



Church of the Apostles
United Church of Christ

September 2026

THE CROWN NEWS

Vol. 50 No. 9



"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers. Some people have welcomed angels without knowing it!"
- Hebrews 13:2

Where Welcome Grows: The Journey Continues

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Let's Get Connected



@ApostlesUCC

When we began our *Where Welcome Grows* campaign, I don't think any of us imagined that the journey would continue beyond the completion of our sanctuary renovation. But somewhere along the way, we discovered that *Where Welcome Grows* is much bigger than a capital campaign. It has become a reflection of who we are as Church of the Apostles and a way of living out our mission and vision.

We see it when we open our hearts and minds to learning what it means to be more inclusive. We see it in the native habitat we are creating to welcome and provide a safe environment for God's smallest creatures. We see it when we advocate for justice, welcome people into our community, and support partners like Anchor Lancaster.

On August 30, we paused to celebrate the completion of the first leg of our journey. But now it's time to put another marker on the map and keep moving. Every journey has rest stops. Sometimes we need to pause, look at where we've been, and recalculate our route. We may even discover a new destination along the way. *Where Welcome Grows* is that kind of journey; one that doesn't have a final destination because there will always be more ways to expand our welcome.

Later this month, we'll take our next step by welcoming neighbors into their new homes. Members will have the opportunity to **assemble Dinnerware Welcome Kits for Off The Streets in Lancaster** - *Off The Streets* provides hope and dignity to those experiencing homelessness by helping them transition to permanent housing. Each kit will include dinner and small plates, bowls, mugs, and serving platters, along with a simple message from you, welcoming a stranger into their new home.

Want to be part of the journey? Look for information in the Narthex and on Page 3 of the *Crown* about how you can assemble a kit or write a message of welcome.

Melissa Kosman (Church Administrator)

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

**13
SEPT**

Schreiber Duckie Race & Festival

📍 625 Community Way, 2-5 PM

A fun-filled day of duck races, community, food, and festivities!

**17
SEPT**

Find the Good Day

📍 Lancaster History Museum, 6-8 PM

Women leading positive change in our community, a panel discussion.



BOARD NEWS

Have you seen the sanctuary yet? It looks great! How lucky we've been that we were able to use the Bachman Center for the summer while the work was being done. (But it sort of made me feel like I was living at the neighbor's house while Mom and Dad were on a trip- nice but just not home.) It was a big undertaking but we got it done by pooling our resources, supporting the idea and cooperating with the temporary disruption it caused. And that's how churches get things done - resources, support and cooperation. When you possess those, the sky's the limit.

With our mission statement that says we seek to **welcome and include all people, serve compassionately and champion environmental care and social justice**, we are actively looking for ways to affect more people's lives through community events and programs. We all have our ways of caring for the environment at our own homes but we'd like to find a way using Rader Park to make a larger impact on our physical world.

Remember the resources, support and cooperation that brought us our wonderful new sanctuary space? What else could we do as a church if we apply those efforts to other things? New programs, new ways of caring for people, new uses for our indoor spaces, new care for our physical corner of the world?

We are looking for new ideas that fit with our assets and our constraints. And our assets are substantial. Do you have an idea about a ministry at which you think we could succeed? The Apostles Board is seven people. Maybe 100 brains working on ideas would be better than seven. **It's time we get out there and spread our love around and show the world what we are all about.** Let's make it happen soon.

Karen Culp (Board Member)

JOIN OUR BOOK CLUB!

Book Club meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at **2 PM** in the Parlor, and we'd love for you to join us! Whether you've read the book or not, you're welcome to come for engaging discussions and fellowship.



For questions, contact Clara Kosmela at (717) 569-9960. Happy reading!

★ Sept. 8th, 2026: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

★ Oct. 13th, 2026: Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt

★ Nov. 10th, 2026: The Correspondent by Virginia Evans

are invited to stop by the church office before heading to the Parish Life Closet to package dishes into sets for families beginning a new chapter. Each box is more than a collection of dishes, it's a tangible message that someone cares, believes in their future, and wants to help make their new house a home.

