

The

# MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2017

## STOP THIEF!

After some last minute Christmas shopping with her grandchildren, a grandmother was rushing the little cherubs into the car when four-year-old Jason said, "Grandma, Susie has something in her pocket." He reached in and pulled out a new red barrette which little Susie had "lifted" from the store. Oops.

Though she was tired, the grandmother knew it was important for Susie to put the item back where she found it. They walked back in the store and did just that. Later at another store checkout, the clerk asked, "Have you kids been good so Santa will come?"

*"I've been very good," replied Jason, "but my sister just robbed a store!"*

Wouldn't you love to be that grandmother? Talk about uncomfortable moments!

So, I'm wondering how many of us are thieves during this wonderful Christmas holiday season? I don't mean stealing barrettes from drug stores, or robbing banks, or cheating on our time sheet at work. But I'm wondering how many of us rob ourselves of the joy and wonder...

- of the Son of God coming to the world wrapped in the rags of a poverty stricken baby?
- of shepherds who became wise men that night because they humbled themselves before the baby king?
- of wisemen who actually became wiser because they lowered themselves like shepherds before the infant ruler?
- of angels swirling around his birth crying out, "Glory to God in the Highest?!"
- of the days of the stronghold of sin being numbered as the countdown begins to a victory on a rough hewn cross?

Too often we trade in the wonder for the whirlwind of seasonal busy-ness.

We exchange the supernatural for the super savings of department & online stores just a few days before Christmas.

We jettison the joy of God's ultimate gift to jump into the fray of last minute gift-buying stress and plans to return gifts we haven't even received, yet!

Yeah, I think we tend to rob ourselves of the joy and wonder of Christmas. In fact, most of us are probably guilty of grand larceny! All because we robbed ourselves of the power and presence of the one who changes lives.

So let's try something different. Let's stop...

- grabbing every opportunity to be at every sale (people go broke at sales, you know!)
- staying up late at night trying to figure out how to keep all the relatives happy at the holidays (you can't - so quit trying!).
- getting joy and peace from having every gift wrapped and every decoration in place at the appointed time instead of receiving joy from the greatest gift, who was wrapped in rags and arrived just when we needed him.

Let's stop the thievery at Christmas... Jesus is here... nothing else matters. Nothing.

May you enjoy the Happiest of Christmases (thievery free, of course!),

I love you,

*Pastor Ed*



### Sunday Worship Services and Sunday School

9:00am  
Contemporary  
(Family Life Center)

10:30am  
Traditional  
(Sanctuary)

Sunday School  
9:00am  
Preschool  
5th Grade & Adults

10:30am  
6th-12th Grade

Youth Group  
6:00-8:00pm  
Thompson Hall



## First United Methodist Church of Toms River OUR MISSION...

BELONGING TO THE FAMILY

BELIEVING THE GOOD NEWS

BECOMING LIKE JESUS



## OUTREACH REPORT

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1. First United Methodist Church Activities are as follows: A) Praise God for the results of our Samaritan's Purse Gift Collection- In 2015 we collected 137 boxes to send around the world to children who would be receiving no gifts at Christmas. However, after a suspension of the program for one year, we collected 213 shoe boxes this year. GOD is GOOD! Wow! That's an increase of 76 boxes from 2015. A big thank you goes out to Dan and Barbara Clinch for chairing this program. 2) Kathy Newsome is hard at work with her Christmas Tree collection of hats, gloves, scarves, and pajamas. This annual Christmas project makes sure that needy children in Ocean County have the clothing to keep warm. All items collected go to the Hope Center for distribution. Thank you! Kathy. 3) A big thank you goes out to all the congregants who brought in foodstuffs on November 19th and presented them up front at the same time pledge cards were presented. We call this day "Harvest Home" Sunday as we have established a goal once a year of bringing in food in order to fill the cupboards of the needy in Ocean County during Thanksgiving weekend. All the food and personal hygiene items go to the Jackson Baptist Church and the Hope Center which are part of the Ocean County Hunger Relief organization. 4) Our Paula Brown Soup Kitchens are as active as ever. During the month of December, they will be providing healthy meals to the needy on December 19th and December 26th from 3 to 4:30 P.M. Remember when you see the Paula Brown Soup Kitchen Tables set up, please approach them and volunteer to donate some food for a great cause. You have a dedicated group of men and women donating their time and effort for others. Betty Lou Pinto and Kris Olsen are the leaders of this extraordinary event. 5) When you talk about GOD'S BLESSINGS, you talk about our Holly Berry Bazaar. This year we raised close to \$12,000 from the bazaar. All money made from this exciting event is used for church expenses and United Methodist Women's Missions. Jane Laub's spiritual leadership is the driving force behind this event. 6) Don't forget that our Fourth Quarter Mission Offerings go to the United Methodist Homes. The purpose of this money is to make sure no resident will ever lose their residency in the home(s) where they reside.

