

THE MESSENGER

A WORD FROM PASTOR GINA:

Curiosity, Connection, and the God Who Shows Up

One of the gifts of summer is that it creates space. Space to wander. Space to rest. Space to notice things we might otherwise miss. And maybe—just maybe—space to grow in ways we didn't expect.

This summer, I'm excited about where we're heading together. Our "Generations" series will remind us that faith is not bound by age—that every generation has something to offer and something to receive. And in "Wait...They're in the Bible?", we'll explore the stories of people we might have overlooked, only to discover that God was working through them all along. It's a theme that feels just right for this season. Because summer is full of "unexpected" moments—conversations, encounters, glimpses of beauty—that can become sacred if we're paying attention. That's where curiosity comes in.

We'll see that Spirit come alive in powerful ways here at FMC. In June, our Youth Sunday will remind us that the Spirit is alive and moving through the next generation—calling, leading, and inspiring us all. In July, our Church BBQ & Silent Auction will gather us in laughter, generosity, and shared purpose—strengthening the ties that bind us as a community.

And in August, our church will be sent and stirred in awesome ways. Thirty-three of our youth and adults will head to Appalachia for our ASP Mission Trip, becoming the hands and feet of Christ in real and tangible ways. At the same time, our kids will embark on a joyful journey during Vacation Bible School: Road Trip—On the Go with God. They'll discover that wherever we go, God goes with us. These are more than events. They are glimpses of God at work—in every generation, in every act of service, in every moment of connection and love.

So, what if, instead of drifting through the summer, we approached it with spiritual curiosity? Wondering where God might show up. Asking how we might grow and serve. Noticing who we're being invited to connect with. Even when attendance is lighter, even when some programs pause, God is still present. Still moving. Still inviting. You are still part of this story.

So, wherever this summer takes you—whether across the country or right here at home—I invite you to stay rooted in what matters most. Stay connected to God. Stay connected to this community. Stay open to the surprising ways grace might meet you.

Because sometimes the most meaningful growth doesn't happen in the busiest seasons, but in the ones where we finally have space to slow down and see.

Grace and peace to you this summer,
Pastor Gina

Find us at FMCMoorestown.com

GENERATIONS: ONE GOSPEL. EVERY AGE.

“Generations” is a four-week preaching series celebrating the beautiful, holy way God works through people of every age and stage of life. From youth to older adults, from biological families to spiritual ones, this series proclaims that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not bound to one generation—but is carried, embodied, and passed on together.

This series lifts leadership, honors wisdom and faithfulness, celebrates spiritual mentors, and calls the whole church to an intergenerational vision of discipleship where no one is invisible, and everyone matters. “Generations” is not just about age—it’s about legacy, belonging, and faith in motion. (*Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted.*)



June 7 – Youth Sunday: Walk the Talk (10:00 a.m. Combined Service)

Get ready for one of the most powerful Sundays of the year – Youth Sunday is back, and it's all led by the next generation! Our youth will lead with passion, purpose, and the power of the Spirit. This dynamic service celebrates how discipleship shapes how we speak, spend, serve, and live. Don't miss it!

June 14 – Older Adults: Faith That Endures and Inspires

We celebrate the deep, steady faith of those who have walked with God over time. Their lives remind us that faith doesn't fade—it grows, bears fruit, and continues to shape the generations around them.

June 21 – Father's Day: Spiritual Fathers, Faithful Men

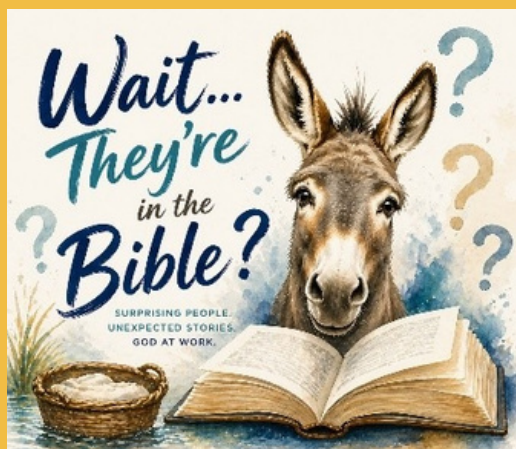
A meaningful and inclusive service honoring men who lead with love and faith—as fathers, mentors, and guides. We'll celebrate the power of presence and the lasting impact of those who help nurture faith in others.

