

The MESSENGER

JANUARY // FEBRUARY 2018

JUST BABIES!

Years ago, in *The Last Days Newsletter*, Leonard Ravenhill tells about a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village who noticed an older man sitting beside a fence. He was a lifelong resident.

In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked, "Were any great men born in this village?"

The man replied, "**Nope, just babies.**"

Pretty good comeback, huh? I thought so, too!

As I was thinking about the man's snappy answer, I began to think of the many conversations I have had with Christians over the years. One of the big questions we all seem to have at one point or another goes something like...

"I have been a Christian for a number of years now, why can't I seem to get my faith all together? Why do I still struggle?"

Sound familiar?

Well, we can apply the spirit of the answer from the man in the village. That is...we start out as babies and we experience a spiritual growth process for the rest of our lives. This is not an easy answer for our "instant" generation, but it is the best one. In essence, we are growing for our whole lives.

Listen to the Apostle Paul,

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." - 1st Peter 2:3-3

You and I are involved in a lifelong growth process where we experience both ups and downs. It is not a perfect process...but it is the one for which we were created.

Where can you grow in your faith and life?...

...Maybe there is a relationship, which needs healing, and it's time for you to make the first move? Maybe your "God Trust Index" is low and God wants you to lean on Him more than ever? Maybe there is a financial decision lurking in your future and God wants you to follow His financial path for once? Or, maybe you're just tired of going through the motions of faith and you know its time to get serious about being a Christian...one who lives out the truth of the Gospel in your personal life, your work life, your spiritual life, and all those other lives you've been hiding behind?

Maybe it's....well, just fill in the blank. You know what it should say.

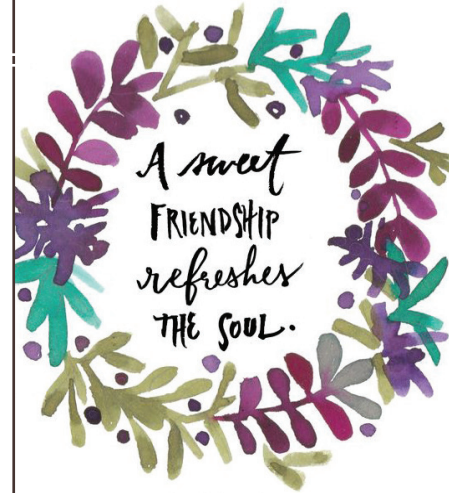
In this NEW YEAR, let's reflect on the NEW LIFE Jesus offers! So, to start the year off right, take a moment every day and thank God for the chance to grow in faith and hope and love. Our lives are a continual quest to experience more of the Risen Lord. If you have already started, keep thanking God for his goodness!

If you haven't, it is definitely time to begin.

Enjoy the journey. I'm glad we are taking it together.
Happy New Year!

I love you,

Pastor Ed



PROVERBS 27:9

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

1. The Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Shoebox Campaign--This project broke all records as 214 Christmas Shoe Boxes loaded with Christmas gifts were collected in November. These boxes will be distributed to children throughout the world and the children of families affected by the recent hurricanes. A big thank you goes out to Dan and Barbara Clinch who headed up this year's campaign of gifts.

2. Decorate the Christmas Tree and around the Christmas Tree with gloves, hats, scarves, pajamas, and socks. This year's campaign chaired by Kathy Newsome collected 100 hats, 8 pairs of socks, 65 pairs of mittens, 44 children's pajamas, 15 adult pajamas, and 13 scarves. The purpose of this project is to keep children and some adults of needy families warm throughout the winter months.

3. First Church remembers its Homebound Members with fruit baskets during every Christmas season. This year 17 fruit baskets were delivered by congregants to private homes, retirement villages, hospitals, and nursing homes as a reminder to all homebound members that the church still thinks about them. This is a United Methodist Women's project chaired by Dianna Correll. Joy is created when a recipient receives their basket filled with fresh fruit, candy, magnets, and bookmarks.

4. On Sunday, December 10th the church collected children's gifts and gift cards for teenagers who are members of a needy family. We cooperate with the Hope Center in implementing this project. The Hope Center sponsors a "shopping day" for needy parents who come to the Hope Center's distribution of gifts activity and are able to select a wonderful number of gifts for each child in their family. This year we collected 107 children's gifts and 17 gift cards. Several congregants have already called the church office and told Paula that they will be bringing in more gifts by the end of the week. The Hope Center sends their thank you to FUMC for our "Gift of Giving" throughout the year.

5. "Harvest Home Sunday" was a great success as a great amount of food was collected for needy families. This food helped these families not only on Thanksgiving Day but also over Thanksgiving weekend. We will be collecting foodstuffs on Sunday, December

17th at both services. This food will be used by families in need over the Christmas season.

6. Add to this our special collection for victims of the hurricanes and the cleaning buckets prepared by congregants that would be given to victims, you can see that there is something special about the FUMC congregation.....we are compassionate!

HOPE CENTER REPORT- 125 Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to needy people- complete with a turkey- for Thanksgiving dinner. 300 coats were distributed to needy residents to keep them warm.

During the month of October 37 households were served with an expenditure of \$3090.11. The money was used as follows: 1) Emergency shelter- 48 nights @ \$2,840.00; 2) Utilities - 5 families @ 250.11; and 3) Shop-Rite gift cards....2 households at \$100; 4) Miscellaneous gift cards....14 households- \$465.00; and 5) 19,480 pounds of food distributed to 460 families with 853 adults and 417 children.

6. Will be this...Church sponsored Thanksgiving Dinner- On Thanksgiving Day Roger and Ruth Shapley chaired an event that included many church volunteers. They set up and prepared an outstanding Thanksgiving Dinner for ninety-plus people in our Family Life Center. Those that attended enjoyed the fellowship, fun, decorations, and luscious food prepared by members of the church. It was a day that all who worked and attended could be thankful for as it was truly a day of Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving!

Thus far, through the month of September the Hope Center has spent \$38, 043.00 on relief measures. This amount is already \$5,000.00 more than was spent during all of 2016.

God gave us His Son to live a life on earth (incarnation) so we could be saved and gain eternal life. That's how much God loved us. This church of Christians has adopted a personality somewhat like God's and will share their wealth with others. Look at what we accomplished during the fall of the year. Add to this the Paula Brown Soup Kitchens, the Rummage Sale, the Men's Breakfast, and the Holly Berry Bazaar, and you can see how altruistic and compassionate our congregation is..."May God Bless Us Everyone."

NURSERY SCHOOL

We hope everyone had a joyous Christmas and a splendid New Year! We loved seeing Santa and Mrs. Clause and now we are back after a wonderful break.

January finds the children at Chestnut Hill nestled in and anxiously waiting for the playground to thaw! We love the Winter White stuff, but we love getting outside and running around much more. The teachers will find it a perfect time to assess the little ones and be able to tell the parents just how smart the children are at conferences in February. We love to be able to sit down and spend extra time to talk to our parents and update them on just how far their children have come in such a short period of time. It is truly remarkable to watch them grow and bloom.

Winter also finds Chestnut Hill having special visitors come into the building to keep us busy. We will welcome the Sheriff's Department, Cattus Island, our wonderful dental hygienist and the Ocean County Library. We will be very busy!!

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

SPIRITUAL RESOLUTIONS.....PART ONE.....FRED BITTNER

Every January, millions of people begin their year with New Year's resolutions. Losing weight, getting organized, exercising more, eating healthier, and managing finances better are some of the most common resolutions. But what about making spiritual New Year's resolutions?

