



First United Methodist Church
201 Dayton Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 1125
Bellmawr, NJ

WHERE WE ARE HEADED THIS AUTUMN

It should be of no surprise to anyone that the world has changed dramatically over the past several years. The changes that have taken place, however, has not been radical innovations as much as they have been continuations of pre-existing trends. The difference is not in the type or nature of changes that have taken place, but in the speed with which those changes have occurred. It has been said that "Crisis is an accelerator," and we have been in crisis mode now for years. The world around us, what you could call the "culture," is changing at a pace that would have been unimaginable even a decade ago. The changes have come, so many and so quickly, that it is no longer correct to call America a Christian nation.

The reality in which we find ourselves living, in America in 2022, has become a post-Christian reality. Gone are the days of Sunday laws, community worship attendance, and civil religion. Today the church feels more like the Israelites living in exile in Babylon, rather than living in Jerusalem. On the surface that seems like a terrible thing, to be uprooted and transplanted into a context which is uncomfortable, unfamiliar, and unfriendly. However, if you look down through the annals of history, the church has always been its healthiest (not necessarily its largest) when it has been in a position of offering an alternative to the world around it, rather than when it has led the world around it from a position of power. But that does not change the reality that we must be extremely intentional if our children are going to learn and receive the faith "once for all entrusted to the saints." (Jude 3)

So how do we live faithfully in the middle of a strange culture, even one that finds us when we thought we were at home? Or, as the Israelites asked while they sat beside the river of Babylon, "How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?" Our first autumn sermon series, which will begin when we come back to our normal schedule on September 11th, will be titled, "Digital Babylon: Developing Resilient Faith in Exile." In this series, I hope to share with you both the research that is available to us about forming resilient disciples and the unchanging God who has revealed Himself to us through Scripture. We have an opportunity to pass on to the following generations the good news of Jesus Christ which has been given to us, but we also have the responsibility to make sure the lives they are building are being built on the only true foundation, Jesus Christ. If we will not disciple our young people, we should not be surprised when they grow up to look like Babylon.

Doing the work of forming disciples is not quick work; it takes time, energy, and intention. But it cannot be time, energy, and intention alone. At least not our time, energy, and intention alone. If we are going to be about the work of the church, which is making disciples of Jesus who make more disciples of Jesus, then we need the Holy Spirit to come and breathe life, power, and desire into the body of Christ. So our second fall sermon series will be leaning into the stories of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts; not in an attempt to recreate what God was doing then, but to get in tune with the Holy Spirit and ask Him what God is doing in our world today.

As we try to live faithfully in the midst of a strange culture, we would do well to listen to the wisdom God gave to His people through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 29:5-7): *"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."* We are not called to hide out and wait to see if it will pass or to give up and be assimilated into the Babylonian culture; we are called to contend for the faith and help form resilient disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Grace and Peace,
-Pastor Scott



SEPTEMBER 11 - OCTOBER 16



OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 20

"lyfe" weekly schedule will include:

Sunday School in the Youth room at 9am
Youth Group from 6pm-8pm on Sundays

We have other exciting events coming up including an All nighter, 30 Hr Famine, Christmas Party, Winter Retreat + more

To receive Details about our events, please reach out to Pastor Jeremy to receive email and text updates at jeremy@fumccollingswood.org



God is at work throughout our congregation and we are so excited for all of the things that He will provide for our Youth this school year! Our goal is to do life with God and each other (Romans 15:5-7).

We will be kicking off our year with a Back to School BBQ on September 11th.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

On **September 11**, we will resume our school year (September-June) Sunday morning schedule. This schedule features a traditional worship service at 9:00am and a contemporary worship service at 10:30am. There are also Sunday school classes for all ages available at 9:00am and an adult class available at 10:30am. At 10am, between the services, there is a fellowship time available for all.

Infant & toddler nursery is available during the 10:30 service and kids in K-5th grade are invited to participate in Kids Church during the message at 10:30am.

9:00AM - TRADITIONAL WORSHIP & SUNDAY SCHOOL

*Hymns, Creeds, Prayers, a Sermon. Sunday School for Kids, Youth, Young Adults, GSC (*9:15), Adult Study, & Adult Discussion.*

10:00AM - FELLOWSHIP TIME

10:30AM - CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

Worship Songs, Creeds, Prayers, a Sermon. Nursery will be available and kids in grades K-5 will be dismissed to Kids Church before the sermon. Adult Sunday School.

