

**Bergen Highlands  
United Methodist  
Church**

The People of the  
United Methodist  
Church

- 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 readable.



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

Word-for-Word			Thought-for-Thought			Paraphrase	
NASB	MIV	NKJV	NRSVUE	ICB	NLT	MSG	NirV
ESV	KJV			NIV			

## 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 CU-MAC (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.

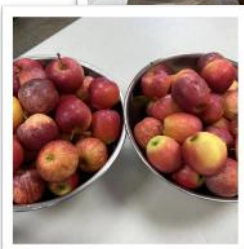
We collected and delivered 140 brand new toys to the Paterson Boys and Girls Club. The congregation and community worked together to make this joyful experience happen. And a special thanks to Betsy Haley and Pastor Miso for organizing and delivering all the toys!

*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!!!***

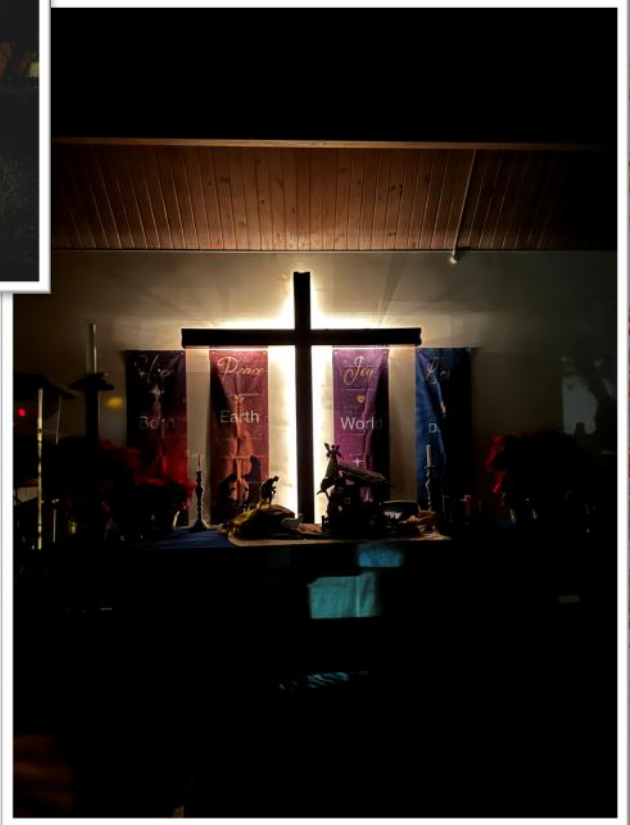


# Christmas comes to BHUMC



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

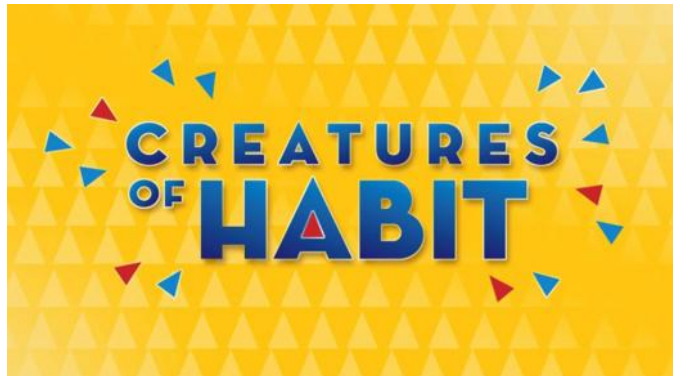
Feb. 18 till March 29—Spring Food Drive

Feb. 19—Cooking for Missions

March 8—Daylight Savings Time begins



# January/February Sermon Series

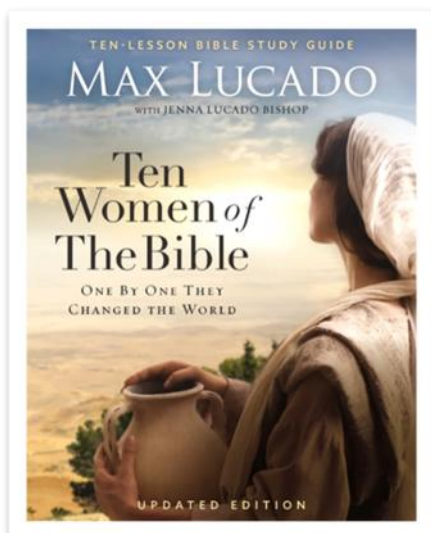


1/4	Epiphany Sunday: Wesley Covenant Renewal Service
1/11	Creatures of Habit Romans 12:1-2, Deuteronomy 6:4-9
1/18	Habit of Prayer Luke 11:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
1/25	Habit of Scripture Psalm 119:105, Luke 24:27
2/1	Habit of Communion Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
2/8	Habit of Mercy Micah 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.



