Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 8, 2026 9:30 a.m. First UMC
11:00 a.m. Old 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 **(9:30)** *Cornet Voluntary* Travers

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 **(9:30)** *Seek Ye First* UMH 405, v.1

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!

*INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Come, people of God—let us lift our hearts in worship.
For the Holy One is able to do far more than we can ask or imagine.
We gather, weighed down by the worries of the world,
yet drawn upward by grace.
We come to be renewed, to release our fears, and to rise in faith.
The Spirit of God is here, calling us to let go of what holds us down.
Together we will trust, give, and soar—
because in Christ, we are free.
Come–let us share in the love and peace of the Divine.

*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."**

*HYMN OF PRAISE *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* UMH 400

CENTERING PRAYER

Gracious God, we gather here because we want to live joyful lives of generosity as Jesus has shown and taught us. Guide us as we seek to overcome our fear of scarcity and leave behind the self-centered aspects of our lives. Help us open our hearts and minds to discover the possibilities generosity creates. Grant us wisdom as we learn how to defy the pull of financial gravity. Give us courage to release what weighs us down in this culture of more, that we might discern the ways Jesus is calling us to rise up and follow. Breathe into us again this morning, so our worship might take flight lifted by faith, strengthened in hope, and sustained by your grace. Amen.

ANTHEM **(9:30)** *Our Dwelling Place* Johnson
Chancel Choir

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

GOSPEL LESSON *Matthew 19: 16, 20-22* Pew Bible, NT 21

May God Bless Our Reading, Hearing, and Understanding.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN OF RESPONSE *Jesus Calls Us* UMH 398

EPISTLE LESSON *1 Timothy 6:10* Pew Bible, NT 210

SERMON *Defying Gravity* Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith
Discovery & Release

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

SHARING OUR PRAYERS

During the **9:30** service, 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 *For the Fruits of This Creation* UMH 97, v. 3

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, You have given us life, breath, and every good gift. Too often we cling to what we have, afraid there will not be enough. Today we open our hands and our hearts to You. Use what we offer to lift others, to lighten burdens, and to help Your love rise in this community and beyond. Teach us to give with joy, to trust Your abundance, and to live freely in Your grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION *The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve* TFWS 2241

*SENDING FORTH

*LIGHT OF CHRIST LEADS US INTO THE WORLD **(9:30)**

Let All Things Now Living TFWS 2008, v. 1

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God the Creator triumphantly raise,
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
who guides us and leads to the end of our days.
God's banners fly o'er us; God's light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into light.

POSTLUDE **(9:30)** *Air* Purcell

*Please join us at **10:30** in Fellowship Hall for refreshments and fellowship.*
*Adult Sunday School is offered in FUMCO's Wesley Hall at **11:00 a.m.**,*
located on the lower level of the building. All are welcome.

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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 (9:30)

Given in loving memory of Richard A. Beckmann by Peggy Ann.
Given in honor of Ashley Bailey's birthday by the Bailey family.

Our Leadership Team This Morning (9:30)

Acolyte: Garry Smith
Counters: Kitty Amato, Peg Kuchen, Chip Stoll
Greeter: Alice Coleman
Lay Reader: Nicola Mulligan
Usher: Robin Whitney
Fellowship Hosts: Bonnie McNamara, Scott & Russel Danielson

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...

The Gilman family, Marley, Jagger, Debbie Eckert, Naomi, Don Whittaker, Debbie, Rose Byrne, Ed Foran, Charles Murphy, Ginny, Vicky

Our Homebound: Bev Itell, Virginia Haydu, Bob Sproat, Bertha Ahrens, Carey Carlisle, Priscilla Smith, Elaine Gould, Terry Frazier, June Holder, Louise Kinsey, Millie Ricci

Jersey Shore Care Center: Dave Miller

At home: Carol Steinat, Nancy O'Shea

The Rehab Center at Wedgwood Gardens: Nancy Burtt

All American Assisted Living: Arlene Shaw

**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 revjmhs@gmail.com.



This afternoon at 3 p.m. Guest speaker: Rebecca Blonski, founder of Madonna House. Event is free-everyone is invited! Please bring a new toy or game for Madonna House.



Please Join in Mission and Ministry

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

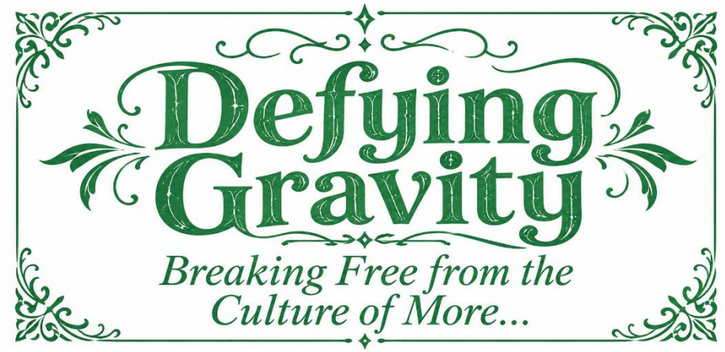
TODAY:	
Children's Sunday School – Downstairs	9:30 a.m.
Fellowship – Fellowship Hall	10:30 a.m.
Adult Sunday School – Wesley Hall	11 a.m.
Worship In Person	11 a.m. (Old First)
UWIF Tea and Guest Speaker*	3 p.m.
Monday, November 9	
AA – Wesley Hall	7:30 a.m.
Alanon – Wesley Hall	10 a.m.
Tuesday, November 10	
Women's Covenant Group – Library	8:45a.m.
Lydia Circle Meeting-Wesley Hall	7 p.m.
Wednesday, November 11	
AA – Wesley Hall	7:30 a.m.
Children's Choir Rehearsal-Sanctuary	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, November 12	
Alanon – Wesley Hall	10 a.m.
OA – Wesley Hall	6:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – Sanctuary	6:30 p.m.
Friday, November 13	
Bishop's Day in the District**	5 p.m.
AA – Wesley Hall	7 p.m.
Saturday, November 14	
Trustees Work Day	9 a.m.
Sunday, November 15	
Children's Sunday School – Downstairs	9:30 a.m.
Worship in Person & Online	9:30 a.m.
Fellowship – Fellowship Hall	10:30 a.m.
Adult Sunday School – Wesley Hall	11 a.m.
Worship In Person	11 a.m. (Old First)
Free Spaghetti Dinner-Fellowship Hall	5 p.m.

*Fellowship Hall **Aldersgate UMC, East Brunswick

Announcements

Knitting Mission Project: Old First UMC invites knitters and crocheters to make scarves & hats for those participating in the addiction program at America's Keswick. Gloves & monetary donations will also be accepted. You may drop off your donations to FUMCO's church office.

United Methodist Men Empowerment Weekend: April 16-18 at West River UMC in MD. The weekend is designed to strengthen men as disciples of Christ and equip them to lead in their local churches and community. See *The Cornerstone* to register.



Happy are those who find wisdom and those who gain understanding.

Her profit is better than silver, and her gain better than gold.

Proverbs 3: 13-14

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.umcchurches.org**

FUMCOakhurst@outlook.com

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

Follow us on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/c/FirstUnitedMethodistChurchofOakhurst

CCLI #1588788

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Old First
United Methodist Church | COME • LOVE • SHARE

We believe we are called to grow in Christ and serve by loving and feeding the members of our community in mind, body, and spirit so, they may be strengthened by the Bread of Life.

11:00 a.m. Worship Every Sunday Morning In-Person
At First UMC located at 103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst

Mailing Address: PO Box 214, West Long Branch, NJ 07764

office@oldfirstumchurch.org

Phone Number: 732-222-4232

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Referring to Matthew 19:16 & 20-22; why was the man grieving when he walked away from Jesus?
   When have you felt caught between following wealth and following Jesus?
2. Referring to 1 Timothy 6:10; what are examples of ways that the love of money can lead to evil? How can the love of money pull you away from God?
3. Is generosity an obligation or an opportunity for you?
4. Where does God fit in your list of goals? And giving to the ministry Jesus proposed to the rich man?
5. "Gravity is the pull of objects on other objects."
6. "Financial gravity is the invisible force that compels us to pursue our basic necessities – things such as food, shelter, and clothing for ourselves and others we love. The challenge is when we feel it with such intensity that it changes the way we live our lives."
7. How does the secular world tempt you to follow the pull of financial gravity? What financial temptations do you find hard to resist and may threaten your life negatively?
8. What helps you resist the pull of financial gravity when it is pulling you away from God?
9. How can financial gravity and the pull of the material world (accumulating debt and keeping up with your neighbors) cause you to lose your freedom and challenge you in following Christ?
10. Tom Berlin speaks of the *Kingdom of Self* or the *Kingdom of God*. What would you say the characteristics of each are? Is it possible for them to work in cooperation with one another?
11. What aspects of your life are self-centered or God-centered? What do you need to work on to move from self-centered to more God-centered?
12. What challenges and struggles do you face in managing your finances while at the same time living a Godly life?
13. What principles or techniques help you manage your financial resources in a way that is pleasing to God?
14. Tom Berlin names 5 financial profiles:

    Batten Down the Hatches: This person feels great anxiety about money no matter what the circumstances. Normal life experience requires financial planning. This person is hyper-focused on saving and feels an urgency making it difficult for them to spend money, much less give it away.

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Every Rung Goes Higher and Higher: When we climb our way to a certain lifestyle, it requires all the household income just to sustain our standard of living. When our income increases, rather than paying off something or giving to the church, we us the extra to move up another rung on ladder… remolding the house, nicer car, etc. Giving is postponed to another day.
The Call of the Wild: For this person, a simple trip to the store becomes a retail jungle – an opportunity to buy what they didn't even know the needed or wanted. They are satisfied with buying till the bills arrive. These folks have an inability to control spending when faced with the allure of merchandise and thus their financial priorities suffer.
I Am the Gift: These are folks who work in human service fields… teachers, employees of nonprofits for example. They make lower salaries and share their talents daily. Often they fall in the trap of thinking that what they do daily is a gift and thus a reason to neglect financial giving.
Bucket List Bingo: These folks have a strong sense that life is finite and the day is coming when we won't be able to have the experiences we might enjoy today. So, compelled by these adventures and experiences, all discretionary income is absorbed by their bucket list.

Each of these profiles involves merit, yet each also makes generosity not possible. What are the positives and negatives? Which profile(s) best describes you?

Jesus understand these dynamics and choices as seen in his conversation in Matthew when he challenges the man to defy financial gravity to accomplish the goal of loving God completely.

15. Jesus offers us a way, as well, to enter the gravitational field of God's kingdom. Following Jesus comes with intentionally practicing these values:
    Humility: Mark 10:44
    Trust: Matthew 6:31-33
    Forgiveness: Luke 6:37
    Sacrifice: John 12:25

The forces and assumptions of our world are polar opposites of those in the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed. That's why to enter the kingdom, we must accept Jesus as the new gravitational center of our lives.

**Our service and sermon is based on *Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More* by Tom Berlin.

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