the bridge

July 12, 2026 - 9:45 AM

WORSHIP MUSIC
This is the Day
Redeemed
Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
Where Could I Go?

SPECIAL MUSIC
Just A Closer Walk with Thee
Bless the Beasts and Children
Shannon Gibson Brown

SCRIPTURE
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 NRSVUE

MESSAGE
Good Dirt
Pastor Melanie Fleischer

CUMC STAFF DIRECTORY

Ministers ..... All Disciples of the Congregation
Lead Pastor: Nathan Decker ..... nathandecker@chesterumc.org
Associate Pastor & Youth Ministry: Mel Fleischer ..... pastormel@chesterumc.org
Minister of Music: Joshua Wortham ..... music@chesterumc.org
Children's Ministry & Preschool Director: Whitney Graham ..... preschool@chesterumc.org
Office Manager: Michelle Couvillion ..... office@chesterumc.org
Office Assistant: Sally Maxwell ..... assistant@chesterumc.org
Financial Administrator: Julie Jones ..... finance@chesterumc.org
Nursery Specialists ..... Carla Adams, Vicki Hankins

Chester United Methodist Church

***Embrace – Love – Impact* * A Community in Christ**

12132 Percival Street, Chester, Virginia 23831 * Church: (804) 748-6006

www.chesterumc.org * *A Stephen Ministry Congregation*

FRESH START SERVICE

July 12, 2026 - 8:30 AM

WORSHIP MUSIC

Father, Spirit, Jesus
Glory to God Forever
We Believe
Build Your Kingdom Here
Everyday

SPECIAL MUSIC

Just A Closer Walk with Thee
Bless the Beasts and Children
Shannon Gibson Brown

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 NRSVUE

MESSAGE

Good Dirt
Pastor Melanie Fleischer

Get Connected! Join our Text Ministry to receive updates on events, small groups, ministry opportunities, and more. Simply scan the QR code or text **CONNECT** to **(804) 979-2922** to stay connected with our church family!

Give with Zelle: Donate quickly and securely through your bank's Zelle app. Send your gift to finance@chesterumc.org or scan the QR code. Questions? Contact Julie Jones, Financial Administrator, at finance@chesterumc.org.

July 12, 2026 **A Service of Worship and Praise** **11:00 AM**
Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome, Announcements, and Greeting
Prelude ***Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*** Organist

* Call to Worship[1] Don Schmidt, Liturgist

Leader: What mysteries there are in God's world!
People: We, so sophisticated, stand in awe at the wonders of the natural world.
Leader: We look at the tiniest of seeds and wonder what will happen.
People: From that small seed will grow a large shrub.
Leader: Although we consider our gifts to be small and insignificant,
People: God will use our gifts in miraculous ways. Praise the God of small seeds and mighty power.

* Opening Prayer

God of small seeds and mighty plants, you take our meager lives and with your love cause them to produce acts of loving kindness for you in this world. You hear our cries and find us when we are lost and wandering in fear. You bring us home with you so that we may be made whole, rejoicing in your goodness. Help us to joyfully serve you all our days, knowing that you are always watching over us. Prepare our hearts to receive your word and our spirits to respond in eagerness to serve you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

* Hymn No. 694 ***Come, Ye Thankful People, Come***
* Affirmation of Faith No. 881
* Gloria Patri No. 70

Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Special Music ***Just A Closer Walk With Thee*** Shannon Gibson Brown

Why We Give
Offertory ***Bless the Beasts and Children*** Shannon Gibson Brown

* Doxology No. 94

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

	Hymn No. 583	***You Are the Seed***	*Stanzas 1 & 3*
	Scripture	***Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23***	NRSVUE
	Sermon	***Good Dirt***	Pastor Mel Fleischer
*	Hymn No. 707	***Hymn of Promise***	
*	Benediction		
*	Postlude		

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* *Please stand as you are able.* **Bold print indicates a response in unison.**

[1] https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/05/contemporary-call-to-worship-proper-6-b.html

The Altar Flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of my mother, Hazel Miller, born July 10, 1933, and my father, Ron Miller, who passed away on July 10, 2017. We also celebrate the 16th wedding anniversary of our son, Jake, and daughter-in-law, Monica, who were married on July 10, 2010. – Sherri & Donnie Snelson

