

THE GOOD NEWS
From The
Stratford United Methodist Church

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SEPTEMBER 2025



The Rev. Suhee Kim, Pastor
Student Pastor: Abby Langford
Affiliated Pastors: Rev. Caroly Gibson,
Rev. George Hilton, Rev. James Stinson
Chris Muller, Director of Music
Beth Buckmir, Preschool Director
Church Office: Beth Sullivan, Secretary
Worship Technology: Jayden Zeleznik

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

September 7th ASP and Sunday School Rally Sunday

Spaghetti & Meatball Luncheon and Make Your Own Sundaes

10:00 a.m. Worship Service; no 8:15 a.m. Chapel Service.

Worship Leaders: Rev. Caroly Gibson and Ed Scofield



Pictures from the entire ASP Trip 2025 can be viewed at:

https://www.instagram.com/sumc_asp/?g=5

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE *(continued)*

September 14th

8:15 a.m. Chapel Service and 10:00 a.m. Worship Service Preacher:

Rev. Caroly Gibson

September 21st

8:15 a.m. Chapel Service and 10:00 a.m. Worship Service Preacher:

Rev. Caroly Gibson

September 28th

8:15 a.m. Chapel Service and 10:00 a.m. Worship Service Preacher:

Joyce Lewis

Pastor Suhee's Sabbatical Leave



In accordance with Paragraph 350.3 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline, I have requested and been granted a Spiritual Growth and Renewal Leave from June 8 through September 30. This opportunity is intended for clergy who have served full-time appointments for at least six years and seek time for deeper spiritual formation and renewal. After 13 years of continuous ministry without an extended break, I recognize the need to step away briefly to tend to my own spiritual well-being. During this time, Pastor Abby Langford, along with our four dedicated lay servants (Burdette James, Joan Gomez, Joyce Lewis, Betty McCready) and Rev. Caroly Gibson, will provide pastoral care and pulpit supply from June 8 to September 30. Thank you for your prayers and support during this season of renewal. I look forward to returning refreshed and ready to serve with renewed vision and strength.

Church Photo Directory Project

Join us this summer to commemorate our church's 235th anniversary by creating an updated photo directory! It has been more than 15 years since we last brought together individual and family photos to document our beloved church family.

If you cannot make it to church in person but would like to be visited at home to have your photo taken, contact the church office to set up a time. If you now live far away, you are welcome to submit a photo of your own to be included. These can be emailed to pastorabby@sumcct.org or mailed to the church.



YOUTH ACHIEVEMENTS

Our own Caitlyn Knight was presented with the Amity Regional School District No. 5 PTSO Special Achievement Award on May 30, 2025,



MUSIC PROGRAM NEWS



If you play an instrument, please share your talents with us in worship!
An audition is required to familiarize yourself with the music.

SEEKING NEW CHOIR MEMBERS



We are always looking for new members for the Choir and our Grace Notes Handbell Choir. If you or someone you know loves to sing, can read music, or would like to learn to play the handbells, please join us!

Choir Rehearsals begin on Thursday, September 4th at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary.

The Graces Notes Handbell Choir first rehearsal of the season is on Thursday, October 2nd at 5:30 pm

If you have questions, please speak to Chris after worship or email music.director@sumcct.org. Required rehearsal times are flexible. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings, and pieces are rehearsed several weeks in advance of presentation in worship so missing a rehearsal is generally OK. We also have short term rehearsal periods before during Advent and Lent.

Support our Music Program

If you would like to support the music program, donations can be made to the Church in honor or memory of a loved one or just to support the ongoing program with a note/notation intending your direct support of this important part of our worship.

Thank you! Chris Muller, Director of Music





Neighborhood Breakfast

The Neighborhood Breakfast is every third Saturday at SUMC. Eat-in breakfast will be served from 8:30am to 10am. Guests will be greeted at the back parking lot entrance. We would greatly appreciate your help serving breakfast, donating items, or your time, if you can. If you are interested in helping, send a message to missions@sumcct.org.

This month's breakfast will be Saturday, September 20th.

Please donate breakfast items such as fruit, granola bars, muffins, yogurt, etc. Thank you for your donations!

Toiletry Items are Being Accepted! Our team has been sharing donated toiletry items with guests who attend our monthly Neighborhood Breakfast. These items are greatly appreciated, and we could use more donations to offer at breakfasts in the months ahead. There is a donation bin located in the narthex, and both men's and women's items are being accepted. We will gladly accept any size item (full size, samples, etc.). Donations suggestions include (but are not limited to): soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste/toothbrush, deodorant, razors/shaving cream, lotion, tissues, and feminine products.

Golden Hill UMC Community Supper

- Volunteers Needed

The Golden Hill United Methodist Church in downtown Bridgeport is one of several Bridgeport churches that provide evening meals for those in need on different evenings of the week. Golden Hill hosts a meal every Wednesday. They provide the food, the location, and the planning. Others volunteer to provide the labor. **Our upcoming turn at Golden Hill UMC Community Supper is October 15th.** A cook and about 3 additional volunteers will be needed to start around 2:30 - 3:00 to prepare the meals. One to two volunteers will be needed to stay and help pack the meals from 5:30 on. Please contact Pat Knebel (pknebel@yahoo.com) in you are interested in volunteering.

