



Tower Bell

BISHOP JANES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | FALL 2025

A Season of New Beginnings

Dear Church Family,

As summer draws to a close and we return from vacations and beach days, I find myself filled with excitement about what lies ahead for our church community. After months of planning and working together, this fall promises to be a season of renewed life and fresh opportunities at Bishop Janes.

The Foundation That Sustains Us

In our fast-paced world where schedules compete for every moment, I'm reminded of how essential our faith practices are—not as one more thing to add to our busy lives, but as the foundation that enables us to engage the world from a place of purpose, passion, and community. Regular worship attendance, commitment to prayer, and ongoing study aren't just religious obligations—they're the practices that ground us and connect us to something larger than ourselves. When we gather for worship, we remember who we are and whose we are. When we pray daily (join us for our "Daily Pause to Pray and Praise" on Facebook and YouTube!), we align our hearts with God's heart. When we study together, we discover wisdom for living.

An Invitation to Renewed Community

This brings me to a special invitation: **Harvest Welcome Sunday on September 21st at 9:30am.** This is our chance to celebrate what God is doing among us and to welcome everyone—longtime members, returning friends, and first-time visitors—to experience the warmth of our community. We'll have wonderful worship followed by a free brunch, bouncy house for the kids, and opportunities to learn about the exciting ministry opportunities launching this fall.



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ONGOING MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship
9:30 AM

Children's Sunday School
(except first Sundays
of the month)
9:45 AM

Daily Pause to
Pray and Praise
(Facebook & YouTube)
7:30 AM



STAY IN TOUCH

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The Season Ahead

Speaking of what's coming this fall, I'm genuinely excited about the breadth and depth of opportunities we have to grow in faith and serve our community:

Our new "**Life Conversations: Struggle, Perseverance, Hope**" Bible study offers three different meeting times to accommodate various schedules.

Our missions and outreach team is launching an innovative **weekend meal program** for food-insecure children in our local schools. **United Women in Faith** has an amazing lineup of activities from their clothing sale fundraiser to the Hearts2Hands knitting ministry serving LGBTQ+ youth.

Our **Book Group** continues to offer rich literary discussions, **Little Lambs** is expanding its enrichment programming, and we're even hosting our **6th Annual Golf Outing** fundraiser on Columbus Day. Plus, the fruits of our **Normalizing Next** cohort work are beginning to show—new vision and mission statements, a fresh website, and more collaborative approaches to ministry.

A Season of Hope

As I look ahead to this fall, I'm filled with hope that the work we've been doing together will bear fruit in renewed life and optimism for our community. Hope that more people's lives will be touched by the grace of Jesus Christ through our ministry. Hope that despite busy schedules, we'll choose to prioritize the practices and community that sustain us.

The foundation is strong. The community is welcoming. The opportunities are abundant. All that's missing is you—fully engaged and excited about what God is doing.

See you Sunday—and especially on September 21st for Harvest Welcome Sunday!

With joy and anticipation,

Pastor Dave

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens"

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

Tee Off for Your Church at Our Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser

Join us on Columbus Day, Monday, October 13th, 2025 at Basking Ridge Country Club (185 Madisonville Rd) for our church's only fundraiser supporting general ministry operations and providing a platform for mission projects at local, national, and international levels. Whether you're an avid golfer or simply enjoy great food and community, there's a perfect way for you to participate!

Multiple Ways to Join the Fun

Golf & Dinner Package - \$260/person

- 10am registration with boxed lunch by XXVI Tavern
- 11:30am shotgun start
- 4:30pm catered dinner
- Access to auction and raffle

Dinner Only - \$75/person

- Join us at 4:30pm for the meal and auction
- Cheer on our golfers and enjoy fellowship
- Bid on incredible auction prizes

Registration Deadlines:

Golf: October 8;

Dinner: Register up to day of
Men, women, singles, and foursomes are all invited to play!

Amazing Auction Awaits!

Get ready to bid on fantastic prizes donated by our generous church members and local businesses:

- Professional sports tickets (football, hockey, and more!)
- Use of vacation homes
- Beautiful jewelry
- Restaurant gift card packages
- Romantic night out packages
- Relaxing spa packages
- And much more!

Ways You Can Help

- **Hole Sponsorship - \$100** - Your family or business name (and logo, if applicable) displayed proudly on a tee box for all to see. (deadline September 30)
- **Donate Auction Items** - We'd be especially grateful for donations from our church family! Gift cards, products, services, or experiences you can contribute will help make this fundraiser a huge success.
- **Spread the Word** - Invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join us for this fun community event.
- **Volunteer** - Help us reach out to local businesses for donations, or lend a hand on event day with registration, auction setup, or other tasks.

