

OCTOBER 5, 2026

Chester Bethel UMC

The Grapevine

2026 NEWSLETTER

FALL EDITION



CBUMC's new Single Board meets to take care of church business



*Christmas Shop opens
October 21st, 2026*



Single Board Begins ...

Chester Bethel now is governed by a Single Board, combining all the decision-making functions of Finance, Trustees, Cemetery, etc. into one body. They met for the first time on Sept. 9

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Church Building Improvements ...

It's been a busy summer around the church! While many of you have been away on vacation or at the beach some significant upgrades have taken place. I'll bet you noticed some of them!

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How Can I Help My Church and my community?...

Have you ever looked at the world and thought, "But what can I do to help?"

Here are a few ideas we had; I'm sure you can come up with more!

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CHURCH BUILDING NEWS

Parking lot paving for the church, preschool, thrift shop and cemetery is now complete, with new striping and arrows so cars only go in by the entrance and out by the exit—thank you for paying attention to the markings! Michael's Paving was the contractor.

A new water line now runs behind the church, across the alley and connects with the parsonage. The old one was leaking in more than one spot, and no one thinks that's a good or thrifty plan! Joe Russo of Russo Bros. did the work.

The roof leaks over the offices, classrooms, narthex, and kitchen storage are now re-roofed with a 25-year warranty. Years of valiant attempts to patch problem areas had reached a logical end and everyone believes this replacement and repair will see Chester Bethel through many more years of water-tight coverage! The roofing contractor is R&R Roofing and Remodeling.

Finally, the two dwarf blue spruce outside the church doors finally outgrew the space. They were originally donated by the Greers and served the church well for many years. Willard Barrowclough and Tony Conkling cut them down and removed the stumps, preparatory to planting replacement evergreen shrubs.

The Trustees considered three different quotes for the paving and roofing work and chose the firms best suited to Chester Bethel's goals. These are major projects and much thought was given to their funding, timing, and long term security for the building.



Prayer Requests

Norma Saulsbury (H);
 Sandra Greer (H);
 Dave McFarlan (H);
 Sam (H); Millie Burke (H);
 Janet Canavan (H); Linda Lyons (H);
 Bill and Doreen Jones (H);
 Ramona Harlow (LT);
 Donna McCormick (H); Gail Kracyla (H);
 Dominic King (LT); Jill Brownback (LT);
 Nancy Walker (LT);
 MaryAnn Rumford (LT);
 Rick Browne (LT);
 all peoples impacted by war (LT)

It is *The Season of Creation* in the Christian Church



Blessing the Animals

•On Oct 11, we will be having our annual Blessing of the Animals service at 9:30 am.

If you have a pet (dog, cat, bird, horse - no matter the size!) or a picture of your pet, you're invited to bring him or her to church for an outdoor worship service.

During the service, there will be a time of introduction for each animal, a blessing over each animal, and lots of breaks for water and other necessities!

A beautiful example of what has often been described as God 'making the world to make itself'.

Praise God for humble moss,
without whom we,
Who live and breathe and leap
and laugh and praise,
Could no more do such things.
Praise God for days
Long past when mosses spread
from sea to sea
A continental carpet breathing
fresh
New life into the oxygen starved
air.
Praise God for lungs which
found that they could bear
To breathe this atmosphere.
Praise God for flesh
Which crept and crawled and
leapt and breathed and moved
Among the lichens, liverworts
and ferns.
Praise God for life's tenacity
across
The ages as it gradually
improved,
Evolved, developed hopes,
dreams and concerns.
For all of this, praise God for
humble moss.

