

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN, NJ

First Sunday of Advent

10:00 AM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Dec. 1, 2024

** Please stand if you are able.*

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE: *"In Dir ist Freude" BWV 615 by JS Bach* (02-39)

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, &

AFFIRMATION OF OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Lisa Besser

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:

L: The advent wreath is a circle with no beginning or end. It symbolizes God's unending love and faithfulness.

P: It reaffirms God's eternal claim on our lives.

L: The light of the candle reminds us of Jesus, the Light of the world.

P: In Jesus was the life and the light for all people.

L: His life and light offer hope to the world.

P: With joyful and hopeful hearts and with grateful praise, let us worship God.

* CAROL OF PRAISE: *No. 11 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE: Teri Harvey & Erika Wulster

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

P: 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.

ADVENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

(in silence then in unison)

Lord, Jesus Christ, our ultimate hope in and for this world, we confess our deep desire to be loved and also our reluctance to love. We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love as well as our reluctance to forgive as Jesus has forgiven us. We confess our eagerness to enjoy the blessing of your saving love

and also our resistance to live and love as a blessed people. In this Advent time, forgive us of our failure to respond, and our casual commitment to search for and be found by the One who is our ultimate hope, Jesus, your Son, our Savior. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS:

L: Friends — the good news of this Advent season is forgiveness of sin and new life is ours for the claiming and our accepting. Believe, and accept the good news of the gospel. Then live in awe and wonder!

P: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Let us forgive one another.

* SONG OF CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS: *The Candle of Hope*

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The candle of hope we light in this hour, proclaims that the Lord is coming in power. We wait for a future, now hidden from view, when Christ in his glory will make all things new.

* EXCHANGE OF CHRIST'S PEACE:

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you.

Welcome one another with Christ's peace.

~ Children may go downstairs for Sunday School ~

GIVING OF OUR GIFTS & OFFERTORY

* DOXOLOGY & PRAYER OF DEDICATION: *No. 577 Glory Be to the Father*

DECLARING GOD'S WORD

EPISTLE LESSON: Jeremiah 33: 14–16

Jeremiah wishes for his people a hopeful waiting.

GOSPEL READING: Luke 21: 25–36

Jesus instructs us to pray for strength to escape and to stand.

ANTHEM: *"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"* Chancel Choir
(traditional)

SERMON: *Strength to Stand* Pastor David Harvey

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *A Brief Statement of Faith: 1990*

We trust in the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit . . . engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

The Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior . . . and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy, [hopeful], and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Amen.

* COMMUNION HYMN: *No. 309 Of the Father's Love Begotten*

vv. 1 & 3

PASTORAL INTIMATIONS

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE:

Elder Lisa Besser

L: Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!

P: People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at the table in the kingdom of God.

L: Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity.

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

L: 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 life-giving and life-empowering words of our Savior Jesus Christ:

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are 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: 28-30

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if those who hear my voice open the door, I will come in to them and eat with them, and they with me."

Revelation 3: 20

Pastor David Harvey

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And with your spirit.

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

GREAT THANKSGIVING, SANCTUS, PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, &
THE LORD'S PRAYER:

L: Holy Lord, it is truly right . . . sing to the glory of your name:

P: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L: You are holy, O God of majesty . . . that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen. Great is the mystery of faith.

P: Christ, has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

L: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine . . . As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world. Let us pray:

P: Our Father, who Art in heaven . . . for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory; forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

OFFERING OF THE ELEMENTS: *Approach the Table, receive the bread, take the cup, and return to your pew.*

SHARING THE BREAD & DRINKING THE CUP

COMMUNION BLESSING:

Elder Lisa Besser

L: Let us pray together:

P: Eternal God, keep us alert in our watch and make us strong in faith and in hope, so, should Christ come in glory to judge the earth, we may receive him with a joyful reception and a hope-filled expectation. Let this advent season be one of joy-filled waiting, that we may wait ready to offer Jesus all praise and thanksgiving for the abundant and eternal life he has given to us by his mysterious grace; in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

DEPARTING IN GOD'S NAME

* HYMN: *No. 15 Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers* (tune #447)

* CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE & BENEDICTION

* CHORAL BENEDICTION: Chancel Choir

POSTLUDE: *"Jesu, Meine Freude" BWV 227 by JS Bach* (02-29)

Our Worship has ended — our Christian Witness begins!

