

THE MESSENGER



“O SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG, FOR GOD HAS DONE MARVELOUS THINGS.” – PSALM 98:1

Psalm 98, traditionally read on Christmas Day, calls us to celebrate again the coming of Christ—to sing with joy and thanksgiving for the new thing God is doing. Yet it’s not always easy to rejoice when the world’s troubles press in, stirring fear and weariness. Still, the joy and promise of Christ’s coming this holy season of Advent help us move forward in faith, carrying hope even in hard times.

The hope of Advent—for healing among nations and well-being for all people—is our deepest longing as we witness so much pain and division. But Advent reminds us that God has already come in Jesus Christ, and in that promise, we glimpse our future—God’s future—filled with light, joy, and peace.

The carols we sing during Advent and Christmas proclaim this hope in ways that touch both heart and mind. Our eyes may glaze over when someone explains “incarnational theology.” But when we

sing Charles Wesley’s beloved hymn, we make a bold confession of faith:

*“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th’ incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.”*

We’ve sung these words from “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” countless times, yet they hold deep truth: this child, born in humble circumstances, reveals the fullness of God’s love dwelling among us (Col 1:19).

This Advent and Christmas—November 30 through December 28—we’ll explore some of the season’s great carols together, uncovering the Scriptures and stories that inspired them. Through poetry and melody, these hymns express our faith with beauty and simplicity.

May every carol we sing this season draw us closer to the One whose birth brings light and life to all—the Christ, our Newborn King.

Pastor Gina

Find us at FMCMoorestown.com

JOIN US THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

ADVENT WREATH MAKING FAMILY NIGHT & COVERED DISH DINNER

Sunday, November 30, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

On this first Sunday of Advent, all are welcome to bring a dish to share and create an Advent Wreath for their home! This family-friendly event will be a time of joy and celebration of the holiday season that has just begun.

We will gather for a covered dish supper at 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Please bring a dish large enough for your family and some extra to share.

We ask that you bring your own dishes, utensils, and napkins. Drinks will be provided.

Advent wreath making will follow the dinner. Gloves and pruning shears are also helpful to have on hand—and bring greens and holly if you can. If you saved your Advent wreath base from last year, please bring it! A limited number of kits will be available. After we add the finishing touches to each wreath, we'll dim the lights and light the first candle. We will conclude the evening with a brief service and singing a few carols.



PIZZA WITH SANTA!

Friday, December 5, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Celebrate the holiday season with a fun, festive, and free event filled with pizza, crafts, and photo ops with Saint Nick for kids of all ages!

COMFORT & LIGHT: A HOLIDAY REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Sunday, December 14, 3:00 p.m.

This sacred time of prayer and remembrance offers space to name and honor loved ones during the holidays. You're invited to bring a candle to light; tea lights will also be provided. The service will be held in the Chapel, and nursery care is available if needed.



CAROL SING & GINGERBREAD HOUSE BUILD

December 21, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

We'll joyfully gather to sing holiday carols at this festive intergenerational event. Families can create their own gingerbread houses, and awards will be given in different categories. Light refreshments will be enjoyed by all. A donation basket will be available to help offset costs. We ask gingerbread contest participants to register at church@fmcmoorestown.com, so that we can order the supplies needed.

Forgotten Verses



Advent & Christmas Preaching Series – Forgotten Verses of Famous Carols

Each year we celebrate the miracle of God made known in Jesus Christ—singing beloved carols, giving gifts, and decorating our homes. Yet the beauty of Christmas can sometimes grow so familiar that we miss its deeper meaning. This Advent, we'll look beyond the first verse of our favorite carols to the “forgotten verses” that reveal profound truths about God’s love, hope, and incarnation. May these songs of faith open our hearts anew to the wonder of Christ’s coming.

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

November 30 – 1st Sunday of Advent:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

As we light the first candle of the Advent wreath, we'll rediscover the gift of who Emmanuel is through the many names revealed in this haunting and hope-filled carol.

December 7 – 2nd Sunday of Advent:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The story of our Newborn King has inspired generations. We'll hear how Rev. Phillips Brooks captured that inspiration in this beloved carol, from his experience in Bethlehem itself.

December 14 – 3rd Sunday of Advent:

Cantata Sunday—The Carols of Christmas

All choirs, including the Bell Choir, will lift up joyful praise as we prepare our hearts for Christ’s coming. Our readings and liturgy will celebrate the joy and faith proclaimed through the carols of the season.

December 21 – 4th Sunday of Advent:

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

The angels were the first to announce the Good News—through song! As we sing Charles Wesley’s masterpiece, may we rediscover the deep peace and joy the angels still proclaim.

December 28 – 10:00 a.m. Combined Service: First Sunday of Christmastide

Join us for a joyful Carol Sing as we celebrate the reason for the season—Jesus Christ, born again and again in the hearts of believers!

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Candlelight Services: Silent Night

4:00 p.m. – All Is Bright:

A Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Celebration

A fun, energetic, and interactive celebration for all ages! We'll honor the birth of the Christ Child in festive, creative ways. Shuffling in your seat is actively encouraged as children and adults join our lively tradition of singing “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

6:45 p.m. – A Musical Prelude to a Holy Night

The FMC Bell Choir and Brass instrumentalists will fill the sanctuary with joyful music as we prepare our hearts for worship on this most holy night.

7:00 p.m. – Silent Night, Holy Night:

A Traditional Candlelight Celebration

Bathed in candlelight, we'll sing the timeless carols of Christmas and celebrate the miracle of God’s love made known in Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel. The Choirs and Brass will lead us in rejoicing at the birth of our Savior. Dr. Hendrickson will share the Word on this silent, Holy night.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY PREACHING SERIES

January 4, 2026 – 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service & Communion

Begin the new year with purpose and power! Join us for a moving Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service, a historic tradition dating back to John Wesley and the early Methodists. Through prayer, song, silence, and Holy Communion, we'll recommit our hearts, minds, and lives to God. Come ready to be renewed by the Spirit and inspired for the year ahead—this is worship that stirs the soul and sets the tone for all that's to come!



