

**Bergen Highlands
United Methodist
Church**

The People of the
United Methodist
Church

- Open Hearts
- Open Minds
- Open Doors

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HIGHLANDER

Volume 16 Issue 6

November/December 2025

Dear Bergen Highlands Family,

Dear Bergen Highlands Family,

I can't believe that we are beginning the final months of the year already. How was your year in 2025?

As we look back over the last ten months, I am sure that you have experienced both good seasons and difficult ones. No matter how many ups and downs we have experienced, it is a time for us to give thanks to God who walked with us on our journey faithfully and with everlasting love and care.



November reminds us to pause and give thanks, remembering that all we have comes from God's gracious hand. In the midst of our busy lives, it is good to stop and say, "Thank You, Lord," for the blessings we experience each day through our families, friends, church community, and the gift of life itself.

The apostle Paul reminds us, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1Thessalonians 5:18). Gratitude is not just a response to good things. It is a posture of the heart that helps us recognize God's presence and faithfulness even in challenging times. When we give thanks, we draw closer to the One who gives us hope and peace.

As we move from Thanksgiving into the Advent and Christmas season, our gratitude naturally turns into giving. We celebrate the greatest gift ever given, the gift of Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem to bring light into our world. The joy of welcoming the Christ child invites us to share that same love with others, especially those who are in need.

This year, I invite you to join in our Christmas Toy Drive for children in Paterson and our Food Drive for Paterson families. Through your generosity, we can bring smiles to children's faces and comfort to families who may be struggling during this season. Every toy, every can of food, every act of kindness becomes a reflection of God's love made visible through us.

Let us finish this year with hearts full of thanksgiving and hands ready to serve. As we give thanks to God and share his blessings with others, may we experience the true joy of Christmas, that came down from heaven to dwell among us.

Wishing you a season filled with gratitude, peace, and the joy of Christ's birth.

In Christ,

Pastor Miso



Loving our neighbors

By the Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe

*Photo of the Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, courtesy
of General Board of Church and Society*



I preached a sermon at the wedding of a young couple recently. She is Roman Catholic and he grew up United Methodist. She had been a student where I was her chaplain. Jane's beloved roommate for all of her college years, Aysha, is Muslim, and had – in the same month – married the man of her dreams.

Jane and Aysha both sat on the Interreligious Council, which was made up of students representing 30 of the university's recognized faith communities. No faith community was monolithic. No community ever is. There were four Jewish groups, four Muslim groups, 15 Christians, three Hindus, one Buddhist, one Sikh and one Jain. Every week there were many diverse and devout voices in the room.

Students represented their own traditions. They each represented themselves with the affinities as well as questions of conscience about their own traditions. Sometimes questions were shared. Occasionally a Roman Catholic would wonder aloud how the church could not ordain women. For some Orthodox Jews, why was it important to have men and women segregated for prayer? For some Muslims, why did women have to pray behind men? For evangelical Christians, how could mainline Protestants not follow more closely the "laws" set forth in the Bible as they believed them?

In addition to giving space for their own "faith family" discussions, these students were on a journey of discovery, understanding and respecting the faiths of those gathered at the Interreligious Council table. With only a couple of exceptions over 20+ years, no one ever crossed over from his or her tradition to that of another. Nearly all would attest to these relationships making their own faith stronger and their love for others deeper.

Being invited to preach at the wedding of this particular couple brought back lovely and vivid memories of the first day I met Jane and Aysha: two young, devout women — one from Indiana and the other from Missouri. These two were inseparable for all four years of their college careers. They came to know and love each other's habits, prayers, families, dietary practices, religious observances, as well as normal young adult life.

And now they each have fallen in love with men who are becoming good husbands and companions, supporting Jane and Aysha as they continue their respective journeys in faith and love.

This journey of friendship gives us insight into what it takes to be good and loving neighbors. It is characterized by meeting, getting acquainted, apprehension, listening, worry, learning, delighting in experiences, sharing joys, arguing, teasing, supporting in sorrow, appreciating, respecting and loving

What did we do in September and October?



We welcomed everyone!



We blessed backpacks



We shared food.



We sang for joy.



We showed our diversity by speaking in six different languages.



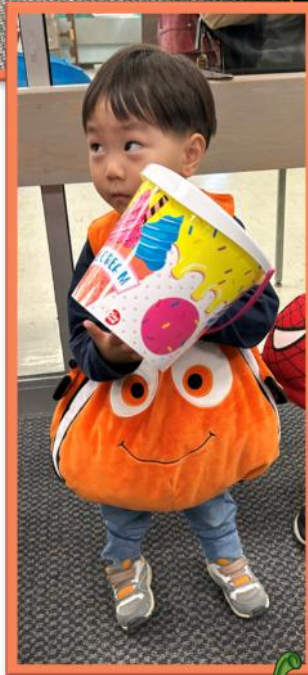
We donated blood.



We wondered where the grill went???

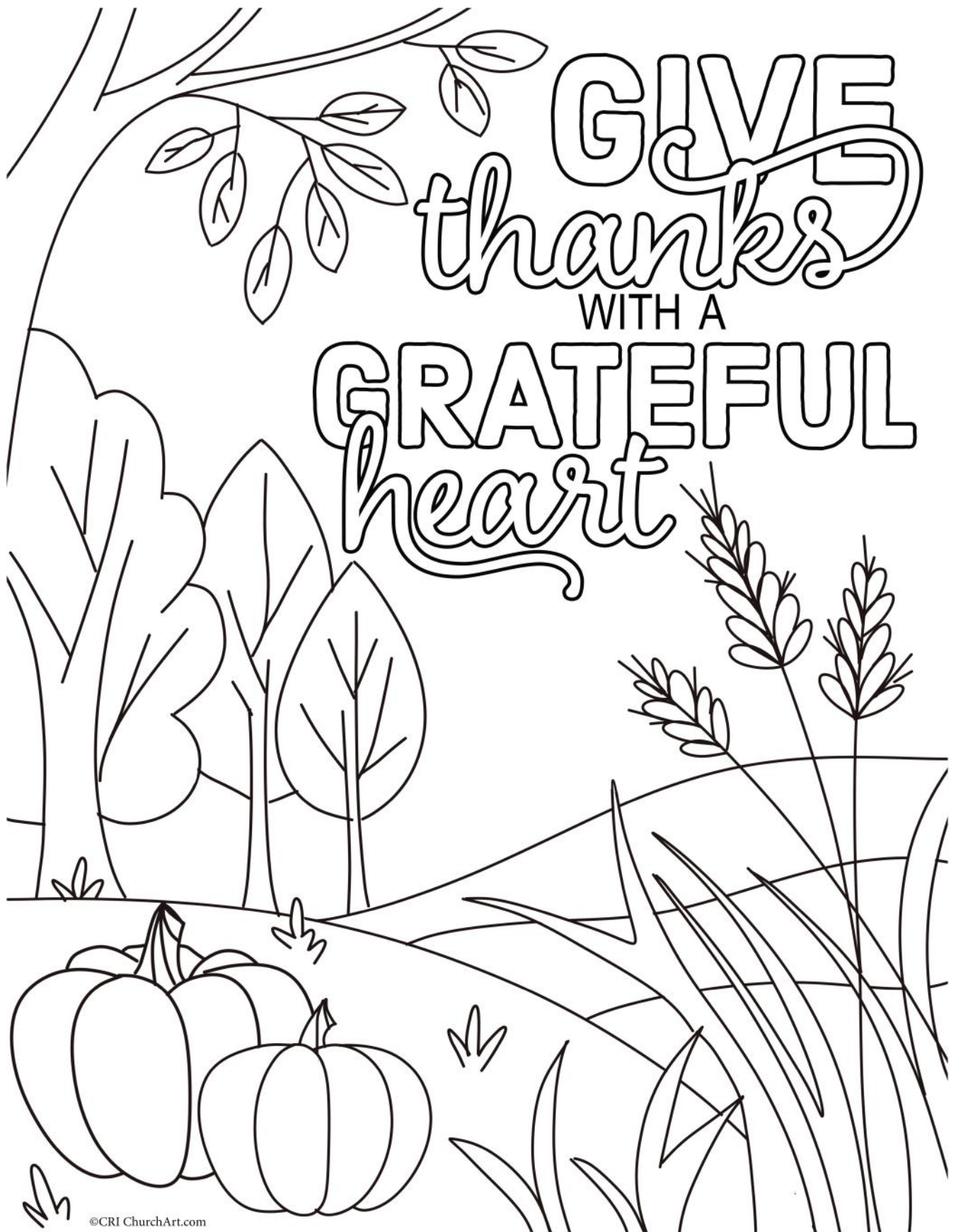


Halloween at BHUMC



Happy
Halloween





Don't Forget to...



November 2nd at 2am-
You get an extra hour
to sleep!



Missions: it's what we do

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" Matt. 25:40

- ⇒ **Nov. 6th**-Cooking dinner for the Spring Valley UMC homeless mission. Help us prepare a dinner for 75 men/women/children that are homeless or very low income in Spring Valley, NY. If you can't help with dinner, perhaps you can bake cookies for dessert. If you can help with dinner-be at church by 2pb, if you can bake cookies-please have them there by 3:30 so we can individually pack them.
- ⇒ Fall Food Drive—We would like to donate towards Thanksgiving dinners to CUMAC. If able contribute the suggested food items by Sunday, Nov. 23rd.—one box/bag stuffing, one box instant potatoes, one pack turkey gravy mix, two cans progressio soup, two lg. cans veg., one can cranberry sauce, two oxes mac & cheese, two boxes Parmalat milk/evaporate milk, two boxes corn muffin mix, and one large can yams.
- ⇒ Up coming Mission—Save your old coats and sweaters. We will have a **January coat and sweater** winter clothing drive for the needy. More information will follow in the next newsletter.

Annual Charge Conference

The members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will be meeting at Grace UMC in Wyckoff on November 15th at 10am, to approve the budget of the church and members of the team. They will review the past year's accomplishments/failures and make plans for the new year.

This occurs every year in the fall and is overseen by the District Superintendent or a presiding Elder.





Adult Bible Study

Tuesdays ~ 7PM



Nov. 11	Expect a Miracle
Nov. 18	Giving Up on Perfect
Nov. 25	Thanksgiving week –
Dec. 2	Scandalous Love
Dec.9	Jesus' Wish List
Dec. 16	By a Different Road

Every year, we say we're going to cut back, simplify, and have a family Christmas that focuses on the real reason for the season—Jesus. But every year, advertisements beckon, the children plead, and it seems easier just to indulge our wants and whims. Overspending, overeating, materialism, and busyness rob us of our peace and joy and rob Jesus of his rightful role as the center of our celebration.

This book of devotional readings is designed to draw your entire family into closer fellowship with God as you respond to this Christmas season and the call of God to live generously all year around. The devotional includes thirty short readings, Scripture, prayer, and stories about helping others at Christmas. Join us on Tuesday evenings at 7pm for a journey into a different kind of Christmas.

November/December Sermon Series



11/2	All Saints Sunday 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12
11/9	Yesterday: Remember God's Grace Deuteronomy 8:1-10
11/16	Today: Experience God's Grace Philippians 4:4-7
11/23	Tomorrow: Trust God's Grace Psalm 100

11/30	Room, When Pressure is Closing In Joshua 2:1-21, Matthew 1:1-5
12/7	Room In Your Heart Mark 1:1-8
12/14	Room in Relationships Luke 1:24-45
12/21	Room for Hope Matthew 1:18-25
12/24	Christmas Eve: Making Room Luke 2:1-20



Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek not to understand that thou mayest believe, but believe that thou mayest understand.

