

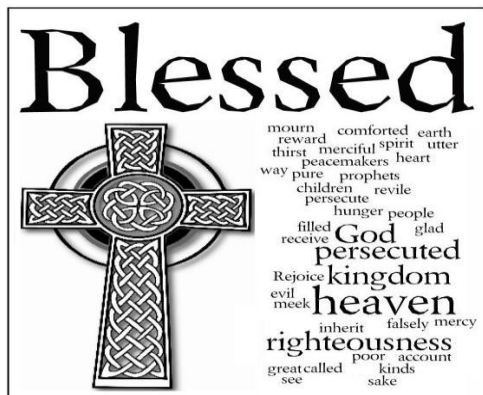
The Cornerstone

The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Psalm 118:22-23

VOLUME LXXIII NUMBER 42

October 23, 2025



“Blessed are the Persecuted...”

Matthew 5:10-12

This Sunday, we will explore the last beatitude as we meditate on the closing three verses of this Sermon on the Mount opening. In this series we have discovered that cultivating qualities described in the first three beatitudes leads to the *hunger and thirst* described in the fourth (Matt. 3-6). And in a similar way, application of beatitudes 5, 6, and 7 leads to the persecution found in the eighth (vv. 7-10). As we look outside of ourselves to offer mercy, live in purity, and make peace, the world will often reject us, just as it rejected Christ.

The promise for those who are persecuted is the same as that given to those who are poor in spirit: *“Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* Though these words are spoken early in Jesus’ ministry, He can look ahead to the day when He will be tortured, spat upon, and crowned with thorns, the day when the world He came to redeem will crucify Him. He will endure it all “for the joy set before Him” (Heb. 12:2), and with this promise, He sets joy before His followers, too.

Abdu Murray shares this story illuminating this point..

In the dank cell, the once powerful Chinese evangelist Wang Ming-Dao renounced his faith in Jesus. He could no longer bear the persecution and pain Mao Zedong’s revolutionaries had inflicted on him and those he loved. After he was released, the Peter-like guilt of denying the Lord racked Ming-Dao’s conscience. He publicly reaffirmed his faith in Christ, causing his re-arrest. In the ensuing 16 years he spent in that prison, Ming-Dao did not languish. He flourished. As he sang hymns and psalms, his devotion blossomed; its scent attracted even prison guards, prompting them to learn more about the God of hope.

God’s power was demonstrated in Wang Ming-Dao, not despite persecution but through it. Our persecution of faith can offer two glorious blessings to follow. First, persecution forges our Christian witness. Paul wrote that his chains encouraged others to be bolder evangelists (Phil. 1:12-14). Is that not surprising, and even strange? Paul’s chains were intended to discourage evangelism, yet sharing the good news is precisely what God used them to accomplish. How surprisingly glorious it is that suffering spreads the gospel.

Though we aren’t all called to be martyrs, we may experience some measure of pain because of our faith. And that suffering brings the second blessing that I believe Wang Ming-Dao and so many others before and since have enjoyed—that we are never closer to Jesus than when in pain and/or suffering for His name’s sake.

I look forward to worshipping with you this Sunday as explore joy that comes in the midst of the suffering.

**A Different View of the Beatitudes, by John Greco; orig. pub. 10/1/2014 & reprinted 10/13/2018.
intouch.org/read/magazine/features/a-different-view-of-the-beatitudes

NOTE: If ever you would like an emailed or printed copy of a sermon(s), please contact the FUMCO office or Jill by email or phone.



MERCY CENTER THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Once again, it is collection time for the annual Mercy Center Thanksgiving food drive. Families in need are provided Thanksgiving baskets containing all the ingredients for a complete holiday dinner. The Mercy Center food pantry currently serves over 3,540 families a month in the Neptune/Asbury Park area!

Since it is a large project, Mercy Center requires the food be delivered to them early. Therefore, starting **October 26th**, there will be a table in the church foyer to receive non-perishable donations. Perishables **clearly** marked for the **Mercy Center Thanksgiving Food Baskets** can be left in the freezer or refrigerator. The Thanksgiving Basket food drive ends on **November 16th**. Donations can be dropped off during church office hours or on Sundays.

The Outreach Committee and Mercy Center truly appreciate the congregation's continuing generous support of the Thanksgiving food drive!!!



It's not too early to get your mental wheels in motion! Advent will soon be here! Once again, we are soliciting contributions to our very personal advent booklet. It's not hard to do. Just a Bible verse, a short anecdote or some thoughts, poetry, favorite hymn-just about anything that might be inspiring.

How has God touched your life? Please give it some thought, and I am certain you could share your experience with your church family!

I am here to help! Diane Maher. 732-513-8413

Dianeserine07712@yahoo.com

Deadline for submissions: November 8



Saturday, January 24 – Saturday, January 31, 2026

**We are heading to West Virginia
to aid our neighbors in need.**

ALL are welcome to participate!!!

No skills needed – learn on the job.

**Every talent will be utilized...cooks, listeners, errand runners, and of course those
willing to paint, hammer, and learn something new. We don't yet know our
projects but we know the meaningful message of love we provide AND receive.**

Interested? Questions?

Contact Robyn Korsen robynpt21@comcast.net



In addition to raising money for missions through an annual pledge and year-round fundraising, United Women In Faith set aside two special days a year to focus on a "Call to Prayer and Self-denial" and a "World Thank Offering."

The World Thank Offering is an opportunity for personal Thanksgiving, and for participation in global mission outreach. Through this offering, mission projects in all 50 states and in almost 100 countries are supported. These vary from support to schools, hospitals and clinics, daycare centers and homes for senior citizens, educational training courses to prevent soil erosion to leadership development and nutritional courses and medical training. The funds collected are used in the total program of mission carried on through UWIF.

Many of us collect money over the course of the year, giving thanks and appreciation in either a blue and white World Thank Offering box or a container we have personally made for the purpose.

Being in mission is sharing our lives and gifts with others that all may be whole persons through Jesus Christ. Mission is creating a new society as we do away with those things that create barriers. It is working to eliminate racism, sexism, and loneliness. Mission is Christ's challenge to us to bring the possibility of food, shelter, and fulfillment to all of humanity.

To contribute to this mission work, please set aside a collection box and give with thanksgiving during the year. Attached is a monthly calendar that will give you some ideas and incentives to place money in your container during the year. Even the whole family could get involved! All money should be turned in at the end of November the following year.

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Maher at 732-513-8413 or speak with a member of the UWIF.



Dismantling Racism II: Christian Nationalism

On Saturday, November 8 from 9:00am-12:30 pm, Rev. Greg Holston will lead training that will focus on the timely and pressing issue of Christian Nationalism. Registration is open and more details will be shared soon. The cost for this event is \$15.00 per person.

To register go to gnidigest@gnjumc.org.

The Legacy Workshop

Nov. 17th @ 6:00 p.m.

All are Welcome.
Come learn how you might
leave a living legacy of faith

The First United Methodist Church, 103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst

CLUSTER UM CHURCH CALENDAR

Old First (Jill Hubbard-Smith) 197 Locust Ave., West Long Branch (Stream: Facebook)
Wayside (David Geller) 1229 West Park Ave., Ocean (Stream: YouTube)
Oceanport (Donna Nielson) 50 Mail St., Oceanport (Stream: YouTube)
St. Luke's (Chungmi Kang) 535 Broadway, Long Branch
Embury (Chungmi Kang) 49 Church St., Little Silver
FUMCO (Jill Hubbard-Smith) 103 Monmouth Rd., Oakhurst (Stream: YouTube, Facebook)

2025

Oct. 31	11-2	Community Apple Peeling Event	Embury
Nov. 1	7:30 a.m.-noon	Apple Pie Making & Sale	Embury
Nov. 7 & 8	9 a.m-4 p.m. & 9 a.m-2 p.m.	Inside Yard Sale	Wayside
Nov 9	4:00 p.m.	Organ Concert-100 th Celebration	Embury
Nov. 11	7:30 p.m.	UWIF Guest Night	Oceanport
Nov. 15	5:00 p.m.	Harvest Home Dinner	Oceanport
Nov. 16	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO with Old First
Nov. 23	10:00 a.m.	Thanksgiving Breakfast	Embury
Nov. 23	Noon	Thanksgiving Lunch	St. Luke's
Nov. 30	2:30 p.m.	<i>One Silent Night</i> Choraliers of Eatontown/Northern Cluster Choir Reformation Lutheran Church	
Dec. 7	4:00 p.m.	<i>One Silent Night</i>	West Grove
Dec. 7	5:00 p.m.	Vespers & Tea	FUMCO
Dec. 14	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Party Covered Dish	FUMCO
Dec. 21	Noon	Christmas Lunch	St. Luke's
Dec. 21	5:00 p.m.	Blue Christmas	FUMCO
Dec. 28	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO with Old First

CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 p.m. - Family Candlelight Service - FUMCO
5:00 p.m. - Candlelight Service – Embury
7:00 p.m. – Candlelight Service – St. Luke's
7:30 p.m. – Candlelight Service – Old First
7:30 p.m. - Candlelight Service - Oceanport
9:00 p.m. - Candlelight Service - Wayside
11:00 p.m. - Candlelight & Communion – FUMCO

2026

Jan. 17	5:00 p.m.	Chicken Dinner	Oceanport
Jan. 24-31		Mission Trip to WV	with FUMCO
Feb. 17	5:00 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	Oceanport
Aug. 19	5:00 p.m.	Peach Festival	Oceanport





**20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 26, 2025**

Counters: Mary Bailey, Cheryl McLoughlin, John Montgomery

Greeter: Pamela Lynch

Usher: Jim Scisco

Acolyte: Joy More

Lay Reader: Timothy Haider

Fellowship Hosts: Judy Gorra, Soon Hur

Altar Flowers:

Given by Susan McRae in loving memory of her mother, Jeanne Killian & her aunt, Barbara Davis.

