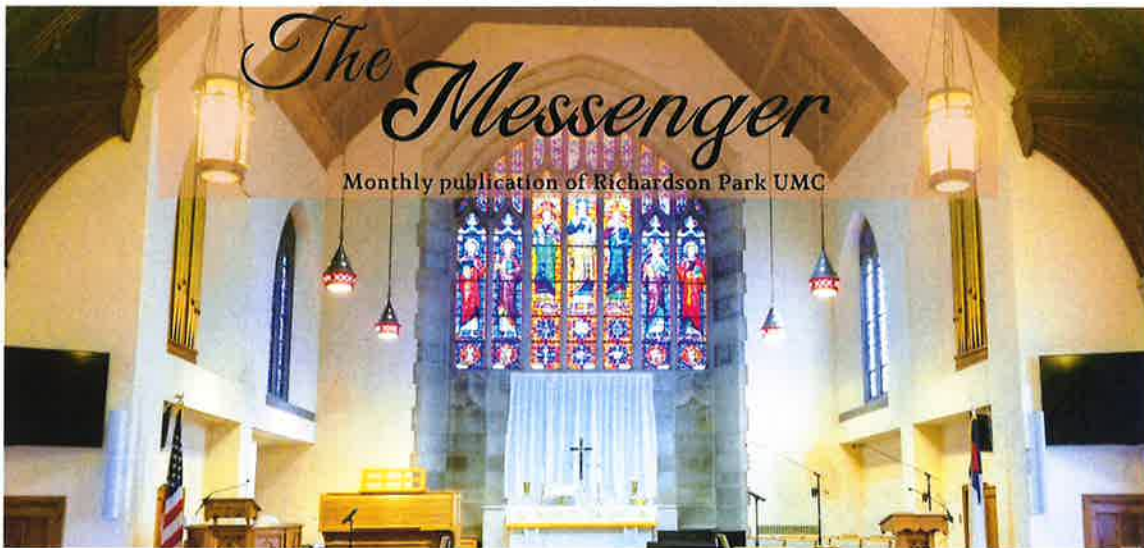


FEBRUARY 2024



## A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

*Written by Rev. Chris Pennington*

### Praying God's Love this Valentine's Day (and always)

God instructs us to love one another, His most important commandment to us all. What does it mean to love one another? It seems difficult, this act of offering love to all. In John 13:34, He said to us, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

Have you ever had a moment in your life where you tried to "look busy" to avoid having to help someone out or ignored a stranger who just kept talking to you as you waited in line together at the coffee shop? You're not alone. It is human nature for us to remove ourselves from situations that are uncomfortable, but we are called to embrace the uncomfortable and really, truly love others well. God calls us to be brave and to share His love with all who cross our paths. Scripture states that we should "not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2 NIV)

When it comes to loving others, there are many, many ways to do so, but to start, pray for them. Praying for others daily is an impactful way of loving them unconditionally, just as God calls us to do. Think about the people that are present in your everyday life and ways that you could pray for them. Think about the people that you come across every so often, maybe a relative that you haven't seen in years or a friend you've drifted away from. How can you love them and serve the Lord through prayer? This year, the National Day of Prayer is on May 2, and I encourage you to ask God to help you step out of your comfort zone. Make the connection, offer encouragement, and start diligently praying for others as an act of love. After all, if we are called to truly love one another - that means we must see past outer appearances, we must see past the little annoying behaviors of others, and we must see past the awkwardness of new situations. We must look past these things so that we can get to the hearts of those who are placed in our paths.

Is there someone in your life you're feeling God placing on your heart? Maybe you have two or three people in mind? Sit down today and say a prayer for them - however you feel called, and then send them an encouraging card today or invite them to coffee. And for those whom you happen upon in the grocery store or the coffee shop line, offer them an encouraging word and keep them in mind as you talk to God throughout your day. Let's take back Valentine's Day from the commercial beast it's become and make it something really special!

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Chris

*The purpose of Richardson Park United Methodist Church is to help people experience the amazing love of God and develop a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.*



United  
Women  
in Faith

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

BY MARLENE JOHNSON

When February arrives, many of us are reminded of "Love". A day is even dedicated to exactly that wonderful feeling. This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine's are the same day! We will have a lot to think about on the 14th of February.