Ready to Register?

Visit BJUMC.org and click the Golf banner, or contact Stephen Johnson at bjumcgolfouting@gmail.com.

Every dollar raised goes directly toward supporting our church's vital ministry operations and mission projects. Let's come together for our 6th annual day of fellowship, fun, and fundraising that makes a real difference in our church's mission!



SUPPORT US

BJUMC is a not for profit 501c3 organization that depends on the generosity of our community to continue our ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Your support matters in so many ways, and we thank you!



Preparing for Tomorrow: Our Normalizing Next Journey

Great things are happening behind the scenes at Bishop Janes!

This year, our church was hand-selected by Raritan Shore District Superintendent Rev. Sang Won Doh to participate in the Normalizing Next® Cohort—a transformative leadership program led by pastor and author Rev. Olu Brown.



Our Leadership Team in Action

Since January, Pastor Dave, Ian Lutes (Church Council Chair), Brett Hodges (Lay Leader), and Eric Colwell (Trustee Chair) have been meeting monthly with leaders from 29 other churches, learning strategies for ministry in today's world. The program focuses on vision casting, leadership development, community engagement, generosity, and worship design.

Exciting Changes Ahead

Through this intensive process, our team has developed new vision and mission statements that will guide us in reclaiming our impact in the community while reinforcing BJUMC's commitment to be a place where all people experience unconditional love.

Coming This Fall:

- New vision and mission statements (presented to Church Council in September, congregation in Q4)
- Fresh website launch (goal: November)
- More collaborative approach to major events like Easter and Christmas
- Enhanced generosity strategies with regular community communication
- Worship and education programs addressing real issues our community faces

Real Impact Already

You've already seen some results! Our backpack lunch program for local students emerged from this work, as did Easter's all-church approach that brought together multiple teams for a more welcoming, comprehensive celebration.



What This Means for You

These strategic improvements will better connect us to our community, create more meaningful worship experiences, and strengthen our ability to welcome newcomers. Our leadership teams will be reviewing strategic pillars to determine each group's role in achieving these goals.

Stay tuned as we share our new vision and mission statements this fall—the future of BJUMC looks bright!

A Vision Bearing Fruit: Ridge Oak Senior Housing Continues to Flourish

Nearly fifty years ago, six local churches, including Bishop Janes UMC, came together with a bold vision: to provide affordable, dignified housing for senior citizens in our community. What began as an act of faith in 1977 has blossomed into a thriving ministry that today serves 360 residents across 308 apartments on a beautiful 26-acre campus.



Leadership and Growth

This past year marked a significant milestone as Bonnie Kelly stepped down after 25 years of dedicated service as Executive Director, with Corey Hovanec taking the helm. The most exciting development is Ridge Oak IV—a new 29-unit affordable senior housing project that has received township zoning approval and moves the ministry closer to serving even more seniors in need.

A Thriving Community

Ridge Oak's 360 residents reflect our community's diversity, with an average income of just over \$23,000. Residents pay only 30% of their income toward rent, with federal subsidies covering the remainder. The demand remains strong—all waiting lists are closed, with over 675 people hoping to call Ridge Oak home.

Recent investments include a \$1.5 million fire monitoring system and \$618,542 in campus-wide Wi-Fi, demonstrating the community's commitment to safety and modern amenities.

A Legacy of Faith in Action

Ridge Oak stands as a powerful testament to what churches can accomplish together. What began as a leap of faith has grown into an \$8.146 million annual operation providing not just housing, but genuine community and comprehensive care for hundreds of seniors. As we look toward Ridge Oak IV and continued improvements, we give thanks for the vision of those who came before us and for the privilege of continuing this vital ministry.

Our congregation maintains representation on the Ridge Oak Board of Directors with Vince Baker as our delegate, continuing our founding commitment to this transformative ministry. We're also blessed that several of our own church members call Ridge Oak home.

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." – Matthew 25:40

Life Conversations: Struggle, Perseverance, Hope

Life brings struggles—we all face challenges, setbacks, and difficult seasons. How do we find perseverance? Where does hope come from? Join us this fall for meaningful conversations exploring these universal human experiences through our September-November Bible study.



Three Ways to Participate

- **Sundays, 11:00 AM** at church with Rev. Wen-Ling Lai. Begins Sep 14 (takes a break Sep 21 for Harvest Welcome Sunday)
- **Wednesdays, 10:00 AM** at Ridge Oak Senior Housing with Pastor Dave. Begins Sep 17. *Open to all church members*
- **Thursdays, 10:00 AM** at church with Pastor Dave. Begins Sep 18

Each 75-minute session focuses on genuine conversation rather than lectures. We'll discover wisdom and stories from the Bible, but no prior knowledge is needed—just bring your questions, life experiences, and willingness to explore together.