Calendar
July 12, 2026– July 19, 2026

Today: Sunday, July 12

8:15 AM Nursery until 12:00 PM
8:30 AM Fresh Start Worship- Fellowship Hall
9:45 AM Bridge Worship- Sanctuary
Sun Sch PreK-107
Sun Sch Gr K-5-206
Adult SS-Various
Youth Sunday School
11:00 AM Traditions Worship- Sanctuary

Monday: July 13

11:30 AM Village Book Club- 226

Tuesday: July 14

7:00 PM Church Council- 116

Wednesday: July 15

12:00 PM Bulletin & Chimes Deadline
6:30 PM Crew- 206
6:30 PM Girl Scout Service Unit- Fellowship Hall

Thursday: July 16

10:00 AM Book of the Romans Bible Study- 205
11:30 AM Women's Fellowship Luncheon- Kristen's Kitchen
1:30 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry- Parlor
6:30 PM Young Adults Game Night- Youth House

Friday: July 17

9:30 AM Feed More Distribution- Greenleigh Community

Saturday: July 18

Next Sunday: July 19

8:15 AM Nursery until 12:00 PM
8:30 AM Fresh Start Worship- Fellowship Hall
9:45 AM Bridge Worship- Sanctuary
Sun Sch PreK-107
Sun Sch Gr K-5-206
Adult SS-Various
Youth Sunday School
11:00 AM Traditions Worship- Sanctuary
12:00 PM Birthday Celebration for 90 Plus- Fellowship Hall
2:00 PM North Carolina Mission Trip Meeting- Fellowship Hall

Sunday Worship Schedule

July 19 Finding the House of God While on the Run — Genesis 28:10-19a CEB and Psalm 139 UMH at Traditions

We are truly blessed if you are a guest who has chosen to worship with us today! First-time guests are invited to pick up a blue Welcome Bag from the Atrium or Narthex. Thank you for celebrating the Lord with us today!

Our Parish Nurse, Cindy Webb, is available today at 9:00 AM in room 105.

Name Tag Reminder: Wear your name tag on Sunday to help Pastor Mel learn names. If you need a name tag, call the Church Office at (804) 748-6006, or email office@chesterumc.org.

Women's Fellowship Luncheon: Thursday, July 16, 11:30 AM at Kristin's Kitchen. RSVP to Joan no later than Monday, July 13. POC: Joan Osborne josbor61@gmail.com

Young Adults Game Night: Thursday, July 16, 6:30 PM, Youth House (Annex). Calling all young adults age 18 – 30. Spend time getting to know Pastor Mel over games, dirty soda bar, and conversation. POC: Pastor Mel Fleischer pastormel@chesterumc.org

Cake and Ice Cream Birthday Celebration: Sunday, July 19, 12:00 PM, Fellowship Hall. Come join us in celebrating the birthdays of church members who are age 90 and above. Everyone is invited to enjoy a sweet birthday treat.

New Member Sunday: Sunday, July 26, during worship. There will be a reception in the Welcome Center immediately following the 11:00 AM Traditions Worship. Please join us for refreshments while warmly welcoming our newest church members.

Chesterfield County Fair: Friday, August 28 - Saturday, September 5. Let's share God's love and grace with our community! This is a great fundraising opportunity because CUMC will be financially compensated for our volunteer hours. Volunteer positions: *Ticket Sales* - Sell tickets for fair entry- must be 18 years or older. *Collect and Scan Tickets*- Youth are welcome to participate with collection and scanning of tickets. A mandatory training session will be held on *Sunday, August 23 at 3:30 PM* at the Fairgrounds. A complimentary T-Shirt will be offered to those who sign up by *Sunday, July 26.* Please provide your shirt size when signing up to volunteer. If you have any questions, please contact Stacey Ferrer at (804) 300-0033, ssfva@comcast.net.
Use the QR code or this link to register.
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D44A5A72BA75-64645760-chesterfield

Keep In Prayer: Bill Chapin; April Cibula; Charlia Holmes; The family of Rick Owens; Billy Hopson; Rick Poole; Bentley Cobb; Cindy Webb; Emory Large; Dawn York; Audrey Comer; Barbara Dance; Lisa Dabney; Michael Stinnett; Cindy Webb; Jennifer Dyson; Abby Honn; Joshua Devericks; Monty Nunery; Bobbie Morrissette; Dorothy Gonzalez; Linda Nabors; Pat Baake; Walt Stone; Sharon Buchanan; Linda Willingham; Bruce Highley; Mary Tyree; Dick & Lynn Weis; Ann Stuart; Bert Watson; Jo Kiser; Ella Hilton; Erika Hilton; Susan Young; Harold Worcester; Lynda Richardson; Summer Lannan; Brooke & Mary Ann Hamilton

