

THE MESSENGER



Hey Church Family!

As we begin this fall season together, I'm reminded of something simple but profound: we were never meant to do life alone. God created us for connection—with God, with one another, and with the world around us.

This truth is woven throughout Scripture and reflected in the earliest followers of Jesus. In Acts 2, the early church gathered often to share meals, pray, care for one another, and worship together. Their community was so full of life and love that it drew others in. It wasn't perfect, but it was deeply connected.

This September, we're launching a new worship series called "Created for Connection." Over five weeks, we'll reflect on what it means to live as people deeply rooted in meaningful relationships—spiritually, emotionally, and communally. We'll explore how God draws us together, helping us remember that we belong to something larger than ourselves.

Homecoming Sunday on September 14 also relaunches our Kids' Church, many small groups, and ministry teams. Whether it's a Bible study, prayer group, Youth Group, music ministry, or a service team—there's a place for you to be known, encouraged,

and spiritually grounded. If you've been feeling a bit disconnected, this is the perfect time to jump back in or try something new!

And don't forget one of our biggest connection points of the year—our Apple Festival! This blossoming tradition isn't just about delicious treats and fall fun (though we love that too). It's about hospitality, joy, and showing our community that this church is a place where all are welcome. Every fun table, bounce house session, apple dessert served, or hand shaken helps someone feel seen and valued.

If there's one thing I hope you'll hear from me this season, it's this: you belong. God created you for love, belonging, and community. Whatever you're carrying—joy or sorrow, energy or weariness—you don't have to carry it alone.

Let's take a deep breath, say yes to connection, and walk together into this exciting new season!

With joy and gratitude,

Pastor Gina

Find us at [FCMoorestown.com](https://www.FCMoorestown.com)

FALL PREACHING SERIES

Created for Connection: September 7 - October 5

Sunday Services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Observing the widespread and severe effects of social disconnection on Americans' health, many health experts believe that loneliness and isolation represent profound threats to our health and well-being. This reality reflects what our faith already teaches us: God created us for connection and community. Drawing on the experiences of the early church in Scripture, let us relearn how God leads us into lives of meaningful relationship with Godself and one another.

September 7: Connection with God

John 15:1-12

Staying connected to God helps us have more loving relationships with others and bear fruit.

September 14: Connection Among Christians

Ephesians 4:1-6

Our local church is a place to build meaningful relationships through the gift of our one faith.

September 21: Connection with Community

Hebrews 10:23-25

In our loneliness, we often retreat from church and community. We are called, as believers, to prioritize the time for worship and small groups, to encourage each other in the faith.



September 28: Connection Across Barriers

Ephesians 2:11-22

Division and barriers can isolate us from one another. Christ, through faith, can break down hostilities and move us into new community and connection with one another.

October 5: Connection with the Larger Church (World Communion Sunday)

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

We remember that we are part of the one body of Christ. Whether we share communion in a church or the countryside, this Sunday celebrates our diversity as well as our common bonds.



A New Path: October 12–26

Sometimes, following Jesus means letting go of what's behind so we can walk with purpose into what God is doing next. In this three-week series, we'll reflect on how God leads us forward—with courage, faith, and openness. Whether you're wrestling with change, seeking clarity, or just hoping for a fresh start, this series will remind us that God is not finished with us yet. Together, we'll explore how to take faithful steps into a future full of promise.



This November, we'll open our eyes to the ways God is moving all around us—sometimes in quiet shifts, sometimes in bold acts of grace. Miracles Everywhere invites us to see, believe, and take part in God's transforming work. As we enter this season of generosity, we'll celebrate how our faith and giving help make miracles happen. Our Commitment Sunday is November 23 at both services. May we be inspired to give generously and serve boldly—because when we show up with faith and love, miracles really are everywhere!

2nd ANNUAL APPLE FESTIVAL

Friday, September 19 | 4:30-7:30 p.m.
(Rain date: September 20)

It's almost here! Join us on Friday, Sept 19 in the church parking lot for our second annual celebration of community fellowship and fall fun. This year's festival will be even bigger and better, featuring exciting new activities, special events, and fantastic musical performances.

We are so thankful for your support in volunteering before, during, and after the festival! A special shout-out to everyone who participated in the "Bake & Freeze-a-Cake" campaign and all who placed pre-orders for the farm stand and other apple-themed food items. See the weekly FMC bulletin for more details and pick-up instructions.

Are you interested in helping with this fun event? You can still be part of the Apple Festival team by emailing Devika Gill at devikagill@comcast.net or Lisa Kulp at trklkk@comcast.net.



STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Rev. Rich Hendrickson, richhendrickson58@gmail.com

Have you ever wondered about how the words "For God so loved that the world that..." came about, and how its meaning is 'explained' by the Gospel according to John in the Bible? Then come and explore the Gospel of John in an eight-week class led by our own Pastor Rich this fall. The class will help us claim, explore, and live the text of John.

When

Monday evenings 7:00 p.m. (Zoom)

September 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27; November 3, 10, 17

Wednesday evenings 7:00 p.m. (In-person in the Heritage Room)

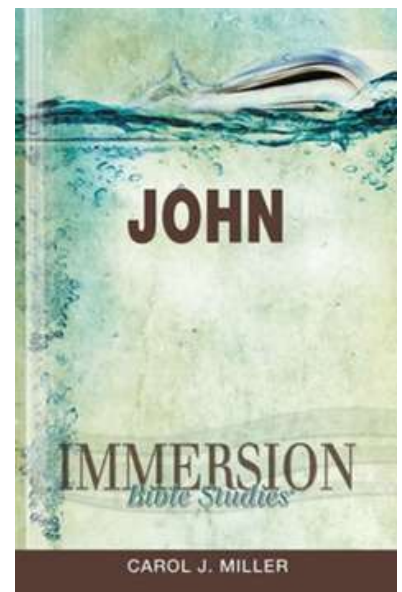
October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; November 5, 12, 19.

Resource

John from the Immersion Bible Study series by Carol Miller (about \$9 plus retail taxes from Amazon). If you need help purchasing this book, please indicate it when you register for the class.

Click the **button** to register for this class.

Register here! >>



YOUTH UPDATE

Jeremiah Appleton, jeremiah@fmcmoorestown.com

Youth Group Kick-Off BBQ – September 14

Join us to kick off another amazing year of Youth Group (6th – 12th grades) with a BBQ for the whole family on Sunday, September 14 at 5:00 p.m. right here at FMC! We will provide the main course and kindly ask all attending to contribute a side dish or dessert for the meal. In addition to sharing fellowship, we will talk about all the exciting things our Youth can look forward to during the 2025-2026 year. (We may even break into a Youth vs. Adults kickball game!)



Ignite Wildwood Retreat October 10-12

We will be returning to Wildwood this October for what has become one of our students' favorite weekends of the year. Leaving Friday night at 5:30, we will again head to the Waikiki Inn, where we will stay Friday and Saturday nights. As usual, we will attend four sessions at the Convention Center from Friday night through Sunday morning, where Youth and Leaders will experience incredible live worship music, passionate speakers with messages targeted towards the Youth, games, Communion, and even a live concert! In between these worship sessions, we will connect as an FMC group to go deeper into the messages and have lots of fun kicking around Wildwood together! The cost for this retreat will be \$125 per student. Check out ignitenj.org for more details!



Appalachia Service Project Summer 2026

It seems odd to be writing this before we leave for our 2025 Mission Trip, but the popularity of this trip is growing, and we wound up with a few interested attendees unable to attend this year as the ASP center filled up by mid-March. SO... looking ahead, we are going to open registration for next Summer's Mission Trip in September. The 2026 ASP Mission Trip dates will be August 2 – 9. We will notify families and trip leaders who have gone or expressed interest in going on either the 2024 or 2025 trips once the registration portal is open, but newcomers are always welcome...invite a friend! A \$50 deposit is all that will be due for each registered attendee until next March.

EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE NEWS

Mary Starn, starred5@comcast.net

Justice Takes Courage is the name of a new podcast from the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society. "Justice takes courage" is an inspiring phrase for FMC's Equity and Social Justice Committee as we plan for the fall. Look for the following topics to be highlighted: Hispanic Heritage Month, Domestic Violence Prevention Month, and Native American Heritage Month. As we make contacts and line up speakers, we are always looking for suggestions. (Please email your ideas to Mary Starn.) Are you ready to show off your jump rope skills? We are planning to sponsor a fun activity at the Apple Fest, which we are calling "Jumping for Justice." Double Dutch, anyone?



