



St. Stephens Bethlehem

United Church of Christ

September & October Newsletter

Hello Church Family & Friends,

Where did this summer go? We still have so many house projects and things to do before it gets cold and the leaves start flying! We hoped you had a well rested and enjoyable summer. Did you take some time and enjoyed the beautiful weather with family and friends? We at church had a very busy summer, planning events for the fall season here at church.

Our theme for Rally Day on Sunday, September 14th and throughout the rest of the year is called "I'm A Member Of God's Team". What does it really mean? To be a member of "God's team" generally means to have a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, becoming part of His spiritual family and community. It involves living according to His principles, using your God-given gifts to serve others, and working together with other believers to spread love and advance His purposes on Earth. God's team is called the church. The church is not just a building; it's a community of believers. Like team members they help each other to win a game, Christians work together as a team to help each other grow in their faith and show Jesus' love to their neighbors! We are all hoping and praying that the Buffalo Bills will go to the Super Bowl and will win this year. But winning isn't everything. Gathering together to watch the game, is like gathering together at church. It unites us for a common purpose to honor and support our team and our GOD!!! Did you ever think that a church works as a sports team? A sports team has an owner, that's our God. They have a board of directors/ coaches. That's our Leadership Teams and Pastors. It has players, that's the people who are involved in the life of the church who contributes, donates and helps with our Sunday worship services, volunteers at our fundraisers, community events, work days, etc... A sports team has cheerleaders, they are people like you who give moral support and kind words that encourage us that we are doing God's great work, by making God's world a better and welcoming place for all, wherever they are on life's journey. So as we are uniting 2 great smaller churches (SSBUCC & KUCC) into one bigger church, we have to step up as members of God's team and get involved in our NEW TEAM! God has given us all different strengths, passions, and talents; so please use what God has given you and put them into action on our team at church.

So as we begin the new programming year, there are many opportunities to become a part of the life of the church. Whether you have been a part of the church since the beginning or just a month or two, jump into the church life and participate. Your God given gifts will enhance this community and make our church even more festive and enjoyable. So join us on Sunday mornings and look through this newsletter and find ways to join the life of the church. The church is better when you are involved!

Joy In Christ,

*Bill Chapman, John Frenning, Joy Tedeschi, Rob Seth, Phil Starr, Joe Tricoli,
Mary Martino, Elisa Faling, Teddy Haase & Robert Christmann*

Your SSBUCC & KUCC Leadership Team Members:



Our Sunday School year will kick off on Sunday, September 14 at 10:30am. We call that Rally Day/ WELCOME BACK SUNDAY! Please invite and bring all the children in your life to our Sunday School program. Each child that day will receive a tshirt (see picture above). The children will meet their teachers down stairs in the Sunday School room before 10:30am. They will come upstairs as a class and will sit in the front pew for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of each month. We are bringing back by popular demand the Children's Moments. These will take place after the passing of the peace. When we are passing the peace, the children will

come up and will sit on the rug in front of the altar. On the first Sunday of the month, the Sunday School class will come up later in worship for communion, so they can participate in and see the importance of it.

Joy held an informational meeting on **Monday, August 25th at 6:00 PM.** If you couldn't make the meeting but still want to teach Sunday School, please **call or text Joy at 716-491-3533.** We are incredibly grateful for our current volunteers—**Christina, Denise, Joe, Joy and Ava**—but we need additional help so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in regular worship as well. **All lessons/crafts/ activities are planned for you.**

As mentioned during our recent Quarterly Meeting, we want to ensure everyone understands the expectations and feels confident and supported in this important role. Remember our church policy is always two adults in a room with children at all times, but we would like 3 adults for appropriate coverage.

Thank you for helping us grow the faith of our youngest members!



September & October Worship Schedule/ Events



Sunday, September 7: Worship & Communion at 10:30am, Guest minister Pastor Jan Hubbard. KUCC Congregational Meeting at 11:30am, in the downstairs meeting room,

Monday, September 8: SSBUCC Leadership Team Meeting at 6:30pm

Sunday, September 14: Rally Day/ Welcome Back Worship Service & Luncheon to follow 10:30am. Sunday School begins. Guest Minister Rev. Dr. Ruth Snyder.

Wednesday, September 17: Wacky Wednesday Spaghetti Dinner & Game Play/ Sing Along at 6pm

Sunday, September 21: Anniversary Sunday & Cake Reception, worship at 10:30am Guest Minister Rev. Bob Fleming

Sunday, September 28: Worship at 10:30am, Guest Minister Pastor Ruth.

