

**CENTENARY
UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF IN-
TEREST:**

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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

SEPT/OCT 2023

Dear Centenary Friends and Families,

May God's grace and blessings embrace each one of you and your loved ones.

The summer at Centenary was filled with moments of joy and heartfelt gratitude.

In early June, we held our annual second Spring Healing Concert. Sixty-five members from our congregation gathered under the open sky, cherishing the divine gift of music, and finding peace and healing. A heartfelt thank you to all the dedicated volunteers and musicians, and to Centenary's choir, who poured their passion into this event. A special shout-out to our music director Brian, whose expertise and leadership made this concert a wonderful success.

In the final week of June, Centenary's Vacation Bible School flourished under the theme "God is Love." Over a span of three days, almost 40 children and teens, aided by the unwavering support of 27 volunteers, learned about God's boundless love. My heart swells with gratitude for every volunteer who served with such joy, making this year's VBS happen again! A special thanks to our family ministry coordinator Grace, whose leadership was a beacon for another huge success.

As the warm embrace of summer yields to the gentle touch of cooler breezes, September has arrived, and autumn is on the horizon. It signals the time for schools and businesses, and indeed all of us, to rejuvenate our daily lives and be ready for a new season.

I warmly invite each of you to join us at Centenary on the first Sunday after Labor Day, September 10th, to kick off the fall season with our "Welcome Back Sunday." On this special day, we'll have a "Blessing of the Backpacks" ceremony to bless our students embarking on their new school year. Following our service, we will come together for an ice cream social to strengthen our bonds of fellowship!

There is still more exciting news! On September 17th, we will begin our "Once a Month Youth Group." We humbly seek your prayers and support as we embark on this revitalized journey to enrich our youth ministry.

Be sure to stay tuned to our Facebook page and our worship announcements, as we will host a fall Bible study, and many fun family events throughout the season.

I look forward to seeing and welcoming each one of you on our "Welcome Back Sunday" on September 10th!

Cheerfully in Christ, Pastor Sooah



WORSHIP SCHEDULE SEPTEMBER 2023

Sunday, September 3, 2023

14th Sunday after Pentecost

9:30am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 16:21-28

Sermon: "Teaching Moment"

Holy Communion will be served

Sunday, September 10, 2023

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Welcome Back Sunday

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 18:15-20

Sermon: "Conflict Resolution"

Sunday, September 17, 2023

16th Sunday after Pentecost

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 18:21-35

Sermon: "What is Forgiveness?"

Sunday, September 24, 2023

17th Sunday after Pentecost

10:15am

Guest Preacher: Rev. Loraine Priestley-Smith

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 20:1-16

Sermon: "God's Rule"



WORSHIP SCHEDULE OCTOBER 2023

Sunday, October 1, 2023

18th Sunday after Pentecost World Communion Sunday International Fellowship

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 21:23-32

Sermon: "Call to be Uncomfortable"

Holy Communion will be served

Sunday, October 8, 2023

19th Sunday after Pentecost

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9

Sermon: "Thou Shalt Not Take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain"

Sunday, October 15, 2023

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Laity Sunday

10:15am

Speaker: James Mojomick

Scripture Lesson: 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

Sermon: "Hello, My Name is James"

Sunday, October 22, 2023

21st Sunday after Pentecost

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 22:15-22

Sermon: "What Does Money Tell Us Who We Are?"

Sunday, October 29, 2023

22nd Sunday after Pentecost

10:15am

Preacher: Rev. Sooah Na

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 22:34-46

Sermon: "The Loves"

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.



- September 2023—Switchboard Soldiers by Jennifer Chiaverini
- October — Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano
- November — Twelve Tribes of Hattie by Ayana Mathis
- December — Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese
- January 2024 — Just a Regular Boy by Catherine Ryan Hyde
- February — Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus
- March — The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O'Farrell
- April — Coming Home by Rosamunde Pilcher
- May — The Magic of Found Things by Maggie Dawson
- June — The Complicities by Stacy D'Erason

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!

We were in the midst of summer and the need to address food insecurity never abates. 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. On Wednesdays, the green REPLENISH collection bin is located at Centenary’s front door; just drop off an item or two or more (follow your GPS to 200 Hillside Avenue in Metuchen 08840)!



Centenary – “The Friendly Church On the Hill” is located at 200 Hillside Avenue, Metuchen, NJ. All are welcome!

SEPTEMBER MISSION BARREL OFFERING
WILL SUPPORT SANDWICH BAG MINISTRY



One of the exciting new local mission programs that was born during the Covid pandemic is the Sandwich Bag Ministry. This program, which helps people in the area with food insecurity issues, has grown significantly since it was established by New Dover United Methodist Church of Edison in 2020. The number of sandwiches distributed this year to hungry people in Elizabeth, Rahway, and Plainfield increased to 34,000, according to New Dover's Pastor Chuck Coblenz.

