



A Patriotic Faith: Gratitude, Humility, and Hope

"For freedom Christ has set us free." — Galatians 5:1

This July, communities across the nation will celebrate a remarkable milestone: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Two hundred and fifty years is a significant birthday. It is an opportunity to reflect on the history of our nation, to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy, and to remember the many individuals who have sacrificed and served for the common good.

As Christians, however, we approach such celebrations with both gratitude and humility.

Gratitude, because we recognize the many blessings of living in a country where we are free to worship, speak, gather, and serve. We give thanks for those who have worked to preserve these freedoms and for all who continue to labor for the well-being of our communities.

Humility, because our faith reminds us that no nation is perfect. Every country, every institution, and every generation falls short of God's vision of justice, mercy, and peace. The history of the United States contains moments of great courage and noble ideals, but also moments of exclusion, injustice, and division. Faith calls us to tell the truth about both.

The Apostle Paul writes, "For freedom Christ has set us free." Yet the freedom Paul describes is not simply political freedom. It is the freedom to love our neighbors, to seek reconciliation, to care for the vulnerable, and to live as people shaped by grace rather than fear.

That kind of freedom remains a calling for every generation.

(continue to next page)

Welcome . . .

to the July 2026 issue of the Clinton United Methodist Church newsletter. We are a community sent for others; our hope is for all people to experience God's love in Jesus Christ.

In This Issue:

Sermon Series	Pg. 2
UMC Social Principles	Pg. 3
Take Us With You	Pg. 3
Life is Better Together!	Pg. 4
Pathways Wrap-Up	Pg. 4-5
Congratulations, Graduates	Pg. 6
Children's Ministries	Pg. 7
Wiggle Room	Pg. 7
Kids' Camp	Pg. 7
Crafting Group	Pg. 8
NH Thrift Shop	Pg. 8
Prayer Chain	Pg. 8
Care Committee	Pg. 9
CUMC Missions	Pg. 9
Supporting Illini 4000	Pg. 10
Coming Together	Pg. 10
July Birthdays	Pg. 10
Thank You Note	Pg. 10
Photo Gallery	Pg. 11

Like us on

facebook



As we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, perhaps one of the most faithful things we can do is pray—not only in thanksgiving for the blessings we have received, but also for the wisdom and courage to continue growing into the ideals we profess. We can pray for our leaders, our communities, and our neighbors. We can pray for healing where there is division, justice where there is inequity, and peace where there is conflict.

The prophet Micah reminds us what God requires: "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

May this anniversary inspire us not only to celebrate where we have been, but also to recommit ourselves to the work that still lies ahead. And may our faith continue to shape us into people who use our freedom to love generously, serve faithfully, and seek the common good.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jess

Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty
Senior Pastor
pastorjess@sentforothers.org
908-400-2343 (cell)

Sermon Series



July Sermon Series: The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss

This July, join us for a whimsical and thought-provoking worship series, *The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss*. Through beloved stories like *The Lorax*, *Yertle the Turtle*, *The Sneetches*, *Horton Hears a Who*, and *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, we'll discover how timeless lessons about justice, humility, belonging, compassion, and courage connect with the teachings of Jesus and our faith today.

UMC Social Principles Spotlight: Faithful Citizenship in a Divided Time

"Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable." (The Political Community—Introduction)

Faith and politics often feel like an uneasy pairing. In a time of intense polarization, many Christians find themselves caught between two temptations: withdrawing from civic life altogether or allowing political identities to overshadow their identity in Christ.

The United Methodist Social Principles remind us of a different path.

As Christians, we are called to participate responsibly in civic life—not because politics is our ultimate hope, but because love of neighbor requires us to care about the communities in which we live. The decisions made by governments and public institutions affect real people: children and families, workers and employers, immigrants and citizens, the vulnerable and the powerful alike.

The Social Principles acknowledge that faithful Christians may disagree about specific policies, candidates, or solutions to complex problems. Yet our faith calls us to engage these disagreements with humility, respect, and a commitment to the common good. We are challenged to listen before we speak, to seek truth rather than merely winning arguments, and to remember that those with whom we disagree are also beloved children of God.

Responsible civic engagement is not about partisan loyalty. It is about bringing the values of Christ—justice, mercy, compassion, honesty, and peace—into the public square. It requires courage to speak when injustice is present and humility to recognize that none of us sees the whole picture.

In a divided world, Christians have an opportunity to model a different way: one rooted not in fear or anger, but in love.

Invitation to Reflection:

How can you participate in civic life in a way that reflects Christ's love? What would it look like to engage political conversations with both courage and humility in this season?