Chester UMC Online Resources
Website: www.chesterumc.org.
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ChesterUnitedMethodistChurch/.
Facebook Closed Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChesterUMC/.
Instagram: Instagram.com/chesterumc
Daily Email News: Visit http://eepurl.com/blV9Tv to subscribe.
Daily Devotionals: https://www.facebook.com/share/18Xuixg6DR/?mibextid=wwXIfr
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/c/ChesterUMC.
Prayer Chain Email: to subscribe or to submit a prayer request, email office@chesterumc.org with "Prayer Chain" or "Prayer Request" in the subject line.
The Chimes* Newsletter**– Submit items to assistant@chesterumc.org no later than the 3rd Wednesday of January**,** March, May, ***July, September, and November.

Our Presence on Sunday, July 5, 2026
8:30 AM, Fresh Start.....…78
9:45 AM, Bridge 67
11:00 AM, Traditions.....137
Online.....64
Total……...346

Leading Our Worship Today, Sunday, July 12, 2026

Greeters:	**8:30**	Bill & Karen Comer	
	9:45	Steve Davies	
	11:00	Linda Large, Will Schmidt	
Ushers:	**8:30**	Wendell Landis*, Bill Comer	*Head Usher
	9:45	Scott Pugh*, Kim Young	
	11:00	Gordon Morris*, Larry Koon, Bob Kutz, Geoff LeSueur, Beth Stewart	
Donut Disciples:		Andy & Eileen Steck	
Nursery:		Carla Adams, Vicki Hankins	

Bible Study: Join Pastor Nathan for a study of the Book of Romans! This Bible study meets Thursdays at 10:00 AM, now through August 20 in ***Room 205***. (Note the room change) Deepen your faith, grow in understanding of Scripture, and enjoy fellowship together.
POC: Nathan Decker nathandecker@chesterumc.org

Youth Ice Cream Sundae Social! Sunday, July 26, 12:00 PM on the Youth House Lawn. Come get to know Pastor Mel during the Ice Cream Sundae Social. Enjoy delicious ice cream, fun conversation, and a chance to learn more about Pastor Mel. We hope to see you there!
POC: Pastor Mel pastormel@chesterumc.org

Rebuilding From Hurricane Helene: Are you interested in going to Asheville, N.C. to provide Hurricane Helene relief on September 27 through October 3, 2026? Hurricane Helene (2024) hit Western North Caroline causing extensive flooding and damage. *There will be an informational meeting on **Sunday, July 19 at 2:00 PM** in the Fellowship Hall.* There will also be two team meetings; August 16 and September 20 at 2:00 PM in Room 226. Please consider being on the team. For more information contact Keith Mottley or email him at: keith.mottley@comcast.net.

National Night Out: Tuesday, August 4, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM at Bermuda Hundred UMC. There will be bounce houses, free hot dogs and Kona Ice, visits from McGruff the Crime Dog, the Enon VFD's classic fire truck, dunk tank, games, crafts, and more! Bring the fa

The Chesterfield Police Department is looking for volunteers to dress as McGruff the Crime Dog (taller youth and adults) for National Night Out on *Tuesday, August 4, 4:00 PM- 9:30 PM.* Volunteers will ride with a police officer to meet members of the community. If you're interested, please contact Pastor Nathan or the Church Office at (804) 748-6006 or office@chesterumc.org**.**

Chester Chums is a ministry to welcome new members, to help acclimate them to the church, and to help get them involved in activities at the church. Current members who choose to become a Chester Chum are paired with new members to serve as their "sponsors". Please consider becoming a Chester Chum. Contact Joan Osborne at josbor61@gmail.com.

