



2026 AT A GLANCE

2026 Summer Assembly
JUNE 27 TO AUGUST 30

For updates,
 visit 2026.chq.org

Chautauqua Institution is excited to present a snapshot of our themes for the 2026 season. We're also pleased to share an early preview of a number of programs within our unique mix — with many more announcements to come!



Help shape the 2026 Summer Assembly with your ideas and inspirations. Visit 2026ideas.chq.org or scan this QR code.

See themes or programs you won't want to miss? Book 2026 accommodations at CHQaccommodations.chq.org

	Week Themes and Descriptions*	• CLS: Chautauqua Lecture Series	Highlights of the Chautauqua Mix*
Week One 6/27-7/4	<p>CLS: Icons and Instigators: Women Who Change the World Across generations and geographies, women have sparked revolutions, reshaped norms and reimagined the possible. Chautauqua Institution itself has amplified many of their voices over its 150-plus years. In this week we celebrate iconic changemakers and unsung trailblazers alike — women whose courage, vision and defiance have rerouted history and continue to shape the future. What drives societal transformation, and what role have we seen women uniquely play in catalyzing it? How do we continue to empower and support girls, young women and emergent women leaders, and demonstrate that their success is not zero-sum — meaning at the expense of their male counterparts — but rather clearly beneficial to all?</p> <p>LECTURE • (6/30) Alyse Nelson, president and CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership</p>		<p>ECUMENICAL WORSHIP Bishop Mariann Budde ORCHESTRA Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra "Opening Night" CLSC Anna North, <i>Bog Queen: A Novel</i></p>
Week Two 7/4-7/11	<p>CLS: Breaking the News: Charting a New Media Landscape The way we produce and consume news is changing fast — shaped by established and emerging digital platforms, evolving audience consumption habits and rapidly shifting business models. As trust in traditional media declines and misinformation rises, how do we ensure a healthy press — and an informed public? During a summer in which we celebrate the 150th birthday of our beloved community newspaper, <i>The Chautauquan Daily</i>, Chautauqua in this week brings together journalists, media entrepreneurs and analysts to explore what's next for news: from independent outlets and nonprofit models to the role of AI and algorithms in shaping public discourse. Our conversation will dive into how the news is framed, who gets a platform, and how emerging storytellers are reshaping what journalism looks like. From TikTok newsrooms to longform investigations, it's a new media moment.</p> <p>LECTURE • (7/7) Chuck Todd, Host, "The ChuckToddCast" • (7/8) Jason Riley, opinion columnist, <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> • (7/10) Neil deGrasse Tyson, director, <i>Hayden Planetarium, American Museum of Natural History</i>; executive producer, "Shot in the Arm," "Food Evolution" & Scott Hamilton Kennedy, director and founder, <i>Black Valley Films</i></p>		<p>ECUMENICAL WORSHIP Rev. Robert Henderson INTERFAITH Rabbi Joshua Stanton, Jewish Federations of North America The Rev. Nicole Martin, president and CEO, Christianity Today COMMUNITY Fourth of July Community Band Concert ORCHESTRA Independence Day Celebration DANCE Dance All-Star Gala (7/8) SCHOOLS Music School Festival Orchestra</p>
Week Three 7/11-7/18	<p>CLS: The 2026 Election: What's at Stake? <i>A Week in Partnership with American Enterprise Institute and Brookings Institution</i> As voters prepare for an election year, the American political landscape is shifting beneath our feet. With all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate on the ballot — and early signals emerging about the 2028 presidential race — this week explores the issues galvanizing voters across the ideological spectrum. AEI and Brookings experts show the way, in the Chautauqua tradition of sharing diverse and divergent perspectives in good-faith, good-humored conversation.</p>		<p>ECUMENICAL WORSHIP Rev. Dr. Michael Chan ORCHESTRA SCHOOLS Music School Festival Orchestra EVENING ENTERTAINMENT Alexander Gavrylyuk, piano (7/15) CLSC Mary Alice Monroe, <i>Where the Rivers Merge: A Novel</i></p>
Week Four 7/18-7/25	<p>CLS: Wasted: Our Era of Disposability In a world where phones are upgraded yearly, appliances aren't built to last, and new cars are essentially rolling computers that require a manufacturer willing to continue providing software updates, even our most expensive possessions are treated as disposable. In this week in partnership with the Chautauqua Climate Change Initiative, Chautauqua convenes a timely exploration of the cost of convenience. We will explore how disposability has crept into every corner of modern life, from fast fashion and single-use plastics to electronics, vehicles and furniture. What are the economic, environmental and ethical costs of this mindset — and what would it take to reverse course? Join designers, economists and environmental advocates for a conversation about durability, repair culture and reimagining value in a throwaway age.</p> <p>LECTURE • (7/20) David Wallace-Wells, science writer and opinion columnist, <i>The New York Times</i></p>		<p>ECUMENICAL WORSHIP Cantor Olivia Brodsky, cantor and co-clergy, East End Temple ORCHESTRA SCHOOLS Chautauqua School of Dance: Student Gala I MSFO with Chautauqua Opera Conservatory OPERA Chautauqua Opera Company Amphitheater Opera (7/22) EVENING ENTERTAINMENT Alison Krauss & Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas</p>