Look for a program at the Moorestown Library on Saturday, September 6, at 10:30 a.m. featuring FMC's own Dr. Keisha Taylor. She will be speaking about her career readiness book entitled *Fuel Your Future*. For more information, visit events.moorestownlibrary.org. This is an exciting moment, as we begin to reach out into the community with some of our featured speakers. Come out and support Keisha and interact with our Moorestown neighbors in attendance.

Our "in-house" Speaker Series begins on Sunday, September 28, featuring Rachel Britland, a Board-Certified Music Therapist, who will give us "An Introduction to Music Therapy." On October 19, we will welcome Rev. Noe Gabriel Lopez (Director of Social Impact & Belonging, EPA & GNJ conferences of the United Methodist Church), who will discuss the importance of Hispanic Heritage Month. For our Sunday speaker sessions, we meet after the 9:00 a.m. service in the Heritage Room.

Thanks to all who have participated in our events throughout the past year! We pray that we will follow the Spirit with courage as we seek God's leading as advocates for the Beloved Community here and now.

RECONCILING COMMITTEE NEWS

The FMC Reconciling Committee was one group among hundreds of participants in Haddon Township's annual Pride Parade. Our marchers joined other local churches, organizations, and corporations, as many thousands more lined the parade route to celebrate Pride in all its glory.



FMC ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 25 | 1:00 p.m. in the Chapel

Our annual Church Conference is a time to celebrate the Spirit-filled ministries of FMC and the incredible ways God is working through us—locally, nationally, and globally. Together, we'll honor the faithful service of our leaders, handle essential church business, and keep our mission and vision moving forward. As part of the connectional United Methodist Church, we give thanks for all God is doing in and through FMC! All are welcome to attend!

JOIN THE CARE & CONNECTION TEAM

FMC Members: Apply for January Training

Answering the Call for Compassion

There are moments in our lives when the comfort of true connection makes all the difference. The Care and Connection Team invites FMC members to step into this sacred calling by applying for our training in January. This is more than an opportunity; it's an invitation to walk alongside others, to uplift, and to bring light to where it is needed most.

The Power of Showing Up

When we show up for one another, something remarkable happens. Our circumstances may not shift overnight, but our hearts are transformed. Acts of kindness, listening with compassion, and simply being present can fill our community with love and hope. In those moments, burdens are shared, and hearts begin to heal, not just for those we serve but for ourselves as well.

Together, Hearts Change

We may not always be able to change the circumstances of those around us, but through care, presence, and connection, we become instruments of God's love. Join us in this transformative ministry where hope grows, friendships flourish, and every act of service makes a difference.

Let us show up for one another. Apply today and help us fill our church and our community with love and hope.

Why Join the Care and Connection Team?

Serve with Purpose: Become a source of strength and encouragement for individuals facing challenges or loneliness.

Experience Growth: Training will equip you with skills in empathy, active listening, and spiritual care, enriching your walk of faith.

Build Community: Form lasting bonds with fellow team members as you work together to make a meaningful impact.

Training Details

Who Can Apply:

All members of First Methodist Church with a heart for service and a willingness to learn.

When:

Training begins in January (specific dates to follow).

How to Apply:

Please contact Nadine Mack, CCT Leader, at 856-266-7589 or nadinemack@icloud.com.



FMC WELCOMES NEW TALENT !

MATTHEW CALLENDER, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Matt joined the FMC Staff in July, bringing a wealth of experience to his new role. He's enthusiastic about using his diverse skills to expand our communications ministry. Matt will be instrumental in helping share FMC's story and connect more effectively as a church community. Feel free to reach out to him with your communications questions at communications@fmcmoorestown.com.



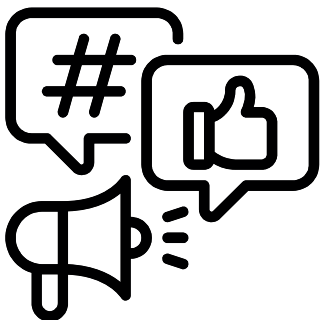
DUSTIN BECK, CO-MUSIC LEADER

Dustin became Co-Music Leader in 2025 and has been performing and singing for over 20 years. He cherishes the challenge not only to provide top-notch musical accompaniment to worship but also to create a special moment for everyone in the room. In his spare time, Dustin performs live throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

You can reach Dustin at dustinbeck1983@gmail.com.



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