Tuesday, September 30: at 12pm. Get to know each other at Lunch & Craft.

Sunday, October 5: World Wide Communion at 10:30am, Guest Minister Rev. Dr. Buddy Hubbard

Monday, October 6: Joint Leadership Team Meeting with SSBUCC & KUCC at 6:30pm.

Wednesday, October 8: Wacky Wednesday Pork Chop Dinner & Game Play at 6pm

Saturday, October 11: Church Work Day, 9am - 12pm

Sunday, October 12: Worship at 10:30am Guest Minister, Pastor Ruth

Sunday, October 19: **Worship at 10am**, Guest Minister, Rev. Bob Fleming
Theme Basket Raffle & Trunk or Treat Event from 11am - 3pm.

Saturday, October 25: Halloween Craft & Movie Night 6 - 8:30pm

Sunday, October 26: Reformation Sunday, Worship at 10:30am, Guest Minister, Rev. Dr. Ruth Snyder. Congregational Quarterly meeting will take place during coffee hour.

2025/2026 Stewardship Campaign
UNITING IN FAITH, BUILDING IN LOVE

Dear Members and Friends,

With heartfelt gratitude, we launch our 2025 stewardship campaign, inviting you to help shape the future of St Stephens-Bethlehem UCC and Kenilworth UCC. Your ongoing generosity has sustained our ministries, supported our outreach, and built a loving faith community. As we move forward and prepare for the merger of our congregations, your commitment remains essential to our shared mission. Our theme, “Uniting in Faith, Building in Love” is also simple. It represents our two congregations coming together to build one church. It recognizes that each of us, through our gifts and the decisions we make to employ them, power this sacred work. Our resources make ministry happen. The arithmetic is not complex. Our choice to grow in our generosity enables the church to increase the impact of the difference it makes.

By choosing to give, even a little bit more, we will expand our shared quest to change lives – even our own. Take a step forward in your generosity. It’s simple! The choice is yours. As we come to this time for gratitude and generosity, what is it that we gather as we give? We gather good will; we gather hope; we gather love and healing and grace. And when all these things are gathered up, and drawn near, the blessing of God fills us up and others too... and the world is changed for the better. Like the servants who gathered up the gifts of the Master and helped them to grow, we too are called to make God’s blessings grow through our generosity. And know this, that your generosity gathers – it gathers people to you, it gathers a force for good in the world, it gathers a love that flows with a great will in the world to extend God’s grace beyond these walls. This is no small thing, but lovely and precious. Give thanks for the ministry God has entrusted into our care and for each other, and know, beloved, that your faithful service makes a difference.

2026 Financial Goal and Purpose

Our financial goal for the 2026 budget is to raise over \$60,000 in pledges. These contributions will fund essential expenses, including building maintenance, staff salaries, insurance and utilities—while bolstering core outreach efforts such as the Hope & Joy Food Pantry, Community Garden and other ministries. Every dollar also ensures the sustainability of our

ministry, allowing us to serve our congregation and neighbors with compassion and love.

Gratitude and Impact of Your Support

Your gifts, whether financial and/or through volunteering—directly enrich our church and the wider community. Thanks to your support, we have provided food to families in need, created spaces for growth and fellowship, and extended God’s love far beyond our walls. Each contribution, no matter the size, enables meaningful ministry and brings hope, healing, and grace to others.

Stewardship Process and Next Steps

A pledge card is included with this newsletter. Please fill it out and return it by the end of September, either by mail or by placing it in the Sunday offering plate. Your commitment will help us plan our 2026 budget. All responses are confidential and essential for our ongoing success.

Biblical Inspiration

Scripture encourages us in Proverbs 3:9-10: “Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” In giving, we honor God and help our ministries flourish.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Your support is vital to our mission and the future of our church. Please complete your pledge card by September 28, 2025, so we can include your commitment in our planning. Your generosity makes a difference, please return your card by mail, place it in the offering plate on Sundays or drop it off at the church office. Together, we unite in faith and build in love.

