

Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2026 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

*Congregation is invited to rise if able and comfortable.

Readings in **BOLD** are to be read in unison.

Hymnals: **UMH is Red or Purple-TFWS is Black-W&S is Green**

Please note that this service is being recorded and viewed on social media.

WE GATHER

PRELUDE (9:30 a.m.) *I Am Not Alone* arr. Tornquist
As you settle into the sanctuary, please open your phone and share the live service from your Facebook page as a way of inviting the larger community to worship.

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOMING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST (9:30 a.m.)
A Wilderness Wandering People W&S 3113, v.1

**We are a wilderness wandering people on a journey of the soul.
May we find our destination in our longing to be whole.
Our Holy God is calling to us.
With Jesus by our side may compassion be our compass;
may the Spirit be our guide.**

*INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Come and worship God whose love is revealed in Jesus,
The True Vine.
We come to be nourished, that we may produce the fruits of discipline.
Christ is the vine; we are the branches,
we will bear fruit when we abide in the vine.

*SHARING THE LOVE OF THE CHRIST

We invite you to turn to the person next to you and greet them saying,
“May the great I AM be with you”
You are invited to respond by saying,
“And also, with you”

*HYMN OF PRAISE *Breathe* W&S 3112

CENTERING PRAYER

Loving God, help us understand that you are the vine and we are your branches. You know that sometimes we feel disconnected from you. We want to cling to you and your power but often find it hard to draw on it when life is tough. We ask you to teach us what it means to abide in Christ and to help us learn how to do so. Free us from trying to produce our own fruit and help us trust that you are at work and will work through us and in us. Prune from our lives the tasks and activities that steal our time and keep us from growing as you want us to grow. Cut away the dead debris of fears and failures so we may become productive branches in the church, reaching out to feed a world starving for genuine love and yearning for community. We ask all this in the name of Jesus, The True Vine. Amen.

FASCINATION AND FAITH

Our youngest disciples are invited to come forward for a special message before heading to Sunday School.

SPECIAL MUSIC (9:30 a.m.) *Vine and Branches* Thomson
Praise Team

WE LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY Vineyards of the Holy Land
“I Am the True Vine”

GOSPEL LESSON *John 15:1-8* Pew Bible, NT 109
May God Bless Our Reading, Hearing, and Understanding.
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

HYMN OF RESPONSE *O Blessed Spring* TFWS 2076, vs. 1,4,5

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

When we feel isolated, we can remember that Jesus said,
“I am the True Vine; abide in me.”
When we feel powerless, we can find strength in remembering that Jesus said,
“I am the True Vine; abide in me.”
When we are tempted to try to go it alone, we can reach out to other believers, remembering that Jesus said,
“I am the True Vine; abide in me.”
When life becomes so busy that time with God seems impossible to find, we can regain our focus by remembering that Jesus said,
“I am the True Vine; abide in me.”
When we stress about the quality of the fruit we are or are not producing, we can relax and trust the source of our life and growth, the One who said,
“I am the True Vine; abide in me.” Amen.

CHORAL PRAYER Music In Pews, v. 2

Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud

**Word and Wisdom, Root and Vine, Shepherd, Savior,
Servant, Lamb, Well and Water, Bread and Wine,
Way who leads us to I AM:**

**May the church at prayer recall that no single holy name
but the truth behind them all is the God whom we proclaim.**

SERMON *Vineyard Steward:* Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith
Knowing God’s Power

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

SHARING OUR PRAYERS

At the 9:30 service, you are invited to name your prayers for the congregation. After each prayer request, the congregation will respond...
Lord, Hear Our Prayer

PRAYERS FOR ALL GOD’S BELOVED PEOPLE LORD’S PRAYER

OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS TO THE MINISTRY OF GOD
*PRESENTATION *My Tribute* UMH 99

**To God be the glory, to God be the glory,
to God be the glory for the things he has done.**

**With his blood he has saved me; with his power he has raised me;
to God be the glory for the things he has done.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We give, gracious God, because we are grateful. Your love has sustained us through many trials and temptations. Your loving judgment has provided the pruning our lives require to bear fruit. We give in order to extend to others the blessings we have received so we might continue the ministry as we seek to abide together in your love. Amen.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION *My Life Is in You, Lord* TFWS 2032

*SENDING FORTH

*LIGHT OF CHRIST LEADS US INTO THE WORLD (9:30 a.m.)
As We Go W&S 3183

**As we go, may your Spirit go before us.
As we go, may we follow where you lead.**

**May we live what we have learned, share the message we have heard,
and be a light unto the world as we go.**

*POSTLUDE

*Please join us at 10:30 in Fellowship Hall for refreshments and fellowship.
Adult Study is offered in FUMCO’s Wesley Hall at 11:00 a.m.,
located on the lower level of the building. All are welcome.*

**Our Service Of Worship Has Ended.
Our Worship Through Service Begins.**

ALTAR FLOWERS

Given in honor of Elaine Gould’s 98th birthday by Wendy, Bobby, Michael, & family.

