



Connection, Community, and Belonging

Rediscovering a Christian vision of love,
intentional living, and new ways of relating

This Fall: Across our programming, our attention will be drawn to God's vision of belonging and connection. *See inside cover.*

Peace, Justice, and Stewardship: World Communion Sunday is fast approaching with stewardship coming on its heels. *See pages 7 and 8.*

Connecting With Our Inner Life: Michael Cuppett shares insight on staying grounded this fall. *See page 9.*

Christian Education: Parents can find a listing of this fall's programming for children and youth. *See page 14.*

Connection, Community, and Belonging

Ken Kovacs

Over the summer, in meetings (both within the church and the wider community) and in conversations with a variety of people in the congregation, three related words began to emerge: connection, community, and belonging. Earlier this year, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy warned that isolation and loneliness pose a profound public health threat. More than half of the U.S. adults experience loneliness, which has consequences for mental and physical health, including a greater risk of depression, anxiety, as well as heart disease, stroke, and dementia. The U.S. is certainly not alone in this regard. Back in 2018, in the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Theresa May appointed a Minister for Loneliness. These trends toward social isolation were noticeable before COVID, but, like so much in our lives, the pandemic accelerated rates of change.

It's clear that many people these days—of all ages—are searching for connection, for community, a place where they feel they belong, where they feel welcomed, affirmed, and safe, a place where they can grow and thrive and flourish.

These are, of course, theological themes. The Bible has a lot to say about belonging and community, about the need to connect with neighbors and strangers, with the environment and the wider world, with God, and with ourselves. The church, therefore, has something invaluable to offer the world in this regard.

Starting in September, the program year will center around these themes of connecting and belonging, that is, deepening our understanding of what it means for us to be a community of the Risen Christ called to love neighbor, God, and self. You'll see our theme reflected in all areas of our life together, in worship, educational offerings for children, teens, and adults, through mission and justice advocacy, and in fellowship opportunities. We'll explore ways to deepen our connection with each other, with the wider community, with the environment, and ultimately, with God.

The early Church Father and theologian Tertullian (c.160–c.225) tells us that Roman society was shocked and often confused by the way Christian communities lived and practiced their faith. “Behold, how they love one another.” It's the love of God that calls us into community, into the church, and it's love that grounds, forms, and reforms God's people, to be people of that “still more excellent way,” as Paul said. (1 Cor. 12:31). May we (re)discover this love at work within and among us this year, and then share it with our neighbors, especially those searching for a place to belong.

Exploring Connection Through Adult Education

9:00 a.m. in the Library.

Our Sunday morning adult education offerings return in September. The Adult Education Committee has put together a thoughtful and engaging program for the fall. Something new this year, you can find all the reading materials for our classes and discussions online. Visit catonsvillepres.org/belonging to access these resources. They are available for you to explore whether or not you attend a class.

Belonging

September 10 and 17 | Ken Kovacs

Throughout the year, we'll be exploring themes related to connection, community, and belonging. In post-Covid America, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy has warned about the "loneliness epidemic" sweeping society. People are feeling isolated and alone. People are searching for ways to relate and connect. People, of all ages, are searching for community, a place where they feel welcome, accepted, safe, and invited to flourish. The Christian tradition has something special to offer this moment. What is distinctive about a Christian vision of belonging? In a recent interview in *The Presbyterian Outlook*, theologian Willie James Jennings reminds us that at its heart, "Christian community is [about] creating belonging where there had been boundary, border, separation, and segregation. A Christian sense of belonging always cuts across every other kind of alignment and allegiance."

Christian Nationalism

October 8 and 22 | Ken Kovacs

Christian nationalism is a political ideology and cultural framework that seeks to merge American and Christian identities. In this day when both American identity and Christian identity are undergoing massive shifts in definition and meaning, the reappearance and rise of Christian Nationalism (CN) is an alarming, reactionary response. The subtitle of Andrew L. Whitebread's new and important work, *American Idolatry*, gets at the heart of the issue: *How Christian Nationalism Betrays the Gospel and Threatens the Church* (Brazos, 2023). In addition to Sunday morning classes, the issue will be explored in two sermons in October. We're also planning opportunities for conversations in the evening (look for dates). And we've invited the members of Grace A.M.E. in Catonsville to join in the discussion. CN subscribes to a particular understanding of who is "in" and who is intentionally left out or pushed to the margins, who belongs, and who doesn't.

God's Glorious Creation

November 5 and 19 | Mark Buehlman

God is longing for us to connect with God's glorious creation, and to be good stewards of it. The two November classes will cover a couple of areas of God's creation, the "just right" timing of climate, and the breathtaking design of plants, animals, and natural systems. As part of the sessions, we will discuss some of the science involved, human impacts, and ways we and the church can protect and help restore these systems. Led by Mark Buehlman, author, speaker, inventor, and teacher, who has over 45 years of diverse environmental experience. Mark received a B.S. in Engineering from Syracuse University and an M.S. in Environmental Engineering from the Johns Hopkins University. Most recently, he worked for 11 years as an Adjunct Professor at the Community College of Baltimore County, where he taught Environmental Science and Environmental Law.

