



December 21, 2025

“Jesus’ birth signals the start of a new way of understanding what it means to be alive. Aliveness, he will teach, is a gift available to all by God’s grace. It flows not from taking but from giving, not from fear but from faith, not from conflict but from reconciliation, not from domination but from service. It opens us up to rethink everything, to see the world in a new light - the light of Christ.” McLaren

Prelude #120

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt vs. 1

Evan O'Donovan

Welcome

Reverend Ed Hoener

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Scripture Reading

The Lighting of the Candles

Selva Villahermosa & Howard Sherman

Unison Prayer ("Let us pray together"):

We celebrate the coming of Jesus, who showed us the way of life that helps and heals others. He showed us the peace that comes from practicing and promoting justice. Today we celebrate the gift of joy that comes from gratitude for what God has done, and will do for the world's well-being.

Call To Worship:

Lord Jesus, all God's promises find their "Yes" in you, and your redeeming work, for the world. **You began the movement that will bring the kin-dom of God to earth.** With your help, O God, love, faith, and justice will increase in the world. **Your Spirit equips us to be part of that work.** We give thanks, O God, for the coming of Jesus and all the gifts he brings. **Help us to be open to them, and to trust, and to follow.**

*Hymn of Praise #146

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

vss. 1 & 3

Call to Reconciliation

Prayer of Reconciliation:

O God, in this holy season, we are grateful for the opportunity to listen to our lives. We are grateful for the opportunity to surrender the things that hinder our growth in spirit. Thank You for your grace and mercy that sets us free to live, by the teachings and the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

Silent Prayers

Assurance of Grace:

Lord Jesus, your steadfast love upholds us and moves us to follow you. **You restore our souls, and strengthen us to live by your ways and truths and life. Amen.**

*Response of Praise #646

Sing Out, My Soul

Sharing the Peace of Christ:

Christ, the light of the world has come; breathing peace and grace for us to receive! **May our lives reflect his ways that lead to a new world's dawning!** May the peace of Christ shine in us, and through us. **Let us share the peace of Christ with each other!**

Scripture Reading

Rom. 1:1-7

Ministry of Music #138

Who Would Think That What Was Needed

Evan O'Donovan

*If you can stand comfortably, please do so.

Scripture Reading

Matt. 1:18-25

Message

Pastor Ed

***Hymn of Faith #106**

Prepare the Way, O Zion

Celebrating Passion Enterprises

Sharing what God has done in each other's lives is a source of encouragement, and reminds us that faith, and prayer and grace are at work! Please come to the lectern and share your testimony so that everyone may see and hear.

Prayer Requests

Please come forward to share your request so all may hear.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

We Affirm Our Mission

We Reflect and Respond

Call to Offering

***Offering Song #710**

We are an Offering

**We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering.
Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are Yours, we are
an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to You,
we give to You. We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we
are an offering, we are an offering.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Announcements (pg. 4)

***Hymn of Response #747**

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

Charge and Blessing

Postlude #124

Still, Still, Still

Evan O'Donovan

*If you can stand comfortably, please do so.

Announcements

Thank you to *William Siocha & Cheryl Anne Cammann* for running the projector & camera!

Join our Worship Support Team! For more information; ask the pastor or the technicians or call the church office.

Chair Yoga

Come join us for Chair Yoga! The morning session is on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. The next session will be on Tuesday, December 23rd. The evening session is on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. The next evening session will be on Thursday, January 8th. All are welcome! Bring 2 full water bottles to be used as weights or dumbbells if you have them.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Service will begin at 7:30 pm on December 24th. Olla Rhapsody, Olga Tymchenko and Laura Giannini, will be joining Evan with musical selections for this very special service.

