

The Messenger



March 2025

Ahhh, it's the season of Lent once again. As part of my own Lenten Journey, I will be incorporating a daily devotional rather than just giving something up. I have determined that I will be more intentional in my time with God because I want to grow closer to God every single day of my life. Some days I do better than others....but I'm trying. I still consider myself a work in progress but God doesn't give up on me so I keep moving forward toward the arms of my loving God. I keep moving toward the cross and the love of Jesus Christ.

I have started reading a book of blessings called "The Lives We Actually Have; 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days" by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. With that in mind, I want to share from that book a blessing for Lent.

Bless This Lent?

What is Lent? Lent marks the forty days leading up to Easter, mirroring the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. It is a practice that began during the fourth century as a way to prepare Christians for the holiest days of the year.

During Lent, we ask God to show us the world as it is. We begin with the reality of our finitude rubbed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday - from dust we were made, to dust we shall return. Then, we walk through that reality in a kind of dress rehearsal. It's the downward slope of God- The Great Descent, where the whole church walks toward the cross.

Frankly, Lent is my favorite part of the church calendar, because it is a time when the whole church is on the losing team. A time when we all get a minute to tell the truth: Life is so beautiful, and life is so hard. For everyone.

Of course, the cross isn't the end of the story, but this season of grief is carved out to acknowledge the reality of Christ's sacrifice. And the reality of suffering that so many of our circumstances reflect too-our own pain and grief and despair. Easter is coming, yes. But for now, we sit in the ashes of our broken dreams and broken hearts, knowing that God sits here with us.

Many people practice Lent by giving something up-alcohol, meat, chocolate, social media. Some take up something new-a new prayer practice or swearing profusely, like I did one year.

But Lent is an incredible moment for spiritual honesty, we are practicing here. Together, we're going to bless the days we have, while longing for the future God promised, when there will be no tears, no pain, and no email.

Lent lasts for a full forty days but Sundays don't count. They are mini-Easters, where we take a day off from whatever we're abstaining from, days to remind us that we are made for both grief and joy, sorrow and delight. Strangely, this might feel like a hard thing to do-to make yourself stop working or worrying and really rest.

But over the next six weeks, you're invited to press against that part of your wiring that tells you that you must always be accomplishing, producing, processing-that everything must be for something. And take a day off from the Lenty-y feelings to practice the discipline of Sabbath. Rest! Eat! Enjoy!

Friends, I pray this reading will bless your Lenten journey, whether you've decided to give something up or incorporate a new spiritual practice, or both, or neither. Know that wherever you are, God is with you. Whoever you are, in this very moment, God loves you. And wherever you're heading, Jesus is waiting for you with open arms, hoping you'll grow closer to God every single day.

Jesus loves you and so do I. May you have a blessed Lent.

Peace & Blessing,

Pastor Dianna





Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Wednesday - March 5, 2025

7pm - FUMC Sanctuary

Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes

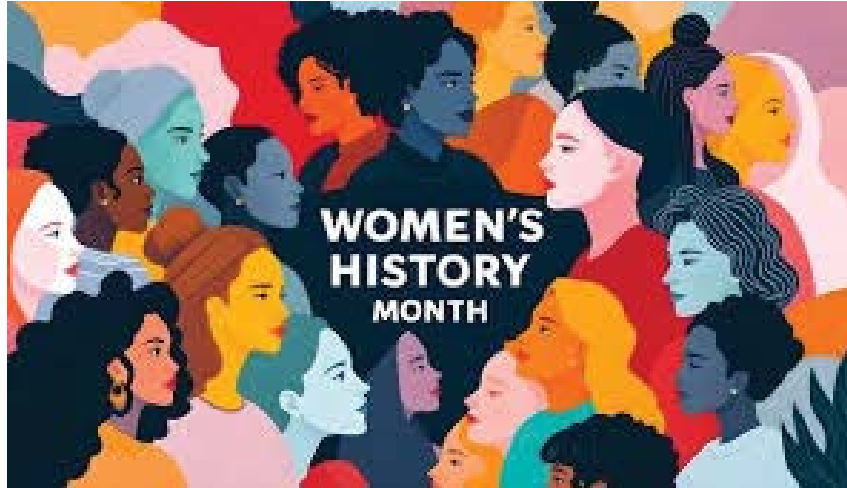
What to Give Up...

Give up complaining ...	focus on Gratitude
Give up pessimism ...	become an Optimist
Give up worry ...	trust Divine Providence
Give up bitterness ...	turn to Forgiveness
Give up hatred ...	return Good for evil
Give up negativism ...	be Positive
Give up anger ...	be More Patient
Give up pettiness ...	become Mature
Give up gloom ...	enjoy the Beauty all around you
Give up jealousy ...	pray for Trust
Give up gossiping ...	control your Tongue
Give up sin ...	turn to Virtue
Give up giving up ...	Hang in there!



March is.....

Women's History Month



Women's History Month is an annual observance held in the United States during the month of March, which celebrates the contributions and achievements of women throughout American history.

[How do you honor the women in your life?](#)

<https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/resources>

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH











EPAGNJHEALING.COM



2025 Pre-Lenten & Lenten Gatherings:

CAPE ATLANTIC DISTRICT
MAR 8 - SEAVILLE UMC
MAR 19 - FIRST UMC MAYS LANDING

CENTRAL DISTRICT
MAR 21 - MEDFORD UMC
MAR 22 - FIRST TOM'S RIVER UMC

DELAWARE BAY DISTRICT
MAR 15 - FIRST UMC MILLVILLE
MAR 16 - CHEWS UMC

MEADOWLANDS DISTRICT
MAR 22 - ARCOLA KOREAN UMC

RARITAN SHORE DISTRICT
MAR 22 - MONTGOMERY UMC

SKYLANDS DISTRICT
MAR 1 - DENVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

ALL ARE ENCOURAGED AND INVITED TO ATTEND

As members of The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, we are called to participate in the Journey of Healing.

What is the 'Journey of Healing'?

The "Journey of Healing: From Lamentation to Praise" is a joint prayer campaign of the United Methodist Conferences of Eastern PA and Greater NJ led by Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi to guide us through a process of spiritual and communal healing. Together, we will name our woundedness, pray for healing, and ultimately, celebrate God's restoration and grace.

Why Join the Journey?

Our wounds are real, but so is God's power to heal. This journey is an opportunity to come together as a faith community, lifting our concerns to God and walking together toward reconciliation and praise.

Join Us for a Time of Spiritual Cleansing

Pre-Lenten and Lenten Gatherings will be held in each district complete with prayer and holy communion. When we partake in communion, we receive the body and blood of Christ to sustain us for the days ahead. These sacred gatherings invite us to cleanse the wounds within us and our communities. We hope you review the schedule below and join one closest to you.

As part of our *Journey of Healing: Lamentation to Praise*, March is dedicated to *Cleansing*. Just as wounds must be cleaned to heal, our spirits need care and renewal.

We invite you to this sacred time and space, where we will name our wounds through litany and music, cleanse our hearts with Lectio Divina, and dress our wounds with special prayer and Holy Communion. Come and experience healing through Spirit-filled worship and the warmth of community. We look forward to journeying with you!

Whom: Raritan Shore District Clergy and Church members

Time: March 22 | 10 AM

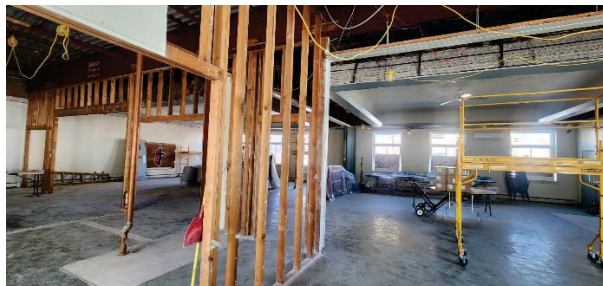
Location: Montgomery UMC | 117 Sunset Rd, Belle Mead, NJ

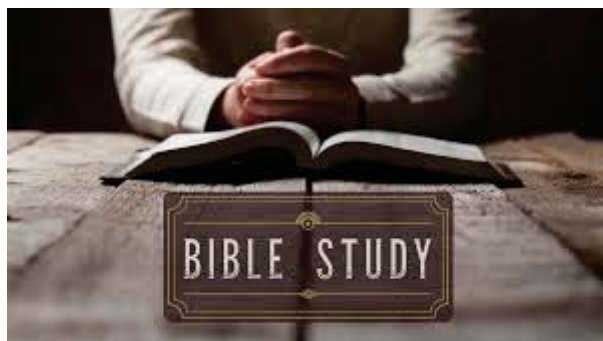


God is on the move and things are changing at Flemington UMC!!

The fellowship hall is being fully renovated, and construction is underway!

Please note that this may cause some minor inconveniences, and we thank you for your understanding in advance. Here's a "sneak peek"





Tuesday Lunch Bible Study

* 12 pm – Lunch BYOL (“Bring Your Own Lunch”)

* 1 pm – Bible Study

ALL ARE WELCOME!!!

Join as we study the Book of “**GENESIS**”



<https://flemingtonfoodpantry.org/>

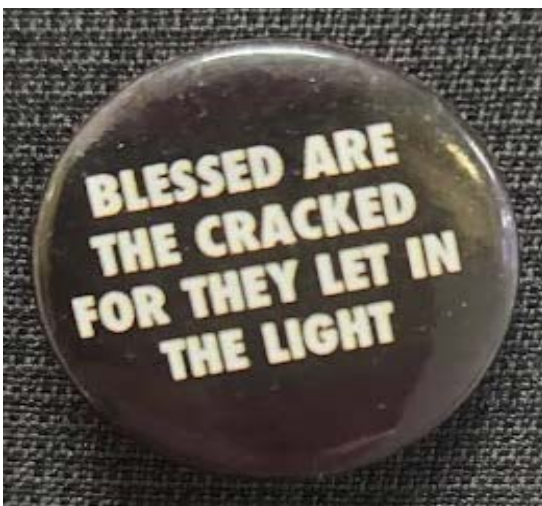
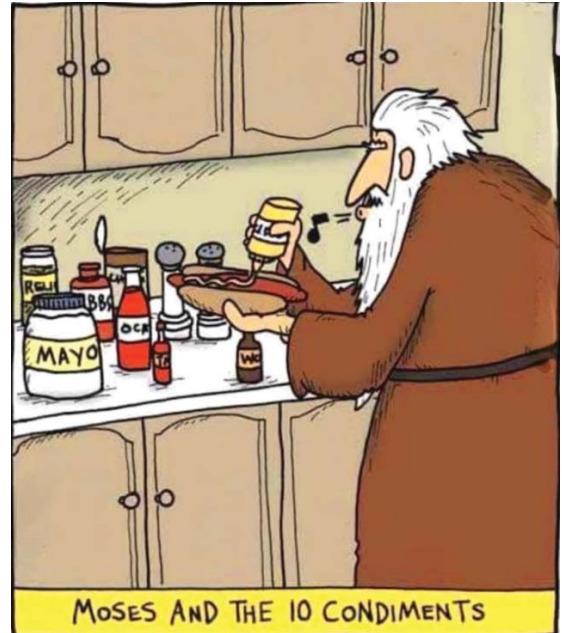
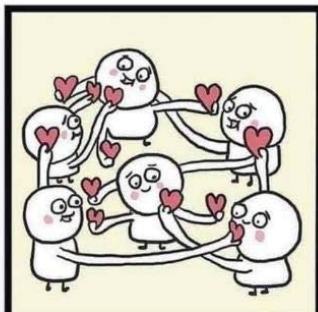
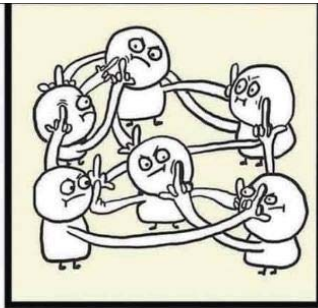
The Flemington Area Food Pantry ALWAYS Needs Our Help!!!

Suggested Donation List

- ♣ Creamy peanut butter ♣ Canned fruit (prefer in juice)
- ♣ Cold cereal ♣ Chicken noodle soup (condensed)
- ♣ Progresso/chunky style soup ♣ Diapers size 4 or 5
- ♣ Food Store Gift Cards



