

- Open Hearts
- Open Minds
- Open Doors

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the HIGHLANDER

Volume 17 Issue 1

January/February 2026

Dear Bergen Highlands family,
Happy New Year! May this new year bring you a fresh start, filled with the hope and love that our newborn Savior brings! As we continue to live in Christmastide, let us receive the greatest gift God has given us into our hearts and share God's hope, peace, joy and love with all we meet. Isaiah 43:19 says, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." As we step into 2026, this scripture reminds us that God is always at work, bringing new hope, new beginnings, and fresh opportunities. A new year gives us the chance to reflect on our lives, our habits, and the ways God is calling us to grow.
*This January and February, I will be leading a new sermon series titled "**Creatures of Habit.**" We will explore the patterns, routines, and rhythms that influence our faith, relationships, and spiritual journey. Together, we will ask, how do our habits shape who we are? How can we cultivate habits that draw us closer to God? And what habits might we need to break to live the life God intends for us? I hope you will join us each Sunday as we explore these questions and discover*

how intentional habits can deepen our relationship with God and others. At the same time, we will continue to live out God's mission in meaningful ways. In 2026, we will carry on our work for Spring Valley **homeless ministry, seniors program for community seniors, and a variety of community outreach programs.** These ministries are at the heart of who we are as a church, and they give each of us an opportunity to put our faith into action. If you were not able to participate last year, I encourage you to step into something new this year, whether it is cooking a meal, baking cookies, participating at a senior gathering, joining a small group, or helping with one of our outreach projects. Each act of service is a chance to experience God's love in both giving and receiving.

As we embrace the new year, let us also embrace the joy of community, the blessing of service, and the power of renewed habits that draw us closer to God. Whether you are looking for spiritual inspiration, a way to serve others, or simply a place to connect, there is a place for you here. Let us walk together in faith, hope, and love, making 2026 a year of growth, purpose, and meaningful action.

In love of Jesus Christ
Pastor Miso

Thinking of starting the New Year with a new Bible? You might want to check this out...

Understanding Bible translations: choosing the right one for you and your family

The Bible is the most widely read and translated book in the world, and today we have access to dozens of English versions. But with so many options, how do you know which translation is best for your church, a children's lesson or your own reading.

Each Bible translation has a different purpose. Some aim for a word-for-word approach from the original Hebrew and Greek. Others take a thought-for-thought style to make the meaning more natural for modern readers. Some even paraphrase the message to make it as easy as possible to grasp as possible. The key is to know your audience and match the translation to your intended message.

Popular Bible translations and how they're used.

- ◆ **King James Version (KJV):** Published in 1611, it's beautiful and poetic, but the older language can be difficult for today's readers. Still, many love the traditional feel and reverent tone.
- ◆ **New King James Version (NKJV):** A modern update to the KJV that keeps its classic style while replacing outdated words and grammar. Great for those who want a traditional feel with improved readability.
- ◆ **New International Version (NIV):** One of the most widely used modern translations. It balances accuracy with readability, making it great for both casual reading and in-depth study.

- ◆ **English Standard Version (ESV):** A word-for-word translation known for staying close to the original text while still being easy to understand. Often used in teaching and preaching.
- ◆ **New Living Translation (NLT):** A thought-for-thought translation that's clear and reada-



ble. Perfect for devotions, outreach or people new to the Bible.

- ◆ **New American Standard Bible (NASB):** Highly accurate and very close to the original languages. Best for those doing deep Bible study or theology work.
- ◆ **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE):** A scholarly and inclusive update to the NRSV. Used in academic settings and mainline denominations and for lectionary readings. The NRSV is recommended by the Methodist Church.
- ◆ **Modern Inclusive Version (MIV):** A newer translation designed with inclusive language

Continued on page 3

for gender and accessibility, while aiming to stay true to Scripture's meaning. Useful in settings where inclusive language is preferred.

- ◆ **The Message (MSG):** A paraphrase rather than a translation. Written in very modern, conversational English. Good for fresh insights but best used alongside a more literal version.

Best translation for kids

When it comes to helping kids read and understand Scripture, clarity is key. Here are a few family friendly options.

