

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 LXIV NUMBER 1

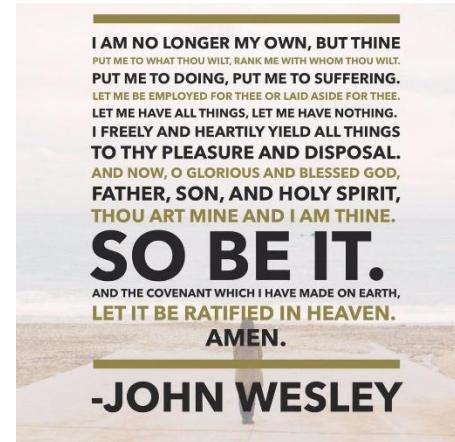
January 1, 2026



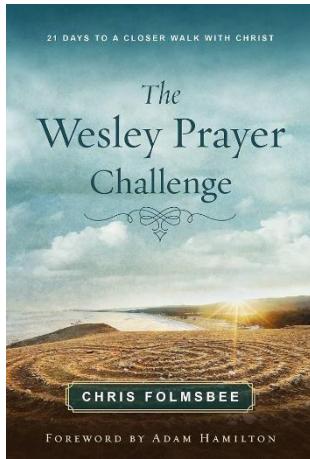
As we prepare to enter a New Year, I invite you to renew your covenant of faith and celebrate Epiphany this Sunday, January 4th. Worship will include:

- Wesley Covenant Service
- Holy Communion
- Consecrating our 2026 Leaders in Ministry
- and the Celebration of Epiphany.

Following worship, I invite you to a joint fellowship with members of Old First UMC as we welcome them into our building. Old First is in a period of transition as they sell their education building. Though they are maintaining their sanctuary, they will need to explore the pathways forward since the sanctuary building does not currently have bathrooms. While exploring their possibilities, the Old First congregation will continue to worship at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday in the First UMC sanctuary. I hope you will join me in warmly welcoming our sister church family.



PLEASE ALSO NOTE SOME JANUARY HAPPENINGS:



A New Year invites new opportunities, right? This January I have decided to spend "21 days to a closer walk with Christ," as my first goal of this new year. Would you like to join me? I discovered this book and decided that beginning Jan. 5th, I would take time each day to strengthen my prayer life as I enter 2026. I will be out of the office for 2 weeks in January...one on vacation and one on a mission trip. But I invite anyone interested in this challenge to gather with me via Zoom to chat about our highs and lows in the challenge. January 20th AND February 3rd at 7:00 p.m. I will be on ZOOM for anyone interested in gathering to share our experience. Use this link to join me...

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84980973175?pwd=9CryKpc9EYKfH2afXGLC760egYsPWG.1>

Meeting ID: 849 8097 3175

Passcode: 618428

DATE CHANGE



mission ON THE MOVE

January 24th – 31st a dozen people from three churches will be traveling to West Virginia to work with a UM mission site helping neighbors in need. C.R.O.S.S is a ministry focused on serving lower economic communities with housing repairs. We will be traveling to WV in rental vans, living in a home designated to house volunteers, and cooking our meals together.

Supplies, housing, transportation, and food come with a cost. If you would like to participate in this meaningful and valuable ministry with our volunteers, your financial gifts may be mailed to the office or placed in the offering plates marked **Mission Trip**. We also welcome your prayers as we prepare for our trip and during the week we are gone. We will share our experience with the congregational family in Feb.

I want to express my deepest thanks to this beautiful church family for the generous Christmas gift. Your kindness at Christmas and throughout the year has been so appreciated. 2025 has most definitely been an interesting year for myself and our family as we grieved the loss of two family members, closed two homes, moved my mom, and expanded my pastoral role to include another church congregation. Through it all, you have walked alongside us and I cannot thank you enough. The cards, supportive words, and appreciative gifts have meant a great deal and kept me looking ahead.