Just for Fun



Sunday School - Pizza with the Pastor

Learning How to Be a Bell Ringer And Acolyte



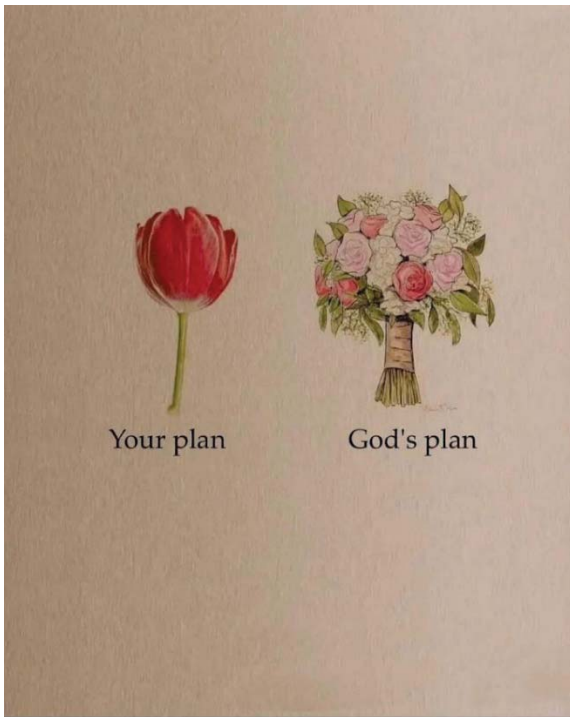
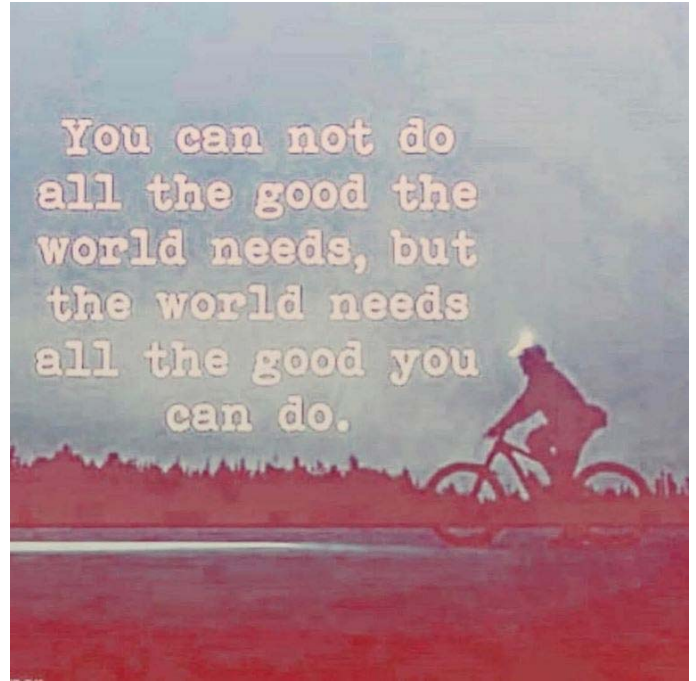
SUNDAY SELFIES



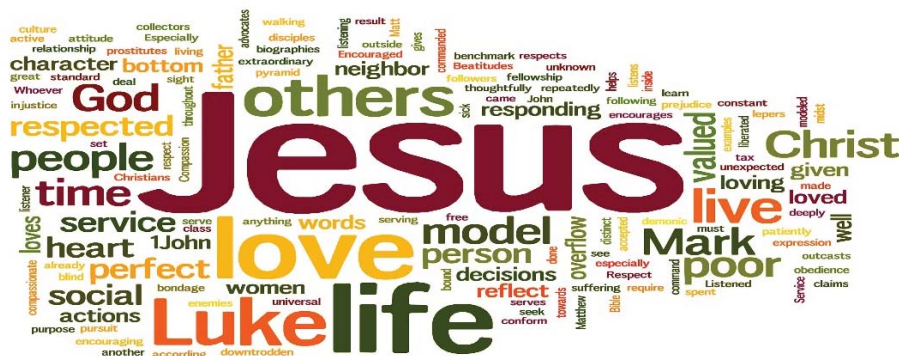


Mrs. Gladys Dunn was a pillar of her church. She visited the sick, she greeted newcomers, she served on every committee, and substituted for the organist when necessary.

After services one day, she noticed a stranger leaving the church. She went up to introduce herself. Extending her hand, she said, "I'm Gladys Dunn." The stranger replied, "Me, too! That was the longest sermon I've ever heard!"



What you **do**, what
you **say**, tells those
around you
something
about **Jesus**.



Don't forget to change your clocks!!! SUNDAY MARCH 9, 2025

