

SPECIAL
POINTS OF IN-
TEREST:

- **From the Pastor's Desk**
- **March/April 2025 Worship Schedules**
- **CUMC Book Club**
- **Sandwich-Making Mission**
- **Missions Update:**
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 - Blessing Bag
- **Valentine Cookie Decorating Event**
- **Black History Sunday**
- **Lenten Bible Study**
- **Youth Group Update**
- **2025 Easter Flowers Form**

Lamplighter

MARCH

APRIL

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

MAR/APR 2025

Dear Beloved Centenary Family,

Lent is upon us — a sacred time to slow down, look inward, and draw closer to God as we prepare for the hope and joy of Easter. Lent isn't just a season; it's a journey that invites us to walk alongside Christ.

I'm reminded of something my mother often told me before school trips or long days: "You need to have a full stomach before going on a long journey." With that loving wisdom, she would prepare warm meals to nourish me before I set out. In the same way, as we begin our Lenten journey, we need spiritual nourishment to sustain us.

We will begin this journey together on Ash Wednesday, March 5, at 7:00 PM, with our "Soup for the Soul" service in Room 20. This special time will include prayers, music, and the imposition of ashes—a symbol of repentance and renewal. Afterward, stay for a warm soup supper and fellowship as we nourish both body and soul.

This year's Lenten sermon series, "Bread of Life" will guide us along the way. When the world feels heavy and uncertain, Christ reminds us of the abundance of love, grace, and hope available to all. We will explore how Jesus didn't just feed bodies — He nourished hearts and souls, offering the good news of God's Kingdom.

In addition to the Ash Wednesday, "Soup for the Soul" service on March 5, we invite you to these upcoming events and services:

Lenten Bible Study (March 12 – April 16, online) – The Final Days by Rev. Matt Rawle

Game Night – March 15, 4:00–6:00 PM, Room 20

Palm Sunday & Egg Hunt – April 13, 10:15 AM

Good Friday Service – April 18, 7:30 PM

Easter Sunrise Service – April 20, 7:30 AM

Easter Sunday Service – April 20, 10:15 AM

Holy Humor Sunday – April 27, 10:15 AM

As we walk through this journey together, may we remember that Jesus, our Light, walks with us, too, filling our hearts with hope, peace, and joy.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Sooah



WORSHIP SCHEDULE **MARCH 2025**

Sunday, March 2, 2025

Transfiguration Sunday

10:15 am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Sermon: "We Do Not Lose Heart"

Holy Communion will be served

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Ash Wednesday

Scripture Readings: Matthew 4:1-11

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Not by Bread Alone"

Sunday, March 9, 2025

1st Sunday in Lent

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: John 6:25-40

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread of Life"

Sunday, March 16, 2025

2nd Sunday in Lent

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: Luke 13:18-21

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Growth"

Sunday, March 23, 2025

3rd Sunday in Lent

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: Matthew 6:9-13

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Each Day"

Sunday, March 30, 2025

4th Sunday in Lent

UMCOR Sunday

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: Luke 14:7-14

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Sharing"



WORSHIP SCHEDULE APRIL 2025

Sunday, April 6, 2025

5th Sunday in Lent

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: Luke 19:1-10

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Community"

Holy Communion will be served

Sunday, April 13, 2025

Passion/Palm Sunday

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: John 12:12-16; Luke 19:28-40

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for the Road"

Easter Egg Hunt (following the service)

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Maundy Thursday

Scripture Readings: Matthew 26:26-29

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Remembrance"

Friday, April 18, 2025

Good Friday

Scripture Readings Luke 23:26-56

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Uncertainty"

Sunday, April 20, 2025

Easter Sunday

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: John 20:11-18, 21:1-17

Sermon Series: Bread of Life

Sermon: "Bread for Feasting"

Sunday, April 27, 2025

2nd Sunday of Easter

Holy Humor Sunday

10:15am

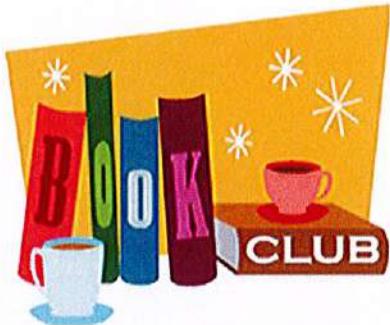
Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Readings: Psalm 150

Sermon: "The Joy of Praising the Lord"

CENTENARY UMC BOOK CLUB WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

All who are interested in reading books are cordially invited to join the **CUMC Book Club**. Meetings are held monthly (the SECOND FRIDAY of every month) from September through June at 12:00 noon at the Metuchen Diner.



January 2025 — The Paris Affair by Maureen Marshall
 February — The Maid by Nita Prose
 March — Mystery Guest by Nita Prose
 April — Everyone Here is Lying by Shari LaPena
 May — The Address by Fiona Davis
 June — Hour of the Witch by Chris Bohjalian
 July/August — Hillbilly Elery by JD Vance

The Club is always looking for new members. Whether you read slow or fast, or just want to join us for lunch and hear about the books, please come and join us! You may contact Ruth Lechelt (rslech@aol.com) or Nancy Rapp (nrapp190@comcast.net) if you are interested. All are welcome to bring their suggestions for books to read as we continue to schedule our meetings for the upcoming months.

LET'S REPLENISH!



Centenary continues its weekly collections of non-perishable food items to help "REPLENISH" (formerly the Middlesex County Food Network) make a dent in food insecurity!

Food collection at Centenary takes place on WEDNESDAYS and SUNDAYS from 9:30 a.m. – noon. The green REPLENISH collection bin is located at Centenary's front door; just drop off an item or two or more .

REPLENISH has provided a list of highest-need items that are on their "most wanted" list. They include:

- Canned fruit packed in juice, not syrup
- Canned vegetables packed in water, no salt
- Reduced sugar/no-added sugar cereals and snack foods
- Reduced/no-sugar nut butters and jams
- Canned tuna
- Low-salt canned beans or dried beans
- Rice and whole grains, packets 1-2 pound bags



"These healthy donations greatly assist our neighbors who may be managing one or more health issues," according to REPLENISH.

SANDWICH MAKING MINISTRY

Our next Sandwich Making Ministry will be on Thursday, March 13 and April 10, 2025

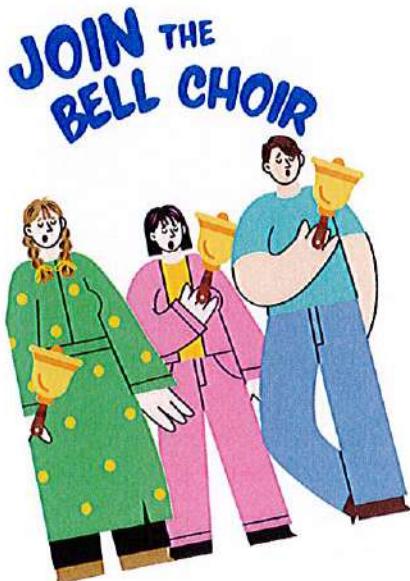
Sandwich Making Night brings a dedicated team together to prepare 250+ sandwiches to feed our hungry neighbors.

We are so thankful for the volunteers and donors who generously shared their time, presence, and gifts to make these acts of love possible. Let's continue to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world. We praise God for His goodness!

We also extend our deepest gratitude to our generous donors, whose support fuels our mission and helps us spread the love of Christ. Together, we are making a difference! Let's carry this momentum forward and continue to share goodwill and support with those in need. Join us in this fulfilling journey—your involvement matters and makes all the difference!



The sandwich ministry is held on the 2nd Thursday of every month. Together, let's spread love and feed the hungry. Contact Bob Carlson (rjcarl75@gmail.com) or Pastor Sooah (pastorsooah@gmail.com) to support Jesus' mission.



We're excited to bring back the Bell Choir, thanks to Ms. Alice Bennett! All ages are welcome—come and make joyful music with us!

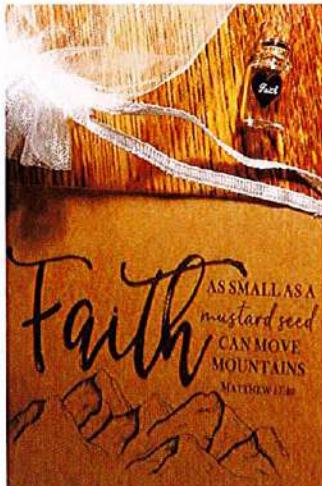
If you're interested, please let Brian (briancalabro@gmail.com) or Pastor Sooah (pastorsooah@sooah) know. We'd love to have you join!



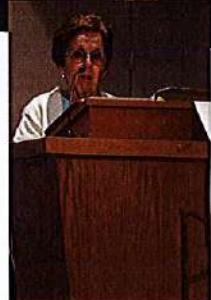
Pastor Sooah visited our long-time church member Cathy Savoia, who will be relocating to Maine to be closer to her family and friends. Cathy had been a teacher in the NJ school system and has taught Sunday School at Centenary.

We will dearly miss her, cherishing the friendships she shared, her caring heart for the children, and the wonderful meals she lovingly prepared for us.

Please keep Cathy and her family in your prayers as they begin this new chapter.



Centenary's young folks distributed a mustard seed (contained in a small glass vessel) and a card, with the verse "Faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains (Matthew 17:20)" to the congregation at its most recent worship service. Centenary's kids also led the congregation in the passing of the peace. Nancy Rapp served as Worship Assistant.





Prayer with and for one another is one of the greatest gifts of our faith. As you navigate life's stressors, struggles, and challenges, we want to support each other in prayer. This year, we will learn prayers in the Bible and pray by using these bible verses. We will also pray for each other, our congregation, and the world.

Our prayer group will gather first Tuesday of every month at 7 pm.

If you are interested in participating in our future meetings, please contact Shirley Kanchi at shirleykanchi@yahoo.com or Pastor Sooah at pastorsooah@gmail.com.



Our annual heart cookie decorating event was held on February 16th following the 10:15am Sunday Service. It was a fun time for fellowship, artistry and delicious cookie eating! Our Family Ministry Coordinator, Grace Manjourides, coordinated this annual event for the children and adults.



MISSIONS
UPDATEDIAPER DRIVE COLLECTS RECORD NUMBER OF DIAPERS,
WIPES FOR THE MAKER'S PLACE

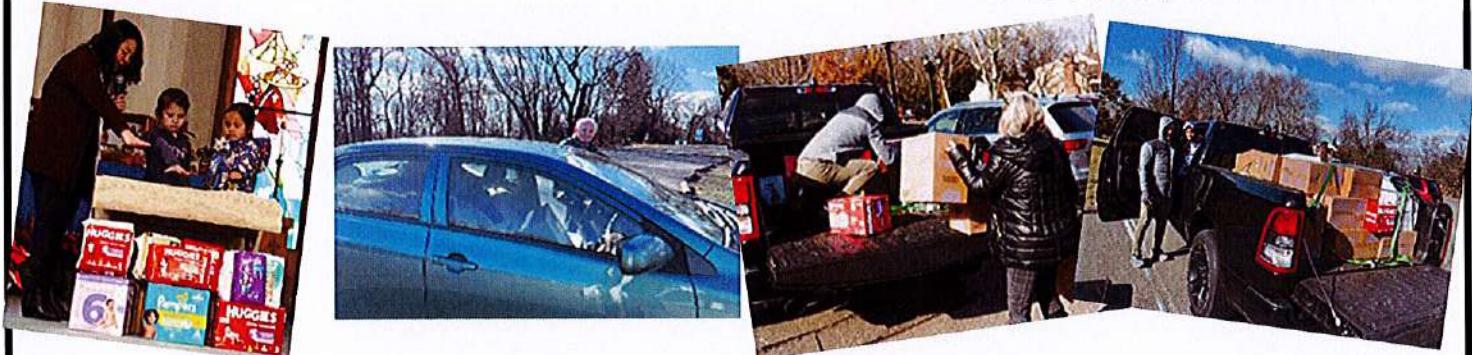
Bolstered by a very generous donation from the College Avenue Community Church of New Brunswick, Centenary collected a record number of diapers and wipes during its seventh annual Advent Diaper Drive for The Maker's Place, a United Methodist Hope Center in Trenton.

On Sunday, January 5th, after Pastor Sooah blessed the donations during our worship service, Centenary delivered 7,598 diapers and 4,192 wipes to Trinity United Methodist Church in Ewing Township, which serves as a diaper depot for The Maker's Place. Pastor Sooah expressed Centenary's deepest appreciation to Pastor Douglas Shepler and the congregation of College Avenue Community Church for their outstanding contribution of 5,143 diapers and 2,592 wipes to the drive.

Since its establishment in 2018 to address the high infant mortality rate in the Trenton area, The Maker's Place has distributed more than one million free diapers to families struggling to keep their infants clean, dry, and free from infection. Each month, The Maker's Place diaper depot distributes some 26,000 diapers to needy families from eight distribution locations in the Trenton vicinity.

Special thanks to everyone who donated diapers and wipes to this year's drive; to Se Hoon Oh and Vika Chala, for making their pickup truck available on short notice to deliver the diapers (and to their children, Sophia and Nikolas, who were a big help unloading the diapers at Trinity UMC); and to the volunteers who helped load the diapers into Se's vehicle and mine at Centenary.