June 28 – Intergenerational Sunday: One Gospel, Every Age

We close the series with a compelling vision of one Gospel lived across every age. This message invites us into shared discipleship, where each generation strengthens the other. We truly are better together—and FMC needs every voice, every story, every age.

WAIT...THEY'RE IN THE BIBLE?

July 5 - September 6 | Combined Worship at 10:00 a.m.



Ever read the Bible and think...“Wait—I didn’t know that was in there?” This summer, we’re diving into some of the most surprising, overlooked, and downright unexpected people in Scripture. Not the big names you already know—but the ones you might have skipped past, never noticed, or didn’t realize had a story at all; like a talking donkey, a runaway slave, two girls who refused to look away at a basket in a river, and a bald prophet with some very unexpected bears.

Each week will introduce us to one of these “wait...what?” moments in the Bible—and uncover the powerful truth hiding just beneath the surface.

Because here’s the thing: These aren’t just strange or forgotten stories, they’re reminders that God works through ordinary people, unexpected moments, and lives that look a lot like ours. So come curious, bring a friend, and get ready to discover that maybe...just maybe...your story belongs in God’s story, too!

GET READY FOR THE SIZZLE!**4th Annual FMC Churchwide BBQ****Sunday, July 12 at 11:00 a.m.**

It's back and better than ever! Join us in Fellowship Hall for an afternoon of great food, good friends, and summer fun at our Fourth Annual FMC BBQ — a tradition worth tasting!

We're firing up the grills for a BBQ feast featuring pulled pork, pulled beef, hot dogs for all ages, delicious sides, and vegan and gluten-free options, too!

Bring your favorite dessert to share and help us create the ultimate sweet table — from brownies to pies, we want to try them all! We'll have a craft table for kids, plenty of time to laugh, connect, and make new friends, and a whole lot of summer joy to go around.

PLUS — Be ready to participate in our Silent Auction benefiting the Fall Apple Festival! Bid on fun getaways, themed gift baskets, and other exciting items.

Bring your appetite. Bring your people. Bring the fun. We can't wait to see you there!

**EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE NEWS**

Mary Starn, starred5@comcast.net

“Justice Takes Courage” has been the theme for the Equity and Social Justice Committee this year. This theme comes from the General Board of Church and Society, one of the four boards of the United Methodist Church. Bishop Julius C. Trimble is the General Secretary of this Board. He has produced an excellent podcast by the same name, *Justice Takes Courage*. Give it a listen to hear what our denomination has to say about issues of equity and social justice.

With that theme in mind, our committee has attempted to educate, engage, and inspire us to ignite our faith and put our beliefs into action. We were particularly pleased to sponsor the Mural Arts Philadelphia program at Moorestown Library. One participant asked why we didn't just have the speaker come to our church for this presentation. We believe we can bring our commitment to important issues into the public square as we reach out into the community.



As summer approaches, we have several more exciting programs lined up. June 7 is Wear Orange Day. This is in support of a national movement advocating for Gun Violence Prevention. (Some of your Flyers gear is orange, so you can wear that too!) June 7 is also the Guided Walking Tour in Center City Philadelphia featuring murals from Mural Arts Philadelphia. On June 14, our very own Dr. Keisha Taylor will be our final speaker for the season as she addresses career readiness and her book, *Fuel Your Future*. Finally, all are encouraged to attend the Juneteenth Freedom Day at Perkins Center for the Arts, Saturday, June 20, from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

As Bishop Trimble always says, “Be encouraged”.



LOOKING BACK, *Stepping Forward*

CELEBRATING THEIR JOURNEY.
TRUSTING GOD WITH WHAT'S NEXT.