Can't help pack? Pick up a **Welcome to Your New Home** card in the Narthex and add your own message of hope and encouragement. Together, we can turn something we no longer need into a meaningful gift of welcome, dignity, and hope. For information contact the church office or Melissa Kosman at admin@apostlesucc.org.

Mocktails & Meaning™

Data Centers in Lancaster County

What could the rise of large-scale data centers mean for Lancaster County? On **Thursday, September 17th, 2026 at 6:30 PM**, our September Mocktails & Meaning™ gathering at Church of the Apostles UCC, 1850 Marietta Ave., Lancaster, PA will take a closer look at the growing conversation around data center development and the potential environmental, economic, infrastructure, and community impacts. **Darrell Lagace** will lead the conversation, offering insight into what these projects could mean for Lancaster County and the communities where they are proposed.



With data centers becoming a hot topic across our region, this is a timely opportunity to learn more, ask questions, and consider what their growth could mean for our community and its future. We'll be serving a **nonalcoholic Blackberry Moscow Mule**. Register by scanning the QR Code.

Don't Forget to Register

Flu & Covid-19 Vaccine Clinic

Our Flu & COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic with Hillcrest Pharmacy is coming up on **Sunday, September 27, following worship**. Pharmacist Melissa Koehler will be on site to administer flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Please register in advance so we can make sure enough vaccines are available. Scan the QR code, register through **Realm→Events**, or contact the church office at (717) 392-5718 or office@apostlesucc.org.

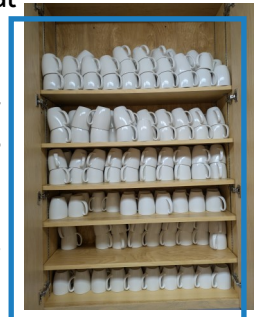


Dinnerware for Off The Streets

Extending Welcome Beyond Our Walls

In partnership with **Off the Streets Lancaster (OTS)**, a volunteer-run nonprofit that helps individuals transition from homelessness into permanent housing, COA will be donating several hundred unused dishes to help furnish new homes.

Now we need **YOU** to help make this gift personal. From **September 1–10, 9 AM - 2 PM** members



INCLUSIVE CHURCH FOCUS

Dementia and It's Impact on Caregivers, Friends, & Family

There are 6.9 million people 65 and older living with dementia in the United States. Dementia is a term for symptoms that cause a loss of cognitive functioning (thinking, memory, mood, and behavior).



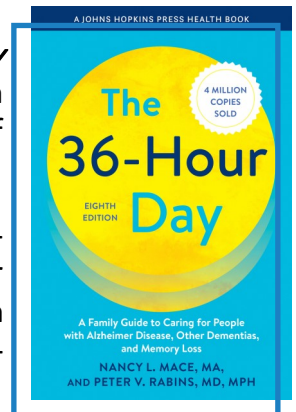
If you are caring for someone with dementia, it will break your heart. It will steal the person you know. At its worst, the dementia patient can experience hallucinations and paranoia. **Caring for a dementia patient will also teach you a lot of hard lessons.** The most important is that it's not about you, it's about them.

Don't quiz the dementia patient to see if they remember something. You don't get to satisfy your curiosity at their expense. Don't worry what they eat or wear. Even if it matters to you, it really doesn't matter. Especially if it upsets them to be told they have to change. Try to have a sense of humor. They can still laugh, so make sure they have something to laugh about. They love looking at pictures, whether they are photos of loved ones or coffee table books about something they once enjoyed. Hold their hands, it makes them feel loved.

In the eight or nine years of my husband's dementia, **I made some colossal mistakes.** Before his diagnosis he started to anger me. I believed the behavior was deliberate and we fought a lot. But as he got worse, I finally saw he just didn't know what he was doing. For instance, he wasn't deliberately hiding things from me. He really didn't know where he put them.