SAVE THE DATE - CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

If you can remember back to early 2020, before the pandemic broke out and the world was forced into lockdown, you may remember that First Methodist was holding a series of conversations regarding the future direction of our denomination and our congregation. Those conversations, like so many things, were cut off and placed on hold while we grappled with the disruptions caused by covid. In the almost two and a half years since then, the landscape of our denomination has changed dramatically and the options before us are less clear than they once appeared to be.

In order to take the pulse of the congregation, and give you an opportunity to give feedback to our leaders, we will hold two sessions of a congregational conversation on **September 14th from 7pm-9pm and September 17th from 10am-12pm**. We are taking time to provide two sessions in the hope that most of our congregation will be able to attend one of the options, but the information that will be presented by Steve Schoch (who led our conversations in 2020) will be the same.

These are important conversations in the life of our congregation about who we are, who we have been, and who we are going to continue to be in the future. I want to encourage each of you to make it a priority to attend and participate in these sessions. As your pastor, the decisions ahead of us are not decisions that I can make for the church or on your behalf. Your involvement in these conversations will help to inform the conversations the leaders of the congregation will have.

Above all, I encourage you to be in prayer for these conversations, but also for the wider process and all those involved in it; Bishop Schol, our District Superintendent Glenn Conaway, the Conference Board of Trustees, and the leaders here at First Methodist. Pray that each of us would be filled with all wisdom, discernment, grace, and truth. Pray that First United Methodist Church in Collingswood, NJ would be faithful to be who God has called the Church to be at all times and in all places.

These are not easy days or simple decisions but, as part of the body of Christ in the world, we have been called *"to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people."* (James v3) These are defining, decisive days, not just for our local congregation in Collingswood, NJ, but for the Church in America and around the world. We do not, as Gandalf said in the Lord of the Rings, get to choose our time, *"All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."*

AUTUMN COMMUNION OFFERINGS

Communion offerings are taken on the first Sunday of each month and will benefit the following ministries.

September - Discipleship Ministries

October - UMCOR

November - Camden Ministries

December - Collingswood Food Pantry

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Our Tuesday morning Bible study will be resuming for the Fall on Tuesday, September 13. This study meets weekly at 10am and is open to all.

The first six weeks of our study will be a study in the book of Jude entitled, "Contender," which will be led by Pastor Scott. After that, other teachers will lead our time of study.

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH THAT WAS ONCE FOR ALL ENTRUSTED TO GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE." JUDE 3

SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER	
2	Lew Farling	2	Gus & Mary Mondatsos	3	Bethany Alexander
6	Pat Gunning, Bill & Barbara Brown	3	Steve & Linda Schoch	8	Ken & Joan Steward
10	Karen Alexander Steve & Michelle Latch	5	Will & Christine Walker	11	Sharyn Bailey
11	Barbara Rapp	7	Joan Steward	16	Patricia Sheaffer
15	Harry Rameriz	8	Elizabeth Boswell	17	Tim Rambo, Mark McGaurn
16	Britny Molloy	10	Tyler Wertz	21	Bill Wertz
21	Ed & RuthAnn Detwiler	11	Jerry Adams	23	Michael Molloy
23	Benjamin Rambo	15	Jack MacNamara, Nicole Meyers, Jill Tribulas	24	Debi Aurig
25	Ed Detwiler	16	David Hammond	28	Steve Hemphill, Alison Tribulas
26	Kathy McGaurn	17	Steve Latch		
30	Nancy Gross, Karen Kline, Gary McGaurn	19	Tom Averell, Linda Rameriz		
		20	Merry MacGlaughlin		
		22	Janel Esher, Nicole Zook		
		26	Betty-Ruth Schopfer		
		29	Jonathan & Jennifer Schwehm		

www.fumccollingswood.org
office@fumccollingswood.org
856-858-1186

Anniversaries bolded
*If your birthday or anniversary isn't listed here, the church doesn't have it. Email it to office@fumccollingswood.org to be included.

AUTUMN BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES