



Prepare Him Room

Another year has come and gone. December is upon us and Advent has begun. Advent is a time of anticipation for Christ's coming into our lives and world. Typically, our preparations for Christmas look like a whirlwind of decorating, shopping, wrapping, baking, and planning for gatherings. We prepare our homes for the celebration and get ourselves ready for the big day, but I wonder if there is something we are missing amidst this flurry of preparations.

In the beloved Christmas carol, *Joy to the World*, we sing:

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King;

Let every heart prepare him room.

Preparing room in our hearts for Christ is what Advent is all about. Not about hanging up twinkle lights and adorning our Christmas trees... but preparing room in our hearts and our lives for Christ to come once again.

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Welcome . . .

to the December 2025 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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What would it look like for you to prepare room in your heart for Christ this Advent season? Perhaps it means setting aside some of the things that distract or take you away from your relationship with God, that keep you from living out your faith in your everyday life. What would you need to give up in order to make room for Christ? Or is there something you need to say YES to instead? Have you been wanting to start a new devotional practice or participate in a service opportunity but just haven't made time? This season of Advent is the perfect opportunity to try something new, to take the time you need to make space in your heart to receive the gifts Christ is bringing in the coming year.

As you prepare for Christmas, it is my hope and prayer that you don't simply go through the motions, but actively, intentionally prepare room in your heart for one who comes to us all.

May you and yours have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

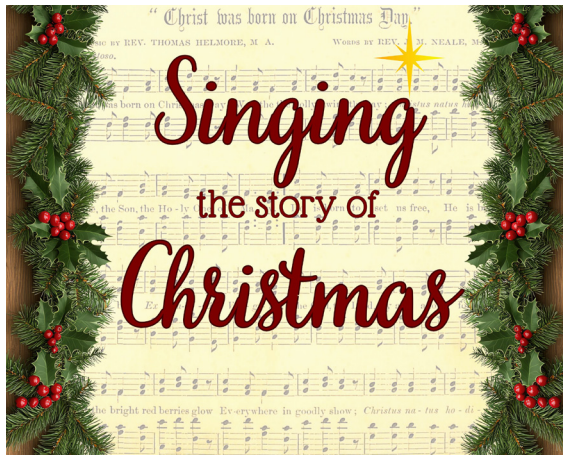
Pastor Jess

Senior Pastor

pastorjess@sentforothers.org

908-400-2343 (cell)

