

# *The Bell Ringer*



## *Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow*

No matter who you are or where you are on your life journey, you are welcome here.

**AUG 2025**



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### ***From the Pastor's Nook:***

#### **"Go and Do Likewise": A Call to Compassion in a Wounded World**

*Pastor's Nook – August 2025*

In Luke's Gospel, a lawyer asks Jesus the question many of us still wrestle with today: "*Who is my neighbor?*" (Luke 10:29)

Jesus responds not with a lecture, but with a story — the Parable of the Good Samaritan. A man lies beaten on the side of the road. Two religious leaders pass by. But a Samaritan — a social outsider, a religious enemy in the eyes of many — stops. He sees the man's suffering. He responds with mercy. And Jesus finishes with a charge: "*Go and do likewise.*"

That's our challenge. And it's not abstract.

In 2025, our nation is a modern Jericho Road. People are hurting — economically, emotionally, spiritually. Across the country, we see growing homelessness, skyrocketing healthcare costs, deepening racial inequities, and the marginalization of refugees and immigrants. Our social safety nets are fraying. And too often, political arguments about who deserves help take the place of compassionate action.

We may not walk past a bleeding stranger on our way to church, but we scroll past headlines about suffering every day. What does it mean, then, to "go and do likewise"?

It means choosing mercy over apathy.

It means seeing the image of God in people whose pain may challenge our politics or comfort.

It means acting not only as individuals but as a church that takes risks for love.

This is the heart of Christianity — not only asking "*What would Jesus do?*" but committing to actually doing it.

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# **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

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## **“Everyday Faith: Practicing the Sacred in the Ordinary”**

*Faith Formation at the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow – August 2025*

As summer slowly ripens into its late-August glow, we’re reminded that faith formation isn’t just for Sunday mornings or church classrooms. It happens in the in-between spaces of life — when we’re walking the dog, sipping coffee, scrolling the news, or folding laundry. God meets us in our ordinary rhythms and invites us to make them sacred.

At Sweet Hollow, we believe that spiritual formation isn’t about becoming perfect — it’s about becoming present. Becoming attentive. Becoming open to how the Spirit is moving through even the most mundane moments of our days.

Here are a few **practical daily practices** you can try this month to nourish your spirit:

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### **• 1. Begin the Day with a Breath Prayer**

Start your morning by taking a few deep breaths and praying a simple phrase as you inhale and exhale.

For example:

- Inhale: “God of peace”
- Exhale: “Be with me today”

It takes less than a minute, but it creates space for calm, clarity, and connection with God before the rush begins.

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### **• 2. Practice the “One Verse” Method**

Choose one verse of scripture each day. Just one. Write it on a sticky note, put it on your fridge, or make it your phone wallpaper.

Let it speak to you throughout the day — not as a rulebook, but as a companion. A few suggestions to get started:

- Micah 6:8 – “*What does the Lord require of you...?*”
  - Psalm 46:10 – “*Be still and know that I am God.*”
  - Romans 12:12 – “*Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.*”
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# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

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## Now for Something a Little Different...

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### • Out-of-the-Box Practice #1: Art as Prayer

Set aside 10 minutes a week to **paint, draw, or doodle** your prayers. Don't worry if you're not "artistic" — the point isn't the result, it's the process.

Use colors to express gratitude, shapes to express longing, scribbles to release frustration. Let your heart speak in color when words feel hard to find.

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### • Out-of-the-Box Practice #2: Spiritual "Unplug Hour"

Pick one hour a week to intentionally unplug — no phone, no screens, no distractions. Just be. You can take a walk, sit on the porch, pray, journal, or do nothing at all.

Let it be a mini Sabbath. A reset for your soul. You might be surprised what you notice when the noise quiets down.

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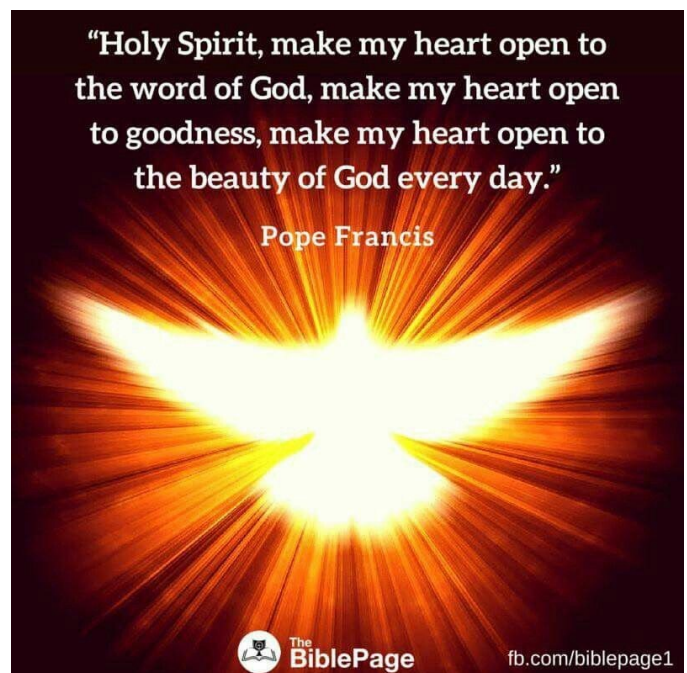
Faith isn't something we *add to life*. *It's the thread that weaves through all of it.*

This August, let's remember that God doesn't wait for us to be ready, rested, or "religious." God is already with us — in the sunlit morning, the chaos of a Tuesday afternoon, the cool breeze at dusk.

Let's meet God there.

With peace on the journey.

~PW



## FAITH FORMATION

By Pastor Wade Pond

### “You Are Welcome Here”: Building Relationships One Greeting at a Time

*Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow – August 2025 Newsletter*

Hospitality is one of the oldest and holiest practices in the Bible. From Abraham offering strangers rest and a meal (Genesis 18), to Jesus breaking bread with outcasts and newcomers, God’s people are called to make space for others with love, openness, and warmth.

At the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow, we believe that building meaningful relationships is one of the most sacred things we do. Our community is not built on programs alone — it’s built on **people** who reach out, remember names, make introductions, and say with every handshake or smile: “*You are seen. You are welcome. You belong.*”

That’s why we’re launching a **new Welcoming Team** — a ministry of connection and care.

This team will be made up of folks who serve as:

- **Greeters** at the door — not just handing out bulletins, but offering a warm, genuine welcome to everyone who enters.
- **Connectors** during and after worship — helping newcomers feel at ease, introducing them to others, and making sure no one sits alone or leaves without a friendly word.
- **Bridge Builders** — helping new folks take the next step, whether that’s joining a small group, meeting the pastor, or just coming back next Sunday.

This isn’t just about smiling at the door. It’s about cultivating a culture of belonging — one where people don’t just *attend church*, *they feel at home*.

In Romans 15:7, Paul writes: “*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*” *That welcome isn’t passive. It’s not accidental. It’s a choice to reflect the grace of Christ in how we greet, include, and love one another.*

We need people of all ages and stages to be part of this team — extroverts, introverts, longtime members, and newer faces. If you’ve ever been new somewhere and felt lost, you know exactly how important this work is.

If your heart beats a little faster thinking about making someone feel noticed and included — then this may be your call.

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## FAITH FORMATION

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Interested in joining the Welcoming Team or learning more? Speak with or email Pastor Wade (revwadepond@outlook.com). A short orientation and support materials will be provided — but the real qualifications are kindness, curiosity, and a willingness to be present.

**Let's build the church not just with bricks, but with relationships.**

Let's be the kind of community where people feel God's love from the moment they step inside.

And let's do it together — one smile, one conversation, one connection at a time.

With gratitude and hope.

~PW



*Accept one another,  
just as Christ also accepted us  
to the glory of God.  
-Romans 15:7*

## WORSHIP NOTES

### **Worship in Every Key: Traditional and Creative Elements**

Worship comes in a variety of forms. During the year, we incorporate lots of these elements as part of our liturgical calendar. Here are just a few you might experience — or be invited to help lead!

- **Liturgical Worship** – Rooted in scripture and tradition, this includes written prayers, call-and-response liturgies, lectionary readings, and sacraments. It connects us to the global and historic Church.
- **Visual Worship** – Through banners, candles, altar arrangements, or interactive prayer stations, we worship with our eyes as well as our hearts.
- **Musical Variety** – From contemporary songs and classic hymns to Taizé chants and beautiful musical reflections — music helps us connect with God in different emotional languages.
- **Embodied Prayer** – Worship can include movement: standing, kneeling, lighting candles, or even stretching and breathing deeply during prayer. Our bodies, too, are instruments of praise.
- **Creative Word** – Sermons might include storytelling, poetry, drama, or even congregational conversation. God speaks in many ways!
- **Silence and Stillness** – Sometimes the most powerful moment in worship is the one where nothing is said. In a noisy world, silence is a sacred gift.

**Liturgist Schedule - many thanks to those that serve and if you are interested, reach out to Pastor Wade if you are willing to help lead.**

August 3rd - Joan

September 7th - Niaja

(Pastor Wade on Study Leave)

August 10th - Maureen

September 14th - Lynn

August 17th - Niaja

September 21st - Niaja

(Pastor Wade on Vacation)

August 24th - Laura

September 28th - Sheri

(Smorgasbord)

(Smorgasbord)

August 31st - Maureen



## **STEWARDSHIP AND GIVING**

***Have you ordered your Bricks yet?***

***Brick by Brick: Creating a Walkway of Dedication***



Build your legacy by purchasing a commemorative 4" x 8" laser engraved brick that will be permanently placed as a border on both sides of a new sidewalk in front of the church's breezeway. Bricks can honor family members, friends, pets-whatever you can imagine. We are partnering with Fundraising Brick, a not-for-profit company with an extensive portfolio of fundraising marketing support, as well as durable laser engraved brick. The proceeds from this fundraiser will be used for the cost of the replacement of the sidewalk, and the installation of the laser engraved brick.

You can have up to 3 lines of text, each line has 20 spaces for text, punctuation and blank spaces, all in CAPITAL letters, the type will be lucida sans: This article is written in that type face. You also have over 25 artwork choices approximately 1 ½" in height engraved on upper left side of text.

The costs are **1 Brick \$125.00 Each** **2 Bricks \$115.00 Each** **3 Bricks \$100.00 Each** additional clipart \$5.00 Each. Additionally, you can purchase to keep at your home or others **Electronic Doner Certificate, 7.00 Each** **4x8 Display Brick in Case \$35.00 Each** **Printed Donor Certificate \$12.00 Each.** **There is only enough space available for 150 bricks.**

Printed order flyers are available as well as electronic ordering. Frank Sansone is leading the campaign and will be able to assist you. This is a transformative opportunity to replace what is worn into a lasting Walkway of Dedication.

## MISSION & MORE

### **“Mission: On the Hunt for Bargains of School Supplies”**



"Our annual mission to assist in preparing the children at the Tri-CYA (Tri Community and Youth Agency) for school continues. With sales at Target, Staples and Lidl showing up in news ads, we thought it may be the time to start collecting. Please take a Sharing Bag from the sanctuary walls. The Tri-County Youth appreciate the school supplies for their programs and they will distribute them mid-August. You may also support this mission opportunity by donating **your check to PCSH, earmarked “school supplies”**, to help purchase needed backpacks.



#### ***Starter Supplies:***

***Backpacks -- Blue or Black Pens -- Magic Markers  
“Marble” Notebooks – Loose Leaf Paper -- Glue Sticks Loose  
Leaf Binders -- Children’s Scissors --  
Colored Pencils —Elmer’s Glue — EVERYTHING welcome***

Also useful are INDIVIDUAL packets of Welch's Fruit Snacks/Skinny Pop/Pudding Packs/Fruit Cups...



**Thank you, Sweet Hollow Congregation  
Your Mission Team**

***ALL Items will be Blessed on August 11 before delivery***





## Prayer Corner

### **“Words That Hold Us: Books and Prayers for a Compassionate Faith”**

*Faith Life at the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow – August 2025*

Prayer is not about saying the “right” thing. It’s about opening our hearts to what’s true, and trusting that God listens — not just to our words, but to our silences, our tears, our hopes, and our longings.

For many Christians, traditional prayer language can sometimes feel distant or disconnected from the world we live in. But thankfully, there’s a growing collection of prayer books that speak with honesty, inclusivity, and deep compassion — prayers that match the rhythms of justice, grief, hope, and wonder that we experience daily.

If you’re looking to deepen your prayer life in this season, here are two beautiful, accessible books to consider:

#### **• Prayer Books for the Journey**

##### **1. *A Rhythm of Prayer: A Collection of Meditations for Renewal***

*Edited by Sarah Bessey*

*This powerful anthology includes prayers and reflections from diverse Christian writers — women, people of color, LGBTQ+ voices — all offering raw, real prayers for those who wrestle with doubt, yearn for justice, or simply need spiritual grounding.*

##### **2. *Every Moment Holy (Vol. II): Death, Grief, and Hope***

*By Douglas McKelvey (with a progressive lens for reinterpretation)*

*While not always framed in progressive language, this liturgy collection invites readers to find sacredness in loss, healing, and care. Many Sweet Hollow members have found its structure comforting and adaptable to various life moments.*

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## Prayer Corner

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Of course, prayer is not limited to the pages of a book. Sometimes, we need fresh words that reflect our values, our concerns, and our call to care for one another in a hurting world.