Study Details

- **Book:** Adult Bible Studies: Struggle, Perseverance, Hope by Rev. Kevin Baker, pastor and Duke Divinity School faculty. This study offers thoughtful exploration of how struggle can lead to perseverance, and perseverance to hope.
- **Attendance:** While we encourage commitment to the full series, you can join any session as you're able.
- **Childcare:** Available for Sunday and Thursday sessions if needed—just let us know when you register.

All Are Welcome

Whether you've never opened a Bible or you've been exploring faith for years, you're welcome. Come as you are with whatever questions or insights you bring. Different perspectives enrich our understanding and deepen our conversations.

Ready to join? Contact the church office at office@bjumc.org or **908-766-1108** to get your student book and reserve your spot. Let's explore together how life's challenges can become stepping stones to hope.

Dear Bishop Janes UMC Family,

Hi! My name is Esther Somp. I'm originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and currently a seminarian in my final year at Drew Theological School, where I've been learning, growing, and discerning my call to ministry. As part of that journey, I am blessed to know that I will be spending the next several months with you worshiping, learning, and serving, and I'm so excited to be joining you soon as your pastoral intern.

While I'll be involved in many areas of church life, I'm especially looking forward to simply getting to know you. I'm coming in ready to listen, to learn more, and to walk alongside you in whatever ways I can. I truly believe that ministry is simply walking on the path of love together, and I can't wait to see how God will move in our time together.

Thank you for welcoming me into your community. I'm really looking forward to meeting you all soon!

With gratitude and excitement, Esther Somp esther.somp@bjumc.org

≡Welcome≡



Share Your Gifts: Enrich Our Worship Together

Our faith community shines brightest when we all contribute our unique talents. We're currently seeking passionate volunteers to enhance our worship services in three meaningful ways:

- **Scripture Readers:** Bring God's word to life with your voice, inspiring our congregation through sacred texts.
- **Children's Sermon Leaders:** Share your gift for simplifying complex faith concepts, touching the hearts of our youngest members (and adults too!).
- **Prayer Leaders:** Guide our community in spiritual communion, offering your heartfelt words to lift our collective voices to God.



No experience is necessary – just a willingness to share your gifts. By volunteering, you'll not only enrich our worship experience but also deepen your own spiritual journey. These roles offer a beautiful opportunity to connect more deeply with our faith and each other.

Ready to make a difference? Contact Janet Kaefer at jbkaefer@optonline.net to learn more or sign up. Let's create transformational, spiritually fulfilling worship experiences together!

Harmony in Faith: Join Our Musical Ministry!



Is music the language of your soul? We're excited to invite you to be part of our church's vibrant musical community! Our Bishop Janes United Methodist Church Choir and Bell Choirs are seeking enthusiastic members to join our weekly rehearsals:

Wednesdays:

- 6:15 PM – Bell Choir
- 7:00 PM – Choir

Sundays:

- 10:45 AM – Children's Bell Choir

Whether you're a seasoned performer or a musical newcomer, there's a place for you in our ensembles. This is your opportunity to share your talents, forge new friendships, and contribute to our church's mission of spreading love and hope through music.

By joining us, you'll experience the joy of collective worship through song, grow as a musician, and be part of something truly inspiring. Our welcoming community is eager to harmonize with new voices and instrumental talents.

Interested in this melodious journey? Contact Jany Izaguirre at music@bjumc.org for more information. Let's create beautiful music together and lift our voices in praise!

Exciting News for our Pipe Organ!



You may have noticed that the grille cloth covering the organ chamber in the front of the sanctuary (where many pipes of our wonderful organ are housed) is quite dirty and unable to be cleaned.

Patrick J Murphy & Associates Organ Builders (who built the organ in 2006-2007) was contracted to create this acoustic wood grille to cover the organ chamber. They will begin construction of our custom wood grille in late September in their shop in PA, and it will be ready to be installed in late October or early November.

We are excited to undertake this important upgrade to our organ - it will enhance the look of our Sanctuary and highlight the cross at the center of our worship space!

The Worship & Music (W&M) Team has been investigating solutions to this for many years. With the help of the Trustees, W&M has decided upon a custom wood grille as the best long-term solution. The new wood grille will be low maintenance - able to be vacuumed if needed and could easily be painted - without dismantling the pipes!

New Mission: Weekend Meals for Students

Great news! BJUMC is launching an exciting new partnership with the Food Bank Network of Somerset County to provide weekend meals for food-insecure children in our four Basking Ridge elementary schools.

The Need in Our Backyard

About 60 children in our local elementary schools qualify for free school lunches—meaning they may go hungry on weekends when school meals aren't available. Through the "backpack program," we'll discretely pack nutritious, ready-to-eat meals into these children's backpacks each Friday, ensuring they have food support through the weekend.