Advent Sermon Series – Singing the Story of Christmas



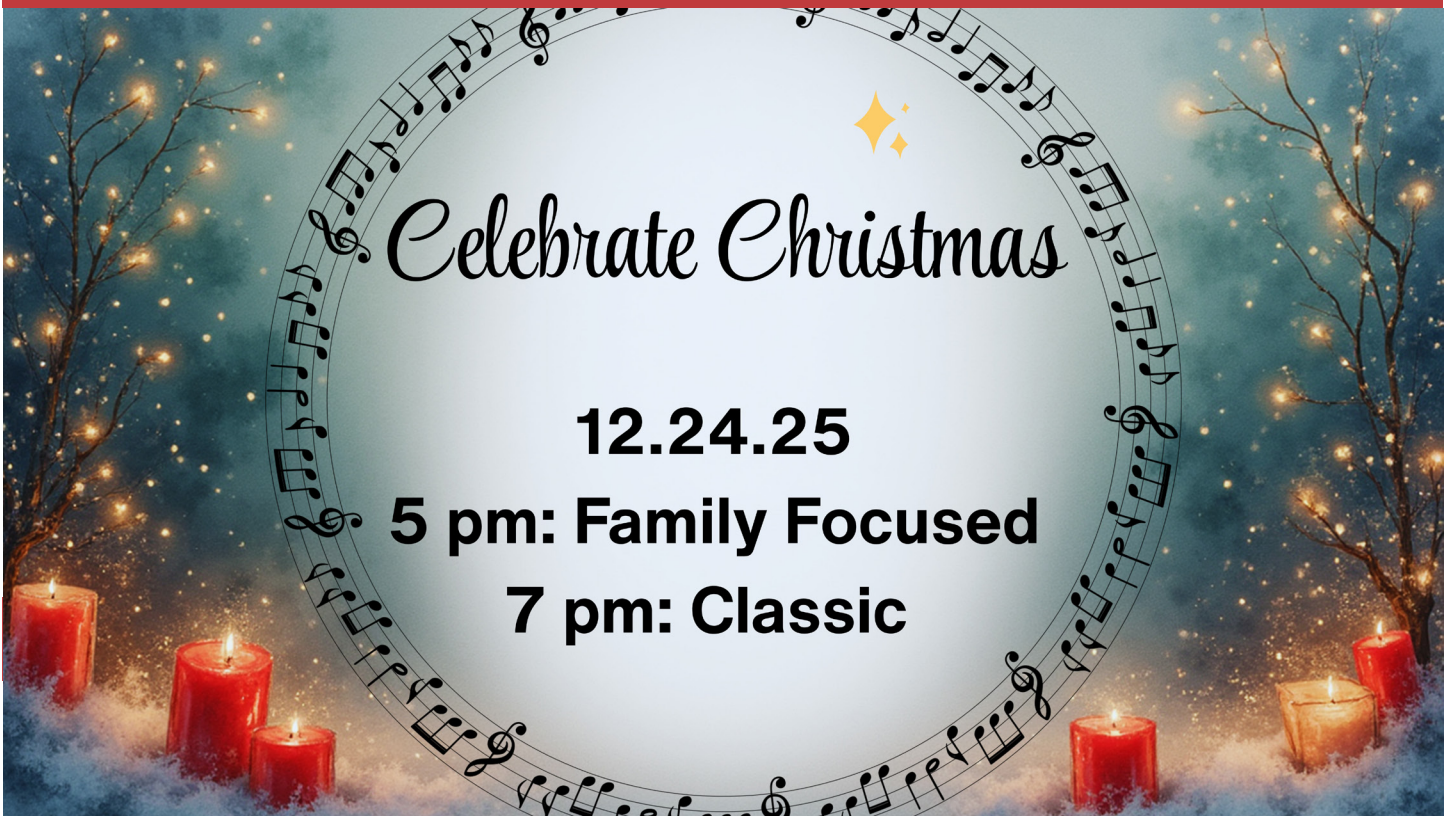
Christmas carols are some of the best-known and most influential songs in our culture. They connect with us in emotional, spiritual, and theological ways, drawing us into the spirit of the season, and teaching us about Jesus' birth story and greater meaning in our lives. As we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming, join us in worship as we dig into some of our beloved Christmas carols to uncover their deeper meaning for us today.

Regionalization of the United Methodist Church Is Ratified

The annual conferences of the United Methodist Church have approved constitutional amendments that create new regional conferences. These conferences will have the ability to vote on ministry policies that are appropriate for their specific regions, while maintaining the heart of our connection as United Methodists.

The newly created US Regional Conference, which includes delegates from all five US jurisdictions, will have its first meeting in late 2028 or early 2029. For more information on regionalization, see this [fact sheet](#).

Celebrate Christmas



New Here? Connect with Pastor Jess

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, January 11, 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.



Pastor's Bible Study – Thursdays at 9:30 am

Our weekly Bible study will take a pause this Advent season, but we will pick up where we left off in our study of Luke in the new year. Consider joining in the conversation on Thursdays at 9:30 am on January 8th in the church office. Contact Pastor Jess (pastorjess@sentforothers.org) for more information.

Children's Ministry

Sunday School

Grades Kindergarten through 5th

Sunday Mornings during Worship

Merry, Merry December! We are so excited to enter the holiday season with you all and share in the joy of church, community, and Christ!

12/7: Returning Home

12/14: The Christmas Story

12/21: Christmas Party after the Pageant

12/28: No Sunday School (casual worship for all)

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 below 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).

Youth Ministries

Youth Group, *Grades 5th through 12th*, Sunday Evenings from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Merry, Merry! We are so excited to spend this holiday season with our youth and look forward to all the upcoming events!

December Schedule:

12/7: Discussion Night: Christmas

12/14: Christmas in Song and Singalong, 6pm

12/21: Christmas Party! Join us for a time of games, treats, and our annual white elephant gift exchange (\$10 limit).

12/28: No YG

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 signup by using the QR code below or finding it on our website.



