

The Stewartville Press

The Newsletter of Stewartville Presbyterian Church
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September 2026

The Ministers: All the Members

The Rev. Stephen Park Choi – Pastor

The Rev. Jack E. Roan – Pastor Emeritus

Brian Ballentine – Music Director

Denise DeMasi – Choir Director

Renée Herb – Office Manager

Sarah Sampson – Treasurer

Laura Choi – Christian Education Director

We will celebrate Holy Communion during the 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, Sept. 6.

We will resume our Regular Worship Schedule on Sunday, Sept. 13 with Worship Service and Children's Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday
Please see page 5 for information on Zoom link.

Rally Day Celebration. Please join us for Rally Day worship service on Sunday, Sept. 13, at 10:30 a.m.

David Rimelis, musician and composer, will be here. He was last here on Palm Sunday (see photo), and the children and adults thoroughly enjoyed his music, puppets, and Children's Sermon.

David will also be presenting a special prelude beginning at 10:15 a.m.

Children's Sunday School will begin on Sunday, Sept. 13.

Sunday School is for children ages 3 through 6th grade.

Sunday School will consist of a structured story/lesson/activity time.

The Nursery will still be staffed for any children younger than 3-years-old.



Rally Day Picnic. Please join us for our Rally Day Picnic after the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, Sept. 13.

The Fellowship Committee will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls, and beverages. Those attending are asked to bring a side dish or dessert.

For more information or to sign up, please call Linda Williams at 908-454-8104.

In Life and in Death, a Blessing

Over these past four months, you have surrounded me and my family with an extraordinary amount of love, prayer, and grace as we walked with my mother through her battle with cancer. Many of you prayed for her, checked in on me, gave me the freedom to travel to Chicago, and supported me as I tried to balance being a faithful pastor and a good son, who wanted to be there for his mom.

And when my mother died on August 8, that love continued. Thank you for all the cards, calls, text messages, prayers, hugs, and kind words. Thank you for giving me the space to grieve while reminding me that I do not grieve alone.

As I reflect on my mother's life and death, one word keeps coming to mind: Love.

Mom was all about love. She loved her family fiercely, cared deeply for her friends, and always seemed to put other people before herself. She never wanted to bother, burden, or inconvenience anyone. In many ways, even her death reflected that same kind of love.

The timing of her passing came at what, for my family, was the most opportune time possible. I had just returned home from the mission trip. Ella was about to finish her final exam. Henry had not yet started classes. And Tay was able to travel, because enough time had passed since her surgery.

It was almost as if mom had once again thought about everyone else before herself.

But something else happened through mom's passing that I believe was another gift of her love: She brought people together.

Family members gathered who had not seen each other in many years. We shared stories, laughed and cried a lot, ate together, and reminisced. There was something beautiful about watching my family reconnect and discover that, despite the years and distance, the bonds of love were still there.

My mother's death also brought another unexpected gift into my life. I reconnected with my childhood best friend. Mom had been sad that we were no longer close. And now, because of her, we found our way back together again, and we have promised to stay in touch.

Perhaps this is one of the greatest gifts a person can leave behind – not simply memories of what they did, but relationships renewed, people reconciled, families gathered, and love shared.

I am grateful for my mother's life. I am grateful for the love she gave us. And I am grateful that, even in her death, she continued to give and to love.

In life and in death, may we also find ourselves to be a blessing.

May we also love generously. May we put others before ourselves. May we bring people together. May we mend relationships and make room for grace. And when our time comes, may the lives we have touched bear witness to the love we shared.

This is the kind of life my mother lived. And that is the kind of life I hope all of us can live as well.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

2026 Summer Mission Trip UrbanPromise WorkGroup Program in Camden, NJ



Our Mission Trip Team: Henry Choi, Nancy Sampson, Lisa Muentener, Carol Evanoski, Jake Muentener, John Muentener, Luke Muentener, and Pastor Stephen.



During our week with UrbanPromise, we helped with the summer camp program. All of us were impressed by the kindness and enthusiasm of the children. We also spent time working at their food pantry.



We celebrated "Christmas in July" during the worship service on Sunday, July 26. Many people in the congregation dressed up for the holiday, and we had a special appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus!



In August, we observed a summer tradition: The Men and Women of the church singing! The men of the church sang "How Great Thou Art" on Sunday, Aug. 16, and the women sang "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" on Sunday, Aug. 23.



