

# The Peoria Christian

September 2026  
Vol 116 ~ Issue 1



Grace and Peace to you, Church. I offer a word of blessing as we have moved through the longest of summer days and now eagerly await the briskness of the fall season to return.

It was in this same eager spirit that we had 100 in attendance the last Sunday in August for Worship and our 1st Annual Fall Kick Off Potluck Picnic Party. I am grateful for those who made the day so joyous and celebratory, with either their preparation and/or participation. Who could have imagined that a dunk tank featuring the Pastors would garner so much attention?!? You all raised a little over \$500 dollars (via the 50/50 raffle) to resupply the Pastor's emergency aid to the needy fund. These are funds available for food, shelter, transportation, or other survival costs arising for those in our community of care - a community which reaches beyond just our building and our members. Thank you for your ongoing support of our church's ability to be God's love in another's darkest moments.

With September also comes our focus on Stewardship. Stewardship Chair, Debra Kreps, has done a wonderful job shepherding our Stewardship Season Pledge Drive into fruition. I encourage you to pay careful attention to her article featured in this newsletter, as she is sharing heartfelt sentiments which extend an important invitation to each and every one of us. The Stewardship goal this year is simple, achieving a 100% pledging rate. Regardless of how much you are able to give, no matter if your gift is treasure, time, or talent, we want every member of this church to be invested in our mission and witness in some way this coming year. I hope you will consider how you will be invested in the work of the church and responsive to God's gracious gifts in the next giving year.

I also want to share a word about the ongoing work of Reunion. The Joint Committee on Reunion (JCoR) continues to meet in pursuit of a viable plan to bring together First Christian Church and Glen Oak Christian Church to share our future mission and witness. A main objective of the members of Glen Oak in this discernment process is to preserve the community impact of their current neighborhood service ministries (such as Snack Pack, Community Meal, and Operation InAsMuch). JCoR aims to achieve these goals by establishing a non-profit organization to assume the leadership of those neighborhood programs as well as management of the physical campus at Glen Oak. This new organization would focus on building the independent infrastructure to sustain current offerings and grow more meaningful programs into the future - having access to much broader potential funding sources than a single congregation would have on its own. That new service organization would be the primary mission partner for all our future congregational service opportunities, a true partnership between church and service center. When this new infrastructure is in place to relieve the financial pressures of the Glen Oak congregation, we will turn our considerations to what kind of church God is calling us to be in this time and place. For all of their work, JCoR continues to solicit your prayers and your own spiritual practices of discernment about what mission priorities God is calling us to in the next season of our lives together.

Yet, with all that future planning at hand, there still is so much important work happening in the life of our church today. We welcome new visitors almost every week. We continue to refine our processes and increase efficiency. We have stayed committed to cost savings and wise use of funds. We have engaged timely and relevant studies on issues which matter to many in our congregation and in the wider culture. And, we are examining every facet of the church asking how God is leading us into what's next. I am so blessed and honored to be walking this faithful path with you all, thank you for the privilege of being your Lead Pastor.

In a final word, please plan to be in attendance for our Commitment Sunday service on September 20th. Not only will we accept your pledge commitments that day, we will also welcome special guest preacher, Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton, from the Christian Church Foundation. Following the service on the 20th, we will host Dr. Burton for a luncheon where she will be sharing about the opportunities Christian Church Foundation provides for Legacy planning and end-of-life giving. All are welcome.

In Christ's Peace,  
Pastor Adam

# Loving Our Neighbors



## 2026 Worship Theme

01

JANUARY

What Is Love?

02

FEBRUARY

Learning to Love Yourself

03

MARCH

Lent:  
Learning to Love the Dust

04

APRIL

Who Is Our Neighbor?

05

MAY

When Neighbors Feel  
Like Enemies

06

JUNE

Love Wins

07

JULY

Pursuing a  
Liberating Love

08

AUGUST

God's Unbreakable Love

09

SEPTEMBER

Stewardship Campaign:  
When Love Is Enough

You Are Here

10

OCTOBER

A Just Love

11

NOVEMBER

Responding to Love

12

DECEMBER

Advent:  
Love Embodied

# WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

## September 6, 2026

Scripture: Mark 6:30-44

Special Music: Saxophone Ensemble, *Jericho* - arr. Paul Yoder

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

In the pledge drive season, the time in the life of the church when we focus ourselves on discerning again what it means to be a steward of Christ's church, of Christ's gospel good news, and how we will plan our stewardship this year - we begin with maybe the most famous miracle story of Jesus there is - and it is about a time Jesus fed a huge crowd with seemingly no resources - only a few tidbits a boy's mother had insisted he bring with him because you never know what might happen. Such is the moving of the Spirit, a brief word of care is carried forward to change the future of the world. A boy's just-in-case snack became the loaves and fishes of Christ's miracle feeding of 5000. We begin our stewardship season remembering that the Spirit works in mysterious and glorious ways.



