



# **D.R.I.V.E.**

## ***MOMENTUM FOR LIFE***

**The First United Methodist Church**  
**103 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755**  
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**Oakhurst.umchurches.org**

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CCLI #1588788

***The First United Methodist Church of Oakhurst  
Is a community of faith committed to Christ,  
seeking to learn the needs of our members,  
friends, and neighbors, and responding with Christian love.***

# Epiphany Sunday

January 7, 2024

9:30 a.m.

\*Congregation is invited to rise if able and comfortable.

Readings in **BOLD** are to be read in unison.

**Hymnals: UMH is Blue -- TFWS is Black -- W&S is Green**

Please note that this service is being recorded and viewed on social media.

## **WE GATHER**

PRELUDE

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHT OF CHRIST ENTERS OUR WORLD

UMH 220, refrain

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

**Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Star-flinging God, whose light dances across eternity,

**dazzle us into your presence this new year.**

Light-bearing Jesus, shine a pathway of new opportunities,

**illuminating our journey of discipleship.**

Radiant Spirit, disturb our dreams with unfamiliar wisdom,

**revealing to us what is possible, but not yet present.**

\*CAROL OF PRAISE

*The First Noel*

UMH 245, vs. 1-3

CENTERING PRAYER

**God of the stars, the heavens, the planets and their orbits; you sent a star to guide the Magi on their journey to the Christ Child. Send your star to guide us on journeys of faith. Give us the perseverance and courage to seek out and approach you wherever you are to be found. Grant us the vision and understanding to see and recognize you whenever we might meet you. Gift us the grace and generosity to respond freely and fully whatever you might ask of us. We pray this all in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem whom we come to worship this day. Amen.**

ANTHEM

*Entertain the Angels*

Sorenson

## **PROCLAIMING THE WORD**

GOSPEL LESSON

*Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12*

Pew Bible NT 2

For the Word of God in Scripture.

For the Word of God among us.

For the Word of God within us.

**Thanks Be To God!**

\*CAROL OF RESPONSE

*We Three Kings*

UMH 254, vs. 1-3

\*PSALTER

*Psalms 121*

UMH 844

SERMON

Rev. Jill Hubbard-Smith

*Momentum for Life: Devotion to God*

## **WE RESPOND**

SHARING OUR PRAYERS...

During this time, you are invited to name your prayers for the congregation.

After each prayer request, the congregation will respond...

***Lord, Hear Our Prayer***

PRAYERS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Farquhar

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give out thanks and praise.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

...And so, with your people on earth and all the company of  
heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Farquhar

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might.**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blest is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

#### CONSECRATION

...as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

#### MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Farquhar

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

#### BLESSING

...we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed  
by his blood.

#### AMEN

Farquhar

**Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

#### SHARING THE BREAD OF LIFE AND THE CUP OF SALVATION

The invitation to share God's covenant love through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ is extended to all. Come and be filled with the body and blood of Christ, knowing you are beloved and rooted in that love as you go forth to love all God's children. We will serve by **intinction**. You are invited to come by the center aisle, receive a piece of the bread, dip it into the cup, and partake. Return to your seats by the side aisles. You are invited to reflect in song as all are being served. There are gluten free bread and juice available.

#### HYMN DURING COMMUNION

UMH 640 Take Our Bread

UMH 641 Fill My Cup, Lord

#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery  
in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we  
may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to  
give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ  
our Lord. Amen.**

## OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Offering plates are available at each door as you depart.

You may also give online or by mail to the church office.

