

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

God of the ages, you have blessed us with another year.

Help us to make room for the blessings that are in store for us in the coming months.

May we be open to learn the right lessons, even if they hurt a little.

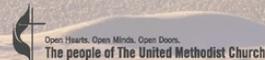
Help us to be patient so that we won't miss divine opportunities.

Show us how to be fulfilled without material possessions, so that we will not miss what it means to be a blessed people.

Enable us to be a blessing so you will recognize us as the ones who gave you bread when you were hungry, drink when you were thirsty, and clothes when you were naked.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Adaptation of a prayer by the Rev. Kevin B. Smalls



Milford United Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER

Jan-Feb 2026 Issue

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JENN

Dear Friends,

In 1755 John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement in the Church of England, celebrated what was probably the first Covenant Service. He found the service rich and meaningful, writing in his journal, “Many mourned before God, and many were comforted.” Traditionally in London these services were held on New Year’s Day, but around the country the Covenant Service was celebrated whenever Wesley visited the Methodist Societies.

The heart of the service requires people to commit (or recommit) themselves to God. It has been celebrated regularly throughout the Methodist movement, and later throughout the Methodist denomination, for 250 years. Generations of people have been comforted and strengthened by remembering God’s Covenant, and have experienced a sense of pardon and gratitude for God’s grace.

In his invitation to the Covenant Service John Wesley reminds us that through Baptism we have entered the Christian life, and have been redeemed. We have been sealed into a new covenant through the blood of Jesus. In this covenant God promises to give us new life in Christ and we pledge to live our lives for Jesus Christ alone.

As we begin a New Year I hope that you’ll take the time to remember your baptism, and be thankful. Consider once again the promise God has fulfilled in Jesus, and the great love that has been poured out upon us all. And when you’re ready, recommit your life to God by joining in the Wesley Covenant prayer:

*I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticized for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.*

Blessings for a Joyous New Year,

Pastor Jenn

January - February Worship

Epiphany is a celebration of the light that was revealed to the world. That joyous recognition reminds us of the gift that incarnation made known to us and to all of creation. The question of the season that follows Epiphany is: so what? What does that light do for us and how do we respond? You're invited to embrace the gift of light that is Jesus the Christ, and to do an attitude check as we stand in the promise of glory revealed.



January 4th - HOLY COMMUNION/ Epiphany Sunday/ "Seeing the Light"/ Matthew 2:1-12/ Baby Shower for Baby Blessings Pantry

January 11th – BAPTISM OF THE LORD/ *Glory Revealed* / "Power of Presence"/ Matt 3:13-17

January 18th – *Glory Revealed* / "Give You as a Light"/Isaiah 49:1-7

January 25th – *Glory Revealed* / "Carrying the Light"/ Psalm 27:1, 4-9

February 1st – HOLY COMMUNION/ *Glory Revealed* / "What is Good"/ Micah 6:1-8

February 8th – SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY/ *Glory Revealed* / "Call to Action"/ Isaiah 58:1-12

February 15th – TRANSFIGURATIONS SUNDAY / "Glory Revealed"/ Matt 17:1-9

Wednesday, February 18th – ASH WEDNESDAY

9:00 am – Ashes on the Go at Jewelers Square Park (corner of Broad and E. Ann St)

7:00 pm – Taize Prayer Service of Word, Silence, and Song with Ashes

February 22nd – *Renewed in Mercy* / "Mercy on the Wilderness Road"/ Matt 4:1-11, Psalm 32

Milford United Methodist Church

ONE BOARD MODEL

On October 25, 2025 a new organizational model was adopted by the Charge Conference of Milford UMC, to take effect on January 1, 2026. This simplified One Board Model of Leadership was designed to better align the Vision, Mission, and Congregational goals, and thus work together more efficiently to accomplish the primary task and shared purpose of the church.

The Nominations and Lay Leadership Committee will continue as a separate committee, and will recommend for nomination the members of the One Board. The One Board will act as a committee of the whole for all matters assigned to the former Church Council, the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, and the Staff Parish Relations Committee. The One Board has the authority to assign work teams and task forces as necessary such as Fundraising, Property Maintenance, Sunday School, etc.,

The first meeting of the One Board will be on **Saturday, January 17 at 2:15pm** in the Fellowship Hall. This will be an opportunity to strategize around the congregational goals, set the calendar events for our 200 th Anniversary Year, and establish the individual roles of the Board Members.

One Board 2026 Members

Pam Houskeeper, *Lay Leader*
Liz Steen, *Lay Member to Annual Conference*
Joan Arlequeeuw, *Financial Secretary*
Laurie Osczepinski, *Treasurer*
Jack Donson, *Finance Chair*
Richard Bloomer, *Trustees President*
Rebecca Masters, *SPRC Chair*
Jackie Pentecharsky, *Education Coordinator*
Jodi Hancock, *Outreach and Mission Coordinator*
Dani Pentecharsky, *Communications Coordinator*
Hannah Tomczyk, *Youth Representative*
Rev. Jennifer Lovallo, *Pastor*

Nominations Committee 2026

Rev. Jennifer Lovallo, *Co-Chair*
Pam Houskeeper, *Co-Chair*
Liz Steen, *Class of 2026*
Chris Lordi, *Class of 2026*
Linda Grady, *Class of 2026*
Bill Arlequeeuw, *Class of 2027*
Martha Dubensky, *Class of 2028*
Nancy McCallum, *Class of 2028*
Dori Stewart, *Class of 2028*

Happy 200th Anniversary Year!

2026 marks the 200th anniversary of Milford United Methodist Church. Here is an account of the "History of the Church" from our 100th Anniversary program:

The beginning of Methodism in Milford takes us back to the days of the itinerate, horseback, pioneer preacher. As early as 1790 the records show that there were visits in Milford by these famed Methodist evangelists. In those early days they apparently came up the river from Stroudsburg.

The exact state of religion in Milford and vicinity in those days can hardly be accurately determined. Some one has written that it was a Godless, prayerless, Sabbath-breaking village, but the oldest inhabitants declare with emphasis that such a characterization is a libel upon the fair name of the sturdy men and women that founded beautiful Milford. The real truth doubtless is that there were mighty men of character, and a few rather "black sheep" then, just as now. Surely it behooves us of the younger generation to bow in reverence as we contemplate the blessings that we enjoy today handed down to us by these men and women of toil and sacrifice.

At any rate among the very first to listen to and heed the gospel brought by the horseback evangelist was a blacksmith named Bartholomew Weed. This man was dubbed by a former historian as the first praying man in Milford. This could hardly be true, but at any rate, he became a devout Christian, kept the Sabbath, held services occasionally and in fact, developed from a blacksmith to a Methodist preacher. In 1815 he left Milford and took up his residence in Philadelphia where he entered into his new duties as itinerant preacher in the Philadelphia Conference.

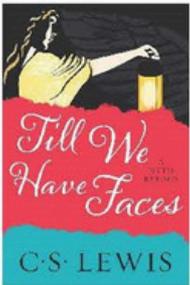
After the days of Bartholomew Weed, the next important move was the founding of the present organization. In 1825 the Rev. John K. Shaw was appointed on the Hamburg circuit as assistant to the Rev. Benjamin Collins. The Milford people heard of Shaw's coming to Newton, New Jersey, and sent to that place to invite him to preach here. This he gladly consented to do, preaching in the Court House. He met with the approbation of the people and succeeded in organizing the first Methodist class with the following members: Mrs. Eliza Mott, Mrs. Louisa Broadhead, Mrs. Mary Olmstead, Mrs. Sophia Suiter, and Mr. and Mrs. David Hand. These were the charter members of the Methodist organization that has endured these One Hundred years.

Soon after the organization was formed the little group began to cast about to find a place for worship. At that time it happened that the group secured the interest of Judge John Brink. To this man the Methodists are greatly indebted. He gave outright a piece of land down by the river at a point a little north of the Jersey Bridge upon which the church was to be built. In the Court House today there can be found the deed dated December 14, 1826, minutely written out as to directions for the use of the property by the church and consigned by John Brink and wife to the following trustees of the church: John Brink, Richard Eldred, Edward Mott, David Hand, and Jonathan Doolittle. By this testament we see that Judge John Brink was himself one of the first trustees of the society.



Faith & Fiction Book Club

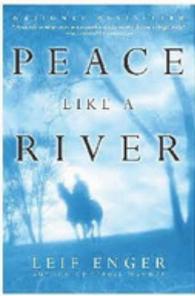
Led by Linnea Geno and Jodi Hancock All Welcome Light Refreshments are offered



January Meeting - Thursday, December 15th 7:30 PM Conference Room

Book Selection (please read prior to meeting) **Til We Have Faces** by C.S. Lewis

If you would like to borrow a copy, let Linnea or Jodi know



February Meeting - Thursday, February 19th 7:30 PM Conference Room

Book Selection (please read prior to meeting) **Peace Like a River** by Leif Enger

If you would like to borrow a copy, let Linnea or Jodi know

Crafty Ladies Looking for Donations of Costume Jewelry (broken pieces acceptable)



*Please see Rhonda
or Liz in church
office to drop off
donations. Thank
you!*



Help Wanted

SUNDAY HELPERS NEEDED

CONTACT LIZ in OFFICE

570-296-6124

Tech People

Sunday School Helpers

Bell Ringers

Choir Members

Nursery Staff Needed

We need a nursery caretaker for Sundays 9:45-11:15

The salary is \$25/week. Background check and Safe Sanctuary online training required.

Our infants and toddlers need someone who is able to care for their needs. Must like playing Peek-A-Boo, reading stories, holding, feeding and changing when needed. You will be one of two people in the room.

If you are interested in the joy filled positions, please contact Rebecca Masters via email : rebamast@gmail.com

or text/call 845-417-6122

IMPORTANT CHURCH INFORMATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL/CHILD CARE *(IN COMMUNITY RM/NURSERY AFTER CHILDREN'S MESSAGE)*

CHOIR PRACTICE: SUNDAYS 8:30AM SANCTUARY

BELL CHOIR PRACTICE: SUNDAYS 11:30AM SANCTUARY

CRAFTY LADIES: WILL RESUME IN SPRING

MEETING SCHEDULE and MEETING ZOOM LINK: bit.ly/MUMCZoom

- Friday, January 9th 6:00 PM—Ecumenical Food Pantry at Good Shepherd
- Thursday, January 15th 7:30 PM—Faith & Fiction Book Group
- Saturday, January 17th 2:15PM— One Board Planning Retreat (Fellowship Hall)
- Friday, February 6th 6:00 PM—Pizza & Game Night (RSVP to office by 2/5)
- Saturday, February 7th—“Love Songs” Cabaret Night Time & Details T/B/A
- Sunday, February 8th—SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY
- Friday, February 13th 6PM—Ecumenical Food Pantry at Good Shepherd
- Thursday, February 19th 7:30 PM—Faith & Fiction Book Group
- Mondays 6PM, February 23rd—March 30th —Lenten Soup & Study
- Sunday, March 15th 4-7PM—Tastefully British Fish & Chips Fundraiser



2026 Pizza & Game Nights
will be on the 1st Friday of each Month
6-8PM in Fellowship Hall
ALL WELCOME!

Want to Serve at the Ecumenical Food Pantry?
Monthly on 2nd Fridays 6-8PM at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church

Here are the 2026 Dates

January 9 February 13 March 13 April 10

May 8 May 29* June 12 July 10 August 14 September 11

October 9 October 30*

November 20 - Thanksgiving Distribution

*** 5th Friday of Month - we cover**