## September 13, 2026

Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30

Special Music: Vocal Quartet, *Gospel of Grace* by Mary McDonald

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

The Parable of the Five Talents is a convicting story Jesus tells. And it is particularly poignant to faith communities in the midst of discerning their futures and how God calls them into what's next. It is one thing to labor for the Lord, and quite another thing to be responsible for growing God's resources. When we simply preserve what God has given, keeping it as near to the condition it was when we received it, we have missed the point. God's love and care and blessings are an investment. We are the implements of God's love on earth - we are the harbingers of God's blessings and good company. Burying our treasure is merely a way to keep it for ourselves; a selfish gospel is no gospel at all. Faithfulness is leveraging God's gifts for the growth of God's realm and the increasing of God's people. Those courageous enough to invest God's resources, find that miracles abound.



## September 20, 2026

Scripture: Luke 12:6-7

Special Music: Chris Fraenhoffer & Natalie Woods, *Place In This World* by Michael W. Smith

Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton, preaching

Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton joins us in worship September 20th as our guest preacher, sharing the message "The Cost of Compassion." Nadine serves as Vice President of the Christian Church Foundation's Great Lakes Zone, supporting congregations and ministries across our region, and previously served for eight years as Executive Regional Minister of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An ordained Disciples minister, Nadine brings years of experience in congregational and regional ministry to her work with the Foundation. Following worship, she will also spend time with our congregation in conversation about legacy planning and the ways our generosity can continue making a difference for generations to come. We are delighted to welcome Nadine to First Christian Church and to our pulpit.



## September 27, 2026 - Outdoor Worship

Scripture: Mark 4:1-20 & Leviticus 19:9-10

Special Music: Rev. Mason Fitch, *All Good Gifts* by Stephen Schwartz

Rev. Mason Fitch, preaching

Most of us have heard the Parable of the Sower enough times that we instinctively ask, "Which kind of soil am I?" And that's a faithful question to ask because, later in the chapter, Jesus himself explains the different kinds of soil as different ways people receive God's word. But before Jesus offers that explanation, he first tells a story, and the first character we meet isn't the soil at all. It's the sower. I wonder if there's something for us to notice there. Why does Jesus begin with a farmer who seems almost careless with precious seed? Why tell a story about someone who scatters grain far beyond the places where it seems likely to grow? And could that image have anything to say to another ancient command, where God tells Israel not to gather every last stalk from the field? Perhaps these two stories are asking us to look at harvest - and maybe even love - a little differently.



# CHURCH LIFE



## Operation Inasmuch

Glen Oak Christian Church is hosting the 23rd annual operation InAsMuch one day event aimed at serving the community. Saturday, September 12th, 2026. Volunteers are needed to help with painting, cleaning, trash pick-up, gutters, windows, etc. Please, email Hannah Jordan with your questions or interest with volunteering. [chappy1287@yahoo.com](mailto:chappy1287@yahoo.com) Meet at the Glen Oak Church parking lot 7:45am on September 12th.



## Walk Through Autumn Trivia

COME HAVE FUN WITH US and join us for autumn trivia! Gather a team and come or join others that day to make up a team. Bring a snack to share is always welcomed. Located at First Christian Church.



## Braiding Sweetgrass - Sep. 26-27

Join us for a soul-nourishing Women's Retreat inspired by *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. We will explore themes of gratitude, reciprocity, and sacred connection to the earth. Our keynote speaker, Rev. Jennie Churchman, will lead us in thoughtful sessions that intertwine spirituality and ecological wisdom, inviting us to deepen our faith and relationship with creation. The retreat will culminate in a meaningful worship and communion service on Sunday, grounding us in community and shared purpose.



## Food Pantry

In September, items donated will be going to Redeemer Lutheran. Any non-perishable items are much needed.

Thank you!



## Stewardship Commitment Season

Our annual Stewardship Commitment Season is September 6-20. This year's theme, ***Stewarding God's Love: Becoming the Hands of Christ***, reminds us that stewardship is about far more than finances. Each household will receive a commitment card with opportunities to pledge time, talent, and financial support. There are so many different gifts we bring to the life of our church.

This year, our goal is **100% participation from our congregant households**. Why 100%? Because every household matters. Every person has something to contribute. And every one of us is part of our shared vision and ministry. We are not asking everyone to give the same amount, serve in the same way, or make the same commitment. We are asking everyone to prayerfully consider, 'How can I be part of what God is doing through this church?' Please return your commitment card by September 20. Each returned card is more than a pledge. It is a sign that we are all in this ministry together. Our hope is not that everyone responds in the same way, but that everyone responds.