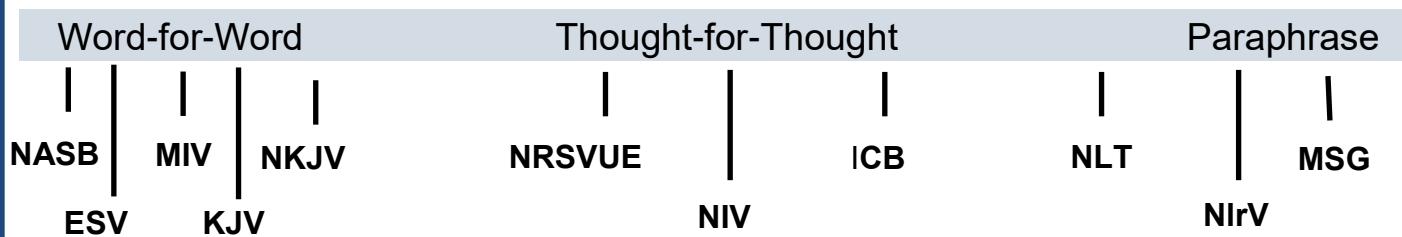
- ◆ **New International Reader's Version**

(NIRV): Based on the NIV but written on a 3rd grade reading level. Ideal for younger children or those new to reading.

- ◆ **New Living Translation (NLT):** Also great for kids and preteens, especially those ready for a slightly more advanced version that still keeps the message simple.
- ◆ **The International Children's Bible (ICB):** Created specifically with children in mind. It avoids difficult words and long sentences, making it accessible and age-appropriate.

You can always speak with Pastor Miso and discuss if she has a preferred translation.

BIBLE TRANSLATION CHART



Why Read the Bible?

Prayer, worship, scripture study, receiving Holy Communion, service, spiritual direction and more are means of grace by which we open ourselves to the shaping work of the Holy Spirit. Find ways to both introduce spiritual disciplines and to deepen your spiritual life.

The UMC



Missions: it's what we do

⇒ In November we collected food for CUMAC (the Methodist food pantry in Paterson). We sent 532 lbs to help the families in this time of need.



Donate winter clothing for Spring Valley Homeless Ministry

Nov. 16 - Dec. 28



Bergen Highlands United Methodist Church
318 W Saddle River Rd. Upper Saddle River, NJ

⇒ Due to the sudden cold weather—In December we collected old coats, sweaters and winter clothing for the needy. Donations will be taken to the Spring Valley UMC Missions Ministry. We are still collecting for another week, so if you have warm winter clothes to get rid of bring them to church. go in the back meeting room.

Final Senior Gathering for 2025

We partied, played bingo, won prizes and ate!



See you next February! There's no meeting in January.

Paterson Toy Drive

This year our Paterson Toy Drive was a grand success.

We collected and delivered 140 brand new toys to the Paterson Boys and Girls Club. The congregation and community worked together to make this joyful experience happen. And a special thanks to Betsy Haley and Pastor Miso for organizing and delivering all the toys!

Good Job!!!



Seasons Missions

We served 75 servings of chicken legs, rice, salad, apples, and cookies for our Thanksgiving offering.



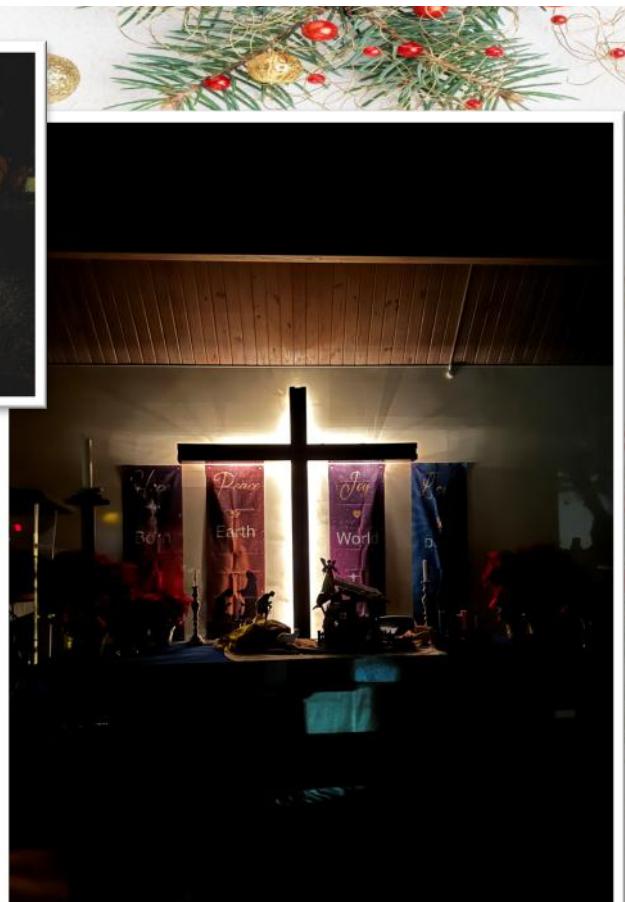
We handed out 60 hot coco gifts to shoppers at Interstate, Ramsey with an invitation for Christmas Eve. Then to Dunkin to warm up.