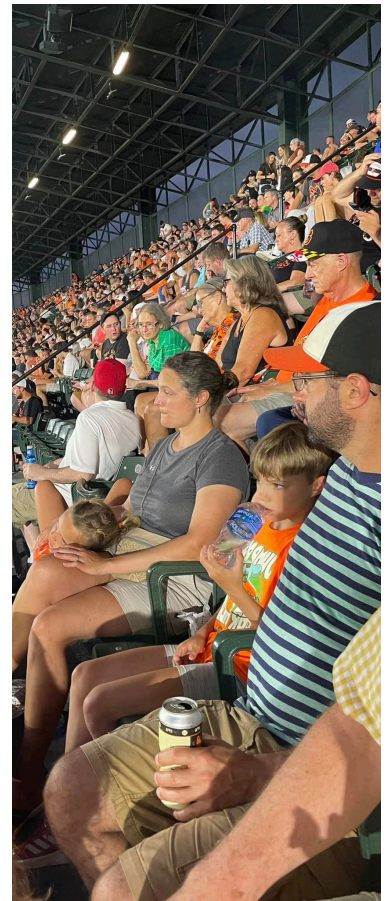
Thursday Morning Bible Study: New Ways of Relating

Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. in the Library | Led by Ken Kovacs

TMBS resumes on September 21 with a study of the Letter to the Ephesians. Written by the apostle Paul, or one of his disciples, to Christians living in and around Ephesus, this letter celebrates the life of the church, a unique community established by God through the work of Jesus Christ.

Reconciliation with God through Christ paves the way for new ways of relating among believers, living in community and in unity.

The letter attests to the power and presence of Christ, who continues to tear down the walls that divide us to form us into one household of God. We—individually and together—are being built in and through love into a dwelling place for God (Eph. 2:22). This is what we are being called toward as a church. And “speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promote the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (Eph.4:15-16). Just bring your Bible and join us at 10:30 a.m. (in the library or via Zoom). We finish promptly at noon.



Connection Beyond Coffee Hour

Stephanie Stevens | *Fellowship Committee Chair* ▶ Between an increase in remote work, decreased opportunities for human connection, and the lasting effects of COVID, it is harder than ever to make much needed connections. I can personally testify that as an adult it is difficult to make friends.

Several months ago, I turned 40 (!) and gathered with friends and family to celebrate at a local restaurant. Numerous members of my Presbyterian Women circle attended along with our pastors and something came up: *why aren't we doing things like this more often?*

While fellowship opportunities certainly exist at church, there is often a level of “formality” that melts away outside of the walls. Outside of the church walls, we can relax and be ourselves in a unique way, deepening friendships that might be ordinarily limited to small talk during fellowship hour. These outside opportunities for fellowship also allow others to see that the church isn't a bunch of stuffy, holier-than-thou types, but to the contrary: we know how to have fun!

I greatly encourage all of you to create your own fellowship opportunities as well! Planning to go to your favorite bar to watch the Ravens game? Post it on our private Members and Friends Facebook group and invite others to come along! If you have any ideas, I'd love to hear them as well.

Being a community of faith means being a true community and taking it outside these walls.



Singing Our Faith

Greg Knauf | *Director of Music*

One of the many things I love about this congregation is that we appreciate music and its integral role in worship. We are also a congregation that sings! One of the nice things about worshipping in the Fellowship Hall during the summer is that we're closer together and can hear every voice filling the space. When the pandemic took in-person worship away from us, there was a hole in my own worship. Congregation singing was noticeably absent.

There is something transformative in the act of singing together, especially singing our faith together.

Science has shown the many benefits of singing in a group, but even without that evidence, I think there's an obvious, palpable energy in the church when we join together in song. I invite you to lean into this transformation that happens through song this fall through one of the upcoming opportunities. And as we kick off another season, please join me in thanking all of the volunteer musicians who contribute in such a valuable way to our worship experience!

Chancel Choir

If you are someone who enjoys the communal experience of singing together and wants to get more involved, the doors to the Chancel Choir are always open. Chancel Choir rehearsals are held on Thursdays between 7:00 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. in the sanctuary, in addition to Sundays at 9:45 a.m. before worship. Our first rehearsal will be Thursday, September 7.

Handbell Choir

The handbell choir is looking for new ringers this season to create a complete ensemble. No ringing experience is necessary, but it is strongly recommended that players know how to read music.

If you are interested in getting involved with the chancel or handbell choirs, or want more information, feel free to speak to me or a current member, or send me an e-mail (gknauf@catonsvillepres.org).

Instrumental Contributions

Please email me if you play an instrument and would like to contribute in some way to our worship services. We have many talented members of the church, and it's always wonderful to see those talents shared in worship.

Children and Youth Choir

As an integral part of our ministry to families, the church recognizes the value of giving our children and youth the opportunity to participate in worship as they learn the value of making music together and offering praise to God. This year, there will be several opportunities to sing in worship. Contact Wendy (wjohnston@catonsvillepres.org) for more info.

Rhythms of Family Connection

For families with school-age children, this time of year brings its own special energy. We're all looking forward with anticipation (and yet a little hesitation) as we begin a new school year.

The Christian Education Committee is excited about our upcoming programming: Second Sundays (multi-age church school, Cocoa & Conversations, Sunday morning child care) and our middle and high school youth group. We can't wait to reconnect with old and new friends this fall!

Still, most Christian formation happens at home in the daily practices and routines of family life. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its Office of Christian Formation, has suggestions and ideas available at tinyurl.com/pcusa-family.

