



Beginning Again, Together

"Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together . . . but encouraging one another."

— Hebrews 10:24-25

There is something about September that always feels like a new beginning. Summer begins to wind down. Vacations come to an end. Students head back to classrooms, teachers prepare to welcome them, and families settle once again into familiar routines. Even if no one in your household is heading back to school, there is something about this time of year that seems to invite us to begin again.

The same is true in the life of the church. Over the coming weeks, ministries that have taken a summer pause will begin gathering again. Our choir will resume rehearsals, youth groups will reconnect, our Bible study will start a new season, community groups will return to their regular meeting schedule. There will be opportunities to serve, learn, worship, build relationships, and simply enjoy being together.

And perhaps, as this new season begins, there is an invitation here for each of us. **Where might God be inviting you to plug in?**

Sometimes we think of church primarily as the place we come to worship on Sunday morning—and worship is certainly at the heart of who we are. But the church is also a community in which we grow together, serve together, ask questions together, laugh together, and carry one another through the difficult seasons of life. We need those connections.

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Welcome . . .

to the September 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.

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The writer of Hebrews encourages us not only to gather together, but to *encourage one another* and inspire one another toward love and good works. Faith was never intended to be something we practice entirely on our own. We need people who will walk alongside us, challenge us, teach us, pray for us, and remind us of God's presence when we have trouble seeing it ourselves.

So as calendars begin filling up again this September, I encourage you to leave a little room for something that feeds your spirit. Maybe this is the year you finally try Bible study. Maybe you sing with the choir, join a small group, serve through one of our ministries, help with our children or youth, or simply make an intentional effort to get to know a few people in the church more deeply. You don't have to do everything. In fact, please don't! The invitation is simply to ask: **Where is God calling me in this season? Where might I grow? Where might my gifts bless someone else? Where might I discover the gift of deeper community?**

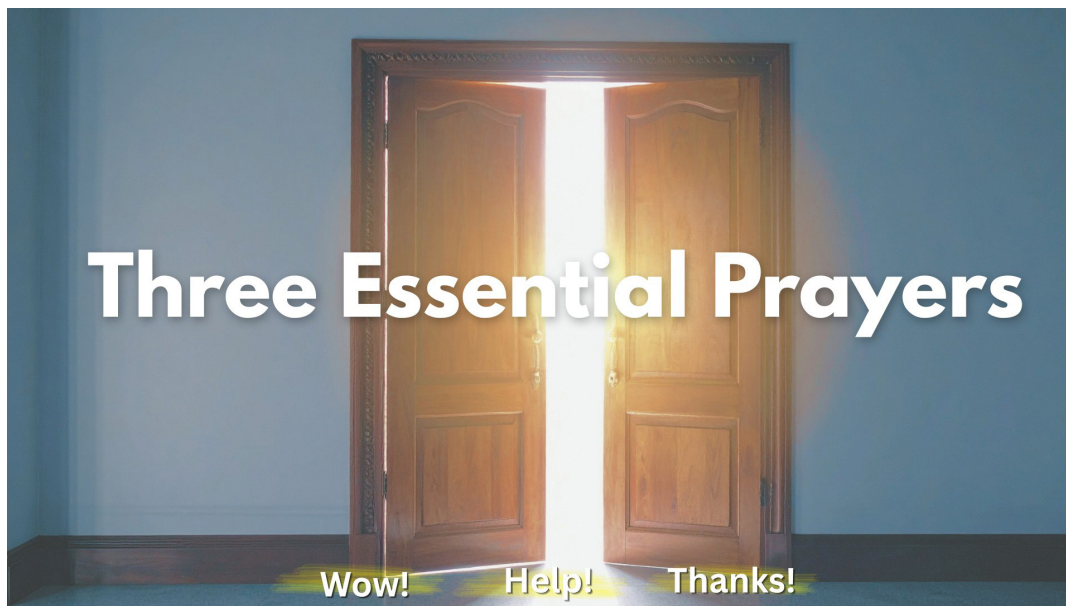
A new season is beginning. May we enter it with open hearts, ready to discover what God might have in store for us.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jess

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September Sermon Series



Three Essential Prayers: Wow! Help! Thanks!

What if prayer didn't have to be complicated? Inspired by Anne Lamott's book *Help, Thanks, Wow*, this three-week series explores three simple prayers that can carry us through almost every season of life: **Wow!** when wonder takes our breath away; **Help!** when we cannot make it on our own; and **Thanks!** when we recognize grace in the midst of ordinary life. Together, we'll discover that prayer is less about finding the right words and more about opening our lives to God—paying attention, reaching out, and responding with gratitude.

UMC Social Principles Spotlight: Honoring the Dignity of Work and Workers

"We support the right of all workers to organize for collective bargaining purposes... We also support workers' right to fair and equitable compensation." (The Economic Community – Dignity of Work)

For many of us, Labor Day marks the unofficial end of summer—a long weekend of picnics, gatherings, and one last opportunity to enjoy the season. But the holiday began with a much deeper purpose. Labor Day grew out of the labor movement of the late 1800s, when workers organized together to advocate for greater dignity, fairness, and safety in the workplace. The first Labor Day celebration was held in New York City in 1882, and in 1894 it became a national holiday honoring the contributions of American workers.

Our United Methodist Social Principles remind us that honoring workers is also a matter of faith.

Work is more than a paycheck. Through our work—whether paid or unpaid—we contribute our gifts, creativity, energy, and time to the well-being of our families and communities. Because every worker bears the image of God, our Social Principles affirm the importance of safe working conditions, adequate rest, fair compensation, and the ability of workers to organize and advocate collectively for their well-being.

These convictions have deep Methodist roots. From our earliest days, Methodists have spoken against the exploitation of workers and insisted that economic systems should serve people rather than treating people simply as a means of generating profit.

This also invites us to think about the unseen labor behind the things we consume: the farmworker who harvests our food, the warehouse employee who fills our order, the caregiver tending to someone we love, or the restaurant worker serving our meal. Our economic choices connect us to neighbors we may never meet.

This Labor Day, may we do more than celebrate work. May we honor the people who do it.

Reflection Invitation

Whose work makes your daily life possible but often goes unnoticed? This month, consider how the choices you make as an employee, employer, consumer, or neighbor can help affirm the dignity, fairness, and well-being of all workers.

Pastor's Bible Study Resumes

Pastor Jess's Bible study will resume on Thursdays at 9:30 am, September 17. If you'd like to dig more deeply into the Scriptures and explore what we can learn about God and our faith journey, please plan to join in the conversation! Contact Pastor Jess for more information.

Homecoming Sunday



*Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Psalm 8:1

Whether you've been away for the summer or here all along, you're invited to a special homecoming service Sunday, September 13 at 10 am. Join us for spirit-filled worship as we celebrate the awe God inspires in us. It will be the perfect time to not just worship but also to reconnect with friends you haven't seen in a while. Hope to see you there!

Gear Up for Groups!

As the summer winds down (I know, I know), it's time to start thinking about joining a small group!

We are excited to announce our newest group—a book club!

The group will be led by Marilyn Stetar, who said the new group will read classic stories set in foreign countries, meeting memorable characters who often struggle with moral dilemmas or personal crises, eventually finding peace. Group members will learn about the culture and mores of countries we've heard of but maybe know little about.

Beginning in October, the group will meet monthly on the second Sunday at church. The meeting time will be either after church or in the late afternoon, depending on the more popular time. The first meeting will be organizational to discuss the proposed book list and get acquainted.

Potential titles include:

- [Life and Death in Shanghai](#) (China), by Chen Nien
- [Cutting for Stone](#) (Ethiopia), by Abraham Verghese
- [Ladies #1 Detective Agency](#) series (Botswana), by Alexander McCall Smith
- [The Light Between Oceans](#) (Australia), by M.L. Stedman

Marilyn encourages everyone to bring their own ideas, too!

In addition to the new group, we have several groups that meet at different times and dates, and they are all open to new members. They include:

- Lisa Maul's Community Group, 7 p.m. Tuesdays via zoom
- The Godshalks' Community Group, Wednesdays, 7 pm, Phillipsburg
- Lois Anderson's Community Group, 3:30 p.m., Mondays at church
- Elaine Peete's Community Group, Fridays, 10 am, at the church office



Wiggle Room



*Children ages 0 through Pre-K
Sunday Mornings during Worship*

Happy Fall!

As we start off the new school year, we ask all parents/guardians to fill out a registration form for their wigglers to help volunteers/staff care for your children.

Please use the link below to fill out the form:

<https://sentforothers.churchcenter.com/registrations/signups/3788675>

Children's Ministry

Sunday School

Grades Kindergarten through 5

Sunday mornings during worship

Sunday School is a great time for students to interact with scripture in a way that is fun, age-appropriate, and interactive! We invite students between the grades of Kindergarten and 5th to head downstairs after Children's Time for weekly lessons.

Parents: As we begin a new school year, please (re)register your students for Sunday School to help us better care for your children.

Please use the link below to complete the form:

<https://sentforothers.churchcenter.com/registrations/signups/3788665>

Our schedule for September is:

9/6: God Creates

9/13: In the Garden

9/20: God of Creation

9/27: God's Promise to Creation

Kids' Camp

The biggest thank you goes out to everyone who volunteered and prayed for kids' camp this year! It was such a lovely event where we had 41 children and 34 volunteers in attendance. Camp would not be the same without each and every one of you who helped set up, spent time with the children, and shared in the sweet moments.

Be on the lookout for next year's theme and opportunities to join the planning team.

Youth Group

Grades 6 through 12

Sunday evenings

Welcome back!

We hope you've had a great summer, and we're so excited to be back to our regular weekly schedule. We offer a safe space for middle- and high-school students to grow in their faith while having fun. We have discussions, group activities, and community service events, while exploring our faith together. Sunday evenings from 5:30–7:30.

Our first youth group of the fall, on **Sunday, September 13**, 5:30–7:30 pm, will be **NERF Night**. Bring your friends and wear athletic clothing!

IGNITE 2026

Date: October 9–11, 2026

Theme: GLOW

Join us as for the annual [IGNITE Youth Conference](#) in Wildwood, NJ. Youth will have the opportunity to connect with others beyond our church, share in worship, and learn from impactful speakers. Use the link below to register—and get excited!

Link: <https://sentforothers.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3758670>



Connecting with Our Young Adults



For our young adults, each step toward independence is an exciting time. But it can also feel lonely or scary sometimes.

Clinton UMC's Guardian Angel program keeps our college and post-graduate students, as well as those just entering the workforce, connected through periodic notes and care packages. Each young adult is assigned an individual, family, or group from the church, who becomes that person's angel for the school year.

During the year, we ask angels to periodically send notes of encouragement, care packages, little gifts from the heart, etc., which will remind our young adults that their church family is praying for them and thinking about them.

Want to bless our young adults? Be a guardian angel.

Do you have (or are you) a young adult who'd like to be connected? Ask for an angel. Contact Robin Godshalk (rlgodshalk@yahoo.com) or Christine Burton (cburton5522@gmail.com).

Missions

Our CUMC volunteers had a great time at America's Grow-A-Row in Pittstown. Along with some other groups, we harvested 15,400 pounds of zucchini and eggplant. That is over 61,600 servings of fresh healthy vegetables for families in need. Thanks to all who came out to help!

Upcoming Events

September–October (exact dates tbd) we will begin collecting items to make youth hygiene kits for Trenton Area Food Pantry. The items we are collecting are:

- 1) Children's toothbrushes
- 2) Children's toothpaste
- 3) Children's full-size shampoo
- 4) Children's soap or body wash (preferably something designed for children or sensitive skin like Dove or Honest Company products)

October 18 after worship we will be packing the products we have collected for the Trenton Area Food Pantry. Please stay to help if you are able. All ages are welcome!

Thank you!

The Missions Team



North Hunterdon Thrift Shop

New season, new style! Autumn is when nature shows off its most dazzling colors—why not do the same? Our fall/winter clothing collection launches on Saturday, September 5, featuring fresh inventory and fully stocked shelves. Shop early for the best selection.

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 908-735-0177, email office@sentforothers.org or visit 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



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.



Potluck Brunch



Sunday, September 27

Want to connect with friends from church . . . or meet new folks? Join us for our next potluck brunch, sponsored by the Care Committee, after worship on September 27. You're invited to bring your favorite fully-cooked casserole, salad, fruit, or dessert to share. Clipboards will be passed through the pews on September 13 & 20 for food sign-ups.

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.



Celebrating September Birthdays



Bill Colo, September 5
AJ Femenella, September 10
Roger Tonzetich, September 16
Emily Minera, September 22
Kara Minera, September 22
Megan Olivo, September 22
Charley Bauer, September 23
Susan Stuart, September 27

Photo Gallery

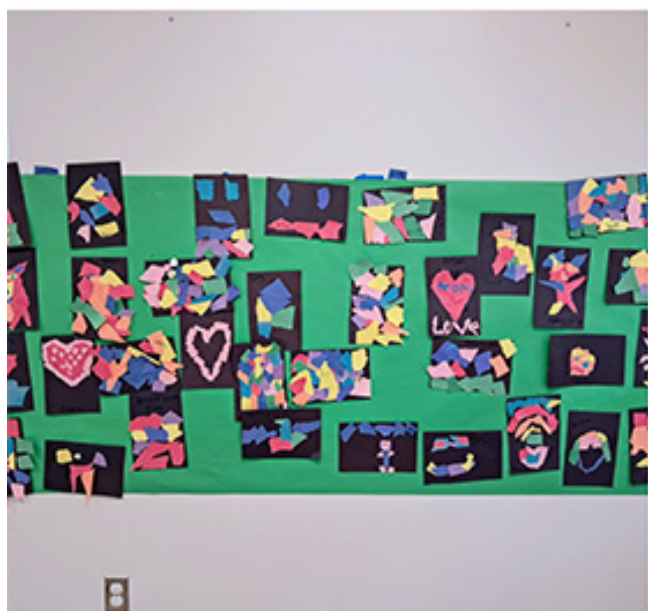


Photo Gallery



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.

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