Lenten Devotionals

Weekly Lenten devotionals are available on the sanctuary entrance tables. The devotionals run Sunday to Sunday. Each Sunday you will find a new devotional for that week.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Welcome to this service of worship. We pray this service offered an opportunity to engage with the Divine. If we can be of service to you in any way, please let us know. If you are looking for a church to call home, please consider joining us, where we help one another grow in faith, love, and service.

For Your Information

- There are **hearing devices** to assist you to experience the service more clearly with our streaming team, at the rear of the sanctuary. Feel free to pick one up.
- A **rocking chair** is available for the comfort of parent and baby, in Blair Chapel, behind the pews.
- To access the **restrooms**, please exit the side door to the right of the lectern/chancel area. In the hall, make a left into Fellowship Hall and follow the signs.
- There are **infant changing tables** available in the restrooms.
- There are **large print hymnals** available. Please ask the usher.

Our Leadership Team This Morning (9:30)

Acolyte: Faye Snorton
 Counters: Mary Bailey, Cheryl McLoughlin, John Montgomery
 Fellowship Hosts: Ron Danileson, Randy Danielson
 Greeter: Kitty Amato
 Lay Reader: Ron Puryear
 Usher: Mike Sheckler



This Week We Hold in Prayer...

Marley, Jagger, Alex & Debbie Eckert, Louise Kinsey, Naomi, Don Whittaker, Ed Ahrens, Terry Frazier, June Holder, Arlene Shaw, Rose Byrne,

Jackie Gilman, Ed Foran, Charles Murphy, Ginny, Vicky

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

Jersey Shore Care Center: Dave Miller

Sunnyside Manor: Nancy Burt

**The church has a team of prayers, known as the Prayer Chain. If you have a prayer need, please contact the office.

**If you know someone who is in need of pastoral care, please contact Jill Hubbard-Smith 732-209-4563 or revjmhs@gmail.com.

Please Join Us in Mission and Ministry

...where together we help each other grow in faith, love, and service.

TODAY:

Children’s Sunday School – Downstairs 9:30 a.m.
 Fellowship Time – Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m.
 Adult Sunday School – Wesley Hall 11 a.m.
 Worship In Person 11 a.m. (Old First)

Monday, March 23

AA – Wesley Hall 7:30 a.m.
 Alanon – Wesley Hall 10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 24

Women’s Covenant Group – Library 8:30 a.m.
 Java With Jill – Blue Swan Diner 10 a.m.
 Lenten Study – Wesley Hall 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 25

AA – Wesley Hall 7:30 a.m.
 Miriam Circle Meeting – Wesley Hall 10 a.m.
 Lenten Study – Wesley Hall 12 p.m.

Thursday, March 26

Alanon – Wesley Hall 10 a.m.
 Chancel Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary 6:30 p.m.
 OA – Wesley Hall 6:30 p.m.

Friday, February 27

AA – Wesley Hall 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 29

Worship in Person & Online 9:30 a.m.
 Children’s Sunday School – Downstairs 9:30 a.m.
 Fellowship Time – Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m.
 Worship In Person 11 a.m. (Old First)
 Adult Sunday School – Wesley Hall 11 a.m.

Announcements

CALL TO PRAYER & SELF DENIAL-If you have been prayerfully and sacrificially putting aside money for the UWIF’s mission work, please have your contribution in by March 31st.

JOSHUA-St. Paul’s UMC is running a bus trip to Sight & Sound Theater on May 19th. Cost is \$189 pp and includes lunch at Shady Maple Smorgasbord, the bus, & tickets to the play. RSVP by 3/28. Call 646-763-0752 to reserve.

UWIF GARAGE SALE-April 25th from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Item donation drop off is April 24th 9 a.m.-8 p.m.



“I AM the True Vine”

No one has ever seen God, except God’s only Son, who has come to make God known.

Paraphrased from John 1:18

First UMC of Oakhurst

...is a community of faith committed to Christ, seeking to learn the needs of others and responding with Christian love.

9:30 a.m. Worship Every Sunday Morning In Person & Streaming

103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755

732-531-1150

FUMCOakhurst@outlook.com

Oakhurst.umcchurches.org

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FUMCOakhurst>

Follow us on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/FirstUnitedMethodistChurchofOakhurst>

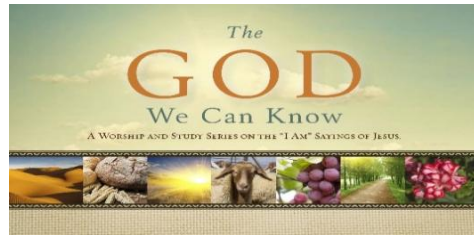
CCLI #1588788

+++++



11:00 a.m. Worship Every Sunday Morning In Person at First UMC located at 103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst

Mailing Address: PO Box 214, West Long Branch, NJ 07764
office@oldfirstumchurch.org



Our Lenten Worship and Study Series is based on *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I Am" Sayings of Jesus.* by Rob Fuquay

Sunday Worship: Feb. 22 through Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday (Lent 6) March 29: "I Am" the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Knowing God's Way. John 14:1-7

Easter Sunday April 5: "I Am" the Resurrection and the Life: Knowing God's Possibilities. John 11:17-26

Study and Small Group Sharing:

Tuesdays at 7 pm.: March 24, March 31

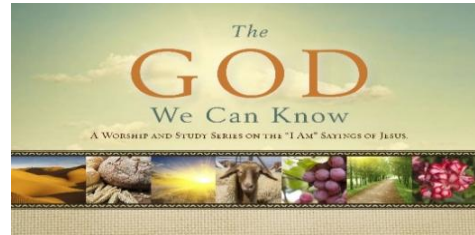
Wednesday at Noon: March 25

In Wesley Hall, downstairs and to the left from our parking lot entrance.

Daily Devotional: Available each Sunday for the coming week.

If you would like them mailed or emailed to you, please contact Joy in the First UMC Office at 732-531-1150.

Holy Week Services
Palm Sunday
 March 29th 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Maundy Thursday
 April 2nd 7:00 p.m.
Good Friday
 April 3rd 7:00 p.m.
Easter Service
 April 5th
 6:30 a.m. **Prayer Garden**
 9:30 a.m. **Sanctuary**
 with a Children's Message & Special Music
 11:00 a.m. **Sanctuary**



Our Lenten Worship and Study Series is based on *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I Am" Sayings of Jesus.* by Rob Fuquay

Sunday Worship: Feb. 22 through Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday (Lent 6) March 29: "I Am" the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Knowing God's Way. John 14:1-7

Easter Sunday April 5: "I Am" the Resurrection and the Life: Knowing God's Possibilities. John 11:17-26

Study and Small Group Sharing:

Tuesdays at 7 pm.: March 24, March 31

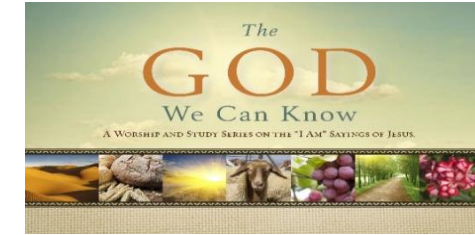
Wednesday at Noon: March 25

In Wesley Hall, downstairs and to the left from our parking lot entrance.

Daily Devotional: Available each Sunday for the coming week.

If you would like them mailed or emailed to you, please contact Joy in the First UMC Office at 732-531-1150.

Holy Week Services
Palm Sunday
 March 29th 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Maundy Thursday
 April 2nd 7:00 p.m.
Good Friday
 April 3rd 7:00 p.m.
Easter Service
 April 5th
 6:30 a.m. **Prayer Garden**
 9:30 a.m. **Sanctuary**
 with a Children's Message & Special Music
 11:00 a.m. **Sanctuary**



Our Lenten Worship and Study Series is based on *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I Am" Sayings of Jesus.* by Rob Fuquay

Sunday Worship: Feb. 22 through Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday (Lent 6) March 29: "I Am" the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Knowing God's Way. John 14:1-7

Easter Sunday April 5: "I Am" the Resurrection and the Life: Knowing God's Possibilities. John 11:17-26

Study and Small Group Sharing:

Tuesdays at 7 pm.: March 24, March 31

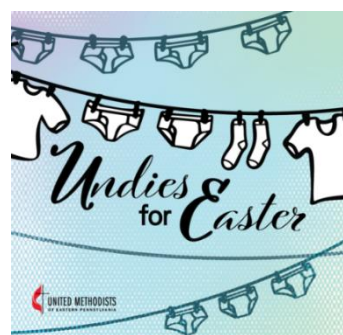
Wednesday at Noon – March 25

In Wesley Hall, downstairs and to the left from our parking lot entrance.

Daily Devotional: Available each Sunday for the coming week.

If you would like them mailed or emailed to you, please contact Joy in the First UMC Office at 732-531-1150.

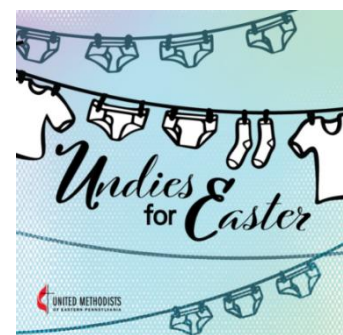
Holy Week Services
Palm Sunday
 March 29th 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Maundy Thursday
 April 2nd 7:00 p.m.
Good Friday
 April 3rd 7:00 p.m.
Easter Service
 April 5th
 6:30 a.m. **Prayer Garden**
 9:30 a.m. **Sanctuary**
 with a Children's Message & Special Music
 11:00 a.m. **Sanctuary**



OUR LENTEN MISSION 2026...

Our Greater NJ Annual Conference is inviting all of us into a ministry to support prison inmates' wellbeing and remind them they are beloved children of God by sending underwear, undershirts, and socks.

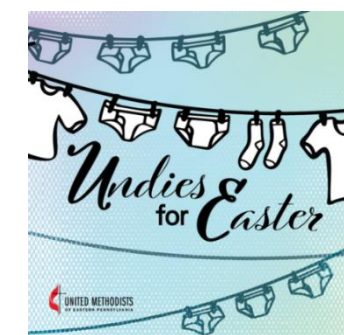
On Amazon, find the EPAUMC Prison Ministry's gift list to make your purchase and have it delivered to the EPAUMC Prison Ministry P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820.



OUR LENTEN MISSION 2026...

Our Greater NJ Annual Conference is inviting all of us into a ministry to support prison inmates' wellbeing and remind them they are beloved children of God by sending underwear, undershirts, and socks.

On Amazon, find the EPAUMC Prison Ministry's gift list to make your purchase and have it delivered to the EPAUMC Prison Ministry P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820.



OUR LENTEN MISSION 2026...

Our Greater NJ Annual Conference is inviting all of us into a ministry to support prison inmates' wellbeing and remind them they are beloved children of God by sending underwear, undershirts, and socks.

On Amazon, find the EPAUMC Prison Ministry's gift list to make your purchase and have it delivered to the EPAUMC Prison Ministry P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820.

Reflective Questions

*When was a time you felt near to God but far away from God's presence?
(Perhaps you were going to church regularly or carrying out lots of
religious functions, but you didn't feel the power in your faith.)*

*What do you think is the meaning of a grapevine as a symbol for the
nation of Israel?*

What did Jesus mean by saying, "I am the True Vine."

*If pruning helps a branch stay healthy, what does it mean for us to be
pruned? When was a time you felt pruned?*

*Are less important things robbing you of productive energy? If so, what
are they?*

*Can you relate to holding on to dead things that don't have the chance to
produce? Such as resentment, disappointment, shame?*

*What does it mean to "cling to the vine?" Have you ever placed more
focus on being fruitful than being faithful?*

Challenges to Grow in Discipleship

*Jill has given a challenge at the close of each sermon during Lent.
Below are the challenges...*

Week One: Complete this phrase: "I Am _____."

List the attributes you give to God and remember, they are also your
attributes as you are not created by God but of God.

Week Two: Try a spiritual discipline during these weeks of Lent such as
fasting from judgment, specific foods, technology, unnecessary spending,
or harsh words and use the time or resources to focus on Christ as a
source of satisfaction. Make room for disciplines such as prayer, serving
others, spending more time with family.

Week Three: Find a quiet place & light a candle.

Thank God for God's presence. Thank God for blessings in your life.
Make your request known, state your challenge, share what you need.
Wait and Be Still.

Write down what comes and don't process the thoughts.

Do this for several days. Sense the direction.

Ask God to show you the next step – not the end of the path.

