



September 2026 Steeple Notes

*"You crown the year
with your bounty"*
-Psalm 65:11



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September F.H. Rental: Taichi Mon-Thurs 5pm-9:00pm & Saturday Mornings 9am-11am.		1 6:00PM BUILD CA 6:15PM 7:00PM Deacons	2 1:00PM Knitting	3 10:00AM Al-Anon	4 Office Closed	5
6 10:00AM Worship Service with Holy Communion †	7 Labor Day Office Closed	8 Trustees 7PM	9 1:00PM Knitting 6:00PM CE Meeting 6:30PM KnitWits	10 10:00AM Al-Anon 7:00PM Vocal Choir	11	12
13 10:00AM Worship Service 11:00AM Celebration Sunday	14 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	15	16 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM KnitWits 7:00PM Council	17 10:00AM Al-Anon 7:00PM Vocal Choir	18 6:30PM A Service of Comfort and Prayer	19
20 10:00AM Worship Service 11:00AM Memorial Garden Bake Sale	21 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group 5:00PM Fair Meeting	22	23 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM KnitWits	24 10:00AM Al-Anon 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Vocal Choir	25	26 10:00AM – 1:00PM Touch a Truck / Fill a Truck
27 10:00AM Worship Service 11:00AM-1:00PM Fill a	28 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	29	30 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM KnitWits			

Rev. Jane's Corner: My Week at Chautauqua

One of the gifts of ministry is that continuing education does not always have to look like sitting in a classroom under fluorescent lights taking notes from a PowerPoint. Sometimes it can look like walking beneath enormous old trees, listening to music drift out of an amphitheater, attending worship in the morning, hearing a lecture in the afternoon, visiting an art gallery before dinner, and ending the day feeling as though your mind has been stretched in twelve different directions.

This summer, one of my two continuing education weeks was spent at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York, and it was unlike any continuing education experience I have ever had....

Continuing reading about Rev. Jane's week by clicking <https://janewillan.com/desk/chautauqua>



Widening the Welcome: Introducing the Visiting Team

Something new is growing at Plantsville Congregational Church—and it begins with one of the simplest and most powerful things we can offer another person: **our presence**.

We are excited to introduce our new **Visiting Ministry**, a ministry devoted to visiting elderly and homebound members of our church and community. Peter Dripchak will be heading up this new program, bringing energy, organization, and heart to work that has already begun in wonderful ways.

Peter has already been making visits, as has Marilyn Walter, and Marilyn and I have also spent a good deal of time visiting together. These visits matter enormously. For those who are homebound, isolated, recovering, or simply unable to participate in church life as easily as they once did, a friendly face at the door can mean more than we sometimes realize. And from my perspective as pastor, having a team of caring people helping us stay connected with members of our wider church family is an enormous gift.

But the Visiting Ministry Team will be much more than a list of people making occasional visits.

Our hope is to build a **robust, thoughtful, well-prepared visiting ministry**. We'll offer some simple training together, because visiting someone you don't know well can feel intimidating. What do you talk about? How long should you stay? What if there are awkward silences? What if the person is grieving, lonely, or ill? We can learn these things together—and become better listeners, better companions, and better neighbors.

We're also imagining a "visiting buddy" plan in which volunteers might develop an ongoing relationship with a particular person. Over time, that connection could grow beyond conversation: perhaps offering a ride to church, helping someone attend a dinner or special event, or simply making sure that someone who cannot easily get out still feels deeply connected to our congregation.

This is really about one of the values at the heart of our church: **widening the welcome**.

Welcome does not stop at the church doors. Sometimes it travels down the road, pulls into a driveway, rings a doorbell, and sits down for a cup of coffee.

Watch your email and upcoming church announcements for information about how to become part of the Visiting Team. Whether you can visit once in a while or would love to build an ongoing friendship, there will be a place for you.

Sometimes ministry begins with simply showing up.

Summer Sunday School Reflections

Summer brings a little extra lightness to so many aspects of life, and Summer and Sunday School was no exception! While we always aim for Sunday School to be fun and educational, Sunday mornings had a lighter feel for the last several months. While we didn't follow the sermon lessons as closely as we did throughout the school year, there were still many lessons to be had, for the children and teachers alike!



This summer in Sunday School, we learned:

Creativity - From amazing egg drop creations, to beautiful chalk art, to inspired bead creations, the children had so many opportunities to let their creativity shine! Each of the children in Sunday School brings a unique perspective and talent to all the activities we engage in, and we are grateful for the ways they bring things to life!

Confidence - Something that goes hand in hand with creativity is risk taking. Doing something out of the box, and trying something new or difficult, all require some bravery. Given the variety of the activities over the last few weeks, and that they were child selected, meant each week saw different children emerging as leaders, and most weeks had someone doing something they'd never done before (Minute to Win It week especially)! We were so proud of the way the kids leaned in and truly let their confidence shine.

