

The Community Messenger September 2026

Erica Extemporaneous

One of you asked me what I most enjoyed about my sabbatical. With what might have been a mischievous smile, I replied, “July!” It is hard to settle upon one favorite day, or even one favorite hour. Each experience was woven in with the others, a delightful tapestry I could have never altogether anticipated, in spite of how carefully I curated my time.



The beauty of Cape Cod, along with Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, was quite something. I carried with me memories of childhood visits and the tricks of light which sometimes tug reality this way and that. Taking part in the Craigville Theological Colloquy afforded me the opportunity to explore the challenges of being in ministry in this particular time and place, considering crucial questions often overlooked in the midst of daily demands.

I spent a week more or less at home, venturing to Cleveland and Pittsburgh and Sugarcreek and Ravenna. I visited with my college roommate, whose daughter just started a PhD program in Genetics! I visited with Danny DeMarco, who served as our youth pastor a few years ago. He now serves as the pastor of Edinburg United Church!

Mom and I spent a whole week at Lakeside, Ohio. Okay, maybe *this* was my favorite part! The Preacher for the Week was the Rev. Dr. Angela Williams Gorell. I continue to luxuriate in all that she shared and all that she called forth from those gathered. Plenty of Lake Erie perch and Tofts Ice Cream cones contributed to the week’s enjoyment, as well.



A trip to Chautauqua Institute drew the month to a reluctant close. Mom and I listened to lectures from Natalie Merchant and Dave Eggers. We also watched a ballet based on *Wuthering Heights* and enjoyed Amy Grant in concert. Incidentally, or coincidentally, we had seen Grant perform in the amphitheater in Chautauqua years ago. She does not disappoint.

It is good to be back...it is. I am eager to share some of what I have learned and considered...I am. I am also determined to find ways to nurture the curiosity and creativity that my time away stirred within. Perhaps *that* will be my favorite aspect of the sabbatical!

Take good care, *Erica*

Greetings from Gabby!

John Howland and I are happy that Pastor Erica is back in the office! She brought us a new friend. This is Jonathan. He is not interested in helping with the newsletter...he is too flight

Pastor Erica visited 9 book stores. That might be a record for her. She also told us that she talked to more dogs than people. She might be exaggerating, but maybe not...

Your friends~
Gabby and John Howland



Howland Community Church and HCC Learning Center **ICE CREAM SOCIAL**

Let's celebrate the beginning of a new
school year!

Wednesday September 16, 2026
6:00 -7:30 pm

In the South Hall



ALL ARE WELCOME

News from the Missions Committee:

OPERATION SHOE LEATHER Thank you for another successful month of donations toward Shoe Carnival gift cards for children's school shoes. We were able to purchase 60 gift cards and have delivered those cards to the Salvation Army. I'm told they are already being distributed to local families, ensuring that students may step into the school year with confidence and comfort.



EGG CARTONS... Thanks to your quick generosity, our storage area is completely full of egg cartons. We have more than enough to last us for the upcoming months, and we will post an update when we have room to accept more donations... **HOWEVER**, we will be happy to continue to accept plastic grocery bags!



SEPTEMBER FOOD PANTRY. Our next pantry is scheduled for Friday, September 18th, between 3-5 pm. As usual, we will be picking up additional food from Second Harvest on Thursday morning, the 17th and will be unloading food and stocking the shelves at that time. The exact times will be available the Sunday before the pick-up...

Diaconate and Elders' Schedules – September 2026

Date	Elder	Diaconate Sanctuary (All Month)	Diaconate Kitchen (All Month)
September 6	Dawn Adgate	Becky Philbin – Captain	Sanctuary Linda Raphoon
September 13	Sarah Sanders	Linda Raphoon	
September 20	Kathy Purdum	Krystal Moison	JHR Jane Walters
September 27	Barb Layfield	Dan Moison	

Lectionary for September 2026

September 6, 2026

Exodus 12:1-14
 Psalm 149
 Romans 13:8-14
 Matthew 18:15-20

September 13, 2026

Exodus 14:19-31
 Psalm 114
 Romans 14:1-12
 Matthew 18:21-35

September 20, 2026

Exodus 16:2-15
 Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
 Philippians 1:21-30
 Matthew 20:1-16

September 27, 2026

Exodus 17:1-7
 Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
 Philippians 2:1-13
 Matthew 21:23-32



DRIVE THRU Spaghetti DINNER

THURSDAYS
— starting —
SEPTEMBER 17
— until —
OCTOBER 29

Includes: SPAGHETTI • SALAD • BREAD • DESSERT

DRIVE THRU PICK-UP ONLY

4:30 - 6:30

\$13 ADULTS
\$7 CHILDREN

**198 NILES-CORTLAND ROAD SE
 WARREN, OH 44484**

JOIN US FOR GAME NIGHT!

We have enjoyed a successful first year of game nights and look forward to welcoming more participants. We meet every other Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the JHR for card games, board games, trivia games, and dessert. Bring your favorite game or join a group game while catching up with old friends and getting to know new ones. All ages are welcome.

Come for the games, stay for the laughter, conversation, and good company.

For questions, please contact Jim or Judi Matyas at 330-646-2341.



Operating Fund Update

	July Activity	YTD Balance	Budget YTD
Income	\$23,713.78	\$154,620.17	\$155,124.00
Expenses	\$16,696.77	\$159,816.66	\$155,430.00
Difference	\$7017.01	-\$5,186.49	-\$306.00



Congregational Meeting October 4

A short congregational meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, October 4, 2026. The purpose of the meeting will be to vote on adopting the Open and Affirming Welcome Statement, thereby becoming an Open and Affirming congregation. All are welcome to vote.