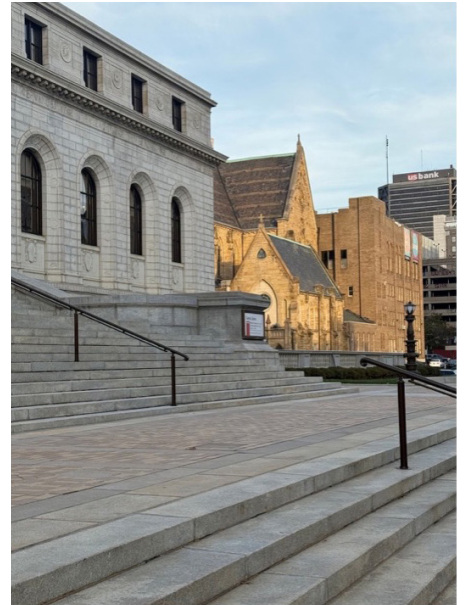
Parent Communication

If you want weekly updates on youth group happenings, please join our youth group GroupMe chat via the QR code below.



Volunteer!

If you are interested in volunteering as a youth group leader, please reach out to Hailey (hailey@sentfortothers.org) for more information. It's a wonderful opportunity to spend time with students as they grow in their faith, their understanding of themselves, and love for one another.



4 Every Generation (4EG) Conference

St. Louis, Missouri

In November, I had the opportunity to attend the 4EG conference in St. Louis, Missouri. There were speakers, breakout sessions, small group discussions, and group mission projects that allowed connections amongst ministry leaders while encouraging sharing of ideas.

In this experience, I found a renewed importance of meeting people where they are and having people come as they are. Children, youth, young adults, adults, and older adults all have a special place in our congregation, and there are many ways that they can feel seen and loved. I'm excited to continue working on some projects that relate to intergenerational ministry while emphasizing the importance of it in all aspects of our ministries.

Joyfully,
Hailey Becker

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.



NH Thrift Shop



December is filled with holiday celebration. Our Christmas Boutique is open and we have a plethora of beautiful items to choose from.

Our ever-changing inventory prompts blue light specials to pop up throughout the month. Come on in to see what's new and have a chat with our friendly volunteers.

In the month of November we took a collection that led us to give a donation to the Harvest Family Success Center in Flemington, NJ.

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

Holiday Closing: Saturday, December 20 through Saturday, January 3, reopening on Monday, January 5, 2026.

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.



CUMC Missions Update



We enjoyed visiting and making a craft with the residents at Country Arch in October. Thanks to all who joined us!

The Missions team is hosting a toy drive for Project Self Sufficiency's Season of Hope Program. If you would like to donate, please leave new, non-gift wrapped toys on the marked table in the social hall through December 14. Toys will be donated to families in need and parents will have the opportunity to choose special gifts for their children. www.projectselfsufficiency.org

As we look back on 2025 we celebrate a remarkable year for missions. Through your generous giving, faithful service, and compassionate hearts, CUMC has made a meaningful impact locally and globally. Together, we have supported missions through financial donations, volunteer efforts, and need-focused collections. This year, we have supported UMCOR for disaster relief, Family Promise of Hunterdon County, NAMI of Hunterdon County, LAMB Institute, United Way of Hunterdon County, Open Cupboard Food Pantry, Good News Home for Women, Safe in Hunterdon, Harvest Family Success Center, America's Grow A Row, Country Arch Care Center, and Project Self-Sufficiency. We have been blessed to welcome various speakers from the missions we support who have shared inspiring stories of how their organizations are making a positive impact in our community. Thank you to all who have made 2025 such a fruitful year for missions.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and New Year filled with Joy and Peace!

The Missions Team

Celebrating December Birthdays



Grete Straube - 12/5

Bennett Kays - 12/6

Susan Becker - 12/9

Christopher Graham - 12/11

Paul Damon - 12/12

Corey Ranauro - 12/13

Emily Colo - 12/23

Bonnie Clouser - 12/31

Calling All Cookie Bakers, Cookie Buyers, and Cookie Eaters!

Mark your calendars for the third annual cookie exchange, to be held after church Sunday, December 21. Please bake (or buy) at least three dozen of your favorite cookies and bring along the recipe for sharing. We will have containers for you to collect all the amazing offerings. Here's a recipe to get you started - these are one of my (Peter Godshalk) favorite to make, and you'll see these on the 21st. All are welcome to attend.

Questions: contact Robin Godshalk (908.797.0928) or Peter Godshalk (908.310.5962). 'C' is for cookie, so we hope to 'C' you there.

MAGICAL MINT KISS COOKIES

1 cup (2 sticks) butter or margarine, softened

2/3 cup sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup Hershey's Cocoa

About 48 Hershey's Chocolate Mint Kisses, unwrapped

Powdered sugar

Heat oven to 350 F. Beat butter, sugar and vanilla in a large bowl until creamy. Stir together flour and cocoa; gradually add to butter mixture, beating until blended. Mold scant tablespoon of dough around each chocolate, covering completely. Shape into balls. Place on uncreased cookie sheet.

Bake 8-10 minutes or until set. Cool about 1 minute; remove from cookie sheet to wire rack. Cool Completely. Roll in powdered sugar. Roll in sugar again just before serving, if desired.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

A Warm Welcome for Christmas Parade-Goers



One way Clinton UMC shares Jesus' love with our community is by offering a warm welcome to Clinton Christmas parade-goers. After the parade on December 5, we invite the community into our social hall for hot chocolate, cookies, and clean restrooms. Here are two ways you can join in the fun:

- **Bake cookies.** You can bring them in advance and put them in the freezer (please mark them "Christmas Parade"; you can even bring them up until the day of the event.
- **Greet visitors.** We'd love to have friendly faces to welcome people and invite them inside.

Setup and cleanup help are also appreciated!

Blood Drive

Blood Drive

Friday, December 12, 1 – 7 pm

Make an appointment [online](#)

Walk-ins are also welcome



Advent Study – *Experiencing Christmas*



The experience of Christmas is bursting with sights, sounds, and tastes of the season! Join us for the first three Monday evenings in December for our short-term Advent study as we explore what we can learn about our faith from the full sensory experience of Christmas. On December 1, 8, and 15 at 7 pm we will delve into *Experiencing Christmas: Christ in the Sights and Sounds of Advent*, a study by Matt Rawle, as we reflect on how the message of Christmas is bursting forth all around us.

Longest Night

Christmas isn't an easy time for everyone. If you or someone you know is going through a challenging time during the Christmas season, experiencing emotions such as grief, depression, or loneliness, please join us Thursday, December 18. The "Longest Night" service is a time to pray, reflect, and hear words of encouragement...a time for healing and hope.

The Longest Night Service
Thursday, December 18
6 pm

Christmas in Song and Sing-Along



Can you think of a better way than music to get into the Christmas spirit? Join us Sunday, December 14 at 6 pm as we sing carols and songs that celebrate the story of Jesus' birth. Refreshments will be served afterward. Invite your friends and neighbors; it's a fun way to celebrate the season and introduce them to Clinton UMC.

Church Season

Advent Began November 30

The word "Advent" derives from the Latin "adventus," meaning "coming." During its earliest observances, Advent was 40 days of repentance, fasting and prayer as new believers prepared for their baptisms. Oftentimes, these baptisms took place on the day of Epiphany--which is a day remembering the Magi's visit to baby Jesus; it was a celebration of Jesus' incarnation on Earth.

Later Christians began tying Advent not just to Christ's incarnation, but to an anticipated second coming of Christ. Advent became a period for renewing the anticipation and longing for Jesus' return.

Today, Advent is a period of preparation for both "advents" - or arrivals - of Jesus. Lester Ruth, a professor at Duke Divinity School and a historian of Christian worship, offered this distinction for Advent: "The simplest way I have to distinguish between Advent and Christmas is that advent uses the word "come" as a longing petition, expressed in anticipation, whereas Christmas is a commemorative reflection on how the Lord has come in Christ's birth and thus the trigger for a new redemptive order has begun."

One of the ways we reflect on Advent in communal worship is by utilizing an Advent wreath--a simple wreath surrounding four exterior candles and one central candle. The four exterior candles represent the hallmarks of a renewed creation: joy, hope, peace and love. The central candle represents the presence of Christ. Each Sunday, one more of the exterior candles is lit. Finally, the Christ candle is lit as a reminder of Christ's ongoing presence. We, of course, can bring this practice home, creating our own Advent wreaths and contemplating our own longings for more joy, hope, peace and love.

The liturgical color for Advent is **blue**.

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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