



August 31 through September 6, 2025



A Growing Ministry: Storytime and the Garden of Knowledge Children's Library

Since its humble beginnings in November 2018, our Storytime Hour has blossomed into one of the most beloved ministries at Ohio United Presbyterian Church. What began with just a few children each week has grown into two sessions on Wednesdays!

Our first Storytime featured an ABC theme focused on Bible characters, places, and objects. With a mix of stories, songs, crafts, and hands-on play, children were immersed in faith-based learning while having fun. One of our young artists, Ava DiCicco, even colored the ABC illustrations that decorated the room. Over time, the program became more structured and meaningful—so much so that families plan their schedules around attending.

We've heard wonderful things from our parents:

Children jump out of bed when they hear it's Storytime Day.

Some families attend even after a morning doctor's appointment.

Parents sit with their children and listen to the stories being read.

Kids check out books to take to their own churches to read during service.

One child excitedly picked a book "because Daddy likes it."

Parents love the music and ask how to find the songs to play at home (now posted weekly on our Facebook group).

Others ask where to buy some of the activities we use so they can recreate them at home.

This beautiful ministry was born from a conversation between two educators and longtime church members—Nancy Lucas and Lynn Smith—who had a shared vision for children's spiritual learning through story. After sharing the idea with Session and the congregation, the dream quickly became a reality. Early planning included visiting other libraries, researching display methods, and sourcing books. Lynn and Nancy decided on sturdy bookshelves and cozy wall-to-wall carpeting with a padded layer underneath—perfect for little ones to sit and read. Countless hours were spent gathering ideas, choosing books, matching songs to stories, and prepping the space, which Nancy continues to do each week.

Alongside Storytime, our dream of creating a Children's Library—The Garden of Knowledge—also took shape. Lynn Smith served as the first librarian, a natural role considering her passion for books. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation,

funds were in place to install carpeting, purchase materials for bookshelves, and expand our collection. An opportunity allowed us to purchase books at a 40% discount through a library supplier.

In 2021, Christina Palmer joined our team and now serves as the Children's Librarian. Just as Lynn Smith did before her, Christina encourages children to check out books each week and maintains a seasonal selection to reflect holidays, themes and lessons. Thanks to the tireless dedication and stewardship of Lynn and Christina, our library now holds over 1,000 books and continues to grow.

Over time, our Storytime has adapted. When the pandemic hit, we paused our sessions but found creative ways to keep families engaged, like placing a book return bin by the side door. Now, Storytime is back in full swing, hosted each Wednesday morning in the Garden of Knowledge Library. We advertise through Facebook, Hopewell Connect, and word of mouth—thanks to moms like Kortney Marlatt who helped spread the word early on.

We're also thankful for our storage areas, which house supplies we use for Storytime, VBS, and even Sunday School when needed. And we haven't forgotten the many who have shaped our children's ministries over the years. Plans are underway to create a tribute wall outside the library to honor those who have faithfully served. Looking ahead, our goal is to upgrade the library with an automated checkout and inventory system—and continue welcoming families to a place where children grow in God's love through stories, music, and meaningful connection.

Through the years, our volunteers have been amazing:

Zbig updated the lighting and removed old fixtures in addition to painting the walls.

Jeff Barth and Bob Keller made and hung the bookshelves.

C.A.R.E.S. offered to paint the remaining walls.

Karen Keller made our first set of curtains.

Harriet Kuhla, Dianne Kanitra, Lois Kearns and Sallie Alviani helped with activities at the various stations.

Pastor Bob was a guest reader.

Lynn preserved artwork from the 1980s youth group to hang in the new space.

Chris Hurni even gave up her Sunday School room so the library could expand!

Pastor Nick helped when needed at different stations.

Bev Abate made our current curtains for our jungle theme.

Pastor Kalyn contributed her musical talents last year to provide a closing song each session.

Our current volunteers, Nancy Lucas, Kim Hughes, Ginny Adams, Missy Sardo and Christina Palmer are blessed beyond measure! THANK you, church family, for making this vision a reality. Your donations, prayers and time are transforming lives—one little reader at a time.

*We have done our best to recognize everyone who has helped make this program possible over the years. If we have inadvertently missed someone, please know it was not intentional, and your contributions are truly appreciated.



Worship
• Sunday School for children 3yr.-6th grade is during worship after the children's chat • 71 were in church on Sunday, August 24
Congregational Care
• Women's Association meeting is on September 2 at 6:30pm • Adult Sunday School begins on Sunday, September 7 at 9am in the Library. Contact John or Bonnie Martin if you plan to attend so they can order a book for you. They will be studying the Book of James. • Deacons are meeting on Tuesday, September 9 at 6:30pm and Session is meeting on that Tuesday as well at 7pm • Ruth Circle is meeting on Wednesday, September 10 at 1pm. • Saturday, October 25—Ladies mark your calendars for the Women's Retreat at Raccoon State Park. Watch for details in September
Mission
Operations
Property Meeting is on Tuesday, September 2 at 6:30pm

Kid's Christmas Musical Practice will begin on Sunday, September 7 from 9 to 9:45. It's open to kids in grades 1-8

Thank you to all who gave donations to the Little Food Pantry.



SEPTEMBER

Birthdays and Anniversaries

ANNIVERSARIES	BIRTHDAYS	BIRTHDAYS	BIRTHDAYS
Chris & Kristy Otto 9/02	Edward Burak 9/01	Ginny Adams 9/12	Linda Hendrick 9/22
Charles & Linda Hendrick 9/04	Michael Knox 9/02	Chris Hurni 9/15	Parker Hoth 9/23
Elizabeth & Alan Repman 9/15	Karen Gartley 9/03	Charles Hendrick 9/17	Emma DiCicco 9/26
Donna & Mark Olexick 9/25	Kenneth Jones 9/05	Karen Keller 9/17	Kiara Kapton 9/28
Eleanor & Richard Pike 9/26	Michael Saxon 9/05	Scott Riddle 9/19	Michael Sardo 9/28
Diane & Jack Gennaro 9/30	Sue Hughston 9/10	Terri Owczarzak 9/20	Ella Mae Spieker 9/28
	Pat Wozniak 9/10	Nicholas Barth 9/22	

IN OUR Thoughts AND Prayers



- Jen Davis—Sister Chris had the flu and had to cancel procedures. Radiation marker scheduled for September 4 and lumpectomy on September 9. Please keep her in prayer.
- Missy Sardo—Niece had a baby, Sydney Rose.
- Dick Klein—Prayers for all involved in Aliquippa Middle School football team's bus accident.
- Shirley Fluharty—Thank you for all the birthday cards!!
- Lynn Smith—Shirley also played the church organ for 54 years.
- Chris Otto—Grandmother Dixie just turned 93
- Dawn Psik—Sister's first round of chemo went well. She is back for second round on September 15. On Thursday August 28 she will have a PET scan done. Please pray that no additional health concerns are found.
- Pastor Judy—Prayers for people throughout the world.



FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Cereal

Mac and Cheese

Canned Veggies

Peanut Butter

Instant Mashed Potatoes

Boxed Pasta

Fruit Cups

Soup

Jelly

Frosting



Sunday School Kick-Off for the 2025-26 school year

WHEN: Sunday September 7th during church

WHERE: Ohio United Presbyterian Church

WHY: To learn about God, His stories, and the amazing
love of Jesus

WHO: Children ages 3yrs-6th grade

**ALL are invited to stay after service to enjoy Mac's
Donuts, milk & coffee, in the Fellowship Hall**