

THE MESSENGER

PRAYER

FASTING

WORSHIP

GIVING

SIMPLICITY

SERVICE

SLOWING DOWN DURING LENT: MAKING SPACE FOR WHAT COUNTS

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited to slow down and reflect. It can be easy to overlook what truly matters in the blur of our busy lives. Lent offers us an intentional time to make space for God, focusing not on what we give up but on what we make room for—namely, a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

During these 40 days, we are called to engage in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, worship, giving, simplicity, and service. These practices are means of grace, ways in which God strengthens and nurtures our souls. They help us grow closer to Christ and deepen our understanding of His sacrifice for us. Whether we commit to daily prayer, reading Scripture, or serving others, these disciplines help us tune out the distractions of daily life and make room for God's presence.

Lent is not just an individual journey but one that impacts families, our FMC family, and the wider community. As we slow down and focus on our own spiritual growth, we also strengthen our bonds with others. Families can use this time to grow together in faith, sharing moments of prayer or reflection. As a church family, our collective commitment to spiritual disciplines unites us in our mission to Love God, Reach People, and Serve All. And as we grow in grace, we are better equipped to share that grace with our community, reflecting Christ's love through our actions and attitudes.

This Lent, let us commit to slowing down—to make space for what counts—our faith and service to Jesus. In doing so, we open ourselves to the transformative power of God's grace, both individually and as a church family. Let us journey together and grow as a Family of Faith.

Find us at [FMCMoorestown.com](https://www.FMCMoorestown.com)

LENTEN WORSHIP SCHEDULE

This Lent, join us for a six-week series, “Slowing Down: Making Space for What Counts.” We’ll explore how slowing down can help us make space for our faith to grow deeper in Christ through weekly reflections on spiritual disciplines like prayer, fasting, giving, service, and rest.

Together, we’ll learn to let go of distractions, focus on what counts, and embrace the gift of God’s presence in our lives. Don’t miss this meaningful journey as we prepare our hearts for Easter and discover the transformative power of a slower, more intentional walk with God.

Sunday Services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. unless noted otherwise.

March 5 at 7:00 p.m.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Begin the Lent season with repentance and prayer.

March 9 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Discipline: Prayer

March 16 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Discipline: Giving

March 23 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Discipline: Simplicity

March 30 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Discipline: Works of Mercy and Justice

April 6 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Discipline: Rest, Solitude, and Silence

April 13 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

PALM SUNDAY

Spiritual Discipline: Worship and Praise

LIVE PASSION at 7:00 p.m.

Led by FMC Youth

April 17 at 7:00 p.m.

HOLY THURSDAY SERVICE

April 18 at 7:00 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE



Lent

SLOWING DOWN
MAKING SPACE FOR WHAT COUNTS

A New CREATION

Easter is all about celebrating the new life Jesus makes possible for us! We often think of this new life in terms that are only spiritual or individual, but Jesus' resurrection means new life for all of creation – yes, for us, but also for our communities and our environment. In a world grappling with environmental concerns, join us as we delve into Scripture to understand how the renewed life Jesus offers shapes our responsibility to care for our environment and all its inhabitants.

Sunday Services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

April 20, EASTER: Hope for All Creation

In resurrecting, Jesus gives us hope for new life. This hope is life and joy for all creation! Both services will celebrate New Life in Christ through Word and Music!

April 27: God's Wide World

As human beings, we tend to think the world revolves around us! As Scripture opens our eyes to the fullness of God's creation, let us consider a shift in perspective. We are but one part of God's magnificent creation. What does creation tell us if we listen?

May 4: A Special Responsibility

Though we are but one part of a vast creation, God has given humanity a special responsibility. As those created in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth that, in turn, sustains us.

May 11, Mother's Day Sunday: Three Voices of Discovery

Who has helped us discover who we are in life? Three women of God share their stories of faithful discovery in their own faith journeys.

May 18: A New Creation

Through Jesus, God makes us a new creation—but not just us! God makes everything new and entrusts us to take action that it might be so.

May 25: Facing Creation's Brokenness

Humanity's sin and brokenness have had devastating effects on the world for which we are called to care. As earth's stewards, living into our resurrection hope involves reckoning with our failures and working for the freedom of all creation—human and nonhuman alike.



PLANNED GIVING AT FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

As we continue to grow in faith and service, we are excited to introduce Planned Giving, a new way to support our church's ongoing mission and ministry. Planned Giving allows you to make a lasting impact on the future of our church and the lives of those we serve, while also ensuring that your legacy aligns with your values.

Planned Giving opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Name FMC in your will or estate planning. You could name a percentage or a dollar amount to be given to the church when your estate is settled, supporting the church's ongoing ministries long into the future.
- Take out an insurance policy or designate an existing policy naming FMC as the beneficiary.
- Designate FMC as the beneficiary of all or part of your retirement assets.
- Make a gift to FMC from your Donor-advised Funds.
- If you're 70½, use your Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA to make a gift to FMC.

Please get in touch with your financial advisor if you are interested in any of the above giving opportunities. If you have any questions, please contact Rich Hendrickson, FMC Generosity Team Chair at richhendrickson58@gmail.com.



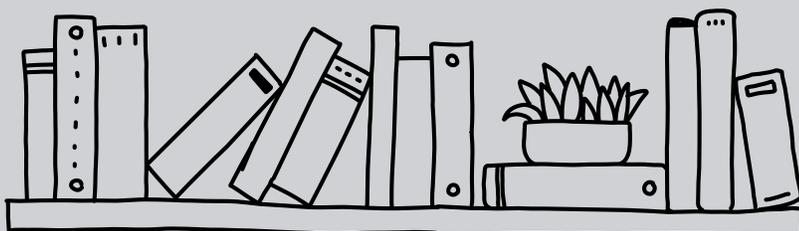
FIRST PLACE FOR HEALTH

Join First Place for Health Bible study on Wednesdays from 9:45-11:00 a.m. in F105—Fellowship Building. In our 9-week study, "Grace for the Race," we'll explore God's promises and truths from Scripture that we can apply to our health and wellness journey and every other challenge, obstacle, or adventure we face. To join, contact Nadine Mack at (856) 266-7589.

VISIT THE CHURCH LIBRARY

Did you know the church has a library with books and DVDs to provide inspiration for your faith journey? In fact, we have two libraries! Children are invited to browse and borrow each

week from the many books and DVDs on the shelves in the Kids Church Room. Teens and Adults can find a wide array of resources in the church library next to the First Light office, just down the steps from Fellowship Hall. You can browse the collection online anytime by visiting fmcmoorestown.com, selecting Resources, then Church Library. Contact Jen Dunne at jendunne1@gmail.com about questions, suggestions, or donations. Happy Reading!



YOUTH UPDATE

Jeremiah Appleton, jeremiah@fmcmoorestown.com

If you haven't heard, FMC will return to Appalachia this summer for another mission trip with ASP! Youth, young adults, and adult leaders are all welcome and encouraged to attend this trip, where they will experience life-changing moments as we help make homes warmer, safer, and drier for families who are unable to do so for themselves. The trip dates will be August 3-10.

We must confirm our final attendance numbers by the start of March, so please contact Jeremiah as soon as possible with questions or to lock-in registration for you or your child(ren).



Youth Family Dinner / Culture Night

FMC Youth Group will host a family dinner event in Fellowship Hall on March 16, from 5:30–7:30 p.m. We invite each family/youth to bring a covered dish representing their family's heritage. For example, the Appleton family may bring Shepherd's Pie (Jen, Ireland) and some delicious haggis (Jeremiah, Scotland). Parents, siblings, and friends of our Youth Group students are all invited to join so we can learn a bit more about each other in a fun, casual setting!

Youth Ministry Reflection:

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

Over my first two years as the responsible party for leading our youth, we have focused on a piece of Scripture to help establish our approach to Youth Group for each coming school year. First was Matthew 22: 36-40; this year we've chosen Philippians 2:1-4. Each of these is intended to offer spiritual guidance that instructs how we should approach our interactions with others.

As I've sat back, watched, and reflected over the past two years, I have been fascinated by how our youth have lived out these Scripture verses. Yes, a youth group gathering can lead to times of zaniness, chaos, and loudness. Still, at the end of the day, I have seen a true compassion building in the hearts of our students for one another. As a youth group that reflects great diversity in terms of our individual backgrounds, activities, and locations, it is perhaps remarkable how little those differences matter at the times we need to come together the most—be it through the sharing of prayer concerns in small group settings or by moving our hands and feet together to accomplish great deeds on mission trips and other activities.

In a time and place where differences of opinion and a desire to be "right" still drive wedges between too many relationships, I find great hope in a group of students who refuse to fixate on differences but instead on lifting each other up. I pray that many adults might heed the lessons found in the way our Youth Group comes together. And I pray that the struggles our youth will inevitably encounter on their journey will not discourage them or cause them to view the world through any other lens but that of the love of Jesus Christ.

EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE NEWS

Mary Starn, E&SJ Committee Chair, starred5@comcast.net

How far do you need to go to support our congregation and denomination's Equity & Social Justice initiatives? Only a few steps to the Heritage Room on a Sunday morning!

Over the past year, between Sunday services, our committee has invited a series of dynamic speakers addressing many topics, including:

Matthew Skic from the Museum of the American Revolution

The history of women's voting rights; African American history

Dr. June Sernak, New Jersey Statewide Diversity Leadership Officer

Native American issues and culture

Jessica Shoffner of the Kensington Neighborhood Association

Poverty in America

Historian Richard Gray

The importance of Moorestown's West End Community Center to the township's Black residents and efforts to preserve its legacy.



We also sponsored the Night of Prayer before the national election and publicized the TAKE ACTION website, which is available to all who want to support legislative initiatives backed by the United Methodist Church (umcjustice.org). It's not too late to check it out!

We continue our speaker series on March 9, when Gary Ell from Moorestown Historical Society will speak about the township's Suffragist Movement to commemorate Women's History Month. On March 30, we host a speaker from the JCC with a program on Jewish Holiday celebrations. In April (Climate & Environmental Awareness Month), Mike Zuber will offer a presentation about Master Gardeners, and in May, we will feature a talk relating to Mental Health Month—date and details to be announced.

Please stay late or come early to join us for these educational and inspiring programs, which we believe reflect faith in action as we walk into the new year and advocate for equity and social justice!



**American
Red Cross**

BLOOD DRIVE

Monday, March 3 from 2:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Thank you to everyone who made our Christmas blood drive a big success, helping the Red Cross collect 27 units of life-saving blood. The next blood drive will be held Monday, March 3, from 2:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Many donors with type O, A-, or B- blood are eligible to double their impact by making a Power Red donation. Learn more, commit to giving the gift of life, and make your appointment today by visiting redcrossblood.org.

ODE TO THE PAPER MESSENGER

Jeremiah Appleton

Oh noble leaf, once crisp and bright
A vessel pure of blackened type
You bore our words with steadfast grace
A silent witness, time embraced.

Yet now, dear pages, the tide has turned
Your weightless twin at last is birthed
No faded ink, no tattered seams
Now endless life in glowing streams

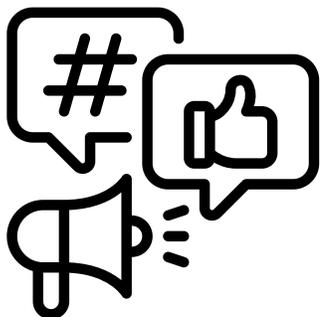
Though pixels claim the tales you told,
And screens now house the words of old,
We honor still your once proud reign
For memory holds what hands retain

So rest, sweet parchment, proud and true
Your time has passed, though we honor you.
Reborn in bytes, you live anew
Digitally made for thousands of views!



Friends – For reasons both practical and environmental, this will be the final version of our broadly distributed paper Messenger. Embracing an online version of our news feed will allow us to be more expeditious in sharing what's happening at FMC, reach a broader audience, and embrace a green approach to a critical element of our ministry. However, should you still prefer a paper copy, please contact the Church Office to request one to be printed/mailed. We will also make a small number of paper copies available outside of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall for guests and those who would like to pick one up.

We look forward to continuing to engage with every member of our congregation and more in the community as we spread the good news about life at FMC!



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