



The Corner Stone

Stone Church ~ The Church on the Green

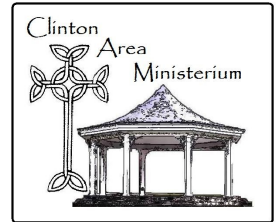
The purpose of Stone Church is to be an inviting, spiritual community of Christ, engaging in worship that inspires and challenges us to learn and grow as we reach out in caring and service, trusting in the love of God.

SEPTEMBER 2026

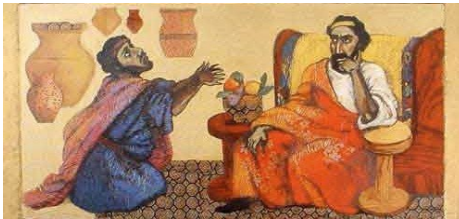
WORSHIP AT STONE IN SEPTEMBER

September 6, 2026 (Labor Day Weekend)

Ecumenical Service at 9:30 a.m. on the Village Green
(or inside at Stone Church with inclement weather). Bring two lawn chairs—one for you and one for a neighbor!



WORSHIP RESUMES AT STONE ON SEPTEMBER 13 AT 10:30 A.M.



September 13, 2026 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19–31 *The Israelites cross the sea on dry land.*

Psalms 114 *Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord*

Romans 14:1–12 *A call to be non-judgmental*

Matthew 18:21–35 *A question and a parable about forgiveness.*

Sermon: “To Err is Human (ya think?)” – Pastor Scott Leonard preaching

September 20, 2026 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost

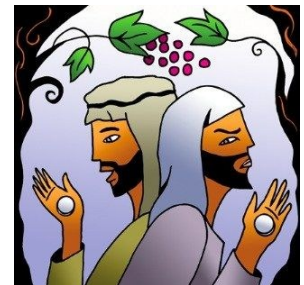
Exodus 16:2–15 *God provides manna from heaven*

Psalms 105:1–6, 37–45 *Seek the Lord and his strength*

Philippians 1:21–30 *Live a life worthy of the gospel*

Matthew 20:1–16 *The laborers in the vineyard.*

Sermon: “Life’s Not Fair—Thank God!” – Pastor Scott Leonard preaching



September 27, 2026 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 17:1–7 *God provides water to the complaining Israelites.*

Psalms 78:1–4, 12–16 *Remembering God's mighty works*

Philippians 2:1–13 *Have the mind of Christ among you.*

Matthew 21:23–32 *Parable of Two Sons.*

The Rev. Victor McKusick preaching

THE PASTOR'S

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R*Retire, Refocus, Recreate.*

“The trouble with retirement is you never get a day off.”
—Abe Lemons, college basketball player and coach

As I mentioned in my April 2026 column, at the end of March I retired from 45+ years of working “9 to 5” (like those were ever my hours!). Unlike many people, though, it took me approximately zero time to transition from my full-time, professional occupation to full-time, discretionary avocation. This is because I had many activities (including being a part-time pastor) that I was doing while also working my secular day job. “Retiring” merely meant I was able to refocus my time and energy into those activities and expand them to fill the time, if not my bank account. Admittedly, some refocusing was recreation: watching movies in the evening, sleeping in until 7 a.m., leisurely reading, and swimming more in my pool—often with grandkids. Others were more time-shifting, like working on worship services during weekday daylight hours (though I still tend to finish my sermons on Saturday nights; bad habits are hard to break). In addition, I was able to go on different vacations with kids and grandkids without having to worry about juggling work.

I also was able to expand in areas that I could not easily do in the past because of the time involved. One is helping a couple of classmates work on our 50th high school reunion on 9/25/26 back in Dayton, Ohio, which has taken far more time than I ever would have had. Another was going to an annual Toastmasters conference (this year in Buffalo, NY) to network with old friends and get inspired by others. Another was going to the annual biblical storytelling conference (this year in Baltimore, NY) that Donna Goodfriend and I have attend twice in the past 16 years. It gave me a chance to shake the rust off my storytelling to crowds of people I mostly don’t know (storytellers no less) and learn a few things as well. And I got to watch the World Cup semi and final games with some international folks, which added some color.