⇒ ***Christmas Poinsettias will be available for purchase. Speak to Gail Anderson if interested.***



Online Donations

PRAYER PERSONS OF THE WEEK

Bill & Dana Marsh

PRAYER REQUESTS

Russell & Purcell families, Lola & family, Diane H., Barbara, Bill Siocha's friend, Flynn family, Carol DeLuca's cousin & family, Michael, Tom M., Simpson & Hartlaub families, the Ross, Hoener, & Pender families, Dante B., Portia, Kaiser, William S. Jr., Carol & Jake, Roberta D., Edna, Sue K., Agnes N. & family, Anne H., Flo, Leo & family, Mike & family, Savannah B. & family, Carole H., Becky, John, Sam, Michael, Sara & Joan P., Mary "Cookie" F., Nicole, Allison, Mary R., Helen, Logan, Harper, Helene & Diane, Dorothy R., Amy

The First Presbyterian Church of Rahway 1731 Church Street

December 21, 2025
Rev. Ed Hoener
Al Shipley
Carol Ann Bregman
Evan O'Donovan

10:30 A.M.
Pastor
Worship Leader
Administrator
Music Director

December 24th

Make plans now to attend our Christmas Eve service at 7:30pm on December 24th. Gather friends and family and bring everyone to this very special service. This year we will have Olla Rhapsody, violin duo, accompanying Evan with the musical selections for the service. Olla Rhapsody is the professional duet of Olga Tymchenko and Laura Giannini. We have been blessed by Olga's gifts before and now we will get to meet her duet partner Laura and be surrounded by their unique talents. This is sure to be an amazing service of music to usher in Christmas Day. So definitely mark your calendars, tell family and friends and join us on Christmas Eve.

Born in Kyiv, Ukraine, **Olga Tymchenko** is a violinist trained in the Russian tradition of violin playing.

At age 8, she won her first violin competition for young artists in Kyiv.



She debuted then at age 11 on the National Philharmonic Concert Hall stage as a winner of the Kyiv City Competition.

Ms. Tymchenko first studied violin in the Gliere Music College with Anna Melnyk and then continued at the National University of Culture & Arts in Kyiv. Olga has been touring and performing in Ukraine, Russia, and the US.

As a member of the Manhattan Symphonie Orchestra, she played at David Geffen Hall, Carnegie Hall, Bargemusic, and Merkin Concert Hall and recorded contemporary and film music.

A resident of Nyack, Olga Tymchenko has performed in Rockland and Westchester counties with various chamber groups and as a soloist. Also a devoted violin teacher, Ms. Tymchenko is a faculty member of The Performing Arts Department at Masters in Dobbs Ferry, NY, and the RiverArts.

Olga is thrilled to be a co-founder and performer of the Olla Rhapsody Violin Duo since 2019.



Laura Giannini is an Italian violinist and music educator based in NYC. At age 19, she was selected by the violinist Uto Ughi to perform as a soloist and member of his Festival Omaggio a Roma Orchestra. Awarded in duo and piano trio competitions throughout Europe, Laura collaborated there with Accademia dei Cameristi, A.Gi.Mus. Roma, Musica a Piazza Navona, and Deutscher Tonkünstlerverband, among others. In 2006 she contributed in the Ensemble Méditerranée to the first world recording of chamber works by Raffaele Gervasio in a CD entitled "Rapsodia su Canti di Puglia," produced by DAD Records. Her playing was also featured in 2012 on Deutschland Radio Kultur during the Kammerensemble Nordwind live broadcast of Schönberg's Pierrot Lunaire and last year on the WVOX radio in a musical interview about South-Italian composers. Ms. Giannini has played with Semplice Players – Mark Peskanov's chamber group at Bargemusic, Kollektive366, The Symphony Orchestra of the Americas, and Ensemble Leonarda. Three years ago, she joined the Connecticut-based New Britain Symphony, whose Music Director is the conductor Toshiyuki Shimada. The same orchestra recently featured her playing for its virtual Music Monday series. In duo and ensembles, she has performed at renowned venues across Europe, Asia, and the U.S., including Carnegie Hall, DiMenna Center for Classical Music, Opera America, Shinmin Art Center, Yuanlin Performance Hall, Die Glocke, Temple du Foyer de l'Âme, and Auditorium Parco della Musica.

As a chamber music enthusiast, Laura is a founding member of the OLLA Rhapsody Violin Duo and the QueensSound Ensemble.