## CONCECRATION OF OUR 2024 LEADERSHIP

\*PRESENTATION      *The First Noel*      UMH 245, vs. 5

**Then entered in those Wise Men three,  
full reverently upon the knee, and offered there,  
in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**As the Magi brought gifts to the Christ Child, today we  
offer the gifts of ourselves and our resources to the  
newborn baby. Bless these humble offerings, that they  
may draw others to a deeper awareness of your presence  
in each of their life journeys. Amen.**

\*CAROL OF DEDICATION      *Sing We Now of Christmas*      UMH 237

\*SENDING FORTH

\*LIGHT OF CHRIST LEADS US INTO THE WORLD

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel*      UMH 204

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.**

\*POSTLUDE

*Jill and Garry invite you to the parsonage  
for refreshments and fellowship.  
102 Pear Street, Oakhurst*

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***Our Service of Worship Has Ended  
Our Worship Through Service Begins***

### **ALTAR FLOWERS:**

Given in loving memory of Russell Danielson by Randy, Ron, Jeff,  
Scott, Russel, & Aldo.

Given by Caroline Chesbro in loving memory of her dear friend,  
Catherine DuPree.

## Words of Welcome

*Welcome to this service of worship here at the First UMC of Oakhurst. We pray you have experienced the presence and fellowship of the Divine. If we can be of service to you in any way, please speak with Pastor Jill, an usher, or any of our members. If you are looking for a church to call home, please consider joining this community, where we help each other grow in faith, love, and service.*

## For Your Information

- There are **hearing devices** to assist you to experience the service more clearly with our streaming team in the rear of the sanctuary. Feel free to pick one up.
- A **rocking chair** is available for the comfort of parent and baby in the rear of the sanctuary, behind the pews.
- To access the **restrooms**, please exit the side door to the right of the lectern/chancel area. In the hall, make a left into Fellowship Hall and follow the signs.
- There are **infant changing tables** available in the restrooms.

## Our Leadership Team Serving Us This Morning

**ACOLYTE:** Robert Scott  
**COUNTERS:** Patty Aria, Abby DiNapoli, Judy Gorra  
**USHER:** Kitty Amato  
**GREETER:** Melody Ragle  
**LAY READER:** Barbara Gruezke

## Announcements

**LYDIA CIRCLE** will have their meeting and pledge service on January 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m., in Wesley Hall.

**MERCY CENTER** is looking for the following items: canned chicken, canned vegetables, dried herbs, dried fruit, peanut butter, whole grain pasta, canned tomatoes, coffee, snacks, & canned beans. Please place all donations in the church foyer.



## **This Week we hold in**

### **Prayer...**

Donna Hulse (Care One, Wall)

**Our Homebound:** David Miller (Jersey Shore Center), Jean Gillette, Virginia Haydu, Bob Sproat, Bertha Ahrens, Cary Carlisle, Carol Allen (Jersey Shore Center) Priscilla Smith, Connie Bruckmann

\*\*The church has a team of prayers, known as the Prayer Chain. If you have a prayer need, please contact the office.

\*\*If you know someone who is in need of pastoral care, please contact Jill Hubbard-Smith 732-209-4563 or [revjmhs@gmail.com](mailto:revjmhs@gmail.com).

## **Please Join Us In Mission and Ministry**

### **Sunday, TODAY**

Service of Worship In Person & Online	9:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School - Downstairs	9:30 a.m.
Open House – 102 Pear Street	11 a.m.

### **Monday, January 8**

AA – Wesley Hall	7:30 a.m.
Alanon – Wesley Hall	10 a.m.

### **Tuesday, January 9**

Women's Covenant Group – Library	8:30 a.m.
Naranon – Wesley Hall	11 a.m.
Lydia Circle – Wesley Hall	7 p.m.
Scouts – Fellowship Hall	7 p.m.

### **Wednesday, January 10**

AA – Wesley Hall	7:30 a.m.
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### **Thursday, January 11**

Alanon – Wesley Hall	10 a.m.
Chancel Choir – Sanctuary	6:30 p.m.

### **Friday, January 12**

AA – Wesley Hall	8 p.m.
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**Pastor:** Jill Hubbard-Smith

**Secretary:** Joy More

**Director of Music:** Gary Farquhar

**Sexton:** Lisa Costello

**Director of Wesley Nursery School:** Noel Worthington



Week One: Jan. 7, 2024

**D.R.I.V.E. – Momentum for Life: Devotion to God**

Biblical practices for sustaining physical health, personal integrity, and strategic focus. Living with faith, balance, and purpose.

