

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN, NJ

First Sunday of Advent & Hanging of the Greens

Today's service is special and unique. You will see a transformation of our sanctuary from its usual appearance into one that readily invites and announces the coming of the Christ-child.

We dedicate the entire service to this celebration, remembering along the way the traditions and the meaning of the symbols that aid us in our preparations. We are glad that you are here today to join with us in these festivities, and we invite you to our Fellowship Hall downstairs for wassail, food, and fellowship after the service.

10:00 AM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 3, 2023

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE:

Pier Natus in Bethlehem

WELCOME, AFFIRMATION OF MISSION STATEMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Erika Wulster

As disciples of Jesus Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, we experience God's unconditional love, and we witness to others by discovering and sharing our gifts.

CHORAL INTROIT:

Chancel Choir

* CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: In this Advent worship, show us your unfailing love, O God, our Savior;

People: And grant us the hope of your salvation.

Leader: The Lord rekindles hope to all his children, to his beloved and precious children.

People: May the Lord be kind and gracious; may the Lord's face shine upon us;

Leader: May we encounter God's face in this place and know God's grace.

People: With joy and peace-filled hearts, let us worship God.

* CAROL OF PRAISE:

No. 9 O Come, O Come Emmanuel

***O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

***O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

***O come, Desire of nations, bind All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

* Please stand if you are able

ADVENT COLLECT: *In silence then unison*

Dear God, in this Advent Season, rich with mystery and miracle, awaken us to your love that during these weeks of December darkness, our own inner darkness may become enlightened with your light, our doubts may be rekindled with hope, and our worries be filled with wonder and peace. Let this service of scripture, stories, and songs speak to us anew and fill us all with the love and laughter of Advent's promise. This we pray in the name of the coming Christ. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE:

Betsy Peterson & Melanie Williams

Leader: May the hope we have in Christ live in you.

People: And also in you.

ADVENT CANDLE SONG:

Arranged by Rev. Dick Wright

***Light of the world come down, fill our hearts new
with expectation so to welcome you.
This candle now is lit, let its light shine,
and help your spirit melt this heart of mine.***

* EXCHANGE OF CHRIST'S PEACE:

Pastor: The peace of Christ dwell in you. **People: and also in you.**

Share the peace of Christ with those nearest to you.

ADVENT CELEBRATION: HANGING OF THE GREENS

THE ADVENT BANNERS:

Judy Trigg

ADVENT CAROL: *No. 8*

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

(v. 1)

***Lift up your heads, Behold, the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here!***

SCRIPTURE READING:

The prophet foretells Christ's coming.

Erika Wulster

Isaiah 7: 14

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9: 6–7

***For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.***

THE GARLAND, HOLLY, AND IVY:

Stephanie Burke

CAROL: *No. 51 See Amid the Winter's Snow* (v. 1)

***See amid the winter's snow, Born for us on earth below,
See, the gentle Lamb appears, Promised from eternal years.
Hail! that ever-blessed morn, Hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem: Christ is born in Bethlehem.***

THE CHRISTMAS WREATH: Melanie Williams

SCRIPTURE READING: John announces the incarnation of Jesus. Pastor David Harvey
John 1: 1–5, 14–15

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")

CAROL: *No. 309 Of the Father's Love Begotten* (v.1)

***Of the Father's love begotten, Ere the worlds began to be, He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He, Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see, Evermore and evermore!***

THE CRËCHE: Joan Cameron

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL: Elizabeth Topolski

CAROL: *No. 31 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (v. 1)

***Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"***

MORAVIAN STAR & ILLUMINATION: Mark Nelke

CAROL: *No. 66 We Three Kings of Orient Are* (v. 1)

***We three kings of Orient are, Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, Following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!***

THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND CHRISMONS:

Bill Olivier

CAROL:

No. 53 What Child Is This

(v.1)

***What Child is this who, laid to rest On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary!***

THE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT:

Lisa Besser

ANTHEM:

'Advent Blessing' by Roger Summers

Chancel Choir

THE POINSETTIAS:

Erika Wolster

GIVING OF OUR GIFTS, OFFERING OUR 2024 PLEDGES & OFFERTORY:

* OFFERING CAROL:

No. 28 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

(v. 1)

***Good Christian friends, rejoice With heart, and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow, And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!***

* DEDICATION OF OUR 2024 PLEDGES & PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Leader: Let us pray together:

People: God of compassion, Source of all life, Giver of all good gifts: As we recommit our lives to the work of Christ, bless the gifts and the pledges we offer to you this day. May your salvation invigorate us with joy, the hope we have in Jesus rejuvenate us with delight; the opportunity to serve Jesus actually thrills us. Receive our pledges and bless our gifts that the work of our hands may carry on and complete the work of Jesus, even as we rededicate our lives to Jesus and his kingdom today and for all time. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE:

Erika Wolster

Leader: Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God.

People: This table comes to us as a gift of God by Christ Jesus himself.

Leader: This table comes to us as a gift by Christ Jesus the host, for all who seek a relationship with God. We come to and are welcomed at this table at Jesus' invitation.

People: God sent the whole world God's only Son. Since God loved us so much, we too, should love one another.

Leader: This is the Lord's Table. Our Savior invites all who are truly sorry for their sins and would humbly put their trust in Him to come to the feast which He has prepared. Listen to the empowering and gracious words of our Savior Jesus Christ:

Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11: 28–29

I am the living bread of life that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh: Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6: 51

I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1: 8

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING, PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Pastor: Holy Lord . . . as we pray together:

All: O God, who in sovereign love created the heavens and the earth, all that is seen and unseen, your love for us is so great you entered into our human situation through the birth of Jesus, being born in the likes of a manger. Grant us grace to grow the mind and heart of Jesus in our daily lives that his incarnate love may live in us and be seen shining through us this Advent season; in Jesus, your Son, our Savior, we pray, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven . . . and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP: *Approach the Table, receive the bread, take the cup, and return to your pew.*

COMMUNION BLESSING:

Erika Wulster

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: We give you thanks, great God, for the hope we have in Jesus, who died and is risen and rules over all. We praise you for his incarnate presence with us. Because He lives, we look for eternal life, knowing that nothing past, present or yet to come can separate us from your great love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE WASSAIL BOWL:

Teri Harvey

CAROL: *Wassail Song* (vv. 1 & 4) (p. 35 *International Book of Christmas Carols*)

***Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green;
Here we come a-wandering, so fair to be seen:
Love and joy come to you, and to you your wassail, too.
And God bless you and send you a happy new year,
And God send you a happy new year.***

***God bless the master of this house, Likewise the mistress too;
And all the little children, That 'round the table go;
Love and joy come to you, and to you your wassail, too.
And God bless you and send you a happy new year,
And God send you a happy new year.***

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

* CHOIR & CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION: *No. 40 Joy to the World* (v. 1)

***Joy to the world, the Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.***

POSTLUDE: *In Dulci Jubilo*

Our Worship has ended — our Christian Witness begins!



◆ <i>Blair Academy Christmas Vespers:</i>	Dec. 8	4:30/7:00PM
◆ <i>2nd Sunday in Advent:</i>	Dec. 10	10:00 AM
◆ <i>Water Gap Singers Christmas Concert:</i>	Dec. 10	4:00 PM
◆ <i>3rd Sunday in Advent & Children Christmas Pageant:</i>	Dec. 17	10:00 AM
◆ <i>4th Sunday in Advent Family Worship:</i>	Dec. 24	10:00 AM
◆ <i>Christmas Eve Service:</i>	Dec. 24	7:00 PM

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

The Human Family: Persons and individuals who struggle with food insecurity and homelessness, the people in the Ukraine and the Middle East; families and communities impacted by gun violence; those impacted by severe weather.

Men & Women Serving in the Armed Forces & America's Veterans

Those in elected office: The President, the Congress, State Assembly, Municipality officials

Healing for Friends & Families:

Cancer: Judy Dales, Gordon Dugan, Samantha Elwell, Olivia Hollis, Adam Hubble, Tracy Lance, Troy Lutz, Caitlyn McMorrow and her family, Bill S., Andrew Shan, Abbi Sparkman, Robert Talmadge, Molly Grace Young, Audrey, Eva, Gail, Liza

Illness & Injuries: Robert Benz, Sue Bonkowski, George Burke, Derek Cameron, Elaine Canonico, Kyle Canonico, Lucy Cuipa, Noah Haiduc-Dale, Marian Hillsdon, Peter Porzio, Jan Smith, Margaret Stephens, Lydia Timcenko, Betty Ann Weir, Ann, Carter, Demares, Tracy, Valerie

