
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 14

April 2, 2026



“Let us occupy ourselves entirely knowing God.

The more we know God, the more we will desire to know God.”

- Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*

In many ways the Bible is a story of humanity's attempt to know God. Sometimes this effort is as obvious as the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Other times the story describes people working hard to avoid God. Many passages in the Old Testament describe people's fear of what would happen if they saw God's face. It's as if we want to know God, but then we're not so sure.

The Bible also tells a story of God's desire to be known. The scriptures relate an unfolding drama of God's never-ending desire to come to us – of God's revealing. The highest expression of that desire is the gift of God's self in the person of Jesus.

John's Gospel records a collection of self-revealing statements by Jesus known as the “I Am” sayings. These statements, rich in imagery and steeped in historical meaning, provide powerful insights into the heart of God and God's desire to know and be known.”

These past five weeks of Lent, we have explored these sayings, deepening our understanding of the images Jesus uses to identify himself: bread, light, shepherd, gate of the sheep, true vine, way of life, and resurrection. Appreciating the historical Jewish roots behind these images opens up a myriad of meanings.

- What does it mean to experience hunger, the need of guidance, desired security, or to want a greater power for living?
- How does a relationship with Jesus fulfill these needs?

Examining these saying brings us into a closer connection with Jesus. Christianity is not a religion. It's a relationship. A living relationship requires nurture and attention. It is deepened with trust and respect. The “I Am” sayings of Jesus invite us into that kind of abiding relationship.

The season of Lent is an invitation to strengthen your relationship with God through the ministry of Jesus. In every fruitful relationship we hold precious, we walk beside one another during times of joys, celebrations, struggles, and suffering.

I invite you to walk with Jesus during this holy week of celebrations and suffering; providing the opportunity to deepen your relationship with the Divine. Jill

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

April 2	7:00 p.m.	Holy Thursday Worship Service	FUMCO
April 3	7:00 p.m.	Good Friday Worship Service	FUMCO
April 5	6:30 a.m.	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	1:00 p.m.	Blessing of the Animals	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



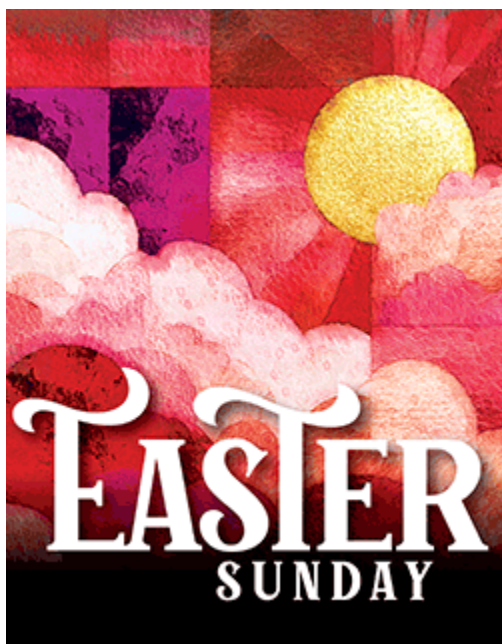


Maundy Thursday: April 2, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

"I Am" Lord and Teacher: John 13:1-17 & 31b-35 with Holy Communion at the Last Supper.

Good Friday: April 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Who do you say "I Am?" – "I Am" Jesus of Nazareth & "I Am" King of the Jews



EASTER SUNDAY: April 5, 2026 6:30 a.m.

"I Am" the Resurrection and the Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

6:30 a.m. Sunrise Communion in the Prayer Garden

9:30 a.m. Festival celebration with Communion in the sanctuary which will include a special children's message.



April 25th 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Set up Friday, April 24th 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

It's time to start gathering your unwanted "treasures" to donate to the UWIF annual garage sale! A few guidelines:

- No books
- No heavy furniture
- No curtain or drapery rods
- No linens
- No heavy exercise equipment
- No clothes or shoes

Please be sure your donations are clean and in working order

Also greatly needed are some hale and hearty volunteers to help clean up at the end of the day on Saturday. To help plan for set-up day on Friday, please sign up on the UWIF bulletin board (next to the upstairs kitchen).