Take Us with You

 **Clinton United Methodi...**  



**Clinton United
Methodist Church**

@clintonumc4755

Where will this summer take you? Mountains? Beaches? Family? With today's technology, you can keep Clinton UMC close, even if you're far from home:

- Worship with us online via [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), or our [website](#).
- Read our firstfive devotionals on this [group page](#) (you don't need a Facebook account).
- Give online via our app, website, or your online bill pay list. The latter is the most advantageous to Clinton UMC because no fees

are deducted. You can even "set it and forget it" by setting up recurring giving.

We're not slowing down this summer. We'll be busy with worship, Kids' Camp, community missions, and much more. So all summer long, keep us with you—wherever life takes you. Enjoy your summer!

Life Is Better Together!

Thank you to everyone who completed our small group survey. Your input is invaluable as we work to strengthen and grow our small group and adult education ministries here at Clinton UMC.

Here are a few highlights of what you told us:

- Top reasons you want small groups: Relationships, applying scripture to daily life, and spiritual growth.
- Most popular small group formats: Book/video studies and Bible studies
- Preferred meeting times: Sundays and weekday evenings

Some people who responded gave us wonderfully helpful comments on what specifically would interest them such as crafting seasonal items to give to people who can't make it to church or who live in nursing homes or are in the hospital; a book club focusing on books by international authors; a group that focuses on modern culture.

Armed with this information, we are working on creating a framework for offering some new groups and bible studies beginning this fall.

If you did not have a chance to complete our survey, I'm always happy to have a conversation about small groups or adult education opportunities. And if you are interested in joining a small group or becoming a leader of one, please let me know.

Thank you!

Greg Crawford

Chair, Adult Education and Community Groups

Gcrawf216@gmail.com/908.343.1936



Pathways Wrap-Up

Pathways Wrapup

Where is Clinton UMC especially healthy and strong as a church—and where do our foundations need some shoring up? Three years ago, we assembled the Pathways Visioning and Goal Setting team to explore these questions. After surveying our congregation and holding two workshops, four themes and goals emerged; they have been our focus. As we wrap up this initiative, we'd like to share our final report on those goals. If you'd like to learn more, you can find additional detail in the ["Pathways Action Plan 2023-2026 Final Version."](#)

Goal 1: Financial. *Increase income by 15% over 3 years so that CUMC can fully meet operating expenditures based on increases in both congregational giving and income from other sources.*

Status:

Operating income increased 39.2% from year-end 2022 through year-end 2025.

We were able to far exceed our goal due to higher-than-average investment income and substantial revenue from the North Hunterdon Thrift Shop. Our Finance Committee will continue to adjust our investment income strategy based on market conditions. Congregational giving will continue to be a growing edge, one that will be addressed by our new Generosity Team.

Much of the work completed by the Financial Sustainability team will continue as part of Clinton UMC's commitment to planning with both faith and fiscal prudence. We will continue to monitor income sources and expenses and adjust our financial strategies accordingly.

Goal 2: Engagement. *Within 3 years, engage 75% of the congregation (members and constituents/regular participators) in at least one mission/ministry annually (other than Sunday worship).*

Status:

A recent engagement audit found that our percentage of engagement has grown from 72% to 74% over the past three years. While we are just short of reaching our 75% engagement goal, we believe that we will not only meet, but exceed this goal in years to come.

Our work within this goal focused on ways to engage members and regular worship attendees in discipleship areas beyond Sunday morning worship, including spiritual growth and small group participation, mission engagement, church leadership and service, and generosity. We have also undergone a thorough audit of our membership rolls to aid us in membership care.

Moving forward, Clinton UMC, along with other United Methodists of Greater New Jersey, will take a closer look at formalizing our discipleship strategy, or a plan for helping our congregation to grow spiritually and equipping them to make new disciples.

Goal 3: Inclusivity. *By May 2024, identify where we are as a congregation in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusivity, develop a Way Forward Covenant, and publicly communicate our status.*

Status:

This covenant was approved with a 92% affirmative vote at our Special Church Conference in April of 2024.

Communications at that time included both internal messaging (through our newsletter, midweek news, etc.) and external communications via social media. Our Inclusivity Group has also developed yard signs and is in the process of finalizing outdoor banners.

Moving forward, inclusivity messaging will be integrated into our overall internal and external communications strategies.

Goal 4: Intergenerational. *Within 3 years, create intentional bridges across generations through a variety of ministries and missions.*

Status:

Overall, we've seen expanded consideration of how to involve multiple generations in the work of the church.

Our Intergenerational Team has been involved in several events hosted by various committees and ministries, including those listed below. A new crafting ministry was established in response to feedback received during the Pathways process. Events that have taken an intergenerational approach include:

- Kids' Camp
- Baseball outing
- Churchwide brunch
- Bulletin board refreshes
- Movie night
- Grow A Row gleaning
- Cookie exchange

What's next for Clinton UMC in terms of visioning and goal setting? Many of the focus areas we have been working on for the past three years will remain priorities for CUMC. Our Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koi Koi has identified a goal for the churches in our conference which aligns directly with our engagement goal, which is exciting! With the help of our conference resourcing, we will be guided to develop intentional pathways of discipleship that encourage faith development for all. Our Administrative Council will be engaging with this conference-wide initiative in the years to come, while also identifying other opportunities for growth within our own congregation. We are prayerfully anticipating where God will lead us in the future!

