

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

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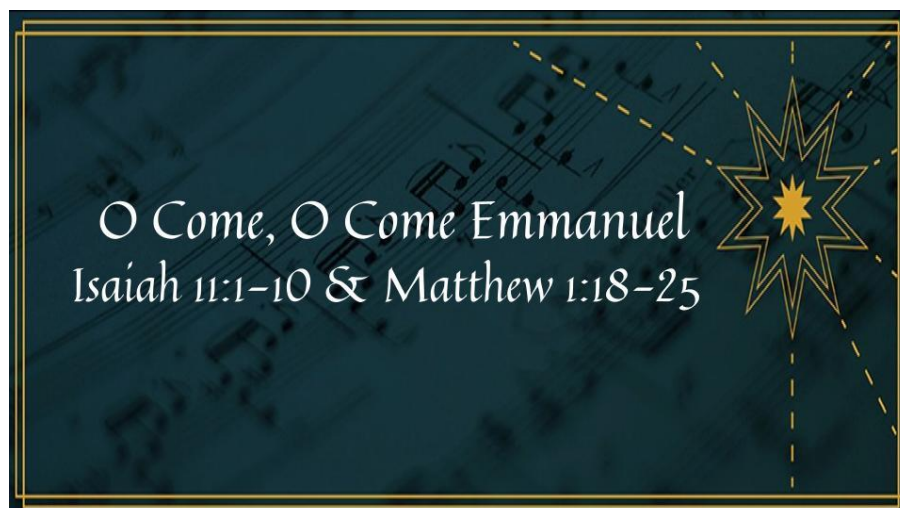


Christmas carols are the best known and some of the most influential songs in our culture. They connect with us in emotional, spiritual, and theological ways, drawing us into the spirit of the season, and teaching the story of Jesus' birth. As we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming, we will dig into some of our beloved Christmas carols to uncover their deeper meaning for us today.

This Sunday we enter into the season of Advent. The time to actively waiting and anticipating the Savior's birth. There will be many opportunities throughout this season to reflectively prepare our hearts for this most precious gift. Please mark your calendars for Sunday morning worship, Sunday evening ministry throughout December at 5:00 p.m., and Advent Meditative Study on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom or Wednesdays at

noon in Blair Chapel. All details will be in our newsletters and on the attached Advent flyer.

Join me this Sunday as we begin our Advent Worship Series, *Singing the Story of Christmas: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. This beloved Advent hymn is packed with metaphors and names for God – Emmanuel, Wisdom, Lord, Root, Key, Dayspring, and Desire of Nations. If Christ has already come into our world, what is it that we are still waiting for in our lives that we anticipate in this Advent season? What are we still waiting for that is promised in Christ's coming? I look forward to seeing you Sunday as we welcome the Light of Hope and explore the lessons of this familiar hymn. *Jill*





ADVENT STUDY

Led by Pastor Jill

Tuesdays Dec. 2nd-Dec. 16th 7 p.m. via zoom

Wednesdays Dec. 3-Dec. 17 12 p.m. Blair Chapel

SUNDAYS DURING ADVENT

Vespers Service & Christmas Tea Dec. 7th 5 p.m.

Christmas Party Dec. 14th 5 p.m.

Blue Christmas Dec. 21st 5 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5 p.m. & 11 p.m.



During the month of November, our Stewardship Sermon Series: *All*



In; invited us to give our time, talents, gifts, service, and witness to God through the ministry of our church and included the invitation to reflect on the legacy we might share with next generations. I am thankful to the Endowment Committee who invited Chip Buckman to share with all who gathered for our legacy workshop

about the importance to understand and prepare paperwork that helps share our resources in the future. I strongly believe this is a spiritual gift of stewardship that is an important step in our journey of discipleship. Following is a synopsis of information shared at the Legacy Workshop. Thank you, Sandy Brown, for summarizing our gathering and updating us to current laws and ideas on way to give to the church. *Jill*



ESTATE PLANNING & GIFTING

On November 17th, the Endowment Committee sponsored a “Legacy Workshop” for the congregation. The committee’s financial advisor spoke to the assembled group about “Estate Planning Basics – An Overview of the Estate Planning Process”. A very healthy question and answer period yielded more information about the concerns of congregation members and ways to ensure proper stewardship of financial goals and aspirations. Paster Jill steered the group towards our Methodist principles of gifting and the opportunities to aid the church while at the same time safeguarding our primary responsibilities to our immediate families.

