The Messenger

First Congregational Christian
UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

September 2026

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From the Pastor – September 2026

Change in the ancient Christian traditions happens slooooowwwwwlllllyyyyyy. So, sometimes it's like watching an eclipse, or pandas mating, when we finally see this much of the global church coming together to do a new thing, a permanent thing.

A new liturgical holiday is coming to a worship service near you! Like the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6th or All Saints' day on November 1st, the liturgical calendar for all major global denominations will be celebrating the Feast Day of Creation on September 1st and Creation Sunday on the first Sunday in September. According to the homepage at www.feastofcreation.com:

> Since the 7th century, September 1 has symbolized the day of God's creation of the world in the Byzantine tradition and has been the opening feast and "the beginning" of their liturgical year (in a parallel with the feast of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year). A series of ecumenical conferences, known as 'The Assisi Process,' has explored that rich theological symbolism and the potential of the 'Feast of Creation in Christ' to enrich the Christological nature of non-Byzantine liturgical calendars. In short, the feast contains four interrelated themes: (1) Creation as God's creative act, (2) Creation as Christological mystery, (3) Creation as Trinitarian mystery, and (4) Creation as sacramental and covenantal.

What has been a commonplace in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and picked up by the Roman Catholic Church in 2015, has now been adopted and assimilated by different worldwide traditions including the Revised Common Lectionary used by most liturgical Protestant denominations, including the United Church of Christ. According to the UCC's Worship Ways website:

> The addition [of the new feast day] was approved by the board of the Consultation on Common Texts, the ecumenical liturgical body that developed and curates the RCL, in coordination with the Feast steering committee led by the World Council of Churches in collaboration with various Christian world communions and the Middle East Council of Churches. This is the first time a new feast has been adopted since the release of the common lectionary in 1974.

In addition, this is the first time *since 998 CE,* when All Souls' day (Nov. 2) was adopted, that this much of the global church celebrated a new liturgical feast day. I told you things happen slowly!

Consequently, on the first Sunday of September, September 6th, we will worship in celebration with the vast majority of the Christian world, lifting up the mystery of Creation, Christ's role in Creation, and our role in bringing about New Creation.

There are not many Sundays when you can simply show up for what would otherwise be a typical church service and still make global history. And yet, we will have occasion to do just that. So, consider joining us and being a part of the chorus of Christians throughout the world praising God for the gift of Creation and contemplating our stewardship of our small corner of the cosmos.

September WORSHIP CALENDAR
Sundays at 11:00 AM

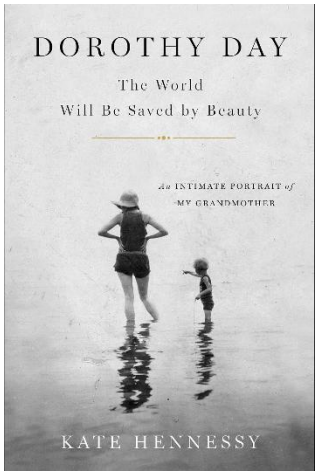
Services are also (live)streamed on YouTube at
www.youtube.com/@fccucchesterfieldva8567

September 6 — **Creation Sunday (Communion Celebrated)**
John 1:1-5 "And the Word Became Fresh" with Rev. Willson

September 13 — **16th Sunday after Pentecost (New Member Sunday)**
Romans 14:1-12; "To Eat or Not to Eat?" with Rev. Willson

September 20 — **17th Sunday after Pentecost**
Matthew 20:1-16; "I'm Reporting This to HR!" with Rev. Willson

September 27 — **18th Sunday after Pentecost (FCCUCC Anniversary Sunday)**
Philippians 2:1-13; "To Will & To Work for God's Good Pleasure" with Rev. Willson



New Faith Formation class begins September 6

For this fall study, we will be discussing "Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved by Beauty" by her granddaughter, Kate Hennessy. Join us Sunday mornings at 9:30!