There is an extremely good book for caregivers. It's called *The 36 Hour Day* by Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins. Please read it if you are struggling with caregiving or know someone who is. Treat caregivers well. It could be one of their 36 hour days.

They could be having a day filled with guilt which is a common emotion for caregivers. We always think we should be doing things better. Try not to say "He (or she) doesn't seem like there's anything wrong with them". When you're filled with guilt it comes across as finding fault. Highly educated doctors have given a diagnosis. Don't tell the caregiver they've got it all wrong.



One thing you might have to confront is whether you should care for a dementia patient at home or if they would be better off in a facility designed for their care. **Remember it's about them, not you.** If you don't have the temperament for home care, find them the best care you can.

My husband reached a point where all he did was watch television and nap. This was no quality of life for him. I made the decision to move him to Homestead Village's personal care house and he blossomed and came alive. There were activities, people, and entertainment there. He was so much happier in that environment. **Don't be afraid of an institution, just choose a good one.**

Being a caregiver is lonely, guilt ridden and stressful. There are some good moments and not so good moments. **Cherish the good ones and try to forget the bad ones.** I wish you an easy journey and you have my greatest respect.

Karen Culp For the Inclusive Church Team



APOSTLES COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL UPDATES



Apostles Community Preschool is looking forward to beginning its **61st year of serving the Lancaster community on September 8!** For the 2026–27 school year, we will welcome approximately 130 children, ages 2–5, with three Tot (2-year-old) classes, three PreK-3 classes, and three PreK-4 classes.

We are grateful to have most of our staff returning for another year of teaching and caring for our students, and we are pleased to welcome **Brittany Martin as our Orange Bear Assistant**. Brittany is a current ACP parent and has been an active member of the ACP Parent Council for many years. We are happy to have her join our staff!

As the new school year begins, please remember that **drop-off is from 8:55–9:15 AM** and **pick-up is from 11:20–11:35 AM** in both the front and back parking lots. The church property will be especially busy during the first few weeks as everyone settles into new routines, so we appreciate your patience and attention while moving through the parking areas. For the safety of our children and staff, all doors, including the interior glass double doors, will remain locked during school hours. Please do not unlock or prop open exterior doors. Anyone needing to enter the building during school hours should use the main church entrance or contact the preschool office ahead of time for special access arrangements.

Thank you to everyone who donated items or monetary gifts through our **ACP Wishlist**. Your generosity helps provide the books, materials, and equipment our teachers and students need throughout the school year. We are also grateful to honor the wishes of **Susan Sensenich**, a former ACP teacher and director who recently passed away. Susan requested that memorial contributions be made to ACP to support the purchase of books and equipment for educating young children. We are thankful for the opportunity to continue her legacy of caring for and educating young children.

Thank you for your patience, cooperation, and continued prayers as we begin another school year. We look forward to a safe and happy year filled with **learning, growth, and community!**

Maggie Biggs

Preschool Director

mbiggs.acp@gmail.com



@Apostles_Community_Preschool



OUTREACH

STOCKING SHELVES & NOURISHING NEIGHBORS

Let's be honest: our food pantry collection has been a little lonely this summer. With worship in the Bachman Center, you haven't had our trusty donation cart sitting in your path each Sunday to remind you! As we transition back to the Sanctuary, our collection cart will be out **all September** to stock the shelves of the **Hempfield Area Food Pantry**, which serves more than 2,000 individuals each month.

OUR IMPACT

\$900

ACP Supplies Wishlist

Donations as of Publishing



You don't have to fill a grocery cart to make a difference. Pick up one 99¢ can of corn on your next shopping trip, and that's one can of food going to a neighbor who needs it. Check the list below for this month's most-needed items, and toss a few extras in your cart.

One important rule: Please check expiration dates before donating. If you wouldn't eat it, we probably shouldn't ask our neighbors to eat it either.

Prefer to give financially? Cash, checks, or **Realm donations marked "Food Pantry"** will also be donated to the Hempfield Area Food Pantry.