Given by Bonnie McNamara in appreciation of Pastor Jill & her family.



SAVE THE DATE

October 26th

1:30 p.m.

St. John's United Methodist Church: Hazlet

All are invited to this very important business meeting of our church.

THIS SUNDAY



**All Saints Sunday
October 26, 2025**

Counters: Pat Aria, John Montgomery, Judy Gorra

Greeter: Mike Sheckler

Usher: Robin Whitney

Acolyte: Garry Smith

Lay Reader: Susan McRae

Fellowship Host: Bonnie McNamara

Altar Flowers:

Given in loving memory of Richard Beckmann by Peg, Kenneth, & Kimberly.

Given in loving memory of Bob More & Tom Maher by Joy & Diane.

THIS TUESDAY



Java with Jill

Join Jill at the Blue Swan Diner for coffee and conversation (or the drink of your preference).

**This informal time of fellowship will be every
4th Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.**

Mark your calendar: October 28th



Please join the Board of Trustees at their fall workday on October 25th. They will be sprucing up the church properties starting at 9 a.m. There is something for everyone to do no matter what your capability.

THIS SATURDAY



and/or wipes. Dessert will be served. RSVP:732-542-9384.

Join Oceanport UMC's UWIF on Tuesday, 11/11 at 7:30 p.m. Their guest speaker will be Callie Crowder from Maker's Place in Trenton. All who are attending are invited to bring diapers



The 2026 calendars are here! A huge thank you to Fiore-Buckley Funeral Home for their donation again this year. These calendars are full of exquisite scenic photos. You may pick up as many as you'd like-they are on the table on the second floor foyer.

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of October by Robin Whitney and Tommy Vignola in loving memory of Pat & Jim Whitney.

**OUR OCTOBER COMMUNION OFFERING
BENEFITS
WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**



Embury UMC celebrates the 100th anniversary of their Möller Pipe Organ with a free concert featuring Dr. Gordon Turk. Sunday, November 9th at 4:00 p.m. A donation of non-perishable food is appreciated. Refreshments will be served.



The Little Free Pantry

Please think of stocking shelf-stable milk, powdered milk, soup, stew, chili, whole grain cereal, toiletries, hygiene products, baby food, applesauce, canned beans, canned chicken, canned tuna, canned salmon, SPAM, canned ham, canned vegetables, olive oil, canola oil, crackers, dried herbs, spices, canned fruit, dried fruit, granola bars, instant mashed potatoes, meals in a box, nuts, pasta, peanut butter, & rice.

A good idea this week:
Apples



Our homebound: David Miller, Bev Itell, Virginia Haydu, Bob Sproat, Bertha Ahrens, Cary Carlisle, Priscilla Smith, Elaine Gould

Sunnyside Manor, Wall: Nancy Burt

At home: Avery Fallon

Our church family worshipping at a distance: Barbara Novick, Jean Gillette, Laura Eble, Jack & Caroline Chesbro



Something to think about:
Kindness does not equal weakness.

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS



Oct. 26-Nov. 1

Joel 2:23-32
Psalm 65
2 Timothy 4:6-8
Luke 18:9-14



Coffee Fellowship

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS NEEDED

Do you have what it takes to
be a fellowship host? **YES,**
YOU DO!

Please sign up in the
upstairs kitchen. The very
simple requirements to be a
fellowship host are posted

on the poster board. Or you may speak with Bonnie
McNamara.



UP FOR GRABS

In Blair Chapel, the side sanctuary, and Wesley Hall
there are cushioned folding chairs that are free for
the taking. The chairs are being replaced with a
different kind of chair and before discarding them
they are being offered to all of you. For more
information or to set up a time to take them, call the
church office 732-531-1150.

There are several chairs still left for the taking




BE HAPPY

In Matthew 5:3-10, Jesus begins his teaching with the Beatitudes. They give us many reasons to be happy. The Greek word for blessed, *makarios*, also means happy!

Directions: Complete the Beatitudes by matching the blanks in each "Happy" phrase on the left with the bold word(s) on the right.

1. "Happy are the <u>POOR</u> <u>IN SPIRIT</u>	hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
2. "Happy are those who _____	pure in heart , for they will see God."
3. "Happy are the _____	peacemakers , for they will be called the children of God."
4. "Happy are those who _____	persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
5. "Happy are the _____	poor in spirit , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
6. "Happy are the _____	merciful , for they will be shown mercy."
7. "Happy are the _____	meek , for they will inherit the earth."
8. "Happy are those who are _____	mourn , for they will be comforted."