Sep 6 – Preface - p.21

Sep 13 – Ch. 2 (pp.22-34)

Sep 20 – Ch. 3 (pp.35-51)

Sep 27 – Ch. 4 (pp.52-66)

September Birthdays

Patty Beatman 9/12
Doug Macauley 9/21
Herman Morris 9/27
Don Hall 9/30

September Anniversaries

Kishon & Kristen Lee	9/20
John & Madeline Meszaros	9/21

Along with all of "Metro Richmond at Prayer," during September let's pray for Schools and Educational Institutions of Metropolitan Richmond.

The Breakfast Club

Saturday, Sept 19, 9 AM

Joe's Inn – Bon Air
2616 Buford Rd

Helping Hands Meeting

Sunday, September 13

Fall is a busy time! Join us after worship on Sept. 13 for a planning update, and on Sept. 27 at a baby shower reception for Minjee. More details to come in the weekly bulletin.

From the Nominating Committee

As fall approaches, the Nominating Committee for 2027 will be starting to get to work. If you have an interest in serving as an officer or on a committee next year, or are currently serving and would like to continue, please let one of our committee members know. This is a great way to get more involved, especially for our newer members! The committee consists of Barbara Walrod, Brenda Clancy, and Michelle Hinton.

Updates from Staff-Parish Relations

A big thank you from SPRC Chair Helen Parry to everyone who helped develop and distribute the evaluation survey for Pastor Daniel. At last count 68 survey forms were distributed, 30 were returned. Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the survey.

Pastor Daniel received Very Effective and Effective ratings for his sermons and leading worship, Faith Formation as well as his involvement in Social Justice. At this point Pastor Daniel and the SPRC have not had an opportunity to discuss the open-ended questions.

At the Congregational Meeting on August 9, the membership voted unanimously to call Pastor Daniel as our permanent settled pastor. An installation ceremony is scheduled for October 11 at 3 PM. Please mark your calendars and plan to celebrate with us!

New Member Sunday Sept 13

We will be welcoming new members into the church during the worship service on Sept 13. If you are interested in joining at this time, please speak with Pastor Daniel.

Virginia Pridefest
Saturday, September 12
12 – 8 PM
Midtown Green

We will again be sharing a booth with St. John's UCC to share our extravagant welcome with the LGBTQ community. Join us at the Midtown Green (formerly Bon Secours Training Center), 2401 W. Leigh St. to help pass out rainbow bracelets and UCC Pride buttons and welcome our neighbors. The booth will be staffed from 12-6. We need 2-3 volunteers per shift. You can sign up for one or more 2-hour shifts; sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

July 2026 Treasurer's Report

Opening balance – July 1 (checking + savings)	$53,202
Deposits	$7459
Expenses	$9403
Ending balance – July 31	$51,258

GOTV Postcarding Update

Our nonpartisan fall postcarding campaign to promote voter registration and get-out-the-vote reminders to Black voters in Virginia is well underway. To date, 13 people (including one from outside the congregation) have committed to writing a total of 1000 postcards! The window for mailing completed cards runs from Sept 11 – Oct 13, so there is still plenty of time to participate. Postcards, addresses, script, and detailed instructions are provided - you only need to provide stamps. For those who can't afford stamps, we have some that have been generously donated for this project. If you would like to write – or if you have finished your packet and are willing to write more - contact Gail Christie.

Registration is now open for the 56th annual Richmond CROP Hunger Walk. This family- and pet-friendly 5K walk is our biggest annual mission project, and everyone is invited to participate as a walker, a donor, or both. You can even register and walk virtually and just fundraise online.
You can register to join our walk team at:
https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/team/first-congregational-christian-ucc
More details will follow in next month's Messenger.

HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Saturday, Nov 14
10 AM – 3 PM

Planning is underway for our annual Holiday Craft Bazaar. We are trying slightly different hours this year, in response to vendor feedback from last year's event. Mark your calendars now and invite family and friends. This is the major annual fundraiser for our Missions and Outreach ministries. Please share this information with any crafters you might know; contact Gail Christie for registration forms and vendor information. It is also not too soon to start collecting your gift-quality items for the Women's Fellowship Olde Curiosity Shoppe.