Rich Clarkson, 2017

-courtesy of UMNews

*photo - Beth Burnam,
in Fort William, United Kingdom*



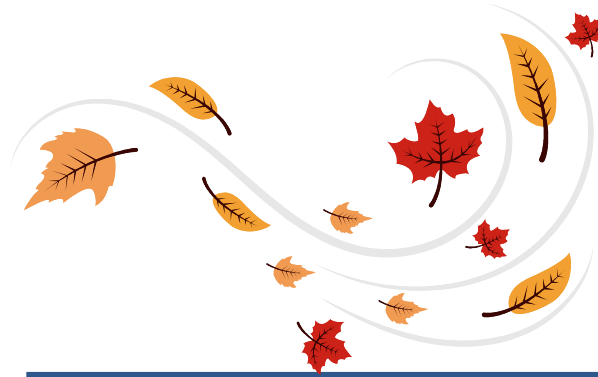
Mission News

For the final six months of 2026, Mission donations will be evenly split between 3 local charities: Pecometh Camp, Sojourner's Place and Chester Bethel's own Good Samaritan Fund which helps with electric bills, rent, and other emergency needs of our neighbors.

Your mission contributions for the first six months of 2026 were given to Food Bank of Delaware, The Salvation Army, and NCC Habitat for Humanity, each charity receiving \$817 to continue their work feeding and housing those in need.



Thank you to Dora and Edgar Greer for their generous donation of the landscaping spruce-up for the church's entry --it looks great!



Ways I Can Help My Church

- Let my friends and neighbors know of the Thrift Shop; a critical source of income to our church and to area charities
- Come to *Trick or Trunk* and collect food for Claymont food pantry
- Volunteer, even if you cannot physically lift donations or climb stairs perhaps you can bring cookies or write cards, encouraging others.
- Consider making a donation to the Good Samaritan Fund, remembering "when I was hungry, you gave me food" and the many facing hard times. Every day there is a request for help and often we have to say, **we can't**.
- Dedicate a donation to the building improvement fund, possibly in honor of someone's birthday or anniversary.
- Thank the volunteers who keep the grass mowed, the lights on, and the bills paid.
- Pray without ceasing



Dear Preschool Parents and Church,
**COME AND JOIN US FOR A
FUN AND SPOOCTACULAR**



Trunk or Treat!

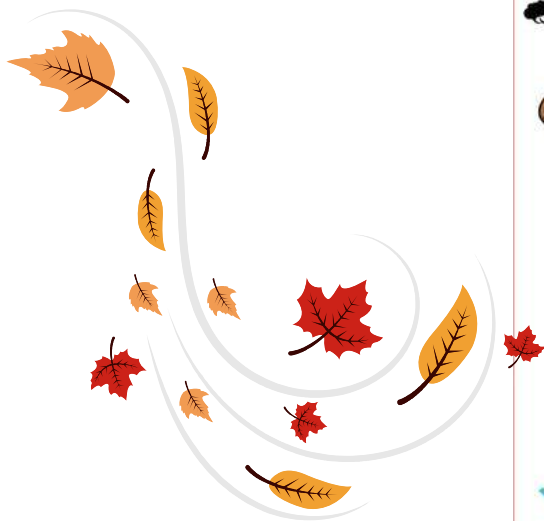
October 24TH-Saturday
Chester Bethel Parking Lot
1-3 PM