And I agreed to be the Ruling Elder commissioner representing the Presbytery of Utica at 227th General Assembly of the PC(USA) (this year in Milwaukee, WI) along with the Teaching Elder commissioner, the Rev. Hannah Ratliff from the New Hartford Presbyterian Church. Between prep work, online multi-day committee meetings, and meeting in person with 900 other people, it took up the latter half of June. We dealt with and voted on many issues including denouncing Christian Nationalism and discrimination against LGBTQI+.

All of this against a continuing backdrop of our world and political environment that seems to be getting worse and not better. But my experiences this summer have given me both wind in my sails and hope for the future. I saw and heard so many stories of people struggling and others helping, of people clearly articulating and describing the challenges and actions they are taking that help fortify us against the incessant pounding of fear and hate in our media and social discourse. Simply put, anytime people, particularly self-described Christians, are trying to exert power and control over others to their own benefit is not the way of Christ.

Yet we do not need to get bogged down in defending or justifying positions so much as to promote interests that are Christlike. For to be a follower of Christ is to imitate Christ, not just what he said but also did: help the poor, heal the sick, relieve the oppressed. And not just on an individual basis but also against the systemic structures of injustice. Sin is not just individual but also collectively as a community and society. To repent we need to promote love not hate, empathy not cruelty, openness not dogma. Everything else is just noise to distract us from God’s mission for us to reconcile the people to God, which means being reconciled to each other and with all. There is no “them”, only “us” for all people are children of God. This is the world God calls us to re-create—and we don’t get to retire from that.

Shalom,

Scott

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

September is a month of transition and new beginnings.

Summer slides into autumn. Students of all ages and their teachers go back to school.

Stone Presbyterian, too, transitions:

After Labor Day, church services return to their 10:30a start on September 13

Choir rejoins the service with some transitions of its own:

Sharon Rankins-Burd will be directing the choir

Johnny Calabrese will be accompanying us on the piano in September and November

Kelli Watson will play the organ in October and December

Maybe some new/old choir members will join us? We'll be singing downstairs when Johnny is here

Bible study will return on September 27. See separate article for details.

Lunch and Learn returns after worship on September 20, with Sharon Rankins-Burd presenting on Upstate Caring Partners. Hopefully, we'll also have another presentation before the end of the year. New ideas and/or presenters are always welcome, so be thinking about what you would like to learn more about or tell us about.

Football season returns! Go Bills!

CLINTON ART & MUSIC FESTIVAL

On a glorious day, once again Clinton held its annual Art & Music Festival on Saturday, 8/29/26 and Stone Church participated through our Building Stones Fair Trade Shoppe both in our store and out on the green. Many, many thanks to all who helped staff. Stone also had buskers ("a person who performs music, acting, magic, or other arts in public spaces to receive voluntary donations from passersby") out in front of our church, which not only added music to the event but also foot traffic to the store. Thank you, everyone, for a fantastic day today! Total sales for the Fair Trade Shoppe were \$2,275.86.



MUSIC AT STONE CHURCH

**The Sanctuary Choir will resume on Sunday morning, September 13
We rehearse on Sunday mornings at 9:15 A.M. and sing for the 10:30 service.**

You are invited to bring your joyful self to choir!

We welcome all voice parts from bass to soprano, and in September we'll be singing beside the piano, not in the choir loft, so don't let those stairs deter you!

I'm also curious to know if there are any potential handbell ringers interested in exploring a handbell choir. No experience? No problem! I can teach you what you need to know!

Thoughts and questions are always welcomed and appreciated. You can reach me at sharonrankinsburd@gmail.com, evenings at 315-822-3342, or by text at 315-765-1716.



Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. - Psalm 100:2

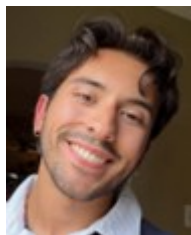
WELCOME TO OUR NEW MUSIC TEAM!

As we transition with the retirement of the Kolbs after over three decades, we are trying out some new configurations and arrangements with our music program, which we will continue to evolve.

We are most fortunate that Sharon Rankins-Burd has stepped up to be our new choir director. She has been singing alto in our choir for over year, having also sang in Rob Kolb's Oratorio Society in the past (one reason she decided to come to Stone). But Sharon also brings extensive talent and experience having been Minister of Music at West Winfield Federated Church in the past and providing and leading worship music in many roles (including pastor) over many years in the United Methodist Church, including guitar, piano, organ, handbells, and choirs. Besides working full-time at Upstate Caring Partners in Utica, she is also thespian and was in former Stone pastor Dennis Dewey's film this year, "2051: The Return Project". We are blessed to have Sharon with us!



With Sharon directing the choir we have brought on Johnny Calabrese to accompany the choir downstairs on the piano in September and November and Kelli Watson on the organ in the choir loft in October and December.



Johnny is dynamic songwriter, performer, and multi-instrumentalist with a strong background in composing, arranging, and live performance. He is experienced in academic and professional settings with a portfolio that spans original musical theater, ensemble leadership, and music production and has worked with Sharon in the past. He is passionate about creating meaningful, collaborative, and emotionally impactful musical experiences.

Kelli is a best-selling author, wellness coach, and co-founder of Scriptor Publishing Group. She focuses on health, personal development, and empowering self-published authors. She worked with Mary Ann Steifvater on publishing Midge Bakos' book, "A View from the Steeple." Kelli is the recipient of the Accent on Excellence Award for her work throughout her community, and she presents, locally and nationally, on topics having to do with health, wellness, mindset and performance. In 2013, she was honored to be a presenter for the first TEDxUtica program. In addition, she plays organ and has been our substitute organist a couple of occasions including last December. She currently plays for Zion Lutheran Church in Utica every other month.



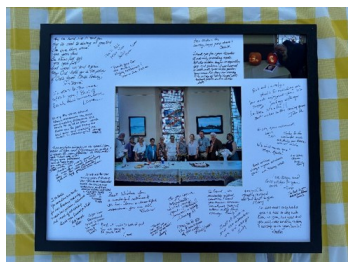


THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION will be holding a DRIVE-THRU PIE SALE from 10am to 2pm on Saturday, October 3rd, 2026. We will be hoping for donations of pies and help (baking and selling) from our congregation. Apple pies seem to be the most requested at this time of year, but all kinds are welcome. The proceeds from this sale will go to the various mission organizations that we support annually. For more information, please contact Ceil Gilbert (315-853-8289), ceilgilbert@yahoo.com or Donna Goodfriend (315-749-4085).

CHURCH PICNIC, SHERRY BIRTHDAY, "GOD BE WITH YE" TO THE KOLBS

On a glorious Saturday July 11th after we had a wonderful summer picnic at the John and Christine Menard's house! Many thanks to them for their gracious hospitality. Besides the bounteous feast, kids young and old also really enjoyed swimming and playing in the pool! We also celebrated Sherry Robinson's birthday that day when she turned...down telling us the number.

Poignantly, we honored Rob and Lauralynn Kolb for the wonderful music and joy they have shared with us over the years, including the choir singing the three-part song "Friends" led by Sharon Rankins-Burd (who will be our new choir director starting in September!). Besides a cake we also had a framed picture of the choir signed by people. David Kolb (their son), wife Katrina, and son Edmund were also able to join us. We wish Rob and Lauralynn all their best in their "second retirement"!