Honoring a Legacy

During our visit to the Food Bank Network, our missions team met in the Peter Ebbe Memorial Backpack Program Room, named for our beloved former member who championed this ministry.

We're honored to continue Pete's work, building on connections several current congregation members already have with this vital food ministry.

The program has grown from serving 600 children countywide in 2015 to over 1,800 children per week today. Now we're bringing it to Basking Ridge for the first time.

How You Can Help

We're soft-launching next week with a community "pack out" scheduled for Sunday, October 6, after Communion Sunday. Weekly school deliveries may begin even sooner!

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Monthly food pickup from the food bank
- Meal packing (great for families!)
- Weekly school deliveries
- Coordination support

No heavy time commitments required—every role matters in feeding hungry children in our community.

Ready to jump in? Contact Linda Mahoney (lacmahoney@gmail.com) or any missions team member to learn more. This is hands-on ministry that directly shares God's love with our neighbors who need it most.



Little Lambs: Ready for Another Year of Learning and Growth!

As a lifelong educator, nothing gets me more excited than back-to-school season. The freshly sharpened pencils, new boxes of crayons, and here at Little Lambs, the voices of families, students, and teachers filling our classrooms again!

Summer Success

Though quieter during summer months, we stayed busy preparing for an amazing year. Our Under The Sea Summer Camp was a huge hit, featuring teachers from each age group plus enthusiastic high school volunteers. Students enjoyed water play, created ocean animal stamped shirts, played games, and made wonderful memories together.

Exciting Program Expansion

This year brings expanded enrichment programming! We're adding **Mondays** to our schedule, creating a rotating menu of class offerings for students. This expansion means even more opportunities for learning, creativity, and skill development throughout the week.

Welcome Back!

We're eager to welcome both returning families and newcomers for another year of learning, friendship, faith, and growth. Our dedicated staff is ready to nurture your children in a loving, Christian environment where every child can thrive.

Questions about Little Lambs programs or enrollment? Contact Evelyn Kissel at 908-766-1871 or evelyn.kissel@bjumc.org to learn more about how your child can be part of our Little Lambs family!



Mark your Calendars!

2nd Annual Mum Sale Fundraiser

Beautify your home with fall colors while helping us raise funds for our preschool ministry. Choose from individual red, yellow, orange, or white mums in 9" pots or apple baskets filled with mums, kale, mini peppers, and a spike.

Orders must be received by Sept 26 and will be delivered to the church on Sept 30. For more information, pick up an order sheet in the narthex or contact Evelyn Kissel at 908-766-1871 or evelyn.kissel@bjumc.org

Parents' Night Out

Your children will enjoy activities and dinner at school while you enjoy a night out or quality time together. Watch for upcoming flyers with dates and registration details.



Join Our Book Group for Great Reads and Better Conversations!

Love diving into a good book?
Enjoy sharing insights with fellow readers?

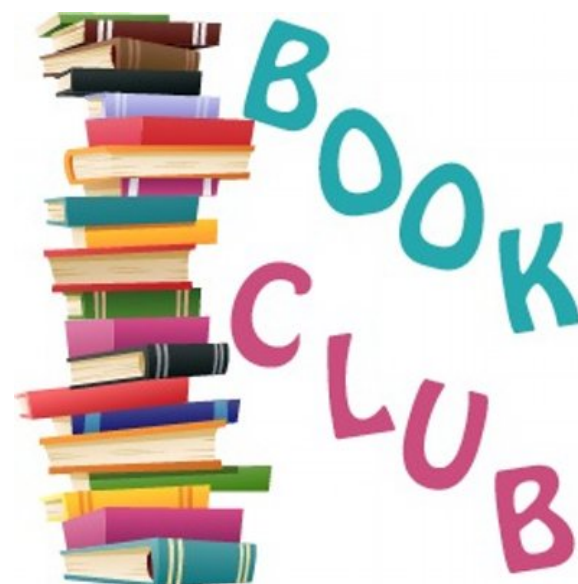
Our BJUMC Book Group offers engaging discussions in a warm, welcoming community where new members are always welcome!

When We Meet

Regular Schedule: Second Thursday of each month, 7pm in Classroom 3/4

Season: September–November and January–May

Special Note: September meeting moved to Monday, September 15 at 7pm



Optional Dinner Before Every Discussion

Join fellow book lovers for dinner at **Ridge Italian Comfort Food** (25 S. Finley Avenue) at 5:30pm before each month's discussion. It's a great way to connect in a relaxed setting.

RSVP for dinner: Email Janet Kaefer by 5pm on meeting day

Fall Reading List

- **September 15:** James by Percival Everett; Discussion leader: Sue Kennedy
- **October 9:** Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History by Erik Larson; Discussion leader: Linda Mahoney
- **November 13:** Kingmaker: Pamela Harriman's Astonishing Life of Power, Seduction, and Intrigue by Sonia Purnell; Discussion leader: Art Martin

Why Join Us?

Members suggest our book selections, ensuring diverse genres and topics. From literary fiction to compelling non-fiction, there's something for every reading taste. Plus, you'll discover new authors and perspectives you might never have found on your own!

Ready to join our literary adventures? Contact Janet Kaefer at jbkaefere@optonline.net for more information or just show up on September 15—we'd love to meet you!

Thank
you

I would like to thank all who helped and continue to help keep the outside of the church looking beautiful. From weeding, digging out bushes, trimming, power washing, washing windows and generally doing what needs to be done. I was going to thank all of you by name but the list was so long and I did not want to leave anyone out. So, a huge THANK YOU to all – you know who you are.

Sincerely,
Sanna Scheuerman

The Lie We Keep Clicking On

What digital addiction reveals about our culture
—and our souls

Reprinted from the Center of Addiction & Faith email newsletter



Hello, my name is Ed and I'm addicted to my phone.

We don't call it addiction. We call it "staying connected." But digital addiction is real—and it's killing our attention span, our relationships, and our capacity to hear God.

You're Not Alone

If you've ever checked your phone for no reason, you're not alone.

You're also not broken. You're not weak. You're not "just bad at self-control."

We're part of a system that rewards disconnection and calls it connection. A system that trades distraction for presence. A system that uses all the tricks of technology to keep us craving. A system that promises transcendence—to make us more than we are. But is making us more empty and alone.

I Know This Story Because I Live It Too

In *The Lie That Kills Us*, I write about my first drink in Cornwall Park in Bellingham, Washington, at the age of twelve. The stolen whiskey mixed with Pepsi didn't just get me drunk—it made me feel divine. It wasn't about escape. It was about excitement. It was about freedom. It was about transcendence. For a scared, invisible kid, it was power and all the things I wanted to be but wasn't.

And that's the hook of all addiction—chemical, digital, relational, or cultural. We don't reach for it because we're trying to destroy ourselves. We reach because something in us longs to rise above our pain, our smallness, our powerlessness.

But the very thing that promises to open our eyes ends up closing them.

The Same Old Lie, Repackaged

In the Genesis story, the serpent didn't just tempt Eve with fruit. He tempted her with divinity: "Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God." Whether we're talking about whiskey, a pill, or a glowing rectangle in our hand, the seduction is always the same: transcend the pain, bypass the limits, be more than human, be more than you are. And it's killing us.

***"The truth will set you free."
— John 8:32***

***"Your eyes will be opened,
and you will be like God."
— Genesis 3:5***

Prayer:

God of truth,
Help me see what I've learned
to ignore.
Give me the courage to name
the ways I escape,
And the grace to choose
presence over distraction.
Lead me into honest
community,
Where healing begins and
elephants are no longer fed.
Amen.



Babel 2.0

*In Chapter 9 of my forthcoming book, **The Lie That Kills Us: We All Have Elephants**, I compare our society to the Tower of Babel. Not just because we're building things that will eventually collapse, but because our towers—literal and metaphorical—are built on illusions. Illusions of independence. Illusions of progress. Illusions of control. Illusions of grandeur.*

We usually don't see the cost until it's too late.

We check emails when we wake and go to sleep and throughout the day. We scroll through reels in bed late at night when we should be sleeping. We Google it. We even do these things at church, during worship!

We binge news stories that outrage us while ignoring the person sitting next to us. We confuse stimulation for meaning. We lose ourselves—slowly, quietly, efficiently—one click at a time.

And Here's the Twist: We've Baptized the Addiction

We normalize it.

We tell ourselves and each other we're "staying informed." We're "Building our platform." "Reaching people for Jesus." But half the time, we're just self-soothing. Just trying not to feel. Escaping.

Is it ironic that most of us will read this on our phones?

Digital addiction is real—and it's not just a Gen Z problem. It's a family systems problem. A spiritual problem. A cultural epidemic hiding in plain sight.

But the fruit is all the same: anxiety, disconnection, exhaustion, distraction, outrage, shame. The algorithms are winning.

So What Do We Do?

Start where recovery always starts: with honesty. We admit it's a problem...out loud to the people around us.

Tell the truth about your relationship with your phone. With your work. With your distractions. Ask what you're avoiding, what you're feeding, what you're afraid of.

And then practice resistance. Small, quiet, holy resistance.

- Put your phone down at the dinner table.
- Leave it in the other room during prayer.
- Take one Sabbath day a week away from screens.
- Let yourself be bored. Let yourself feel.
- Reclaim stillness.
- Reconnect with someone—in person.



We cannot change the whole system overnight. We can start by changing ourselves. But we can start telling the truth. And truth is the first step toward healing.

The elephant in the room—the one you think is yours alone—is actually ours. We all carry it. We all feed it. But we can also help each other name it, face it, and make it go away.

My name is Ed, and I'm addicted to my phone. I need help.

United Women in Faith: Empowering Through Faith, Fellowship, and Service



The United Women in Faith at our church is a vibrant community of women dedicated to spiritual growth, fellowship, and service. Their diverse range of activities offers something for everyone, creating opportunities for meaningful connections and community impact.

From the annual Clothing Sale, which supports various charitable causes, to the Hearts2Hands Ministry that crafts winter garments for at-risk LGBTQ+ youth, these women demonstrate their faith through action. The Fall Potluck Supper and Walk and Talk group provide spaces for building friendships and sharing life's joys and challenges.

Their commitment to spiritual growth is evident in the Grace Circle and New Circle meetings, where women gather for devotion, discussion, and fellowship. These circles welcome all women, providing a nurturing environment for faith exploration.

The group's calendar is filled with engaging activities throughout the year. From the Ridge High School A Cappella Choir's holiday concert to the Winter Market/Holiday Bazaar, there are numerous opportunities to get involved and make a difference.

United Women in Faith embodies the spirit of community and service that is at the heart of our church. They invite all women – church members and neighbors alike – to join in their activities. Whether you're interested in hands-on service projects, spiritual growth, or simply forming new friendships, there's a place for you

We encourage you to participate in their upcoming events and to invite your friends and neighbors. Together, we can strengthen our faith, build lasting relationships, and make a positive impact in our community and beyond.

To get involved or learn more about United Women in Faith, reach out to any of the contact persons listed in their calendar of events. Your participation can make a difference!

Growing Need in Our Community

According to Sally Fuchs, a board member at God's Coop Pantry, the need continues to grow. The pantry has seen a 30% increase in clients since the beginning of the year, and food and funding needs remain as great as ever. Clients had already been asking about school supplies before our delivery arrived—what a blessing that we could provide exactly what was needed!

Your generosity directly impacts families right here in Basking Ridge, ensuring children have the tools they need to succeed in school.

Learn more about God's Coop Pantry at
www.brpc.org

School Supplies Success: 172 Kits Delivered!



A huge thank you to everyone who donated school supplies this summer and helped assemble them into kits for children at God's Coop Pantry in Basking Ridge. We exceeded our goal with 172 kits delivered on August 16th—just in time for the start of school!

United Women in Faith Fall Activities



All United Women in Faith events, circles, and ministries are open to all women and youth of BJUMC, friends, and the community. Join us this fall for a variety of meaningful activities and opportunities to give back. Questions about any UWF activities? Contact Linda Cargo at cargoph@aol.com

Weekly & Monthly Activities

- **Walk and Talk:** Every Monday, 9am at Harry Dunham Park (Liberty Corner Road parking lot) *Weather permitting*. Contact: Liz Mailhot - emailhot@optonline.net
- **New Circle:** Every 3rd Tuesday, 5:30pm for dinner. *Sep 16: Thai Thai, 1168 Valley Road, Stirling*. October and November locations TBD. Contact: Linda Cargo, cargoph@aol.com
- **Grace Circle:** Every 4th Monday, 9:30am in Youth Room *Begins Sep 22*. Contact: Janet Kaefer - jbkaefer@optonline.net
- **Hearts2Hands Ministry:** Every 4th Tuesday, 7:00pm in the Youth Room. *First fall meeting: Tuesday, Sep23*. Contact: Linda Cargo - cargoph@aol.com

Special Events

- **Annual Clothing Sale:** September 26-27
- **Sew-In with Bonnie Artell:** Thursdays in October, 10am-12pm in Melick Hall starting Oct 2. *Bring scissors and lunch!* Contact: bonnieartell@gmail.com
- **Apple Pie Day with Lyn Stake:** November 3, 9am in church kitchen. *Bring your favorite peeler and knife*. Contact: lynstake49@gmail.com
- **UWF provides Sunday refreshments:** every week in November, *Volunteers needed for setup, serving, cleanup*
- **Bazaar decorating day:** November 29, 10am
- **Winter Market/Holiday Bazaar:** December 6, 11am-6pm

Hearts2Hands: Knitting Warmth for LGBTQ+ Youth

This September, our Hearts2Hands Ministry will launch an inspiring new project—creating handmade winter items for homeless and at-risk LGBTQ+ youth in New York City through Knit The Rainbow, an organization that places these gifts directly into young people's hands.

What We're Making

Join us in knitting or crocheting hats and ear warmers, Scarves and cowls, Mittens and socks. Whether you're an experienced crafter or eager to learn, there's a place for you in this ministry of love and warmth.

Get Involved

Kickoff Meeting: Tuesday, September 23 at 7pm in the Youth Room. Come learn more about the project, get patterns, and connect with fellow crafters.

Donation Deadline: December 1st

Community donations welcome! Know someone who loves to knit or crochet? Invite them to join us in this meaningful work.

This project combines our love of crafting with direct service to vulnerable young people who need to know they are valued and cared for. Questions? Contact Linda Cargo at cargoph@aol.com. Learn more about Knit The Rainbow: www.knittherainbow.org



United Women in Faith Annual Clothing Sale

Mark your calendars for our biggest fundraiser of the year! Join us Friday, September 26 (9am–3pm) and Saturday, September 27 (9am–2pm) for amazing deals on quality clothing and accessories.

What We're Collecting

We're seeking clean, gently used items for the whole family:

- Clothing for men, women, and children
- Shoes and coats
- Accessories: jewelry, purses, ties, scarves, gloves, hats, belts



Donation Timeline:

Church member donations begin **Sunday, September 7** in **Melick Hall**. Simply place items on or under the designated tables.

Community donations begin **Monday, September 22**.

Special need: We're also collecting paper grocery bags—please drop them in the church kitchen!

Volunteers Needed

Help us make this sale a success: Sort and price items during the week, Work during sale days, Clean up afterward, Load leftover items on collection truck Tuesday, September 30 (9–10am)

All proceeds benefit mission organizations supported by United Women in Faith, making your participation a double blessing.

Questions or want to volunteer? Contact Karen Hayworth at karenahayworth@gmail.com or Linda Cargo at cargopheaol.com.

A God Moment: When the Radio Has Other Plans

I had to share this funny story with you all! Last week, I dropped my son off at soccer camp, and when I got back in my car, a radio station I've never listened to was on the dial—"CAT Christian."

My immediate instinct was to scroll it a few channels down to my usual country station, but when I tried to change it, the channel wouldn't budge. I stopped for a second, looked at the station again, and had a good chuckle. I tried to change the channel once more, and it still wouldn't move in either direction. So I said, "OK God, you win—I'll listen!"

The song that was playing was "What If" by Consumed by Fire, and it got me thinking about all the "what ifs" in our lives. What if I had just forced the radio to change? What if I hadn't paid attention to this little moment? What if God is trying to speak to us in ways we usually brush off?

What made it even more amazing was how perfectly the name of the band tied into Pastor Dave's "refined by fire" sermon theme that week. Sometimes God works through the smallest things—even a stubborn car radio—to get our attention and remind us he's present in our everyday moments.

Has God ever gotten your attention in an unexpected way? I'd love to hear your stories!

Amanda Modale



The Power of "Us": Reflecting on Our Church Family

Greetings to my fellow brethren at Bishop Janes United Methodist Church. I find myself feeling so blessed every time I reflect on the amazing activities that our parishioners are involved with. I also find myself energized when I think of all the opportunities that lay before us. A key theme for me is "us."

Look What "Us" Accomplished

- It is "us" that showed our love and welcoming hearts, which recently led to 5 new members deciding to make Bishop Janes their place of worship.
- It is "us" that went to the Red Bird Mission and helped bring real, tangible improvements to people's homes in Appalachia—people who would not have been able to fix their homes but for the love of Jesus guiding "us."
- It is "us" who came together to provide the opportunity for young people to learn about God's love, maybe for the first time, through our Vacation Bible School.
- It is "us" who have stepped up in our community to fill a need for school-age children who may not have enough food over the weekends when their school cafeteria is not an option.
- It is "us" who volunteer and provide monetary assistance for God's Coop Pantry, where 7,000 pounds of food is distributed every month to those in our community who are food insecure.
- It is "us" who come together to help ensure that our physical church is a warm and welcoming building that invites our community to join "us."

So Much More

I have not mentioned many other ways that "us" come together for fellowship and activities which show our community what a vibrant church home they will find when they walk through our doors. I ask for your forgiveness if my few examples did not cover all that "us" do. It is a beautiful fact that I do not have space in our Tower Bell newsletter to list all the fantastic works that "us" are involved with!

Moving Forward Together

It is that spirit of "us" that drives our church family forward into our community. It takes all of "us"! Each person contributes in the ways they can, which collectively add up to "us" doing amazing things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Bishop Janes is uniquely positioned so that "us" can demonstrate to our community all that God has to offer.

Thank you all for the honor of allowing me to share my journey with you and for allowing me to be a part of your journey.

In Christ's Love,
Brett Hodges, Lay Leader
layleader@bjumc.org

Slots Available for Flower Dedications

As autumn approaches, we invite you to contribute to the beauty of our worship services by dedicating flowers for our chancel. These floral offerings serve as meaningful tributes, whether celebrating a special occasion, honoring a loved one's memory, or simply glorifying God. With numerous open dates this fall, now is the perfect time to order stunning autumn arrangements that will complement the season's vibrant colors.

Don't forget to consider reserving a Sunday during the upcoming Advent season as well. Your floral dedication adds a personal touch to our services and helps create a warm, inviting atmosphere for all who gather.

To reserve your chosen Sunday, simply sign up on the board and complete an order form in the Narthex. Alternatively, contact Nancy Sweazey at 908-208-3250.



A Hidden Gem: Our Evergreen Cemetery Ministry

Did you know...

- Bishop Janes owns Evergreen Cemetery, located off Oak Road right here in Basking Ridge?
- Bishop Janes has owned Evergreen Cemetery since 1853 and that it was the first non-profit, non-sectarian cemetery in New Jersey?
- Evergreen Cemetery, besides grass cutting, is maintained and managed entirely by volunteers?

Dear friends, all of the above is true. What a beautiful service Bishop Janes provides our community! For over 170 years, we have been providing a space where families can lay their loved ones to rest with respect, dignity, love, and beauty.

Evergreen Cemetery offers more than just burial services. It provides Bishop Janes an opportunity to grow our presence in our community while generating funds that help us expand our outreach and bring even more people to know the love of Jesus Christ.

We Need Your Help

Being volunteer-run, Evergreen Cemetery is always looking for more hands and hearts to join this ministry. We need volunteers for:

- Cemetery maintenance projects and beautification
- Spreading the word about Evergreen in our community
- Administrative support and record keeping
- Joining our volunteer management team alongside Charlie Walker and myself

The time commitment is flexible, and there are opportunities for people with different skills and availability.



Get Involved

I would be happy to speak with anyone wishing to know more about this meaningful ministry. You're also welcome to stroll through Evergreen Cemetery—many of our Bernards Township residents do just that every day, finding it a peaceful place for reflection.

With over 1,000 grave sites available today, Evergreen continues its mission of serving families in their time of need while supporting our church's broader ministry.

Please consider how you may be hearing the calling to become involved in such a wonderful ministry. Contact Brett, Evergreen Cemetery Manager, at evergreen@bjumc.org to learn more or volunteer.

Regards,
Brett

In Loving Memory: Connie Moore

It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of Connie Moore on June 30, 2025. Connie served as our church office manager from September 2023 until early 2025, when health concerns required her to step away from her duties.

During her time with us, Connie brought joy and laughter to our church community. Her warm spirit, wonderful Italian cooking, and deep commitment to the vibrancy of our ministry touched the lives of everyone who knew her.

Connie's legacy lives on in the countless ways she strengthened our church family through her dedicated service and infectious joy. She will be greatly missed.



"Well done, good and faithful servant." - Matthew 25:23

The Power of Personal Invitation



Here's something powerful to remember: **85% of people who come to church for the first time come because a friend shared their experience of the community and invited them to join.**

Your personal invitation matters more than any advertisement or social media post we could create.

Who in your life might benefit from experiencing the welcome, purpose, and community we share here? Who could use the hope that comes from knowing they're part of something larger than themselves? Your invitation could be the beginning of their journey back to faith, community, and purpose.

Your Voice Matters: Annual Church Conference

Saturday, October 4 at 9:00 AM, Bridgewater United Methodist Church, Followed by worship service



Our Annual Church Conference (Charge Conference) is when we come together to review our ministry, elect church leadership, set pastoral compensation, and make important decisions about our church's future direction.

Why Attend? As a member of Bishop Janes UMC, you have both voice and vote in these decisions that directly impact our ministry and mission. Your participation matters! This is also a time to celebrate what God has accomplished through our church this year and look ahead to the opportunities before us.

All church members are encouraged to attend this important annual gathering. Come be part of the decisions that shape our church's future!

Everyone in
the community
is welcome

Bring
a friend

Bounce
House

Picnic
Brunch

Ice
Cream

Harvest Welcome Sunday

You're Invited to Join Us for Church Service
& Church School (for elementary school students)

SEPTEMBER 21 at 9:30 AM

followed by food, fun, family & friends

BISHOP JANES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

22 South
Finley Ave.
Basking Ridge

Come
see what's
happening at
Bishop
Janes

Questions?
email
Office @
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Open Hearts.
Open Minds.
Open Doors.