**D.R.I.V.E.**

**Devotion to God**

*January 7, 2024*

– increase your passion for God and be fully present to God’s presence each day.

**Readiness for Lifelong Learning**

*January 14, 2024*

– stretch your mind so that your work will be more creative, innovative, excellent, and redemptive.

**Investing in Key Relationships**

*January 21, 2024*

– invest in key relationships and make a difference in the lives of others.

**Visioning for the Future**

*January 28, 2024*

– envision and move toward God’s purpose and direction for your future, persevering despite opposition and resistance.

**Eating and Exercise**

*February 11, 2024*

Make a disciplined commitment to healthy eating and exercise habits.

**Devotion:** reflects our ultimate values.  
reveals true belief.

**Passion:** is a motivator  
and determines your life actions and directions.

1. *What do those who know you best say that your passions are?*  
*(Suggest: ask three people and reflect on their responses)*
2. *Does your belief in God need to grow OR...*  
*Does your passion for God need to grow in order to give you momentum to thrive in the face of resistance?*

**Present to God's Presence:** God is always speaking but are we listening? Devotion is time focused on God's presence

1. *What helps you to focus on God?*

**Passionate Life Focus:** Being fully present to God's presence continually renews a healthy, passionate life focus.

1. Psalm 121 says, "*Where does my help come*" – *my help* refers to my meaning, my purpose, and my life-empowerment.  
*So, when you lift your eyes to the mountains, what "gods" offer you relief in times of stress?*

**Danger Zones:** Passions that take on a life of their own.

1. *What could be your danger zone?*

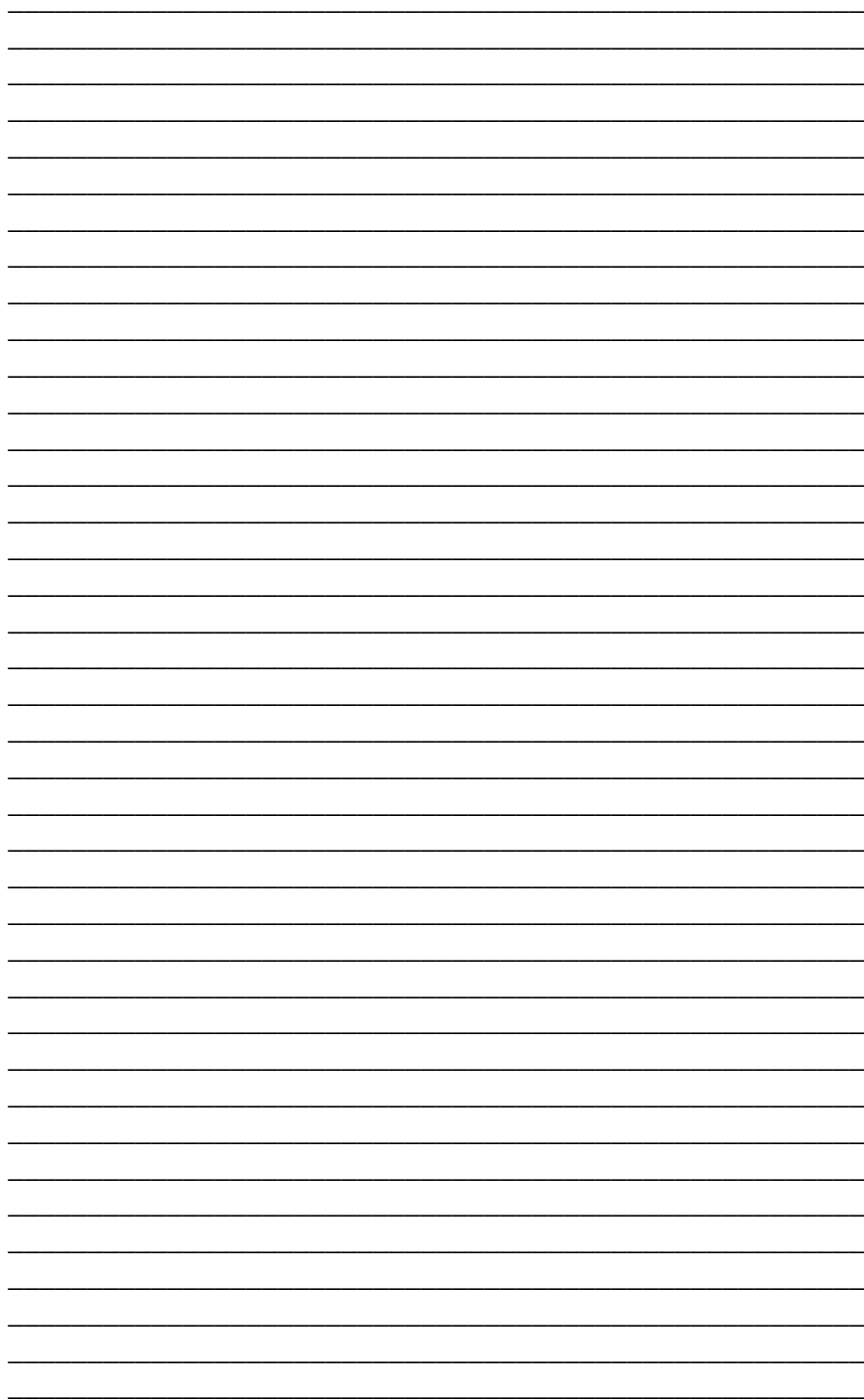
*"God is looking for people who will take their lives out of park and shift them into drive."* How does this statement apply to your devotion to God? What is one thing God might be saying to you? What action plan might you make to give you momentum for bringing more balance in this area of your life?