Leading Our Worship Next Sunday, July 19, 2026

Greeters:	**8:30**	Andy & Eileen Steck	
	9:45	Jessie & Brenda Stacey	
	11:00	Pam Kasky, Jim Rhodes	
Ushers:	**8:30**	Will Herrmann*, Ron Dombrowski	*Head Usher
	9:45	Jim Watkins*, Beth Stewart	
	11:00	Herb McCulloch*, Janis Hargrave, Bob Kutz, Jeff Marlin, Joan Osborne	
Donut Disciple:		Laura Hougland	
Nursery:		Carla Adams, Vicki Hankins	

Lay Servant Academy: Looking for a way to grow in your faith and deepen your discipleship? Pastor Nathan encourages anyone interested to consider the Virginia Conference's online Lay Servant Academy. These courses are designed to equip God's people for ministry and are open to both new and experienced lay servants. The primary Academy will be held August 14–15 and offers courses including the Basic Course, Spiritual Gifts, Loving People and Planet, Connectional Living and Giving, Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century, Millennial Narrative, and CLM Orientation. Additional courses begin in early August, including Exploring a Culture of Care for a Caring Congregation and Called to Preach. Whether you're beginning your journey as a lay servant, renewing your certification, or simply looking to grow in your faith, there's a course for you. Be sure to register early, as some classes begin before August 14.
For more information visit https://vaumc.org/laity-district-and-conference-training/
POC: Pastor Nathan, pastornathan@chesterumc.org

Bridge Builders Ministry is asking for help in supporting the Men's HARP program with toiletries for the men leaving jail and for those coming into the jail until their commissary accounts are started. Items needed are deodorant, soap, body wash and shampoo. Leave your donations in the Mission Closet in the labeled bin**.** Thank you for supporting this Ministry! POC: Maureen Coker, mcoker2003@comcast.net

Stephen Ministry: There are people in our congregation and community who could benefit from the personal care of a Stephen Minister. We have trained Stephen Ministers ready to walk alongside these people. If you are someone who would like to provide care as a Stephen Minister, please contact Lynn Crump, lynncrumppla@gmail.com or Andy Steck, coop1kate@gmail.com. If you or someone you know could benefit from a Stephen Minister, contact Sandy Sims at sandygeosims@hotmail.com.

- *Stephen Ministry testimony from a person who received care:* "My Stephen Minister's weekly visits became an anchor in my life; something I could rely on when everything else was so uncertain. She was a steady reminder of God's presence, helping me know I was never alone."

Altar Flowers: We still have many dates still available for you to provide flowers. July 19, 26; August 30; September 6, 20, 27; November 29. Write your name on the flower chart by the Church Office and fill out one of the forms below the chart. Call or email the Church Office to let us know. Please make your own arrangements with your preferred florist.

Interested in Joining Chester UMC? We warmly welcome you to join our Church family! If you would like to learn more about Church membership, please contact our Membership Coordinator, Joan Oborne. The next N*ew Member Sunday* is July 26.
POC: Joan Osborne josbor61@gmail.com, (540) 270-4251.

Volunteer Opportunity: C.C. Wells Elementary, is looking for volunteers to paint the teachers' lounge. They will provide paint and supplies. They are also looking for a free or reasonably priced couch and side table for the lounge.
If interested, please contact Summer Lannan at Wells Elementary (804) 768-6265.

United Methodist Women (UMW) is to be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church. POC: Susan Petrey, (804) 938-5396.

- **The Jean Craig Fellowship**: Meets on the 1st Monday of each month at 7:00 PM, Room 205. POC: Susan Petrey (804) 938-5396.
- **The Ada Mae Bookman Fellowship**: *Will resume meeting in the fall.* Meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 10:30 AM, Room 226.
  POC: Martha Miles, (804) 748-5476.

A Place of Miracles: Thank you for all your donations. They are in need of personal hygiene items, summer clothing, and kitchen utensils. Place donations in the bin in the Church Missions closet.
POC: Diane Merryman, (804) 586-4189 dianemerryman@gmail.com

Blood Drive News: Thank you to everyone who donated blood during the July 1st blood drive. The American Red Cross collected 45 donations! The next blood drive at CUMC will be on Wednesday, October 7. It's not too early to schedule your donation for October. Use this link or QR code to make an appointment.
https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=chesterumcva

SUNDAY SMALL GROUPS

Children's Sunday School, Kidz Zone: 9:45 AM. Pre-K (Room 107); K-2 (Room 204) Grades 3-5 (Room 206). Come join our Kidz Zone Ministry.
POC: Whitney Graham, preschool@chesterumc.org

Adult Small Group Bible Study: 9:45 AM, Room 213 "Our Pad". All adults are welcome. POC: Jeff Marlin jeff.marlinabd@gmail.com

Fresh Start Sunday School Class: 9:45 AM, Room 221, at the top of the old stairway. Join the Fresh Start Sunday School Class in study, fellowship, and service. All are welcome. POC: Susan Petrey, (804) 938-5396.