Congratulations, Graduates!

Congratulations to our recent graduates!
Please join us in celebrating with them and praying for their next steps.

POST-GRADUATE



Emily Adair Dunn

Master of Social Work, West
Chester University
Working toward becoming a
Licensed Social Worker



Allie Moyer

Johns Hopkins University
Working at the Johns Hopkins
Applied Physics Lab

COLLEGE



Eli Waisburd

Vanderbilt University
Will work for an ecoinvestment
firm

COLLEGE



Kyra Chen

Marist University
Will attend Georgetown
University (Master's in Integrative
Neuroscience)



Steven Crawford

Rutgers University
Will attend University of Southern
California (PhD in History)



Adam Zehnbaauer

Stockton University
Plans to work with youth

COLLEGE



Shannon Byrnes

West Chester University
Will join Henkel's Emerging
Professionals program



Garrett Kluthe

Widener University
Will work as an engineer

8th Grade



AJ Femenella

Union Twp. Middle School
Will attend North Hunterdon

Children's Ministries

Sunday School

Grades K-5th

As we enter the heat of summer, we hope you and your children will join us for Sunday school! Here are our lessons for the month:

July 5: Born in Bethlehem

July 12: Let the Children Come

July 19: One Body, Many Gifts

July 26: Fly like an Eagle

Volunteer!

Our Sunday school program wouldn't be possible without our team of volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering to teach Sunday school, please contact Hailey Becker (hailey@sentforothers.org).

Wiggle Room

Children ages 0 - Pre-K

Sunday Mornings during Worship

Calling all wigglers! Children are always welcome in the sanctuary with us during morning worship, but you are also invited to utilize the Wiggle Room located outside the social hall. Our Wiggle Room offers supervision from staff for your children ages 0 through Pre-K, and is filled with toys and space to do what wigglers do best: wiggle!



Kids' Camp



Youth and Adult
Volunteers, scan here:



Information

August 3-7, 2026

9 am – 12 pm

Children's Registration:

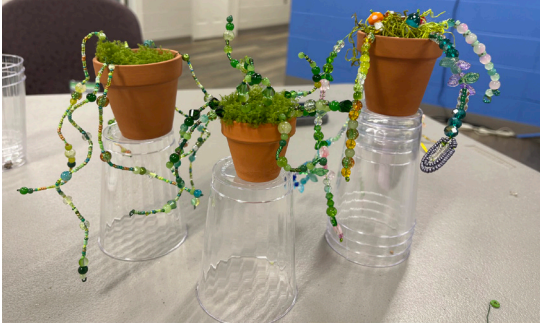
To register, use the QR code on the right or find the link on our website.



Upcoming Dates for Volunteers:

- July 12 & 19: Mandatory Training (must attend one)
 - Youth Worship Room
 - 11:30am
- July 22: Craft Night for Decorations
 - Social Hall
 - 5:30 pm–7:30 pm

Intergenerational Crafting Group Meets July 25



If you enjoy crafting, especially with others, check out our crafting ministry. All crafts are easy, require no preparation, and are fun for all ages. Last month, we made the pictured beaded succulents. On July 25 at 10 am, Hannah Dunn will lead us through easy crochet projects. You'll get to choose what you create: a coaster, a water bottle holder, or a planter.

Questions? Contact Robin Godshalk (rlgodshalk@yahoo.com).

North Hunterdon Thrift Shop

With sizzling summer sales, come on in to see what's new and chat with our friendly volunteers.

The North Hunterdon Thrift Shop offers new and gently used clothing, home goods, linens, children's toys, books, vintage items and more to people who want to stretch their budget or reduce waste and pollution.

Donations are needed! Our donation shed is open 8:00 am – 8:00 pm daily and is convenient and hassle-free. We love your donations, but please only drop off usable, in-working-condition, clean items. Accepted items can be viewed online at <https://www.sentforothers.org/northhunterdonthrift>.

Make a difference and meet great people—volunteer at the NH thrift shop. If you have a warm smile and a heart for others, this may be the ministry for you! You don't need experience, and you can choose days/times that work for you. For more information, stop in during shop hours or call 908-733-3333. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

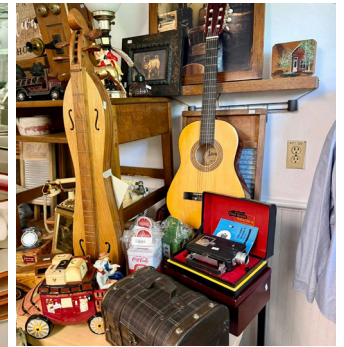
Hours: Monday: 8:30 am–12 pm | Wednesday: 8:30 am–12 pm and 3 pm–6 pm | Saturday: 8:30 am–2 pm

Location: 51 County Road 635, Hampton, NJ (corner of Norton Church & Charlestown Roads)

Phone: (908) 735-0177

Blessings,

Volunteer Staff



Prayer Chain



We would love to add you to our prayer chain to receive the prayers of our people each week. We appreciate every prayer that is lifted for healing and comfort for those who are in a time of need.

Call or email your request to the church office: office@sentforothers.org or 908-735-7025. Prayer is a treasure that is never exhausted.

Care Committee

Do you join us for coffee and treats after worship? (Please do!) You can help us keep coffee time going throughout the year, and show your appreciation to the Care Committee, by signing up for an open date. If you have never participated before, don't worry.

Contact Nancy Smith (nsbestemor41@gmail.com) or the church office to let us know which Sunday works best for you.



Shop Rite Cards for Sale

Every Sunday, Shop Rite cards are available for sale in the social hall.

5% of all sales go toward our church mission.

Please come prepared with cash or check made out to CUMC.

CUMC Missions



Thank you to all who donated laundry detergent for Harvest Family Success Center. We collected 39 bottles from the congregation. The clients at the thrift shop donated 9 bottles of detergent and \$120. We used the money to purchase 17 bottles of detergent. A total of 59 containers of laundry detergent was delivered to Harvest Family in Flemington on June 9. They were very appreciative of our efforts and grateful for the donations.

Upcoming Events

- Grow-A-Row Summer date to be determined.

A fun way to support our local missions is to attend one of their fundraisers. Here are two coming up in July

- *Supporting Good News Home for Women*. Designer Bag Bingo at the Flemington Elks Saturday July 11, 6-10 pm. goodnewshome.org for tickets or more information

- *Supporting Family Promise of Hunterdon County*. Dinner and (clean) Comedy Night at the Clinton Fire Department Friday July 24 6-10. Tickets \$45. Call Family Promise for more information 908 782-2490

The Missions Team

Thank You For Supporting the Illini 4000



We'd like to share a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported the Illini 4000 cyclists as they visited Clinton UMC in May. Thanks to all who donated food and ShopRite cards, who visited and helped cook dinner, and who opened their homes so the cyclists could shower after a cold, wet ride. This year's team has raised \$70,000 for cancer awareness and research efforts. You can learn more about their journey [here](#) or find them on Facebook or Instagram.

Coming Together—Musically

Did you know we help host the Town of Clinton's "Come Together Friday Night Street Festival"? "Come Together" showcases musical acts throughout Clinton on Friday nights. As the "Friday Nights" became more popular, Clinton needed an additional space for hosting music. Clinton UMC readily agreed. We're able to show love to our community by sharing our space, and we can gain visibility for our church.

If you'd like to help us plan how to extend a warm welcome, please contact beth@sentforothers.org. And if you're in the community on a Friday night this summer, stop by and support the performers!

Celebrating July Birthdays

Michael Lane – July 2
Dominick Lane – July 2
Deborah Lenig – July 7
Garrett Kluthe – July 8
Luke Kluthe – July 8
Robin Damon – July 21
Sandi Graham – July 22
Russ Yarnell – July 24



Thank You Note



Thank you so much Clinton UMC Quilters for the beautiful quilt! I absolutely love it! It will be a great comfort as I continue to heal from my surgery.

Blessed,

Stephanie (Formus)

Photo Gallery



The church does not receive mail at 12 Halstead Street (the church) or
10 Halstead Street (the church office).

Ensure your mail is not lost: Send mail to the church's Post Office Box in Clinton:
P.O. Box 5331, Clinton, NJ 08809
Send packages to 10 Halstead Street, Clinton, NJ 08809.

CUMC Staff

Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty

Senior Pastor

908-735-7025

Cell 908-400-2343

pastorjess@sentforothers.org

Sandi Graham

Administrative Assistant

908-735-7025

office@sentforothers.org

Hailey Becker

Director of Children's and Youth Ministries

hailey@sentforothers.org

Karl Dietel

Accompanist

908-735-7025

office@sentforothers.org

Eric & Erica Rasmussen

Directors of Digital Ministry

erica@sentforothers.org

Amanda Santiago

Childcare Staff

office@sentforothers.org

Beth Crawford

Communications Director

908-442-3934

beth@sentforothers.org

Rose Leonard

Accountant/Bookkeeper

908-735-7025

rose@sentforothers.org

Brian Repsher

Sexton

office@sentforothers.org

Jennifer Gursky

Choir Director

jen@sentforothers.org

Jessica Buntine

Childcare Staff

office@sentforothers.org