



## The First United Methodist Church of Oakhurst

103 Monmouth Road

Oakhurst, NJ 07755

Phone (732) 531-1150

Email: [OakhurstUMC@optonline.net](mailto:OakhurstUMC@optonline.net) • Web: [www.Oakhurst.umcchurches.org](http://www.Oakhurst.umcchurches.org)

Facebook: First United Methodist Church of Oakhurst

**Grace and peace be with you.**

***Grace and peace:*** words we use with regularity and ease.

Perhaps we need the reminder that *grace and peace* are words that hold tremendous power; they carry life itself. There is a profound need for these gifts in our time, as once again violence tears the fabric of our nation.

We are witnessing the deeply wounded and fragile nature of the human community. We pray for God to be at work in every avenue of healing, that fear and distress may be replaced with mutual concern and hope. You and I are called to partner with God in this healing work, by attending to the power of our words, by conveying God's grace and God's peace in our actions, and by joining with God in manifesting hope.

As Christians, we are also called to a mature faith: in which one can disagree over issues with respect, and can advocate for justice through peaceful and life-giving means. We are empowered to convey grace: God's redeeming love in the places of despair, and peace: the gift of wellbeing, and reconciliation throughout the human community.

In the United Methodist Book of Worship there is a "Prayer in a Time of National Crisis."

I invite you to pray with me:

*May leaders be led by your wisdom;*

*may they search your will and see it clearly.*

*If we have turned from your way,*

*reverse our ways and help us to repent.*

*Give us your light and your truth, let them guide us;*

*through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of this world, and our Savior.*

*Amen.*

Let us join together in being bearers of grace and peace to our fractured land as this new year unfolds.

Shawn Callender Hogan

Pastor