Compassion - If you ever want to see compassion in the Sunday School room, just stop by when there is a new child joining the class! Each child ensures new children are welcome and comfortable, giving them space or support as needed. They also extend the same grace to each other. Lego day was one of my favorites for seeing kids help each other, with both the directions and frustrations of tiny pieces!

Coping - Even when we're having fun, sometimes things get hard! Whether the loss of a race, a rouge basketball, or an errant splash, sometimes there were big feelings. Summer offered an easy opportunity for the children to try some new coping techniques, from squeezing slime, to taking a break on the beanbag (Thank you Friends Room for sharing!), or talking things through with the help of a teacher. They learned what strategies work best for them and found ways to manage stronger emotions.

Community - Most importantly, this summer we learned the importance of community. We worked together, learned new things about ourselves and each other, and grew as a classroom. By far, the lemonade stand was the children's favorite day. It was a day that combined their culinary and artistic skills, but also let them connect more broadly with our church community, and our town. Choosing which causes to support, and connecting those missions to their own lives and the lives of others, helped us to continue to build our connection to each other and the broader community.

One Sunday, Hailey shared, **"This is the best day ever!"** and we couldn't have hoped for more.

We are grateful to have been able to spend this time together, enjoying the fun and ease of summer, and can't wait to continue to build on these lessons as we head into fall!



Touch a Truck / Fill a Truck!

It's coming ! Sept 26th is Touch a Truck / Fill a Truck (rain date Oct 3rd)! The event will be held from 10am to 1pm and we will need some volunteers to make the day another success! We are thrilled to offer this free event for the community while "filling our truck" with nonperishables for Southington Community Services.

Due to your generosity we have enough matchbox cars this year for the giveaway and won't need to collect more!

CA will continue with the Fill the Truck part on Sunday Sept 27th from 11am—1pm. We need volunteers to help on Sept 26th. **Sign up in Fellowship Hall.**

We continue to actively recruit trucks and/or other cool vehicles to participate—anything from Trucks, to tractors, to golf carts...kids love to sit in them all! Please let Jill know if you have an idea or connection or have any questions! Thank you!



Memorial Garden Bake Sale

The Memorial Garden Committee will be having a bake sale on September 20th.

We recently had the fence surrounding the Memorial Garden cleaned, primed, and painted. Wayne Jewett did a beautiful job on it, and it looks like it did when it was new. The bake sale will help replenish some of the money that we spent on the fence.

If you would like your name added to our list of people who are willing to bake something for our bake sales, please let one of the Memorial Garden Committee members know. There will be a sign up sheet at the table.



A Service of Comfort & Prayer

Sometimes life gets loud. Sometimes the weight of it all feels like too much to carry alone. Sometimes you just need a quiet place to breathe.

This is that place.

Join us for an informal evening of quiet reflection, gentle prayer, and the simple comfort of being together.

**Come to sit quietly and rest.
Come to seek comfort and strength.
Come to share what's on your heart.
Come to remember you are not alone.
Come to escape, just for a brief time, the noise of everyday life.**

Whether you choose to sit in silence, light a candle, or share something with our small and caring community — there is a place for you here. *No judgment. No pressure. Just grace.*

□ **Friday, September 18th @6:30 PM**

All Are Welcome — Come As You Are

Bread for Life Summer Lunch Collection Recap

Thank you to all who donated to the Summer Lunch Program collection for Bread for Life. The Friends Room assembled approximately 500 bags this summer. This mission not only helped feed children in our community this summer, it also provided a meaningful job task for The Friends Room to complete. Thank you for your generosity. Please continue to support the Fruit Shelf Collection for SCS, an ongoing PCC mission. Thank you!



The Christmas Fair is Coming!

The Christmas Fair is November 14th from 9:00am to 2:30pm. There are plenty of ways to help with preparations and to get involved!



Calling all Bakers!

We are seeking volunteers to bake cookies for the church fair “Cookie Walk” which is noted for its past success! UCC (Unique Christmas Cookies) are encouraged, but all kinds will be greatly appreciated. If baking and freezing ahead, it is recommended you store them in freezer bags or air tight containers. Sign up sheets in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!

Jewelry Donations:

Charlotte Camilleri is accepting donations of jewelry. Please consider donating pieces such as earrings, bracelets, pins, necklaces, and rings you no longer wear. **We will begin taking donations September 14 behind the curtain on the stage.**

We cannot receive donations sooner because the band will be on the stage Sept 13th. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Silent Auction News

This year, the silent auction is changing the way we accept donations. We’re hoping to receive more gifts involving experiences and gift certificates rather than physical items. Do you have a favorite restaurant you visit regularly? Consider asking them for a \$50 gift certificate. Do you have a special skill you could share? Offer to spend a couple of hours teaching someone your technique. Do you work somewhere interesting? Someone might love a tour of your workplace.

