

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 34

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Summer Worship Series:



Leadership Lessons From the Toy Box



Slinky Dog

Matthew 10:1-14

This week we conclude our Summer Sermon Series: Leadership Lessons from the Toybox as we explore the conditions and the support necessary for a slinky to move successfully to the next step.

Each toy this summer has taught us about Christian life and some characteristics for faithful and fruitful discipleship. As we prepare to close out this summer season of fun, I would invite you to reflect on your favorite childhood toy(s) and what reminders they might be providing you regarding living as a disciple of Christ in this time and place. You are welcome and invited to share your insights with others this Sunday. See you in church - *Jill*



Hi First United Methodist Church,
Your generosity means more than you know and we are so grateful to have you in our corner. Because of supporters like you, we can provide an abundant life for our seniors. Thank you for being such an important part of our community.
Blessings,
UMC Foundation
(Our congregation supports UMC Foundation with our May communion offering.)



Due to the unusual wind and rain we've had, our outdoor Christian flag was tattered and removed from the pole. A new flag has been ordered. If you would like to make a donation toward the flag, please call the church office. Your donation may be dedicated in memory of or in honor of loved ones.



DISASTER RELIEF FUND

WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN & UMCOR/U.S. DISASTER RESPONSE & RECOVERY FUND

1 Peter 4:10- *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

Thanks to the congregation’s generous support of the August communion offering designated for the Disaster/Relief Fund, \$500 donations have been made to both World Central Kitchen and UMCOR’s U.S. Disaster Response & Recovery Fund to aid our brothers & sisters in crisis at home and around the world.

Your generous gifts allow natural disaster victims, refugees, and those caught in the tumult of a humanitarian crisis, civil unrest, or war zone to have their most fundamental of basic needs met-shelter & food-while they navigate during troubled times.

So far in 2026, UMCOR has aided & set-up recovery effort programs for flash flood victims in KY, WV, IN, and TX; wildfire victims in WA, NV, & GA; tornado victims in MI & WI, and victims of Tropical Storm Arthur in MS. Recently UMCOR has started relief efforts in Puerto Rico for the evolving humanitarian crisis due to drought conditions and a failing infrastructure that’s led to emergency water rationing for the residents.

World Central Kitchen has teams mobilized throughout the world. Its kitchens are feeding our world neighbors in Hawaii in the wake of Tropical Storm Lala, earthquake victims in Indonesia, Venezuela, and Columbia and the citizens of Ukraine and Gaza trapped in on-going conflicts.

Your continued support of this ministry allows us to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters in crisis. The Outreach Committee thanks you for your faithful commitment and support.



Attn: Adult Sunday School & Congregation

To go along with a soon-to-be worship series on stewardship from the pastor, we are going to switch to her sermon materials based on Bishop Tom Berlin's book *Defying Gravity; Break Free from the Culture of More*. (We will do *Jesus is Lord* at a later time.)

Study notes: Our possessions can create unbearable weight and affect our ability to serve and thrive. How do we defy gravity and find freedom in Christ? In this 4-week study Bishop Berlin explores what is required to sustain a vibrant life, what we need versus what we want, and what we can do to avoid being overwhelmed by the weight of our possessions. The class begins on September 13th at 11 a.m. All are welcome to explore the pastor's Sunday messages on a deeper level.

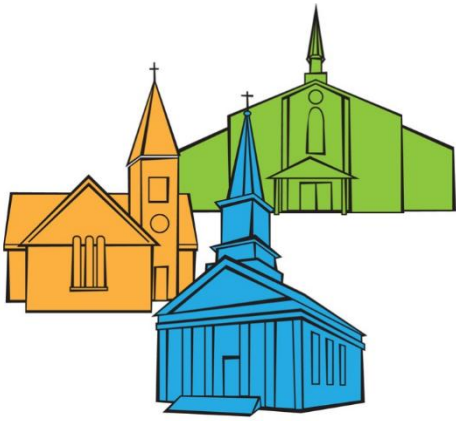


The pastor's summer book club proved to be a popular gathering. The participants have decided to continue it. The club meets the first Wednesday of each month at noon. Each participant will have the opportunity to pick a book for the following month. September's book is *The Music of Bees*. *The Music of Bees* is a heartwarming novel by Eileen Garvin about friendship, healing, and the unifying power of honeybees in a small Oregon town.

Overview

Published in 2021, *The Music of Bees* follows three lonely individuals in Hood River, Oregon, whose lives intersect on a local honeybee farm. The story centers on Alice Holtzman, a 44-year-old widow and beekeeper struggling with panic attacks and grief; Jake Stevenson, an 18-year-old paraplegic teenager coping with depression; and Harry Stokes, a socially anxious young man seeking purpose and connection.

******Please note that for September, the club will meet on the 9th.**



CHURCH CONFERENCE

October 31st, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

All are invited to attend the annual church conference here at FUMCO.

REMINDER: If you are submitting a report, they are due in the Brick River reporting system by September 30th. However, if Joy is entering your report for you, she must have it by September 21st. Please call the church office with any questions.



Summer Communion Service in the Prayer Garden –

**Sept. 6th
8:00 a.m.**

Busy summer schedule? Want to worship and still maximize the day? Want to be outside and worship amid God's beautiful creation yet still beat the heat of the day?

We have a service for you. The first Sunday of the month in the summer, Jill leads us in a Communion service in our prayer garden. Come sit in this beautiful space for Word, message, song, and Communion.

You are invited to follow the sidewalk from the parking lot north on Monmouth Road to the garden entrance.

Conference & Other UMC Opportunities

Rebuilding the Village - hosted by GNJ

COSROW

Many of us have felt isolated or struggled with burnout at one time or another. On **Sept. 26, from 9:30am-2:30pm**, GNJ's Commission on the Status and Role of Women will be hosting **Rebuilding the Village**, an event seeking to support and uplift women, their voices, and their lived experiences.

Through storytelling and reflection, we'll explore ways we have experienced villages of support, ways we've failed to be a village, and steps we can take to build villages for one another. [Register here.](#)



Location: Mission and Resource Center (205 Jumping Brook Rd., Neptune, NJ)

9:30am: Registration & Coffee Fellowship

10:00am: Program



Have questions? They have answers!

Here you'll find responses to many of the questions asked most often or you may submit one of your own. There's even a live chat!

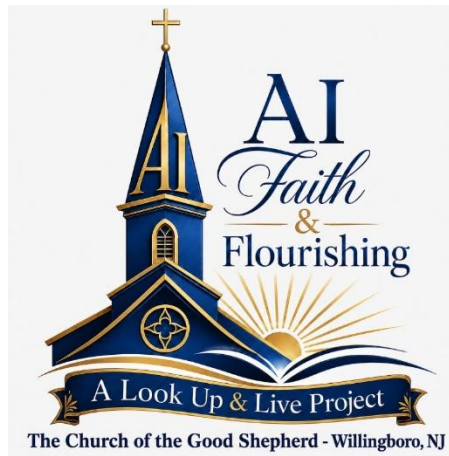
United Methodist Communications

Help shape how United Methodist story is told

The United Methodist Church is entering a pivotal season of renewal, and your voice matters. As part of a multiphase brand-messaging initiative, United Methodist Communications is listening to leaders, clergy and members across the connection to shape a message that reflects who United Methodists are and who they're becoming. Share your perspectives on faith, community and what makes The United Methodist Church unique.

The anonymous survey takes about 15 minutes and is open through Sept. 4.

[**Take survey**](#)



Church of the Good Shepherd presents AI, Faith & Flourishing Conference Sept 18-20

AI, Faith & Flourishing is an intergenerational community learning initiative exploring how artificial intelligence is changing the ways we learn, communicate, create, form relationships, understand information, and care for our mental and spiritual well-being. The summit will examine the emerging areas of AI literacy, digital wellness, mental health, media literacy, ethics, and human flourishing. [Learn more and register here.](#)



GCOSROW presents: Do No Harm, Trauma-Informed Care

Join Do No Harm, a virtual conference for the urgent work of preventing sexual harm and fostering trauma-informed care across the UMC. November 12–14, 2026 — fully online, open to all.

[Learn more & register here.](#)

NEW! Pen Pal Ministry

If it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." Romans 12:8

Debbie Eckert (Old First) has spoken with the leaders at Keswick, and they are ready to begin the Pen Pal Ministry now entitled Connected. This is a letter program to encourage men and women going through the addiction program at America's Keswick.

Here is how it works:

- Write to either a man or a woman.
- Put it in an unsealed envelope with the gender for whom it is written.
- Use only your first name (no last name please).
- Indicate if you are from FUMCO or Old First UMC so the recipient can respond.
- Put your notes of encouragement in the basket marked "Connected" just outside the sanctuary.
- Your notes will be delivered on Fridays.
- Notes back to us will be put in the basket as well so don't forget to check the basket.

Wondering what to write in your note?

They are individuals who need encouragement and support. They are folks probably missing home and need to be reminded of God's love for them. They may or may not have family, so this is a wonderful way to help them know that they have a spiritual family.