News from the Open and Affirming Committee

Our congregational survey produced 59 responses with 90% positive results. There were a few requests for further information:

1. How would becoming Open and Affirming affect Howland Community Church? In most ways, there would be very little change to our current worship and other activities. The biggest change would be in making our church known to those who have felt unwelcome in other congregations.
2. What does scripture say? Actually, very little. The few mentions of same-sex encounters in the Old Testament are condemning sexual violence or are related to health concerns. In the New Testament, Paul's concerns are also addressing sexual exploitation, while Jesus never addressed sexual or gender issues. What Jesus *did* condemn was the marginalization of those on the edges of society.

For further discussion of this issue see <https://www.hrc.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality>.

Please see elsewhere in this newsletter the announcement of the congregational meeting to vote on adopting our Welcome Statement.

SEPTEMBER 11

25th Anniversary

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

★ REMEMBER. | REFLECT. | RECOMMIT. ★



FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 11,
2026



8:30 A.M.
CEREMONY BEGINS
Approximately 45-60 minutes



ORWIG PARK
HOWLAND TOWNSHIP

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY IN REMEMBRANCE

Howland Township invites residents, families, first responders, veterans, community leaders, and neighbors to gather as we commemorate the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001.



REMEMBER
the lives lost and sacrifices made.



REFLECT
on the courage, resilience, and unity shown in the aftermath.



RECOMMIT
ourselves to service, unity, and care for one another.

25 YEARS LATER — WE REMEMBER.

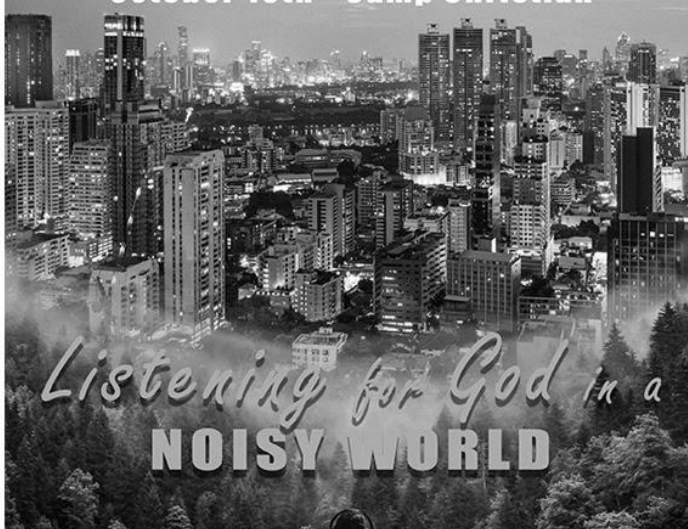
Please join us for this special community ceremony honoring the lives lost, the courage of our first responders and service members, and the families and survivors forever impacted by September 11.

★ **HONORING THE PAST. STRENGTHENING THE FUTURE.** ★

HOWLAND TOWNSHIP
A COMMUNITY UNITED

OHIO REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

October 10th - Camp Christian



Listening for God in a

NOISY WORLD

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice."
Philippians 4:9



September 2026 - HCC Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 1 pm Women's Group (JHR)	3 6-8 pm Girl Scouts (NH)	4	5 1 pm NA (NH) 6 pm AA (NH)
6 10 am Worship	7 Labor Day Office Closed 7 pm Boy Scouts (NH)	8	9 1 pm Women's Group (JHR)	10 7 pm Game Night (JHR)	11	12 1 pm NA (NH) 6 pm AA (NH)
13 10 am Worship- Noisy Coin Happy Grandparents Day!	14 5:30 pm Trustees (JHR) 6 pm O & A 7 pm Elders 7 pm Boy Scouts (NH)	15	16 1 pm Women's Group (JHR) 6-7:30 pm Ice Cream Social (SH)	17 6-8 pm Girl Scouts (NH)	18 3-5 PM Client Choice Food Pantry	19 1 pm NA (NH) 6 pm AA (NH)
20 10 am Worship with the Celebration Band Smokey's Autumn Festival	21 6:30 pm Finance 7 pm Official Board 7 pm Boy Scouts (NH)	22	23 1 pm Women's Group (JHR)	24 Drive-thru Spaghetti Dinner 4:30 – 6:30 pm 7 pm Game Night (JHR)	25	26 11 am – 12:30 pm Free Fellowship Meal (SH) 1 pm NA (NH) 6 pm AA (NH)
27 10 am Worship	28 7 pm Boy Scouts (NH)	29	30 1 pm Women's Group (JHR)			

HOWLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

198 Niles Cortland Rd. S.E.
Warren, Ohio 44484

WE'RE ON THE WEB:

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PERMIT No. 163
Youngstown, OH

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



Reverend Erica L. Brown, Senior Minister
Andrew Purdum, Director of Music
Rebecca Shelton, Organist
Minta Pitts, Custodian
Diane Andrews, Office Coordinator
Alan Purdum, Chair of the Congregation
Sarah Sanders, Vice-Chair of the Congregation

The Community Messenger is the monthly newsletter of the **Howland Community Church** (affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, and the International Council of Community Churches). Our church is “**A House of Prayer for All People.**” We offer Sunday School for children and a fellowship gathering after Worship. Communion is served every Sunday.

Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