ASSISTING DURING TODAY'S WORSHIP

Choir Director: Maggie Morokutti

Worship Leader: Erika Wulster

Church Intern: Melanie Williams

Sound System: Theo Padavano

DLP: -

Pastor: Rev. David Harvey

Ministers: The Congregation

Coffee Hour: Bill Olivier

Greeter: Emily Arena

Usher: Paige Arena

MIDI: Frank Wilson

Readers: Lisa Besser, Stephanie Burke, Joan Cameron, Teri Harvey, Mark Nelke, Bill Olivier, Betsy Peterson, Elizabeth Topolski, Judy Trigg, Melanie Williams, Erika Wulster

THIS WEEK IN OUR CHURCH

Sunday, Dec. 3

Hanging of the Greens &

1st Sunday of Advent & Consecration Sunday

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM Family Worship & Communion

Monday, Dec. 4

Office Closed

5:00 PM Advent Wreath Workshop & Soup/OC

Tuesday, Dec. 5

10:00 AM Bible Study/OC

Friday, Dec. 8

4:30 & 7:00 PM Blair Vespers

Saturday, Dec. 9

Water Gap Singers Rehearsal (morning)

Sunday, Dec. 10: *2nd Sunday of Advent*

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM Worship

10:15 AM Sunday School

2:00 PM Water Gap Singers Concert Set-Up

4:00 PM Water Gap Singers Concert

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1 Main St., P.O. Box 385, Blairstown, NJ 07825

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Phone: (908) 362-5254 Fax: (908) 362-8060

Food Pantry (908) 362-5254 Children's Center: (908) 362-7887

e-Mail: fpcb@ptd.net Website: fpcb-nj.org

Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday, 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Joy Offering will be received during the month of December. Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

ShopRite (\$25/\$100), **Acme** (\$25/\$100), **Dunkin** (\$10), **IHOP** (\$10), **Starbucks** (\$10), and **Panera** (\$10) **gift cards** are available. See Gail Weber (or Jen Plut in the church office) to order additional cards or if you have any questions about how to support this ministry!

Blair Vespers: Blair's Chamber Orchestra and Singers perform as part of this traditional holiday service on Dec. 8 at 4:30 & 7:00 PM in our Sanctuary.

Water Gap Singers Holiday Concert: Sunday, Dec. 10 at 4 PM in our Sanctuary with a reception to follow. The program will include a variety of seasonal music, both sacred and secular. The Water Gap Singers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Funding has been made possible, in part, by the Warren County Cultural and Heritage Division. New members are always welcomed. There are no auditions. Visit their website for more information: <https://watergapsingers.org/>.

FPCB Book Club: The next meeting of the FPCB Book Club will be held at 7:00 PM on Wed., Jan. 10, hosted by Teri Harvey. We will discuss the book, Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. The Book Club meets every 6–8 weeks, and we read a variety of titles: fiction and nonfiction; mysteries and suspense. New members are always welcome. If you have any questions or would like a copy of our reading list, please speak with Teri Harvey or Kaye Evans.

Presbyterian Women:

Advent Wreath Making: On Monday, Dec. 4, at 5 PM, we will be holding an Advent Wreath Making event at the Outreach Center. Homemade soup will be served. Please let us know if you can make soup or help our hostess Erika Wulster with that event. Sign-ups are in Fellowship Hall

Poinsettias Dedications: If you wish to dedicate a poinsettia for the sanctuary in memory of a loved one or in celebration of the season, you may do so by returning the order form in the offering plate or to the church office. The donation per plant is \$12. Please make checks payable to "Presbyterian Women." Poinsettias may also be ordered at our website. Simply visit fpcb-nj.org and go to our Give Now button, contribute through Presbyterian Women and leave your dedication in the Notes section! The last date to sign up is Dec. 17. Speak with Erika Wulster if you have any questions.

Community News:

Pocono Concert Chorale presents *A Ceremony of Carols* today at 2:30 PM at the First Presbyterian Church Stroudsburg, 575 Main St., Stroudsburg, PA. Admission \$10

Messiah Sing! A Free concert featuring a string quartet today at 4:00 PM at the Knowlton Presbyterian Church. Additional information at www.knowltonpca.org/sing. Refreshments provided.

Poinsettia



DEDICATIONS

A. In Honor of B. In Memory of C. In Celebration of D. Other (specify)
 Please return by Sun., Dec. 17

(A., B., C., or D. "Other"—specify)	Dedication Name

Please print clearly. Thank You!!

Name of Contributor: _____

----- *For Office Use Only* -----

Amount Paid:

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