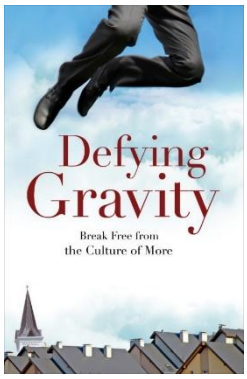
First United Methodist Church **Phone (732) 531-1150**
103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755
FUMCOakhurst@outlook.com, http://oakhurst.umcchurches.org

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 45 November 12, 2026



[11]Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. [12]The younger son said to his father, Father, give me my share of the inheritance.' Then the father divided his estate between them. [13]Soon afterward, the younger son gathered everything together and took a trip to a land far away. There, he wasted his wealth through extravagant living.

[14]"When he had used up his resources, a severe food shortage arose in that country, and he began to be in need. [15]He hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. [16]He longed to eat his fill from what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything. [17]When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have more than enough food, but I'm starving to death! [18]I will get up and go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. [19]I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands.'"

[20]"So he got up and went to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. [21]Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' [22]But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! [23]Fetch the fattened calf and slaughter it. We must celebrate with feasting [24]because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. ***Luke 10: 11-24***

This past Sunday we began our three-week stewardship series, *Defying Gravity.* We heard in *Matthew 19* of a rich young man who was experiencing financial gravity and unable to break free to accept Jesus' invitation to deepen his faith and discipleship.

In *Luke 10*, we hear the story of another young man who feels financial gravity with such force that he takes his inheritance early and is quickly sucked down a black hole in his pursuit of self-interest. This once rich but now very poor young man returns home to ask for a job on his father's estate. As the son draws closer to the homestead his father comes running toward him.

That day the son learned about the father's generous spirit. The father's generosity gave his son new life, and I suspect changed the son's character. This self-centered son died in that distant land and a new man is resurrected through his father's love. This young son was no longer simply a recipient of his father's loving generosity, now he possessed the insight to participate in it.

Like this young man, we are invited to recognize the difference between being a beneficiary of God's kingdom and being a participant in God's kingdom. The practice of generosity tethers us to expanding God's kingdom and gives us identity and purpose.

How does the practice of generosity change you? This week in worship, I invite us to explore how living generous lives empowers our church in ministries that honor and glorify our Creator. See you Sunday at 9:30

– 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



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.



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COLLECTION ENDS NOVEMBER 15



MERCY CENTER THANKSGIVING BASKETS

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.





Native American Heritage Month Resources

As we celebrate and honor Native American Heritage this month, there are several resources that can help:

- **Honoring Native American Heritage Month: A call to listen, learn, and build relationships**
- **Remembering forgotten historical figures in Native American History**
- **GCORR Book Study: Massacre at Sand Creek: How Methodists Were Involved in an American Tragedy by Gary L. Roberts**

From *GNJ Digest*





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.



THIS SATURDAY

Join the Trustees on November 14th at 9 a.m. to help them spruce up the church properties and take care of some maintenance. There is something for everyone to do! Bring some gloves and you'll be good to go.



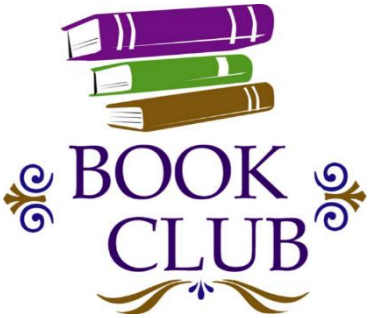
Thanksgiving offering envelopes are available in the church pews and on the sanctuary entrance tables if you would like to give a special offering to the church as a Thanksgiving gift.



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 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 **THIS FRIDAY!**

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



The Academic Christian Center for Excellence is holding their winter musical right here in our Fellowship Hall. Some of their students are Wesley Nursery School alums!



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.



Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday
November 22, 2026

Counters: Mary Bailey, Cheryl McLoughlin, John Montgomery

Greeter: Scott Danielson

Usher: Chip Stoll

Acolyte: Robert Scott

Lay Reader: Robin Whitney

Altar Flowers
Given in loving memory of Frances Miller by her niece, Sharron Meadows.
Given in loving memory of Carol Allen by her daughter, Abby.



November is a 5th Sunday month

Please use the yellow envelopes in the sanctuary for your donation to this extra-giving offering to help with upkeep of the church's properties.



Thank you to my church family for all the cards, prayers, and donations-they helped me through the shock of Laura's passing. Ellen Kale



Last Sunday, the UWIF welcomed Rebecca Blonski, founder of Madonna House in Neptune, to speak about her 40-year ministry to local needy families. Her story is very inspiring!

I wish to thank all who attended, donated gifts, provided refreshments, set-up, and cleaned up.

Please remember Rebecca in your prayers as she continues to do the Lord's work. You might also stop by their non-profit thrift store located at 1401 7th Ave. in Neptune City. Proceeds from the thrift store pay the monthly bills.

Diane Maher



UNITED METHODISTS
OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
& GREATER NEW JERSEY

Dear Greater New Jersey United Methodists,

We have been alerted to an email scam currently circulating that appears to come from Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi. The email offers a free piano, that was donated by a Mrs. Amanda. The email address is not Bishop Moore-Koikoi's, but instead amandarousey240@gmail.com. Please be advised that this message is a **scam** and was **not** sent by Bishop Moore-Koikoi. **Do not** reply, **do not click links**, or provide any personal information. If you receive this email, we recommend reporting it as phishing or spam and deleting it immediately.

Thank you for your attentiveness to this matter. We are grateful for your care in helping prevent the spread of fraudulent activity.

Grace and peace,

EPA&GNJ Communications Team



We here at Interfaith Neighbors are very grateful for the gift ($1204.06) that was received in August from your congregation. We are truly appreciative of your support of Interfaith Neighbors and our community. - Bonnie Johnson, volunteer

(Our June communion offering benefits Interfaith Neighbors.)

COMMUNITY DINNER

THIS SUNDAY!

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. 15-Nov. 21

Judges 4:1-7
Psalm 123
Psalm 76
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
Matthew 25:14-30

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

NEW LIST

Please think of stocking shelf-stable proteins, whole grains, canned vegetables, baby essentials.

A good idea this week:
Uncrustables



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

That's the thing about faith. If you don't have it, you can't understand it. And if you do, no explanation is necessary.
-Kira Nerys

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 NOVEMBER COMMUNION OFFERING BENEFITS HOPE SCHOOL.

Please be Praying for...

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



MERCY CENTER

NEW LIST

The Outreach Commission thanks you for your continued support of the Mercy Center food bank. Here are the current needs: canned beans, peanut butter, brown rice, oatmeal, cooking oil, flour, sugar, spices, coffee, juice, crackers, baby food, applesauce, black-eyed peas, canned fish, canned fruits, canned vegetables, canned soup, canned meat, whole grain pasta, granola bars, low-sugar cereal, shelf-stable milk, popcorn, dried herbs, whole grain cereal, baked goods.