The Gifts of Imperfection—Wholehearted Living Through the Lens of Faith

Starting January 11 through February 15, we'll journey through a six-week sermon series inspired by Brené Brown's *The Gifts of Imperfection*. Each week explores a "guidepost" for wholehearted living—authenticity, gratitude, resilience, rest, creativity, meaningful work, and joy—through the lens of Scripture and faith. Whether we are searching for renewal, balance, or deeper purpose, this series will help us discover that God meets us not in our perfection, but in our beautiful imperfection.

Lenten Series—From the Inside Out: A Journey of Honest Faith

Beginning February 18 and triumphally concluding on April 5, Easter Sunday, this series invites each of us to go deeper—not by striving harder, but by telling the truth about ourselves and opening our hearts to God's grace. Each week focuses on a spiritual practice or posture that invites renewal from the inside out. This is a season of letting go, showing up honestly, and walking with Jesus toward the cross and a hope-filled resurrection!



1 & 2 Peter: Courage in Times of Trouble

Rev. Rich Hendrickson, richhendrickson58@gmail.com

Believers in the early church, who were scattered across the Roman Empire, were facing the threat of increased persecution. Peter, the most outspoken of the disciples and leader among the disciples, wrote two practical and encouraging letters to strengthen the hearts of these followers of Jesus.

For more information, email Elite Law at elitelaw@gmail.com.

When

Monday evenings 7:00 p.m. (Zoom)

February 9, 16, 23; March 2, 9, 16, 23

Wednesday evenings 7:00 p.m.

(In-person in the Heritage Room)

February 11, 18, 25; March 4, 11, 18, 25

Resource

1 & 2 Peter using John MacArthur's Bible Study: 1 & 2 Peter: *Courage in Times of Trouble*. If you need help purchasing this book, please indicate it when you register for the class.

YOUTH UPDATE

Jeremiah Appleton, jeremiah@fmcmoorestown.com

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

The Advent season is a busy but joyful one in the life of FMC, and that includes the Youth! Youth and their families are encouraged to participate in our wreath-making and carol sing events, as well as volunteer at the Pizza with Santa event on Friday, December 5. The 2025 Youth Group Christmas Party will be held on Sunday, December 14, from 6:00-8:30 in the basement youth space and, as always, will involve some of our craziest games along with our gift exchange.



MID-WINTER ADVANCE



Mid-Winter Advance (MWA) is a retreat at Refreshing Mountain in Stevens, PA, January 23-25. Leaving Friday evening and returning Sunday afternoon, our Youth will be treated to inspiring worship and impactful messages as they join together with over 300 middle- and high-school students from New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania as well as a college team from Eastern University. Periods of downtime allow for volleyball and basketball tournaments, ziplining and a ropes course, visiting a reptile house, Escape Rooms, and time for fellowship with FMC attendees. The 2026 theme is "Campfire Stories" based on the Scripture from Matthew 18:20.

Cost will be \$175/attendee, but we will be doing fundraising activities to help students reduce their cost.



APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT (ASP)

ASP is a mission organization serving areas in Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky to provide home repair ministry for families who desperately need that love and support. In August 2025, FMC sent a mission team of 29 youth and adults to Jonesville, VA, where we worked on three homes, repairing and replacing porches, installing vinyl siding, completing a kitchen rehab, and installing a tin roof. Our homeowners and volunteers were impacted in very powerful ways, and we can't wait to be back. Our next trip will be August 2-9, 2026, and we will have our first information meeting in January. Registration is currently open, and there are 40 spots available. While it may be possible to add additional volunteer spots, the ASP center filled up last year, and we had to turn some folks away. So please register as soon as possible! A \$50 deposit is all that will be required until March 1.



EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE NEWS

Mary Starn, starred5@comcast.net

“Justice Takes Courage” is the name of a new podcast from the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society. We invite you to check it out! And now more than ever, it is time for us as a congregation to speak up for justice. One simple way to do so is to visit umcjustice.org and learn how to take action on the many legislative initiatives of our denomination during challenging days. Please get involved!



Our committee has already had some excellent presentations as we kicked off our Speaker Series this fall. And now you can see the presentations on video. Just check out the FMC YouTube channel as directed by the weekly E-blast.

January is Poverty in America Month. Our January 11 speaker will be Eduardo Esquivel, MSW, Executive Director, Simple Homes. He will cover affordable housing and the needs of the unhoused.

We will also welcome our own Dr. Keisha Taylor, who will discuss her career readiness book, *Fuel Your Future*, on January 25.

Look for a four-week video series to celebrate Black History Month in February. We will use a series entitled “Lift Every Voice—A Celebration of Song from the Black Church Experience!” This presentation comes from the Discipleship Ministries of our denomination. Each video presents in music and song a particular genre of music, and we will follow it with a discussion of the meaning and relevance of the underlying musical themes. Plan to take part in this fun and educational mini-class. No need to attend all four Sundays, but you won’t want to miss them once you begin.

We are also highlighting the Black College Fund, which we contribute to as part of the yearly apportionment giving from our church. Did you know that the United Methodists support the largest number of fully accredited historically black colleges and universities in the United States?

It's time for you to get involved by participating in these activities that help to build the Beloved Kingdom!



Save the date!

Our 4th annual Health & Wellness Fair will be held Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Karen Reiner and Ali Wederich (MooreUnity) will be our keynote speakers.