"For I know the plans I have for you,"
declares the Lord, "plans to give you
hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11



YOUTH UPDATE

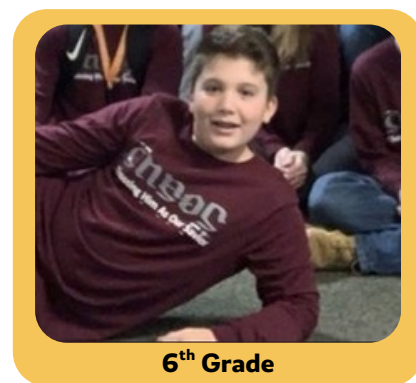
Jeremiah Appleton, jeremiah@fmcmoorestown.com

This June marks a bittersweet milestone in my role as Youth Director. For the first time, students I've watched grow since the beginning of their youth group journeys six years ago are preparing to step into their next season of life after high school.

I recently met with three of them—Evan Huelbig, Noah Pearce, and Matt Stewart—to reflect on how FMC's Youth Group helped shape their faith and who they have become, while also looking ahead to what comes next. To say I'm proud of these young men would be an understatement, and I can't wait to see how God continues to guide their paths in the years ahead.

EVAN HUELBIG

Evan is the oldest of four Huelbig siblings. This year was the first time they have all been part of Youth Group, with the youngest, Ethan, joining as a 6th grader. Evan has been a tremendous role model not just for his younger brother and sisters, but for everyone in our Youth Group, thanks to his calm, steady demeanor and his complete willingness, even eagerness, to help out in any circumstance. Evan is a shining example of our call to turn faith into action. Oh, and he grew up on the same street in Mt. Laurel that I did 30 years ago!



6th Grade

What is your first memory of your time in Youth Group?

Six years ago seems like a loong time, but I do remember going on my first Mid-Winter Advance retreat weekend in February 2020, just before Covid. This was the first time the event was held at Refreshing Mountain.

What is your favorite memory of your time in Youth Group?

It was our Slime Wars event in 2023. I particularly remember a game where we had to pour buckets of water over our heads into a bucket held by the person behind us—and Matt Stewart missed my bucket entirely and

soaked me. We were all blindfolded, so I didn't see it coming! Jeremiah captured a great photo of this moment, which lives in Youth Group lore.

Is there a leader or fellow student who made a lasting impact on you?

Tyler Hare has made a lasting impact on me because he was actually in Youth Group when I joined as a 6th grader. The fact that he has stayed involved as a leader is inspiring. Since his experience with Youth Group is very recent, Tyler always has relatable stories to share and wisdom to offer.



12th Grade

Was there a mission trip or retreat weekend that changed your perspective on faith?

Both ASP summer mission trips gave me a new perspective on how people live in areas of the country I'd never seen before. I was particularly struck by the level of poverty in Jonesville, VA, yet I was amazed that the people we were helping were able to find joy within their circumstances and stay strong in their faith. Witnessing this has helped me find confidence in my own faith.

What advice would you give to a younger student about Youth Group?

Go on as many trips as you can with your fellow YG students and friends – Ignite Wildwood, Mid-Winter Advance, and Appalachia Service Project. The trips are tons of fun and very meaningful, but they're also a great opportunity to connect with your FMC friends in different settings. These have all been incredible experiences for me.

What's next for you after high school graduation?

I am considering two different routes – joining the Coast Guard or getting an apprenticeship with the Pipefitters Union. I have been learning the art of welding over the past year at an after-school job, so this would be an opportunity to put the skills I've developed to greater use.