Thank you again, for your kindness, compassion, and generosity. *Jill*





DIAPER DRIVE-The congregation is collecting diapers for Maker's Place, a GNJ mission site. This drive will

support low-income families in the Trenton area. Jill will match every diaper received by January 6th.

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)

2026

Jan. 17	5:00 p.m.	Chicken Dinner	Oceanport
Jan. 18	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO
Jan. 24-31		Mission Trip to WV	with Old First
Feb. 15	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO
Feb. 17	5:00 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	with Old First
			Oceanport
Aug. 19	5:00 p.m.	Peach Festival	Oceanport





Epiphany Sunday
January 4, 2026

Counters: Patty Aria, John Montgomery, Judy Gorra

Greeter: Randy Danielson

Usher: Greg Scott, Robert Scott

Acolyte: Faye Snorton

Lay Reader: Ron Puryear

Fellowship Hosts: Scott & Russel Danielson

Altar Flowers

Given in loving memory of Russell Danielson by Randy, Aldo, Ron, Jeff, Scott, & Russel

Given in loving memory of Scott Gill by his mother, Carol Whyte.



Thank you for your special Christmas gift. I so appreciate your love and support.

Joy



UWIF Spring Garage Sale-Save the Date

Saturday, April 25

Please keep our spring garage sale in mind as you make room for your new Christmas items. Mark your calendars! More info to follow.



Baptism of the Lord
January 11, 2026

Counters: Kitty Amato, Peg Kuchen, Chip Stoll

Greeter: Len Gruezke

Usher: Mike Sheckler

Acolyte: Sue McRae

Lay Reader: Pam Puryear

Fellowship Host: Bonnie McNamara

Altar Flowers

Given by Scott & Russel Danielson in living memory of Russel's father, Fulciendo Terrado.



Our deepest sympathies go out to Pastor Shawn Callender Hogan and family upon the death of Shawn's mother. Arrangements will be private. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family at 361 Gracetown Road, Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210.



We have an opening for one bouquet of altar flowers on Jan. 11. If you would like to donate a bouquet in honor or memory of someone, please call Diane Maher at 732-513-8413. Price:\$20



New Adult Study Begins Jan. 4

11:00 a.m. Wesley Hall (downstairs)

All are welcome to our Adult Sunday School class as we begin a rather in-depth exploration of Judaism. As part of the excellent "Great Courses" series, you will gain many insights into the Jewish faith and practices.

Please grab your coffee after church and come on down!



The church office will be closed January 1st and 2nd in observance of New Year's Day!



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. The next date for the dinner is January 18th.

Please be Praying for...

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

At home: Avery Fallon, Peg Kuchen

Jersey Shore Care Center: Dave Miller

Sunnyside Manor, Wall: Nancy Burtt

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



Something to think about:

We're not called to give thanks because everything in our lives is going wonderfully. We're called to give thanks because our life itself is a wonderful gift from God. -Adam Hamilton

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS

Jan 4-Jan. 10



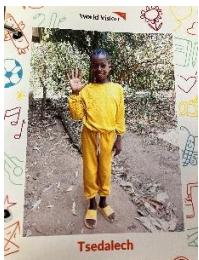
Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:1-9, 10-18

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.



We are looking for sponsors for our World Vision child, Tsedalech. All months are open except October, January, & February. Sponsorship donations are \$39. Please make checks out to the church. If you'd like a dedication, please let the office know.



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:

Ketchup



MERCY CENTER

The Outreach Commission thanks you for your continued support of the Mercy Center food bank. Here are the current needs: canned meats, canned fish, beans, lentils, rice, pasta, oats, whole-grain cereals, low-sodium soup, canned fruits, canned vegetables, peanut butter, powdered milk, & nonperishable oils.



Pledge Envelopes

Thanks to those of you who have already picked up your pledge envelopes. If you haven't done so, you may find them on the table in the foyer.

DATE CHANGE!



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 date is 1/20.**

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of January in memory of Martha Suarez, Aldo's mother by Aldo Suarez & Randy Danielson.

OUR JANUARY COMMUNION OFFERING BENEFITS THE PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND