

HOW IS IT?

How's your prayer life? I mean, how is it, really?

Is it a hit or miss effort that sometimes happens and sometimes doesn't? Is it a regular routine, which you've been doing for years and somehow has become more "routine" than "regular conversation" with God? Is it a time of joy and encouragement? Or is it a dreaded responsibility you feel guilty about if you don't put in your time?

How's your prayer life?

In our world which never sleeps - where our accomplishments get all the attention, prayer has become an after thought of minimal importance.

"After all, with so much to do, who has time to pray?" we tend to say.

We get raises, incentive clauses, pats on the back, good reputations, and impressive resumes from the things we do. And prayer doesn't seem like a "do" thing. It seems like a "wait around and do-nothing" thing. As a result, we have not grasped the divine importance of an ongoing conversation with the Almighty.

How's your prayer life?

If God is going to have his way with us at First Church (both with us as individuals & as a body of Christ), God is going to make His way with ordinary people, like you and me. People who have an extraordinary trust in, and regular conversation with, Jesus.

As Christians, we can celebrate a God who wants a daily relationship with us! We can celebrate that we are loved so much God would rather die than live without us! We can celebrate that whatever life may bring our way, our heavenly Father, through the Savior, Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, wants to walk alongside us every step of the way! We never need to be alone!

What He wants us to do is diligently seek Him through the conversation of prayer. And as we do, the Spirit will descend upon us and we'll begin to understand the way God moves. Then we'll want to move in the same way.

I don't want to miss that reality during Lent because I was *doing* things instead of *talking with God* about things. I'm sure you wouldn't, either.

I'm so glad we are taking the journey together.

How's your prayer life?

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

HOPE CENTER REPORT : Their 2017 Annual Report

The Hope Center served 12,523 men, women, and children for a total of 4,512 families, they distributed 205, 994 pounds of food, distributed Shop-Rite Gift Cards to 83 households, provided 186 gasoline vouchers, assisted with 49 gas, water, and electric bills, provided individuals and families with 806 nights of emergency shelter, and 45 nights of safe shelter through rental assistance.

In addition, in March, we provided 57 Easter baskets to 22 families; in August and September, we provided 98 backpacks filled with school supplies to 98 children and 34 families with an additional 21 backpacks donated to the Toms River School System and 14 backpacks given to other organizations. In November, we distributed 125 Thanksgiving baskets and turkeys plus 21 fully cooked meals that were delivered to client's homes. In November and December, there were 292 winter coats distributed to our brothers and sisters in need; and for Christmas we provided 3,317 gifts/toys to 516 children in 168 families, and 13 Christmas dinner baskets were delivered serving 48 people.

Remember the Hope Center helps the needy throughout the County of Ocean and we are part of their system. Together.... WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE! Praise the LORD!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OUTREACH ACTIVITIES FROM OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) We provided cleaning buckets for those affected by Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Maria.
- 2) We held a UMW Rummage Sale in October that helped finance contributions to missions and church expenses.
- 3) We held a Holly Berry Bazaar that also was organized by the UMW that provided funds for missions and church expenses.
- 4) We participated in Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas

Child and provided over 200 gift boxes for needy children throughout the world and also children that were victims of the hurricanes.

- 5) We had an Operation Christmas Tree that provided gloves, hats, scarves, and pajamas for needy children/adults in Ocean County.
- 6) The UMM sponsored breakfasts during the last quarter of the year and funds raised went to missions and people in need.
- 7) We provided fruit baskets for our homebound members who appreciated the thoughts and donations of our members. They were blessed by the deliveries made by our members.
- 8) Harvest Home Sunday in November provided an abundance of food that was delivered to the Hope Center and Jackson Baptist Church. The goal was to provide enough food for Thanksgiving weekend.
- 9) The same program was run in December and that program of donations filled the pantries of the needy with food over the Christmas holidays.
- 10) The toy collection for the Hope Center provided over 100 gifts and gift certificates for needy children
- 11) The two Paula Brown Soup Kitchens provided meals twice a month for needy people in our surrounding area. Please continue your outstanding support of these two activities.
- 12) The Fourth Quarter Mission Offering was donated to United Methodist Homes

FUMCTR TAKES PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT THEIR CONGREGATION IS A GIVING ONE THAT FULFILLS THE SCRIPTURE FOUND IN MATTHEW 25: 31 through 46. The Hope Center constantly thanks FUMCTR for their donations throughout the year. The monthly gifts of food and personal hygiene items are just amazing.



STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

MAKING SPIRITUAL NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS—PART II

Here are a few possible resolutions we might consider:

- 1) Seek God's face, and pray David's prayer every morning for the next year.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Restore within me a sense of being brand new.
Do not throw me far away from Your presence,
and do not remove Your Holy Spirit from me." Psalm 51:10 - 11

- 2) Let's resolve to give our attitudes to the Lord. Commit to making a difference at home, in the workplace, the marketplace, on the roads, and even at church.
- 3) You could make this passage your resolution: "But above all these, put on love! Love is the perfect tie to bind these together. Let your hearts fall under the rule of the Anointed's peace (the peace you were called to as one body), and be thankful." —Colossians 3: 14 - 15
- 4) Thomas Fuller, well-known preacher from England, understood how to be successful in our resolve. In the mid-1600's Fuller made this statement: "Seek Him and His wonderful plan for your life. The two of you will make a great team--united in your determination to fulfill your destiny. A strong will, a settled purpose, an invincible determination can accomplish almost anything.—Thomas Fuller
- 5) The two of you make a great team! What an empowering statement. So often we think we are forging our path alone. We live as though life is completely up to us. Yet, if we are "In Christ" we are part of a team. "This expression of God's restorative justice displays in the present that He is just and righteous and that He makes right those who trust and commit themselves to Jesus." Romans 3:26
- 6) "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17
- 7) Life is not always easy. Following through on simple commitments can even be difficult when bombarded by every day affairs. In addition, the attacks of the evil one will challenge us at every turn. Because of this, we offer this prayer on your behalf. "Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified," Acts 20:32

Concerning your work in God's church, what resolutions will you make this year? There are people you can contact in our church that will help you choose activities that will make you a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Read Ephesians 2:10.....Jesus Christ our Lord needs us to do His work and he empowers us with the Holy Spirit.



EARLY HISTORY OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TOMS RIVER

The estimated cost of the new church was \$700,000. The first meeting on the property was held in the refurbished office (now called the cottage) in February 1974. The parsonage was sold. A new one was built and dedicated on Thanksgiving Sunday, 1974.

DISPLACED CONGREGATION

June 16, 1974 was a Sunday to remember. It was the last Sunday in the historic old church at Hooper and Washington and the first Sunday for a new pastor. There were few dry eyes as the altar cross was carried out at the end of the service. Methodists in Toms River were truly displaced persons! Until the new church could be completed, the church school and services at 8:30 and 11 A.M. were held in gym-like all purpose room of the Walnut Street Elementary School, and attendance remained high.

Work on the new building proceeded well until, in May, a gust of wind caught a roof truss being placed in the multipurpose room. Like dominos 58 of the 63 roof pieces and part of the side walls collapsed. Two workers were injured and the town building inspector stopped work until the beginning of June. We had a joint Christmas Eve Service with St. Andrew's Church.

Easter Sunday 1975 was the glorious day everyone had been anticipating. The sanctuary was ready with a limited certificate of occupancy. The sanctuary was beautiful and full. Over 1,000 people attended that first Sunday. The walls reverberated with the singing of the choir reinforced by a brass quartet. The congregation responded with joy and the memorial chimes in the belfry rang out. It was a day to remember.

AND STILL WE GROW IN OUR FOURTH CHURCH

For the next two years the church operated with a temporary certificate of occupancy. The original plans called for only the shell of the Fellowship Hall. But memorial gifts of \$35,000 and a donation of \$10,000 from the Division of Church Expansion and Board of Missions allowed its completion. The United Methodist Women assumed responsibility for furnishing and equipping the kitchen. Through their hard work they had accumulated \$9,000 for this purpose.

The one story tri-building complex had an administrative wing and sanctuary, Sunday school classrooms and a fellowship hall with a kitchen. A Schulmerich carillon in the steeple's cupola played twice daily. The red carpet sanctuary with pale blue walls has cherry pews which seat 400 plus 40 in the choir. The squared white raised paneled pew ends are part of the the 18th Century decor. A large lighted cross above the Communion table was donated by a church family in memory of their son.

Saturday mornings saw 175 volunteers cleaning the church for Sunday activities and caring for the grounds. We didn't have a sexton yet. Toms River Schools again rented two rooms for kindergarten for \$3,700 a year. There were difficulties but the program of the church went on.

On April 13, 1975, 13 youth became the first new members in the new church. On April 20th, 75 adults joined bringing the total membership to 1,020. In June of 1975 the bell from the old church was moved to its new location. It had called Methodists to worship since it was hung in the second building in 1855. It rang from the belfry of the third church from 1875 to 1974. Now it can be seen in the little island in front of the present building with the cornerstone of the third building.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF HERITAGE SOCIETY

SUNDAY, MAY 20TH AT BOTH SERVICES

IN ADDITION TO THE ADVANTAGES OF GIVING TO YOUR CHURCH'S ENDOWMENT FUND ANYTIME, GIVING NOW GETS YOU ON OUR ANNIVERSARY PLAQUE DISPLAYED AT OUR CHURCH.

Gifts can be unique to your situation since it is not an annual gift. There are many ways to give our endowment fund. Some are:

1. It can be cash or another asset all at once or over a period of time.
2. It can be all or a portion of a life insurance policy.
3. It can be a specific amount or percentage of your will.
4. It can be a charitable gift annuity paying a fixed amount annually to you over your lifetime. (the payout is based on your age at the time of your gift and is usually more than you could get from an investment.)
5. It can be stocks or bonds which allows you to avoid capital gains tax, and gain an income tax deduction.

PERMANENT GIFT

Your gift is used to produce income, but your gift is never spent. For this reason, it makes a wonderful tribute to the giver.

First United Methodist Toms River Heritage Society

A minimum gift or promise of a gift of \$5,000 makes you a member of our Heritage Society. Recognitions include your name on the plaque hung on the wall in the church lobby and a handsome individual plaque for yourself.

Questions and help available from committee members; Mary Bode, Chris Christiansen, Jim Graef, Peter Rrich, Frank Strucki, Sibyl Walczak, Robert Wahlers, and Jere Williams



BIRTHS

Penelope Trotman 12/28/17 Parents; Carrie (Beadle) Trotman & Christopher Trotman

Sophia Lynn Fernandez 1/20/18, Parents; Katy & Alex Fernandez

BAPTISM

Brielle Madison Lustig, 1/7/18 daughter of Ryan Lustig & Kristen Hill

DEATHS

CAROL GERTSEN Joined FUMCTR 1/27/74
and Passed 12/31/17

THANK YOU

Dear friends,

Thank you for your get well cards & Christmas cards sent to North Carolina. My daughter, Patty is taking good care of me. She sees to my needs before she goes off to work each day. The weather is cold but no snow.

I miss all of you~ Diane Herbert

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	2	3
4 4pm Confirmation TH	5 7pm UMW Executive Board Meeting RM 4 7pm Endowment Commitee mtg WR	6 12:30pm Phoebe Circle TH 7pm UMM Bible Study TH	7 7pm Lent Study #3 TH	8 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	9 10am UMM Breakfast set-up FLC	10 8-10am UMM Pancake Breakfast FLC 10-4pm Beachpum Quilters 1-4pm Scout Ceremony FLC
11 Non-perishable Food Collection FLC & NARTHEX 10:30am Sanctuary Baptism 10:30-2pm Rummage donations dropped off 4pm Confirmation Rummage Sale Set up FLC	12 8:30am-9pm Rummage Sale Set-up FLC	13 9am-6pm Rummage Sale sorting & pricing FLC	14 3-5pm Nine Patchers TH 7pm Esther Circle 7pm Lent Study 6:30pm CHNS Board Meeting RM 4 9am-6pm Rummage Sale sorting & pricing	15 9-2pm Rummage Sale drop off FLC 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	16 10-6pm Rummage Sale	17 10-1pm Rummage Sale
18 4pm Confirmation TH	19 7pm Team Vital TH	20 6:30pm Trustee Meeting WR	21 7pm Lent Study #5 TH	22 7pm Bible Study (Book of John) WR	23	24 9-12pm UMW District Training FLC
25 PALM SUNDAY 4pm Confirmation TH	26 11:30am Sarah Circle	27 3:00-4:30pm Soup Kitchen FLC	28 3-5pm Nine Patchers TH	29 1pm Soup Kitchen Meeting WR 7pm Holy Thursday FLC	30 12pm Good Friday Service Sanctuary	31

MONDAYS

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

TUESDAYS

7:00 pm Praise Team - FLC
10:00 - Knitters - TH

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
7-8 Acts Bible Study - MR

**BE BOLD.
BE BRAVE.
BE COURAGEOUS.
JOSHUA 1:9**

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
OF TOMS RIVER**

129 Chestnut Street
Toms River, NJ 08753
(732)349-8155
Email: fumctr@verizon.net
Website: www.fumctr.com

FUMCTR STAFF

Ed Davis, Senior Pastor
Wes Ellis, Associate Pastor
Linda J. Hendrickson, Director of Music
Dr. Harold E. Schmul II, Pastor Emeritus
Bob Ferrara, Lay Leader
Paula Smith, Administrative Assistant
Kimberly Dillon, Nursery School Director

CHESTNUT HILL NURSERY SCHOOL

Phone: (732)286-9388
Email: chns1@verizon.net
Website: chestnuthillnurseryschool.com

The Messenger is posted monthly (except
Dec/Jan & Summer (June, July, Aug) on the
FUMCTR website @ www.fumctr.org.

Messenger Designer, Carrie Trotman
Email: carrie@zoeydesigned.com