



Clinton
a community sent for others

Our Joyful Noise

March 2026



The God We Can Know

Lent is a season of slowing down. In a world that pulls us in a hundred directions — headlines, deadlines, responsibilities, worries — Lent invites us to return to center. It is a season of reflection, honesty, and renewal. We remember that we are dust — finite, fragile, beloved — and we reorient our lives toward what truly sustains us.

This year, our Lenten journey is shaped by a powerful question: Who is the God we can know?

Throughout March, we will listen closely to the "I Am" sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John. These statements are

not abstract theological ideas. They are relational invitations. In them, Jesus reveals the heart of God — not distant or unknowable, but present, personal, and life-giving.

Each "I Am" statement answers our Lenten longing. They remind us that faith is not about mastering doctrine but about knowing God's character. The God we can know is not a God of scarcity, but of nourishment. Not a God of confusion, but of guiding light. Not a God of abandonment, but of shepherding care. Not a God of distance, but of abiding presence.

As we move through March together, I invite you to approach this season gently but intentionally. Create space for prayer. Practice honesty in your self-examination. Consider not only what these "I Am" statements reveal about the heart of God, but also what they reveal about US as well. For we are created in the image of God, and are invited to reflect God's heart back out into the world through the way we love and serve God and neighbor.

May this season center us in the steady, sustaining love of the God we can know.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jess

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

Welcome . . .

to the March 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.

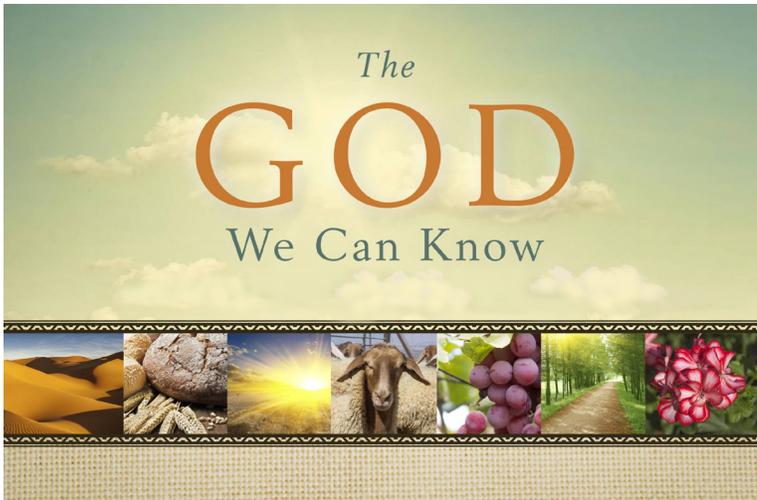
In This Issue:

- [Sermon Series](#).....Pg. 2
- [Churchwide Potluck](#).....Pg. 2
- [UMC Social Principles](#).....Pg. 3
- [Holy Week & Easter](#).....Pg. 4
- [How Are You Generous?](#).....Pg. 5
- [Children's Ministry](#).....Pg. 5-6
- [NH Thrift Shop](#).....Pg.6
- [Youth Ministry](#).....Pg. 7
- [Community Egg Hunt](#).....Pg. 8
- [Care Committee](#).....Pg. 8
- [CUMC Missions](#).....Pg. 9
- [Blood Drive](#).....Pg. 9
- [Prayer Chain](#).....Pg. 10
- [March Birthdays](#).....Pg. 10
- [Communications Survey](#).....Pg. 10
- [Photo Gallery](#).....Pg. 11

Like us on



Lenten Sermon Series – The God We Can Know



Continuing our Lenten Sermon Series – **The God We Can Know**

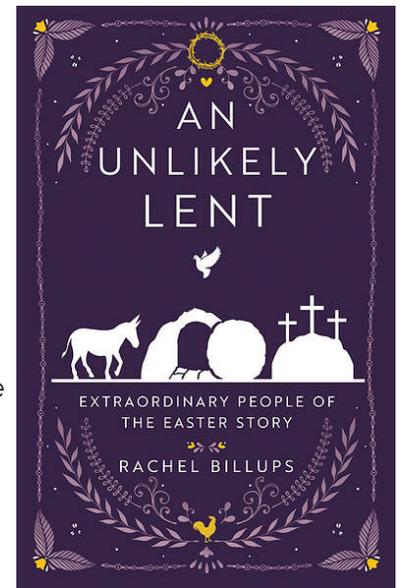
Getting to know God means getting to know ourselves. The more we know who God is the more we know who we are. The Gospel of John records several declarations of Jesus known as the “I Am” sayings. This Lenten series will explore each of those sayings and will help us find and form an answer to the most essential question in the Christian faith, “Who do you say I am?”

Pastor’s Lenten Study: “An Unlikely Lent”

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are at the heart of the story of Easter. But the resurrection was not witnessed in isolation; it unfolded before a crowd. What might the experiences of the lesser known women and men teach us today? How will they help us step into the story of Easter?

If you enjoy good storytelling, engaging videos, and thought-provoking discussions, join us Wednesday nights at 7 pm or Thursday mornings at 9:30 am. Together, we’ll search for what might have been overlooked in the days leading to Jesus’ death—not just in the grand moments, but in the silence, the side characters, and the questions. If you’d like to buy the book (completely optional) you can find it here:

[An Unlikely Lent: Extraordinary People of the Easter Story](#) by Rachel Billups.



Churchwide Potluck Brunch



Sunday, March 22

The Care committee is planning a potluck brunch after worship on March 22 and we invite the congregation to bring your favorite fully cooked casserole, salad, fruit or dessert to share. Clipboards will be passed through the pews on March 8 & 15 for RSVPs. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite a friend to church!

Introducing: UMC Social Principles Spotlight

After spending six weeks reflecting on the United Methodist Social Principles during our last sermon series, Love Made Visible, Pastor Jess asked the question: So now what?

If we believe that we are the body of Christ — called and sent to make love visible — then our faith cannot remain abstract. It must take shape in how we live, how we vote, how we speak, how we spend, how we advocate, how we love.

The United Methodist Social Principles are one way our denomination seeks to articulate what it means to embody Christ's love in the real world. They are not partisan platforms. They are prayerful attempts to name how Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience guide us in addressing the pressing issues of our time.

Beginning this month, our newsletter will include a "Social Principles Spotlight." Each month we'll highlight one area of our Social Principles and invite reflection — not to tell you what to think, but to help us think faithfully together — because we are not spectators. We are disciples. And discipleship touches every part of life.

The Dignity of Every Person

"All persons are of sacred worth, created in the image of God."

At the heart of the Social Principles is a simple but radical conviction: every person bears the image of God. Not just those who agree with us. Not just those who share our background. Every person. The UMC applies this principle to combat racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, affirming that all people, regardless of race, gender, status, or sexual orientation, are of equal value in the sight of God.

In a culture that often reduces people to labels — political, economic, social — this affirmation calls us back to something deeper. The sacred worth of each human being does not depend on productivity, status, nationality, or opinion. It is gift.

For us as a congregation, this means our welcome cannot be conditional. Our language must reflect dignity. Our disagreements must be carried out with care. Our advocacy must protect those whose worth is overlooked or denied.

Reflection Invitation:

This month, consider: Where am I tempted to forget someone's sacred worth? How might I intentionally practice honoring the image of God in someone I find difficult?

Coffee and Connection



Are you new to Clinton UMC? If you want to learn more about who we are and chat with Pastor Jess, join us for "Coffee & Connection," Sunday, March 8, after the worship service. We'd love to get to know you better, share a bit about our church, and answer your questions. Child care will be available.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

AT CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Palm Sunday

March 29, 10 am

Maundy Thursday

April 2, 7 pm

Good Friday

April 3, 7 pm

Easter Sunday

April 5

Sunrise service at the river 6 am

Classic Easter service 10 am

How Are You Generous?

When you hear the word "generosity," what comes to mind? Maybe it's someone who offers generous financial support to a local charity, or that person who will drop everything to help at a moment's notice, or the one who always arrives at your house with a gift in hand.

A study commissioned by Thrivent with the Barna Group homed in on five ways to be generous:

- 1. Monetary support:** Donating money to people or causes
- 2. Gifting:** Sharing tangible items other than money
- 3. Volunteering:** Serving others in a variety of ways
- 4. Hospitality:** Welcoming others and making them feel at home
- 5. Emotional/relational support:** Being present, listening, and encouraging others

Which of the above resonate most with you? Which of these do you find most helpful in growing your faith?

In the end, how you are generous is less important than why. Thank you for honoring God with your generosity.

Ways to be Generous



Monetary Support



Gifting



Volunteering



Hospitality



Relational Support

Children's Ministry

Sunday School

Grades Kindergarten through 5th
Sunday Mornings during Worship

Happy March! We are so excited to continue 2026 with you all and share in the joy of church, community, and Christ!

Sunday school will be based on lessons from "Seeking God Together" which is an exploration of 13 spiritual practices that can deepen and transform our relationship with God and others. These are individual and corporate practices that are explored in interactive, age-appropriate ways. The unit is divided into three sections: God Within Us (weeks 1-4), God Above Us (weeks 5-9), and God Beside Us, (weeks 10-13). In March, the topics covered will include:

- 3/1:** Crying Out
- 3/8:** Confessing
- 3/15:** Celebrating
- 3/22:** Walking Together
- 3/29:** Studying the Word



(continue to next page)

Sunday School Registration

As we continue throughout this school year, we are asking all parents to complete our 2025-2026 Sunday School Registration form. Please complete the sign-up by using the QR code or visiting our website.



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!

North Hunterdon Thrift Shop

Our Designer Shop in February was a huge success. Thanks to all who donated and who came out to shop.

March into Spring with incredible deals! This month's sales include 50% off all adult clothing, shoes, jewelry, gloves, hats, scarfs, as well as our entire children's room, including toys. Additionally, weekly discounts pop up throughout the shop.

Come on in to see what's new and have a 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 908-735-0177, email office@sentforothers.org or visit us on Facebook or Instagram.

Come on in; we're more than just a thrift shop!

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

Youth Ministries

Youth Group

Grades 5th through 12th

Sunday Evenings from 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Happy March! We are so excited to continue our time together of spiritual growth, fun, and service to others.

March Schedule:

3/1 NERF Night

3/8 Cooking with Greg!

3/15 Discussion: Luck

3/22 Service: Fill Eggs for Community Egg Hunt

3/29 Share Your Story: Pete Godshalk



Youth Group Registration

As we continue throughout this school year, we are asking all parents to complete our 2025-2026 Youth Group Registration form. Please complete the sign-up by using the QR code on the right or finding it on our website.



Parent Communication

If you want weekly updates on Youth Group happenings, please join our Youth Group GroupMe chat via the QR code on the right.



Meal Sign-Ups:

Enjoy cooking and want to provide nourishment to our youth group? Use the QR code on the right to sign up and provide a meal for our students! If you have any questions, please contact Hailey (hailey@sentforothers.org).



Young Adults

Twenties and Thirties

Coffeehouse: Saturday, March 21 at 7 pm

Join us in the youth room for a night of getting to know one another, board games, and (decaf + regular) coffee! There will be snacks provided, but you are encouraged to bring something to share as well. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you have any questions, please contact Hailey Becker (hailey@sentforothers.org).

Warmly,

Hailey Becker

Community Egg Hunt



Picture the joy: A toddler picks up a plastic egg and discovers treasure inside. Kids test out the playground equipment. Parents, beaming, capture the moment on their phones and chat with one another.

Clinton UMC makes it happen every year. And you can, too.

As the organizers of the Annual Clinton Community Egg Hunt, Clinton UMC works with The Guild of Clinton to create a family-friendly event that starts at the Clinton Community Center and moves downtown. At the egg hunt, we provide not only candy-filled eggs but also Easter crafts and refreshments. It's well attended—and helps families get to know us right before Easter, when people are more

receptive to attending church.

This year's egg hunt will be Saturday, March 28, at 10 am. Here are ways you can get involved:

- **Join our Evangelism and Outreach Committee.** Help us as we work to connect people more closely with Christ.
- **Join the Community Egg Hunt team.** Help plan the event or just help on March 28.
- **Donate candy for the eggs.** We need more than 2,000 individually-wrapped, small pieces of candy that can fit in plastic eggs.
- **Help stuff the eggs.** We stuff literally thousands of eggs! Invite your friends or your group to help.

For more information or to get involved, contact Evangelism and Outreach Chair Kelly Lewis or the church office.

