



United Methodist Church of Summit

A Note From the Pastor

See, I am doing
a new thing!
Now it springs up;
do you not
perceive it?

Isaiah 43:19

Dear UMC Summit Members and Friends,

Fall is always a season of new beginnings—when the air turns crisp, the leaves remind us that change is part of God’s beautiful design, and our church family steps boldly into new ministries and renewed purpose. This year, we are embracing the words of Isaiah 43:19: *“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”* God is surely at

work among us, and our congregation is blossoming with opportunities to grow in faith, serve our community, and walk alongside one another in love and grace.

NEW! Mental Health Ministry

There are so many exciting new ministries and opportunities to grow in faith here at our church.

I am especially grateful to share the development of our new **Mental Health Ministry**, led by long-time member and candidate for ordained ministry, Dr. Alison Johnson. The new Mental Health Ministry program seeks to bring hope and healing to our community through addressing the mental health challenges so many are facing today through the lens of faith. This ministry will include:

- * A **Social Skills Group** for children ages 8–12, helping young people build healthy relationships and confidence.
- * Two **Lifeline Workshops** open to the wider community, addressing pressing issues facing youth and their families.
- * Our **Came to Believe** worship service designed with the recovery community in mind, but welcoming to all.
- * And, beginning in January 2026, a **support group for individuals and caregivers of aging parents**, offering care, prayer, and practical resources.

These ministries remind us that the church is not only a place of worship, but a sanctuary of support and compassion.

Children, Youth, and Families Ministry

Our **Children, Youth, and Families Ministry** program, led by Drew seminarian Carrie-Lee Farnham, is thriving with renewed energy this season. We are launching a new **Confirmation Class** cohort, helping young people claim their faith and become full participants in the life of the church. Our **Sunday School** room has been refreshed with new arrangements and resources to create a welcoming, engaging environment for learning. Families can look forward to exciting new events throughout the year, and our **Youth Group** is preparing for a robust calendar of activities that nurture friendships and deepen discipleship.

Music Ministry

We continue to be blessed with a vibrant **Music Ministry** program, led by our talented, long-time Music Director, Joanne Teubner-Prussak, which offers many ways to lift our voices and instruments to the glory of God. This includes our **Chancel Choir**, **Bell Choir**, **Contemporary Ensemble**, and talented **Instrumentalists** who enrich our worship life week after week.

Fall Outreach and Hospitality

As always, fall brings opportunities for outreach, fellowship, and celebration. Mark your calendars for these special Sundays and events:

Kick-Off Sunday, September 14th – Worship, picnic, and a petting zoo for the whole family!

Shine a Light for Climate Justice, September 21st – With guest preacher Rev. Victor Peterson, we will join with faith communities in our area and around the world to shine a light for Creation.

World Communion Sunday, October 5th – Joining hands with Christians across the globe at Christ's table.

Clothing Rummage Sale, October 19th – Extending hospitality and care to our neighbors through low-cost clothing, accessories, and shoes.

Welcoming Our New Intern

We are delighted to welcome **Daniel Faniyan**, our new Drew Seminary Intern, who will bring fresh gifts and perspective to our ministry team. Please take a moment to greet Daniel and encourage him as he begins this journey with us. Please see Daniel's biography later on in this edition of the newsletter.

Senior Affordable Housing Project

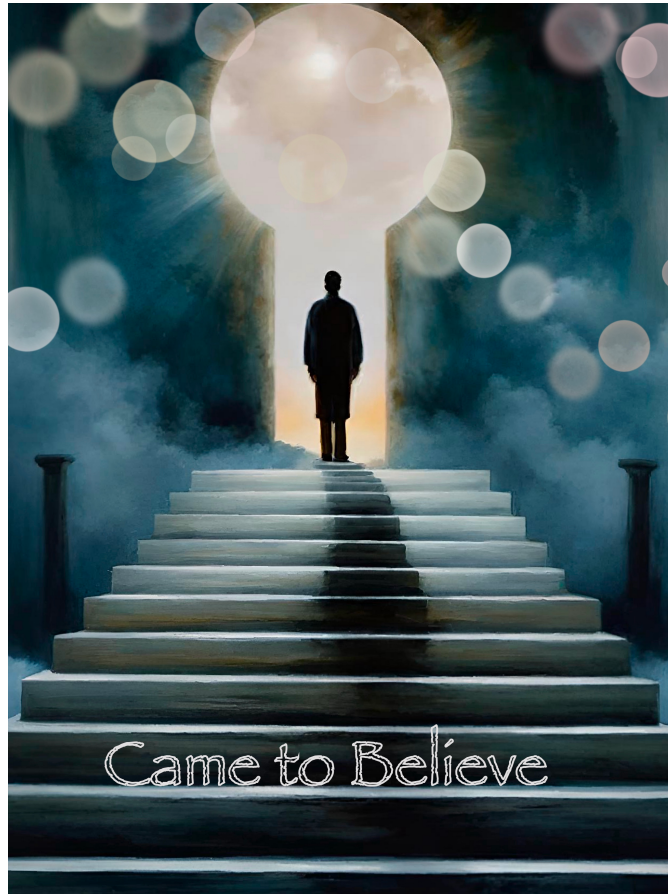
Finally, many of you know about our new **Senior Affordable Housing Project**. This ministry has been widely praised in the community as a sign of hope and hospitality. At the same time, some among us are wrestling with the change it brings. This, too, is part of our faith journey—learning to embrace God's new thing, even when it stretches us beyond our comfort zones. As Paul reminds us in Romans 12:2: *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* Together, let us pray for open hearts, trusting that God will use this project to bless our neighbors and our church alike.

Friends, I am filled with gratitude for the ways in which the Holy Spirit is moving among us this season. Let us enter this fall with courage, curiosity, and compassion, knowing that Christ is leading us forward.

With joy in Christ,

Pastor Laura

Upcoming Events and Announcements



"CAME TO BELIEVE" WORSHIP SERVICE SEPTEMBER 7th, OCTOBER 5th @5:30PM REEVES CHAPEL

**For People in Recovery, Their Friends and Family
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SUMMIT**

908-277-1700

Office@umcsummit.org

The Came to Believe Service: A Worship Experience of Hope and Healing

First Sunday of Each Month | 5:30 PM | Summit United Methodist Church

You are warmly invited to **The Came to Believe Service**, held on the first Sunday of every

month at 5:30 PM at Summit United Methodist Church. This special worship experience is open to all—individuals in recovery, their families and friends, and anyone seeking spiritual renewal or growth.

Came to Believe is a Christian service that thoughtfully integrates Methodist theology with the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps, offering a powerful message of grace, transformation, and hope. Whether you are walking the path of recovery, supporting a loved one, or exploring your own faith journey, this service welcomes you just as you are. Rooted in compassion and honesty, Came to Believe creates a sacred space for healing, connection, and spiritual discovery. Come join us—whoever you are, wherever you've been—and come to believe in what's possible through faith in a loving Creator.

Please join us on the first Sunday of every month in the UMC Chapel located on Deforest Avenue.

The service starts at 5:30p.m. We provide light refreshments.



Fall Kickoff! Next Sunday, September 14th - Starting at 10:30AM

Worship, Picnic, and PETTING ZOO!

Join us as we launch a new season of worship, community, and service! Whether you're new to the area, returning after a break, or just looking for a fresh start, Kickoff Sunday is the perfect time to come and see what our church is all about. We'll have joyful worship, engaging programs for all ages, and a special fellowship celebration after the service - we will have our annual picnic and **NEW THIS YEAR - A PETTING ZOO FOR THE KIDS AND KIDS AT HEART!** All are welcome.

Sunday School LESSON PLANS

SEPTEMBER

- 14 Adam & Eve
- 21 Noah
- 28 Tower of Babel

OCTOBER

- 5 David
- 12 Solomon
- 19 Josiah
- 26 Jesus, King of Kings

NOVEMBER

- 2 Psalm 150
- 9 David Dancing Before the Ark
- 16 The Valley of Praise
- 23 **Student Sunday**
- 30 **Christmas Pageant Practice**

DECEMBER

- 7 **Hanging of Greens**
- 14 Journey to Bethlehem
- 21 **Christmas Pageant**
- 24 **Christmas Eve**
- 28 **Worship Service**

JANUARY

- 4 **Worship Service**
- 11 Baptism of the Lord
- 18 Souper Bowl of Caring
- 25 Jesus Begins His Ministry