It was **COLD !!!**

Christmas comes to BHUMC

Luke 2:10

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”



:: What's Next on the Calendar? ::

Jan 4—Epiphany Sunday

Jan 22—Cooking for Missions

Feb 8—Packing Valentine Boxes for college students

Feb 12—Senior Gathering

Feb. 17—Pancake Supper/ Shrove Tuesday 6:30pm

Feb. 18—Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30pm

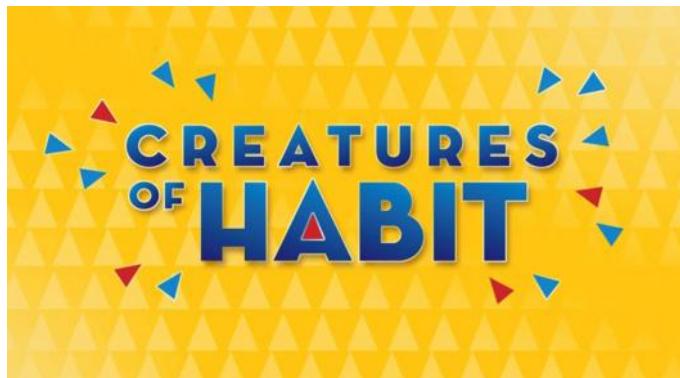
Feb. 18 till March 29—Spring Food Drive

Feb. 19—Cooking for Missions

March 8—Daylight Savings Time begins



January/February Sermon Series

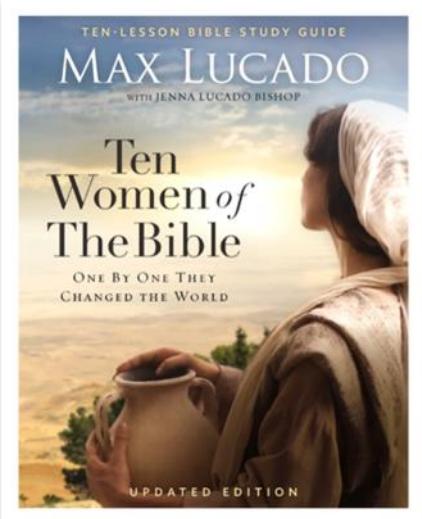


1/4	Epiphany Sunday: Wesley Covenant Renewal Service	
1/11	Creatures of Habit	Romans 12:1-2, Deuteronomy 6:4-9
1/18	Habit of Prayer	Luke 11:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
1/25	Habit of Scripture	Psalm 119:105, Luke 24:27
2/1	Habit of Communion	Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
2/8	Habit of Mercy	Micah 6:8, Matthew 25:35-40
2/15	Perfected in Love: A life well practiced 1 John 4:18, Philippians 1:6	

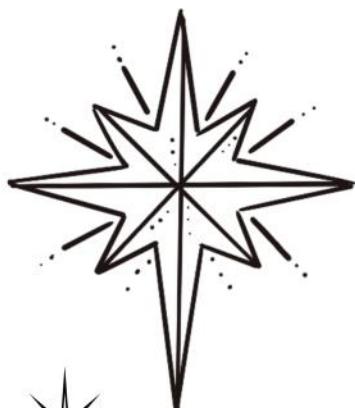


Adult Bible Study

Tuesdays ~ 7PM



January 6	Sarah
January 13	Rahab
January 20	Abigail
January 27	Esther
February 10	Mary, the mother of Jesus
February 24	The Samaritan woman
March 3	The Canaanite woman
March 31	Mary of Bethany
April 7	Mary Magdalene
April 14	Sapphira



When they saw the

STAR, they

rejoiced

exceedingly with

**GREAT
JOY.**

Matthew 2:10, ESV



Valentine's Day for College Students

It's that time again, This year we are sending 5 college students Valentine Boxes. We will be boxing them on ...

Sunday, February 8th after Church

We can only accept wrapped candies and treats but we also accept SMALL hand held games and stress relievers.

Make sure your Valentine donation is in church by February 8th. We box the candy after coffee hour.

Thank you.



It's Time for Pancakes!!!

February 17

...is Shrove Tuesday and that means it's time for the pancake dinner.

*6:00 pm
and on~*

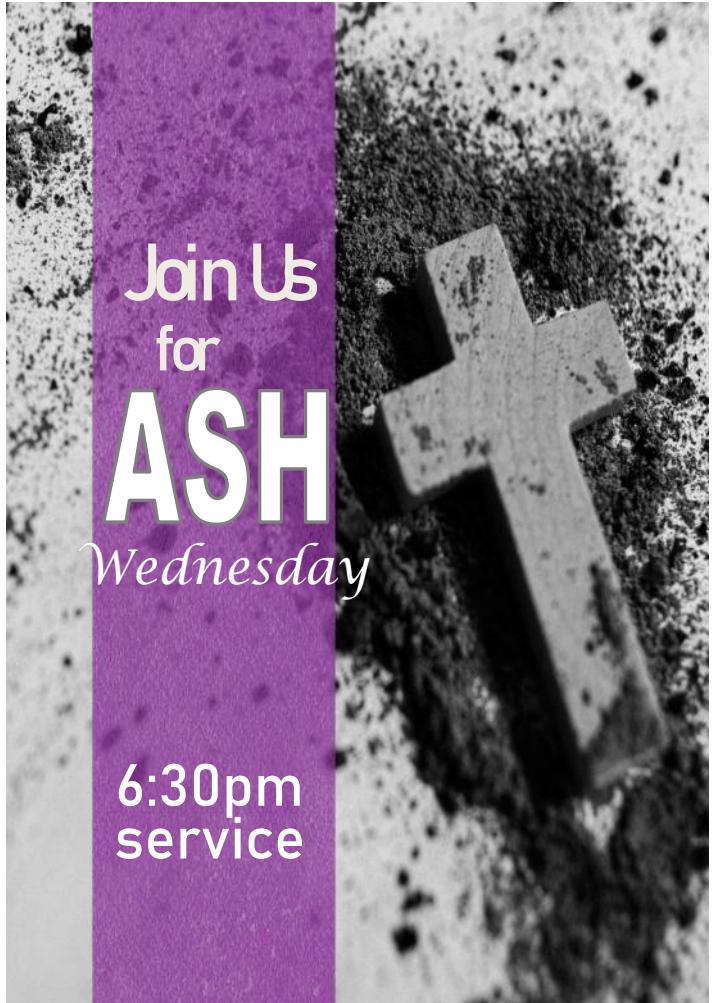


We need donations~

Check the bulletin board in the Narthex and sign up for something you can bring. They are the **BEST** pancakes!

Join Us
for
ASH
Wednesday

**6:30pm
service**



Lenten Bible Reading Plan

Journey to the Cross

- Matthew 21:1-11
- John 12:1-11
- John 12:12-19
- Mark 11:12-26
- Matthew 21:23-32
- Mark 12:1-12
- Matthew 22:1-14
- Luke 20:9-26
- Luke 20:27-40
- Matthew 22:34-46
- Matthew 23:1-39
- Mark 12:41-44
- Mark 13:1-13
- Matthew 24:15-35
- Matthew 24:36-51
- Matthew 25:1-13
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Matthew 25:31-46
- John 12:20-50
- Mark 14:12-26

- John 13:1-17
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- John 13:18-38
- Luke 22:24-38
- Matthew 26:31-35
- John 14:1-31
- John 15:1-27; John 16:1-4
- John 16:5-33
- John 17:1-26
- Matthew 26:36-56
- John 18:1-18
- Mark 14:32-72
- Luke 22:39-62
- John 18:19-40
- John 19:1-16
- Matthew 27:27-44
- Luke 23:26-49
- John 19:16-27
- John 19:28-42
- John 20:1-31





Senior Gatherings

No Meeting in January

February 12~

Come and watch a chocolate demonstration by Darshana Tolani for Valentines Day! This is an excellent opportunity to enhance your knowledge of chocolate while enjoying a memorable experience.

Don't miss your chance to partake in the delightful event.



?? ? ? ? ? ? ? Bible Quiz

Fill in the blanks for three qualities Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, attributes to love: "Love is _____; love is _____. ... it keeps no record of _____."