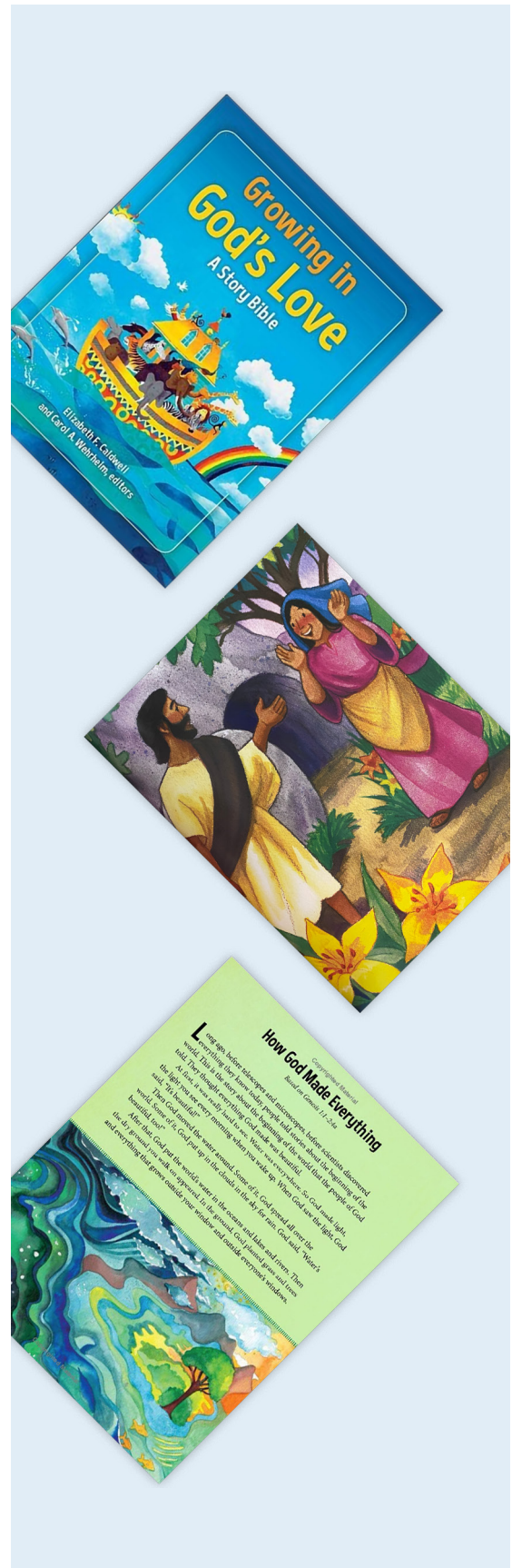
The Office of Christian Formation has just received a Lilly Foundation grant which will be used to support and grow and develop its at-home ministry over the next five years. We've discovered that parents and caregivers are interested in gaining confidence about sharing the faith with their children and grandchildren in addition to educational and skill-building opportunities. We'll be sharing materials and resources with you as they are available.

If you haven't yet received a copy of Traci Smith's book, *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home*, we have one to share with you. We also have a story bible with 150 stories for ages 4-8, *Growing in God's Love*. Please contact the church office or any member of the Christian Education Committee and we'll be delighted to get one to you.

Blessings to all as we begin our school year and church program year together.

Christian Education Team

Jeff Bolognese, Jenny Hutton, Sharon Oaks, Laura Parkhurst, JV and Melissa Virago



A Broken, Fearful World

Ken Kovacs | Pastor

World Communion Sunday is October 1. First adopted as a denominational practice in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.) in 1936, churches in other denominations were later invited to join. It wasn't until 1940, when the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches (a predecessor of the National Council of Churches) extended the celebration to several churches around the world, that the practice became widespread.

The idea originated with Dr. Hugh Thompson Kerr, pastor at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1933. Kerr first conceived the notion of World Communion Sunday during his year as moderator of the General Assembly in 1930. But this nascent idea came to fruition through the work of the Stewardship Committee at Shadyside. They dreamed of bringing churches together in a service of Christian unity to lift up the global Church and to remember that by virtue of our baptism, we are connected to a worldwide community. One congregation is connected to every other congregation, united in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

The vision gradually caught on in the denomination and with our ecumenical partners. Ecumenism only emerged after the First World War as churches struggled to respond to the devastating humanitarian and theological crisis brought on by the war. Dr.

Kerr's son, the Rev. Dr. Donald Craig Kerr (who was a pastor emeritus of the Roland Park Presbyterian Church in Baltimore), shares that "the concept spread very slowly at the start. People did not give it a whole lot of thought. It was during the Second World War that the Spirit caught hold because we were trying to hold the world together. World Wide Communion Sunday symbolized the effort to hold things together in a spiritual sense. It emphasized that we are one in the Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Today, organized by the National Council of Churches, World Communion Sunday is celebrated worldwide, demonstrating that the church founded on Jesus Christ peacefully shares God-given goods in a world increasingly destabilized by global market economies based on greed. It is fitting that on this Sunday, we will receive one of the Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Peace and Global Witness Offering encourages congregations to address the anxiety and discord prevalent in a broken and fearful world. Twenty-five percent of what we receive will support the Dismantling Racism Committee's ongoing work of peace, healing, and reconciliation in our community. Together, we make a difference. Let us gather around the Lord's table and entrust our lives to the one who holds the world together, giving generously to the work and witness of Christ through the life of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

**FROM "A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH,"
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**



Give to the Peace
& Global Witness
Offering



Connecting in God's World

Stewarding our Community

This fall season, we'll turn our attention to stewardship, giving, and pledging. Reid shares how his habits of giving were formed in community and through connection.

Pledge Commitment Sunday is November 19.

Reid Spearman | *Member*

I decided to share my personal experience with giving.

Since childhood, I've set aside 10% of my gross income (before taxes) to give to the church or other charitable causes. This was the "Old Testament rule." My parents practiced what we call tithing and they brought me up in that tradition.

I believe the Lord has blessed my giving. In over sixty years of life, I've never wanted for any necessity. It gives me great joy to share with others financially.

Now, I realize that 10% off the top is a lot of money, especially on a fixed income. Jesus said that we should all give what we have decided in our hearts to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. So how do we make giving a habit?