With sincere thanks and blessings,

The Leadership Teams of St Stephens-Bethlehem UCC & Kenilworth UCC

St. Stephens-Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team

Bill Chapman (Moderator) John Frenning (Vice Moderator)

Rob Seth, Phil Starr, Joyelle Tedeschi, Joseph Tricoli

Kim Wilson (Treasurer – Ex Officio), Gineen Frenning (Clerk – Ex Officio)

Kenilworth UCC Leadership Team

Mary Martino (President) Elisa Faling (Vice President)

Robert Christmann (Treasurer) Teddy Haase (Secretary)

Columbarium Report 2025

Introduction

Many members of our congregation may not be aware that our church has a Columbarium located alongside our building on Churchcroft Drive. The Columbarium is the brick wall visible as you approach the driveway to our parking lots.

Purpose and Capacity

The Columbarium was established around 1995 in response to the needs of church members seeking an affordable way to inter their loved ones and have them nearby. It has the capacity to hold up to 160 urns. As of now, approximately 80 niches are available for purchase.

Costs

Each niche is priced at \$500 and can be purchased by church members and their families. The current cost for interning a loved one is \$350. This fee covers the removal and replacement of the panel, engraving, and the interment of the remains. Please note that the engraving and interment costs are charged at the time of interment and may vary according to prevailing market rates.

Recent Improvements and Gratitude

The Columbarium Committee extends heartfelt gratitude to Bill Chapman, Joyelle Tedeschi, Roman Tedeschi & Christina Jarlenski who worked diligently this past month to clean up and repair the stone walkway and sitting area.

Committee Membership and Volunteering

We are pleased to welcome Sue Fleming as a new member of our committee and continue to look forward to filling additional vacancies on our board. We are seeking individuals interested in helping oversee the Columbarium. The time commitment is minimal, as meetings are scheduled on an as-needed basis. Applicants should have basic Microsoft and computer skills, particularly with Excel, Word, and Publisher, and be able to work sensitively with bereaved families to coordinate and prepare the niche for interment.

Further Information

Pamphlets with detailed information about the Columbarium are available in the church office or by contacting any member of the Columbarium Committee listed below.

Please reach out if you are interested in joining our team

Current Committee Members

John Frenning (Chair), Margaret Tricoli, Sue Fleming

Respectfully submitted,

John Frenning

Kenilworth News & Updates:

The congregation of Kenilworth UCC accepted to sell their church to Emmanuel Temple 7th Day Adventist for \$675,000.

As part of our continuing process of moving towards a merger completion, the following steps are upcoming:

1. Date: TBA

Kenilworth UCC members who personally donated items to the church will be given the opportunity to pick up these donated items.

2. Date: TBA

Leadership of the St. Stephens-Bethlehem UCC will be asked to go to the Kenilworth UCC to select any items they would like to bring back to the church. Arrangements will be made to transport all items selected.

3. Date: TBA

Kenilworth UCC will conduct an estate sale of remaining items. The auction will be well advertised and open to all in WNY.

Actually conducting the estate sale will be the professional company "Stock Exchange Sales" under the direction of Andy Gay.

All items not taken in the estate sale will be removed from the church in a full clean out. No items will remain.

This work should be completed by the end of September 2025. Members of both churches will be provided with the dates above once the calendar has been finalized.

Kenilworth UCC Budget Update January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025

INCOME EXPENSES

Contributions \$7345.91

Pass through Income \$124.00

Fundraisers \$10.00

Building use Income \$1646.31

TOTAL \$9146.22

EXPENSES

Salaries \$8165.78

Payroll Expenses \$1895.14

Contractual \$2730.12

Buildings/grounds \$9710.41

Accounting/Bank fees \$1507.77

TOTAL \$24009.22

NET INCOME/LOSS: (\$14,863.00)

SSBUCC Treasurer Report: (AS of August 4, 2025)

Checking: _\$2,384.50_ Savings: __\$55.62__

SSBUCC Pledges Year to Date: \$24,235.22

Building Rental Income Year to Date: \$13,730.09

Fundraisers: \$8,936.00

MAJOR EXPENSES (Jan 1 - August 4)

Maintenance Contracts: \$6,004.40

Insurances: \$12,642.50

Utilities: \$ 10,864.66

PayRoll: \$19,989.49

Food Pantry Outreach Expenses: \$17,907.50

A transfer of \$17,000 from our endowment fund to our checking account will be made in August to cover the rest of our summer expenses.