Week Four: Do the meditation of Week 3 and as you wait, focus on
Christ's care for the lost sheep. End your time with the Shepherd closing
the gate of what was and allow yourself the freedom of a new field.

Week Five (Today): Spiritual energy audit: Pruning & Clinging to the Vine.

Write down the areas in your life that deserve the greatest energy.

Estimate the hours or % of your week you give them.

List the tasks that rob you of your best energy...can you redirect?

Is your time and energy apportioned appropriately?

Reflective Questions

*When was a time you felt near to God but far away from God's presence?
(Perhaps you were going to church regularly or carrying out lots of
religious functions, but you didn't feel the power in your faith.)*

*What do you think is the meaning of a grapevine as a symbol for the
nation of Israel?*

What did Jesus mean by saying, "I am the True Vine."

*If pruning helps a branch stay healthy, what does it mean for us to be
pruned? When was a time you felt pruned?*

*Are less important things robbing you of productive energy? If so, what
are they?*

*Can you relate to holding on to dead things that don't have the chance to
produce? Such as resentment, disappointment, shame?*

*What does it mean to "cling to the vine?" Have you ever placed more
focus on being fruitful than being faithful?*

Challenges to Grow in Discipleship

*Jill has given a challenge at the close of each sermon during Lent.
Below are the challenges...*

Week One: Complete this phrase: "I Am _____."

List the attributes you give to God and remember, they are also your
attributes as you are not created by God but of God.

Week Two: Try a spiritual discipline during these weeks of Lent such as
fasting from judgment, specific foods, technology, unnecessary spending,
or harsh words and use the time or resources to focus on Christ as a
source of satisfaction. Make room for disciplines such as prayer, serving
others, spending more time with family.

Week Three: Find a quiet place & light a candle.

Thank God for God's presence. Thank God for blessings in your life.
Make your request known, state your challenge, share what you need.
Wait and Be Still.

Write down what comes and don't process the thoughts.

Do this for several days. Sense the direction.

Ask God to show you the next step – not the end of the path.

Week Four: Do the meditation of Week 3 and as you wait, focus on
Christ's care for the lost sheep. End your time with the Shepherd closing
the gate of what was and allow yourself the freedom of a new field.

Week Five (Today): Spiritual energy audit: Pruning & Clinging to the Vine.

Write down the areas in your life that deserve the greatest energy.

Estimate the hours or % of your week you give them.

List the tasks that rob you of your best energy...can you redirect?

Is your time and energy apportioned appropriately?

Reflective Questions

*When was a time you felt near to God but far away from God's presence?
(Perhaps you were going to church regularly or carrying out lots of
religious functions, but you didn't feel the power in your faith.)*

*What do you think is the meaning of a grapevine as a symbol for the
nation of Israel?*

What did Jesus mean by saying, "I am the True Vine."

*If pruning helps a branch stay healthy, what does it mean for us to be
pruned? When was a time you felt pruned?*

*Are less important things robbing you of productive energy? If so, what
are they?*

*Can you relate to holding on to dead things that don't have the chance to
produce? Such as resentment, disappointment, shame?*

*What does it mean to "cling to the vine?" Have you ever placed more
focus on being fruitful than being faithful?*

Challenges to Grow in Discipleship

*Jill has given a challenge at the close of each sermon during Lent.
Below are the challenges...*

Week One: Complete this phrase: "I Am _____."

List the attributes you give to God and remember, they are also your
attributes as you are not created by God but of God.

Week Two: Try a spiritual discipline during these weeks of Lent such as
fasting from judgment, specific foods, technology, unnecessary spending,
or harsh words and use the time or resources to focus on Christ as a
source of satisfaction. Make room for disciplines such as prayer, serving
others, spending more time with family.

Week Three: Find a quiet place & light a candle.

Thank God for God's presence. Thank God for blessings in your life.
Make your request known, state your challenge, share what you need.
Wait and Be Still.

Write down what comes and don't process the thoughts.

Do this for several days. Sense the direction.

Ask God to show you the next step – not the end of the path.

Week Four: Do the meditation of Week 3 and as you wait, focus on
Christ's care for the lost sheep. End your time with the Shepherd closing
the gate of what was and allow yourself the freedom of a new field.

Week Five (Today): Spiritual energy audit: Pruning & Clinging to the Vine.

Write down the areas in your life that deserve the greatest energy.

Estimate the hours or % of your week you give them.

List the tasks that rob you of your best energy...can you redirect?

Is your time and energy apportioned appropriately?