Centenary is pleased to partner with New Dover and Wesley United Methodist Church of South Plainfield, as well as other local faith groups and community organizations, in this collaborative ministry. Every Friday morning at 8 a.m., some 15 volunteers meet at New Dover to fill hundreds of sandwich bags with two beverages, fruit cup, a granola bar, cookies, snacks, and two sandwiches. These bags are then delivered to food pantries in Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Rahway for distribution to the hungry.

In addition to participating in this Friday morning activity, Centenary also holds a sandwich-making night at the church on the second Thursday of each month. The goal each month is 250 sandwiches.

Since its inception, the Sandwich Bag Ministry has been supported entirely by donations from our members and friends. The cost of this ministry has been driven up by inflation, and is now approximately \$2400 annually or about \$200 per month. This covers the cost of 21 loaves of bread each month, various luncheon meats including ham, turkey, bologna, and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, sandwich bags, and other miscellaneous items.

We thank all of the donors who have generously supported this ministry in the past. During the month of September, our mission barrel offerings will be designated for the Sandwich Bag Ministry. If you would like to help sponsor a sandwich-making night during the coming months, please put a check in the mission barrel during September, or mail it to the church office at 200 Hillside Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840. Write "Sandwich Bag Ministry" on the memo line so your gift will be properly credited.

Besides providing financial support, there are several other ways you can participate in the Sandwich Bag Ministry:

* You can help make sandwiches at one of our sandwich-making nights on the second Thursday of each month, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in Room 20. We need a minimum of six volunteers each month to make the sandwiches. We now have a pool of more than a dozen volunteers who have helped out at sandwich-making nights. The dates for upcoming sandwich-making nights the rest of this year are September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14.

* If you can't make it to the church for sandwich-making night, you are welcome to prepare sandwiches at home and drop them off at the church on any second Thursday of the month.

* Finally, volunteers are always welcome at New Dover UMC on Friday mornings at 8 a.m. to help assemble the sandwich bags for delivery to the food pantries.

If you would like to help in any of these ways, please contact Bob Carlson, Missions Chairman, for more information (call 612-289-9102 or email rjcarls75@gmail.com).



CENTENARY'S MISSION DOLLARS AT WORK

Centenary recently disbursed mission checks totaling more than one thousand dollars to two organizations. One check for \$694 was sent to The Maker's Place--the United Methodist Hope Center and diaper depot working to reduce the infant mortality rate in the Trenton area. The second check for \$359 went to The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), earmarked for refugee relief in Ukraine.

Our gift to The Maker's Place represented the proceeds from the "In Honor of Mom" fundraiser held last May for Mother's Day, plus mission barrel offerings received during the month of December when we conducted our annual diaper drive. This donation will enable The Maker's Place to buy infant formula and other needed items for struggling families in the Trenton area.

The check to UMCOR represented the donations and special gifts received during January/February when the Mission Barrel was designated for Ukrainian Refugee Relief. In late February, on the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that more than eight million Ukrainian refugees have fled to neighboring European countries, representing 18 percent of Ukraine's population. To see how UMCOR is using your gifts, Google "UMCOR Support for Ukraine."



Thank you for your continuing strong support of our Mission Barrel, which makes these gifts possible. Barrel offerings during the month of May supported Rise Against Hunger to help meet the costs associated with the meal packaging event that New Dover United Methodist Church in Edison hosted on May 20, 2023. More than 14 volunteers, consisting of members, family and friends from Centenary UMC participated in the Rise Against Hunger Meal Packaging Event during two shifts: 9-11am and 12-2pm.

The event was a hands-on international hunger relief program that coordinates assembly-line packaging of highly nutritious meals for needy third world countries. Community volunteers worked together to package meals comprised of rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables, and essential vitamins and minerals into bags. These meals are then distributed to people facing hunger around the world, especially throughout the schools. Thank you to the many volunteers who helped to make this mission possible.

JULY BARREL OFFERING BENEFITS FUCCILE FOUNDATION

Donations to our barrel offering during July will benefit the Fuccile Foundation, a Metuchen-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the service and support of local families affected by tragedy. The foundation was established to honor the memory of Metuchen resident Michael J.

Fuccile, who was stabbed to death by a mentally ill man on September 4, 2008 on his way to work at Merrill Lynch in Jersey City. His widow, Nancy, started the foundation as a way of paying forward the strong support she and her three young children received from the local community following the tragedy. The Fuccile Foundation's major fundraiser is the Fuce 5K Family Fun Run/Walk, held each year on Father's Day in Metuchen.



"GAME NIGHT" A FUN EVENT FOR ALL

On Saturday, April 29, 2023, Centenary held a "Game Night" which proved to be fun for "children of all ages." Board games, a craft table for kids, cornhole and a hot dog bar with snacks elicited smiles and laughs throughout the event. Thanks to Grace Manjourides, our Family Ministry Coordinator, for organizing this fun event for all ages!



Centenary – "The Friendly Church On the Hill" is located at 200 Hillside Avenue, Metuchen, NJ. All are welcome!



Happy Father's Day!

These young ones helped Centenary celebrate Mother's Day & Father's Day in a big way! Big smiles throughout when they delivered greetings to all the mothers, dads, grandparents, aunts and uncles of the families.

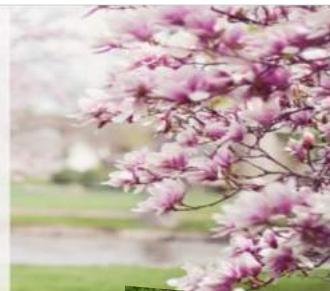


It was so wonderful to have the Rev. Loraine Priestley-Smith as guest preacher on Sunday, May 21, 2023. Rev. Priestley-Smith's inspiring message was "A Living Hope." James Mojomick led Children's Time. In Sunday School, the young ones talked about forgiveness, asking for forgiveness and learning how to forgive. To put that into practice, the kids made forgiveness flowers!



Rev. Gary Frieze as our guest preacher on Sunday, June 11, 2023, spoke on "A Passion for Compassion." Bob Carlson served as worship assistant and Shirley Kanchi led Children's Time during service.





Centenary Choir sang “Here I Am to Worship, How Great Is Our God, Good, Good Father” and the audience joined in on the last song “The Stand.”



Brian Calabro on the recorder
Ed Stern on the guitar
Trio singers: Sarah Kanchi, Emma Stern and Pastor Sooah



Sonia Kanchi on the violin played “Just As I Am.”



Linda Woodfield-Stern and Emma Stern sang a duet “For Good.”



Centenary Children Choir sang “This Little Light of Mine.”

A potluck lunch was enjoyed by all.



On Sunday, June 18, 2023, Centenary UMC celebrated our 2023 Graduates. Pastor Sooah blessed the graduates, who were honored with a gift certificate from Linda Woodfield-Stern, chair of the Centenary United Methodist Women group.



Carla A. Gray received her Bachelor's degree in Cognitive Psychology from Rutgers University, Newark Campus. Carla worked in the health care field throughout her college years and will continue her graduate studies in Health Care Management.



Juliana Martino received her Master's degree in Dance Education (with teacher certification for grades K-12) from Rutgers Graduate School of Education. She earned her Bachelors degree in Fine Arts in Dance from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts in 2022.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO CARLA AND JULIANA!
WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU!**



Participation from our members, children/youth and neighboring communities came together to celebrate Centenary's VBS held on June 27-29, 2023 from 6-8pm. This year's theme was "God is Love," with dancing, music, spiritual lessons, crafts, outdoor games and a glow-dance party at closing in our sanctuary. A pizza dinner, cupcakes and Italian ice were provided each evening. Thank you to Pastor Sooah and Grace Manjourides, our Family Ministry Coordinator, and the many volunteers who supported this successful event.







Our Family Fun Sunday was held on Sunday, July 30th, right after our worship service. It was a great opportunity for families to come together and enjoy some outdoor activities while sharing delicious food. We had a variety of games and activities for all ages!

To make the day even more special, we hosted a potluck brunch where everyone brought in their favorite dish to share. Family and friends joined in for a fun-filled day of community, laughter, and plenty of good food!





CENTENARY HOSTED FREE OUTDOOR MOVIE

The beloved Pixar classic “WALL-E” was shown on Centenary’s front lawn on Friday, August 25th, beginning at 7:30 p.m. This was a free event for all and complimentary popcorn and candy were provided.

WALL-E, short for Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-class, is the last robot left on Earth. He spends his days tidying up the planet, one piece of garbage at a time. But during 700 years, WALL-E has developed a personality, and he's more than a little lonely. Then he spots EVE, a sleek and shapely probe sent back to Earth on a scanning mission. Smitten WALL-E embarks on his greatest adventure yet when he follows EVE across the galaxy.



METUCHEN COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY ON THURSDAY AUGUST 31, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Metuchen CARES: Community Action for Recovery, Education, and Support will host a candlelight vigil in memory of all who have died from a substance use disorder, on the evening of Thursday August 31 at 7:00 PM, outside Borough Hall, 500 Main Street. The entire community is invited to gather in support of those who have lost loved ones to the disease of addiction and those who are presently fighting it. By recognizing the disease and understanding its consequences without judgment, we can fight the isolation and devastation that go hand in hand with addiction.

Cosponsoring the event are the Metuchen PBA (Local #60), the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi, Centenary United Methodist Church, the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen, Neve Shalom, New Hope Baptist Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Temple Emanu-El (Edison), Metuchen EMS, Metuchen Recreation and Senior Services, the Metuchen Public Library, the Metuchen Public Schools, and the Metuchen YMCA. Also joining the event will be the Metuchen High School Cheerleading and Football Teams and Girl Scout Troop 80240. Other local organizations, houses of worship, youth groups, and sports teams are invited. For more information or to become a sponsor write KLiss@me.com. Families with children in middle school, high school, and college are encouraged to attend.



We are excited to kick off the fall season with our annual Welcome Back Sunday on September 10, 2023. This year, we will be returning to our regular worship time of 10:15 am.

As part of our celebration, we will be offering special backpack blessings for children and youth as they start the new school year. We will also be starting our Sunday school year, with activities for all ages.

After the service, we invite you to join us for an ice cream social! This is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones, all while enjoying some delicious treats!

We hope you can join us on Welcome Back Sunday as we start the fall season off with a bang!

I would like to thank you all for your diligent prayers, cards and well wishes. Knowing how caring everyone is during this time positively impacts my recovery.
Kind regards, Linda Serentino



Prayer with and for one another is one of the greatest gifts of our faith. As you navigate life' stressors, struggles, and challenges, we want to support each other in prayer. This year, we will learn prayers in the Bible and pray for 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 joining this group, please let Pastor Sooah know (pastorsooah@gmail.com).



Future sessions have started from Tuesday, June 6, 2023 from 7:00-9:00 pm and running through Tuesday, September 12th, are held at Community Presbyterian Church, 75 Glenville Road, Edison, NJ 08817. You are encouraged to join on any week. The sessions are self-contained. You can register online at griefshare.org/groups/ or at a meeting in person. Please feel free to contact Ruth Lechelt at 908-227-6670 for additional details.

*Hello to all who visit,
Please know we are truly interested in Walking with you during this time of great emotional distress. You will find comfort (from those who have already lost a loved one), and friends (from those who are going through this season alongside of you), and an ear, (from those who are always willing to listen), and wisdom (from experts in the field of Grief as they share a great deal of information each week). Please feel free to contact me any time.*

*In Christ,
Michael Gabriel, Lead Facilitator
908-510-5753*

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



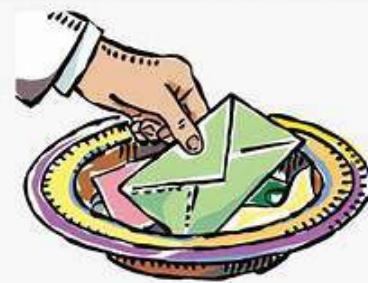
www.facebook.com/centenaryUMCMetuchen/live
[YouTube: https://tinyurl.com/centenaryworship](https://tinyurl.com/centenaryworship)



If you have a request for prayer, or a joy you would like to lift up, please send your requests to:
prayercentenaryumc@gmail.com

The requests will be passed along to Pastor Sooah. Please keep us updated on your requests.

Thank you everyone for sharing your time, talents, and treasures to support our ministry by serving through our church and our community. May we prayerfully offer our resources to spread God's abundant love, seeking first not our own comfort, but the work of God's kingdom on earth.



Remember in your prayers: Jessica Elil (daughter of Stella, co-worker of Peggy Martino; Kenny Fischer (cousin of Charles Giordano); Young Oh (father of Se Oh); John Ringler; Carole McCann (friend of Ruth Lechelt); people and animals affected by the wildfires in Canada and floods in Ukraine; Linda Serentino; John Lashley; family of Celeste Ramsey (mother-in-law of Isabel Pichardo); family of Ed (friend of Mojomick family); families of Sylvia Woodfield; family of Heather Vail (friend of Ruth Lechelt); Noah (family of the Dingles); Amelia (student at Edgar MS-Metuchen); Mary Ellen Heim; family of Sandy Baks; family of Rev. Dr. Hoo Sug Lee; family of Mala Roberts; family of Anne Beattie; parents of Lester Gesteland; mother of Asher Irfan; family of Mary Kari (aunt of Shirley Kanchi); family of Rowena Principe (sister of Odessa Delos Santos); family of Rev. Gary Frieze; family of Samantha Nu Nguyen Hogan (friend of the Tierno family); Shirley & Steve Mosteller; family of Lewis Hause; Monika Van Houten; Carolee Szajko; Patricia Thompson; family of Matthew Ferry (former teacher of Lily Tierno); Pvt. Brian Reppert (serving overseas and family friend of Ruth Lechelt); Miriam Dingle; Poonam Chauhan (sister-in-law of Mala Roberts); Arthur Manjourides (father of Paul Manjourides); Terri Sgambati (aunt of Nicole Tierno); Lori Loza; Debra Martin (daughter of Mary Ellen Heim); Lee Lehman; Lester Heim, Jr.; Laura Vasile (daughter of Rita Vasile); Portia Lashley.