As for physical items: in recent years, certain donations — dolls, Snow Babies, framed artwork, and crystal — haven’t brought in the money they once did, therefore, we’ll be selectively choosing items most likely to bring in strong bids. If you’d like to donate something, please send photos to:

Sue Smayda: ssmayda@gmail.com or Laurie Smedburg: k2_skimom@yahoo.com

Pie Making Day

Save the date for Wednesday, October 14th from 9:30am to 11:30am for Pie Making Day! Please come help assemble pies if you can! We are also asking for donations of pie crusts—please place crusts in the back refrigerator at the end of the hallway past the office. Thank you.

Help Us Advertise!

Like and share the Facebook Event for the Christmas Fair. Take a flier from Fellowship Hall to post in the community! Lawn signs will be available starting in October.

T-Shirt Reorder

We will be doing another ordering of Plantsville Congregation Church T-shirts to wear at events like the Fair, Touch a Truck/Fill the Truck or just to enjoy promoting our great church. Please reach out to the church office if you would like to order a Tshirt! Order deadline is September 20th.

More opportunities to come! Please keep your eye on the weekly bulletin for more Christmas Fair needs! Thanks!

Fruit Shelf

Our fruit shelf at Southington Community Services continues to be emptied almost daily. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this and keep those fruit cans rolling on in!!

Our church's donations supply the fruit shelf for Southington Community Services. Please remember your items to support this ongoing mission. Items like *applesauce and fruit cups* are greatly appreciated.



Operation Stay Warm

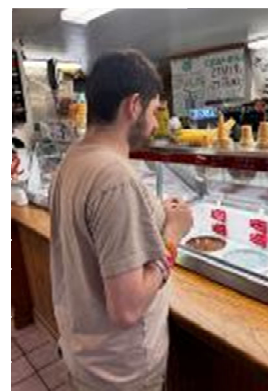
Our church is happy to host Southington Community Services for their Operation Stay Warm Coat Drive for it's third year at PCC. SCS will be using our rooms downstairs for the distribution of winter coats and winter accessories that have been previously collected. Operation Warmth will take place from October 3rd to October 17th.

The rooms are being manned by volunteers from various companies and civic organizations, including members of PCC. Volunteers from our church will be needed from our church October 5th sign up in Fellowship Hall.



The Friends Room Spotlight: Ice Cream Tour 2026!

What have our friends at The Friends Room been up to this summer? This summer, they've been on a mission to find the best ice cream in the state. Not only have they been enjoying delicious treats with their friends, but they are also practicing communication and life skills in real world settings- there is nothing more valuable than that! Simply put, it's about more than just ice cream!



Deacons Update

We are pleased to announce that Peter Dripchak will be joining the Deacons starting this September. Peter recently rejoined Plantsville Church and expressed the desire to become a Deacon after assisting with the weekly offering and serving as a volunteer greeter. He has a long history of church service, and we are delighted to have him as part of our group.

Thank you for your continued donations of bottles and cans. We worked diligently throughout the summer to sort and redeem your generous donations. Thank you!

Charlotte Camilleri

Co-Chair of the Deacons

Trustees Update

Here is the latest from the Trustees:

The garage roof replacement has been completed –thank you to all who helped with installation and cleanup!

The fire door to the boiler room on the lower level will be replaced this month, this is the result of a recent Fire Marshall visit to meet compliance.

The parsonage is being power-washed within the coming weeks as well.

Thank you, Dan Camilleri, Trustees chairman

Party and Event Space!

Graduation parties, baby showers, birthday parties, OH MY! All are possibilities in our lovely Fellowship Hall. Need a space to rent or know someone who does? Reach out to the church office to check availability!

A New 2026 Tax Benefit for Charitable Giving

Beginning with the 2026 tax year, taxpayers who take the standard deduction may be able to claim a new charitable deduction for cash gifts to qualifying public charities. This is especially helpful because many households do not itemize deductions, which has often meant that charitable gifts did not reduce taxable income. Under the new rule, eligible taxpayers may deduct up to \$1,000 for single filers or up to \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly for qualifying cash contributions.

Example for a single filer: If a single taxpayer gives \$1,000 in cash to Plantsville Congregational Church in 2026 and takes the standard deduction, that taxpayer may be able to deduct the full \$1,000. If the taxpayer is in the 22% federal tax bracket, the deduction could reduce federal income tax by about \$220.

Example for married filers: If a married couple filing jointly gives \$2,000 in cash to Plantsville Congregational Church in 2026 and takes the standard deduction, they may be able to deduct the full \$2,000. If they are in the 22% federal tax bracket, the deduction could reduce federal income tax by about \$440.

To qualify, gifts generally must be made in cash, check, credit card, electronic payment, or another cash-equivalent form to an eligible charitable organization. Members should keep records of their donations, and for any single gift of \$250 or more, a written acknowledgment from the church will be provided. As always, please consult a tax professional about your personal situation.

This new deduction is a meaningful opportunity to support the ministries, outreach, worship, and community care made possible through Plantsville Congregational Church. If you receive tax savings from your 2026 charitable giving, we invite you to consider donating those savings back to the church as an additional gift of gratitude and support.