The Lord's Kitchen

The next Lord's Kitchen will be on Monday, September 29th.

BIBLE CLASS LUNCHEON – JUNE 27, 2025

Our Bible Class had a wonderful luncheon this summer.



BIBLE CLASS LUNCHEON – JUNE 27, 2025



Sterling House



Food Donations for the Sterling House Food Pantry are always being collected in the bins in the narthex.

Food Pantry and Senior Deliveries

Low sodium canned vegetables, peanut butter & jelly, low sodium canned soups, whole wheat pasta, low sodium beans, canned tuna/chicken, sugar, shelf-stable milk, rice, oatmeal, granola bars, popcorn

Stratford Food-4-Kids Program

Baked beans, bread – small loaves/rolls, ramen noodles, canned vegetables, Chef Boyardee, Poptarts, canned fruit, peanut butter & jelly, canned soup, mac and cheese, oatmeal, juice boxes, cereal, granola bars

Resource Connection and Senior Deliveries

Body wash, shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, feminine care products



The Arts & Crafts Committee will meet again after the summer on a date TBD



Altar Flowers



Automatic altar flower orders are ongoing. Contributions towards our dedicated flower fund are always welcome and greatly appreciated!

If you would like to make an altar flower dedication, please contact JoAnn Schif at (203) 513-0514.

Arts and Crafts will be meeting for the first time this fall on Wednesday October 8. No meeting in September. We are collecting paper towel rolls for a project. Please no toilet paper rolls. Bring the rolls to church and give to Phebe or Virginia. Thank you!



Do small things with
great Love.



The **Historical Committee**, celebrating 235 years of Methodism in Stratford, is looking for a few good historians. Looking for people who are interested in our Church history and preserving its records. We file the paper trail of church activities and persons, write articles for the Good News, do displays (remember the Friendship Quilt display), change the year on the narthex sign.



There are other projects we can do if interested folks step up. Please speak to Phebe Kirkham.

INCIDENTS AND HAPPENINGS OUT OF OUR PAST

Musical Sounds of Summer

What were the sounds that you heard this summer? Your experiences may be very different from mine. I heard the sounds of children laughing and splashing in the water, motorboat engine sounds of all kinds and speeds, the cry of loons, the tune from the ice cream boat approaching, the chirps of an eaglet, the drone of a seaplane, chatters of a red squirrel, fireworks exploding, the swish of a paddle from a kayaker, the wind before a storm and the rain, the sound of silence late at night.

But I also heard music, from the radio, from our YouTube church service, from boats speeding past, from parties on the lakeshore, from the campers at the top of the lake.. As I was kayaking one early morning, the sun rising high, what popped into my head but the song, “Rise and Shine,” the one about Noah’s ark.

You know it—

The Lord said to Noah there’s gonna be a floody, floody.

The Lord said to Noah there’s gonna be a floody, floody,

take your children out of the muddy, muddy, Children of the Lord.

So rise and shine and give God the Glory, Glory.

Rise and shine and give God the Glory, Glory

Rise and shine and give God the Glory, Glory

Children of the Lord.

Started singing it to myself, but struggled with all the verses. Over the next few days the verses came back to me, with a little help from an Internet search. All those summers at Vacation Bible School, the youth group meetings and retreats, my 2 summers at a Methodist camp, Girl Scout meetings and camp overnights—we sang, and we sang! And learned about God’s love and grace.

Popped a Peter, Paul, and Mary CD in my stereo (yes, still them!). This was a recording of live concert performances from the early 1960s. Peter Yarrow engaged the audience with “Oh, Rock my Soul,”

A traditional African American spiritual. It is a lively and enthusiastic song, and Peter divided the audience to do different parts. They sang it fast, they sang it slow, they sang it loudly, they sang it softly. I turned up the volume and sang along.

Rock o' my soul in de bosom of Abraham,

Rock o' my soul in de bosom of Abraham,

Rock o' my soul in de bosom of Abraham,

Oh Lord, Rock o' my soul.

The verses however are the crucial part: We are heaven bound and it is there for us.

Too high, can't get over it

Too wide, can't get round it

Too deep, can't get under it

Gotta go through the door.

Did you sing this summer? In Church? At a campfire? Along with the radio? With the children or grandchildren? At a birthday, wedding, or anniversary celebration? Or even at a funeral? At a summer or beach concert? What joy or other emotion did you feel? Did you share it? What did you learn about God's love for us and others? Methodists are known for their singing. So sing!

by Phebe Kirkham

Fruits of the Spirit Word Search!



Love

Kindness

Self-control

Joy

Goodness

Fruits of the

Peace

Faithfulness

Spirit

Patience

Gentleness

A Special Service on August 3, 2025

On August 3rd, we had a *special communion service recognizing the United Methodist Church's work in and call to immigration justice.*

Rev. Paul Fleck, the Executive Director of Immigration Law & Justice New York (ILJNY) and an ordained elder in the New York Annual Conference, will preside over the communion table. During service, we also took a special offering for ILJNY, which is a United Methodist immigration ministry.



We look forward to seeing you all in September.

We have an exciting year ahead



**The Pumpkins will be arriving on the truck
right after the 10:00 a.m. Service on September 28th!**