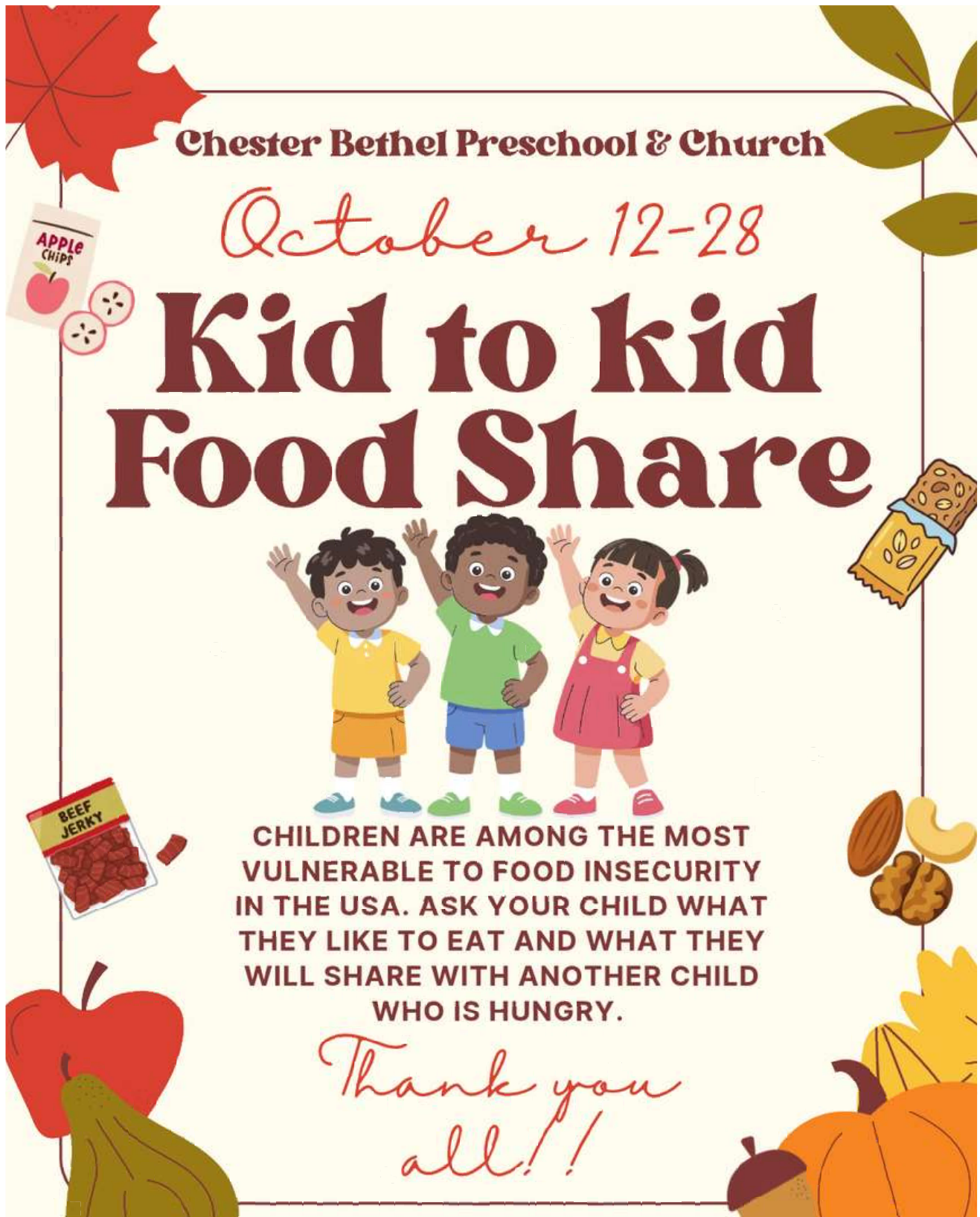
Free Hot Dogs! Just bring a shelf
stable food item for Donation!!

Blessing of the Animals

October 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Bring
your pet or
bring a picture
of your pet for
a joyous blessing!





Single Board Chester Bethel UMC

**Co-chairs - Sylvia Illuzzi
& Yvonne Kaciuban**
Lay Leader - Sylvia Illuzzi
Financial Secretary - Bonnie Wright
Treasurer - Yvonne Kaciuban
Trustee - Bill White
Trustee - Willard Barrowclough
Trustee - Tony Conkling
SPRC - Barbara Coulbourn
SPRC - Linda Lyons

The Single Board for CBUMC meets monthly at 6 pm on second Thursdays to consider all the matters previously discussed by various committees. Missions is an exception, as is Thrift Shop and Hospitality who all hold their own meetings and act within their guidelines. Reports from these three ministries are submitted on an as-needed basis to the Board.