2) December, 2017 opportunities for outreach are as follows: 1) On Sunday, December 3rd, we will be collecting fruit during both services in order to make fruit baskets for our Homebound Members. This is a compassionate ministry of

our church that makes sure people who are unable to attend church are reminded that their church still thinks about them and loves them. Please think about delivering a basket or two to a Homebound Member or Members. You'll make their day with a special visit and a fruit basket. Please donate fruit on Sunday, December the 3rd. 2) On Sunday, December 10th, we will be collecting dolls, action figures, games, and arts and crafts for needy young children in Ocean County and 15 dollar gift certificates to Applebees, fast food places, the movies, Target, and Walmart for teenagers in need. All the gifts collected are given to the Hope Center which distributes the gifts to parents on a Christmas gift night in December. We have been participating in this event for years and realize the joy that we place on a needy child's face when they are able to open up a gift(s) on Christmas Day. It's great to be a blessing to children who, otherwise, would have no gifts to open up. 3) The December food collection will take place on Sunday, December 17th. This is the third Sunday of the month. Why? So we can provide the necessary foodstuffs for the needy of Ocean County during the holidays. Let's help take the worry of securing food out of the holiday and give the recipients more time to giving thanks to GOD for His blessing and care.

3) The Hope Center Report- Services rendered during the month of September, 2017 are as follows: 1) 56 households were served for a total of \$2826.85 in expenditures. Emergency Shelter- 37 nights- \$2042; Utilities- 7 families- \$390.85; Gas vouchers- 20 families- \$394.00. Other expenditures- 25 nights of shelter- \$2181.60; Shop-Rite Cards- 8 households- \$250.00; and miscellaneous gift cards- 12 households- \$535.00. The Food Pantry distributed 20, 579 pounds of food to 425 families which included 763 adults and 331 children. The Hope Center is a church-based ministry that attempts to alleviate suffering in our local society and sends out a thank you to FUMC for all our participation in the program.

Remember- WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING- GOD TAUGHT US THE TRUE MEANING OF GIVING WHEN HE GAVE US HIS ONLY SON AS A SACRIFICE SO THAT WE COULD HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. LET OUR LIFE REFLECT THE TRUE MEANING OF THIS TIME OF YEAR----"JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON"---AND LET OUR ACTIONS PROVE THAT WE BELIEVE THAT FAMILIAR QUOTE.



## EARLY HISTORY OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TOMS RIVER THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR PERIOD

The last year's of the 1940's started the population explosion in the Toms River area. This was reflected in Sunday School attendance. The Sunday School had to operate in two sessions, 9:45 A.M. and 11 A.M. In 1948, 22 young people attended one of the Methodist camps with half of their tuition paid by the church. A young adult group, the Modern Methodists was formed and in 1947, 40 new members joined the church. In March 1949 leaded stained glass memorial windows were a beautiful addition. Several of these windows are located in the hallway of the present Education Wing.

In 1949 all Methodist churches changed the name of the Epworth League to the Methodist Youth Fellowship. We contributed \$649 to build the new Methodist Hospital in Philadelphia. We helped bring a displaced family from Europe to be caretakers at Mt. Misery.

In October 1949 a week of evangelistic meetings were held and 52 new members were added to the rolls that year. A new door had to be added to the sanctuary to meet fire codes. The Sunday School was so crowded that we decided to buy a new parsonage and use the old one for the church school. A paid church secretary was hired for the first time. The Church was growing.