We make commitments and tell our friends and family on January 1st, only to give it all up by January 3rd. But as humans, our struggle for consistency goes way beyond resolutions. Making commitments we can't keep runs all through society, back to Biblical times. In the Bible, James spoke of some people who can teach us a valuable lesson about great intentions that aren't aligned with God's will. "Listen carefully, those of you who make your plans and say, 'We are traveling to this city in the next few days. We'll stay there for one year while our business explodes and revenue is up.'" The reality is you have no idea where your life will take you tomorrow. You are like a mist that appears one moment and then vanishes another. It would be best to say, "If it is the Lord's will and we live long enough, we hope to do this project or pursue that dream." But your current speech indicates an arrogance that does not acknowledge the One who controls the universe, and this kind of big talking is the epitome of evil. So if you know the right way to live and ignore it, it is sin --plain and simple. (James 4: 13 - 17)

Our plans may or may not be God's plans. If we want to be successful with any New Year's resolutions, we must seek God's will. By His strength we might lose weight, eat better, or become better stewards of our finances. What does God want for our lives? When He convicts, He also equips us to follow through with the plan. When we know we are following God's plan, then we have more strength to stick to it, allowing Him to work well beyond our normal January 3rd quitting date. "For this reason, my brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the return of the Lord. Look! The farmer knows how to wait patiently for the land to produce vegetables and fruits. He cannot harvest a freshly planted seed. Instead, he waits for the early and the late showers to nourish the soil. You need this same kind of patience, so in the meantime, strengthen your resolve because the Lord will be coming soon." James 5:7-8

The farmer waits patiently for the Lord to bring the growth, but it doesn't mean he sits on his porch doing nothing. The farmer works hard, watering and weeding, repairing equipment, and completing all the daily chores. When a farmer does what a farmer is supposed to do, God is able to do the things that only He can do. It's not easy being patient.

Would the Lord be honored if our bodies (the temple of the Holy Spirit) were in better shape? Would He be blessed if our financial affairs were in order? Is it possible that He would use us mightily if we serve in a ministry, or shared our faith? The answer to each of these questions is the same. Certainly the Lord can be in these things. However, committing to lose weight does not mean sitting on the couch with a bag of chips watching the Biggest Loser. Like the farmer, we must do what we need to do, so that God can do what only He can do to produce results in our lives. But, why is it that we only make resolutions about weight, exercise, and money?

God would be honored if we made spiritual resolutions. Read the Bible, get involved in ministry at your church, share our faith with friends, make a step of faith that is so big that only God can make it happen. Resolve to represent Him no matter what the cost. "Let's then go out to Him and resolve to bear the insult and abuse that He endured." (Hebrews 13: 13).

FIRST PLACE 4 HEALTH

Make this the year for a healthier you.
Learn tools to improve your spiritual,
emotional, mental & physical health.
With God's help success is certain!

Where: Thompson Hall

When: Monday evenings from 6-8pm

New Class- Jan 22 2018

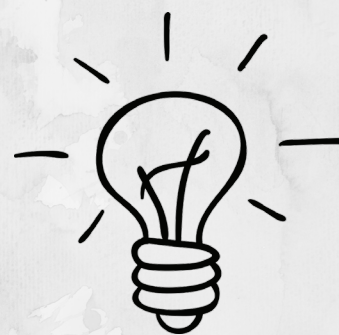
Cost: Books are \$25 for a 12 week Bible study.

Please register by
January 9th for the new session.

Contact: Patty Bailey
Home : 732-998-8546
Cell : 732-551-1317
E-mail: glassflowermama@gmail.com

First United Methodist Church Presents:

Confirmation



BELONG, BELIEVE, BECOME

To sign up or receive more information, contact
us at wesellis@fumctr.com or call



732-349-8155



EARLY HISTORY OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TOMS RIVER

THE DECADE OF THE SIXTIES

The Methodist Men met monthly and sometimes for breakfast Sunday morning before the worship service. They did many of the repair and improvement projects in the church. They helped with a redecorating project at Wells Chapel in South Toms River. One part of the group became the Fishermen's Club. They also visited prospective members as a special project and one year were responsible for 56 new members.

Between 1962 and 1971 the Toms River Board of Education rented as many as 4 rooms in the education building for classrooms. Schools could not be built fast enough to accommodate the growing population caused by the Garden State Parkway. Until the Town Hall was built, the Methodist Church answered the need of the entire community for a large meeting place.

In 1965 the summer 8:30 A.M. service was changed to 9:30 A.M. and we began to have two services year round. Heavy attendance at Christmas and Easter necessitated 3 services. In 1973, average Sunday School attendance was 180 and Vacation Bible School was held for two weeks and attracted close to 100 students.

The church population continued to grow. By November, 1965 the Youth Building (the old parsonage) was bulging so opening services were held in the church basement Fellowship Hall and the 11th and 12th grade classes stayed there to study. Parking was a problem on weekdays.

In September 1966 the final payment was made on the education building. In 1966 and again in 1974 an original Lenten daily devotional was prepared by the members. The church continued to support the programs of Methodism worldwide. Missionary work was not neglected. Benevolence funds were sent to: Alaska Methodist College, Church Board of Temperance, Flood Relief, Camden Deaconess Home, and the Negro College Fund. In nearby

areas we gave to the South Amboy Church which was leveled by fire and the Merchantville Church which was destroyed by a gas explosion. In Toms River the church gave to the Community Hospital Building Fund.

In 1967 Operation Coffee Cup was an attempt to help the general public realize the true meaning of Christmas. A center for distributing free coffee was set up outside of the Grants store during the last days of the Christmas rush. Members of the W.S.C.S. manned the center as they poured free coffee and distributed booklets on the real meaning of Christmas. During that first operation 620 cups of coffee were served and 1,040 booklets were distributed.

IN 1968 THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHERN AND THE METHODIST CHURCHES VOTED TO MERGE. WE THEN BECAME THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TOMS RIVER.

In 1969 the Commission on Social Concerns was very active, searching out needy families and providing baskets of food at Thanksgiving and food and toys at Christmas. With the aid of a circle from the W.S.C.S. they set up a clothing distribution center for poor families. They worked to get American POWs released and conducted a race relations study. The Annex was used for Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

The congregation was looking for a new location. In 1969 the property on Old Freehold Road and Chestnut Street was purchased. The cost was \$46,970.64. The church borrowed \$35,000. The church on Hooper and Washington was put up for sale. The Board of Freeholders considered making it a historical site but in 1972 they decided against it.

A buyer for the old church was found and we were moving. The old church sold for \$180,000.



February 10th there's a youth ministry training event called "IGNITE: Leaders' Day" at Monmouth Grace United Methodist Church. All youth, parents of youth, and youth workers are encouraged to attend! People can get more information and register at the event website: www.ignitenj.org/youthleadersday

ENDOWMENT FUND

START THE NEW YEAR WITH A GIFT TO YOUR CHURCH!

Jim Graef, on behalf of the committee, in September 2017, wrote our members and friends about "Create a Lasting Legacy." The first step is to gaining peace of mind by making sure one has an up to date Will protecting important people in one's life. This Will can also be used to invest in our Church as an instrument to permanently support Christ's ministry on Earth. The vehicle to receive this permanent gift is the First United Methodist Toms River, NJ, Permanent Endowment Fund. Persons who donate to this Fund \$5000 or more by Will, cash, beneficiary of Life Insurance in whole or in part, Charitable Gift Annuity, or other means, become members of **The First United Church Toms River Heritage Society** (Current members are listed on the plaque in lobby of the Sanctuary)

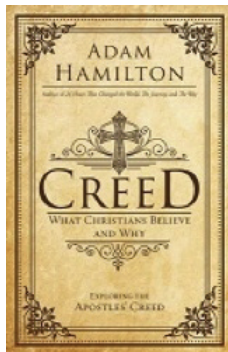
Early 2018 is a great time to arrange a gift to the permanent endowment fund since we will be celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Permanent Endowment Fund's founding in May! As a part of this event, the Heritage Society Plaque will be updated and could include your name. And your gift could be promised in the future such as including it in your Will or as a portion of a life insurance policy. Or it can be gift made with a current donation such as cash or stock. Some will find the Charitable Gift Annuity where the donor receives income for their lifetime will be the most attractive method.

Our Church members and friends have donated (adjusted for inflation) \$692,631.38 as of September 30, 2017. These earnings of these donations have allowed almost \$200,000 to be used in God's work at our Church. Last year \$36,000 was used, while in 2018 \$39,600 will be distributed for the ministry of our Church. Former pastor and his wife, Harold & Caroline Schmul provided the inspiration for its beginning, but members and friends of First Church have made it successful by the prayers and financial support. Remember, only the earnings can be used thereby providing a forever gift in the donor's honor.

The Permanent Endowment & Planned Giving Ministry Committee are Jere Williams, Chair, Frank Strucci, Treasurer, Mary Bode, Chris Christensen, Jim Graef, Peter Rich, Sibyl Walczak, and Robert Wahlers. Bob Auer serves as volunteer Consultant. Ex-office members are Charles Burch, Trustee Chair, Heike Graef, Finance Chair, and Dr. Ed Davis, Senior Pastor. **Please feel free to contact any of the above persons with any questions you might have.**

LENTEN STUDY

CREED By Adam Hamilton



Do you have questions about foundational Christian truths such as the purpose for life...And how those truths affect our everyday lives?

So many of us do...

During the Lenten season, join Pastor Ed for a study about what Christians believe and why it matters to God and us based on the Apostles' Creed.

Believing that powerful answers are embedded in that Apostles' Creed, we will be discussing:

1. Jesus Christ
2. The Holy Spirit
3. The Church and the Communion of Saints
4. The Forgiveness of Sins
5. The Resurrection of the Body

Books are available for \$13.00 ~ Book scholarships are available!

*We will meet on February 21, 28 and March 7, 14, 21.



DEATHS

THOMAS CARNEY JOINED FUMCTR 5.19.13
AND PASSED 11.24.17

MARLEN BELLITTO JOINED FUMC 5.23.99
AND PASSED 12.4.17

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1 OFFICE CLOSED	2	3	4 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	5	6
7	8 7pm Ruth Circle TH 7pm UMW Exec. Bd. Mtg. RM 4	9 10am Knitters TH 12:30pm Eve Circle TH 4pm Phoebe Circle TH	10 3-5pm Nine Patchers TH 7pm Esther Circle Sue Malinowski's home	11 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	12 10am UMM Pancake Breakfast Setup	13 8-10am UMM Pancake Breakfast FLC
14	15 OFFICE CLOSED CHNS CLOSED	16 3-4:30pm Soup Kitchen TH 6:30pm Trustees WR	17	18 6:30pm CHNS Board Meeting WR 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	19	20
21	22 11:30am Sarah Circle TH	23 10am Knitters TH 3-4:30pm Soup Kitchen TH	24 3-5pm Nine Patchers TH	25 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	26	27
28	29	30	31			

MONDAYS

9am Crafters - FLC
6-8pm First Place for Health - FLC
7pm Boy Scouts - FLC

TUESDAYS

7:00 pm Praise Team - FLC

WEDNESDAYS

4:30 Youth Choir
(Grades 7-12) - CR
5:30 YGENESIS Choir - CR

THURSDAYS

6:30 Fellowship Bells - CR
7:30 Sanctuary Choir - CR

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

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	2	3
4	5 7pmm UMW Exec. Bd. Mtg. RM4	6	7 5:30pm Covenant Bible Study RM 4	8 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	9 10am UMM Pancake Breakfast Setup	10 8-10am UMM Pancake Breakfast FLC
11	12 7pm Ruth Circle TH	13 10am Knitters TH 12:30pm Eve Circle TH 4pm Phoebe Circle TH	14 3-5pm Nine Patchers TH 1pm Ash Wednesday SANCTUARY 7pm Ash Wednesday SANCTUARY	15 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	16	17
18	19	20 3-4:30pm Soup Kitchen TH	21 3-4:30pm Soup Kitchen TH 5:30pm Covenant Bible Study RM 4 7pm Lent Study #1 RM 4	22 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	23	24
25	26 11:30am Sarah Circle TH	27 10am Knitters TH 3-4:30pm Soup Kitchen TH 7pm Church Council MTG. TH	28 3-5pm Nine Patchers TH 7pm Lent Study #1 RM 4			

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**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
OF TOMS RIVER**

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Kathy Newsome, Lay Leader
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