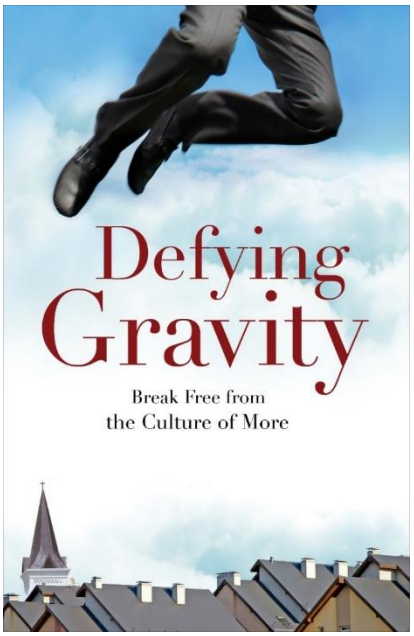
First United Methodist Church **Phone (732) 531-1150**
103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755
FUMCOakhurst@outlook.com, http://oakhurst.umcchurches.org

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 44 November 5, 2026



Defying Gravity:
Break Free from the Culture of More

We all want to be generous, but most of us find this hard to accomplish. Demands on our time and money make scarcity a real problem. Marketing creates a compulsion to buy things that are new or the latest versions of the old. Instead of enjoying the freedom to bless others with the best of our lives, we feel trapped. We are held down and held back by forces that seem beyond our control.

But there is good news! Jesus offers us a way to defy gravity and break free from the culture of more. *Defying Gravity* is a three-week stewardship program exploring what the Bible says about how to experience a generous and joyful life. Here are the topics we'll be discussing:

Sunday, November 8th
Discovering Gravity and Releasing - Matthew 19:16, 20-22

Sunday, November 15th
Tethered to God - Matthew 6:21 & 24

Sunday, November 22nd Joint Thanksgiving Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
When We Get It Right - 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

The key to all of it—and the key, I believe, to Christian discipleship—is generosity. When we follow Jesus, we develop a spirit of generosity that makes us eager to give. It's not about *should* or *ought to*. It's about *want to*. It's about overflowing with love and the desire to bless others as Jesus blesses us. I and pray you will join us for this exciting journey of defying gravity!

See you at worship, *Jill*

Our services, sermons, Bible studies are based on *Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More* by Tom Berlin. Abingdon Press. 2016.

\


Thanksgiving Sunday
Consecration Sunday
November 22, 2026
10 a.m. Worship Service
11 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
ALL ARE INVITED

UWIF TEA

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH INVITATION
TO
AN AFTERNOON TEA

****THIS SUNDAY****

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.



If you would like to place a poinsettia plant on the altar in memory or in honor of a loved one for Christmas, please fill in this form and mail it with **$15.00** (checks payable to the Altar Guild) to Diane Maher, c/o First United Methodist Church, 103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755 by **December 13** to be included in the Christmas Poinsettia List in the December 17 edition of The Cornerstone.

(Orders received after December 13 will be printed as space becomes available in subsequent issues of The Cornerstone.)

PLEASE KEEP DEDICATIONS BRIEF and WRITE NEATLY ONE PLANT PER FORM, PLEASE

Place a poinsettia on the altar ____ in memory of: ___ in honor of:

_____

(give name exactly as you wish it printed)

Given by: _____

_____ I will pick up the plant after the 11 pm service on Christmas Eve.



If you would like to place a poinsettia plant on the altar in memory or in honor of a loved one for Christmas, please fill in this form and mail it with **$15.00** (checks payable to the Altar Guild) to Diane Maher, c/o First United Methodist Church, 103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755 by **December 13** to be included in the Christmas Poinsettia List in the December 17 edition of The Cornerstone.

(Orders received after December 13 will be printed as space becomes available in subsequent issues of The Cornerstone.)

PLEASE KEEP DEDICATIONS BRIEF and WRITE NEATLY ONE PLANT PER FORM, PLEASE

Place a poinsettia on the altar ____ in memory of: ___ in honor of:

_____

(give name exactly as you wish it printed)

Given by: _____

_____ I will pick up the plant after the 11:00 pm service on Christmas Eve.



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!!!



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, 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.

WE STILL NEED A FEW!



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

Deadline for submissions: November 8

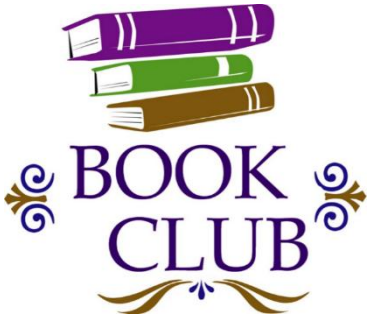


*

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!

****



Book Club will meet December 2nd, 12:30 p.m.

December's book: *Christmas Bells* by Jennifer Chiaverini.

***New York Times* bestselling author Jennifer Chiaverini celebrates Christmas, past and present, with a wondrous novel inspired by the classic poem "Christmas Bells," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.**





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



Those currently receiving pledge envelopes will automatically be assigned envelopes for 2027. If you would like to request envelopes for the first time or discontinue receiving them, please notify John Montgomery or the church office by December 1. Thank you!



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

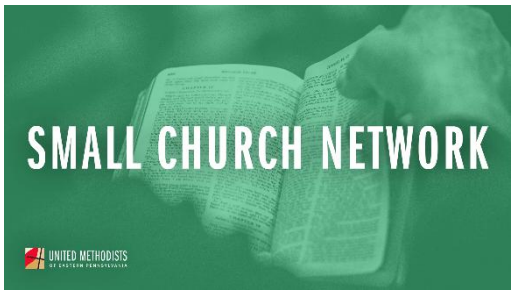
Conference & Other UMC Opportunities

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.



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.

OUR NOVEMBER COMMUNION OFFERING BENEFITS HOPE SCHOOL.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT



Following Jesus from day to day, gently He leads me along the way; e'er will I trust Him all foes despite, by faith and not by sight.
Clara M. Brooks



25th Sunday after Pentecost
November 15, 2026

Counters: Rand Danielson, Jane Gittines

Greeter: Jack Coleman

Usher: Jay Aretino

Acolyte: Robert Scott

Lay Reader: Garry Smith

Fellowship Hosts: Bonnie McNamara, Jeff Danielson, Pam Lynch

Altar Flowers
Given in loving memory of Laura E. Kale's 53rd birthday.
Given in honor of Bonnie & Kevin McNamara's wedding anniversary.

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, Nancy O'Shea
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. 8-Nov. 14

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25
Psalm 78:1-7
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Matthew 25:1-13

Tsedalech, our World Vision Child from Ethiopia, is sponsored for the month of November by the Wesley Nursery School in honor of all the children of the world.



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:
Toothpaste