FEBRUARY

- 1 The Talents
- 8 The Good Samaritan
- 15 Souper Bowl of Caring Count
- 22 Jesus Says No To Temptation

MARCH

- 1 **Easter Pageant Practice**
- 8 **Pageant Practice**
- 15 The Last Supper
- 22 Peter's Denial
- 29 **Pageant Practice**

APRIL

- 5 **Easter**
- 12 Jesus & Thomas
- 19 Breakfast on the Beach
- 26 The Great Commission

MAY

- 3 Jeremiah
- 10 Timothy
- 17 Mary & Martha
- 24 Pentecost
- 31 Spiritual Gifts

JUNE

- 7 **Education Sunday**

Family Christmas Eve Service

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Sunday School Kicks-Off September 14th, 10:45AM

Join us as we kick-off an exciting year of learning in our Sunday School program. Children elementary aged begin in worship at 10:30AM and are dismissed to Sunday School with Ms. Carrie after the Children's Sermon. This year we have added some exciting new areas to our Sunday School room: a Bible dress and play area, a new Bible story felt board, a new puppet theater, and a new Bible sensory table! Come check them out starting September 14th, located on the second floor of the Education building. If you have any questions please contact Children, Youth, and Families Minister Carrie-Lee Farnham at:

CYFMinister@umcsummit.org

SOCIAL SKILLS GROUP

FOR AGES 8–12



**LED BY DR. ALISON JOHNSON,
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST**

**SUNDAYS 9:15–10:15 AM STARTING SEPTEMBER
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**LOCATION: 17 KENT PLACE BOULEVARD, SUMMIT, NJ
CONTACT: 908-277-1700**

Social Skills Group for Kids Ages 8–12 Starting September 21st: 9:15AM-10:15AM in the Reeves Chapel

We're excited to invite families—both from our church and the wider community—to a brand new Social Skills Group for children ages 8 to 12, beginning September 21st. The group will meet every Sunday from 9:15 to 10:15 AM, and it's completely free of charge. The groups will be led by Dr. Alison Johnson, a licensed psychologist with years of experience supporting children and families. This group offers a safe and welcoming space where kids can build confidence, practice communication, strengthen emotional awareness, and grow friendships. In the wake of the social disruptions caused by COVID, many children are still finding their way back to connection, and this group is designed to help them do just that. We encourage you to spread the word—this group is open to any family, not just church members. To learn more, give our church office a call at 908-277-1700. We'd love to see your child there!



NEW: "Come to the Table" Small Group, Sundays after Church

Every Sunday, there will be an extra table set up during Coffee Hour for those who want to dig deeper into God's Word. We are calling this small group "Come to the Table" and you can grab some refreshments and join in conversation and fellowship about the day's Scripture readings and sermon topics. This is a "self led" group. There is no sign-up or commitment to join this group, just COME TO THE TABLE! All are welcome.



Fridays @ 11AM in the Chapel

YogaFaith classes are BACK! Classes meet in the Chapel on Friday mornings at 11AM. All levels are welcome! Join us as we stretch our faith as we stretch our bodies! Suggested donation of \$10 per class.



Rummage Sale - October 18th, 10AM-3PM Clothing ONLY

Our **Rummage Sale** will take place on October 18th in the Social Hall from 10:00am to 3:00pm. This rummage sale will feature clothing, including jewelry and accessories. There is a special need in our community for infant and toddler apparel. (Please no appliances, furniture, kids' toys, etc.) Collection of clothing items will begin on August 1st and will continue until October 13th. Please see Faye Cunningham, Debbi Picorale or Kim Goldman for further information.

NEW! Mental Health Ministry



The Mental Health Ministry at Summit United Methodist Church was born out of a growing awareness that our community is struggling with rising levels of anxiety, depression, addiction, and loneliness. We recognized that many people feel disconnected, fearful about the future, and unsure where to turn for support. The church

wanted to respond to these needs faithfully and compassionately, creating a space where people could find healing, connection, and hope. Our mission is rooted in the conviction that mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being are essential to the abundant life God desires for all people. At its heart, the ministry is committed to inclusion, belonging, compassion, and practical support—meeting people where they are and walking with them in community.

