



Tower Bell

BISHOP JANES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | WINTER 2024

Making Room for Hope: Celebrating Advent & Christmas Together

As winter's chill settles over Basking Ridge, Bishop Janes UMC warmly invites you to journey with us through this sacred season of anticipation and joy. Our Advent theme, "Making Room for Hope: From Division to Peace," will guide us through a meaningful exploration of how God's presence brings healing and unity to our world.

Special Advent Services

Our Advent journey begins December 1st with a blessing—we welcome District Superintendent Rev. Sang Won Doh to our pulpit for the first time. Join us as he helps us explore what it means to "Stand Watch Together" in times of uncertainty.

Throughout December, each Sunday service at 9:30 AM will unfold another chapter of hope:

- December 8: "Preparing the Way"—discovering how we can break down barriers together
- December 15: A special Service of Lessons and Carols, featuring our choir, bell choir, and guest musicians
- December 22: "Hope in Unexpected Places"—finding Emmanuel, God with us, in surprising ways

A Quieter Path to Christmas

On December 20th at 7 PM, we offer our Quiet Christmas service—a gentle sanctuary for those seeking peace amid the season's bustle. This contemplative service provides space to experience God's comforting presence and the quiet promise of Emmanuel.



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"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

JOHN 1:5

ONGOING MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship
9:30 AM

Children's Sunday School
(except first Sundays
of the month)
9:45 AM

Daily Pause to
Pray and Praise
(Facebook & YouTube)
7:30 AM

Bible Study
Most Thursdays 7:00 PM

Christmas Eve Celebrations

Join us as we welcome the Christ child with two distinct Christmas Eve services:

- 6:00 PM: A family-friendly celebration of joy
- 7:45 PM: Traditional service with cherished carols

Both services feature the beloved tradition of candlelight, symbolizing Christ's light entering our world.

Can't join in person? All services stream live on Facebook and YouTube.



Beautifying Our Sanctuary: Flowers & Poinsettias

Transform our sanctuary this Christmas season with the gift of a poinsettia. These beloved symbols of the season not only create a stunning worship environment but also offer a meaningful way to honor loved ones or celebrate God's blessings in our lives.

Your dedicated poinsettia will grace our sanctuary beginning December 13th through the Christmas season. Choose from classic red or elegant white varieties at \$30 per plant. After Christmas Eve services, you're welcome to take your poinsettia home to continue enjoying its beauty.

How to Order Your Poinsettia:

- Order after worship on November 24, December 1, or December 8
- Contact Richard Blauvelt: 973-518-2029
- Final ordering deadline: December 8

Year-Round Flower Dedications

Beyond the Christmas season, our sanctuary flower ministry continues throughout 2024. Fresh flower arrangements offer a beautiful way to:

- Commemorate special occasions
- Honor the memory of loved ones
- Express gratitude for God's blessings
- Celebrate life's meaningful moments

To reserve your preferred Sunday in 2024, simply sign up on the flower dedication calendar in the narthex or contact the church office. Each arrangement becomes part of our worship experience, bringing natural beauty and personal meaning to our sacred space.

Journey Together This Advent: "Making Room for Hope"

In a world often divided by uncertainty and difference, our Advent study invites us to discover how God's presence brings healing and unity. Join us Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Youth Room as we explore "Making Room for Hope: From Division to Peace."

Our Journey Together

Our four-week exploration begins November 21st with "Standing Watch Together," where we'll discover hope amid shared anxieties and find common ground in our watchfulness for God's presence. After a brief pause for Thanksgiving, we'll reconvene December 5th for "Preparing the Way," exploring how we can break down barriers and prepare for God's transformative work in our community.

As we move deeper into December, our December 12th gathering focuses on "Rejoicing in Our Midst," celebrating how God brings diverse communities together in joy. We'll conclude on December 19th with "Hope in Unexpected Places," reflecting on Mary's song and discovering how God brings hope through surprising channels.

A Rich Experience

Each evening includes engaging video content, thoughtful discussion, and practical applications for daily life. Through prayer practices and interactive activities, we'll connect ancient wisdom to contemporary challenges. You'll receive take-home materials to continue your reflection throughout the week, helping bridge our Thursday gatherings with Sunday worship.

Whether you can attend one session or all four, you're welcome to join this journey of hope. Bring your Bible and an open heart as we make room for hope together this Advent season.