NOAH PEARCE

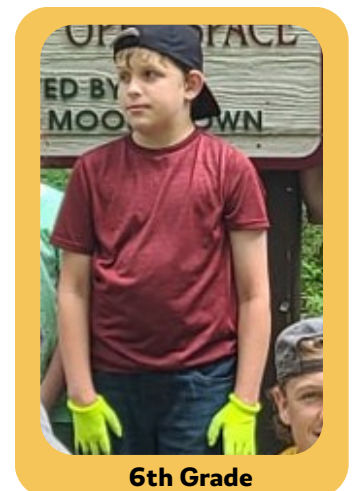
When Noah first entered the fray of Youth Group as a 7th grader, he was quiet, unsure of himself, and still trying to figure out where he fit in. Over the past six years, it has been incredible to watch him grow—not only in confidence, but also in faith. Noah has developed into a thoughtful, grounded young man who is unafraid to lead, serve, and openly live out what he believes. His journey is a powerful reminder that growth often happens little by little, through community, encouragement, and God's steady work in our lives.

What is your first memory of Youth Group?

Slime Wars in 2021 was the "kick-off" to my youth group experience, and I remember meeting new kids, in particular our new Pastor's kids (Jeremiah, Nate, and Chris Campbell), and I had so much fun. I fondly recall being pelted with slime balloons, which may seem odd to some, but it let me know this was a place I could have fun and get along with others. I also remember throwing the football around that day and how others were impressed with my throwing distance.

What kept you coming back to Youth Group over the years?

The bond with other youth and the fun we had together. School was a difficult place for me as I found it hard to make good friends there, but Youth Group always felt



6th Grade

like a place I could be myself, connect, and have fun with other students. Youth Group also gave me a place where I felt comfortable connecting with my faith, which has come to mean so much to me as I prepare to head off to college.

Were there times you struggled with faith or doubt? What helped you through?

I struggled with connecting to God during my freshman and sophomore years. I felt lost and believed I was headed down a path where I couldn't be saved. I was much more interested in seeking attention from others than I was in practicing my faith. My parents and my friends helped me re-prioritize what was most important, and I began to see that as God communicating through others to reach me. My perspective changed significantly in my junior year. That's when I signed up for the mission trip, despite my anxiousness over it, and that experience convinced me I was back on the right track.



12th Grade

Is there a leader or fellow student who made a lasting impact on you?

Tyler Hare, who is the youngest leader of our Youth Group, shares many of the same interests as me and he is a very easy person to talk to. Tyler is a role model to me because of his cool, collected composure and because he was in our shoes not that long ago, so he understands the trials of high school that we experience today.

Was there a mission trip or retreat weekend that changed your perspective on faith?

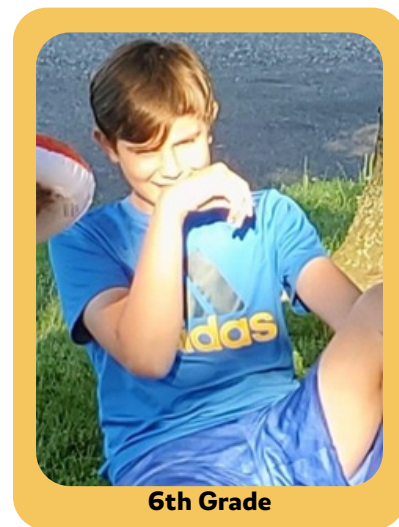
Our first ASP mission trip to Jonesville, VA, and my first mission trip ever, showed me that when I respond purposefully to God's call in my life, I can make a difference. I loved how our work crew came together to accomplish a goal for a family who needed it. On this trip, God showed me that I will always have a purpose in life, regardless of any mistakes I have made along the way. I look forward to continuing to join FMC mission trips in the future.

What's next for you after HS Graduation?

I am headed to Elizabethtown College for the next four years, where I anticipate a double major in Communications and Business Administration. I am particularly interested in pursuing sports journalism like my grandfather, as I really enjoy writing and (Baltimore) sports. Otherwise, I am interested in becoming a business leader who could use my platform to make a positive difference in the world.

MATT STEWART

When Matt first joined Youth Group as a 6th grader, he brought plenty of energy, confidence, and more than a little chaos with him. Even then, it was clear there was something special in the way he connected with people and jumped fully into whatever was happening. Over the past six years, that youthful energy has been shaped into something remarkable. Matt has grown into a true role model—someone unafraid to share his faith openly with both students and adults, and someone who consistently leads with authenticity, compassion, and joy. Along the way, God has clearly stirred in him a deep heart for service, inspiring him to use his gifts not just for himself, but to make a difference in the lives of others.



