

Living Waters Association NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

of the Nebraska Conference of the United Church of Christ.

August 2025

Neligh UCC to Celebrate 150 Years



After having to postpone earlier plans, Neligh United Church of Christ is now preparing to mark a very special milestone—150 years of ministry in the community. The celebration will take place on Saturday, September 14, at 2:00 p.m. at the church, located at 102 East 6th Street. The worship service will be led by Rev. Rodger Good and Pastor Janet Davis, offering a time to give thanks for the past and look forward to the future.

Following the service, everyone is invited to gather in the church basement for food, fellowship, and the chance to enjoy a digital slideshow highlighting the church's long history. It will be a time not only for remembering but also for reconnecting with friends and celebrating the life of the congregation together. All are welcome to join in this joyful event as Neligh UCC gives thanks for 150 years of faith and community. For more information or to RSVP please contact Trish Smith at 402-750-5819

Special Meeting of the Nebraska Conference of the United Church of Christ

Because the quorum requirements were not met at the May gathering, a **special online meeting of the Nebraska Conference of the United Church of Christ** has been scheduled for **Sunday, October 6, at 7:30 p.m.** via Zoom. The sole purpose of this meeting will be to elect officers.

All congregations are encouraged to have their delegates participate. This is an important opportunity for us, together, to live faithfully into our United Church of Christ covenant.

Delegates must register in advance. Please use the QR code provided, or contact **Kim Spinger** by **September 5** at **515-809-7775** for registration assistance. Your congregation's presence and voice matter—thank you for helping the Nebraska Conference move forward together.

REGISTRATION QR CODE



REGISTRATION CLOSES SEPT. 5TH

For event questions please contact
Sue Shear via email sueshear53@gmail.com

For registration question please call
Kim Springer at 515-809-7775



Important Update: Federal Grants and Local Church Responsibilities

The following article, “**Federal Grants: Local Churches Must Review and Understand Requirements**” by Heather Kimmel (published August 6, 2025), was recently released by **United Church of Christ News**. We are sharing it below in case your congregation has not received or reviewed this information. It contains important legal and policy guidance for churches that are applying for or receiving federal grant funds. Please read carefully and consult with your legal counsel as needed.

Federal Grants: Local Churches Must Review and Understand Requirements

by [Heather Kimmel](#) | published on Aug 6, 2025

On July 31, 2025, the Office of General Counsel shared via email certain information relating to federal grants with Conference Ministers, so that they could encourage their Local Churches to review and understand the terms of federal grants Local Churches may be considering. The email was shared with some Local Churches, and subsequently the text of the email was reproduced on social media and shared widely by people. Some folk questioned the authenticity of the text due to the lack of original source link; accordingly, the Office of General Counsel is providing similar information in this space. As always, the Office of General Counsel does not advise Local Churches of the United Church of Christ; however, it does provide information that Local Churches may find useful in determining their own next steps with the guidance of their own attorneys. Local Churches are encouraged to avail themselves of resources their Conferences may have and to be in touch with their Conferences on these matters.

The federal government has recently changed the terms and conditions of certain grants. Some Local Churches have received and relied upon HHS grants, FEMA grants, and other types of federal grants to support their ministries. Some Local Churches are planning to apply for federal grants under the [Nonprofit Security Grant Program](#). The [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) indicates the standard Department of Homeland Security terms and conditions will apply to subrecipients of the grants. Churches should carefully review the terms and conditions of any federal grant they are choosing to apply for with their own legal counsel. The [standard terms and conditions](#) for any DHS grant, including the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, now require recipients and subrecipients of the funding, among other things, to cooperate with immigration officials, not engage in or promote programs that engage in DEI, DEIA, or “discriminatory equity ideology” within the meaning of the [Executive Order](#), in violation of anti-discrimination laws, and not participate in discriminatory prohibited boycotts relating to Israel. [HHS is also requiring certification of compliance with not engaging in DEI activity](#). The terms and conditions of ANY federal funding MUST be carefully examined to ensure that accepting a grant does not make the church’s ministry an instrument of the state by dictating what religious activities the church can engage in and with whom the church can associate.

Whether Local Churches should accept the terms and conditions of these grants, what will happen if they are accused of violating them, and whether First Amendment defenses exist are issues and risks churches should raise with their legal counsel.

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ, various settings of the UCC, and its predecessor denominations, have a rich heritage of promoting religious freedom and tolerance. Believing that churches are strengthened, not weakened, by the principle of the separation of church and state, the UCC has long acknowledged its responsibility to protect the right of all to believe and worship voluntarily as conscience dictates, and to oppose efforts to have government at any level support or promote the views of one faith community more than another. At its twentieth gathering, the General Synod continued this legacy by encouraging the involvement of the United Church of Christ in a national campaign to promote the principle of the separation of church and state and the proper role of religion in society. The UCC has a long history of advocating against the establishment of religion by the government, and has taken public positions supporting the separation of church and state, including positions that argue against churches being eligible for public funding, such as the position that it took in the amicus brief it joined in *Trinity Lutheran v. Comer*. Each Local Church of the United Church of Christ can decide for itself whether to pursue funds from the government.