Begin each day with our Daily Pause to Pray and Praise service at 7:30 AM on Facebook and YouTube. This brief yet powerful time of prayer will set a positive tone for your day, bringing peace and clarity. Whether at home or commuting, take a moment to pause, pray, and praise. Join us tomorrow and experience the difference that starting your day with prayer can make!

morning prayer



STAY IN TOUCH

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SUPPORT US

BJUMC is a not for profit 501c3 organization that depends on the generosity of our community to continue our ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Your support matters in so many ways, and we thank you!

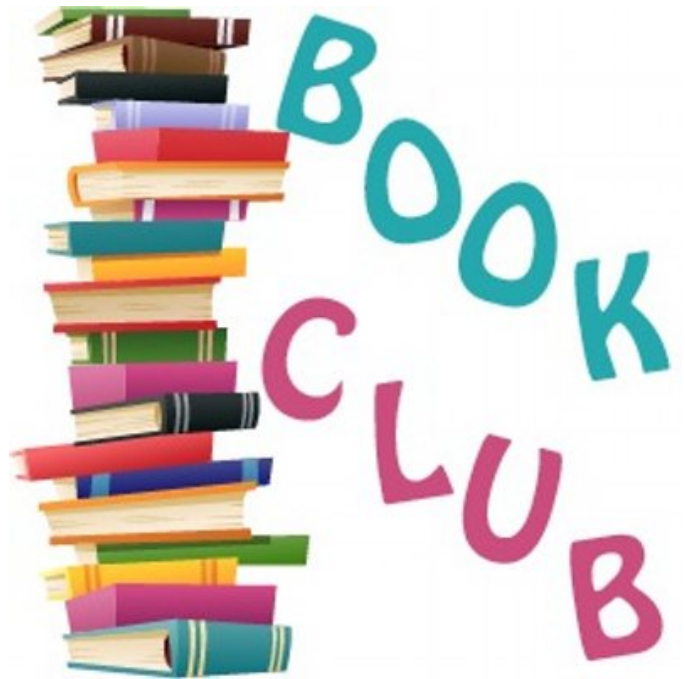


Join Us for Books, Fellowship & Discussion

Love books? Enjoy good conversation? The BJUMC Book Group welcomes readers from all walks of life to join our monthly literary gatherings. Whether you're a longtime reader or just getting back into reading, our casual, facilitator-led discussions offer the perfect blend of literary exploration and friendly fellowship.

Winter 2025 Reading List

- January 9: "Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt A heartwarming novel about a widow who befriends a giant Pacific octopus, leading to unexpected insights about life and loss.
- February 13: "The Women" by Kristin Hannah From the bestselling author of "The Nightingale" comes a powerful new story about the women who served in Vietnam.
- March 13: "The Berry Pickers" by Amanda Peters A moving debut novel exploring family bonds, loss, and indigenous identity through the lens of migrant workers in Maine.



More Than Just Books

Each month begins with an optional dinner gathering at Ridge Italian Comfort Food (25 S. Finley Avenue) at 5:30 PM, where conversation flows freely over good food and friendly company. Book discussions follow at 7:00 PM in classroom 3/4 at the church.

Join Us!

- When: Second Thursday monthly, September–November and January–May
- Time: Dinner at 5:30 PM, Discussion at 7:00 PM
- Where: Ridge Italian Comfort Food (dinner) & BJUMC classroom 3/4 (discussion)

For book group information, contact or to join us for dinner, contact the church office. (please RSVP for dinner by 5 PM on meeting day).

Share Your Gifts in Worship & Music

Bishop Janes comes alive when members share their unique gifts in worship. We welcome new worship leaders to read scripture, offer children's messages, or lead prayers during Sunday services. No experience needed—just a willing heart. Contact Janet Kaefer via the church office to join our worship leader rotation starting in March.

Our music ministry also invites new voices and ringers to join our ensembles. Whether you're interested in choir or handbells, we'd love to have you join us. You can participate year-round or join for special seasons like Christmas or Easter. Contact Jany Izaquirre (music@bjumc.org) to learn more about our music ministry opportunities.



Light Up a Child's Christmas at CAMP YDP!

For over three decades, Bishop Janes has helped make Christmas brighter for children at the CAMP Youth Development Program in Paterson. This year, 53 stars on our Christmas tree represent 53 opportunities to share God's love with children who participate in CAMP YDP's vital after-school and summer programs.

Beginning November 24th, you'll find our special Christmas tree in the Narthex decorated with stars. Each star carries the name and gift wishes of a CAMP YDP child. To participate in this cherished tradition:

1. Select a star from the tree
2. Sign the gift register with your name and phone number
3. Pick up an instruction sheet
4. Purchase and wrap gifts (\$20-25 limit)
5. Return your wrapped gift, with star attached, under the CAMP tree **by December 15th**



Through CAMP YDP's educational and life skills programs, these children are building brighter futures. Your gift adds a spark of joy to their Christmas celebration and shows them they're part of a caring community. Questions? Contact Arthur Martin via the church office.