HOPE HOUSE WISH LIST: Hope House continues to serve the unhoused and needy of Utica with three meals a day and a place for daytime shelter. We at Stone Church join their mission once a month by sending three volunteers to serve dinner there. As you know, we also have a Sunday (the 4th of the month) designated as an opportunity to bring in items for Hope House and their guests. Their needs for this month continue to be sugar and coffee, as well as full-sized personal items like shampoo, conditioner, deodorant and bar soap. We're always looking for more people willing to spend a couple of hours (3-5 p.m.) with us on the 4th Monday of the month serving dinner at Hope House. If you'd like to join us, you can use the sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary, or contact Lora Schilder at 315-790-1945 or lschilde@hamilton.edu.

THE COUNTRY PANTRY is gearing up for the fall season. They would like applesauce, cranberry sauce, gravy packets (no glass), peanut butter and jelly. Other donations are always welcome. Please help me fill my car on the 3rd Sunday of every month. Blessed are those who give!! Thank you!

THE FAIR TRADE SHOPPE: A woman and her daughter were discussing going shopping. The daughter asked, "Where should we go?" The mother replied, "I know where the best gift shop in the area is." The daughter said, "Where is that?". The mother answered, "The Fair Trade Shop at the Stone Presbyterian Church, 8 So. Park Row, Clinton." The daughter exclaimed, "I'm ready, let's go."

- Ethically hand carved in India using sustainably sourced solid Indian rosewood, our Butterfly Puzzle Box features intricate details resembling lace patterns, carved using traditional hand wood carving techniques. The puzzle pieces pull apart to reveal a secret hidden compartment inside, which can be used to stash money, keepsakes, jewelry or little mementos. 
- Add a touch of color and sustainability to your home with our beautifully crafted Rainbow Gingham Rethread Throw from India. Made with recycled clothing, each piece is carefully separated, spun into new threads, over-dyed, and re-woven on traditional looms, creating a soft and sustainable accent for your home. The vibrant rainbow gingham pattern brings cheerful charm to any room. Perfect for draping over a sofa, layering on a bed, or using as a wrap on cool evenings. 
- Indulge in a luxurious hair care experience with our Balance Blue Clay Shampoo Bar from India, where the sale of one bar of soap sends one child to school for one day. The formula is reef-safe, cruelty-free, and free of harsh chemicals and parabens, as well as plastic packaging. Each bar is handcrafted and packaged in 100% recyclable paper, making it a travel-friendly and waste-free choice. 

These and MANY, MANY MORE uniquely handcrafted gift items from 38 different countries can be found at our **FAIR TRADE SHOP, STONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 8 SO. PARK ROW, CLINTON**. Our regular hours are 10am to 4pm every Thursday, **SECOND SATURDAYS, AT THE FARMER'S MARKET ON THE VILLAGE GREEN EVERY THURSDAY UNTIL OCTOBER 1ST**, and by appointment by calling 315-853-1070. Purchasing fair trade items ensures artisans and small farmers fair wages and healthy working conditions, providing dignity, sustainable development and hope for marginalized people. **LET US BE YOUR GO-TO GIFT SHOP!** Visit us at <https://buildingstonesshoppe.square.site> or www.facebook.com/

PRAYER REQUEST

Phil Conley
Mike Britton
Lee Kelso
Ryan
Grace Whittemore
Midge Bakos
Tom Mannino & Family
Matt Schementi
Mary Ann Stiefvater
Peggy Weldon
Tom & Ewa Lawrence
Ruth Hughes



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!

09-2-78 - Dennis & Sue Dewey

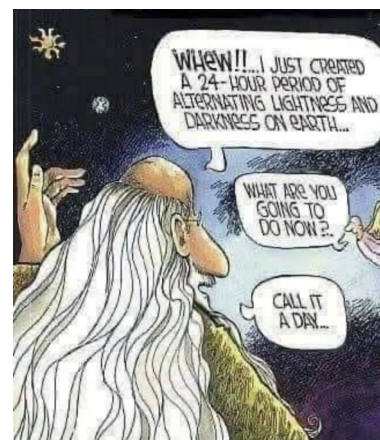


Want to see what's on the calendar?
You don't have to call the office. Go to
our home web page - stonepres.org, and
click on the "Calendar" tab at the top or
on the calendar icon.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

September

- 1 - Shelly Coe
- 4 - Alan Tuttle
- 7 - Mary Ann Stiefvater
- 14 - Cynthia Ellis
- 16 - Janice LeFrois
- 17 - Sarah LaFont
- 18 - Dennis Dewey
- 19 - Nicole Schilder
- 22 - Deli Rogers
- 23 - Tricia Tuttle
Ceil Gilbert
Sue Russo
- 25 - Samantha Reed
- 26 - Elena Schilder
- 27 - Emily Hughes
- 28 - Sue Rambo
Ann Smallen
- 29 - Brittany DeRosa
- 30 - Nikki Reynolds



BIBLE STUDY RESUMES WITH A NEW DAY AND TIME

Was Mary Magdalene really one of the bad girls of the Bible? Or was she really an important woman of the Bible?

Come to Bible Study and find out!



Beginning on September 27th, Donna will lead us in discussions on Sunday mornings around noon after fellowship.

She will have a tentative schedule of future sessions at that time, as we will be working around Lunch and Learns and the holiday season.

Please come join us! All are welcome, even if you cannot attend all the meetings

HAPPY (EARLY) 90TH BIRTHDAY TO BEV MILLER!

Bev Miller was able to join us for worship on 8/23/26 with her son and daughter-in-law coming up from North Carolina for a visit. Though her birthday isn't until October 30, since she likely won't be back up here then, we had a bit of a birthday celebration for her after worship during our hospitality time.



WANTED: YOUR PER CAPITA! Please note that per capita payments for the New Year are now being readily accepted!!! The 2026 per capita charge this year remains at \$46.04 per member, the same as last year. The church is assessed this amount for each member on the membership roll. The per capita is the cost of our representative democracy as a church and supports the meetings and operations of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. Please consider sending your per capita either directly to the church office (P.O. Box 33, Clinton, NY 13323) or enclosing it in with your pledge envelope. It is helpful if you pay the per capita explicitly even if it comes from your overall financial commitment to the church for the year. Thank you in advance for your help.



DEACONS CORNER

WE SHOULD CHOOSE THE BETTER SIDE OF LIFE

HATE has 4 letters, so does LOVE.
 ENEMIES has 7 letters, so does FRIENDS.
 LYING has 5, so does TRUTH.
 NEGATIVE has 8, so does POSITIVE.
 UNDER has 5, so does ABOVE.
 CRY has 3 letters, so does JOY.
 ANGER has 5, so does HAPPY.
 WRONG has 5, so does RIGHT.
 HURT has 4 letters, so does HEAL.

So, what does this mean? It means LIFE is like a doubled edged sword...so transform every negative side into an aura of positivity!!!! I know we all try to focus on the better side of life. It's not always easy...and there are times the negative side takes over our life and our actions. If any of you are ever struggling and need someone to help you see the positive side of life...your Deacons are here for you...anytime. Please let us be part of your journey when needed!! We all need help now and then.

Hugs, your Deacons

FARE THEE WELL AND GODSPEED TO THE KOLBS



As Rob and Lauralyn Kolb's last Sunday with us on 8/30/26, we had a hymn sing service based on one Rob had run across that Lauralyn put together 11/12/06 when she was our worship leader, making sure we had quality worship services for a year while we were between pastors. Rob told Pastor Scott afterward, "Playing four times as many hymns as normal makes me appreciate having a sermon." We had a lovely cake and hospitality time afterward as well.



DON'T FORGET THE DEACONS!