The information provided in this article is not legal advice. If you need legal advice, please consult with an attorney.

When Is the Newsletter Published?

Q: How often is the newsletter published?

A: At this point, the newsletter is published whenever there is information to send out. To help save costs, our long-term goal is to make the newsletter available only online.

We would love to send it out more regularly, but that depends on having enough content to share. If churches in the Living Waters Association are willing to send us their event information at least two months in advance, we can put together newsletters more often and keep everyone better connected.

Your contributions make the difference—please consider sharing your upcoming events so the whole association can celebrate and participate together.



Fall Gathering Information Coming Soon!

The **Living Waters Association Fall Gathering** is on the horizon—and while the official date is still being finalized, we encourage all congregations to **save the date now** and be on the lookout for more details in the coming weeks.

This annual gathering is an important time for connection, worship, learning, and decision-making across our Association.

It's also a **required event for congregations applying for Association grants**, as a delegate must be present.

What to Do Now:

- Mark your calendars tentatively for the fall season
- Make sure your church has a delegate ready to attend

Stay tuned for the official announcement, coming soon!

We look forward to seeing you there and strengthening the work we do together as the Living Waters Association.



Living Waters Association Small Church Grant Program Opens September 15, 2025

(Not associated with the article on the other page)

The Living Waters Association of the Nebraska Conference United Church of Christ is pleased to announce the opening of the 2025 Small Church Grant Program, beginning **September 15, 2025**.

These one-time grants are designed to support churches within our association that have fewer than 225 members. Each congregation may apply for up to \$500 in grant funds this calendar year. Please note: Total available funds are limited to \$5,000, so not all applications may be funded.

Eligible Uses for Grant Funds Include:

- Regular or special church events or functions
- Utilities and building maintenance
- Clergy continuing education (including travel)
- Church education events (youth or adult)
- Pulpit supply support

Application Requirements:

- The Data Hub reporting requirement has been waived this year due to system difficulties.
- Association dues must be current.
- A congregation member must be present at the Association Annual Meeting to receive a grant.

We encourage all eligible congregations to apply and make thoughtful use of these funds to strengthen ministry and community presence. Stay tuned for more information on the Fall Gathering date.

To apply visit the Living Waters Website at www.livingwatersassociation.org



Nebraska Conference Office Reopens in Burwell

We are pleased to share the good news that the Nebraska Conference Office has officially reopened. The office is now located in Burwell, Nebraska—right in the central part of our state and in the heart of our congregations. This location offers both convenience and a reminder that our Conference office is rooted in the midst of the people and churches it serves.

The new office is housed within the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Burwell. This partnership provides a welcoming home for the work of the Conference and strengthens our connection to the wider church. Here is the updated contact information for the Nebraska Conference Office:

Nebraska Conference Office Location

First Congregational UCC
657 H St
Burwell, NE 68823-4127

Nebraska Conference Mailing Address

C/O Kamp Kaleo
46872 Willow Springs Rd
Burwell, NE 68823

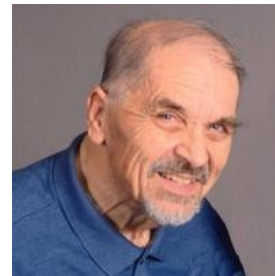
Phone: 515.277.6369

We encourage you to make note of this information and share it within your congregations.



For more information visit: www.kampkaleo.com

In Remembrance: Rev. Dr. Dorsie Ivy



We give thanks for the life and ministry of Rev. Dr. Dorsie Eugene Ivy, who entered eternal rest on July 23, 2025, in Columbus, Nebraska.

Born in Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1941, Dorsie grew up in a working-class family and discovered his call to ministry as a teenager. He pursued that call with dedication, studying at Grinnell College and earning advanced degrees from Chicago Theological Seminary. Over the years, he faithfully served congregations in Iowa, Illinois, and Nebraska, including many years at Federated Church in Columbus, where he retired in 2002. He also founded the Center for Growth in Clear Lake, Iowa, and guided many churches through interim ministry.

Dorsie was known for his love of music, puzzles, reading, and the joy he found in supporting his son and grandchildren at their school and sporting events. When asked late in life how he had touched so many people, he simply said it was because he had “a big heart.” Those who knew him will remember him as a kind, gentle, and deeply spiritual man.

We hold his family in prayer and celebrate a life lived in faith, service, and love.