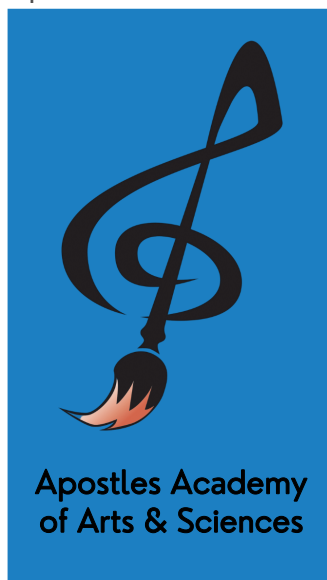
Let's fill that cart back up!

Most-Needed Items

- Cereal
- Instant oatmeal variety packs
- Canned potatoes
- Canned corn
- Canned chicken & rice soup
- Canned cream of mushroom soup
- 1-pound bags of dried beans
- Granola bars
- Crackers
- Canned tuna
- Canned chicken
- Spam
- Condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise & salad dressings)



Scan Here to Donate



A MUSICAL NOTE

With Music Director, Lars Potteiger

As we transition from summer into fall, there are many changes that occur this time of year. For children, it is a time of returning to school after summer vacation. We also experience a seasonal change as the days become cooler and the leaves begin to change. It is also the time of year in the church when our music ensembles return to enrich our worship life.

I want to encourage you to think of music not as something that is simply added to our worship services. Music is one way that we, as a congregation, worship together, and it is a form of ministry for everyone. Music in worship is not a performance; it is a way for all of us to participate more fully in worship as a community of faith.

Music is a form of service. Through making music, we serve others in our community. It takes time and dedication to prepare and learn music. Through this active commitment and creative process, we serve others by giving our time and dedication. Music is also a form of prayer in our worship services. The songs we sing are about more than simply singing nice songs; they are about connecting with God and with one another. I want to encourage you to approach the songs you sing in church more like prayers and see if you notice a transformative difference in this approach.

Making music also creates community. It is a way to connect with one another and welcome others into our church. This is one of the most powerful aspects of making music together. Through this process, we form relationships with other people. It is hard to stay angry at someone when you regularly make music with them. Making music together can be a wonderful way to learn about forgiveness and to grow in love.

As we begin another season of music at the church, I want to invite you not just to passively experience music in our services, but to take a more active role by joining and participating in the musical parts of our worship. Whether you sing in the choir, play an instrument, or sing with the rest of the congregation from the pews, your voice matters. We are called to make a joyful noise. I hope to hear the joy in the noise you make in worship this fall.

Blessings & Peace, *Lars*

The Malta Band of Lancaster

The Malta Band holds the distinction of being one of the oldest concert bands in Lancaster County.



OCT
11

NOV
15



Community Drum Circle

A fun, hands-on drum circle led by Music Director Lars Potteiger. All ages are welcome, and drums will be provided!

Christmas Hymn Sing

Celebrate the season with favorite Christmas hymns and carols, followed by light refreshments and fellowship in the Narthex.



DEC
20

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

This Suicide Prevention month let's learn to notice, listen and reach out.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to remember that mental health struggles can affect anyone and that reaching out can make a difference. Mental Health America encourages us to pay attention to changes in the people around us. Signs that someone may be struggling can include increased hopelessness, withdrawal, sudden personality changes, giving away valued possessions, or talking about feeling like others would be better off without them. One sign alone does not necessarily indicate a crisis, but a pattern of concerning changes is worth noticing.

If you are concerned about someone, listen without judgment, ask how they are doing, and help them connect with support. You don't have to have all the answers. At COA, our **Compassion Team** offers **one-on-one listening sessions** and a **spiritual support group**, and Rev. Kuhn is available for deeper pastoral care. Our Compassion Team, Rev. Kuhn, or the church office can also help connect you with local mental health resources.

