

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.

Psalms 118:22-23

VOLUME LXIV NUMBER 5

January 29, 2026



February is a month of love viewed through our hearts. It's a month filled with messages of love; from candy to flowers, from loving expressions of gifts and attention to love letters. It is a month where we acknowledge our love for our pets and our partners, our favorite foods, our family, and our friends, our most binged TV shows, our favorite activities and hobbies AND our God. Or do we?

Between busy schedules, long days, and the stresses of daily life expressing love can get lost. February invites us into a season of examination where our love may have become complacent, and action is needed in our most intimate relationships and in our faith. Reflecting on love and understanding the love we have for family, neighbor, and God can reinvigorate our actions of love that have rippling effects in our world and create an attitude of change.

So, what would it look like to explore more deeply the meanings behind the word LOVE. What would it look like to study what the Bible says about LOVE. For the next three weeks, our worship series; *More Love* will examine the Greek words for love: *Eros* - romantic love for a partner (Feb. 1), *Phileo & Storge* – love for family & friends (Feb. 8), and *Agape* – self-less love as experienced in God's love for us (Feb. 15).

I invite you to join me in worship and listen to how scripture leads us in the complexity of love. Until Sunday, I leave you with this prayer...

Write Your Love

by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, March 14, 2018

*I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts* Jeremiah 31:33

Write your love on my heart,
God of love,
write it in your own hand.
Make your love my heartbeat,
my instinct, my brainwave, my breath.
Soften the stone of my heart;
and sculpt it with love.
Inscribe your ways
on my bones,
your love in my heart of hearts.
Write your love on my heart, Love,
and seal it with a kiss.

Amen!

May you be held in the warm love of Christ in these cold winter days and I look forward to worshipping with you on Sunday. Jill

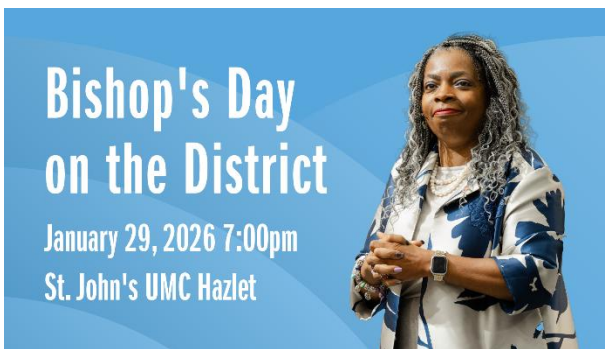




Rumors have been circulating that we can endure another snowstorm this Sunday. At this time, it is too early to call. BUT, if we do find ourselves in that situation again, please remember your safety is my utmost concern. So, if you wake up and find it snowing, please don't take the risk, stay in your warm home and cozy pjs, light a candle, and watch online.

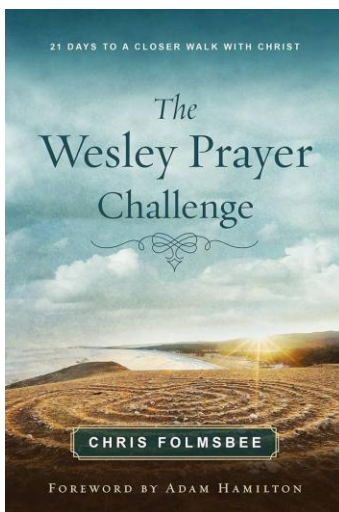
I will always try to have worship. BUT, on those occasions when the weather is not in our favor and we need to close the building; we will post our decision by 6 a.m. on our website and Facebook.

Peace and prayer as we all stay safe and warm in the days ahead, **Jill**



YOU are invited to come tonight and meet our Bishop who will speak first and then offer an opportunity to ask her questions.

Wesley Prayer Challenge Group Zoom



Jill kicked off her 2026 year with a daily reading from the *Wesley Prayer Challenge* and has invited you to do the same. Regardless if you read and followed the book, you are invited to meet with Jill and others via ZOOM in this three week study that will help us understand the meaning behind Wesley's Covenant Prayer and how we might live it out in our daily lives.

Feb 3 at 7:00 via Zoom

Honor and Humility: *Let me be employed by thee... to thy pleasure and disposal.*
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88469103303?pwd=J4jsS5dbxWLLqsO7txFHpBcWNClAet.1>
 Meeting ID: 884 6910 3303 Passcode: 605673

Feb 10 at 7:00 via Zoom

Community and Commitment: *And now... Let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.*
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85730555419?pwd=xfXFu5HJRqJiLdVMLfEBVoaUbQ4huG.1>
 Meeting ID: 857 3055 5419 Passcode: 713435



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 February 24th.**



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 February 15th.



847 diapers have been collected by our Wesley Nursery School

1576 diapers have been donated by the FUMCO and Old First congregations.