Hope & Joy Food Pantry News:

The Hope & Joy Food Pantry has started a newsletter! To sign up to be on our e-mail list and learn more about what our pantry does and our impact in the community, use this link:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/newsletter-form/sign-up-for-our-newsletter-285>

This year so far we helped 8,213 people. Pounds of food received 30,400. Due to the rise of needs, Pantry Board is considering adding another additional shift. The community garden is starting to produce. Donations were given by Spoth's; Tractor Supply, Lowe's, Leo Brenan for soil and plants. Applied for NYS Grant Opportunity to improve our garden. Received an operational grant, amount unknown at this time.

Please see or email Kim Wilson. (treasurer.ssbucc@gmail.com) if you can help out in the community garden or food pantry.



Rally Day/ Welcome Back Sunday

September 7, 2025

Worship at 10:30am

A special Pizza, Salad, and Chicken Finger Luncheon will follow. Please feel free to bring a dessert. Sign-up sheet posted across from the church office.



If you don't have a name tag, please let Bill Chapman know by September 3 so he can order you one. If you already have a name tag, **PLEASE** start wearing it every Sunday and at **ALL** our events. We are having a lot of new visitors to our church, and it's a **GREAT** way to get to know each other better by knowing our names.

Thanks so

much for your help and cooperation.

Anniversary Sunday, is Sunday, September 21, we will be celebrating 172 years TOGETHER!!!

We are creating a picture slide show of all the special events that happened throughout the years together as a congregation. If you have pictures of moments/ events that happened at church, please email them to tochapmanbill98@gmail.com, or text them to 716-989-9255. Deadline is **Sunday, September 7th** to submit pictures. This will be shown in worship on Anniversary Sunday. We will be having a special cake, icecream & punch reception to follow worship.



Our next scheduled church work day will be **Saturday, October 11 from 9am - 12pm**. We have some painting projects and touch ups that need to be done; along with putting on the air conditioner covers and winterizing the building. Donuts and coffee will be served. Many hands make light work. Remember with church volunteers doing the maintenance and cleaning, we are saving \$20,000 in our 2024 budgets.

Volleyball Court Update

We're exploring options to restore the volleyball court and prevent the return of grass and weeds. After talking to landscaping experts, we learned that simply tilling and adding more sand—as has been done in the past—will not be a long-term solution. To create a lasting fix without using chemicals, the recommended approach is to lay down a weed barrier, followed by a large amount of sand (some have also suggested a layer of rock beneath the sand). Joy is currently gathering quotes and exploring possible interim solutions. As you can understand, there are other financial priorities for the church, so we want to be thoughtful about the approach. Once estimates are in, we will also look into recreational grants that could help fund the project. **If you have access to donated sand or weed cover, please let Joy know.** Thank you for your patience and support! —Joy

Constitution and Bylaws Committee

A crucial step in the merger of St. Stephen's Bethlehem and Kenilworth Churches will be the creation and approval of a new constitution and bylaws. Pastor Ruth Snyder, who previously chaired the committee responsible for updating the Western NY Area Churches in Covenant's bylaws, has offered to lead a joint committee composed of members from both congregations.

Kenilworth's Church Council has chosen Mary Martino and Bob Christmann as its representatives, while St. Stephen's Bethlehem Leadership Team has appointed Peter Nichols and Cody Mejeur. Meetings for this joint committee are scheduled to commence after Labor Day. The anticipated process includes the committee reviewing current documents and preparing an initial draft. This draft will be submitted to each congregation's Church Council or Leadership Team for feedback. Following revisions, a revised draft will be distributed to both congregation's leaders. Subsequently, a joint meeting of Kenilworth's Church Council and St. Stephen's Bethlehem Leadership Team will be convened for further evaluation and discussion. Once this group finalizes a proposed draft, it will be sent to both congregation's members for their consideration.

To foster transparency and gather input, at least two town hall sessions will be organized, allowing members from both congregations to share feedback. Additional revisions will be made as necessary, and the final version will be circulated to everyone. Each congregation will then hold a vote to adopt the finalized constitution and bylaws.

This undertaking is significant and challenging. We kindly ask for your prayers and support for the committee as we begin this important task.

Respectfully,

Pastor Ruth E. Snyder, Chair

Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, October 26, 2025 at 11:30am

It was recommended that we bring back our quarterly meetings so the leadership team can keep the congregation up to date on important topics that are happening and to ask the congregation for help. The congregation can bring their questions and concerns. This

keeps the transparency open during this transition period.

Opportunities to get to know each other at SSBUCC & KUCC.
Please make every attempt to attend at least one of these events.

Thank You!!!



Wednesday September 17 & October 8
Dinner at 6pm, Game Play & SingAlong will follow.
Church members really liked gathering on one
Wednesday out of the month to have dinner,
socialize and to play a game. So we are
continuing this tradition throughout the year.

Dinner in September will be Spaghetti, salad and bread. Dinner in October will be Pork Chops, Baked Potato, and applesauce. Please sign up across from the church office so we can count you in. . Please bring a dessert to pass. Thank You.

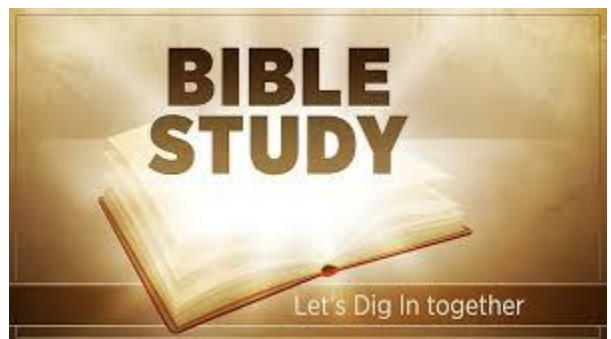
For people who don't like to drive at night, please join us at 12pm on Tuesday, September 30th, for Lunch, Soup & Craft Time. The church will provide the sandwiches, beverages, soup & a fall/halloween craft to make, please bring a dessert or snack to share. A sign up sheet is posted across from the church office. If the September 30th event is a hit, we will try doing this once a month.



If you need transportation to any of these events please let Bill Chapman know by calling or texting him at 716-989-9255, and we will make arrangements for it.

Mary is planning on doing an evening Bible Study beginning in October. Please let her know what days and times work best for you. Please call/ text or email her your availability and if you are interested. (716)523-9368

Mar4everL8@gmail.com





Saturday, October 25, 2025

Time: 6pm - 8:30pm

**Where: SSBUCC Downstairs
Social Hall**

**Showing a Disney Halloween
Movie, Halloween Craft Making,
Game Playing, come in a costume
to win a prize. Free Popcorn &**

**Pop & Cider. Snack Bar open at additional cost. Invite your family, &
friends. This is open to the community.**

Theme Basket & Gift Certificate Raffle/ Trunk or Treat Event Sunday, October 19, 2025, 11am - 3pm.



If you can donate a theme basket or gift certificate/ gift card please let Bill know.
We have donation letters you can use if you are asking a business for a donation.

*****Please Note***. Worship on October 19 will be at 10am, due to the
Basket Raffle Fundraiser at 11am - 3pm. We need everyone's help to
make this fundraiser a HUGE success. Thanks so much!!!!**



**Halloween Candy and Individually Wrapped
Treats are needed for our trunk or treat event
on Sunday, October 19. Please drop these
off in the church office when you're there.
Thanks so much.**



Coffee hours are a great time for the congregation to bond and to grow together. If you can help us out by volunteering to host a coffee hour, please let Bill know. The church provides the coffee, juice and paper products, we just need you to provide the goodies.

Open slots are:

Sunday, September 7: ____ Sunday, September 28: _ Sunday, October 12: ____



To Joy Tedeschi and her family for hosting, Ronnies Polka Party at SSBUCC. This is a great new tradition.

Thank You SO MUCH to Sue Wade who is volunteering to cover the cost of Kenilworth sound system to be installed at St. Stephens Bethlehem.

Thanks to everyone who donated items and worked our Church Yard sale on August 28 & 29th.



Please Keep the Following People in your Prayers:



Sue Fleming's Mom (Terry)
Sylvia Brown
Marion Andrus
Kathy Caramazza
Pastor Arthur Davis
Chris Donner
Alan Graser(Denise's husband)
Joan Saletta



Hooks' n Needles:

KUCC's Crochet and Knitting group would like to resume meeting in mid - September. We will be setting up a date and time. We are looking forward to making new friends and welcoming new members. We do have ongoing mission projects (Prayer Shawls, Laprobes, hats for anyone in need, but also work on our own projects.) Ladies, gentlemen, whatever your age, come join us!!! Brush up on old skills or learn a new one!!! If you need a pattern, we can help with that. If you are not comfortable crocheting or knitting,

we now have looms to loan out to weave hats along with hooks, needles and yarn. Please call Donna Miller (716-481-1213) for more information.