## August Giving

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| DMF                            | \$1258.33 |
| Center for Prevention of Abuse | \$250     |
| Help for Immigrants            | \$600     |

## September Birthdays

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Steve West        | 9/2  |
| Geraldine Runkle  | 9/8  |
| Judy Leeper       | 9/9  |
| Karen Merrick     | 9/15 |
| Dan Cox           | 9/16 |
| Lisa Best         | 9/17 |
| Kyle Cheatham     | 9/18 |
| Oliver Truelove   | 9/18 |
| Victoria Truelove | 9/18 |
| Jake Cohen        | 9/19 |
| Shirley Fuchs     | 9/19 |
| Frank Wheeler     | 9/24 |
| Patrick Payne     | 9/28 |



## September Anniversaries

|                                      |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Hannah Fitch & Olivier Assaf-Chauvin | 9/2  |
| John & Lisa Best                     | 9/19 |
| Brandy & Jordan Ganschow             | 9/26 |



### Disciple Women

**September 8th @ 12pm**

Ladies it is time for Disciples Women's year to begin! Our program will be a presentation by Emersion Croft about the Berea College Weavers. Please sign up at the information desk if you are able to join us. Bring a sack lunch, coffee and dessert will be provided. Please also remember to bring any pull tabs that you have not yet turned in.



### Tasting Peoria

**Smokin' Notes BBQ**

**September 10th @ 6pm**

Looking for the best BBQ in the area? Look no further because Smokin' Notes BBQ has everything you need. They offer delicious ribs, brisket, pulled pork, chicken and more. All their meats are smoked to perfection and smothered in their signature BBQ sauce. If you are searching for a family-friendly establishment with delicious food and excellent service, look no further than Smokin' Notes BBQ!

**400 Riverside Dr, East Peoria**

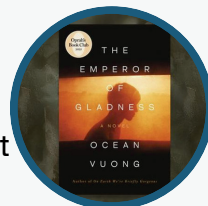


### Book Club

***The Emperor of Gladness***

**September 17th @ 6pm**

*The Emperor of Gladness* is a novel that explores themes of survival, memory, and chosen family in a working-class New England town. It centers on an unlikely bond between a troubled young man and an elderly immigrant woman with dementia.



### Movie Night

***Indiana Jones - Temple of Doom***

**September 25th @ 6pm**

The second of the Lucas/Spielberg Indiana Jones epics is set a year or so before the events in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Indy needs to retrieve a precious gem and several kidnapped young boys on behalf of a remote East Indian village. This time he teams up with a night club singer and a 12-year old boy.



# SERVING SCHEDULES

| Date    | Elders                       | Deacons                                                       | Lay Reader    | Acolyte | Greeters               | Counters                 |
|---------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9/6/26  | Beth Smittkamp<br>Linda Rex  | Monica Hinrichs<br>Steve Hinrichs<br>Joe Rex<br>Ange Bertucci | Becky Sisk    |         | Jerry & Val Hornbacker | John & Lisa Best         |
| 9/13/26 | Connie Sinn<br>Dave Sinn     | Monica Hinrichs<br>Steve Hinrichs<br>Joe Rex<br>Ange Bertucci | Kevin Wolfe   |         | Jerry & Val Hornbacker | Steve & Monica Hinrichs  |
| 9/20/26 | Beth Cox<br>Kevin Wolfe      | Monica Hinrichs<br>Steve Hinrichs<br>Joe Rex<br>Ange Bertucci | Sandy Surface |         | Jerry & Val Hornbacker | Jim & Beth Smittkamp     |
| 9/27/26 | Kevin Cheatham<br>Steve West | Monica Hinrichs<br>Steve Hinrichs<br>Joe Rex<br>Ange Bertucci | Larry Weber   |         | Jerry & Val Hornbacker | Steve West<br>Ralph Tegg |
|         |                              |                                                               |               |         |                        |                          |

| Date    | Friends with Jesus | Growing Disciples | The Open Table |
|---------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 9/6/26  | Jenny Tripses      | Kathleen Wheeler  | Frank Wheeler  |
| 9/13/26 | Chere Peters       | Kathleen Wheeler  | Frank Wheeler  |
| 9/20/26 | Jenny Tripses      | Cheryl Davis      | Frank Wheeler  |
| 9/27/26 | Chere Peters       | Cheryl Davis      | Frank Wheeler  |
|         |                    |                   |                |

# SWARM FOR THE HIVES!

SUPPORT DR CONGO BEEKEEPERS  
5K FUN WALK/RUN/BIKE

**WHO:** ILLINOIS VALLEY CLUSTER

**WHERE:** ROCK ISLAND TRAIL

**WHEN:** SATURDAY, September 19, 2026  
**TIME:** 10:00 A.M. | **REGISTRATION FEE:** \$25.00  
**REGISTER BY:** AUGUST 11

**WHY:** BUILDING BEEHIVES, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES & WILDLIFE IN DR CONGO

Meet at the Rock Island Trail lot on Alta Road.

Join us for lunch following the walk at Last Chance Bar and Grill.

Last Chance Bar and Grill