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

We will be packing snack bags for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen on March 1 after the service. Please join us in the social hall if you are available. All ages and abilities are welcome.

We are organizing a small group (under 20) to travel to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen to work a lunch or dinner shift in early Spring. If you are interested in volunteering for a shift, please contact Brenda Jaffe (908) 797-4731 or brendarjaffe@yahoo.com. 13–17-year-olds are welcome with a parent or guardian.

Mission Opportunity:

Discovery Service Project will be hosting a service project from April 19-25 in Asheville North Carolina. Rice and Beans of Asheville will be partnering with them. They will be helping to get families back into homes that are safe, sanitary and secure. The typical work will involve drywall, flooring, roofing, cleaning, and debris removal. They will be staying at the First United Methodist Church of Granite Falls, N.C. with bunkbed, dormitory type housing. Spots are limited, so if anyone is interested, please contact Brenda Jaffe. (908) 797-4731 as soon as possible.

Several times a year, we will be highlighting one of the missions that we support at CUMC. The purpose is to provide information to the congregation on the non-profit organizations we partner with and the important work they do.

Mission Focus: Open Cupboard Food Pantry

CUMC has supported the Open Cupboard Food Pantry for many years through money donations and food drives. One year we provided special Thanksgiving dinner donations.

The Open Cupboard Food Pantry was started by Anne Underhill in 1993. Anne was trying to help a local family in need and started a food pantry in a closet at the High Bridge United Methodist Church. At that time it was called the High Bridge Food Pantry. As it grew to meet the need in northern Hunterdon County, the name was changed to Open Cupboard in 1997. Open Cupboard has provided more than 2 million pounds of food to 22 communities in Hunterdon and Warren counties. In 2022, a second location was opened in Washington NJ called the Washington Basket. Contributions come from groups such as Girl and Boy Scouts, schools, churches and various organizations. In the spring through fall, local farms donate fresh produce. Proceeds from their thrift shop funds the rent, insurance and utilities with any excess proceeds going toward the purchase of fresh food for their clients. The Open Cupboard has over 120 volunteers and feeds over 400 families a month in northern Hunterdon and Warren counties. To learn more about the Open Cupboard Food Pantry, visit their website at <https://www.opencupboardfoodpantry.org>

Thank you for all you do to support the work of our local missions.

The Missions team

Blood Drive



Blood Drive

Friday, March 27, 1 – 7 pm

Make an appointment [online](#)

Walk-ins are also welcome

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 February Birthdays



Marlene McCoy – March 9

Linda Williams – March 11

Jill Puleo – March 21

Jake McCabe – March 22

Cliff Colo – March 22

Corbin Payne – March 24

Mecan Payne – March 27

Phyllis Pedersen – March 30

Communication Survey: What You Told Us

Thank you to all who took part in our Communications Preferences Survey. Your feedback will help us to focus on the communications that work best for you. Among the things we learned:

You want more stories about our missions and ministries.

Our midweek news email is your most popular source of information.

You'd prefer both paper and electronic messages to invite others to CUMC.

Based on your feedback, we're looking at additional ways to tell the stories of our church's missions and ministries, optimize the use of our midweek news email, and offer both paper and electronic means of inviting others to major events at Clinton UMC.

If you have questions or additional feedback, I'd love to hear from you.

Beth Crawford

Communications Director

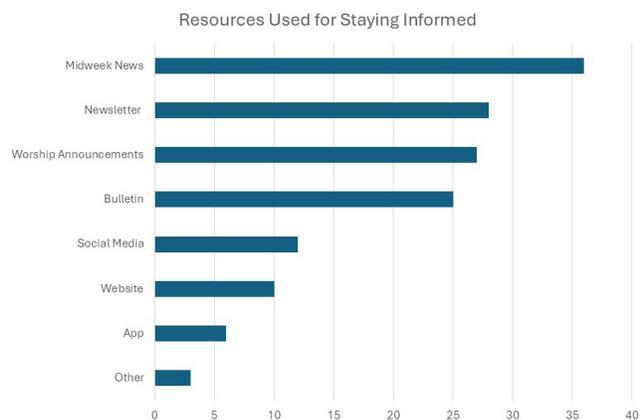


Photo Gallery



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