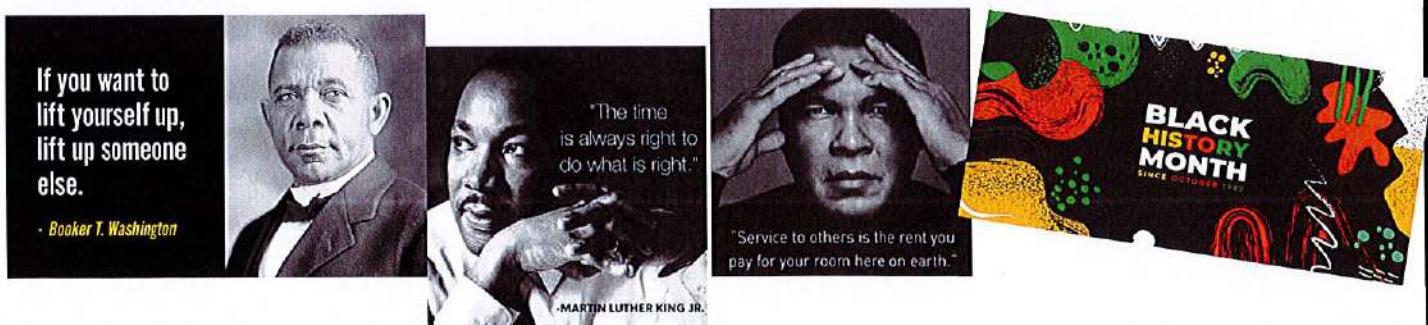
Bob Carlson, Missions Chairman



Centenary Celebrated Black History Month on Sunday, February 23, 2025

Bob Carlson's sermon, as guest speaker, titled "How the Bible was Used to Condemn and Justify Slavery."

Worship Assistant Pastor Sooah read scriptures from Exodus 6:1-8; Ephesians 6:5-9.



MISSIONS UPDATE

A Blessing Bag Mission Project

CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Centenary prepared 100 “Blessing Bags” to share hope and basic necessities with those in need. Each bag contained items like water bottles, snacks, gloves, and hand warmers — all conveniently packed in zip-lock bags.

Then on February 2nd, members came together to assemble these bags, and then distribute them to our congregation. That way, whenever they encounter someone who is homeless or in need, they can offer a Blessing Bag.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who had donated items for our Blessing Bag Mission Project! Your generosity is making a difference!

February's barrel offering was designated to It Takes a Borough (Metuchen).



For many years, Centenary has been a proud supporter of the Fucile Foundation, helping Metuchen families in urgent need. While the foundation closed in 2023, its mission lives on through It Takes a Borough, a new initiative that continues the legacy by hosting the beloved Fuce 5K and the Metuchen Cookie Walk—events that bring our community together to support neighbors facing hardship.

March Barrel Offering is designated to Breaking the Chain Through Education

April Barrel Offering is designated to Marisa Tufaro Foundation

Begin Your Lenten Journey – Ash Wednesday Soup for the Soul



Looking for a meaningful way to start Lent? Join us for Centenary's Ash Wednesday Soup for the Soul Service as we reflect, pray, and gather in community.

- Date: March 5th
- Time: 7:00 PM
- Location: Room 20

The service will include prayers, music, and the imposition of ashes as a symbol of repentance and renewal.

Afterward, stay for a warm soup supper and fellowship.

All are welcome—come begin this Lenten season with reflection, hope, and community.

Upcoming Lenten Bible Study

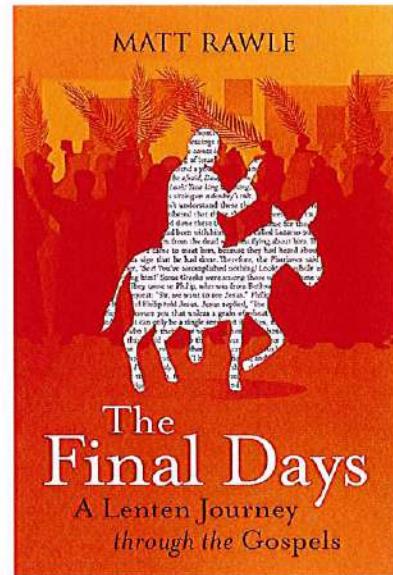
This year, we will be exploring The Final Days by Rev. Matt Rawle, a powerful study that walks us through the final moments of Jesus' earthly ministry by comparing the Gospel accounts.

Bob Carlson and I will be leading the study, which will take place on Wednesdays from March 12 to April 16. Each session will begin with a 10-12 minute video featuring Rev. Rawle, followed by a time of meaningful group discussion.

If you'd like to join us or need any assistance purchasing the book, please let me know by March 2 (pastorsooah@gmail.com)

I look forward to sharing this journey with you and growing together in faith!

Blessings, Pastor Sooah





Our Youth Group and their invited friends met at Centenary on Sunday, February 23, in Room 20 for a Ramen & Dumpling Party, provided by Pastor Sooah.

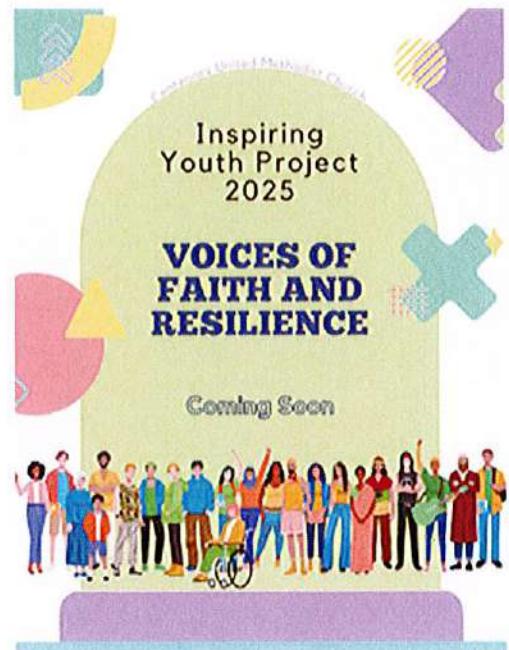
This year, we're launching the Inspiring Youth Project, a bold new initiative designed to give our youth the opportunity to meet local leaders who have overcome life's challenges and continue to make a positive impact in the community. Through these encounters, we hope to inspire, connect, and empower our youth while fostering friendships with other youth groups from local churches and houses of worship.

I'm incredibly grateful to our amazing team—John Wooding, Grace, Darla, and James—for their dedication to this effort! We currently plan to meet five times this year (March, May, July, September, and November) and encourage youth to invite their friends.

This upcoming youth meeting will be our first gathering to officially kick off the Inspiring Youth Project! We'll introduce the program and encourage our youth to invite their friends to be part of this exciting journey.

Looking forward to a fantastic time together! Let me know if you have any questions.

Blessings,
Pastor Sooah





**EASTER FLOWERS
2025 ORDER FORM**

PLEASE PRINT YOUR INFORMATION

NAME _____ PHONE _____

LILIES- 2 plants per order, \$16.00

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Number of orders _____ Amount paid _____ (check number _____ / envelope number _____)

TULIPS- assorted colors/ 2 plants per order, \$16.00

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Number of orders _____ Amount paid _____ (check number _____ / envelope number _____)

Payment is expected when the order is placed. Please write EASTER FLOWERS in the Memo section of your check. Your order can be mailed to the church office at 200 Hillside Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840 or placed in the offering plate on Sundays.

LAST DAY TO ORDER IS APRIL 16, 2025

Thank you for your order.

Ali Woodfield, Flower Chairperson

Phone number 732-692-3289

Join us indoors or livestreaming
every Sunday Worship Service
at 10:15AM



www.facebook.com/centenaryUMCMetuchen/live
YouTube: <https://tinyurl.com/centenaryworship>



If you have a request for prayer or a joy you would like to lift up, please send your requests to: prayercentenaryume@gmail.com
The requests will be passed along to Pastor Sooah. Please keep us updated on your requests.



Remember in your prayers: Jose (cousin's husband of Darla Downes); Howard Reenberg (friend of Tom Moyer); Wes Lanni's family (nephew of Beverly and Chuck Bell); Debbie Parker (niece of Mary Ellen Heim); Alber Chek (brother of Mary Ellen Heim); Vinny (friend of James Mojomick); Tom Moyer; family of Jim Taylor; Lester Heim, Jr. (son of Mary Ellen Heim); Carolee Szajko; Cathy Savoia; Steve Mosteller

We are thoughtfully updating our prayer request list in the bulletin and newsletter to better serve and support one another.

To keep our bulletin and newsletter meaningful and focused, we will be removing existing prayer requests unless we hear that you or your loved ones wish to keep them.

If you would like your prayer request to remain in the bulletin and newsletter, please let us know by submitting the prayer request form available in the Narthex area or by reaching out directly to Pastor Sooah at pastorsooah@gmail.com.