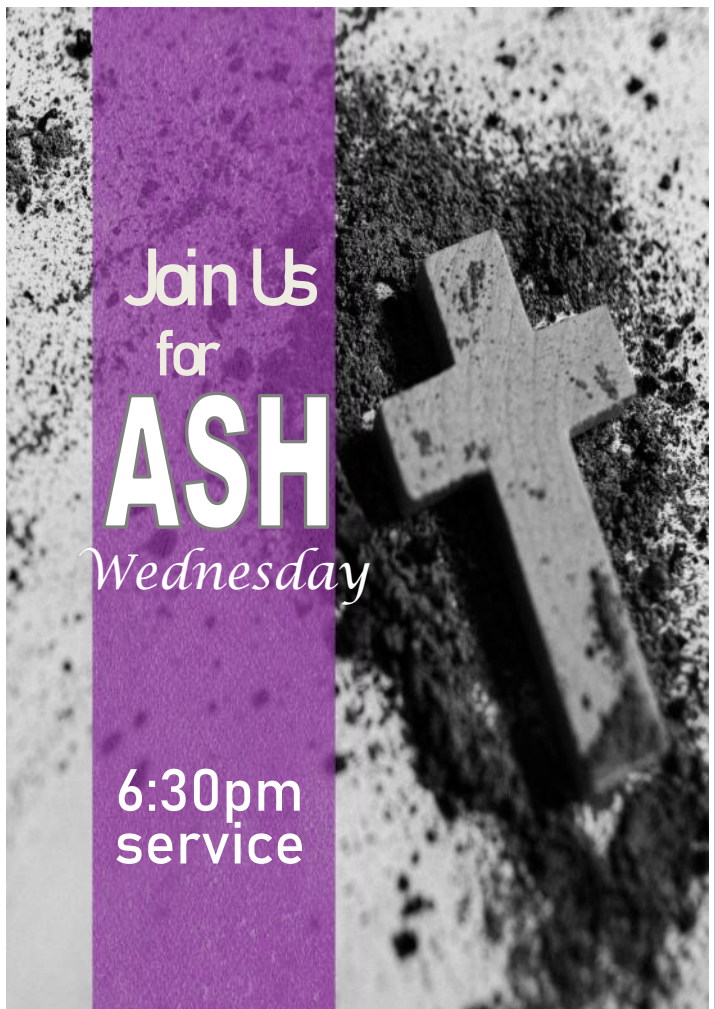
**6:00 pm  
and on~**

**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

**Love is**

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

ASHWEDNESDAY

BLESSING

CHURCH

CROSS

DONATING

EASTER

FASTING

FOREHEAD

FORTYDAYS

JESUS

PRAYER

PURPLE

REPENT

SACRIFICE

SHROVETUESDAY

TEMPTATION



**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!**



If you have a suggestion for the newsletter, send an email to:  
[bergenhighlandsumc@gmail.com](mailto:bergenhighlandsumc@gmail.com)

## Important BHUMC Dates for 2026

**Jan. 4**—Epiphany Sunday

**Jan. 22**—Cooking for Missions

**Feb. 8**—Valentine Boxes for College Students

**Feb. 12**—Senior Gathering

**Feb. 17**—Pancake Supper, 6pm

**Feb. 18**—Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30pm.

**Feb. 18-March 29**—Spring CUMAC Food Drive

**Feb. 19**—Cooking for Missions

**March 8**—Daylight Savings Time begins

**March 12**—Senior Gathering

**March 17**—Soup Supper; 6pm

**March 29**—Palm Sunday Service

**March 29**—Easter Egg Hunt after service (ages 12 and under)

**April 2**—Holy Thursday Service; 7:00pm

**April 5**—Easter Sunday Service

**April 9**—Senior Gathering

**April 16**—Cooking for Missions

**May 2**—Best Stuff Sale; 9am-2pm

**May 10**—Mother's Day

**May 14**—Senior Gathering

**May 17-19**—Annual Conference

**June 12**—Strawberry Picking, 8:30am.

**June 13**—Strawberry Festival, Rain or Shine

**June 14**—Father's Day

**June 18**—Cooking for Missions

**July 5**—Summer Worship begins—New service hours 9:15am

**July 9, 16, 23, 30**—LEGO Club VBS

**Aug. 20**—Cooking for Missions

**Sept. 13**—Back to Fall Service Hour; 10:15am and BBQ after church

**Sept. TBA**—USR Day, noon-6p

**Oct. 4**—World Communion Sunday

**Oct 8**—Senior Gathering

**Oct. 18-Nov. 22**—Fall Food Drive

**Oct. 22**—Cooking for Missions

**Nov. 12**—Senior Gathering

**Dec. 6**—Hanging of the Greens

**Dec. 6**—Final day to order/pay for poinsettias

**Dec. 6**—Final Toy Drive drop off date

**Dec. 10**—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.