2427 diapers have been matched by Jill.

4850 diapers will be delivered to Maker's Place on Feb. 10, 2026. Love in Action to many families struggling with diaper insecurity which creates health challenges for these precious and beloved children. Thank you for changing lives! Thank you for being in ministry.

Peace and prayers of love, Jill



I would like to express my sincere gratitude to United Church Oakhurst for their generous financial support, which helped me complete my degree. This assistance played an important role in my educational journey and allowed me to continue my studies despite financial challenges.

The support provided by United Church Oakhurst not only helped me financially but also gave me encouragement and hope to work hard and achieve my academic goals. Because of this kindness, I was able to focus on my education and successfully complete my degree.

I am truly thankful to United Church Oakhurst for believing in me and supporting my education. Their generosity has made a lasting difference in my life, and I will always remain grateful for their help and encouragement.

Kind regards,
Kashif Nadeem

CLUSTER UM CHURCH CALENDAR

Old First (Jill Hubbard-Smith) 197 Locust Ave., West Long Branch
Wayside (David Geller) 1229 West Park Ave, Ocean
Oceanport (Donna Nilson) 50 Main St., Oceanport
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

2026

February 15	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
February 17	5:00 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	Oceanport
February 18	7:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Worship Service	FUMCO
March 15	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
April 2	7:00 p.m.	Holy Thursday Worship Service	FUMCO
April 3	7:00 p.m.	Good Friday Worship Service	FUMCO
April 5	TBD	Easter Prayer Garden Communion	FUMCO
April 5	9:30 a.m.	Easter Worship Service	FUMCO
April 16	10:00 a.m.	ARMS Annual Meeting	FUMCO
April 19	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
April 25	8:30 a.m.	UWIF Garage Sale	FUMCO
May 17	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
June 21	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
July 19	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
August 16	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
August 19	5:00 p.m.	Peach Festival	Oceanport
September 20	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First
October 18	5:00 p.m.	Free Community Spaghetti Dinner	FUMCO w/Old First





February's Communion Offering Benefits Church World Service's Blankets Ministry.

"I was in need and you cared for me." Matthew 25:40

Blanketing the world in love is easy when people of faith unite through this ministry. Together, we can offer comfort, hope, and warmth to our neighbors during their most challenging times. Imagine the impact of your compassion. Each blanket serves as a tangible expression of God's love—sharing warmth on a chilly night, relief in a crisis, or a reminder that someone truly cares.

17,317 blankets were shared with people in need in 2025, thanks to generous donors like you.

A blanket recipient at The Nehemiah Mission, in Cleveland, Ohio writes, "These blankets will help keep my children warm through these coldest nights. I see God's love in the kindness of those who gave." Belinda, a representative of Church World Service speaking on the organization's behalf, writes, "Your support makes moments of care possible every winter. When families receive CWS blankets, they feel God's love and know they're not forgotten."

Together, we can continue to make a difference. Our church is joining CWS in sharing compassion and blankets today! The Outreach Commission thanks you in advance for your generosity. Please use the LOVE envelopes for your donations



UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



February 2026 Zoom Prayer Meeting for Laity and Clergy

So much is happening in our world, and many days I am lost as to what God wishes me to do. One day, things seemed so overwhelming I found myself crying. As the tears began to fall, I was reminded that while I am a person of hope, I am only human. I surrendered to my own expectations and allowed myself to give in to my sadness.

In the shortest verse of Scripture we are given a powerful truth:

“Jesus wept.”

Jesus did not rush past sorrow or pretend it was not there. He stood in the midst of loss and let love be seen in his tears.

Jesus came as one of us to show us how to live in times and places when things are not as we might hope. Jesus suffered and yet still chose love. Love is both beautiful and sometimes tattered. Love can be seen in the messiness of birth and the brokenness of death. It was found in Jesus’ healing and performing miracles, as well as the agony of the cross.

The sharing of our wounds enables us to heal; it also helps others to heal when they know we have also suffered. It can be the way that we bear one another’s burdens and facilitate healing; this is love at work among us.

As Christians, we are not called to unrealistic expectations; we need space to be human, to slow down, to listen, and to allow the love of God to shape how we live and serve. It is our hope that these prayer sessions will offer us just that opportunity.

When we gather to pray, we come not as people who have it all together, but as people who trust that God meets us even in our tears and carries us into love for the world.

Join Us in Prayer

You are invited to gather with pastors and laity from across GNJ for shared prayer on Zoom. All are welcome.

First Monday of the Month

Monday, February 2 | 12:00 PM

This half-hour prayer gathering is held on the first Monday of each month.