At my church back home in Georgia, we taught something called percentage giving. If you don't give consistently and 10% would wreck your budget, go with something more manageable. If you already give regularly, what percentage of your income is that? Think about increasing what you give by a percentage point or two in the coming year. God is faithful, and I believe he will bless your gifts to the point that you can begin increasing what you give each year.

Give it a try! See what happens!

A Community of Sharing

Jim Wallace wrote in his book *Rediscovering Values* that "God's economy has two basic points: 1. There is enough; 2. If we share it." Stewardship, giving, and missions are all related to the radical ordering of life to which God has called us.

Jenny Hutton | *Member of the Mission Committee*

The Deacons and the Mission Committee are very pleased with the amount of donations we receive at the biweekly Friday Food Collections. The next collection is on Friday, September 8 between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and will benefit the Grace A.M.E. food pantry. On September 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., the "Fill this Truck" food drive event will take place at the Knights of Columbus on Frederick Road. This event is organized by Ellen Draper and members of Catonsville Presbyterian, Salem Lutheran Church, Christian Temple, New Hope Community Church, Catonsville Emergency Assistance (CEA), and Grace A.M.E. All collections will be divided equally between the Grace A.M.E. and CEA food pantries. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please email me at jenhutton2010@gmail.com.

Looking ahead to the fall, we will once again be partnering with Grace A.M.E. for their annual Thanksgiving Giveaway. The missionaries at Grace hope to feed 250 families with a Thanksgiving meal that would not otherwise be possible. Our "Adopt a Turkey" fundraiser will get underway soon, but it's not too early to contribute to this wonderful mission! Send me a message and we'll get you squared away.



Connecting With the Inner Life

**Staying Grounded in
Contemplation and God's
Presence this Fall**

**“For it is not knowing much, but
realizing and relishing things interiorly,
that contents and satisfies the soul.”**

Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises

Michael Cuppett | *Communications and Operations Manager* ▶ **With the change in seasons comes a change in our living.** Though the days might remain warm for several weeks, they might carry a different rhythm, a rhythm that might be more dense, ponderous, or frenzied. As the school year returns and parents thank the Almighty for teachers, aids, and staff, the summer is exchanged for a different set of responsibilities like extracurriculars, sports, part-time jobs, or late-night assignments. For those of us without children—or whose children have long flown the coop—the autumn season might bring a different set of feelings, whether they be feelings of renewal, excitement, fatigue, grief, or something in between.

As the world turns around us, it's an opportunity to become aware of our inner lives and deepen intimacy with our souls. If the phrase "inner life" sounds vague, that's because the inner life is vague. Our spirits are filled with ambiguities, complexities, odd knots that are woven into the synapses of our brains and expressed in our bodies. Within those ambiguities of our human lives, we know that the triune God is working, living, breathing. God became incarnate so that we might "come home," to our complex selves—body, mind, heart, and spirit—as Henry Nouwen wrote.¹ This autumn, in its transience and transformation, is ripe to become a season of attunement and awareness to our inner lives.

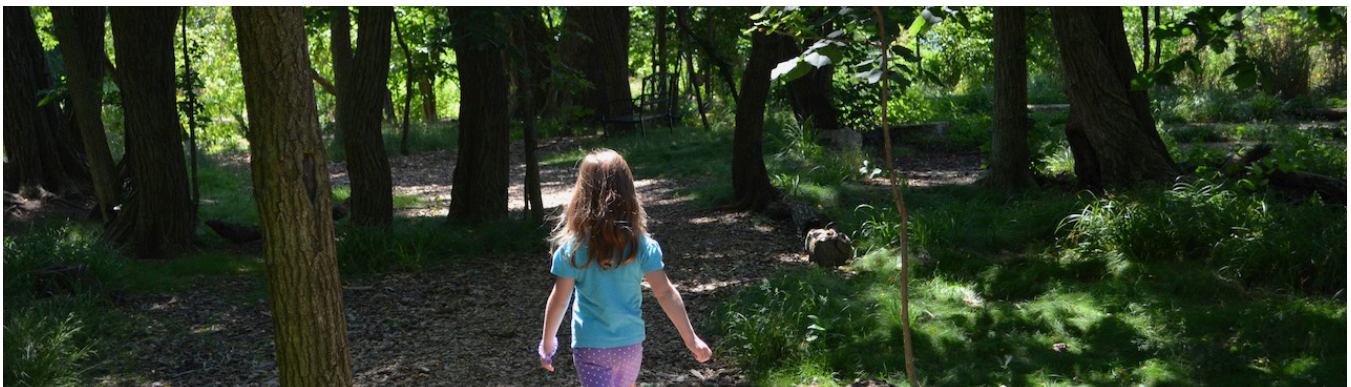
To deepen intimacy with ourselves, it takes a little bit of practice. There's no secret sauce or hidden wisdom that is required, just an openness to the

present moment and God's presence. Stretching back through centuries of Christian practice (and seeing a resurgence in Western Christianity), the idea of "contemplation," draws us into these practices of intimacy and awareness.

The Center for Action and Contemplation defines contemplation as "the practice of being fully present—in heart, mind, and body—to 'what is' in a way that allows you to creatively respond and work toward what could be."² Contemplation is an overarching idea that encompasses a range of practices. These are sometimes called spiritual disciplines or contemplative practices. The notion that these are "disciplines" suggests that contemplation forms us, grows us, and structures our living. The term "practice," illuminates something else: these are not skills to master, but rhythms that are continually rehearsed and refined. That's a freeing concept. There's no winning, achieving, or conquering involved. Only willingness to become present with the truth of God's presence. Either phrase—spiritual discipline or contemplative practice—is appropriate, so use whichever speaks to you.