FEAST: Building Community One Meal at a Time



There's something powerful about sharing a meal together. Stories flow more easily, laughter comes more naturally, and strangers can become friends across a shared table. That's the heart behind FEAST (Fellowship Encounters And Spiritual Transformation), our new community dinner ministry launching this winter.

On Wednesday, February 12, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM, Melick Hall will be transformed into a gathering place where all are welcome. Whether you're a longtime resident or new to the area, seeking connection or simply sharing in community, FEAST offers a place for you. Over home-cooked meals and conversation, we'll create space for connections to grow.

This quarterly gathering is more than just dinner—it's an invitation to be part of something larger. As we break bread together, we'll discover the threads that

connect us all. There's no cost to attend, and everyone is welcome to this table.

Want to help create these evenings of connection? We need volunteers to prepare meals, set up spaces, and welcome guests. To learn more about volunteering or to help us plan (though RSVPs aren't required), contact the church office at 908-766-1108 or office@bjumc.org.

Come as you are. Bring a friend. Let's discover what happens when we gather together in fellowship and faith!

Growing, Learning, & Playing at Little Lambs



Autumn brought a whirlwind of discovery and joy to our Little Lambs Toddler Center. As the seasons changed outside our windows, our littlest learners embraced each day with curiosity and enthusiasm, making every moment a learning adventure.

Our classrooms came alive with the spirit of fall exploration. Young mathematicians sorted and graphed apples, developing early math skills through tasty investigation. Budding naturalists ventured on walks around town, collecting leaves and acorns, while artistic spirits created beautiful leaf etchings. Each activity wove together learning and play in the special way that makes Little Lambs such a nurturing environment.

October brought extra excitement when Swift Farms transformed our space into a mini petting zoo. Eyes widened with wonder as children met chicks, goats, bunnies, and even a pony! The month culminated in our Halloween parade, where costumed children delighted everyone with their performances of spooky seasonal favorites.

As we look toward the holiday season, our hearts are full of gratitude for our wonderful community of students, families, and teachers. We're excited to bring Little Lambs' creative spirit to the Winter Market on December 7th, where we'll host a special craft space in the Youth Room.

Want to be part of our joyful learning community? Contact Evelyn Kissel (evelyn.kissel@bjumc.org) or Barbara Kleinert to learn about volunteer opportunities. We're deeply thankful to Bishop Janes Church for their continued support in nurturing these precious early learning experiences.



Caring & Connecting: Your Church Family

The spirit of connection was alive and well this fall at Bishop Janes! Our October Fall Festival/Chili Cookoff brought the community together for a memorable evening, with Brett Hodges defending his championship title for another year of chili excellence. Looking ahead to 2025, we're planning a game night for February or March—stay tuned for details!

Yet our ministry extends far beyond social events. Each Sunday after worship, different church committees host fellowship time in the narthex, creating space for conversation and connection over refreshments. Our card ministry reaches out to those experiencing illness, loss, or life transitions—letting them know their church family holds them in prayer and care. For those unable to join us in person, we offer streaming services, visits (often accompanied by Pastor Dave), and regular check-ins.

Your Membership Care Team—Debbie Becker, Donna Hanft, and Peggy Shurts—wants to hear from you. Whether you know someone needing care or encouragement, have ideas for future activities, or want to get involved in our caring ministries, please reach out to any of our co-chairs. Together, we create a church family that celebrates joys, supports through challenges, and stays connected in all seasons of life.



Growing Our Ministry in 2025



As we approach the close of 2024, our Finance Committee celebrates the faithful stewardship of our church family. Despite facing a modest deficit earlier this year, the tremendous success of our Golf Outing combined with anticipated holiday offerings puts us on track to end the year meeting our goals—a testament to our congregation's generous spirit and dedication.

The coming year brings exciting opportunities for growth in our ministry. Our 2025 budget reflects our commitment to nurturing discipleship, with increased funding for Worship & Music, Christian Discipleship, Mission & Outreach, and Membership Care. These additional resources will empower each ministry area to explore innovative ways to fulfill our church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Pastor Dave will share more about these exciting initiatives in the weeks ahead.

This season of growth also brings leadership transitions within our finance team. As our current Treasurer and Finance Secretary prepare to explore new ways of serving our church, we're adding a Bookkeeper position in addition to welcoming a new Treasurer & Finance Secretary (see letter from Brett on next page). These changes will strengthen our financial ministry as we move forward.

