
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 6

February 5, 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 our expressions of love can get lost. February invites us into a season of examination where our love that may have become complacent, and a time of action that may be needed in our 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 these first three weeks of Feb., 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). Our first worship service on *Eros Love* may be viewed on FUMCO's Facebook page or YouTube.

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

Vessel of Your Love

by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, Aug. 31, 2018

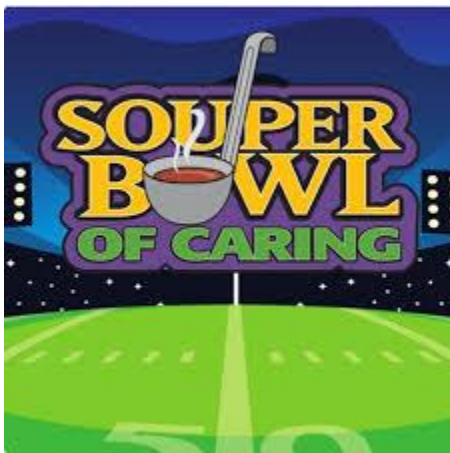
*Beloved, Beloving,
may I be a vessel of your love today.
I am flawed and inadequate,
but you have chosen to bear your love into the world through me.
No matter my shame or fear,
no matter the resistance of others,
let your love shine in me.
To all, the intimate and the stranger,
ally and enemy, welcoming and bristly,
let me convey your love,
for their sake (which is your sake), not my own.
Not my own skinny passion,
but your deep, life-giving love
flows through me each moment.
May I fill to overflowing with you for the sake of the world. Amen*



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.



Seattle Seahawks OR New England Patriots
... who are you routing for?

This Sunday you have the opportunity to share who you are routing for on this Superbowl Sunday by bringing in a can of soup for neighbors in need. Warm love expressed through a warm bowl of soup.

There will be a space available in the sanctuary to drop off your soup and show team support while expressing *More Love...Phileo Love*.
See you in church - Jill

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**



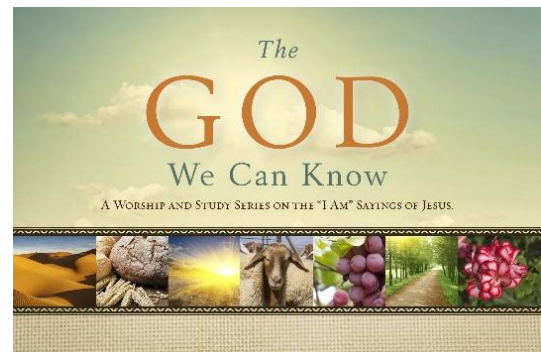
Looking to Lent...

Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Supper



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

Tuesday, February 17th at 5:00 p.m.
Oceanport United Methodist Church



Lent begins on February 18th with our **Ash Wednesday** service in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. A service of ashes, reconciliation, and communion will begin our Lenten Worship series entitled, *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I Am" Sayings of Jesus* by Rob Fuquay. I pray you will mark your calendars for the lent journey ahead here in these beloved communities of faith

Sunday Worship

Feb. 22 through Easter Sunday, April 5

Study and Sharing (Wesley Hall)

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. & Wednesdays at Noon

Conference opportunities

Join in Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigration Justice

Join us in **Washington, DC**, on **February 25th** for a **meaningful ecumenical and interfaith gathering** to stand in solidarity with our neighbors and advocate for immigrant justice. The day will begin with worship, followed by a prayerful march to the U.S. Capitol. This is an opportunity to show solidarity for immigrants and call upon Christians everywhere to live out Christ's call to "welcome the stranger."

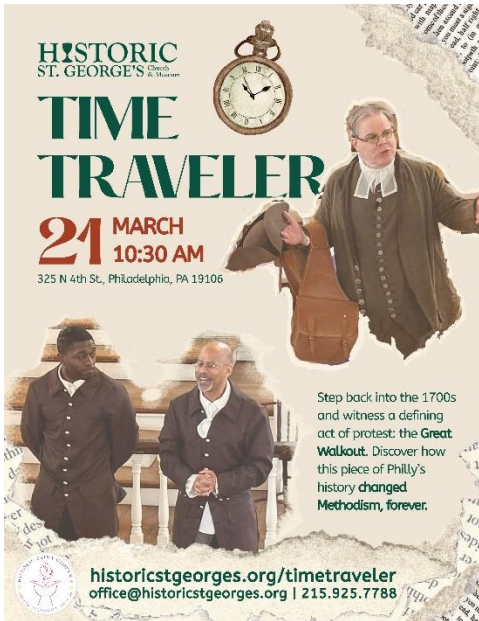


Faith leaders and congregants across EPA and GNJ are invited to participate and support this important event. We will have two chartered buses departing from the EPA conference office and Haddonfield UMC in Haddonfield, NJ. If you're interested in joining us, please complete a brief survey available by calling FUMCO's church office 732-531-1150.