Here are some possibly helpful hints from the workshop, for those able and willing to aid the church during the estate planning process:

***Donating appreciated stock.** If you acquired stock at a low value which has now increased, by gifting it to the church, you avoid any capital gains on the increase, and the church receives 100% of the value. At least several members of the congregation have been good enough to contribute in this manner.

*** IRA RMD Transfers.** If you have any traditional IRAs (usually received through your employment), once you reach the age of 73 the federal government requires you to withdraw a certain amount in an IRA yearly (called a “RMD”). Therefore, you pay income taxes on that amount transferred to you from the IRA.

A vehicle which some in the church have used is to have your IRA advisor send a check from that fund directly to the church, in an amount determined by you. By doing so, you reduce your taxable income for the year and the church receives 100% of the value of the donation.

*** Annual Gift Exclusion Donations.** You are presently entitled to donate up to \$19,000 per year to any individual or charity, including to our church without any requirement to pay income tax on that amount. This allows you to lower your income for that year, dollar for dollar. Additionally, these gifts are not counted against what is called your lifetime gift/estate exemption (which is actually a very high amount, but it might apply to some in the church).

*** Life Insurance Beneficiaries.** If you have an existing life insurance policy or are willing to take out a new one, by naming the Church as the beneficiary, you can provide a wonderful legacy to the benefit of the congregation. This approach has been utilized before, to the great benefit of our church.

*** Beneficiaries Under Your Will.** By naming the church as a beneficiary in your will, you provide funds after you pass away, without concern about whether gifting during your lifetime might unduly impact your needs. Everyone should have a properly prepared and executed Will, Living Will/ Advanced Medical Directive and a General Durable Power of Attorney. By doing so, you protect your own medical and financial desires during your life and may provide great comfort to family members during your life and beyond.

If you do not have all of these or you have, but have not had them reviewed in years, you should consult with an attorney specializing in this field. If you do not have an attorney and wish to seek assistance, you could ask members of the church’s Endowment Committee to see if they have any recommendations for you.

Follow up. The above is a summary of some of the estate planning options discussed at the workshop. The information above should not be considered professional advice. If you wish to follow up on any estate planning matters, you should consult with appropriate licensed advisors.

Adopt-A-Family/ Interfaith Neighbors



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Once again we will be sharing our Christmas joy by partnering with our friends at Interfaith Neighbors in the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program.

In lieu of gifts, gift cards will be provided to the families along with a small assortment of Christmas cheer. If you would like to brighten a family's Christmas, please make your gift payable to **First United Methodist Church-Oakhurst** and in the memo line note: **Adopt-A-Family Christmas**.

Contributions can be mailed to the church or please make use of the designated yellow envelopes in the sanctuary and place your gift in the offering plate on Sunday morning. For on-line donations, please designate your gift for **Adopt-A-Family Christmas**.

Deadline: **December 11th, Thursday**

With thanks,
The Outreach Committee



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

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

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	
Feb. 17	5:00 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	Oceanport
Aug. 19	5:00 p.m.	Peach Festival	Oceanport



First Sunday of Advent



**1st Sunday of Advent
November 30, 2025**

Counters: Mary Bailey, Cheryl McLoughlin, John Montgomery

Greeter: Judy Smith

Usher: Jay Aretino

Acolyte: Faye Snorton

Lay Reader: Judy Gorra

Altar Flowers:

Given in loving memory of Charles Anthony Arrigo by Randy Danielson.
Given in honor of Shirley Bailey's birthday by her family.

Second Sunday of Advent



**2nd Sunday of Advent
December 7, 2025**

Counters: Patty Aria, John Montgomery, Judy Gorra

Greeter: Jack Coleman

Usher: Chip Stoll

Acolyte: Sue McRae

Lay Reader: Bob Crowther

Altar Flowers:

Given in loving memory of Betty Beckmann by Peggy Ann, Kenneth, & Kimberly.
Given in loving memory of Martin Bailey by his family.



World Thank Donations

November is coming to a close and if you have any World Thank money to turn in, it is time to do so. Donations should be put in an envelope with Mary Bailey's name on it. **Checks should be made out to the United Methodist Women, with "World Thank" in the memo.**



The church office will be closed on Thursday, November 27th & Friday November 28th in observance of Thanksgiving.