Our sisters of faith met on January 14th and many ideas were discussed. Here are two of the great ways we can share God's Love:

- 1) Years ago, there was a barrel outside the sanctuary. The purpose was to collect canned goods and non-perishables for the community action program. C.A.P. is no longer here but St. Mathews Food Pantry is here. Join us in bringing items to fill the barrel especially on the first Sunday of the month.
- 2) Many folks in our immediate area look forward to the H.O.P.P. delivery of food on the 4th Friday of the month. Now that cold weather is here - there is a need for scarves, hats, gloves and socks. We have another container ready to collect these items. Bring them to church on Sundays--everything is appreciated!

Yes, the women of faith have ideas and act! Let all of us get involved. During our meeting, we also did a photo challenge from the Response magazine. The editors wanted to know who uses the magazine published for United Women in Faith. Photos were taken and e-mailed - wonder if we will appear in a future edition?

Here is an invitation to all women in Richardson Park United Methodist Church:

When: February 11th

Time: Directly following worship

Where: The Extension

Length: 30-35 minutes

Come join this wonderful and active group of women!

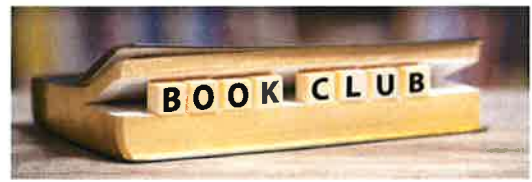
Now, my sisters in Faith:

1. Attend our meeting on February 11th.
2. Share a short story of love you have encountered.

Remember: "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony".

Colossians 3:14

Blessings from Marlene



## BOOK CLUB

BY PAUL WEAVER

Our January meeting was held on Friday, January 12th at 2 pm at the church. We discussed "The Spectacular" by Fiona Davis.

Our February meeting will be on Friday, February 9th at 1 pm at the church. **Please note the earlier time!** We will discuss "The Neighbor's Secret" by L. Alison Heller.

Coming attractions include "I Know Who You Are" by Barbara Rae-Venter, "The Senator's Wife", by Liv Constantine, "The Guest List" by Lucy Foley and "Seventy Times Seven" by Alex Mar. And if you would like to join us and have a book to share with the club, please let me know. A number of our recent books have come from your suggestions, please keep those coming!

We received information on the New Castle Reads event for 2024, which is scheduled for April 30, 2024 at 7 pm. We are planning to attend again this year. The author and the book (The Violin Conspiracy by Brendan Slocumb) appear to be very interesting. Thanks, Paul



## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

BY MARLENE JOHNSON

We started the year of 2024 with an exciting role play. We became the wise men on the long trip to visit Jesus. We followed the "large" star to where the Holy Family was located. Gifts (promises of what we will do) were given to Jesus. We even had costumes to wear. It was wonderful to place ourselves back in time.

The weather has turned cold and we remembered God made many creatures. After reading "Bird Count", we made bird feeders - all God's creatures can use a helping hand.

What will happen in February? You must come to Children's church to discover what adventures are awaiting you!

Meet us in the back of the church sanctuary by 10:30 am. We will then go to our room - adventures await!

Hope to see you soon - Ms. Marlene



## TECHNOLOGY TIPS

BY JIM CHILCUTT

### Scams

There is a scam that has been around for a while but is worth mentioning. The primary target is seniors who have family members traveling far from home. The bad actor calls the home of the victim and claims to be calling on behalf of the police or emergency hospital and the family member needs funds. The objective of course is to panic the victim and get money sent to aid the distressed family member.

How does the scammer know who to call? How many people do you know use Facebook, Instagram, or other social media to document their travels? Or suppose the family member is overseas and the criminals get their identity or personal information somehow.

When a family member is travelling it would be a good idea to work out a means of identification allowing you to get proof of identity that a criminal would not know.

It's a dangerous world and there are lots of people trying to separate you from your hard earned money.

If you have any questions or suggestions send an email to [rpumc@rpumchurch.org](mailto:rpumc@rpumchurch.org) or call the church office.



## FLOWER CONTAINERS NEEDED

We love delivering altar flowers to shut-ins and they love the visit **BUT** we are in need of containers. I have found the 1 lb. metal coffee cans do work very well. Please donate these so we can continue this wonderful program.  
Blessings from Marlene



## MEMORIAL TREE

BY GLENDA DONNELLY

Thanks to the great work of the Trustees and the BMG, we have a beautiful Memorial Tree to recognize all our loved families and friends who have passed.

Take a moment and stop by the Extension and see the Memorial Tree. If you are interested in adding a loved one's name to the Memorial Tree, there are forms located on the table near the Tree. Any questions, please contact Glenda Donnelly at (302) 998-5047 or call the Church Office.