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## SCRIPTURE AS ART RETURNS

JANUARY 21, 1 P.M.

This is a ministry to participate in a low-structure exploration of scripture. It is a way to allow your creativity and imagination emerge as you reflect on a particular

scripture. Need to be an artist? – NO! Just be open to the movement of the Spirit.

### This is how it works:

1. First think of “art” in broad terms...poetry, coloring, painting, sculpting, weaving, song, dance, and acting.
2. Read the scripture I am naming over the next two weeks. As you read it, pay attention to what calls upon your imagination. Read or listen to the scripture with senses alert. What colors do you picture would be a part of a painting as your expression. What words or emotions stand out to you? What music style and lyrics might sing forth within you? On what aspect of the story does your heart focus?
3. Share your feelings and thoughts in some artistic representation. No talent and skill is judged. It is simple to draw deeper into God’s word in a different way and allow God to speak to us through our senses. Allow it to become an act of prayer and/or praise.
4. Invite other friends and family to join you or do something themselves – this is a great intergenerational activity.
5. On the date named, we will share our artistic expression with others online.

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 5:17-25 (Common English Bible)

<sup>17</sup> One day when Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and legal experts were sitting nearby. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem. Now the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal. <sup>18</sup> Some men were bringing a man who was paralyzed, lying on a cot. They wanted to carry him in and place him before Jesus, <sup>19</sup> but they couldn’t reach him because of the crowd. So they took him up on the roof and lowered him—cot and all—through the roof tiles into the crowded room in front of Jesus. <sup>20</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

<sup>21</sup> The legal experts and Pharisees began to mutter among themselves, “Who is this who insults God? Only God can forgive sins!”

<sup>22</sup> Jesus recognized what they were discussing and responded, “Why do you fill your minds with these questions? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier—to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? <sup>24</sup> But so that you will know that the Human One<sup>[a]</sup> has authority on the earth to forgive sins” —Jesus now spoke to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, get up, take your cot, and go home.” <sup>25</sup> Right away, the man stood before them, picked up his cot, and went home, praising God.

**Now let us reflect and create...Jill**

**Online code will be made available next week.**