Here are **two original prayers** written for this season of life at Sweet Hollow:

### • A Prayer for Caring for Others

Holy One, when we are tempted to look away, open our eyes. When we are tempted to stay quiet, give us words of compassion. Make our hearts soft enough to feel the pain of another, and strong enough to carry love where it's needed. Bless the caregivers, the listeners, the volunteers, the ones who bring meals, write cards, check in. Let us be counted among them — not for recognition, but because we are Yours. Teach us to love as You do: Widely. Patiently. Tenderly. Amen.

### • A Prayer for a Broken World

Creator of Earth and Sky, we are grieving the brokenness — The fires and floods, the hatred and harm, the violence, the injustice, the ache of the innocent. And yet, we believe You are not finished. Not with the world, not with us. So breathe into us the courage to act, to protest with peace, to serve with joy, to repair what has been torn apart. Give us the imagination to believe that love can still win. And give us the strength to live like it's true.  
Amen.

Prayer can shape our posture toward the world — softening us, grounding us, stirring us to act. Whether you find your prayers in a book, on a walk, or in the stillness of early morning light, know this: **every word of love you offer becomes part of God's healing in the world.**

May your August be filled with gentle words, sacred moments, and the prayers your soul didn't know it needed.

~PW



### AUG 2025

3... Teddy Tanksley  
 7... Carol Schiffmacher  
 15... Ray Moder  
 22... Tim Mason  
 22... Millie Schmitt  
 25... Rob Reiser  
 25... Mickey Rogers



### AUG 2025

7... Jason & Emily Wagner  
 8... David & Sharon Krams  
 14... Tim & Carol Mason  
 22... Bob & Lori Kevelos  
 26... Ray & Denise Moder



1... National Girlfriends Day  
 2... National Ice Cream Sandwich Day  
 3... National Sisters Day/National Friendship Day  
 6... National Root Beer Float Day  
 7... National Purple Heart Day  
 8... National Pickleball Day  
 9... National Bowling Day  
 11... National Son's & Daughter's Day  
 12... National Middle Child Day  
 15... National Relaxation Day  
 16... National Roller Coaster Day  
 19... National Soft Ice Cream Day  
 21... National Senior Citizens Day  
 22... National Be An Angel Day (Good Samaritan)  
 26... National Women's Equality Day  
 28... National Rainbow Bridge Remembrance  
 31... National Eat Outside Day

## Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

(631) 367 - 9249

[www.sweethollowpresby.org](http://www.sweethollowpresby.org)

Rev. Wade Pond, Pastor

Jason Black, Director of Music Ministries

Lori Kevelos, Church Administrator

Jill Conroy, Treasurer

Beatrice Reiser, Clerk of Session

Elders: Ed Conroy

Melissa D'Angelo

Niaja Mowatt

Frank Sansone

Bea Reiser

## SESSION MEETING!

The session meets monthly, typically on the third Monday of each month at 8 PM. Most meetings occur via Zoom. In person meetings occur February/May/September/November. The next meeting is AUG 18. Any member of the church is welcome to attend.



*Find our website and social media links!*

[www.sweethollowpresby.org](http://www.sweethollowpresby.org)

*Facebook/YouTube/Instagram*

<https://www.facebook.com/sweethollowpresby>

<https://youtube.com/>

@presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401

<https://www.instagram.com/presbysweethollow>

### *From the Pastor's Nook:*

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As James reminds us, *“Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (James 2:17). Real faith walks with the wounded. Real discipleship picks up the burdens of others, not just when it’s convenient, but when it’s urgent.*

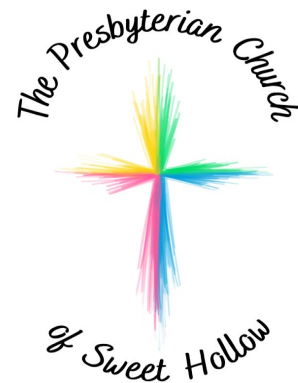
Here at PCSH, that might mean organizing around food insecurity, advocating for affordable housing, or forming partnerships with immigrant-led ministries. It might mean educating ourselves on systemic injustice and then showing up at the town meeting or the polling place. It definitely means seeing our neighbor not as someone who looks like us, thinks like us, or votes like us — but as someone beloved by God.

The Samaritan wasn't the one with religious status. He wasn't part of the "in crowd." But he had the one thing that matters most: compassion that takes action.

May we be that kind of neighbor. Not just in thought, not just in prayer, but in practice.

**“Go and do likewise.”**

~PW



**Bell Ringer Delivery:** To have your copy of the Bell Ringer delivered by paper rather than email, please call the office, e-mail <pcshsecretary@hotmail.com> or Pastor Wade.

## SEPT Bell Ringer Submissions: Due by AUG 25

Email to Jessica Pond: [8kidscallmemom@gmail.com](mailto:8kidscallmemom@gmail.com)