



## An Invitation into Lent

As February unfolds, many of us feel the tension in the air. Our nation is weary and divided, conversations feel sharper, and patience can be hard to come by. It often seems easier to retreat into our own corners than to listen deeply or love generously.

This year, Lent begins on February 18, and perhaps that timing is no coincidence. Lent has never been about giving something up just for the sake of discipline. At its heart, Lent is an invitation to pause, to tell the truth about our lives and our world, and to turn again toward God's ways of love, justice, humility, and mercy.

In a season of conflict, Lent invites us to ask courageous questions:

(continue to next page)

### Welcome . . .

to the February 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:

<a href="#">Sermon Series</a> .....	Pg. 2
<a href="#">CUMC Budget Update</a> .....	Pg. 3
<a href="#">Coffee and Connection</a> .....	Pg. 4
<a href="#">Pastor's Bible Study</a> .....	Pg. 4
<a href="#">Ash Wednesday</a> .....	Pg. 4
<a href="#">Prayer Chain</a> .....	Pg.4
<a href="#">Children's Ministry</a> .....	Pg. 5
<a href="#">God's Love Into the World</a> ....	Pg. 5
<a href="#">Youth Ministry</a> .....	Pg. 6
<a href="#">Care Committee</a> .....	Pg. 6
<a href="#">NH Thrift Shop</a> .....	Pg. 7
<a href="#">February Birthdays</a> .....	Pg. 7
<a href="#">CUCMS Missions</a> .....	Pg. 8
<a href="#">Church Season</a> .....	Pg. 8
<a href="#">Photo Gallery</a> .....	Pg. 9

Like us on

facebook



What do we need to release so that we are not ruled by fear or resentment?

Where might God be calling us to listen instead of react, to repair instead of retreat, to love instead of harden?

The ashes of Ash Wednesday remind us that we are fragile and finite—and also deeply beloved. From that honest place, God does some of the most transformative work. Lent is not about fixing everything all at once, but about taking faithful steps toward healing: within ourselves, within our communities, and within a broken world longing for hope.

As we journey toward Easter, may this Lent be a season where we practice holy courage—choosing reflection over reaction, compassion over contempt, and love that refuses to give up on one another. We are invited to walk this season together, trusting that, even in the wilderness, God is already at work, making a way toward new life.

With peace for the journey,

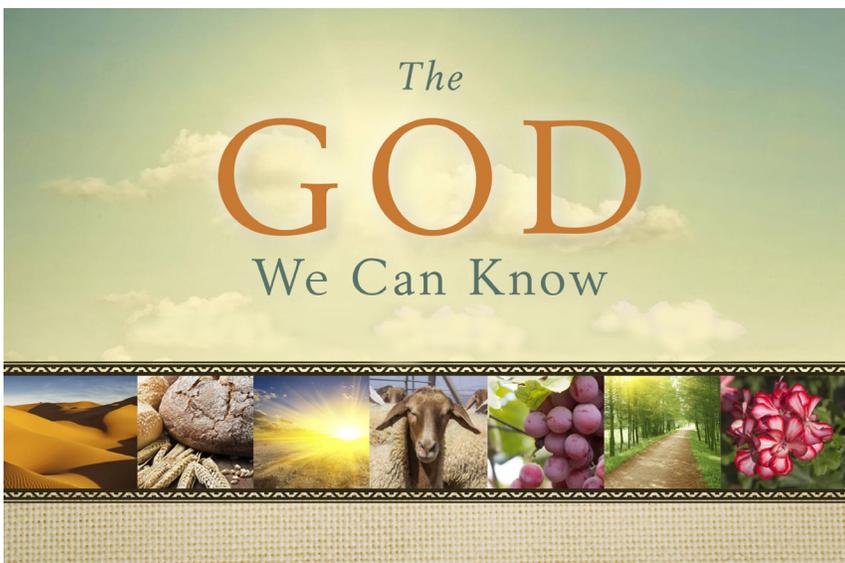
*Pastor Jess*

Senior Pastor

[pastorjess@sentforothers.org](mailto:pastorjess@sentforothers.org)

908-400-2343 (cell)

## 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?”

**5-Week Lenten Study – Wednesdays, Feb 25 through March 25 – An Unlikely Lent**

Join us each Wednesday in Lent at 7 p.m. for a short-term study to help us go deeper in faith. 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 stories of those women and men teach us today? How will they help us step into the story of Easter? Here, we can see what has been overlooked, not just in the grand moments, but in the in-between: the silence, the side characters, and the questions.

It is not required, but you may use this [link](#) to purchase the book Pastor Jess will be using for this study: *An Unlikely Lent: Extraordinary People of the Easter Story* by Rachel Billups.

## CUMC Budget Update

We're happy to report that in 2025, our collective giving, combined with other income streams (including returns on our investments as well as profits from our North Hunterdon Thrift Shop), exceeded our expenses by \$38,700. We were able to donate 100% of our Christmas Eve offering, totaling \$4518, to Family Promise and the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. Our operational budget for 2026 is also shown below.

	2025	2025 Actual	2026
	Budget	Expenditures	Budget
<b>Administration/Maintenance</b>			
Administration/Office	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 11,797.49	\$ 13,000.00
Trustees	\$ 40,510.00	\$ 42,733.65	\$ 50,610.00
Utilities (All Facilities)	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 50,639.83	\$ 55,000.00
Finance (includes Generosity team)	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 894.19	\$ 1,500.00
Communications	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,385.30	\$ 4,000.00
<b>Denominational Ministry Connection</b>			
Ann.Conf-CUMC Apportionment	\$ 9,091.00	\$ 9,093.96	\$ 8,840.00
GNJ Shared Ministries	\$ 42,184.00	\$ 42,183.96	\$ 43,407.00
BSA Settlement - 3of 3	\$ 1,743.63	\$ 1,743.63	\$ -
<b>Spiritual Growth</b>			
Christian Education (All Ages)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,729.77	\$ 3,000.00
Worship	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,292.15	\$ 5,000.00
Youth	\$ 2,500.00	\$2,198.57	\$ 3,000.00
<b>Mission and Outreach</b>			
Evangelism/Outreach	\$ 750.00	\$ 953.52	\$ 1,500.00
Missions	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 17,500.00
NH Thrift Shop Expenses	\$ 5,000.00	\$12,412.58	\$ 10,000.00
<b>Staffing</b>			
SPRC (Employees' Salaries/Benefits & Professional Fees)	\$ 289,300.00	\$300,846.81	\$ 325,088.00
<b>Congregational Care</b>			
Pastoral Care Team	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00
CARE/Hospitality	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,735.34	\$ 2,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 477,278.63</b>	<b>\$ 503,640.75</b>	<b>\$ 543,645.00</b>
<b>2025 Operating Income</b>		<b>\$ 542,340.95</b>	
<b>2025 Gain/Deficit</b>		<b>\$ 38,700.20</b>	

## 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, February 22, 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 continue on Thursdays at 9:30 am in the church office. We hope you join in our study of the Gospel of Luke as we journey alongside Jesus through the Galilean countryside. Hear again the story of Jesus' ministry and dig deeper into what his ministry means for us today. *Please note that we will pause during Lent, so we will not meet from Feb 18, but will resume again on April 16.* Contact Pastor Jess ([pastorjess@sentforothers.org](mailto:pastorjess@sentforothers.org)) for more information.

## You Are Invited: Ash Wednesday

Worship. Reflect. Receive ashes.  
February 18, 7 pm

*Joel 2:12-13*

*Yet even now, says the Lord,*

*return to me with all your heart,*

*with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;*

*rend your hearts and not your clothing.*

*Return to the Lord, your God,*

*for he is gracious and merciful,*

*slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,*

*and relents from punishing.*



## 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](mailto:office@sentforothers.org) or 908-735-7025. Prayer is a treasure that is never exhausted.

## Children's Ministry

### Sunday School

\*Grades Kindergarten through 5th\*

Sunday Mornings during Worship

Happy February! 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 February, the topics covered will include:

**2/1: Marveling**

**2/8: Saying Thanks**

**2/15: Crying Out**

**2/22: Confessing**

### 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](mailto:hailey@sentforothers.org)).

### Parent's Night Out

Date: Sunday, February 1, 2026

Time: 4:30pm - 6:30pm

Clinton UMC will be hosting a Parent's Night Out on Sunday, February 1st from 4:30pm - 6:30pm. Parents can drop off their children to join in watching a movie, making a Valentine's Day craft, and eating pizza! We ask that parents pre-register their children, using the registration QR Code included, as there is a limited amount of spots (on the screen, in the bulletin, etc.) and this will outline emergency contact information and allergies. We look forward to seeing you there!



## Taking God's Love Out into the World

Today, we need to meet people where they are—spiritually, emotionally, even geographically. You are invited to join our Evangelism and Outreach team as we share the good news of God's love in our community. We're meeting February 15 after worship to discuss the Community Egg Hunt and other relationship-building opportunities. Will you join us? Contact the church office or Evangelism chair Kelly Lewis for more information.

## Youth Ministries

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

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

### February Schedule:

2/1 Parent's Night Out, 4:30pm - 6:30pm

2/8 No Youth Group

2/15 Discussion Night: Love

2/22 Community Building

### 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.



### Volunteer!

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](mailto:hailey@sentforothers.org)).



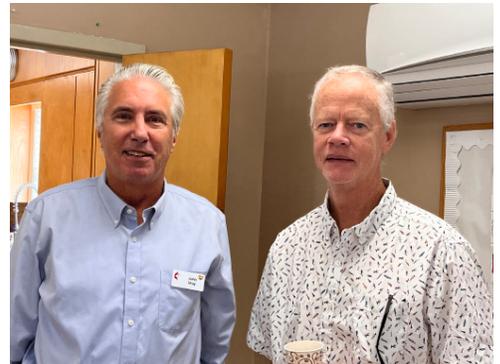
Warmly,

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](mailto: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.



## North Hunterdon Thrift Shop



During the downtime of the holidays, many were hard at work renovating, cleaning and reorganizing. The Shop continues to improve, and we are very thankful for all who come out to lend a hand.

This month we will open a Designer Shop upstairs on Saturday, February 14. Be sure to stop in for a visit.



Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on these weekly sales and weather updates/shop closures.

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](mailto: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

## Celebrating February Birthdays



Robin Godshalk - 2/1  
Braedon Dobrynio - 2/6  
Pete Godshalk - 2/10  
Greg Crawford - 2/16  
Debbi Clewell - 2/17

## CUMC Missions

The Missions team will be hosting a snack packing event for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) on Sunday, March 1 in the social hall after the service. In addition to offering lunch and dinner in their soup kitchen, TASK gives out bags of snacks, lunches and hygiene supplies for area families that are struggling. TASK relies on volunteers to prepare these bags for them. If you are interested in helping us with this project, please join us March 1 in the social hall. All ages are welcome!

In addition to the event, we will be collecting the following items starting several weeks prior to the packing day. These are the items specifically requested by TASK and what we will need for the bags. There will be a table in the social hall to drop off items.

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) napkins             | 4) 2 oz. bags of pretzels |
| 2) granola bars        | 5) bottles of water       |
| 3) 2 oz. bags of chips | 6) juice boxes            |

In the late winter/early spring, we will be organizing a small group (under 20) to travel to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen to work a lunch or dinner shift. Volunteers must be at least 13 years old. 13-17 year olds must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. If you are interested in serving at the soup kitchen, please contact Brenda Jaffe by email, phone or text, [brendarjaffe@yahoo.com](mailto:brendarjaffe@yahoo.com) or 908 797-4731, with your availability. If there is more interest than time slots available, we can register several groups. We will be trying to carpool to Trenton as well.

Future dates

- early spring (date TBD) Country Arch visit (all ages welcome)
- 3/29 through 4/5 Family Promise dinner preparation
- 5/31 through 6/7 Family Promise dinner preparation
- Late summer/early fall (date TBD) Group volunteering at Grow a Row (all ages welcome)

Fall (date TBD) Country Arch visit

Thank you, CUMC, for faithfully supporting our mission efforts through your time, prayers, and donations. We couldn't do this work without you.

The Missions Team

## Church Season

### The Time After Epiphany (Ordinary Time)

The first period of Ordinary Time, called the Season after Epiphany, begins on Epiphany Day and ends on February 17, the day before Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent). The central theme of this season is the calling of disciples and the early ministry of Jesus. The color for this season is green.

### February 18 (Ash Wednesday) Lent begins.

Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word lencten, meaning "lengthen", and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The 40 days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry. Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the 40 days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." The color for this season is **purple**.

# 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](mailto:pastorjess@sentforothers.org)

**Sandi Graham**

Administrative Assistant

908-735-7025

[office@sentforothers.org](mailto:office@sentforothers.org)

**Hailey Becker**

Director of Children's and Youth Ministries

[hailey@sentforothers.org](mailto:hailey@sentforothers.org)

**Karl Dietel**

Accompanist

908-735-7025

[office@sentforothers.org](mailto:office@sentforothers.org)

**Eric & Erica Rasmussen**

Directors of Digital Ministry

[erica@sentforothers.org](mailto:erica@sentforothers.org)

**Amanda Santiago**

Childcare Staff

[office@sentforothers.org](mailto:office@sentforothers.org)

**Beth Crawford**

Communications Director

908-442-3934

[beth@sentforothers.org](mailto:beth@sentforothers.org)

**Rose Leonard**

Accountant/Bookkeeper

908-735-7025

[rose@sentforothers.org](mailto:rose@sentforothers.org)

**Brian Repsher**

Sexton

[office@sentforothers.org](mailto:office@sentforothers.org)

**Jennifer Gursky**

Choir Director

[jen@sentforothers.org](mailto:jen@sentforothers.org)

**Jessica Buntine**

Childcare Staff

[office@sentforothers.org](mailto:office@sentforothers.org)