Chapel of the Good Shepherd Celebrates a Joyful 2026 Season

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Chautauqua Institution has concluded another vibrant summer season of worship, fellowship, and Anglican hospitality.

Throughout the nine-week Chautauqua season, the Chapel welcomed an extraordinary group of visiting priests from across the Episcopal Church. Each chaplain spent a week at Chautauqua, leading Sunday worship and the Chapel's weekday celebrations of the Holy Eucharist while enjoying a "working vacation" at the Episcopal Cottage.

This year's chaplains brought a remarkable breadth of experience to the Chapel—from parish ministry, military and hospital chaplaincy, and theological education to interim ministry, racial reconciliation, missionary service, and biblical scholarship. They came from across the country, including Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina, Michigan, Maryland, Ohio, and Texas, reminding us that this small chapel at Chautauqua is part of a much larger Anglican community.

The Chapel register tells an equally encouraging story. During the season, the Chapel celebrated more than 40 services. Sunday worship averaged approximately 66 people, while weekday celebrations of the Holy Eucharist averaged approximately 16 worshippers per service. For a small seasonal chapel, these numbers represent a remarkably lively worshipping community—one that forms anew each summer as longtime friends, Chautauqua residents, visitors, and newcomers gather around the same altar.

The season was about much more than numbers. Worship included baptisms, feast-day celebrations, Sunday liturgies, and the steady rhythm of weekday Eucharist. Each week brought a new priest and new voices into the pulpit and at the altar, while the Chapel itself remained a constant place of prayer, welcome, and community.

Special thanks go to the Rev. Joe Kozlowski and the Rev. Deacon Robin Kozlowski, who once again helped bring the season to a fitting close. As has become their custom, Joe returned to lead worship during the Chapel's closing weekend, with Robin joining him in this beloved annual tradition. Their faithful presence at the end of each summer provides a wonderful sense of continuity—gathering the community one final time around the altar before the Chapel doors close for another season. Joe continues to serve as a supply priest in the Genesee Region of WNY, and they make the Chapel's closing weekend a regular part of their ministry.

The Chapel also celebrated an important milestone for its future. An anonymous donor generously offered to match contributions to the Chapel of the Good Shepherd Endowment Fund up to $10,000, and supporters responded with the gifts necessary to receive the full match. The strengthened endowment will provide ongoing income to support the worship, care, and ministry of this beloved place for years to come.

This support is especially important because the Chapel is financially self-sustaining. Although it is a summer chapel of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York, it receives no financial support from either the Diocese or Chautauqua Institution. Its ministry is made possible by those who worship there, participate in its services, and generously support its mission.

Already, plans are taking shape for summer 2027—and the Chapel is seeking additional priests interested in serving as weekly chaplains. Episcopal priests, as well as priests from throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion, are invited to apply. Chaplains receive accommodations at the Episcopal Cottage and have the opportunity to lead worship while participating in the rich life of Chautauqua Institution.

The 2027 season is already off to an exciting start. Among those committed to serve are the Rev. Dr. Randall Balmer, John Phillips Professor in Religion at Dartmouth College, and his wife, the Rev. Dr. Catharine Randall, who will serve together. Balmer is a prize-winning historian, author of eighteen books, and Emmy Award nominee whose scholarship has focused extensively on religion in American life.

Also joining the Chapel will be Archdeacon Laurie Pankey, rector of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Lexington, Kentucky, and her husband, the Rev. Dr. Steve Pankey, Secretary of the House of Deputies Pro Tempore of the Episcopal Church. Their early commitment points toward another wonderfully diverse roster of clergy for the coming summer.

Additional chaplains are still being sought for 2027. Priests looking for a distinctive opportunity to combine ministry, renewal, learning, and the extraordinary experience of Chautauqua are warmly encouraged to apply. More information is available at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd website.
For more than a century, the little Chapel of the Good Shepherd has offered a distinctly Episcopal presence in the heart of Chautauqua—a place where visitors become a congregation, strangers become friends, and people from across the Church gather around one table. The summer of 2026 continued that tradition beautifully and gives us much to look forward to when the Chapel doors open again next year.

The Rev. Luke F. Fodor
Vicar of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Chautauqua Institution