Any questions, call Debbie Ecker: 908-489-7619 or eckertpartygirl@hotmail.com





**Monmouth Medical
Center is seeking NEW,
Birth - 2 Years old toys
for their pediatrics
department along with
DVD's (not needed to be
new)! Drop off to WNS!!**





Worship

14th Sunday after Pentecost
August 30, 2026

Counters: Mary Bailey, Cheryl McLoughlin, John Montgomery

Greeter: Rand Danielson

Usher: Jay Aretino

Acolyte: David Furda

Lay Reader: Robert Crowther

Altar Flowers

Given by Bonnie McNamara in honor of Robin's and Buddy's wedding anniversary.
Given in honor of Jenny Henderson by her family.



Worship

15th Sunday after Pentecost
September 6, 2026

Counters: Patty Aria, John Montgomery, Judy Gorra

Greeter: Mike Sheckler

Usher: Scott Danielson

Acolyte: Ian Furda

Lay Reader: Ron Puryear

Altar Flowers

Given by Joy More in loving memory of her husband, Bob.
Given in honor of Ryan Henderson by his family.



Begins September 12th

Please sign up to be a fellowship host. There are a signup sheet and details in Fellowship Hall. Please contact Bonnie McNamara with any questions, 732-216-1511.



CHANCEL CHOIR BEGINS

The choir meets on Thursdays from 6:30-7:30 p.m. New members welcome! First rehearsal is on September 10th. Bring a friend!

*Please be
Praying for...*



September 13th

Hymn Sing

October 4th

10 a.m. service-World Communion Sunday

November 1st

10 a.m. service-All Saints Day

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

At home: Carol Steinat

Jersey Shore Care Center: Dave Miller

The Rehab Center at Wedgwood Gardens: Nancy Burt

Our church family worshipping at a distance:

Barbara Novick, Laura Eble, Jack & Caroline Chesbro



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.

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS



Aug. 30 – Sept. 5

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16 21-28

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:
Cleanup wipes



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

**I will be kind to the poor,
for they are alone. Kind to
the rich, for they are
afraid. And kind to the
unkind, for such is how
God has treated me.**

Max Lucado

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of August by Mel & Jeff Ragle in loving memory of Jeff's mother, Emma Jean Ragle.

OUR AUGUST COMMUNION OFFERING BENEFITS DISASTER RELIEF.

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 or contact Debbie at Eckertpartygirl@hotmail.com.



August is a 5th Sunday month

What is a 5th Sunday? In the months when there are 5 Sundays, the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees ask for a collection that will help reduce the costs of snow removal and salting in the winter months. Those costs contribute significantly to the church's annual budget costs. If you would like to make an offering to this collection, please use the yellow envelopes found on the tables in the sanctuary entrances.



COMMUNITY JAVA WITH JILL

SEPTEMBER 22ND, 10 a.m.

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.

Summer Must Go

by Lenore Hetrick

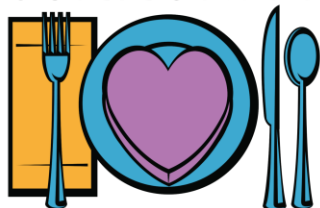
Summer has lingered a little too long,
The grass and the trees wear a rusty look,
The calendar cries the last day of August,
And so say the leaves that float down the brook.

The mists hang low in the morning hours,
And the smell of harvest grows more strong.
The calendar cries the last day of August –
And summer has lingered a little too long.



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COMMUNITY



DINNER

The next **free** community spaghetti dinner will be on September 20th at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited to Fellowship Hall for a delicious meal and good company.



Puzzle!



A MIRACLE DINNER

Matthew 14:15–21 & John 6:1–14
is a Bible story about a special dinner.
Below is a poem about that story.



Complete the poem by filling in the blanks with the correct pairs of words.

then / men	rest / quest
true / you	began / ran
late / ate	faces / spaces
lunch / bunch	done / ton

Jesus was tired and went to find _____,
So away from the crowd he started his _____.
It came to an end before it _____,
The crowd followed Jesus; they walked and
they _____.
His boat pulled ashore and he looked at
their _____—five thousand men, plus families
filled all open _____.
And so Jesus spoke and he taught until _____.
The disciples told him it was time they
all _____.
Jesus said, "Yes, that is certainly _____,
and feeding this crowd is now up to _____."
Feeding five thousand! It could not be _____!
What would they do? They'd need a
whole _____!
But then a young boy came and offered
his _____—five loaves and two fish to
feed this big _____.
Jesus gave thanks and blessed it and _____
it fed all the women, the children and _____!

Answers: rest, quest, began, ran, faces, spaces, late, true, you, done, ton, lunch, bunch, then, men