ASSISTING DURING TODAY'S WORSHIP

Greeter: Deb Albrecht
Choir Director: Maggie Morokutti
Sound System: Theo Padavano
Pastor: Rev. David Harvey

Ushers: Joan Cameron &
Gary Albrecht
DLP: Ryan Burke
Ministers: The Congregation

Worship Leader/Communion Assistant: Lisa Besser

Advent Candle Lighters: Teri Harvey & Erika Wulster

Children & Worship: Stephanie Burke | *"Advent IV The Prophets, Mary & Joseph, The Shepherds, & The Magi"*

Faith Works: Zach Burke | *"A Baby is Born" Luke 2:1-7 & pageant practice*

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 McMorro and her family, Peter Porzio, Andrew Shan, Robert Talmadge, Addie Wasserman, Molly Grace Young, Audrey, Chet, Eva, Gail, Liza, Joan

Illness & Injuries: Robert Benz, George Burke, Derek Cameron, Elaine Canonico, Kyle Canonico, Thomas Cheevers, Lucy Cuipa, Anna Nagyhetenyi, Jan Smith, Margaret Stephens, Gail Weber, Betty Ann Weir, Ed Williams, Ann, Carter, Demares, Evelyn, Tracy, Valerie

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Joy of Giving! What a fulfilling feeling it is to help others less fortunate. Truly it is better to give than to receive. How important it is to foster a spirit of altruism in our children! Gift giving will be part of the Children's Christmas Pageant this year. The gifts will be delivered to the Clover Rest Home in Columbia. The residents are in need of shampoo, body/hand lotion, chapsticks and would enjoy sugar-free soft candy treats like chocolate. There will be a collection box in Fellowship Hall or items may be dropped off at the Outreach Center. Questions? Please contact Deb Albrecht 908 447-2112 Thank you!!!

ShopRite (\$25/\$100), **Acme** (\$25/\$100), **Dunkin** (\$10), **IHOP** (\$10), **Starbucks** (\$10), **Barnes & Noble** (\$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!

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.

Sweets with Santa — Sat., Dec. 7 at 11 AM: Hot cocoa bar, desserts, and photos with Santa in Fellowship Hall! \$5 per person; ages 2 and under free. ♦**Register** with Jen McElroy at jenhillsdon@yahoo.com or 973-879-6279. ♦

Youth Movie & Craft Night — Sat., Dec 7 at 6 PM: Attention kids! Join us at the Outreach Center where we'll be watching *Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas*. We'll have pizza, games, and crafts. If anyone has any questions, email Stephanie Burke at sburke11286@gmail.com.

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/bulletin insert in the offering plate or to the church office by Dec. 15. The donation per plant is \$12. Please make checks payable to "Presbyterian Women." Poinsettias may also be ordered at fpcb-nj.org and go to our Give Now button, contribute through Presbyterian Women and leave your dedication in the Notes section!

COMMUNITY NEWS:

Pocono Concert Chorale presents *A John Rutter Christmas* at 2:30 PM on Sun., Dec. 8 at the First Presbyterian Church at 575 Main St., Stroudsburg, PA. Featuring the great holiday music of this beloved composer, including his classic "Gloria" with brass & percussion. Admission is \$12 at the door.

Blair Vespers: Blair's Chamber Orchestra and Singers perform as part of this traditional holiday service on Dec. 13 at 4:30 & 7:00 PM in our Sanctuary.

Water Gap Singers Holiday Concert: Sunday, Dec. 15 at 4 PM in our Sanctuary (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 welcome (no auditions). Visit watergapsingers.org for more information.

THIS WEEK IN OUR CHURCH { Dates/times subject to change }

Sunday, Dec. 1 *1st Sunday in Advent*

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship
10:15 AM Sunday School
11:15 AM Children's Choir

Monday, Dec. 2 *Office Closed*

Tuesday, Dec. 3

10:00 AM Bible Study/OC

Wednesday, Dec. 4

7:00 PM M&W and CE/OC

Saturday, Dec. 7

11:00 AM Sweets with Santa/FH
6:00 PM Youth Movie & Crafts/OC

Sunday, Dec. 8: *2nd Sunday in Advent & Hanging of the Greens*

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal
10:00 AM Family Worship
11:15 AM Children's Choir

For your spiritual renewal and refreshment,
consider attending some or all the activities below:

- ❖ *First Sunday in Advent & Celebration of Holy Communion*
Dec. 1 10:00 AM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Sweets with Santa*
Dec. 7 11:00 AM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Youth Movie & Craft Night*
Dec. 7 6:00 PM FPC Outreach Center
- ❖ *Second Sunday in Advent & Hanging of the Greens*
Dec. 8 10:00 AM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Blair Academy Christmas Vespers*
Dec. 13 4:30/7:00PM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Third Sunday in Advent*
Dec. 15 10:00 AM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Water Gap Singers Christmas Concert*
Dec. 15 4:00 PM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Fourth Sunday in Advent & Children Christmas Pageant*
Dec. 22 10:00 AM First Presbyterian Church
- ❖ *Christmas Eve Service*
Dec. 24 7:00 PM First Presbyterian Church



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

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