Meetings are open to all; confidential personnel issues will be discussed at private sessions limited to the board .

If you have church issues or proposals to bring before the Single Board please submit them in writing to one of the Chairs for consideration at a meeting.

THRIFT SHOP UPDATES

With Fall here already we are getting ready to open our **Christmas Shop on Oct. 21st.** then will **close Dec 19** for Christmas , **reopening Jan. 6.**

We have a devoted group of volunteers from Chester Bethel and other churches and customers. This year we were able to again open Saturdays but we are always in need of volunteers. It's a great way to make new friends!

We started out with a bang in 2025 taking in \$81,000 and 2026 promises to be even better. Each of the nine charities we support received \$875 --that's a significant donation! Whenever we are overwhelmed we always know **GOD WILL PROVIDE!**

Important Dates to Remember

- **October 8, 6 pm – Single Board Meeting**
- **October 11 – Blessing of the Animals**
- **October 24 – Trunk or Treat from 1-3 pm**
- **Nov. 12, 6 pm - Single Board mtg**
- **Nov 29 - Joint worship at CB with MtL**
- **Dec. 10, 6 pm - Single Board mtg**
- **Dec. 23-24 - Christmas Live Nativity**

Hope in Difficult Times

By Pastor Kelly Conner

As a child, I had trouble falling asleep. I would worry about the things I had coming up for the next day – like a school project, or a difficult problem with a friend, or even personal goals that were yet unmet. I would worry about the safety of my family. I would worry about my future, and about whether or not I would be able to get a good scholarship to college. (I was a very anxious child – not much has changed!) My mom would often come to sit and talk with me before bed, because as she said, I wouldn't fall asleep until "all was right with the world."

People all over the country and all over the world are experiencing difficult times right now. Costs are higher than they've ever been, so basic needs like housing, medical care, and food are more difficult to afford. Many of us have found need to keep the faith in the midst of job loss, or the loss of a loved one, or other life changes that might leave us despondent and frustrated. These are surely difficult times, and all is certainly not "right with the world!" I believe that when bad things happen, it's because we live in a broken world, not because God is punishing us for something. At least, that's what I feel called to believe as a Christian.

As Christians who have the New Testament at hand, we know that our God is a benevolent God who loves us enough to put aside God's divinity and come to us in our own form (we heard about that recently in our Philippians 2 passage a few Sundays ago). Jesus lived out the brokenness of our daily lives in order to redeem them. So we know that when bad things happen to us and to those around us, it isn't due to some sin that we committed or, as ancient Israel believed, some sin that our parents or grandparents committed. And similarly, it's not that we are somehow more sinful than those who did not experience those bad things – somehow more targeted by God's wrath. It's just that bad things that we cannot control are a part of human life.

We live in a broken world – brokenness that humanity brought into the world, as Scripture tells us, but brokenness that has spiraled out of anyone's control. When bad things happen, then, it's a reflection of that spiral of brokenness in which we are situated. The New Testament helps to clarify the Old Testament by showing us that God, through Jesus, is here to cast out that brokenness – not to reinforce it. Actually, both Testaments show us that God is here to help us to love God and to love all Creation more faithfully, so that we can aid God in making all things "right with the world."

But I also believe that there's hope in everything, waiting deep down in there somewhere. That hope is God's still, small voice, actively providing us with a bit of God's goodness so we can carry on. That hope is God's still, small voice, showing us that this goodness is still abundant and never-ending here. This hope is God's still, small voice, loving us in the here and now while we hold fast to the promise of a very certain future.

And when bad things happen, we just have to hold onto that hope. We need it so we can run with courage the race set before us. Because while we personally are powerless, not in control of our own future, God is a professional chaos-tamer. The glimpses we see of the ultimate future encourage us that the chaos will not win in the end. We've got the "spoiler alert" for the future of all things, and it is that hope. So take courage. Take heart. God's amazing grace will bring us there, and each piece of hope only strengthens that conviction!