SUNDAY ZOOM WORSHIP

In September, we will celebrate Holy Communion during the 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, Sept. 6. Please be prepared with bread and juice/wine.

We will resume our **regular worship schedule** on Sunday, Sept. 13, with worship service at 10:30 a.m. The Zoom service is broadcast live during the in-person worship service.

Please join us every Sunday morning by using the link below or by calling with the Meeting ID.

The great thing about Zoom is even if you do not have a computer or smartphone, you can still phone in to listen to the service.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office at office@stewartsvillepc.org or call the church during our regular office hours, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94418910396?pwd=WlQwMHByZHZUMy9sTFpQaThEMkRvdz09>

Dial by your location

1-646-558-8656 (New York)

Meeting ID: 944 1891 0396

Passcode: 08886

Adult Lunch Group. "Grazing with Grace," our Adult Lunch Group will meet on Thursday, Sept. 10, at 11:30 a.m. at Pizza Village Cafe, 665 Columbus Ave., Phillipsburg.

We had 15 people attend the July luncheon, and we collected \$29 for the NORWESCAP Food Bank. At the August luncheon we had 29 people, and collected \$45 for the Food Bank. Each month we encourage participants to bring a can of soup or \$1 to the luncheon to donate to the Food Bank.

If you plan to attend the September luncheon, please call Louisa Miers at 908-763-3861 by Monday, Sept. 7, to make your reservation.



Friday Devotional Group. The Friday Devotional Group will resume studying and discussing "Holy Envy" by Barbara Brown Taylor on Friday, Sept. 11. The group meets each Friday at 8:00 a.m. in the library and on Zoom.

If you would like to participate, please contact Pastor Stephen.



Voices Needed! Our choir will meet for the first rehearsal of the season on Sunday, Sept. 13 at 9:30 a.m. in the choir room behind the sanctuary.

All interested new members, ages 13 and above, are encouraged to join us every Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. in the choir room. We will be singing during the 10:30 a.m. worship service each week.

No musical experience is necessary, so come join the fun with our growing choir! We look forward to lifting our voices to the Lord!

For more information, see Denise DeMasi or email her at demasid13@gmail.com

SPC Youth Choir. All children ages 3-12 are invited to join Miss Denise and Mr. Bruce for SPC Youth Choir.

We will rehearse after the 10:30 a.m. worship service, 2 times a month for about 30 minutes.

The first rehearsal is Sunday, Sept. 20.

For more information, see Denise DeMasi or email her at demasid13@gmail.com

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

As of Sept. 1, we have received \$21,564 for our Capital Campaign. Our goal is to raise \$30,000.



Adeline Rose Fry, daughter of Evan and Ashley Fry, was born on Thursday, July 9. She weighed 6 lbs. 4.5 oz, and was 20" long. Her grandparents are Brad and Lisa Fry. Adeline will be baptized during the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, Sept. 27.



Thank You Note. We received the following thank you note from Hudson Musuuza, our former UrbanPromise fellow, who returned to his home in Uganda in July:

"My beloved family of SPC, I want to say that I am grateful for your love, prayers and words of encouragement as I head home. I am grateful to God for his grace that has carried me through. I request your prayers, and prayers, and prayers! Thank you so much!"

Adult Sunday School Class. The Adult Sunday School Class will meet at 9:20 a.m. every Sunday beginning Sept. 20. The class meets in the library and on Zoom. This fall, our class will continue its study on the book of 2 Peter.

Church Trivia Team. Do you enjoy trivia? We are putting together a trivia team to play locally about once a month. If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Stephen.

Catholic Charities Food Pantry. We continue to donate food and toiletries to the Catholic Charities Food Pantry. In July, we donated 16 bags of food and toiletries. In August, we donated 18 bags. At this time, the Food Pantry is in need of food for school lunches, including peanut butter and jelly, juice boxes, snack-size bags of pretzels, and individual packs of fruit snacks, as well as grocery bags.



- 3 Tayliss Choi
- Dale & Lynn Alpaugh – Anniversary
- 4 Michael Diacopoulos
- 7 Jim & Janis Clark – Anniversary
- 8 Sarah Sampson
- 10 Brian Ballentine
- Barry & Tammy Oberly – Anniversary
- 11 Jeff Schoeneberger
- 15 Dave Bove
- Noelle Steller
- Evan & Ashley Fry – Anniversary
- Chris & Laurie Winans – Anniversary
- 17 Lindsey Culcasi
- 18 Christopher Hamlen
- 19 Jim & Cindy Bowman – Anniversary
- 20 Eileen Gercie
- 21 Jean Bradbury
- 22 Tim & Melanie Loyle – Anniversary
- 23 Diane Olsen
- 28 Eileen Miers
- 29 Lisa Fry

Birthday/Anniversary List. Are we missing your birthday or anniversary? Please let the office know, either by calling 908-859-1399 or e-mailing office@stewartsvillepc.org. We don't want to miss your special day!