	Week Theme and Description* • CLS: Chautauqua Lecture Series	Highlights of the Chautauqua Mix*
Week Five 7/25–8/1	<p>CLS: Art and Artists Against the Odds Behind every celebrated work of art is a story of persistence. In this week, Chautauqua spotlights the uphill journeys of artists who've carved out visibility and voice in a world where creative paths are rarely straight or simple. What systems shape which artists rise and which are overlooked? We'll explore the realities of the art world — from the influence of gatekeepers and geography to how race, class and access impact who gets seen and supported. Through the lens of Chautauqua's proud history as an incubator of emerging artistic talent, we'll celebrate the grit, imagination and community that fuel creative expression — and ask what it takes to keep making meaningful work in an ever-shifting cultural landscape.</p> <p>LECTURE • (7/24) Rainn Wilson, founding director, Climate Basecamp</p>	ECUMENICAL WORSHIP ORCHESTRA SCHOOLS Music School Festival Orchestra with Chautauqua School of Dance School of Music: Piano Program Showcase COMMUNITY Airband (7/30) CLSC Tessa Hulls, <i>Feeding Ghosts: A Graphic Memoir</i>
Week Six 8/1–8/8	<p>CLS: America at 250: In Partnership with the National Constitution Center and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation The term semiquincentennial has entered the zeitgeist as the United States of America prepares to commemorate its 250th birthday in 2026. Such a milestone anniversary offers an opportunity to survey the previous quarter-millennium — how a collection of upstart British colonies became the world's pre-eminent constitutional democracy, with major successes, failures and continued struggles along the way. In this week, Chautauqua partners with the National Constitution Center and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to celebrate, debate and commemorate the American idea at 250. Thought leaders of diverse perspectives will gather to explore the principals of the Declaration and the Constitution — including Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness — and to discuss America's efforts to live up to our founding ideals from 1776 to today.</p> <p>LECTURE • (8/3–8/4) Ken Burns, documentary filmmaker. Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO, National Constitution Center</p>	ECUMENICAL WORSHIP Rev. Dr. Anna Carter Florence COMMUNITY OFN Run/Walk (8/1) Community Band Concert (8/4) Old First Night Festival (8/4) LITERARY ARTS CLSC Recognition Week ORCHESTRA SCHOOLS Music School Festival Orchestra DANCE Alonzo King LINES Ballet
Week Seven 8/8–8/15	<p>CLS: Global Power and Our Evolving International Order For decades, the United States has been the anchor of a liberal world order shaped by shared institutions, military alliances and economic leadership. As the Trump administration's "America First" domestically focused agenda takes root, new powers are rising — and the rules of global engagement are shifting. In this week we examine the impact of America's new posture toward its international allies and enemies, examining how the international order is evolving in real time, from security alliances and trade blocs to diplomatic norms and great-power competition. What are the ripple effects of these major global shifts, from regional conflicts and migration to climate diplomacy and human rights?</p> <p>LECTURE • (8/10) Nancy Youssef, staff writer, <i>The Atlantic</i></p>	ECUMENICAL WORSHIP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS Music School Festival Orchestra Chautauqua School of Dance Student Gala II ORCHESTRA Alonzo King LINES Ballet with the CSO (8/8) CLSC Rebecca Nagle, <i>By the Fire We Carry</i>
Week Eight 8/15–8/22	<p>CLS: The Future of Food: Climate, Technology and the Next Agricultural Revolution Food is universal — it sustains us, connects us, defines us. But how we grow it, share it, and celebrate it is changing fast. As climate pressures mount, technologies advance and cultural traditions evolve, we find ourselves at the edge of a new agricultural revolution. This week at Chautauqua explores the future of food systems through the lenses of sustainability, technology, culture, justice and joy. From vertical farms and climate-smart crops to food sovereignty movements and the science of flavor, we'll meet chefs, farmers, scientists and changemakers working to reimagine what and how we eat — and what it means for our planet, our communities and our sense of connection around the table.</p> <p>Speakers: (8/17) Danielle Nierenberg, president and co-founder, Food Tank. (8/19) Brian Frank, founder and general partner, FTW Ventures.</p> <p><i>This week also marks the return of the beloved Chautauqua Food Festival, returning for both Weeks Eight and Nine.</i></p>	ECUMENICAL WORSHIP The Rev. Natalie Hanson, retired clergy, United Methodist Church COMMUNITY Chautauqua Food Festival SCHOOLS Music School Festival Orchestra ORCHESTRA The Music of Billy Joel with Tony DeSare and the CSO
Week Nine 8/22–8/30	<p>CLS: The Importance of Gathering: A Collaboration With the Smithsonian Folklife Festival For more than 150 years, the essence of Chautauqua, the most fulsome expression of its mission and work, has been a stretch of summertime in which thousands of people gather on our verdant, rural 220-acre grounds. These folks gather to learn, to feel, to pray, to play, and much more — and each of these experiences is made all the more rich because they are experienced together. This week, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Chautauqua investigates and celebrates togetherness as a critical component of what it means to be human. Why is it so important that we remember, harmonize, move and grow together? The week serves as a capstone of sorts to the Festival's supersized commemoration of America's semiquincentennial, which is based on those themes of togetherness. We'll close our time together — capping both this week and the 2026 Summer Assembly — with a joy-filled celebration inspired by Obon, the Buddhist "Festival of Lanterns."</p> <p>LECTURE • (8/24) Priya Parker, author, <i>The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters</i></p> <p><i>The Chautauqua Food Festival continues in Week Nine, bringing a second week of gathering through flavor and fellowship.</i></p>	ECUMENICAL WORSHIP Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ COMMUNITY Chautauqua Food Festival EVENING ENTERTAINMENT Silkroad Ensemble featuring Rhiannon Giddens (8/22) ORCHESTRA CSO "Closing Night"