First United Methodist Church
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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 43 October 29, 2026



…Surrounded by such a Great Cloud of Witnesses…

Hebrews 12:1

"I praise the Saints who have graced us:
the Great Saints, Francis and Teresa and the gang;
but especially the Lesser Saints,
those who have humbly, perhaps unknowingly,
shed light in our lives.
I am grateful for the people
who have blessed you—yes, you, dear reader,
who have loved you more than necessary,
who have taught you and forgiven you and shown you what love is possible.
I give thanks for those who endured silently
and those who showed you how to rise up and shout.

I bless those who didn't yell at you and showed you a new path.
I thank God for the saints whose brokenness, whose imperfections,
faults and failures showed you what a glorious light can shine in a cracked lantern.
For all who have helped you know your belatedness
I give thanks, because now you, dear one, are sanctified, too: chosen as Love's vessel,
no more deserving or adequate or worthy than others, but loved, and chosen as Love's vessel.
May you know with certainty that you can't know who you have blessed,
but that, like all Saints, you have."

By Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light,* November 1, 2021

I look forward to gathering us - the Family of God, the community of saints; as we remember the saints who have come before us – those of our loved ones and community who have marked our lives with their faithfulness and now rest with God in their eternal home. Join me for worship, the reading of the saints, candle lighting, and Holy Communion this Sunday, **November 1st at 10:00 a.m.** after having **set your clocks back an hour.**



See you in church or online, *Jill*

Saturday, October 31st



Old First & First UMCs' Annual Meeting
WHERE…Conveniently right here at
First UMC – 103 Monmouth Road
At 10:00 a.m. we will worship in the sanctuary with 12 other churches.
Enjoy refreshments in fellowship hall before or after.





MERCY CENTER THANKSGIVING BASKETS
COLLECTION BEGINS THIS SUNDAY!
ENDS NOVEMBER 15

Once again, it is collection time for the annual Mercy Center Thanksgiving Basket food drive. Families in need are provided Thanksgiving baskets containing all the ingredients for a complete holiday dinner. The Mercy Center food pantry currently serves over 3,600 families a month throughout Monmouth County.

The special Thanksgiving food basket collection allows Mercy Center patrons to enjoy a traditional holiday meal with their families.

The following items are being collected for this year's food drive:

Turkeys
Boxed stuffing mix
Canned corn, green beans, and yams
Canned cranberries/cranberry sauce
Turkey gravy
Desserts-frozen pies
Coffee

Since it is a large project, Mercy Center requires the food be delivered to them early. Therefore, starting **October 25th**, there will be a table in the church foyer to receive non-perishable donations. Perishables clearly marked for the **Mercy Center Thanksgiving Food Drive** can be left in the freezer. The Thanksgiving food drive ends on **November 15th**. Donations can be dropped off during church office hours or on Sundays.

The Outreach Committee and Mercy Center truly appreciate the congregation's continuing generous support of the Thanksgiving food drive!!!



Hope School

November's Communion Offering

Since 1962, Hope School has provided a stable learning environment to at-risk children growing up in a region rife with conflict for decades. Located in Beit-Jala, a Palestinian-Christian town in the West Bank, Hope School's teaching is founded on the Christian values of Love, Peace, Tolerance, Human Dignity and Justice.

Besides in-person schooling, Hope School recognizes the difficult living conditions that many of its students face and understands that academic achievement only goes so far with an unstable home life. Therefore, beyond the school curriculum, the school has outreach programs that allow for visits to the children's houses and their parents to see how living conditions can be improved so the student can be focused on his/her studies.

Beyond educating students and improving home-life, the third facet of the program is economic empowerment of the student and his/her family to allow for improving the families' standards of living and a path toward financial stability. The curriculum includes a vocational education and training program to enrich its students and offer the chance for future achievement.

For disadvantaged children- either orphaned or with unsustainable home-life situations, Hope School offers a boarding school that allows at-risk students to live on campus throughout the school year in a safe and healthy environment in order to accelerate their academic achievement.

Hope School understands that a quality education not only provides the best opportunity for its students' future success but the outgrowth of its students' achievements is that the students will be future leaders who hopefully can be beacons to their communities and allow for the communities' development and growth.

Your November communion offering will allow Hope School to continue its mission.



In addition to raising money for missions through an annual pledge and year-round fundraising, United Women in Faith set aside two special days a year to focus on a **"Call to Prayer and Self-denial"** and a **"World Thank Offering."**

The World Thank Offering is an opportunity to personal thanksgiving, and for participation in global mission outreach. Through this offering, mission projects in all 50 states and in almost 100 countries are supported. These vary from support to schools, hospitals, and clinics, daycare centers, and homes for senior citizens, educational training courses to prevent soil erosion, to leadership development, and nutritionals courses, and medical training. The funds collected are used in the total program of mission carried on through United Women in Faith.

Many of us collect money over the course of the year, giving thanks and appreciation in either a blue and white World Thank Offering box or a container we have personally made for the purpose.

Being in mission is sharing our lives and gifts with others that all may be whole persons through Jesus Christ. Mission is creating a new society as we do away with those things that create barriers. It is working to eliminate racism, sexism, and loneliness. Misdion is Christ's challenge to us to bring the possibility of food, shelter, and fulfillment to all of humanity.

To contribute to this mission work, please set aside a collection box and give with thanksgiving during the year. Attached to this newsletter is a monthly calendar that will give you some ideas and incentives to place money in your container during the year. Even the whole family could get involved! All money should be turned in at the end of November the following year.

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Maher at 732-513-8413 or speak with a member of the UWIF.


November
Happenings at
Wayside UMC &
Oceanport UMC
11/14 Harvest Home Dinner-Oceanport
11/13 & 14 Yard Sale-Wayside
Oceanport UMC 732-544-9028
Wayside UMC 732-493-8039

An Old First UMC Mission Project



MISSION POSSIBLE

Crocheters/Knitters needed. We are making scarves and hats for the men and women going through the addiction program at America's Keswick. We are also in need of gloves or monetary donations to purchase them. We are working hard to deliver these gifts for Christmas. Any donations can be given to Debbie Eckert, Diane Wortman, or Pastor Jill. Thank you.

New Information



Advent will soon be here! Once again, we are soliciting contributions to our very personal advent booklet. It's not hard to do. Just a Bible verse, a short anecdote or some thoughts, poetry, favorite hymn-just about anything that might be inspiring.

How has God touched your life? Please give it some thought, and I am certain you could share your experience with your church family!

I am here to help! Diane Maher. 732-513-8413
Dianeserine07712@yahoo.com
At this time, only 8 have been submitted.

Deadline for submissions: November 8

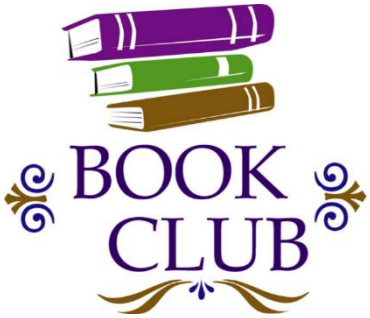


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Calling all Children and Youth for a Christmas Choir!

Do you have a child or youth in your life that would like to sing at Christmas time? Our Music Director Denise is hoping to get a group together!
If interested, please have a parent email FUMCOMusicDirector@gmail.com for more information!

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Book Club will meet November 4th, 12:30 p.m.

November's book: ***A Secret Gift: How One Man's Kindness and a Trove of Letters Revealed the Hidden History of the Great Depression*** By **Ted Gup**

An inspiring account of America at its worst-and Americans at their best-woven from the stories of Depression-era families who were helped by gifts from the author's generous and secretive grandfather.





Bishop's Days on the District

Bishop Moore-Koikoi is making a visit to our district!

Please save the date; more details are coming soon.

Raritan Shore- Friday, November 13, 5 p.m.

Aldersgate UMC, 568 Ryders Lane, East Brunswick



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 have begun 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 Eckert: 908-489-7619 or eckertpartygirl@hotmail.com

UWIF TEA

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH INVITATION
TO
AN AFTERNOON TEA

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
REBECCA BLONSKI
FOUNDER OF MADONNA HOUSE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH AT 3:00 PM

Madonna House, located at 1401 Seventh Ave., in Neptune, ministers to poor, destitute, and underprivileged infants, children, and women who live in our local communities. All clothing, juvenile furnishings, toys, infant formula, diapers, and small household necessities are provided **free of charge.**

Refreshments will be served after Rebecca's presentation.
All (including men) are invited to attend.
Contact Diane Maher with any questions. 732- 513-8413.



Please consider donating a child's toy or game when attending the tea.



Our sincerest congratulations to Lydia Smith who received GNJ's Board of Higher Education and Ministry's 2026 Frances Nelson Scholarship to continue her studies at Miami University.

The Frances Nelson Scholarship is an annual award for undergraduate United Methodist students in New Jersey who plan to pursue full-time Christian service after graduation.

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS NEEDED



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

NOTE: This year there are changes in fellowship hosting. It is the hope that these changes will give everyone the opportunity to host no matter which service they are attending.

Part 1: Set up will be done by Bonnie McNamara unless she asks someone to cover.

Part 2: Hosting: Bring 1 quart of whole milk. Arrive in the kitchen by 10:20 a.m. and serve.

Part 3: Clean up: Arrive in the kitchen by 10:55 a.m. to clean up.

More detailed instruction can be found in the kitchen in the fellowship closet.

Conference & Other UMC Opportunities

NEJ United Methodist Men - Empowerment Weekend

From **April 16-18,** the Northeastern Jurisdiction United Methodist Men will host an **Empowerment Weekend** at **West River United Methodist Center** in Maryland. The gathering is designed to strengthen men as disciples of Jesus Christ and equip them to lead faithfully in their local churches and communities through worship, practical workshops, leadership development, and connectional fellowship. **Learn more and register.**

BRIGADE BAND CONCERT

On November 8th at 3 p.m., Vineland 1st UMC, 700 E. Landis Ave., will be hosting **Beck's Philadelphia Brigade Band** for a concert. Admission is free and open to all. A **love offering** will be taken to support ongoing repairs to the church's stained-glass windows.



Join the Zoom on Nov. 10.

Learn how to recognize and prevent elder financial exploitation

EPA's Small Church Network invites all to a presentation on Elder Financial Exploitation Prevention on **Nov. 10 at 6:30 on Zoom.**

GNJ Certified Lay Servant, Amy Charleston, a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist will talk about common scams targeting older adults, warning signs of financial exploitation, and practical prevention steps for individuals, families, and church leaders.



ONE SERVICE
10 AM
23nd Sunday after Pentecost
November 1, 2026

Counters: Patty Aria, Judy Gorra, John Montgomery

Greeter: Ruth Sheckler

Usher: Ron Danielson

Acolyte: Garry Smith

Lay Reader: Chip Stoll

Fellowship Host: Bonnie McNamara

Altar Flowers
Given in loving memory of Richard A. Beckmann by Peggy Ann.
Given in loving memory of Bob More and Tom Maher by Joy and Diane.

OUR OCTOBER COMMUNION OFFERING BENEFITS WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT



Faith is putting all your eggs in God's basket, then counting your blessings before they hatch.
Ramona Carroll



24th Sunday after Pentecost
November 8, 2026

Counters: Kitty Amato, Peg Kuchen, Chip Stoll

Greeter: Alice Coleman

Usher: Robin Whitney

Acolyte: Garry Smith

Lay Reader: Nicola Mulligan

Fellowship Hosts: Bonnie McNamara, Scott & Russel Danielson

Altar Flowers
Given in loving memory of Pat & Jim Whitney's wedding anniversary by Robin & Tommy.
Given in honor of Ashely Bailey's birthday by the Bailey family.

COFFEE & COMMUNITY

JAVA WITH JILL

NOVEMBER 24, 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.





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 Burtt
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.



The next **free** community spaghetti dinner will be on **November 15** at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited to Fellowship Hall for a delicious meal and good company.

WEEKLY BIBLE READINGS

Nov. 1-Nov. 7



Joshua 3:7-17
Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Matthew 23:1-12

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of October by Robin Whitney and Tommy Vignola in loving memory of Pat & Jim Whitney.



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:
Soda