Zoom Meeting

<https://epagnj.zoom.us/j/89107773540?pwd=Yibz0kYTKubuqUbbI0QeYbrnXx5p4F.1>

Meeting ID: 891 0777 3540

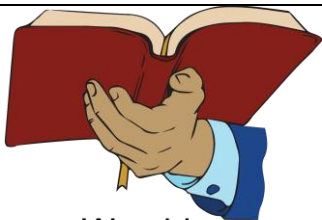
Password: 375980

Next Meeting: Monday, March 2

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Gina Yeske

Associate Superintendent



Worship

**4th Sunday after the Epiphany
February 1, 2026**

Counters: Patty Aria, John Montgomery, Judy Gorra

Greeter: Jeff Ragle

Usher: Gerry Busfield

Acolyte: Robert Scott

Lay Reader: John Montgomery

Fellowship Host: Kitty Amato

Altar Flowers

Given in loving memory of Betty Beckmann by Peggy Ann, Kenneth, & Kimberly.
Given by Maha Boutros in honor of grandson, David's birthday February 1st and husband, Awni's birthday February 3rd.



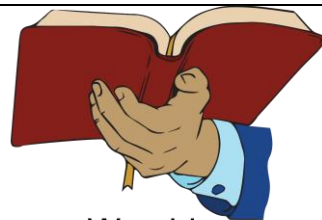
All UWIF members are invited to a fantastic potluck dinner that we'll enjoy before our installation of officers. Please bring your favorite dish-savory or sweet-anything at all will be a wonderful addition!

Please come out to support our officers as they begin the new year!

We're really hoping you can make it for an evening of good company, great food, and shared spirit!

Date: February 3rd/Time: 6 p.m.

Diane Serine Maher



Worship

**5th Sunday after the Epiphany
February 8, 2026**

Counters: Kitty Amato, Peg Kuchen, Chip Stoll

Greeter: Melody Ragle

Usher: Ron Danielson

Acolyte: Kitty Amato

Lay Reader: Ruth Sheckler

Fellowship Host: Meg Macan

Altar Flowers

Given in loving memory of Tom Maher by Diane.
Given by Susan McRae in honor of Samantha & Sean McRae's February birthdays.

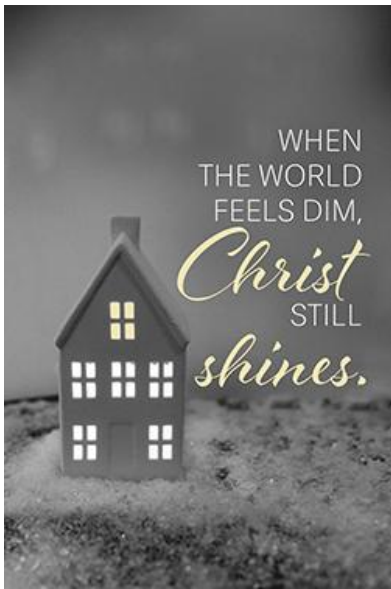


Would you like to be an acolyte? Joy More will have a short training session on Sunday, February 1st after the worship service. If you can't make it that day, then contact Joy 609-686-9140 and arrange a time.

Acolytes can be 10 years old and above-even adults!

**OUR JANUARY COMMUNION OFFERING
BENEFITS THE PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY
FUND**

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.



WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS

Feb. 1-Feb. 7

Micah 6:1-8
 Psalm 15
 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
 Matthew 5:1-12



FELLOWSHIP HOSTS NEEDED



Coffee Fellowship

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.

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 Burt

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



We are looking for sponsors for our World Vision child, Tsedalech.

Open months are June & August.

Sponsorship donations are \$39. Please make checks out to the church. If you'd like a dedication, please let the office know.



Something to think about:

Life isn't about being right. It's about being understanding, compassionate, and kind towards one another, regardless of our differences.



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:

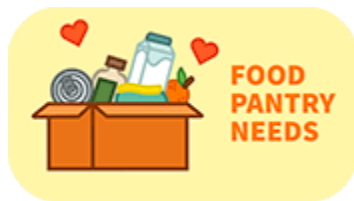
Olive oil



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.



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.

Lost



There is a silver-toned chargeable candlelighter missing from the shelf in the back of the sanctuary. It is the personal

property of one of our acolytes. If you know where it is, please let the office know.



Tis winter now; the fallen snow
Has left the heav'ns all coldly clear;
Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,
And all the earth lies dead and drear. And yet
God's love is not withdrawn;
His life within the keen air breathes;
His beauty paints the crimson dawn,
And clothes the boughs with glittering wreaths.
And though abroad the sharp winds blow,
And skies are chill, and frosts are keen,
Home closer draws her circle now,
And warmer glows her light within. O God!
Who giv'st the winter's cold
As well as summer's joyous rays,
Us warmly in Thy love enfold,
And keep us through life's wintry days.