Aluminum Can Collection. Habitat for Humanity NWNJ is collecting aluminum cans and anything else aluminum.

There is a bin in the back of the sanctuary where you can deposit your cans, etc.

We are also still collecting aluminum can tabs for Ronald McDonald House Charities. There is a container on the table in the back of the sanctuary where you may put them.

August Deacons Offering. Thanks to your generosity, we received \$305 for the August Deacons Offering. This offering supports the work and ministry of our Deacons.

Session Notes – August 31, 2026

- We opened our meeting together with the lighting of the Christ candle and devotions led by Elder Brad Fry.
- Approval was given for the Baptism of Adeline Rose Fry, child of Evan and Ashley Fry on Sunday, September 27.
- We made the prayerful decision to donate:
 - Make-A-Wish New Jersey: \$500
 - Warren County Police Chief's Association: \$275
- Donations of new kitchen items were also made for the Presbyterian Depot.
The Presbyterian Depot is a collaborative mission partnership of Old Greenwich, Pilgrim, and Stewartsville Presbyterian Church which helps provide essential kitchen and household items to families in need throughout the Phillipsburg area.
- We will have Communion on Sunday, September 6 and not on Rally Day, September 13, this year.
- Staff reviews will be conducted before the end of the year.
- Our next Session meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 28.
- Treasurer's Report:
As of July 31, we have a year-to-date deficit of \$10,031 in our General Fund Budget.
As of August 1, we have received \$21,444 for our Capital Campaign. (Our Goal is \$30,000.)
- As we concluded our meeting, we committed to praying for one another and our church, lifted up our joys and concerns, and closed with the Lord's Prayer.



Women's Circle. The Women's Circle will meet on Thursday, Sept. 24, at 6:00 p.m. at Warrendale Tavern, 511 Route 173, Stewartsville.

All women are invited to join us for a meal, good conversations, and the opportunity to encourage one another.

For more information or to make a reservation, please call Linda Williams at 908-454-8104.

Women's Fall Retreat. The Women's Fall Retreat at Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center will be held from Friday, Oct. 23 through Sunday, Oct. 25. The theme for the retreat is "Spiritual Practices for a Practical People."

Registration is now open, and is expected to fill up quickly.

We offer scholarships to the retreat. Please speak with Pastor Stephen if you are interested.

For more information on the retreat and registration, please contact Linda Williams at 908-454-8104.



Trunk or Treat! We will have Trunk or Treat on Sunday, Oct. 25 in the church parking lot after the 10:30 a.m. worship service.

Children can wear costumes and go from car to car collecting candy and other goodies. Adults can participate by dressing up, purchasing candy, etc., and handing it out at their cars.

For more information, or to reserve your parking spot, contact Janis Clark at JanisR500@gmail.com

Stewartsville Presbyterian Church – September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 7 pm Deacons Meeting 7 pm AA	3	4 8 am Devotional Group, Panera	5
6 10 am Worship Service with Holy Communion 6 pm AA	7 Church Office Closed for Labor Day	8	9 7 pm AA	10 11:30 Adult Lunch Group, Pizza Village Cafe 7 pm Grange	11 8 am Devotional Group	12 10 am Samplemakers
13 Regular Worship Schedule 10:15 am Special Prelude 10:30 am Worship Service and Children's Sunday School Church Picnic after Worship Service 6 pm AA	14	15	16 7 pm AA	17	18 8 am Devotional Group	19 6 pm County Grange
20 9:20 am Adult Sunday School 10:30 am Worship Service and Children's Sunday School Youth Choir Practice after Worship Service 6 pm AA	21	22	23 7 pm AA	24 6 pm Women's Circle, Warrendale Tavern	25 8 am Devotional Group	26 10:30 am Private Use of Roan Hall
27 9:20 am Adult Sunday School 10:30 am Worship Service and Children's Sunday School Time for Fellowship after Worship Service 2 pm Deacons Chapel Service 6 pm AA	28 7 pm Session Meeting	29	30 7 pm AA			