We enter 2025 with hearts full of gratitude for your faithful giving and excitement for the wonder-filled year ahead.

A Message from Brett Hodges

Dear Bishop Janes Family,

As we enter this season of hope and new beginnings, I write to share some important transitions in our church's financial leadership. For several years, I've had the privilege of serving as your Treasurer, managing our payroll, bookkeeping, and financial reporting. As we look toward 2025, I'm excited to announce positive changes that will strengthen our financial stewardship.

I'm delighted to share that Karen Hosbach will step into the role of Treasurer, while Suzanne Baker will serve as our new bookkeeper. Both bring incredible talent to these positions, and we are truly blessed to have them leading our financial ministry forward.

You might wonder why we're moving from one position to two. This change reflects both our growth as a congregation and our commitment to excellence in managing your generous gifts. Working with Pastor Dave, Finance Committee Chair Bob Parker, and following United Methodist guidelines, we've thoughtfully redesigned our financial processes. This transition adds important security layers and acknowledges that our church's financial responsibilities have grown beyond what one person can reasonably manage—a wonderful sign of our church's vitality!

While there may be occasional adjustments during this transition, I know you'll extend the same grace to Karen and Suzanne that you've always shown me. Though I'm stepping down as Treasurer, I remain part of our church family and am always happy to answer any questions you might have about this transition.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me these past years. I look forward to seeing how God continues to work through our church's faithful stewardship.

With gratitude and blessing, Brett Hodges Outgoing Treasurer & Continuing Lay Leader



Experience Winter Market

On Saturday, December 7th from 12-7 PM, Bishop Janes UMC transforms into a winter wonderland as we host the Basking Ridge Business Alliance Winter Market alongside our traditional Homespun Holiday Bazaar. This cherished community event showcases local artisans and entrepreneurs who create unique treasures you won't find in traditional stores.

Discover handcrafted jewelry, local honey, striking metal photography, pottery, Christmas ornaments, and cozy crochet creations. Make a day of it by exploring both the Winter Market and our church's Homespun Holiday Bazaar, or stop by our Christmas tree sale. When you need a moment of peace amid the festive bustle, our sanctuary welcomes you for quiet reflection.

Join us in supporting our local creative community while finding special gifts that carry meaning and heart.

United Women in Faith: Growing Together in Faith & Service

United Women in Faith stands as a testament to the power of women working together to transform lives through spiritual growth, service, and social justice. At Bishop Janes, our vibrant community welcomes women of all ages and stages of life to join in fellowship, study, and mission work that makes a tangible difference in our community and world.

Celebrating the Season Together

Our December calendar opens with the Ridge A Capella Holiday Concert on December 3rd at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary. This award-winning choir will fill our sacred space with seasonal songs, followed by homemade refreshments and fellowship in the Narthex. This free event welcomes our entire community to begin the holiday season with music and joy.

The highlight of our winter season, the **Homespun Holiday Bazaar**, transforms Wesley and Melick Halls on December 7th from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. This cherished tradition offers handcrafted treasures, home-baked delights, and unique finds at our jewelry table and Attic Treasures booth. Take a break from shopping to enjoy lunch in Melick Hall until 4:30 PM, featuring homemade quiche, hearty soups, fresh salads, and more. Our silent auction showcases themed gift baskets, local experiences, and special offerings from community partners. The bazaar continues Sunday morning after worship for final sales. All proceeds support our vital mission work locally and globally.



Growing in Community

Throughout the winter months, several circles offer ways to connect and grow.



- **New Circle:** Third Tuesdays (Dec 17, Jan 21, Feb 18) at 5:30 PM. Share dinner and meaningful conversation with other working women in a relaxed setting. Locations vary monthly.
- **Grace Circle:** Fourth Mondays (Dec 16, Jan 27, Feb 24) at 9:30 AM. Gather at Carol Lutes' home for devotion, fellowship, and engaging discussion about faith and life.
- **Hearts2Hands:** Fourth Tuesdays (Jan 28, Feb 25) at 7:00 PM in Youth Room. Create prayer shawls for those needing comfort and support. All skill levels welcome—we provide instruction and materials.
- **Thursday Walk & Talk:** 9:00 AM at Harry Dunham Park (weather permitting). Start your day with fellowship and fitness in the fresh air.

Contact women@bjumc.org for current meeting locations and to learn more about any of our activities.

Living Our Faith: Justice, Kindness & Humble Service

He has told you, O man,
what is good; and what
does the Lord require of
you but to do justice,
and to *love kindness*
and to walk humbly
with your God?