Several plans for more room were considered--buying the Catholic rectory next door and moving graves in the cemetery we still owned. More property behind the church was purchased. (It is interesting to note that the new property held the first Methodist Meeting House which had been moved, used as a grocery store and later as part of a double house.) In

June 1960 a new two story education building was dedicated. As the church continued to grow, two paid parish visitors were added. One concentrated on the many retirees moving to the area, the other on young married couples. It became difficult to keep such a large congregation informed so "The Informer," a church newsletter was started in 1960. The name was changed to "The Messenger," which has a better connotation

During this period the church again became a community center. Perhaps it began in 1953 when an amplifying system in the belfry first sent out Christmas carols for the whole community. At any rate the busy church housed a Brownie Troop, A Girl Scout Troop, A Cub Pack and a Boy Scout Troop. Seventh Day Adventists met on Saturdays. The DeMolay Mothers, The African Violet Club, Community Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, Ocean County Library Association and Parents Without Partners met regularly in the fellowship room. It was the collection center for UNICEF at Halloween and the Jayceettes used it for their Christmas children for special children. The Red Cross, TB Association and the Council on Alcohol Problems held luncheon meetings, and the Toms River High School French Club had its dinner meetings there.

The ministry of music was also expanding. The church now had three choirs. A new Hammond electric organ was purchased in 1961. In 1967 new hymnals were purchased. In 1971 the youth choir won second place in the Kiwanis Club Talent Show. About this time they adopted the name "Singspirations" and frequently provided "music of the modern trend" for church services.



## A YULETIDE STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

### 5 WAYS TO CELEBRATE CHRIST THIS CHRISTMAS

Are you getting caught up in our culture's consumerist Christmas mindset? Have the courage to step away from the junk and refocus the season on Christ with these Christmas traditions!

It's December, which means Andy Williams is once again serenading frenzied shoppers through mall speaker systems across America: with: "It's the most wonderful time of the year!"

Cue the record scratch. WONDERFUL?

Well, Christmas should be the most wonderful time of the year. But often, instead of celebrating what matters, you get caught up in our culture's consumerist mindset. And that stresses you out long after you've left the mall. Then you wake up in January with a holiday spending hangover. Yuck.

You can have a Christmas that's as calm and bright as the night Jesus was born. The key is turning the focus on Him while keeping less spiritual traditions in check. We're not suggesting you be a Scrooge and box up the stockings and tinsel for good. It's okay to have fun! You just need the courage to step away from the junk.

It's tough to go against the grain. But refocusing the season on Christ can really make Christmas the most wonderful time of the year. How can you shift your perspective? Read on for some ways to bring Jesus into your Christmas traditions.

1) Celebrate Jesus' Birthday- Instead of a pie at Christmas dinner, bake a birthday cake and let the kids decorate it. Then round out your meal by singing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. Just don't try to sticking a few thousand candles on top of the cake!

2) Read or Watch The Best Christmas Pageant Ever- This '70s children's classic by Barbara Robinson (made into a TV movie in 1983) is substantial enough to be a favorite of adults too. It reminds us that Christmas is the perfect opportunity to love the unlovable and to share the story of Christ's birth with them. You may have something to teach, but you'll probably learn a

thing or two about love and acceptance as well. So snuggle up with some hot chocolate by a warm fire and enjoy the story as a family.

3) Tame the gift monster by instituting the Three-Gift Rule- If we aren't careful, kids can begin to see Christmas as an occasion for tearing into a pile of gifts. To quash any budding sense of materialism, buy everyone in your family three gifts apiece to mirror the three gifts the Magi brought to Jesus. If it was good enough for the King of kings, it's good enough for your little prince or princess. Then pull last year's gifts from the bottom of the toy pile and donate them to charity. Contentment? Check. Generosity? Check. A bank account with money in it? Check.

4) Give Gifts to Jesus- Speaking of generosity, what better way to honor Christ than to be His hands and feet for others? Buy some chickens for a hungry family through Compassion International's gift catalog. Help your children save their money to contribute to a special family offering at church or buy gifts for needy people---Operation Christmas Child & the Hope Center's Provide a Christmas Gift for Needy Ocean County Children. Each time you show Christ's love, write it down and put the paper in a gift box under the tree. On Christmas morning, open it up and read through each gift for Christ.