Thank you. Glenda

## BAGS OF BLESSINGS

### DONATIONS NEEDED

Please donate "single-served" food items such as granola bars, fruit cups, pudding cups, 16 oz. water bottles, snack crackers, cookies, peanut butter, etc. in support of this important adjunct ministry to our Free Lunch program. Volunteers are needed to fill the Bags of Blessings which are given out at the Free Lunch Ministry on Thursdays. Any questions, please contact Kathy Rogers, Missions Chair

## FREE LUNCH MINISTRY

BY JOE TUCKER

Free Lunch program is continuing every Thursday 11:30 am to 12:30 pm with a grab-n-go lunch. We deliver a hot lunch in a take-out container at the main door of the church. Each person also receives a bag of crackers, power bars, a bottle of water, cup of pudding, etc. Our group of dedicated volunteers work Wednesday morning preparing food and 'bags of blessings' to hand out on Thursday morning. We are averaging about 100 meals a week. Contributions of items are always accepted. Currently, Free Lunch is in need of plastic grocery shopping bags at this time.

Some church members pick up meals and deliver them to family and elderly neighbors. Thank you to all volunteers who help on Wednesday and Thursday to prepare and serve free lunch!! Thank you. Joe



## ONLINE GIVING - TITHES & OFFERINGS

ONLINE GIVING NOW AVAILABLE

Hello RPUMC Family!

We are pleased to announce that ONLINE GIVING is NOW Available! During this time of social distancing and quarantine, you can still support the work and ministry of Richardson Park UMC through your tithes and offerings by either sending them in the mail or now by giving online through our website!

(Click the "GIVING" tab on our website).

[www.rpumchurch.org/html/giving.html](http://www.rpumchurch.org/html/giving.html)



## New Women's Al-Alon Meeting

Women's Al-Anon Family Group is an open meeting available to all women on Thursday evenings from 6:30-7:30 pm at Ebenezer United Methodist Church, 525 Polly Drummond Hill Road, Newark, DE 19711. Please use the main front entrance of the church.

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relative and friends of alcoholics who share experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems.

If you have any questions please call 302-731-9495, Ext. 10.

## Peniel Soup Kitchen

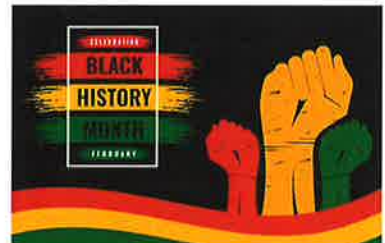
### 10:30 to 12:30—Every Friday

Pick Up Free Lunch—Goodie Bag For All

Looking forward to seeing all of our friends again. Please come everyone.



## WELCOME!



## The Shoppe at RPUMC

The Shoppe at RPUMC will reopen for shopping on Thursdays from 11 am-2 pm on January 18, 2024



PROCEEDS BENEFIT MISSIONS/OUTREACH



### ALTAR FLOWER ORDERS

Please remember that if you would like to dedicate altar flowers "In Honor of" or "In Loving Memory of" a loved one, please submit your order and donation to the church office at least one week before. Thank you.



PENIEL UMC CHURCH

# Soup Kitchen



OPEN EVERY FRIDAY  
FROM 10AM to 12PM

OPEN TO ANYONE WHO WANTS  
A HOT MEAL

115 E Market St, Newport, DE 19804

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling continues her podcast.  
**Thursdays at the Table**



Asking good questions, engaging in deep conversation and telling the whole truth can change the world.

In her podcast Bishop LaTrelle Easterling invites you to join her for Thursdays at the Table as she is joined by leaders from across the connection, serving up new insights and interesting ways of experiencing our lives together.

New podcasts are the first Thursday of each month. Tune in **February 1, 2024** for the next podcast.

You can join at 8 a.m. or listen any time on: Spotify, Apple Podcasts or at [pdcbbc.org/thursdays-at-the-table.html](http://pdcbbc.org/thursdays-at-the-table.html)



February 14th

ASH  
WEDNESDAY

### The Bulletin

A newsletter published by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling is a reproducible resource for local churches. In the most recent issue, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling offers a word of gratitude for the United Methodists serving faithfully in a vast array of mission and ministry. "It is a privilege to serve in ministry with you as we share the love of God and bring hope to our communities," she writes. "Because you rise every morning and say, 'Yes!' to discipleship, seeds are being planted, challenges are being met and lives are being transformed."