6th Grade

What is your first memory of your time in Youth Group?

I remember a Property Day where the Youth Group helped and when I was just old enough to participate. The youth had raked a huge pile of leaves onto a tarp and Tyler, who was a junior or senior at the time, offered to let me sit in the giant pile of leaves on the tarp while everybody else picked up the tarp and carried me and the leaves across the parking lot. The experience was fun but it also made me feel like this was a place I would be welcomed.

What kept you coming back to Youth Group over the years?

The connections – I've made some really good friends over my time, people that I cared about and looked up to. Overall, I'd say there have been a bunch of really cool people that made Youth Group fun for me.



12th Grade

Were there times you struggled with faith or doubt? What helped you through?

I believe we all have difficult seasons of life. Knowing that there were always people I could talk to in this community of faith provided a sense of comfort, not to mention real relief and guidance when I needed it most.

Is there a leader or fellow student who made a lasting impact on you?

I want to acknowledge both Tyler and AC Cannizzaro. Tyler was one of the first people to make me feel included in FMC Youth Group. AC was a source of inspiration and wisdom in many ways and at many times.

What advice would you give to a younger student about Youth Group?

Being a follower of Christ can be really difficult because you can start to feel limited in a typical high school environment. No matter how hard the struggle is, be persistent to prioritize and stick with your faith because I've personally seen the rewards of having gone through many difficult circumstances and choices and coming out stronger on the other side.

What's next for you after high school graduation?

I'm headed to Rowan for my freshman year of college. However, I will then take a break for a year-long fellowship with Appalachia Service Project because that's a place I feel God has called me. After that, I'm not settled on what happens next...maybe back to Rowan or maybe on to Virginia Tech. I have learned that the uncertainty is OK, because you never truly know what's down the road for you...and this is why it's important to me to stay grounded in my faith because THAT is one thing I can carry with me no matter where I go.

APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT MISSION TRIP

FMC is headed back on a summer mission trip with ASP for the third straight year. This summer, 19 youth and 14 adults will forego valuable summer vacation days and Paid Time Off from their jobs to travel to Johnson City, TN, where we will spend a week working on home repair projects to create warmer, safer, and drier living conditions for wonderful families who are simply unable to do so for themselves. Your prayers are most appreciated while we are on the trip from August 2-9.



Please note these other important dates:

- **July 26—Commissioning Service.** Come bless the ASP team and join them for a special coffee hour sponsored by our Missions Committee.
- **August 16—Missions Sunday.** Come hear stories from those who went on the mission trip and experienced God in new ways.

FIRST LIGHT PRESCHOOL NEWS

Devika Gill, FirstLight@FMCMoorestown.com

Our new playground is amazing!! It's about the same size as our old playground but feels much bigger. The huge built-in shade is perfect for afternoon play because we get direct sun all afternoon. This playground is designed for children between the ages of 2 years and 5 years, while our old playground was designed for children between 2 and 12 years. It has more "play events" (specific play areas) and more slides, so more children can safely play on the equipment designed specifically for their age. While our old playground served us well for many years, we are so excited to have this new equipment, which is much more age appropriate for our children!



YOU'RE INVITED TO VBS!

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

ROAD Trip!

FOOD • FUN • FRIENDS • FAITH

AUGUST 10-14 MONDAY-FRIDAY

9:00-12:00

KIDS AGES 3 THROUGH 5TH GRADE

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446 E Camden Ave
Moorestown, NJ

REGISTER TODAY!

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

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THE FMC APP

Communications@fmcmoorestown.com

We had an overwhelmingly positive response after rolling out the FMC App in May! If you haven't tried it yet, use the QR code to download it now. Your next step in faith is just a tap away:

- **Access FMC, right in your pocket**
- **Stay connected**
- **Grow anywhere**

