



Chestnut Street United Methodist Church
161 Chestnut Street
Gardner, Ma. 01440
978-632-1978

September 2026

The Connection

Proverbs 16:3-Commit to the LORD whatever you do,
and he will establish your plans.

September invites a fresh start—a calendar turning, routines shifting, and a posture of possibility. September often brings a fresh rhythm: new classrooms, new routines, and the sense that our days lie ahead like unmarked pages. September reminds us that new beginnings are not merely seasonal but are for taking up new spiritual disciplines as well. In this season, we are reminded that God invites us to participate in His ongoing work of renewal as we come back together from our summer activities.

But like New Year resolutions, September's opportunities for a fresh start or taking on something new can quickly get lost in the busyness of crowded schedules. Take a deep breath and one step at a time.

1. Psalm 37: 23-24 (NET) The LORD grants success to the one whose behavior he finds commendable. Even if he trips, he will not fall headlong, for the LORD holds his hand.

Before September's days unfold, name one project, one habit, or one relationship you want to renew or newly start, and present it to God. Ask Him to establish the path as you take the first step.

2. Joshua 1:9 (NIV): "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Courage is not the absence of risk but the decision to move forward with God as your certainty. Identify a fear that holds you back from starting anew. Speak it to God, and replace fear with a deliberate, small action that moves you toward God-honoring goals. Take one measured step each week, start that project, extend that forgiveness, begin that habit and trust God to meet you there.

3. Hebrews 11:1 (NIV): "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Establish small, repeatable steps of accountability—a prayer partner, a written plan, a weekly check-in. Each day becomes a renewed opportunity to pursue God's purposes with hope, knowing His mercies are new. Confidence grows not from certainty of outcomes, but from certainty of God's character. When we step forward toward what is good and true, guided by Scripture, God's faithfulness becomes a visible road.

Starting anew is not merely about fresh routines; it is about a renewed posture toward God. We commit, we step, and we persevere with confidence grounded in His faithfulness. As we enter September, may we internalize Proverbs 16:3 and let our plans be shaped by the One who establishes them. May our beginnings reflect a life submitted to Him, so that what we do becomes a testimony to His grace.



Discussion Group 9:15 am

Worship Service 10 am

Sunday School 10 am

All are Welcome!

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FREE
Community
Supper
Wednesday
September
5:30 – 7 pm
Shepherd's Pie
Freshly Made

Lots of good
Bargains!
Thrift Store
Wednesday
9-2 pm
Saturday
9-12 pm

Announcements:

Permission to copy this newsletter and share not needed.
Please do and thank you.

Discussion Group 9:15 am Informal small group discussion. It was decided this past spring to explore the 4 gospels one by one. This summer we will finish the gospel of Mark and then begin the gospel of Matthew.

Sunday School has been having fun with science. How? One Sunday adults and kids alike were challenged to hop an empty soda can from one glass to another without touching either glass or can. Because the how is not so obvious the lesson of asking for help (the hint) lended itself to the story of the blind man Bartimeus asking for help from Jesus. Plan is to continue with these object lessons for fun as well as the serious work of learning about the stories of the Bible.

Our Website has been updated with the help of the host company Tithe.ly. It has the advantage of automatic calendar updates and can be changed or added to easily. Two of us have been learning how to manage the website and we are open to new ideas and of course new items to add to the calendar. Check it out at Gardnerumc.org

Reminder: Church Council will meet on September 13th at 11 am this month. Please forward concerns or announcements to Debra Stephenson.

St Paul's Episcopal Church is teaming up with our supper team to help us provide a free meal on the third Wednesday of every month. Please share an invitation with your neighbor or a friend for a good meal and friendly faces after a busy day. Have a shut in neighbor or family member? The team will pack up a home made meal for delivery.

For the Holiday Season coming up.
October 17th from 9 am –2pm
HalloThanksMas Craft Vendor Fair.