You can view The Bulletin at: [www.pdcbbc.org/the-bulletin](http://www.pdcbbc.org/the-bulletin)



Happy  
Groundhog Day

February 2

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

February 4-Sherlynn Aurelio  
 At the Cross: Fran Tebutt  
 February 11-RPUMC Chance & Bell Choir  
 February 18-OPEN  
 February 25-Bob & Karen Collins

**LAY READERS-To be announced**

**FREE  
BREAD**

**Thursday 9:00am -  
12:30pm**  
**Friday 9:00am -  
12:30pm**  
**Sunday 11:15 am -  
12:30 pm**

**PENIEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
115 E. MARKET STREET NEWPORT, DE 19804**



*Bishop LaTrelle Easterling*

BISHOP, PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE,  
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

REV. ERICA ROBINSON-JOHNSON *Chief Administrative Officer*

### **A New Year Message from Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling Forging A New Path**

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." -- Philippians 2: 3-4

Have you ever been listening to a song you've heard a thousand times before and it just hits you differently? You can hum the melody from beginning to end and you know the lyrics by heart, but this time it just hits you differently. That happened to me a few days after Christmas. I was walking through the grocery store, singing along with a tune and the song gripped me in a different way. The song was [The Living Years](#) by Mike + The Mechanics. I couldn't get the song out of my head and I didn't understand why it was speaking to me so poignantly. I finally sat down and listened to it in the quiet of my home without distraction. As I listened to these words, I felt convicted about the coming year:

*So we open up a quarrel*

*Between the present and the past*

*We only sacrifice the future*

*It's the bitterness that lasts*

This song was released when I was attending law school in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1988. It is part of the soundtrack of my life. But as I heard it a few days ago, it spoke to me about our future and what we risk if we aren't willing to see beyond our tightly held beliefs, beyond our well-crafted opinions. It is the bitterness that lasts. The words themselves are often forgotten. The nuances blow away like leaves in the wind. But the bitterness that was created remains and hardens hearts. It fosters an acrimony that is almost impenetrable. It is at this moment that we no longer care what happens to another, whether they stay or go, whether they prosper or suffer, whether they are included or cast aside. When all else is gone, it's the bitterness that lasts. Bitterness is a price we cannot afford to pay.

As a church, we have not just embarked upon a new year. We have closed the door on a very painful chapter of our United Methodist lives. Therefore, we have an opportunity to learn the lessons of the past and begin a new future together -- a future that brims with newness and hope and possibility. We are not obliged to repeat our past mistakes, but we must be mindful of them and refuse to repeat those corrosive behaviors. We must learn a new way of living together as the Beloved Community.

The chorus of *The Living Years* includes the line, "You can listen as well as you hear." The definition of listening is "to hear something with thoughtful attention." Listening is an active process that requires an intentional choice. We can hear sounds without actually listening to them. We can claim to be in a conversation without really listening to what is being said. When that happens, we are really engaged in a monologue rather than a conversation or dialogue. We are simply rehearsing our perspective without opening ourselves to what others are sharing, or the reasoning that supports their belief. But this year can be different. We can choose to listen as well as we hear.

We have significant decisions to make in the coming days. How will we design and structure the annual conferences for even more effective disciple-making? How will the General Conference define the trajectory of our denomination, both in theology and structure? How will we collaborate as a jurisdiction to engage in deeper mission and ministry? Will we elect new bishops and how will all of the bishops be deployed? How will we bring revival to our congregations? These are herculean decisions that will affect our future for generations. Generations. This requires discernment beyond our desires and preferences. This requires a selfless surrender to something larger than ourselves. It will require being open to the Spirit, but also being open to one another.

After visiting the Methodist societies in Newcastle, it is reported that John Wesley believed those gathered lacked something extremely important for their future. He discerned they lacked the discipline needed to grow in holiness of heart and life with one another. He advised that along with gathering to pray and receive a word of exhortation, they also had to **watch over one another in love**. I contend it is impossible to watch over one another in love without the willingness to listen to one another.

*continued .....*

continued from previous page.....

Another line in the song reminds us that "we all talk a different language talking in defense." There is a tendency to guard or defend the past, including our previously held beliefs and the decisions attendant to them. Somehow, we believe that to make a different decision or have a change of mind casts aspersions upon our former selves. Yet, our Wesleyan heritage calls us to continued study, growth, discernment and evolution. We are not prisoners to the past and change does not condemn. We are all going on to perfection.