- A. challenging, important, the past
- B. childlike, innocent, injustice
- C. self-sacrificing, generous, finances
- D. patient, kind, wrongs



Answer: D (See 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, NIV.)

Ash Wednesday Word Search

C	J	I	Z	A	L	F	T	V	P	S	Z	Z	S	A
P	X	A	S	N	A	G	R	M	J	N	W	G	U	S
L	U	H	D	S	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S	H
O	E	R	T	V	V	B	P	T	P	D	O	M	E	W
S	L	I	P	L	D	A	E	H	E	R	O	F	J	E
E	N	Z	D	L	J	L	N	F	V	N	W	S	B	D
G	S	J	O	O	E	B	T	H	C	R	C	A	E	N
U	H	Y	N	B	A	P	R	A	Y	E	R	C	R	E
G	Q	Y	A	D	S	E	U	T	E	V	O	R	H	S
Q	J	H	T	D	P	C	K	D	R	Y	S	I	W	D
N	O	M	I	Y	Y	Y	H	E	H	T	S	F	J	A
B	F	L	N	N	K	T	T	U	Q	X	B	I	A	Y
M	U	G	G	G	B	S	R	M	R	L	C	C	A	E
T	E	M	P	T	A	T	I	O	N	C	A	E	L	T
V	P	X	U	E	W	L	O	R	F	P	H	U	A	V

ASHES

EASTER

PURPLE



ASHWEDNESDAY

FASTING

REPENT

BLESSING

FOREHEAD

SACRIFICE

CHURCH

FORTYDAYS

SHROVETUESDAY

CROSS

JESUS

TEMPTATION

DONATING

PRAYER

**Bergen Highlands
United Methodist
Church**

**318 West Saddle River Rd
Upper Saddle River, NJ
07458**

Church: 201-327-3960
Parsonage: 201-934-1618

Join Us!



Important BHUMC Dates for 2026

Jan. 4 —Epiphany Sunday	May 17-19 —Annual Conference
Jan. 22 —Cooking for Missions	June 12 —Strawberry Picking, 8:30am.
Feb. 8 —Valentine Boxes for College Students	June 13 —Strawberry Festival, Rain or Shine
Feb. 12 —Senior Gathering	June 14 —Father's Day
Feb. 17 —Pancake Supper, 6pm	June 18 —Cooking for Missions
Feb. 18 —Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30pm.	July 5 —Summer Worship begins- New service hours 9:15am
Feb. 18-March 29 —Spring CUMAC Food Drive	July 9, 16, 23, 30 —LEGO Club VBS
Feb. 19 —Cooking for Missions	Aug. 20 —Cooking for Missions
March 8 —Daylight Savings Time begins	Sept. 13 —Back to Fall Service Hour; 10:15am and BBQ after church
March 12 —Senior Gathering	Sept. TBA —USR Day, noon-6p
March 17 —Soup Supper; 6pm	Oct. 4 —World Communion Sunday
March 29 —Palm Sunday Service	Oct 8 —Senior Gathering
March 29 —Easter Egg Hunt after service (ages 12 and under)	Oct. 18-Nov.22 —Fall Food Drive
April 2 —Holy Thursday Service; 7:00pm	Oct. 22 —Cooking for Missions
April 5 —Easter Sunday Service	Nov. 12 —Senior Gathering
April 9 —Senior Gathering	Dec. 6 —Hanging of the Greens
April 16 —Cooking for Missions	Dec. 6 —Final day to order/pay for poinsettias
May 2 —Best Stuff Sale; 9am-2pm	Dec. 6 —Final Toy Drive drop off date
May 10 —Mother's Day	Dec. 10 —Senior Gathering
May 14 —Senior Gathering	Dec. 24 —Candlelight Service, 5:30pm
	Dec. 25 —Christmas Day

- Adult Bible Study**—Tuesdays beginning at 7:00; call for more info 201-327-3960
- Adult Choir**—Before church service
- Children's and Youth Choirs**—Thursday at 3:30pm
- BHUMC Youth Group**—TBA
- Executive Leadership Team**—as needed after church, Contact person-Pat Hiler or Pastor Miso Park 201-327-3960



Put these dates on YOUR calendar!

Dates and times can occasionally change, for more info call 201-327-3960, thanks.

If you have a suggestion for the newsletter, send an email to: bergenhighlandsumc@gmail.com