You Don't Need to Go Far

There's nothing you have to buy, acquire, read, or prepare to engage in contemplation and spiritual disciplines. Everything is ready—today—for you to cradle in God's loving and kind presence. Here are three suggestions to get started.



¹ Nouwen, Henri. *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish To Freedom* (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1996). 19-20.

² "What Is Contemplation?" *Center for Action and Contemplation*, <https://cac.org/about/what-is-contemplation/>

Labyrinth: The labyrinth sits behind the Church House and is always open. Church members who have walked the labyrinth at Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center in Marriottsville, Maryland often share that it is a meaningful practice. Our own labyrinth can provide a similar experience. Take a deep breath before entering the labyrinth and set an intention for your time. It may be to love oneself more fully or to become aware of God’s presence. Perhaps it is helpful to choose a simple prayer or mantra. After this preparation, begin to follow the labyrinth’s path toward the center. There is only one path to follow. If you prefer to sit, you can follow the path with your eyes, allowing a soft gaze to trace the contours of the labyrinth. Take your time, and allow thoughts to drift into your mind, and release the thoughts when you become conscious of them.

Walking Meditation: Thich Nhat Hanh is sometimes called the “father of mindfulness,” and lived a full life as a Vietnamese peace activist, prolific author, poet and teacher. He outlined a simple walking meditation. Consider going to the woodlands and beginning by taking a deep breathe followed by a single step. Be fully present, taking time to notice the sensations around you. What do you notice about the sole of your foot? The feeling of your weight? What about the earth beneath it? Once you become fully present, begin walking gently, counting the number of steps you take with each breath. Find a balance and connection between your breath and body, and once you have found a rhythm, continue to walk. You might find a sense of connection with God’s creation, your body, mind, heart, and all that is within you.³

Contemplative Prayer and Meditation: The Contemplative Prayer group meets on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. The group varies weekly from three to five participants and focuses on a 20-minute spiritual practice of silent meditation, quieting the mind to drop into the silence of the present. The group begins with a welcome, an introduction for beginners, and a practical meditation for that sitting. Often the group

concludes with a form of directed blessing, called “acts of loving-kindness.” As Martin Laird writes, the practice of silence “simply allows something to take place.”⁴ It is what it is. You are welcomed and encouraged to drop into this time of practice. This is a safe space. Acceptance and welcome are the norm. It is what it is, and tolerance abounds. You can email the church office for the Zoom link or attend an upcoming introductory event this fall.



Columbarium and Sacred Garden: At the columbarium, you are surrounded by a community of faith, a great congregation that exists beyond all time and space. When sitting at the benches in the sacred garden, allow yourself to wonder. Contemplate on God’s providence throughout time, the love that others have invested into the physical environment around us, and the confession that “in life and in death, we belong to God.”⁵ Consider using this space to practice *lectio divina*, as a quiet space for belonging and communion with God’s people.

Other disciplines

Lectio Divina is a sustained, focus way of reading Scripture that reaches back to Jewish practice and refined by Saint Benedict in the sixth century. The Presbyterian minister Marjorie J. Thompson

³ “Thich Nhat Hanh’s Walking Meditation,” *Lion’s Roar*, 16 July 2023, <https://www.lionsroar.com/how-to-meditate-thich-nhat-hanh-on-walking-meditation/>

⁴ Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to Christian Practice of Contemplation*. Oxford Press, 2006, 3.

⁵ “A Brief Statement of Faith,” 11.1, *The Book of Confessions* (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly).

Connecting With the Inner Life

identifies four phases in the classic practice of *lectio divina*, each identified with a different Latin word: *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. In the first two phases, the Word of God is held close to heart. In *lectio*, one reads the scripture slowly, being careful to read with freshness and tenderness. The second phase, *oratio*, invites the participant to meditate on the reading with that is within them: their experiences, memories, imaginations, and feelings. It is more akin to pondering the Word than it is to meditation in a colloquial sense. In *oratio*, the participant raises a prayer. It may be of joy, anguish, confession, contentment, or whatever else may surface from the *lectio* and *meditatio*. And finally, after lifting this earnest, sincere prayer, the participant rests in a period of *contemplatio*. This is communion with God's Spirit, Sabbath rest, and security in the nature and presence of God. These four phases are the foundation of the classic practice of *lectio divina*.⁶



Spiritual direction is a process of guidance, discernment, and cultivation in one's faith that typically occurs in a one-on-one or group setting. A 2021 *New York Times* article describes the role of facilitators, called spiritual directors as “guides whose purpose is to listen deeply to clients and help them explore their spirituality.”⁷

Many Presbyteries encourage those preparing for the pastorate to participate in spiritual direction. And though spiritual direction has roots in the Jesuit tradition, it is becoming increasingly popular in Protestant and non-denominational spaces. Princeton Theological Seminary recently announced its own training program through its Center for Contemplative Leadership (CCL).

There's something for you

Ironically, there's a lot of noise in the universe when it comes to resources for contemplation. The good news, however, is that there's bound to be something that feels like a natural fit for you. See if something stands out from the following list and give it a chance this fall. And as always, have a conversation with Ken or Dorothy about this season. They're delighted to listen, offer suggestions, and explore God's presence in your life.