The song The Living Years is ultimately about living with the regret of not learning how to be in relationship with a loved one when we don't see eye to eye. How do we transcend and love one another beyond our differences? The irony is that the writers had both recently lost their fathers, and only through those deaths did they realize they had more in common with them than they previously believed. Beloved, there will be differences of opinion as we discuss the many matters before us. We will disagree on various and sundry points. But those disagreements do not have to divide us. We can choose to listen and understand. We can choose to privilege the needs of others beyond our own. We can choose to respect the Imago Dei in all and know that God loves them just as God loves us and find a way to discern together. We can understand that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we have far more in common than we understand. We can choose to listen as well as we hear. May it be so.

Happy New Year! Happy Living Year!

**Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling**

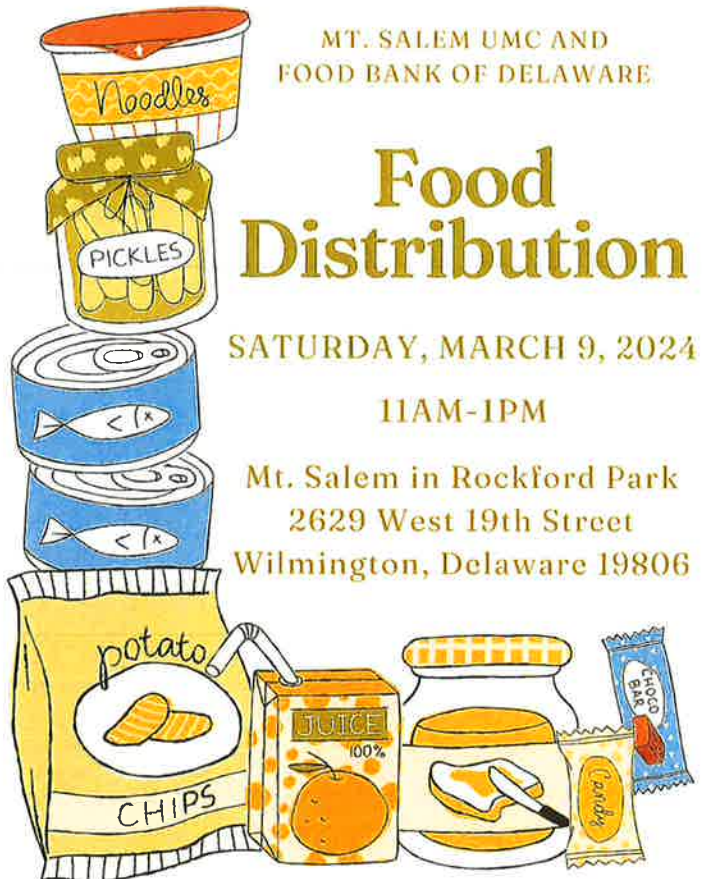


# PAPER

## Shredding

**SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024  
8AM-2PM**

**MT. SALEM IN ROCKFORD PARK  
2629 WEST 19TH STREET  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19806**



MT. SALEM UMC AND  
FOOD BANK OF DELAWARE

## Food Distribution

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024

11AM-1PM

Mt. Salem in Rockford Park  
2629 West 19th Street  
Wilmington, Delaware 19806

# February Birthdays

Terri Snead February 1  
Anastasia Hayman February 2  
Edward Podgorski February 4  
Beverly Cuomo February 5  
Terry Bourdon February 7  
Carol Cathell February 10  
Mary Sutor February 11  
Brian Crozier February 12  
Terri Antonine February 13  
Cassandra King February 13  
Byrom Price February 13  
Ellen Willard February 14



Robert Davis February 16  
Kathy Gibbons February 20  
Bettie Smith February 20  
Robert Truitt February 20  
Kristin Fleming February 21  
Bethany Pasmore February 21  
Morgan Coverdale February 23  
Donna Daniels February 23  
Ben Brindle February 24  
Bob Thomas February 24  
Kim Przybylski February 26

Note: If your name is not listed on our birthday list, please call the church office

## ASH WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 14TH

All are Welcomed!!

Please join us for a Service of Worship for Ash Wednesday at Richardson Park UMC.

Worship Service can be attended in-person or may viewed online broadcasting Live.