The ministry now offers a variety of programs: Came to Believe, a monthly worship service designed especially for people in recovery; a Social Skills Group for children to learn and practice healthy ways of relating; the Life Line Workshop Series, which provides practical tools and conversations for families navigating life's challenges; and a Support Group for Caregivers of Aging Parents, offering encouragement and guidance for those carrying the weight of care (scheduled to start in January 2026). These programs reflect our vision to be a church where mental health is not a stigma but a shared commitment, and where every person is valued and supported. Looking ahead, we see this ministry expanding into a broader Wellness Mission—a place that integrates faith, mental health, and community life in ways that can powerfully transform the lives of those around us.

I am Dr. Alison Johnson, a licensed psychologist and Mental Health Minister at Summit UMC. For over 33 years I have directed Summit Psychological Services, where I specialize in working with children, teens, and young people, as well as with individuals and families struggling with addictive behaviors. This calling—integrating professional expertise with the compassion of faith—has shaped my life's work. I feel deeply excited about bringing these gifts into the church setting, helping to create a ministry that honors the wholeness of body, mind, and spirit. I believe God has prepared us for this moment, and I am humbled and energized to lead a ministry that can make such a profound difference in people's lives.

If you would like more information or to sign-up for a particular group or event, please contact me at:

MHMinister@umcsummit.org

Kindly,

Alison Johnson

SOCIAL SKILLS GROUP

FOR AGES 8–12



**LED BY DR. ALISON JOHNSON,
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST**

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Summit United Methodist Church
On the corner of Kent Place & Deforest Ave.
Lifeline Mental Health Series
parenting siblings!



Sunday October 19th, 3PM
Led by Dr. Alison Johnson
Mental Health Minister
All Community Members Invited
Free Pizza to Follow
Free Babysitting
MHMinister@umcsummit.org

Introducing The Life Line – A Free Community Workshop on Raising Siblings

Sunday October 19th | 3:00 PM | Summit United Methodist Church

We are excited to continue **The Life Line**, a ministry of Summit United Methodist Church offering free, practical workshops for all members of the community—whether you’re connected to a faith tradition or not. These gatherings are designed to offer support, insight, and connection around some of the most important and challenging aspects of family life.

Our first Life Line event, “Raising Siblings,” will take place on Sunday October 19th, at 3:00 PM. This free workshop will be led by Dr. Alison Johnson, a licensed psychologist with extensive experience working with children and families. The workshop will explore the often-overlooked truth that siblings don’t come into the world knowing how to get along. They may share a home and family, but the skills to live well together—communication, cooperation, conflict resolution—must be taught, guided, and nurtured by caring adults.

Parents and caregivers will come away with practical strategies, fresh insight, and encouragement for the journey of raising siblings who grow not just side by side, but together. The afternoon will end with a free pizza supper for all attendees—a time to connect, share, and build community.

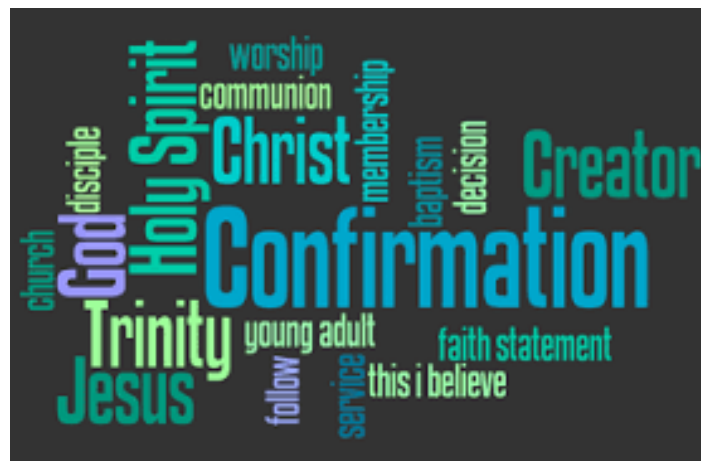
All are welcome. There’s no cost to attend. To learn more, call the church office at 908-277-1700. We’d love to have you join.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Update



Grace and Peace Friends,

As we look ahead to the coming school year, we're excited to share a few important updates from Children, Youth, and Family Ministry.