Books

Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life by Marjorie J. Thompson: “Marjorie Thompson offers a framework for understanding the spiritual disciplines and provides instruction for developing and nurturing those practices.” ([PCUSAStore.com](https://www.pcusa.org/store/))

Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone by James Martin, SJ: “A trusted guide walking beside us as we navigate our unique spiritual paths, Martin lays out the different styles and traditions of prayer throughout Christian history and invites us to experiment and discover which works best to feed our soul and build intimacy with our Creator.” ([HarperCollins.com](https://www.harpercollins.com/))

Wrestling with Rest by Nate Stucky: “With all that's going on in our lives and in the world, who has time to rest? In this winsome and wise book, Stucky offers a gentle, moving corrective to that pervasive modern mindset. And while the subtitle might make it seem as if this book is about young people, it's really about all of us—all who are burdened by ceaseless activity, all with endless to-do lists. Stucky reminds us that Sabbath is a beautiful thing for us.” —Jeff Chu

⁶ Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

⁷ Cooper, Andrea. “Can Spiritual Directors Help?” *New York Times*, 13 January 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/13/style/self-care/spiritual-directors-faith-religion.html>

The Inner Voice of Love by Henri Nouwen: “This was written during the most difficult period of [Henri Nouwen’s] life, when he suddenly lost his self-esteem, his energy to live and work, his sense of being loved, even his hope in God. Although he experienced excruciating anguish and despair, he was still able to keep a journal in which he wrote a spiritual imperative to himself each day that emerged from his conversations with friends and supporters.” ([BarnesAndNoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com))

Websites and Apps

Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC): Founded by Fr. Richard Rohr, The Center for Action and Contemplation is an educational nonprofit introducing seekers to the contemplative Christian path of transformation. CAC publishes podcasts, daily meditations, online education, events, and books. ([cac.org](https://www.cac.org))

The Center for Contemplative Leadership (CCL) at Princeton Theological Seminary: The CCL trains leaders in contemplative listening, spiritual peer mentoring, and the importance of contemplation for social and racial justice. They publish resource lists in addition to their training programs, and programming is tailored to a wide range of audiences. (ptsem.edu/academics/ccl)

Headspace app: Headspace creates science-backed meditation/mindfulness tools that promote mental and emotional wellbeing. With over 70 million members using the app in 190 countries, the app is an excellent tool to develop habits of meditation and understand the foundations of mindfulness. ([headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com))

Music and Podcasts

Taizé music: The Taizé community publishes a range of meditations, reflections, music albums, and resources that are rooted in contemplation. Their website includes a sign up list for email updates, news, and resources. ([taize.fr](https://www.taize.fr))

Contemplating Now: Contemplating Now is a podcast by The Christian Century, born from the research and experiences of Cassidy Hall. The podcast explores the intersections of contemplation and social justice by centering the voice of scholars, mystics, and activists of color. ([christiancentury.org/about-contemplating-now](https://www.christiancentury.org/about-contemplating-now))

Programs and Retreats

Oasis Ministries for Spiritual Development (OMSD): OMSD is a non-profit organization that offers ecumenical training in spiritual direction and contemplative prayer practices. The organization has close ties to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Princeton Theological Seminary and maintains a searchable directory of spiritual directors. (oasismin.org/find-a-guide)

Embodied Faith: Embodied Faith is a project by Annalise Hume, a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary who worked as a professional dancer prior to her theological education. Embodied Faith is a form of group spiritual direction that incorporates movement, dance, and the physical body. Through retreats and virtual sessions, Annalise hopes to draw others into holistic, embodied spiritual practices. ([withannalise.com](https://www.withannalise.com))

Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center: Besides offering rooms for private retreats and quiet getaways, Bon Secours has an active schedule of programming, group retreats, and events. ([bonsecoursrcc.org](https://www.bonsecoursrcc.org))

Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation: Since 1973, the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation has fostered contemplative living and leadership through programs and other resources. Shalem provides a range of offerings that are both online and in-person. ([shalem.org](https://www.shalem.org))

Christian Education

Jenny Hutton | *Member of the Christian Education Committee*

The Christian Education Committee is gearing up for another fun and productive year. Second Sundays will start back up on Sunday, September 10. If you are interested in being a volunteer for any of these ministries, please email the chair of the Christian Education Committee, Jeff Bolognese at jabolognese@gmail.com.

Confirmation Meeting

Sunday, October 1 | after worship | Library

Ninth and tenth graders who are interested in confirmation will meet with Dorothy Boulton and Jeff Bolognese to learn about this year's process.

Trick or Treat Trail

Sunday, October 29 | after worship | Woodlands

Children are encouraged to wear costumes and visit the Woodlands for fun, fellowship, and candy! Everyone is welcome to provide candy and/or volunteer for the event by signing up at tinyurl.com/cpc-trick-or-treat

"Fill the Truck" food drive

Saturday, September 16 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Knights of Columbus

Benefits the Grace A.M.E. and Catonsville Emergency Assistance food pantries. Any youth that need service hours and would like to volunteer should email Jenny Hutton at jenhutton2010@gmail.com

Third Grade Bible Gifts

Sunday, October 8 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary

Third graders will receive Bibles during worship, so be sure to attend!

Advent Ornament Crafting

Sunday, December 3 | after worship | Fellowship Hall

Following worship, we will meet in Fellowship Hall for lots of treats, fun, and ornament crafts. Some ornaments can be enjoyed at home and some will be donated to our neighbors at the Westside Men's Shelter.

Second Sundays Schedule

Beginning September 10

	Childcare	Multi-age church school	Cocoa and Conversations
Age/grade	0-5 years old	Kindergarten to 5 th grade	6 th -12 th grades
Location	Lower Level: Below France Room	Lower Level: Below Fellowship Hall	Youth room at top of Frederick Road stairs
Start time	10:00 a.m.	Before sermon	10:00 a.m.
Pick up time	11:30 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	11:30 a.m.

