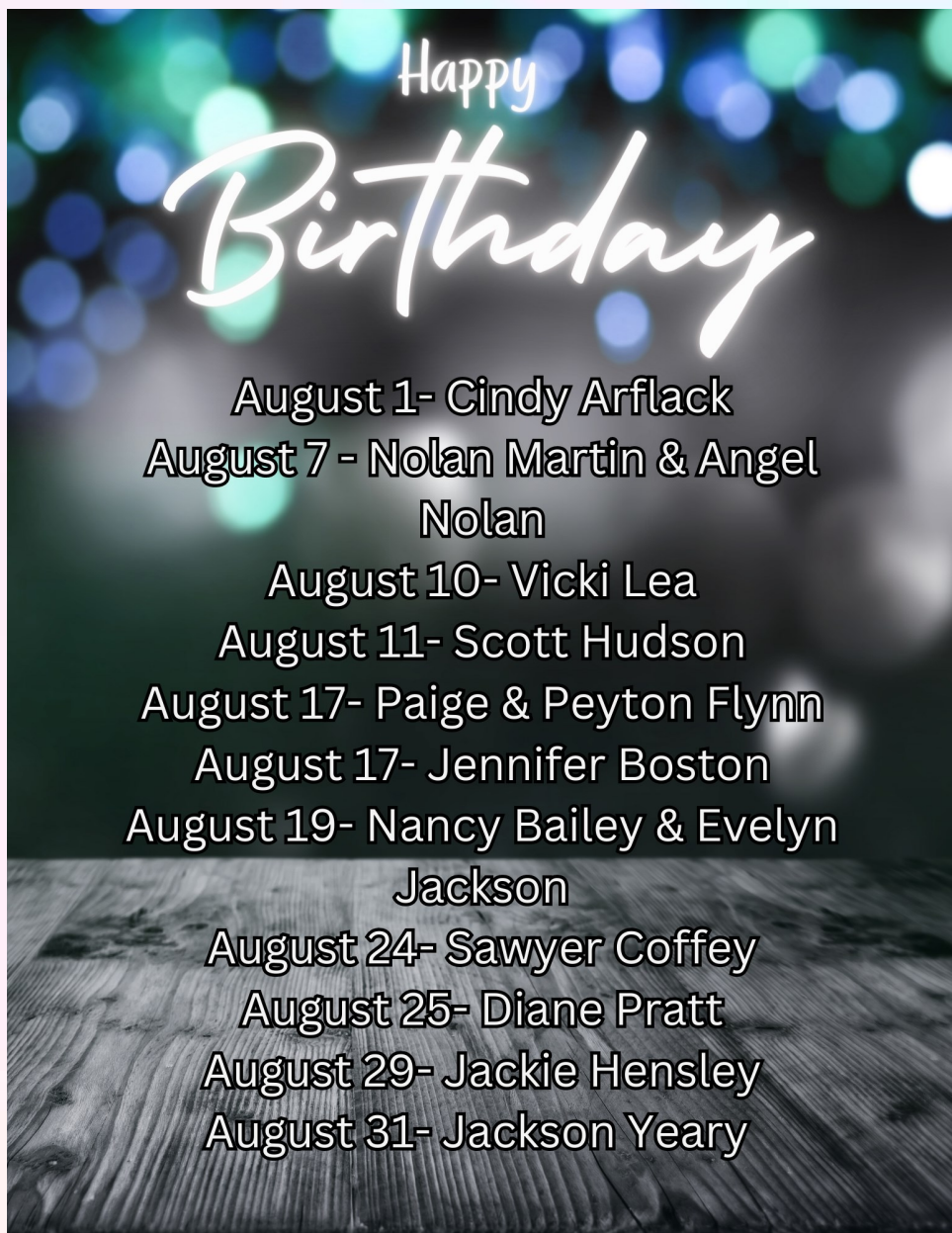
August 20— 10:30 am In-person and Online Worship

August 21—2:00 pm Bible Study (Zoom)

August 27— 10:30 am In-person and Online Worship

August 28—2:00 pm Bible Study (Zoom)

August 29— 5:30 pm Book Club



Date	Greeters	Worship Leader	Elder	Worship & Wonder
8/6	Ted Sloan's Team	Sissy O'Brien	Don Flinn	Jackson Campbell & Laura Begin
8/13	Ted Sloan's Team		Donna Long	Anita Bolen & Denisha Dodge-Summerour
8/20	Ted Sloan's Team	Jeff Pratt	Sissy O'Brien	Jackson Campbell & Donna Long
8/27	Ted Sloan's Team	Anita Bolen	Jeff Pratt	Jackson Campbell & Kirk Shepherd

**Worship Service  
Opportunities**

Facebook - [www.facebook.com/bridgeportchristian](http://www.facebook.com/bridgeportchristian)

YouTube - [www.youtube.com/channel/UCsZ84Pu5U2KkzvKR26U\\_VTg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsZ84Pu5U2KkzvKR26U_VTg)

**Who is Bridgeport Christian ?**

Founded in 1846, Bridgeport Christian strives to serve God and our community in the best way we know how. We are a certified Green Chalice Congregation and an Open & Affirming Congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Date	Scripture	Topic
August 6	Genesis 32:22-31; Matthew 14:13-21	A Prodigal God Rev. Molly Smothers preaching
August 13	Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33	Miracles: Walking on Water
August 20	Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15:10-28	Canaanite Woman
August 27	Matthew 16:13-20; Romans 12:1-8	Living Sacrifice

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**Staff**

- The Rev. Ann B. Shepherd, Pastor
- Valerie Drake, Admin. Assistant
- Laura Foley, Music Director
- Jackson Campbell, Children & Youth Coordinator



**Bridgeport  
Christian  
Church**