Please keep the Deacons in mind on the first Sunday of each month. All of the loose money collected on those Sundays will go to support the ministry of the Deacons. Questions? Speak with any of the Deacons: Linda Rance, Judy LaGasse, Mary Chamberlain, Trish Harris, Emily Hughes, Barbara Greene, Helen Leonard and Deb Lapoint.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

In celebration of the Feast of St. Francis come join us for an Ecumenical Service for the Blessing of the Animals @ 1:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon, October 4th on the Village Green by the gazebo. This is sponsored by the Clinton Area Ministerium. The purpose is to bring awareness to the need of pet food to a food bank, often failing to recognize that many folks living on a fixed income, often alone, have companion animals that need support as well. Look on our web site & next month's newsletter for more details or talk with Scott Leonard who is on the planning committee.



WELCOME BACK LUNCHEON!!!

September, 13, 2026

It is hard to believe that Summer is over and kids are going back to school and people are closing up their camps etc. We hope you all had a nice Summer and made lots of memories.

Starting September 13th we will be back to our regular services being at 10:30 instead of 9:30. We can all go back to getting an extra hour sleep!! As we have done in the past we will be having a light lunch after Church that Sunday. It is time to reconnect with everyone and share stories about our Summer activities. So, save the date. See you all on the 13^h!



"The people are wondering if you could multiply some tartar sauce?"



The Fair Trade Shoppe is at the Farmers Market on the Village Green every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until October



Stone Church has an online giving tool called Givelify that is also available as an app on your smart mobile device. Check it out on our web page.

NEW CHAIRS

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it also takes a village to buy new chairs for the Norton Room!! With lots of help, it still took us almost a year. Who would have thought that folding chairs are now smaller and therefore not very comfortable. We actually tried about 6-8 different styles. Many of them were sent to the Menard's home who had to ship the samples back!

The chairs were purchased by our Memorial fund. Many monetary donations were given by friends and family in memory of Harold (Hal) Rance. He passed away November 10, 2024. Hal and Linda often borrowed some of the chairs when they needed them at their home. Hal always had to sort through them to find several in good shape. He would be very pleased with this purchase.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 9:30 am - 10:30 am <u>Summer Worship</u>	31	September 1	2	3 10 am - 4 pm <u>Fair Trade Shoppe</u>	4	5
6 9:30 am - 10:30 am <u>Ecumenical Service on the Green</u>	7 Labor Day <u>Office Closed</u>	8	9	10 10 am - 4 pm <u>Fair Trade Shoppe</u> 1 pm - 2 pm <u>CAM Meeting</u>	11 Patriot Day Rosh Hashana	12 10 am - 4 pm <u>Fair Trade Shoppe</u>
13 GrandParents' Day 10:30 am - 11:30 am <u>Worship</u> 11:30 am - 12:30 pm <u>Welcome Back Luncheon</u>	14 7 pm - 9 pm <u>Session Meeting</u>	15	16	17 10 am - 4 pm <u>Fair Trade Shoppe</u>	18	19
20 Yom Kippur 10:30 am - 11:30 am <u>Worship</u>	21	22	23	24 10 am - 4 pm <u>Fair Trade Shoppe</u>	25 Sukkot	26
27 10 am - 11 am <u>Bible Study</u> 10:30 am - 11:30 am <u>Worship-Guest Preacher-Victor McKusick</u>	28 3:30 pm - 5 pm <u>Hope House</u>	29	30	1 10 am - 4 pm <u>Fair Trade Shoppe</u>	2 Last Day of Sukkot	3

 **The Corner Stone**
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



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Sunday Summer Worship 9:30 a.m. from July-August in person, streamed & recorded on Facebook Live
Church Office hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. weekdays except Tuesdays in July and August

Newsletter team:

Many thanks to Mary Chamberlain, Linda Rance & Donna Goodfriend who have folded, taped and labeled this issue of *The Corner Stone* just for you!



Please note...

The deadline for the issue of the October newsletter is September 18th.

To see a color version of this newsletter in pdf format, visit stonepres.org.