In this time of thanksgiving, I would like to thank some church volunteers who gave so generously to recent projects.



Thanks to Jim Scisco for setting up our outdoor creche. Great new location!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's Advent devotional booklet. You should be receiving it in the mail this week. Thank you to Ron Danielson for donating the price of the postage.

Thanks to Barbara Gruezke & Sue Johnson for our beautiful altarscapes.

It takes prayer, time, planning, generosity, and work to make these seasonal activities happen and I am extremely grateful to all those who give of themselves to our church.

Diane Maher-Altar Guild chairperson



With Sympathy

During this time of loss

We mourn with the Nacarlo/Haider/Landis family on the passing of wife and sister Robin Nacarlo who passed away on November 24th.



Time to Order Poinsettias

If you would like to order a poinsettia for our sanctuary to remember or honor a loved one, please fill out and return the order form included in this Cornerstone. Deadline is December 14. Questions? Contact Diane Maher at 732-513 8413.



Christmas Vespers Service

On December 7th at 5:00 p.m., the choirs, under the direction of our music director Denise Furda and the Carillon Choir director, Barbara MacPherson, will present our annual Vespers service of Lessons & Carols followed by the Christmas Tea hosted by the United Women in Faith. Please join us as we celebrate the coming of Christ.



THANKSGIVING BASKETS/MERCY CENTER

Thank you to the congregation and Wesley Nursery School for its generous support of Mercy Center's annual Thanksgiving Basket food drive. Along with the Wesley Nursery School, the Oakhurst congregation provided three carloads of Thanksgiving meal staples to Mercy Center along with fifteen turkeys.

Mercy Center is most grateful to the congregation for its steadfast commitment to the Mercy Center food pantry not only through the Thanksgiving Basket food drive but also the monthly collections for items of need throughout the year.

We are enriched as a community of faith when we can share our blessings.

Happy Thanksgiving,
The Outreach Committee

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of November by Diane Maher.



The third Sunday of every month is a FREE to all community spaghetti dinner hosted by the Outreach Committee and Old First UMC. You are invited to Fellowship Hall for a dinner of salad, bread, and spaghetti with your choice of marinara, meatballs, or sausages, and dessert. Birthdays are also celebrated with a cake for those celebrating their birthday during that month. You may eat in or take out. Service starts at 5 p.m. Please spread the word. **Date for December: 28th. (Please note the date change for December.)**



children's Christmas choir

Calling all children and youth for a Christmas Choir!
Do you have a child or youth in your life that would like to sing at Christmastime? Our Music Director Miss Denise is hoping to get a group together! If interested, please have a parent email FUMCOMusicDirector@gmail.com for more information!

Please be Praying for...

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

At home: Avery Fallon

Imperial Care Center: Peg Kuchen

Sunnyside Manor, Wall: Nancy Burt

Jersey Shore Care Center: Cliff Miller

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



Something to think about:

Always try to be nice but never fail to be kind.

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS

Nov. 16-Nov. 22

Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44



FELLOWSHIP HOSTS NEEDED

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



Coffee Fellowship

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 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.

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.

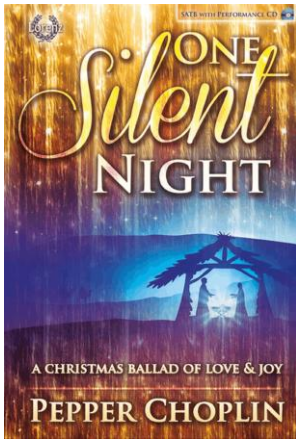
A good idea this week:

Fruit rollups



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

OUR NOVEMBER COMMUNION OFFERING BENEFITS HOPE SCHOOL



ONE SILENT NIGHT

Presented by the Choraliers of Eatontown & The Northern Cluster Choir at West Grove UMC, Neptune 12/7 at 4:00 p.m.



November is a 5th Sunday month. Your donations to this fund help with upkeep of the church properties. Please use the yellow envelopes for your donations. The Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee thank you!



Every 4th Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. Jill and friends meet at the Blue Swan Diner in Ocean for an informal gathering. **All are invited!**

Next gathering is 12/16 (please note the date change for December).