**Join Us**  
**February 14th**  
**at**  
**12 Noon**  
**Online and**  
**In-person**  
**Worship**  
**Service**

Ash Wednesday



# FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> 9AM BMG – EXT. 11:30AM–12:30PM -Free Lunch – FH 11AM–2PM -The Shoppe at RPUMC	<b>2 GROUNDHOG DAY</b> 	<b>3</b> <b>CLOSED</b> First Saturdays' – The Shoppe & Annex at RPUMC
<b>4 FH RESERVED SCOUT SUNDAY BLUE &amp; GOLD CEREMONY</b> 9AM Adult Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Children's Church	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6:30 PM Scouts Board Mtg. - Lounge	<b>8</b> 9AM BMG – EXT. 11AM–2PM -The Shoppe at RPUMC 11:30AM–12:30PM -Free Lunch – FH	<b>9</b> 1PM Book Club – Lounge	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9AM Adult Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Children's Church 11:30AM UWIF Mtg. – Ext	<b>12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14 VALENTINE'S DAY</b> <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> 12PM Noon – Online and In-person Worship 	<b>15</b> 9AM BMG – EXT. 11AM–2PM -The Shoppe at RPUMC 11:30AM–12:30PM -Free Lunch – FH	<b>16</b>	<b>17 FH RESERVED</b> 11AM – Koinonia Mtg. – Ext.
<b>18</b> 9AM Adult Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Children's Church 11:30AM – Trustee Mtg. – Lounge	<b>19 PRESIDENTS' DAY</b>  <b>CHURCH OFFICE &amp; BUILDING CLOSED</b>	<b>20</b>  <b>Messenger Deadline Articles Due</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 9AM BMG – EXT. 11AM–2PM -The Shoppe at RPUMC 11:30AM–12:30PM -Free Lunch – FH	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 9AM Adult Sunday School 10:30AM Worship & Children's Church	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 9AM BMG – EXT. 11AM–2PM -The Shoppe at RPUMC 11:30AM–12:30PM -Free Lunch – FH		

COME ON OUT & SHOP AT  
**THE SHOPPE AT RPUMC**  
 on Thursdays 11 AM-2 PM  
**PRE-LOVED GOODS**  
 DISCOVER GREAT FINDS



Thank you for supporting the mission.



@rpumchurch.org  
 proceeds benefit  
 missions/outreach



The Messenger



February 2024



RICHARDSON PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

11 NORTH MARYLAND AVENUE
WILMINGTON, DE 19804-1305
Office: (302) 654-0961
E-Mail: rpumc@rpumchurch.org
Website: www.rpumchurch.org

Rev. J. Christopher Pennington
Cell Phone (302) 229-5626
E-Mail: pastorchris@rpumchurch.org
Office Hours: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. M-F
Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Boyce



In-Person and Live Streaming Sunday Worship Services at the following sites:

rpumchurch.org/html/streaming\_service.html or Facebook at: facebook.com/rpumchurch

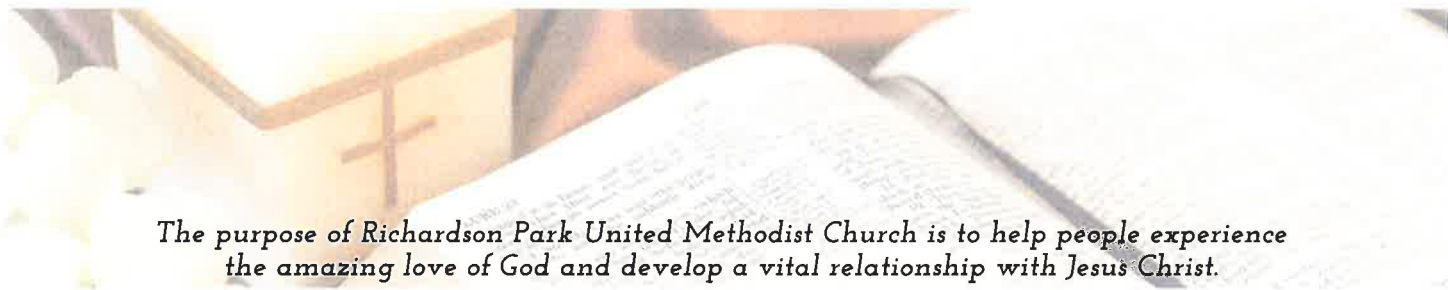
Sunday School.....9:00 A.M.
Fellowship Time.....9:40 A.M.
Worship & Children's Church.....10:30 A.M.



The Church Office & Building will be closed on Monday, February 19th



Please have articles and information for the March Messenger to the Church Office by Tuesday, February 20th. Remember to submit all announcements for the Sunday Bulletin no later than Wednesday. Email to: rpumc@rpumchurch.org Thank you! ~Jen



The purpose of Richardson Park United Methodist Church is to help people experience the amazing love of God and develop a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.