Music Corner:



We need more people in our choirs!!!! If you are interested in joining the choir, singing a solo, or playing in the handbell choir please see Kim Rauch or Harry Graser, our choir directors and musicians. kim.rauch109@gmail.com or harrygraser@gmail.com

A HUGE thank you to Kim Rauch for organizing our Summer Benefit concert on Thursday, August 21. If you missed out on it, you can catch it on the church's YouTube Channel or Facebook Page.

Mark your calendar for the Christmas Benefit Concert on Saturday, December 13 at 3pm. Cookie Walk is from 1-4pm, with a Pork Chop Dinner from 4 - 6pm.

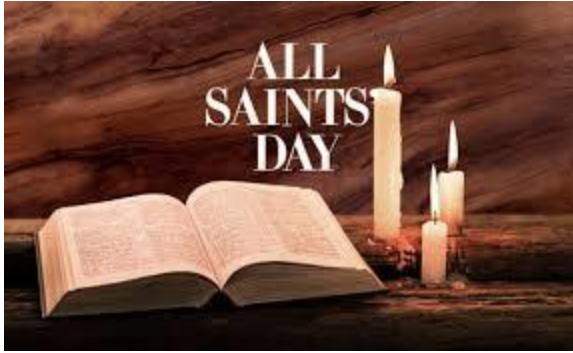


Cookie Walk Planning Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 28th, 2025

11:30am in the Downstairs Meeting Room/ Sunday School Room.

If interested in planning this event please join us. ALL are WELCOMED.



All Saints Day is Sunday,
November 2, 2025. Please submit
names of family & friends who passed
away throughout the year to the church
office ststephensbethlehemucc@gmail.com
by Monday, October 27th. Thanks.



September

Erika Burgasser (9)
Sue Seth (10)
Carolyn Bernhart(10)
Mindy Rankin (11)
Jan Wagner (21)

October

Marcia Fogelsonger (1)
Rob Seth (3)
Linda Miller (5)
Gordon Green (5)
Kim Rauch (9)
Elisa Faling (10)
Mary Rauch (18)
Frank Calvarese (20)
Nick Tobiczky (21)

Sorry if your name is missing above. We don't have it in our church records,
Please contact Bill Chapman call or text (716-989-9255) so he can include you.
Thanks

If you are having a party and need a caterer, please consider Shaun
Leidolph, one of our own church members. Thanks so much.

MEMOIRS CATERING

By Chef Broderick Golda

Contact: 716-476-1423 | chefbroderickgolda@gmail.com

A NEW EcoFriendly Fundraiser/ SAVERS

When you are doing your Fall cleaning, please donate these items to our church. Instead of throwing it out or donating them to Good Will, Am-Vets, etc..., let the church earn some extra money.

Start Date: Sunday, September 1 - Sunday October 26, 2025

Please bring in the below items and drop them off under the patio by the church's garage, and let this FunDrive company(Savers) pay us per pound for the following items.

Product means all Soft Goods, HouseHold Items & Books:, Soft Goods means all clothing, shoes, accessories and bed and bath items, including clothing (men's, women's, children's), clothing accessories (hats, mittens, scarves, ties, nylons, socks, underwear), personal accessories (purses, wallets, fanny packs, bags), bed and bath (towels, sheets, blankets, pillows, curtains, tablecloths), shoes (all types) and other cloth materials. Miscel means small household goods, small sporting goods. Miscel includes housewares (toys, games, puzzles, jewelry, crafts, mugs, pots, pans, candles, pictures/frames, utensils, small garden tools, china cups, vases, dishes, cutlery, stuffed animals, glassware, silverware, stemware, baskets, ornaments, hand tools), small electrical items (toasters, radio, power tools, irons, blenders, mixers, small stereos, CD players) and small sporting goods. Books & Media means hardback books, paperback books. Amount we will receive: Clothing: 20 cents per pound, Small housewares: 2 cents per pound Books: 2 cents per pound.

The Girl Scout Troop will be starting up again at our church beginning on Oct. 13, from 6:30 - 8:30pm. If you know any girl who is interested in joining this troop, please contact Robin at.

robin.e.close@gmail.com. Last year the troop supported the church by contributing to our Saver's clothing drive, they made crafts to give to our shut-ins for the holidays, collected canned goods for our Thanksgiving Dinners for the Community, and, they also went Christmas Caroling to our church's shut-ins.