These folks have creative talent to share. Come see what they have made, enjoy a lunch and a fresh baked treat as well.

PS—if you would like to rent a table for your crafts, please email Gardnerumc@gmail.com



Saturday, September 26th 10 am—4 pm
Every year the Railroad Club that meets in the basement of our church each week, opens to the public an invitation to come see their village and the model trains that travel around and through the village. Upstairs there will be vendors selling anything and everything related to models trains. A fun time for children and adults alike.

FREE COMMUNITY SUPPER

Shepherd's Pie

Wednesday September 16, 2026

5:30pm-7:00pm



Come for a free meal and friendship

***In partnership with
St. Paul's Episcopal Church***

Chestnut Street United Methodist Church

161 Chestnut St

Gardner MA 01440

www.Gardnerumc.org

An Invitation to Share (with those who haven't been to church in a while)

by Lauren Buchanan (UMC)



If you haven't been to church in a while, that's okay. We understand. With the changes and challenges we've been facing in the past half-dozen years, we all have needed to take time to process and reevaluate. While we understand, we also invite you to reconnect, rekindle your relationships and get involved once more.

Chances are things are different than when you were last at church. Pastors have changed appointments, ministries have evolved or shifted their focus, and the community has changed as the church has shifted to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Get curious about the new things God is doing and how God might be calling you to take part.

Community nourishes faith

All Christians are vital to the faith community. As Paul says in Romans, chapter 12, "In the same way, though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other." Church is a safe space to be your authentic self, the unique and beautiful individual that God created you to be. You can ask challenging questions and wrestle with difficult decisions. You can thrive in a community where everyone is trying to figure out their purpose and live as faithful disciples of Christ.

While a strong faith is not dependent upon church attendance, being part of a body of believers is an essential aspect of mission, worship and celebration. Together, we pray, we grow, we celebrate communion and baptisms, and we share joys and heartaches.

Church families offer support in times of distress, refuge in times of fear, healing in times of pain and a place to anchor during life's storms. They'll also join you in giving thanks when you are celebrating good news or exciting life events. The outpouring of care that comes from a congregation comes directly from God. God moves among us and asks us to use our time and talents to serve each other. Being part of a church offers an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ – and to accept this gift when you are in need.

Too much? Start slowly

If participating in a worship service feels like too much right now, remember that Sunday mornings are not the only time churches are active. Follow nearby churches on social media and subscribe to their e-newsletters so that you are aware of opportunities to engage. Consider these ideas:

- **Fellowship events:** Attend a fall festival, Advent cookie swap, Easter egg hunt, ice cream social, chili cook-off, craft night or pancake breakfast. These gatherings present an opportunity to see familiar faces, meet new people and catch up on congregational news.
- **Bible study or small groups:** Small groups are the perfect places to ask questions and learn from others' perspectives. Perhaps your pastor leads a weekly study, or groups gather throughout the week to pray together. Joining a smaller group can be a solid first step back into the larger community.
- **Mission efforts:** Volunteering at the food bank, Vacation Bible School, community garden days or similar events are excellent times to nurture relationships. Serving alongside those who share your passions will help you find commonality and build friendships.

You belong here

God calls us to lean on each other, to ban together in mission and to grow, both in personal relationships with Christ and as a faith family. These facets of God's grace and love can only be found through communal worship, prayer and fellowship. Don't miss out on the many blessings that God has waiting as part of a community of believers.

CRAFT AND VENDOR FAIR



HALLOTHANKSMAS



TO BE HELD

October 17, 2026 9:00-2:00

Chestnut Street United Methodist Church

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BAKE SALE

Lunch





A Prayer for Teachers

Lord, bless the teachers who give their heart to teaching. Thank you for the special gift that you have given them and for giving them a spirit of grace and compassion. May they have strength and endurance to perform their many tasks, and may they know and feel the deep gratitude of those whom they teach.

Amen



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PLEASE
 PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE