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this:
to believe in the one he has sent."

John 6:29

Upcoming Winter Concert—November 22, 2025



Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra

8:00pm West Side Presbyterian Church

Location: 6 South Monroe St. Ridgewood, NJ 07450

Pro Arte Chorale Sings Songs of Destiny

Mozart, Ave Verum Corpus

Parry, I Was Glad

Brahms, Schicksalslied

Saint-Saens, Requiem

If purchased through BHUMC, tickets are \$30 paid to the church. This is a fund raiser granted us by the Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra. We are most appreciative, it is a wonderful concert!

If interested, contact Pastor Miso with your email address and tickets will be sent to your email before the concert.



Senior Gatherings

November 13~

USR Police Department

Do you know the latest scams???

There are new scams coming out every day and you need to be aware of them. Seniors are the most widely targeted demographic and are the most number of people who fall victim to them.

Join us on **November 13** to learn the latest scams from the Upper Saddle River Police Department.

Lunch will follow.



December 11~



Bath Bombs

Ever just want to soak in a warm, luxurious bath with bubbles and scented water? You need a bath bomb!

Come and learn how to make Bath Bombs!

Joan Clifford has volunteered to demonstrate how to make bath bombs that you can use or give as gifts.

They are my grandkids favorite gift.

Lunch will follow (after you wash your hands).

Paterson Toy Drive

We are currently waiting for a list of families in Paterson who could use a little extra help to make their Christmas bright. It will list family members, ages, and requests (if any). You can choose a family or individuals to buy for. You will need to wrap your presents and tape on the outside of the box who should receive it. Then just drop it off at the church by Sunday, December 7th.

There will be many grateful people, thank you!



:: Important Dates to Remember ::

Nov. 1—All Saints Day

Nov. 2—**Daylight Savings Time Ends:** set your clocks **BACK** an hour at 2am.

Nov. 13—Senior Gathering, 11am-1pm.

Nov. 15—Annual Church Conference

Nov. 23—Last day to drop off food for the food pantry.

Dec. 4—Cook Dinner for Spring Valley UMC Mission, 2 pm.

Dec. 7—Hanging of the Greens after church.

Dec. 7—Last day to order and pay for Christmas Poinsettias.

Dec. 7—Final drop off date for the Paterson Toy Drive.

Dec. 11—Senior Gathering,

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve Service at 5:30pm. *** Note time.

Dec. 25—Christmas Day ~ Merry Christmas



the Hanging of the Greens

We'll be decorating the Narthex and the Sanctuary during and after Coffee Hour on **December 7th**.

If we have everyone helping, it will only take 30-45 min. and be fun. Everything will be laid out for you to help put up. Just pick your area and get to work.



Please use this form to indicate the number of Poinsettias you wish to order for our Advent/Christmas Season.

I/We would like to order _____ poinsettia plants
at \$11.00 each

Total for plants ordered: \$_____

Given in Honor of _____

Given in Memory of _____



You must include your payment with this order form. Thank you.

This year, only poinsettia forms that have the payment attached will be honored.

Orders and payments must be received by December 7th.



Christmas Word Search

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

ANGELS
CHRIST
HOLY
JESUS
MARY
NIGHT
SHEPARDS
STAR

ANIMALS
GOLD
INN
JOSEPH
MYRRH
PRESENTS
SHEPARDS
WISEMEN

BETHLEHEM
HEROD
JERUSALEM
MANGER
NATIVITY
SHEEP
SINGING

What do the candles in our Advent wreath mean?

A wreath with three lit candles marks the third week of Advent. Photo by Kathleen Barry, United Methodist Communications.



The Advent wreath began as a German and Scandinavian home devotional practice used to mark the four weeks of Advent. Families would light a candle for each past week and the current week at their dinner or evening time of prayer. The configuration of candles, whether in a line or a circle, did not matter. Neither did the color of the candles (all colors are used in homes in Europe). What mattered was the marking of time and the increase of light each week in the face of increasing darkness as the winter solstice approached.

As Advent wreaths began to be used by congregations on Sundays in some places in Europe and America beginning in the late 19th century, several adaptations were made to make them work better in public worship spaces. Candles needed to be larger and more uniform than the "daily candles" handmade or purchased for home use. They also needed to be more uniform in color to fit with other décor in the sanctuary. That is why candles used in the Advent wreath are usually purple or blue, to coordinate with color of the paraments used during this season.

This shift in context from home to public use also made it important in the eyes of some for the candles to be given a meaning more than simply marking time and increasing light. This led to special ceremonies being developed for lighting these special candles each week.

As this practice began to catch on by the mid-twentieth century, several church supply houses who sold Advent wreaths and candles for public worship also developed resources, banners, and bulletin covers assigning a theme to each week, and thus each candle, based on scriptures from the one-year lectionaries used at that time. Those themes were Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, in that order.

Today, almost no one uses those one-year lectionaries, so those themes may not always fit the scriptures we hear in worship. The one exception is the Third Sunday

Continued from pg 2

of Advent, where the current lectionaries have continued to support the centuries old observance of "Gaudete" or "Joy Sunday." That is why church supply houses often offer rose or pink colored candles for the wreath for use on this day.

So how may we talk about the meaning of the Advent wreath today?

We can reclaim the original home use of marking time with the hope of increasing light as we await the return of Christ, that day when "The city no longer has need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it, because the glory of God illumines it, and its lamp is the lamb."

And we can develop meanings or themes for each week based on the focus of the scriptures themselves. After all, the candles and the wreath are an accessory, not an end in themselves. Their meaningfulness comes from how we use them to point toward Christ, the world's true light, who was, and is, and is to come.

This content was produced by Ask The UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications.



**Bergen Highlands
United Methodist
Church**

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**Church: 201-327-3960
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Join Us!



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

Important BHUMC Dates for 2025

Jan. 6—Epiphany

Jan. 9—Senior Gathering, 11am

Jan. 23—Cooking for Missions

Feb. 1-28—Soles 4 Souls Mission

Feb. 9—Valentine Boxes for College Students

Feb. 13—Senior Gathering

Feb. 27—Cooking for Missions

March 4—Pancake Supper, 6pm

March 5-April 6—Spring CUMAC Food Drive

March 5—Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30pm.

March 9—Daylight Savings Time begins

March 13—Senior Gathering

March 25—Soup Supper; 6pm

April 10—Senior Gathering

April 13—Palm Sunday Service

April 13—Easter Egg Hunt after service (ages 12 and under)

April 17—Holy Thursday Service; 7:00pm

April 20—Easter Sunday Service;

May 3—Best Stuff Sale; 9am-2pm

May 8—Senior Gathering

May 11—Mother's Day

May—USR Memorial Day Parade

June 13—Strawberry Picking, 8:30am.

June 14—Strawberry Festival, Rain or Shine

June 15—Father's Day

June 19—Cooking for Missions

July 6—Summer Worship begins-
New service hours 9:15am

Aug—Cooking for Missions

Sept. 7—Back to Fall Service Hour; 10:15am and BBQ after church

Sept. 13—USR Day, noon-6p

Oct. 5—World Communion Sunday

Oct. 5-Nov.2—Fall CUMAC Food Drive

Oct. 23—Cooking for Missions

Nov. 6—Cooking For Missions

Dec. 7—Hanging of the Greens

Dec. 7—Final day to order/pay for poinsettias

Dec. 7—Final Toy Drive drop off date

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.