

*Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
August 23, 2026 9:30 a.m. First UMC  
\*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 *Minuet in G* Beethoven  
*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  
*Sanctuary* TFWS 2164  
**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.**  
**With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

\*INVITATION TO WORSHIP  
God calls us into meaningful, forward-moving ministry.  
**God entrusts us with talents and gifts meant to be invested, not buried; shared, not protected; lived, not rocked in place.**  
Today we come to worship the One who measures faithfulness not by busyness, but by love in action.  
**Today we worship our God, who leads us forward with purpose and courage.**  
May we serve each other with humility and wisdom.  
**May we be faithful stewards of God's abundant grace.**

\*SHARING THE PEACE OF THE CHRIST  
We invite you to turn to the person next to you and greet them saying,  
**"Peace of Christ be with you."**  
You are invited to respond by saying,  
**"And also, with you."**

\*SONG OF PRAISE *Grace Alone* TFWS 2162

CENTERING PRAYER  
**Purposeful God, in the quietness of this moment, we pause from the perpetual motion of our lives-the rushing, the doing, the busy rhythms that fill our days-and we turn our hearts toward You.**  
**You know how easily we confuse activity with purpose, how often we measure our worth by how much we accomplish instead of how faithfully we love. Center us now in Your gracious presence. Slow our minds, steady our spirits, and remind us of our true calling: to love You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**  
**Show us where our energy is scattered, where our time is spent without meaning, where our efforts move but do not progress.**

**Help us to invest our gifts and talents in ministries that yield growth. Draw us back to what matters. Align our lives with Your purpose. Let this moment of stillness become a turning point-where our motion becomes mission, our work becomes worship, and our lives become love in action. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC *Take My Life* arr. Tomlin & Giglio  
Praise Team

**WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD**  
\*GOSPEL LESSON *Matthew 25:13-28* Pew Bible, NT 28  
May God Bless Our Reading, Hearing, and Understanding.  
**Thanks be to God.**

\*SONG OF RESPONSE *The Wonderful Cross* Tomlin, Reeves, & Alt  
**When I survey the wonderful cross  
on which the Prince of Glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.**  
  
**See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**Chorus**  
**O the wonderful cross  
O the wonderful cross  
Bids me come and die and find that I may truly live.  
O the wonderful cross  
O the wonderful cross  
All who gather here by grace draw near and bless Your name.**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were an offering far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

**Chorus**  
  
GOSPEL LESSON *Mark 12:28-34a* Pew Bible, NT 49  
SERMON Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith  
*Leadership Lesson from the Toy Box: The Rocking Horse*

**WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**  
HYMN OF RESPONSE *Forward Through the Ages* UMH 555

SHARING OUR PRAYERS  
The congregation is invited  
to respond after each request...  
***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 *In Unity We Lift Our Song* TFWS 2221, v. 1  
**In unity we lift our song of grateful adoration,  
for brothers brave and sisters strong.  
What cause for celebration!**  
**For those whose faithfulness has kept us through distress,  
who've shared with us our plight,  
who've held us in the night, the blessed congregation.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION  
**Generous God, You have entrusted us with gifts meant for Your kin-dom; not to hide, not to protect, but to release in love. May our lives be offerings of courage, our choices, investments in Your kingdom, our actions reflections of Your love. Bless these offerings we bring. Multiply them as only You can, using what we give and all we are to move forward in ministries of service and love. Amen.**

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

\*SENDING FORTH

\*LIGHT OF CHRIST LEADS US INTO THE WORLD  
*The Lord Bless and Keep You* TFWS 2280  
**The Lord bless and keep you,  
the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious, gracious.  
The Lord bless and keep you,  
the Lord lift his countenance on you and give peace, give you peace.  
Shalom. Shalom.**

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

**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.*

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

Given in loving memory of Betty Lou Beckmann by Peggy Ann.  
Given by Carol Whyte in loving memory of her son, Scott Gill now in  
heaven 10 years.

**Our Leadership Team This Morning**

Acolyte: Faye Snorton  
Counters: Mary Bailey, Cheryl McLoughlin, John Montgomery  
Greeter: Pamela Lynch  
Lay Reader: David Furda  
Usher: Gerry Busfield

**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 and Bibles** available. Please ask the usher.



**This Week We Hold in Prayer...**

**Our Homebound:** Bev Itell, Virginia Haydu, Bob Sproat, Bertha Ahrens, Carey Carlisle, Priscilla

Smith, Elaine Gould

**Jersey Shore Care Center:** Dave Miller

**At home:** Carol Steinat

**The Rehab Center at Wedgwood Gardens:** Nancy Burt

\*\*FUMCO 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 at 732-209-4563 or [revjmh@gmail.com](mailto:revjmh@gmail.com).

**Please Join in Mission and Ministry**

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

**TODAY:**

Worship In Person 11 a.m. (Old First)

**Monday, August 24**

AA – Wesley Hall 7:30 a.m.  
Alanon – Wesley Hall 10 a.m.  
12 Step Study – Fellowship Hall 7 p.m.

**Tuesday, August 25**

Women’s Covenant Group – Library 8:45 a.m.  
Java with Jill – Blue Swan Diner 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, August 26**

AA – Wesley Hall 7:30 a.m.

**Thursday, August 27**

Alanon – Wesley Hall 10 a.m.  
OA – Wesley Hall 6:30 p.m.

**Friday, August 28**

AA – Wesley Hall 7 p.m.

**Sunday, August 30**

Worship in Person & Online 9:30 a.m.  
Worship In Person 11 a.m. (Old First)

**Announcements**

**Book Club:** This new small group gathering meets the first Wednesday of each month at noon. September’s book is *The Music of Bees* by Eileen Garvin. NOTE: September’s meeting will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> instead of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. For more information, please see *The Cornerstone*.

**The Wesely Nursery School** is seeking new birth-2 years old toys for Monmouth Medical Center’s pediatrics department. They will also take new or used DVDs. Drop items off in the church office.

**Little Free Pantry:** The “bench” has been low on items, and the overflow shelves are empty. Even though our ministry was blessed recently by members of our community, items are always needed. List for this week: powdered milk, stew, whole grain cereal, hygiene products, applesauce, canned chicken, canned salmon, canned ham, olive oil, crackers, spices, dried fruit, instant mashed potatoes, nuts, peanut butter, & vinegar.

**A Small Group Study** by Henri Nouwen is being offered on the BeADisciple Study App. The study is titled *Following Jesus: Finding Home in an Age of Anxiety*. This 6-week study of the book will include daily prayer practices and video clips of Nouwen.



*Leadership Lessons from the Toy Box*

**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**

**Oakhurst.umchurches.org**

[FUMCOakhurst@outlook.com](mailto:FUMCOakhurst@outlook.com)

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

Follow us on YouTube:

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

CCLI #1588788

**Pastor:** Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith

**Secretary:** Joy More

**Director of Music:** Denise Furda

**Sexton:** Lisa Costello

**Streaming Team:** Chip Stoll, Rob Crowther, Johnny Tocci

**Director of Wesley Nursery School:** Noel Worthington

**Music Director Emeritus:** Gary Farquhar