If you or someone you know is in crisis or thinking about suicide, **call or text 988** for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Help is available 24/7.

There is no shame in asking for help, and no one should have to carry a difficult season alone. Sometimes, simply noticing, listening, and staying connected can be the first step toward hope.



September

FAITH COMMUNITIES
Partnership

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Is someone you know having thoughts of suicide?

Here are five steps you can take that are known to help:

1. ASK:

Are you thinking about suicide? How do you hurt? How can I help?

2. BE THERE:

In person or on the phone. Show support. Listen. Keep promises to connect.

3. HELP KEEP THEM SAFE:

If the person in crisis is suicidal, details matter: Do they have a plan, or ideas about timing or method? You can call 988 to support their crisis care.

4. HELP THEM CONNECT:

When someone is in crisis, connecting them with ongoing supports can help establish a safety net. Remind them they can call, text or chat 988 to connect with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.

5. FOLLOW UP:

After the immediate crisis is over, check in. That text or call afterwards makes a real difference.

SOURCE: #BeTheTo @<https://www.betheto.com/betheto-steps-evidence/>

The Faith Communities Partnership (FCP) equips Faith Communities with essential tools for promoting mental health and wellness through education, support for mental health ministries, and connection with other Faith Communities and mental health services and resources in the Lancaster area. For info contact Irma: idoemhalancaster.org

SUICIDE PREVENTION
Conference
HOPE IN ACTION

A Community Approach
to Suicide Prevention
Thurs., September 17, 2026



If you or someone you know
needs support now,
call or text 988
or
[chat 988lifeline.org](https://chat.988lifeline.org)

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE





YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR

COMMUNITY

Open House & Dedication

AT CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES UCC

SEPTEMBER 20TH

10:00 AM

You're invited to our Community Open House as we celebrate the completion of our Where Welcome Grows Sanctuary renovation! Join us for worship as we rededicate our renewed Sanctuary, followed by a fellowship hour celebrating the successful completion of our Where Welcome Grows Campaign and experiencing our new welcome together.



1850 MARIETTA AVE. LANCASTER PA 17603

September Birthdays

9.2 ~ Christa Smeigh
 9.3 ~ Ruth Senior*
 9.9 ~ Christina Bahling
 9.9 ~ Larry Waltman
 9.11 ~ Karen Wallach
 9.13 ~ Mic Bender
 9.13 ~ Linus Whittington
 9.17 ~ Barbara Achtermann
 9.20 ~ Bev Moran
 9.21 ~ Betty Reiff*
 9.22 ~ Tom Lewis
 9.24 ~ Sharon Shaeffer
 9.25 ~ Marsha Erisman
 9.25 ~ Ken Keller
 9.25 ~ Mathew Rice
 9.25 ~ Maeson Sheffer
 9.27 ~ Debbie Belsinger
 9.28 ~ Rev. Debra Sickles
 9.30 ~ George Bechtold

*90+ Birthday's

September Anniversary's

9.1 ~ Tim & Sue Stirling
 9.6 ~ Mic & Laura Bender
 9.17 ~ Adam & Sara Zipko

*50+ Anniversary's

WORSHIP FLOWER SPONSORSHIP

Enhance our worship with the beauty of flowers by sponsoring them in honor or memory of a loved one. To sponsor, email office@apostlesucc.org or complete a form in the Church office. The **suggested donation is \$60**, but any amount is appreciated.



Contributions can be made via check, cash, or Realm.



Dear Friends at Church of the Apostles UCC,

Peter and I want to "Thank You" for the many prayers, cards, and calls we received over the last nine months. Your support during the illness and death of his father, Max Van Buskirk, and my mother, Lucille Herman, was very much appreciated.