Confirmation Classes This Fall

This fall, we'll be offering Confirmation classes for middle and high school students who have not yet been confirmed. Confirmation is a meaningful time to explore faith more deeply, ask questions, and take the next step in your spiritual journey.



Sunday School Volunteer Opportunity

Training Luncheon Sunday, September 7th, 11:30AM-12:30PM

This September we are looking for volunteers to assist in our Sunday School classroom during the 10:30AM worship service. To comply with our Safe Sanctuaries guidelines, we need a second adult to be present during Sunday School sessions. Volunteers are asked to commit to at least one Sunday per semester (September-December and February-May), providing a safe and supportive environment for our children. To help everyone feel prepared, we will hold a **Volunteer Training on Sunday, September 7th**, after worship. During this session, you can sign up for the Sundays that best work for you and receive a brief overview of the year's lesson plans. If you're interested in volunteering or want more information, please don't hesitate to reach out—I'd love to connect with you!



Ignite Conference 2025

On Saturday, October 11, our Confirmation Class will be heading to IGNITE at the Wildwood Convention Center for an incredible day together — and we want all youth in grades 6–12 to join us!

IGNITE is a high-impact, life-changing event featuring high-energy worship with powerful bands, relevant and engaging messages from nationally and locally known speakers, interactive exhibits, and inspiring activities led by dynamic leaders. You'll have the chance to connect with God, grow in your faith, and build community with more than 2,000 young people from across the region.

If you're planning to attend, please use this link: <https://forms.gle/Dyd5mRB7qvwACCzq5>. You can also let Ms. Carrie-Lee know in person or by emailing cyfminister@umcsummit.org.

Thank you for continuing to support our ministry and the young people we serve.

In Christ,

Carrie-Lee
Children, Youth, and Family Minister
CYFMinister@umcsummit.org

FAMILY MINISTRY **EVENTS**

SEPT.
14 10:30 AM - 2 PM:
Homecoming Sunday

DEC.
6 10 AM - 4 PM:
Cookie Walk

DEC.
7 10:30 AM - 3 PM:
Hanging of Greens
& Talent Show

DEC.
14 3 PM:
Christmas Concert

DEC.
21 11:30 AM:
Christmas Caroling

DEC.
24 5 PM:
Family Christmas Eve
Service

FEB.
18 7:30 PM:
Ash Wed. Service *

FEB.
25 6 PM:
Lent Soup Suppers Start

MARCH
25 6 PM:
Last Soup Supper

MARCH
29 7:30 PM:
Easter Egg Stuffing

APRIL
2 7:30 PM:
Maundy Thurs. Service *

APRIL
3 7:30 PM:
Good Friday Service *

APRIL
5 10:30 AM:
Easter Service

JUNE
14 10:30 AM:
Music Ministry Sunday

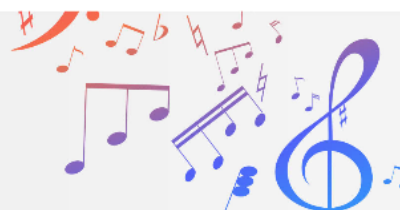
*** IN THE CHAPEL**

Music Ministry Updates



United Methodist
Church of Summit

MUSIC MINISTRY



"Let Us Make A Mighty Sound!
Let Our Choirs In Praise Resound!"

As we begin our Fall season we ask the Lord's blessing on our music of praise.
This is a great time to join a choir or ensemble as we lift our anthems of grace.

Our Chancel Choir will begin the season with rehearsals beginning on Saturday, September 6 at 1:00 p.m. and additional preparation on Sunday, September 7 at 9:30 a.m. We are preparing for Kick-Off Sunday, September 14.

Our Bell Choir will resume rehearsals on Saturday, September 20 at 12:00 and on Sunday, September 21 at 10:00 a.m. Come and ring!

Our Contemporary Ensemble will continue rehearsals on Saturday at 12:30 and on Communion Sundays at 9:15 a.m. as we share praise during Communion.

Our Singing Believer Family Choir will meet on Sunday, September 21 at 11:45 following Coffee Hour. We share our voices of the church each Sunday morning.

This is our greatest joy, to unite our voices and instruments of praise.

WELCOME ALL MUSIC MAKERS!!

Come and share your musical gifts and enrich your faith with your Church Family!

Chancel Choir

It is a joy to work together and lift our voices in praise. Our Chancel Choir rehearses on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. and Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in preparation for worship. Come before His presence with singing and sing joyful songs to the Lord! The Chancel Choir shares an anthem each Sunday as well as leading the congregation in song. Come and share the inspiration of singing with your brothers and sisters in Christ!

Bell Choir

Calling all bell ringers!! Making a joyful sound is the mission of our Bell Choir. Come and ring Handbells and Handchimes with your church friends. Rehearsals are on Saturdays at 12:00 and on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. Come and ring with our Church Family.

Singing Believers Family Choir

All children, youth and adults are invited to sing the songs of the church. Let us share the light of Christ through music. Rehearsals are on Sunday mornings at 11:45 a.m. in the Music

Room. Come and share the joyous songs of Christ's church.

Contemporary Ensemble

Our Contemporary Ensemble shares music for Holy Communion each month. The ensemble prepares music from the contemporary hymnal "Worship and Song". Rehearsals are on Saturdays at 12:30 and on Communion Sundays at 9:15 a.m. All singers and instrumentalists are welcome to praise and make music to the Lord during the sacred time of the Lord's Supper.

With thanks to all the members of our choirs and instrumentalists who lift their music in praise each Sunday.

SINGING BELIEVERS

Austin Bogle
 Brooke Bogle
 Zoe Bogle
 Juliet Steele
 Lucas Steele

HANDBELL CHOIR

Yejin Baek
 Karen Berry
 Sarah Daniel
 Carrie-Lee Farnham
 Ximenita Gonzalez
 Waveny Hall
 Deanna Hoffman
 Neil Johnson
 Brett Kendall
 Emily LaJeunesse
 Jayme LaJeunesse
 Parker LaJeunesse
 William Teubner
 Susan Woolever

**VOCAL & INSTRUMENTAL
SOLOISTS**

Ximenita Gonzalez, *Mezzo Soprano*
 Adelmo Guidarelli, *Baritone*
 Latonia Hall, *Soprano*
 Jesse Reyes, *Guitar*
 Lou Steele, *Tenor*
 Perri Sussman, *Soprano*
 William Teubner, *Trumpet*

CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

Beverly Alexis
 Carrie-Lee Farnham
 Ximenita Gonzalez
 Latonia Hall
 Neil Johnson
 Brett Kendall
 Emily LaJeunesse
 Jayme LaJeunesse
 Parker LaJeunesse
 Lindsay Ruotolo
 William Teubner

CHANCEL CHOIR**Soprano**

Yejin Baek
 Carrie-Lee Farnham
 Latonia Hall
 Emily LaJeunesse
 Lindsay Ruotolo
 Perri Sussman

Alto

Beverly Alexis
 Karen Berry
 Ximenita Gonzalez
 Susan Woolever

Tenor

Parker LaJeunesse
 William Teubner

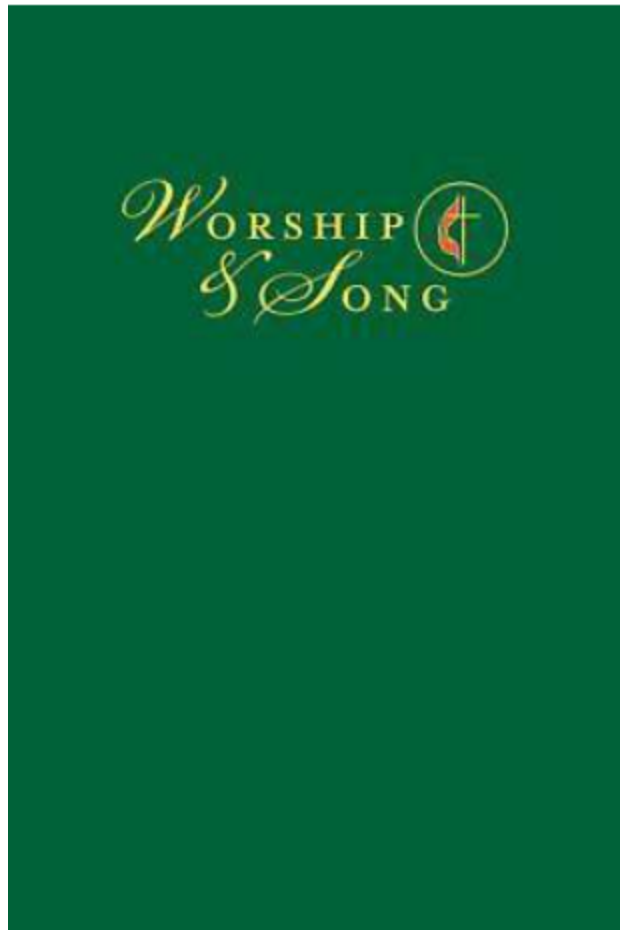
Bass

William Glancy
 Adelmo Guidarelli
 Neil Johnson
 Brett Kendall
 Jayme LaJeunesse

With much love,

JoAnne Teubner Prussak
 Director of Music

I can be reached through the office number: 908-277-1700, or email:
 Office@umcsummit.org



NEW Hymnals! Coming Soon!

The United Methodist Church of Summit is hoping to refresh our worship experience with new *“Worship and Song”* hymn books that will serve our congregation for years to come. These updated books will enhance our singing and help us continue lifting our voices in praise together. We invite you to support this effort by making a donation toward the purchase of the new hymnals. Any amount is appreciated and will go directly toward the cost of the books. (\$15 each) You can give through our regular offering (please mark it “Hymn Books”) or donate online through our church website. Thank you for helping us make a joyful noise to the Lord!

Updates from the UMC Summit Finance Committee



Did you know you can support the ministries of our church through **online giving**? It's a simple, safe, and convenient way to give—whether you're at home, traveling, or prefer a paperless option. Your faithful generosity helps sustain our worship, outreach, and care ministries year-round.

To give online, visit [Our Online Giving Page HERE](#) or use the text to give number in the bulletin. Thank you for your continued support as together we do God's work in the world!

—The Finance Committee

Updates from the UMC Green Team



“The world sings of an infinite Love: how can we fail to take care of it?”

– Pope Francis, Laudate Deum

**JOIN THE UMC OF SUMMIT THIS FALL FOR OUR
ANNUAL CREATION SERIES
MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SUNDAY SEPTEMBER
21st - "Shine A Light" Sunday!!**

WHY

In a time when climate denial, corporate greed and political inaction threaten our communities and future, we gather not in despair but in prophetic defiance and faithful hope.

It's a moral imperative for people of faith and spirit to come together to shine a light that cannot be ignored. We are building a constellation of courage for climate justice all across the country.

WHO

People of all faiths (and no faiths) interested in climate justice, wanting to take action. From seasoned activists to first timers – all are invited! Join GreenFaith, United Church of Christ, Third Act, Fossil Free Media and others.

WHAT

Sun Day: Faiths for Climate Justice. A weekend of sacred action rooted in justice, spirit, and community. Shining our light for climate justice. Some ideas: prayer vigils, pilgrimages, sitting meditation, teach-ins, parades, joyful picnics, solar panel house tours, hanging a green lantern at your congregation, municipal building, or home. Each local group designs their own

event, with support from GreenFaith, as needed.

WHERE

New Jersey communities, joining a nationwide celebration and mobilization.

WHEN

Friday September 19 – Sunday September 21, 2025

Would you like to help the Green Team plan this event? Please contact Bill Glancy, Green Team Chair, for more information!

Greater NJ UMC Updates



**ATTENTION ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS
MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

Charge/Church Conference Date: **October 6, 2025**

Charge/Church Conference Time: **7:30 PM**

Method of the charge/church conference (in-person or zoom based on pastor's suggestion): **In Person**

SPRC meeting information: **30 minutes prior to the charge/church conference and is the same method as the charge/church conference.**

Presiding Elder: **District Superintendent Williams**

Charge Conference paperwork has a new deadline!

Attention Chairpersons!! Charge Conference paperwork is now due September 30 or two weeks before your church's Charge Conference, whichever date is sooner. For more

information please visit [2025 Charge Conference | United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey](#).

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Join us in celebrating with those who have birthdays and anniversaries
this month!

Click here for our [September](#) and [October](#) birthdays and anniversaries!

The United Methodist Church of Summit
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