Calling all bakers

Once again, the UWIF will offer delicious baked goods for sale at the garage sale. Please contribute home-made items. The UWIF is grateful to all who contributed to the bake sale last year. It was almost sold out!

Helpful hints:

- Bake now and freeze
- Pretty packaging helps things sell

Questions? Contact Diane Maher, 732-513-8413

Thank you!



DR. JOHN D. BLAIR SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for the 2026 Dr. John D. Blair Scholarships are available on the church website or in the church office.

Scholarships are available for up to four years of undergraduate education. Grade transcript must accompany application. The deadline for applications is

April 25.

Conference opportunity

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.

Blessing of the Animals

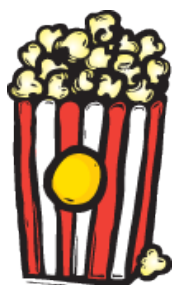
Join us for the Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, April 19th at 1:00 p.m.

First UMC, 103 Monmouth Rd. Oakhurst

732-531-1150

www.oakhurst.umcchurches.org



Let's all go to the movies!

Below are two movies, one based on scripture and one based on historical events that you may find interesting:

The Faithful: Women of the Bible: April 5th. You can find it on Fox & Hulu at 8 p.m.

A Great Awakening: A historical drama created by Sight & Sound (Lancaster, PA) about the relationship between preacher George Whitfield & Benjamin Franklin. It debuts in theaters on April 3rd. It will be shown at AMC-Monmouth Mall. (Jill notes that she cannot give witness to its accuracy but looks forward to seeing it.)



**Easter Day
April 5, 2026**

Counters: Patty Aria, John Montgomery, Judy Gorra

Greeter: Alice Coleman

Usher: Robin Whitney

Acolyte: Ian Furda

Lay Reader: Randy Danielson

Fellowship Host: Bonnie McNamara



**2nd Sunday after Easter
April 12, 2026**

Counters: Kitty Amato, Peg Kuchen, Chip Stoll

Greeter: Scott Danielson

Usher: Ron Danielson

Acolyte: David Furda

Lay Reader: Pam Puryear

Fellowship Hosts: Judy Gorra & Soon Hur

**OUR APRIL COMMUNION OFFERING
BENEFITS MERCY CENTER**

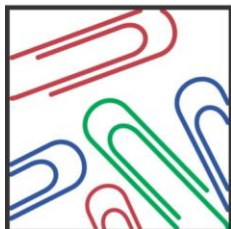
Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of April by Marty & Mary Bailey in memory of their grandparents.



The next free community spaghetti dinner will be on April 19th at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited to Fellowship Hall for a delicious meal and community.



Something to think about:
If you feel like you're about to snap, say a prayer and take a nap!



**CHURCH
OFFICE
CLOSED**

April 3-Good Friday
April 6-Easter Monday



COFFEE & COMMUNITY

JAVA WITH JILL
April 14th 10 a.m.

Notice Date Change

Join Pastor Hubbard-Smith and friends at the Blue Swan Diner for an informal gathering to share conversation and perhaps a treat of your choosing.

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS



Apr. 5-Apr. 11

Acts 10:34-43
Jeremiah 31:1-6
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4
John 20:1-18
Matthew 28:1-10

Please be Praying for...

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

Jersey Shore Care Center: Dave Miller

Sunnyside Manor, Wall: Nancy Burt

Our church family worshipping at a distance:

Barbara Novick, Laura Eble, Jack & Caroline Chesbro

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.

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:
Yeast



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.

Beaded Crosses for Sale to Benefit Keswick Ministry.

Debbie Eckert (Old First UMC) is making & selling these small, beaded crosses to support the Keswick ministry. Keswick provides a program for addiction recovery that costs approximately \$11,000.00 yet they only charge the participant \$600.00.

By providing a donation to this life changing ministry, you will receive a handmade beaded cross from Debbie. They are available from Debbie on Sunday mornings.