MICAH 6:8

As we enter 2025, United Women in Faith renews our commitment to a vision of liberation, justice, and peace that transcends political seasons. Guided by Micah 6:8, we pledge to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. This sacred calling leads us to work intentionally toward racial justice, climate justice, and gender justice—putting one foot in front of the other, even when the path grows challenging.

We embrace the truth that all people are beloved by God, created with inherent dignity, and worthy of respect and kindness. As a sisterhood, we commit to working across lines of difference, trusting that while we may not always see the path ahead clearly, God promises us a future filled with hope.

College Care Packages: Love in Action

One way we express this care is through our College Care Package Ministry. Beginning January 15th, we'll collect items to remind our college students they remain close to our hearts. Consider donating:

Comfort Foods:

- Candy and gum
- Fruit snacks and granola bars
- Ramen noodles and instant soup
- Hot cocoa packets

Practical Care:

- Toothbrushes and lip balm
- Fun socks
- Playing cards
- Fidget spinners and silly putty



Most importantly, we include handwritten notes and Valentine's cards, sharing messages of encouragement and support. Join us Saturday, February 8th at 10:00 AM in Room 3/4 to assemble these packages of love and care.

To ensure your college student receives a package, please send their current address to women@bjumc.org. Together, we create tangible reminders that our church family's love extends far beyond our walls.



Planning with Purpose: Free Resources for Life's Important Decisions

Through our connection with Rev. Adam Hamilton's Church of the Resurrection, we're pleased to share information about two valuable free resources that can help bring peace of mind to you and your loved ones.



Binder for Life: A Guide to Personal Organization

This comprehensive three-session guide helps you organize essential personal and financial information in one accessible location. While valuable for adults of all ages, those 50 and older find it particularly beneficial as it provides:

- Templates for gathering crucial documents
- Guidelines for creating clear instructions for loved ones
- Frameworks for ensuring your wishes are known
- Steps to reduce stress on family members during difficult times

"Having the Last Word": Your Legacy, Your Wishes

This thoughtful resource, designed as a follow-up to "Binder for Life," guides you through planning your memorial service or funeral. While considering end-of-life arrangements might seem daunting, having these plans in place is a precious gift to your loved ones. The guide helps you think through:

- Selection of meaningful scripture readings and music
- Expression of personal wishes
- Creation of a service that reflects your faith journey
- Documentation of final arrangements



Both resources are available at no cost through sharechurch.com. They can be used individually, with family members, or in small groups. Many find that these materials prompt important family conversations and provide frameworks for discussing sensitive topics with grace and clarity.

Interested in accessing these resources? Contact Pastor Dave for more information about obtaining these materials and guidance on how to use them effectively.

Spreading Christmas Joy, One Tree at a Time

For 73 years, Bishop Janes' Christmas tree sale has been more than just a holiday tradition—it's been a ministry of connection, service, and love. Starting November 30th, our church lawn will once again transform into a festive forest of Fraser and Douglas Firs, alongside beautiful wreaths and pine roping, creating opportunities to share Christ's love with our neighbors.



A Legacy of Service

What began as a simple fundraiser has grown into a cherished community tradition, with second and third generations returning to find their perfect tree. Through this ministry, we've helped countless families create Christmas memories while supporting vital missions. The approximately \$40,000 raised annually reaches far beyond our church walls, supporting:

- Local needs through Somerset County Food Bank and God's CoOp Pantry
- National disaster relief efforts
- International missions, including famine relief and educational initiatives
- The Good News Home for Women

Be Part of the Mission

Every aspect of our tree sale depends on volunteers, and there's a place for everyone to serve. Whether you can lift trees or prefer to help with sales and pricing, your presence makes a difference. Each three-hour shift offers countless opportunities to:

- Welcome families to our church grounds
- Share prayer with those facing challenges
- Connect newcomers with our worship community
- Demonstrate Christ's love through simple acts of service

Visit Us This Season (while supplies last)

- Weekdays: Noon - 8 PM
- Saturdays: 9 AM - 8 PM
- Sundays: 11 AM - 6 PM

Convenient parking available on S. Finley Ave. Credit cards, checks, and cash accepted.

Join Our Volunteer Family

Sign up for a shift at bjumc.org or contact Ian Lutes (towerclub@bjumc.org). High school students can earn community service hours while making a difference in their community.

When you volunteer, you're not just selling trees—you're creating opportunities for ministry, building relationships, and sharing God's love with our community. Join us in making this 73rd year of Christmas tree ministry our most meaningful yet.