*Fondly,
Michelle & Peter*

	July 2026	July 2025
YTD Revenue	\$201,020.43	\$235,561.39
YTD Investment Transfers	\$134,000.00	\$45,543.90
YTD Operating Expenses	\$367,757.64	\$385,739.40
Net YTD Operating Income	-\$32,737.21	-\$104,634.11

MARKET BASKET: A LEGACY OF GENEROSITY

For many years, Market Basket was more than a grocery fundraiser. It was a quiet but powerful source of support for the outreach ministries of our church. Now that the Market Basket program has come to an end, we pause to celebrate its impact and express our deep gratitude to everyone who helped make it possible.

From the volunteers who managed the program year after year, to those who purchased grocery cards and supported the effort, countless volunteers and people played a part. Their time, generosity, and commitment helped turn everyday grocery shopping into meaningful ministry.

Over the years, Market Basket proceeds supported a variety of outreach efforts. They helped provide disaster relief, support local non-profits serving people experiencing homelessness, contribute to food bank needs, assist with ministry projects in Honduras and Namibia, supported youth mission trips, and help with improvements to the kitchen where our Saturday Morning Breakfast Ministry takes place.

More recently, Market Basket became an important source of funding for our Saturday Morning Breakfast Ministry, helping us provide meals and welcome to our neighbors experiencing food insecurity.

Reports and numbers only tell part of the story. The true impact is measured in lives touched, meals shared, communities strengthened, and people reminded that they are not alone.

Market Basket may have come to an end, but we hope its spirit of generosity lives on. **Thank you to everyone who, in big ways and small, made Market Basket a lasting part of our outreach ministry.** May its legacy of generosity inspire us to continue finding meaningful ways to turn our time and treasure into action.

COMMUNITY IN ACTION IN RADER PARK

Team River Runner celebrates 10 years of KAOS Adventure Weekend!

This summer, Rader Park welcomed the **Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Team River Runner** for their 10th annual KAOS Adventure Weekend, bringing a weekend of adventure, connection, and community to our campus. During their stay, Team River Runner also generously donated and installed a new flagpole in Rader Park, which was dedicated during a special flag-raising ceremony.

The weekend was made possible in part through the use of our newly renovated Retreat Center, which provided a welcoming home base for the group. Afterward, Chapter Coordinator Jennifer Eaton shared a heartfelt thank-you to the Church of the Apostles Board: **"On behalf of Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Team River Runner we would like to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts and boats, for the generosity you extended to us this summer. Without this we would not have been able to facilitate the 10th KAOS Adventure Weekend."**



We're grateful to see the Retreat Center and Rader Park creating opportunities for connection, adventure, and community.

STAFF

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Nathan Sheffer

Technology Specialist

Jaben Jury

Property Manager

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Sexton 2

Tasha MacLaren

Office Hours & Staff Emails

Reach the Right Person at the Right Time

Our church office is open **Monday-Thursday, 9 AM-1 PM**. Because not all staff are available during those hours, please call before stopping by to be sure someone can assist you.

The office is **closed on Fridays**, and staff are not in the building. For Friday needs, email is the best way to receive a response. To help us respond quickly, please double check that your email is going to the correct staff member. Thank you for helping us stay organized and connected!



Prayer Requests

Let us Pray with You!

We are honored to pray for you through life's ups and downs. You can share your prayer requests on your connection card during Sunday services or email them to office@apostlesucc.org. Please let us know if your request can be shared or should remain private for our prayer chain. Together, we lift our hearts in prayer to support and encourage one another.

Supporting Our Community

Ways the Compassion Team is Here for You!

Our Compassion Team is dedicated to providing support, understanding, and care to our community, no matter where you are in your walk of life. We offer several confidential resources designed to help nurture your mental and spiritual well-being.

- **Confidential Listening Sessions** - Members may set up a private time of listening, understanding, and compassion with one of our trained Compassion Team members.
- **The Compassion Corner** - A collection of materials focused on mental health, grief, and other challenging life topics located in Rm 107.
- **Monthly Spiritual Support Group** - Meeting every 2nd Thursday at 10 AM, this gathering will provide a space for shared encouragement and community.

WORSHIP WITH US EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 AM
IN-PERSON OR ONLINE