RICHMOND COMMUNITY LEGAL FUND

Donation Call

As reported in the news this past week, ICE has arrested over 15,000 people in Virginia since the beginning of Trumps's second term in office. Thousands of local families have been left without their breadwinners and are in critical need of legal assistance and community support. Ongoing donations to the Richmond Community Legal Fund Emergency Defense Fund are urgently needed. Please give what you can to help our most vulnerable neighbors!
https://secure.actblue.com/donate/rclf-launch

Our monthly Social Justice Witness will be held on **Sunday, September 20** from 12:30 – 1 PM. Grab a snack at fellowship time and the join us in front of the church along Courthouse Road. Bring a sign - or borrow one of ours. Chairs can be provided if standing is a hardship.

Early voting for the Nov 3 election starts September 18. You can vote by mail-in absentee ballot or in person. In Chesterfield, early voting is only at the Central Library until Oct 18, when the satellite voting locations will open at 5 libraries (and anyone in the county can vote at any satellite location). Absentee (vote by mail) ballots can also be returned to drop boxes at the Registrar's Office, at the satellite voting locations, and at your precinct on Nov 3. Given the current uncertainties about mail-in ballots and federal election monitors, we recommend voting early, in person – or, if you receive an absentee ballot automatically by mail, we encourage returning it to a drop box. Curbside voting for the elderly and disabled is available at all polling locations during voting hours.

VOTE EARLY	Central Library 7051 Lucy Corr Blvd, Chesterfield	5 Libraries Clover Hill, LaPrade, Meadowdale, N. Courthouse Rd., Etterick-Matoaca
	Mon – Fri 9 AM – 5 PM Starting Sept 18	Mon – Fri 10 AM – 6 PM Starting Oct 19
	Sat Oct 18 & 25: 9 AM - 5PM; Sun Oct 24 & 31: 11 AM – 4 PM	
	Last day to vote early: Oct 31	Election Day: Nov 3 6 AM – 7 PM at your precinct

You can check your registration status, update your address, apply for an absentee ballot, or even register to vote at: https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation

If you need early voting information for other localities and you can't find it online, ask Gail Christie for help.

Who/what is on my ballot?

This year, you will be voting for one Senator and a member of the House of Representatives. In Chesterfield, there are also two special elections to fill vacancies: Board of Supervisors in the Dale District; School Board in the Clover Hill District. Richmond City has a School Board election in District 6; Powhatan has a Board of Supervisors election in District 5. There may be local referendums as well. Sample ballots are available on the website of your local Registrar's office.

There are also **3 Constitutional Amendments** on the ballot this year. These are all in areas where the UCC has taken an active interest. Amendment 1 would enshrine reproductive freedom. Amendment 2 removes the prohibition on same-sex marriage from the VA Constitution and protects marriage equality. Amendment 3 removes the requirement that voting rights be restored individually by the governor to those who have completed serving their sentences for a felony conviction (VA is the only state with such a barrier) and would restore these rights automatically. You can read the full text of these amendments at https://www.elections.virginia.gov/election-law/referenda/

Important deadline: October 23: Deadline to Register to Vote or update voter information and deadline to request Vote by Mail Ballot (must be received by Registrar's office by 5 PM)
Voters also may register after this date in person, through Election Day, at the Registrar's Office, satellite early voting locations, or at their precinct on Nov 3, and vote using a provisional ballot.

Looking ahead from the Board of Missions and Social Justice

Fall is a busy time! Here are some important dates to keep in mind. Additional details for each will follow as they draw nearer, but make note of them now!

Fall Missions and Social Justice Calendar

Saturday, September 12	Richmond Pridefest 12-8 @ Midtown Green
Sunday, October 4	Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering
Sunday, October 18	RISC House “Listening” Meeting 12:15 PM
Sunday, November 8	56th Annual Richmond CROP Hunger Walk Registration/Rally 1:30, Walk 2 PM Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
Tuesday, November 9	RISC Community Problems Assembly 7 PM
Saturday, November 14	Holiday Bazaar (fundraiser for our Missions programs)
Sunday, November 22	Special Thanksgiving Mission Offering
Sunday, November 29	Christmas Mother Gifts due
Sunday, December 20	Special Christmas Mission Offering