Join the 2026-7 Financial Leadership Academy Cohort

Are you ready to be bold and creative about funding your ministry? The Mid-Atlantic Faith Foundation, with endorsement from the GNJ Stewardship Foundation, offers the Financial Leadership Academy—an extraordinary opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of what is needed in the church to fund ministry. This is not taught in seminary and yet it is a crucial part of your job as a leader. Graduates tell us how much this program has transformed their ministry. For more information, please contact FUMCO's church office, 732-531-1150. MAFF will be hosting an **information session** for anyone (laity or clergy) interested in learning more on **Feb. 17 at 2p.m.** To register, contact **FUMCO's church office 732-531-1150.**



Historic Walk-Out Re-enactment

On Mar 21, Historic St. George's will host their annual Time Traveler event, re-enacting the Great Walk-Out of the late 1700s—one of the earliest civil rights protests in America—which led to the creation of Mother Bethel AME and St. Thomas African Episcopal Church. Doors open at 10 a.m. The event starts at 10:30 a.m.

This event is recommended for all Methodists. It is an essential and illuminating history lesson, which sparks discussion about how Methodist history can help us be better in the future. For more info email office@historicstgeorge.org.

Saving the Soul of Our Nation, State, and Church-Faith Forum & Historical Tour

Mark your calendars! On **May 12** from **1-6:30 p.m.**, attend a faith forum, **“Striving to End the Sin of Racism in Church & State: Contemporary and Historical Methodist Perspectives”** featuring keynote speakers Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, Bishop Ernest S. Lyght, Rupert Hall, Jr., and Kevin Dusenberry. The forum will be held at Pennington UMC (60 South Main Street, Pennington). Then on **May 13**, plan to attend the “Historical Tour: Saving the Soul of Our Nation and State” featuring keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Kevin Newburg and visiting such sights as Washinton's Crossing State Park, Princeton Battlefield, Historic Tenant Church and more. Buses leave from the Courtyard by Marriot Ewing Princeton at 8:30 a.m. These events are open to all and form part of the **Northeastern Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History (NEJCAH) Annual Meeting and Program**. For details, registration link or paper registration form contact FUMCO's church office 732-531-1150. Need accommodation? Register for the conference hotel, Courtyard Marriott Ewing Princeton.

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





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.

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

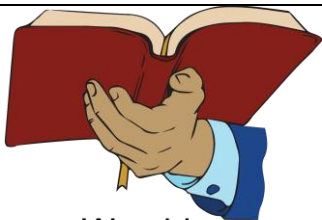
Password: 375980

Next Meeting: Monday, March 2, at noon

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Gina Yeske

Associate Superintendent



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.



Transfiguration Sunday
February 15, 2026

Counters: Randy Danielson, Jane Gittines

Greeter: Ruth Sheckler

Usher: Jay Aretino

Acolyte: Kayleigh Becker

Lay Reader: Ron Danielson

Fellowship Host: Pam Lynch & Jeff Danielson

Altar Flowers

Given in loving memory of Linda Dietz by Walt.
Given in loving memory of grandson, AJ Robson
by Buster & Arlene Stoll.



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.



OUR FEBRUARY COMMUNION OFFERING

BENEFITS CHURCH WORLD SERVICE'S BLANKET PROGRAM

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of February in loving memory of brother-in-law, Tom Maher by Joy More.



UWIF Spring Garage Sale-Save the Date

Saturday, April 25

Please keep our spring garage sale in mind. Mark your calendars! More info to follow.

*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



Something to think about:

Dear God, sometimes I do not have the words,
but I hope you can hear my heart.

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS

Feb. 8-Feb. 14



Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 112:1-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-16
Matthew 5:13-20



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.



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:
Popcorn