5) Remember the Greatest Gift of All- Start Christmas morning by reading the gospel accounts of the Christmas story and saying a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the greatest gift of all---salvation through Christ. If you have children, carry the message home by placing a baby doll on a bed of straw in a basket. Then put the basket under your Christmas tree along with the other gifts.

Ready to start some new traditions with your family this Christmas season. Try one or two of the above suggestions and see if you and your family begin to focus more on the real meaning of Christmas! Remember- "JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!"



## HOW DOES A GIFT ANNUITY WORK?

### SUPPORT CHRIST'S WORK IN YOUR CHURCH WHILE GAINING A LIFETIME INCOME WITH INCOME TAX SAVINGS.

BETTY, AGE 86, ESTABLISHES A \$25000 FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TOMS RIVER ENDOWMENT GIFT ANNUITY. THEN SHE GETS AN ANNUAL FIXED PAYMENT OF \$2000 OR AN 8.0% RETURN ON HER ORIGINAL GIFT. THIS PAYOUT WILL NEVER CHANGE. THIS GIFT IS SET ASIDE AND ONLY GOES INTO THE ENDOWMENT AFTER BETTY NO LONGER NEEDS IT.

#### MORE WAYS YOU BENEFIT

- A GIFT ANNUITY ESTABLISHED BY DECEMBER 31 QUALIFY FOR A 2017 CHARITABLE INCOME TAX DEDUCTION.
- THE SATISFACTION OF MAKING A GIFT THAT BENEFITS YOUR CHURCH IN THE FUTURE AND YOU TODAY.
- GIFT ANNUITIES CAN BENEFIT UP TO TWO PEOPLE MAKIING AN IDEAL WAY FOR FINANCIAL SECURITY FOR A SPOUSE OR OTHER LOVED ONE.
- AVIOD CAPITAL GAINS TAXES WHEN USING APPRECIATE STOCK TO FUND YOUR GIFT ANNUITY.
- AUTOMATICALLY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST TOMS RIVER HERITAGE SOCIETY WITH NAME(S) PLACED ON PLAQUE ON THE LOBBY WALL AND AN INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATE FOR THE DONOR.

"Need Help? For a no obligation, personalized example of your payment rate and annual payment. Also, your tax savings based on your age, and donation amount will be figured out. Just call the Church office at 732-349-8155.

## CONTACTS

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BOB WAHLERS  
JERE WILLIAMS  
Or call Church office  
732-349-8155

#### HOW MUCH WILL I RECEIVE?

IF YOU DONATE \$25,000  
AGE 75 81 86 90  
RATE 5.8% 7.0% 8.0% 9.0%  
PAYOUT PER YEAR TO YOU  
\$1450 \$1750 \$2000 \$2250  
(Minimum gift is \$10,000)



*First United Methodist Church Presents:*  
**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
*Celebration*

*December 24th, 2017*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>5:00PM</b><br/>         praise team,<br/>         candlelight,<br/>         and children's story in<br/> <b>THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER</b></p> | <p><b>7:00PM</b><br/>         carols, communion,<br/>         candlelight, choir,<br/>         and family worship in<br/> <b>THE SANCTUARY</b></p> |
|--|--|



**First United  
 Methodist Church**  
*of Toms River*

[www.fumctr.com](http://www.fumctr.com)



## MEMORIALS GIVEN

### TO THE MEMORIAL GARDEN

In memory of John General,  
 Given by Newsome's

### TO THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

In Memory of John Fischer,  
 given by Newsome's

## BAPTISM

JORDAN MCVOY, 11-19-17,  
 son of Christopher & Courtney McVoy

## DEATHS

EFFIE MCKINNON

JOINED FUMCTR 12.27.92 AND DIED 10.27.17

## NURSERY SCHOOL

The Holidays will be a joyous time at Chestnut Hill. The halls will be filled with toy soldiers, Christmas angles and the children will be giddy with excitement as we count down to the "Big" day. A big thank you to all the families that donated toys to Brandon's Elves. You made a huge difference to a child who may not have received any toys for the Christmas holiday.