Friendship Ministry Class: 10:40 AM, Room 116, for adults who are developmentally challenged. POC: Mari and Dan Hayes, JLMinNaples@msn.com

The Gathering, Small Group: 9:45 AM, Room 205. Join with other young families for a time of study and fellowship. Anyone interested in joining us is welcome.
POCs: Sonja Seward (804) 543-3036; Andrew Brummette (678) 409-3683; and Brion Seward 1bseward@comcast.net.

Journey Sunday School Class: 9:45 AM, Youth House and Google Meet, Join by video link: https://meet.google.com/ptm-pieh-vve. POCs: Carolyn Landis landisfamily05@gmail.com and Eric Hougland, ehougland88@gmail.com

Seekers Sunday School Class: 9:40 AM, Room 226. All adults are welcome.
POC: Laura Hamm, Laura.hamm83@yahoo.com

Middle & High School, Sunday School Class: 9:45 AM, Youth House.
Grades 6-12. POC: Pastor Mel Fleischer, pastormel@chesterumc.org

Youth Group: Grades 6th-12th, 4:00 PM -5:30 PM, Youth House. Meets weekly for fun, fellowship and outreach. Snacks are provided. *On summer break.*
POC: Pastor Mel Fleischer, pastormel@chesterumc.org

OTHER SMALL GROUPS

Faith Keepers Women's Prayer Group: Mondays, 9:00 AM at Grants Coffee Co. (11884 Chester Village DR). POC: Sherri Morris smorris787@aim.com

Bridge Builders- Jail Ministry- Meets every other Monday, 3:40 PM at the Chesterfield County Jail. Help us as we build relationships with the men of HARP (Helping Addicts Recovery Progressively). Maureen Coker, mcoker2003@comcast.net

Joy Singers: Tuesdays, 10:30 AM, Music Suite. Rehearsals for our retired folks. This group sings for local nursing home residents and community groups. POC: Joshua Wortham, music@chesterumc.org

Grief Recovery Group: Wednesdays, 2:00 PM, Room 213. A new session will begin Aug 5-Oct 28. A Christ-centered program for those who have lost a loved one within the past two years. Go to GriefShare.org, then click "*Find A Group"*, and message Keith Mottley, keith.mottley@comcast.net or Sandy Sims, sandygeosims@hotmail.com

ESL Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 PM- 8:30 PM. Click on this link: https://sites.google.com/view/cumcenglishclasses *Currently on summer break.* POC: Rebecca Hodell, rhodell7@gmail.com

Youth Bible Study: Wednesdays, 5:45 PM- 7:00 PM, Trinity UMC. *On summer break.*

Wacky Wednesdays: Wednesdays, 6:15 PM-7:15 PM, Trinity UMC. *On summer break*.

Chancel Choir Rehearsals: Wednesdays, 7:00 PM. Singers of all skill levels are welcome to join! POC: Joshua Wortham music@chesterumc.org

Handbells: Wednesdays, 5:45 PM, Sanctuary. For Adults. POC: Joshua Wortham music@chesterumc.org

Thursday Morning Men's Bible Study: Thursdays, 7:30 AM at Grants Coffee Company, 11884 Chester Village Drive. POC: Gordon Morris gordo15458@aim.com

Women's Fellowship Luncheon: 3rd Thursdays, 11:30 AM. Join us each month at a local restaurant for great food and conversation. POC: Joan Osborne josbor61@gmail.com

Prayer Shawl Group: Thursdays, 1:30 PM, Parlor. All are invited to join! We can provide yarn and will happily teach you how to knit or crochet. POCs: Beverly Trevillian (804) 337-2367, and Betty Stone (804) 914-0433 / wva_lady@verizon.net

Young Adult Bible Study: Thursdays, 6:30 PM, Youth House. Age 18-30. Dinner provided. POC: Pastor Mel, pastormel@chesterumc.org

Women's Christian Book Club: 1st Thursdays of *odd months*, 6:30 PM, Parlor. POC: Jennifer Brame jrbrooksieee@gmail.com

United Methodist Men: For men who are seeking to give and receive fellowship, mentorship, and service to Church and community. POC: Brion Seward 1bseward@comcast.com