Calendar

Committees and event coordinators often adjust schedules throughout the month. Please check the online calendar of events for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Events Every Week this Fall

Contemplative Prayer

Mondays | 7 p.m. | Zoom

Each gathering includes brief time for conversation, discussion, and about 20 minutes of silent meditation.

Needlework Group

Tuesdays | 10:30 a.m. | Zoom

Join other needlework enthusiasts and enjoy each other's company.

September

Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Thursdays beginning 09/21 | 10:30 a.m. | Library

Explore Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Choir Rehearsal

Thursdays | 7 p.m. | Sanctuary

Prepare choral anthems with others in a relaxed and inviting atmosphere.

Events this September

Food Collection

Friday, September 8 | 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Small Lot

Bring a few nonperishable items to the small parking lot off Frederick Road to support our neighbors.

Adult Education

Sunday, September 10 | 9 a.m. | Library

Ken Kovacs leads the first session on connection and community.

Second Sunday Ministries

Sunday, September 10 | Beginning at 10 a.m.

Childcare, youth programming, and multi-age church school are provided for all ages from infants to 18.

Presbyterian Women: Zoom Circle

Monday, September 11 | 9:30 p.m. | Zoom

The Monday morning Zoom circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Staff Meeting

Tuesday, September 12 | Noon | Church House

Church staff will attend to the daily life of the church.

Child Care Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 13 | 7 p.m. | Zoom

The Child Care Council oversees the Family Child Care Center (FCCC).

Christian Education Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 14 | 7 p.m. | Zoom

The Christian Education Committee facilitates ministry with children and youth.

Church Grounds Workday

Saturday, September 16 | 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.
Church grounds

Care for the small corner of creation we inhabit.

September (Continued)

Fill the Truck Food Drive

Saturday, September 16 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Knights of Columbus

Bring a few items to the Knights of Columbus for this food drive benefiting the pantries at Grace A.M.E. and Catonsville Emergency Assistance.

Adult Education

Sunday, September 17 | 9 a.m. | Library

Ken Kovacs leads the second session on connection and community.

Q&A with Ken and Dorothy

Sunday, September 17 | After worship
France Room

Spend time with our pastors asking questions, learning about our ministry together, and getting to know each other.

Mission Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 17 | After worship
Church House

The Mission Committee initiates mission projects, facilitates hands-on service, and collaborates with Deacons.

Presbyterian Women: Passages Circle

Tuesday, September 19 | 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Passages circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Presbyterian Women: Wednesday Night Circle

Wednesday, September 20 | 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Wednesday night circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Food Collection

Friday, September 22 | 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Small Lot

Bring a few nonperishable items to the small parking lot off Frederick Road to support our neighbors.

Retirement Celebrations for Ginger Daiger

Sunday, September 24 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary

We will give thanks for the ministry and career of Ginger Daiger during worship, followed by a light reception.

Youth Group

Sunday, September 24 | 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Middle and high school youth will gather for games and growth.

Staff Meeting

Tuesday, September 26 | Noon | Church House

Church staff will attend to the daily life of the church.

Presbyterian Women: Bridges Circle

Wednesday, September 27 | 4 p.m.
Brightview Rolling Hills

The Bridges circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Deacons Meeting

Wednesday, September 27 | 7 p.m. | Library and Zoom

Deacons will attend to the care needs of the congregation.

Events this October

October

World Communion Sunday

Sunday, October 1 | 10:30 a.m.

From north and south, east and west, join us.

Confirmation Meeting

Sunday, October 1 | After worship

Ninth and tenth graders and their parents are invited to gather in the Library following worship to learn about the confirmation process.

Presbyterian Women: Zoom Circle

Monday, October 2 | 9:30 a.m. | Zoom

The Monday morning Zoom circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Dismantling Racism Committee Meeting

Monday, October 2 | 7:30 p.m. | Zoom

The Dismantling Racism Committee facilitates anti-racism action and education in Catonsville.

Staff Meeting

Tuesday, October 3 | Noon | Church House

Church staff will attend to the daily life of the church.

Session Meeting

Wednesday, October 4 | 7 p.m. | Library

The Session is an elected body of elders that guide the church's witness and life together.

Food Collection

Friday, October 6 | 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Small Lot

Bring a few nonperishable items to the small parking lot off Frederick Road to support our neighbors.

Adult Education

Sunday, October 8 | 9 a.m. | Library

Ken Kovacs leads the first session on Christian Nationalism.

Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Second Sunday Ministries & Third Grade Bibles

Sunday, October 8 | Beginning at 10 a.m.

Childcare, youth programming, and multi-age church school are provided for all ages from infants to 18. Third graders will receive Bibles in worship.

Envision Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 10 | 7 p.m. | Zoom

The Envision Board administers grants for ministry initiatives and capital improvement projects.

Child Care Council Meeting

Wednesday, October 11 | 7 p.m. | Zoom

The Child Care Council oversees the Family Child Care Center (FCCC).

Staff Meeting

Tuesday, October 17 | Noon | Church House

Church staff will attend to the daily life of the church.

Presbyterian Women: Passages Circle

Tuesday, October 17 | 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Passages circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Presbyterian Women: Wednesday Night Circle

Wednesday, October 18 | 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Wednesday night circle will meet for fellowship and study.

October (Continued)

Food Collection

Friday, October 20 | 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Small Lot

Bring a few nonperishable items to the small parking lot off Frederick Road to support our neighbors.

Charlestown Treasure Sale

Friday, October 20 - Saturday, October 21

The general public is invited to a treasure sale supporting the Charlestown Benevolence Fund from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

Adult Education

Sunday, October 22 | 9 a.m. | Library

Ken Kovacs leads the second session on Christian Nationalism.