The children will make presents for their families and prepare to visit with the big man in the red suit. The Sanctuary always looks so beautiful decorated with pointsettias and lighted with wreaths, we can not wait to show it off to all our parents as they come to celebrate the season on family night. A long winter's nap will follow as we prepare for parent /teacher conferences. Snuggling in for chilly January will be the perfect time to test our little ones on just how super smart they are! We love to talk to our parents at conference time.

To all our families: We wish you a perfect holiday filled with family, friends, peace and love.

*First United Methodist Church Presents:*  
**Confirmation**



**BELONG, BELIEVE, BECOME**

To sign up or receive more information, contact  
 us at [wesellis@fumctr.com](mailto:wesellis@fumctr.com) or call  
 732-349-8155



# DECEMBER

| SUN   | MON  | TUES  | WED   | THURS  | FRI   | SAT   |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
|   |  |   |   |  | 1   | 2<br><br>Christmas<br>Decorating  |
| 3<br><br>Sarah Circle<br>Greeters<br><br>Collection of<br>Fruit for Baskets<br>Annual Food<br>Collection                          | 4<br><br>6pm<br>UMW Dinner,<br>LaBove Grande,<br>Lakehurst | 5   | 6<br><br>7pm<br>WOO<br>Bible Study<br>MC  | 7<br><br>7-8pm<br>Acts<br>Bible Study<br>MC  | 8<br><br>10am<br>Breakfast<br>Setup<br>FLC                    | 9<br><br>8-10am<br>UMM<br>Pancake<br>Breakfast<br>(UM Homes)<br>FLC<br><br>Christmas<br>flowers Delivered<br>(help with setting up) |
| 10<br><br>Soup Kitchen<br>sign up<br>FLC<br><br>Hygiene<br>Items<br>Collection<br>FLC & NARTHEX                                   | 11   | 12<br><br>12:30pm<br>Eve Circle<br>TH<br><br>6:30pm<br>UMM Bible<br>Study<br>TH         | 13<br><br>3-5pm<br>Nine Patchers<br>TH  | 14   | 15<br><br><b>Messenger<br/>Deadline for<br/>Jan &amp; Feb</b> | 16  |
| 17  | 18   | 19<br><br>3:00-4:30pm<br>Soup Kitchen<br>FLC<br><br>6:30pm<br>Trustees<br>Meeting<br>WR | 20<br><br>CHNS<br>Meet & Greet<br>Mr. & Mrs. Claus<br><br>7pm<br>WOO<br>Bible Study<br>MC | 21   | 22  | 23  |
| 24<br><br>10am<br>One Worship<br>Service<br>(Sanctuary)<br><br>5pm<br>Candlelight<br>FLC<br><br>7pm<br>Candlelight<br>(Sanctuary) | 25<br><br>CHNS<br>Closed for<br>Winter Break               | 26<br><br>NO<br>Soup Kitchen<br><br>CHNS<br>Closed for<br>Winter Break                  | 27<br><br>3-5pm<br>Nine Patchers<br>TH<br><br>CHNS<br>Closed for<br>Winter Break          | 28<br><br>CHNS<br>Closed for<br>Winter Break | 29<br><br>CHNS<br>Closed for<br>Winter Break                  | 30  |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>MONDAYS</b><br>6-8pm First Place for Health - FLC<br>7pm Boy Scouts - FLC | <b>TUESDAYS</b><br>7:00 pm Praise Team - FLC | <b>WEDNESDAYS</b><br>4:30 Youth Choir (Grades 7-12) - CR<br>5:30 YGENESIS Choir - CR | <b>THURSDAYS</b><br>6:30 Fellowship Bells - CR<br>7:30 Sanctuary Choir - CR |
|--|--|--|---|

CR = Choir Room, FLC = Family Life Center, MC = Media Center, R4 = Room 4, TH = Thompson Hall, WR = Wilden Room



**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
OF TOMS RIVER**

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Wes Ellis, Associate Pastor  
Linda J. Hendrickson, Director of Music  
Dr. Harold E. Schmul II, Pastor Emeritus  
Kathy Newsome, Lay Leader  
Paula Smith, Administrative Assistant  
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The Messenger is posted monthly (except  
Dec/Jan & Summer (June, July, Aug) on the  
FUMCTR website @ [www.fumctr.org](http://www.fumctr.org).

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