Concerts at 3

Sunday, October 22 | 3 p.m. | Sanctuary

Pianist Katie Mahan is a distinguished interpreter of the music of George Gershwin, Claude Debussy, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Youth Group

Sunday, October 22 | 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

Middle and high school youth will gather for games and growth.

Reformation Sunday

Sunday, October 29 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary

We will celebrate the 506th anniversary of the Reformation.

Trick or Treat Trail

Sunday, October 29 | After worship | Woodlands

Children are encouraged to wear costumes and visit the Woodlands for fun, fellowship, and candy!

Events this November

Session Meeting

Wednesday, November 1 | 7 p.m. | Library

The Session is an elected body of elders that guide the church's witness and life together.

Food Collection

Friday, November 3 | 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Small Lot

Bring a few nonperishable items to the small parking lot off Frederick Road to support our neighbors.

Adult Education

Sunday, November 5 | 9 a.m. | Library

Mark Buehlman leads the first session on "God's Glorious Creation."

All Saints' Sunday

Sunday, November 5 | 10:30 a.m.

We will celebrate All Saints' Sunday and lift up the names of those who have died this past year.

Dismantling Racism Committee Meeting

Monday, November 6 | 7:00 p.m.

The Dismantling Racism Committee facilitates anti-racism action and education in Catonsville.

Presbyterian Women: Zoom Circle

Monday, November 7 | 9:30 p.m. | Zoom

The Monday morning Zoom circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Staff Meeting

Tuesday, November 7 | Noon | Church House

Church staff will attend to the daily life of the church.

Child Care Council Meeting

Wednesday, November 8 | 7 p.m. | Zoom

The Child Care Council oversees the Family Child Care Center (FCCC).

Memorial for Ted Dürr

Saturday, November 11 | 11:00 a.m.
Charlestown (tentative)

A memorial service will be held for Ted Dürr, a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbytery of Baltimore who died earlier this year.

November (Continued)

Second Sunday Ministries

Sunday, November 12 | Beginning at 10 a.m.

Childcare, youth programming, and multi-age church school are provided for all ages from infants to 18.

Presbyterian Women: Wednesday Night Circle

Wednesday, November 15 | 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Wednesday night circle will meet for fellowship and study.

No Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 16

There is no choir rehearsal on November 16 as Greg Knauf will be away.

Food Collection

Friday, November 17 | 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Small Lot

Bring a few nonperishable items to the small parking lot off Frederick Road to support our neighbors.

Adult Education

Sunday, November 19 | 9 a.m. | Library

Mark Buehlman leads the second session on “God’s Glorious Creation.”

Pledge Dedication Sunday

Sunday, November 19 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary

We will dedicate 2024 pledges in worship.

Mission Committee Meeting

Sunday, November 19 | After worship | France Room

The Mission Committee initiates mission projects, facilitates hands-on service, and collaborates with Deacons.

Catonsville Concerts at 3

Sunday, November 19 | 3 p.m. | Sanctuary

The Maryland State Boychoir perform a wide repertoire that ranges from Gregorian chant through contemporary choral music and have conducted national and international tours that have taken them to over forty states and fifteen countries.

November

Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Presbyterian Women: Passages Circle

Tuesday, November 21 | 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Passages circle will meet for fellowship and study.

Troop 306 Tree Sales Begin

Tuesday, November 24

Christmas trees will be sold by Scout Troop 306 to support their programming and learning.

Youth Group

Sunday, November 26 | 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Middle and high school youth will gather for games and growth.

Financial Update

Actual Income	\$ 574,428
Actual Expense	\$ -566,850
Total	\$ 7,578
Per Capita	\$ 1,780

Updated 09/06/2023

Pastors and Staff

Kenneth E. Kovacs, Ph.D.

Pastor

kkovacs@catonsvillepres.org

Dorothy L. Boulton, M.Div.

Associate Pastor

dboulton@catonsvillepres.org

Greg Knauf, D.M.A.

Director of Music

gknauf@catonsvillepres.org

Wendy Johnston, M.M., A.A.G.O.

Organist and Assistant Director of Music

wjohnston@catonsvillepres.org

Michael Cuppett, M.Div., M.A.

**Communications and Operations
Manager**

mcuppett@catonsvillepres.org

Bernard Lawson

Sexton

facilities@catonsvillepres.org

Ginger Daiger

Bookkeeper

gdaiger@catonsvillepres.org

Kristy Herring

Mission Coordinator

kherring@catonsvillepres.org

Q&A With Ken and Dorothy

September 17 | After worship | France Room

If you're intrigued by connection, community, and belonging, but aren't a member of Catonsville Presbyterian Church, there's an opportunity to be drawn closer into the circle. And though we might share a more formal invitation to become a member down the road, there's no set agenda at this Q&A event.

Spend time with our pastors to learn about our ministry in Catonsville, ask questions about the church, and getting to know one another. Whether you're curious about Presbyterian polity, the ins and outs of youth ministry, or why we find faith *and* doubt compelling, your questions are invited.

Ken and Dorothy both know that this congregation is a community of love, care, and true welcome. But that community, that *belonging*, can sometimes feel insurmountably difficult to experience. This is a time to topple those barriers to belonging, answer those curiosities, and loan a little bit of their connection.



THE
Messenger

Catonsville Presbyterian Church

1400 Frederick Rd • Catonsville MD

Church Office

Open Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
(410) 747-6180 • catonsvillepres.org

Cover image and illustrations on pages 5 and 7 courtesy of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, part of the Peace and Global Witness promotional items kit.