

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

"In those days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be the highest, and all the nations shall stream to it. They'll say, 'Come let us go up to this mountain, so that God may teach us his ways.' And, they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and they shall not learn war anymore." Isa. 2

Dear Friends,

Isaiah saw this extraordinary vision that was the center of his overall message. In the vision, Mt. Zion rose to such a height that it became *visible to the whole earth*. (Remember that everyone believed the world was flat.) Then, when all the nations saw this incredible sign, something wonderful happened. All of a sudden, all the nations of the earth laid down their weapons and made peace. And then people in every nation made a pilgrimage to worship the God who performed this miracle, because they all wanted to learn who God truly is.

It seems too wonderful to be true...at least when we measure it by our common sense. Yet it is this vision that is the substance of our faith - that God will make the "peaceable kingdom" a reality. Moreover, our faith trusts that it will not come to pass *just* by human striving or expertise - it is first, and wondrously, God's gift. This vision proclaims that people from all over the world will come to this mountain from all different directions - making different pilgrimages - and yet, all arrive at the same place, and find there, one Shepherd.

This vision is such a clear picture of the God Jesus came to show the world - the God who saves, simply for love of the world he made. But there's more, for during Advent, we celebrate the sign that all the *round* world could see - a *star* which heralded the coming of God's son to the earth. The good news we celebrate in this season is the lengths and heights to which God goes to redeem this world. The good news we celebrate is the depths to which God goes to help us know him - even to being born in a manger. At the heart of our faith is the hope that is founded upon the One who has come, to be our wonderful Counselor, and Prince of peace - teaching us and leading us in his ways, until the peaceable kingdom comes, at last.

Christmas Peace,
Ed

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 13 Issue 12

December 2022

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Just a gentle reminder about the Giving Tree:

Families have been selected so please consider purchasing a gift card(s) from ShopRite, Walmart, or Target, and present it to a member of the Outreach Committee by **Monday, Dec 12th**. If sending a check, please make it out to 'First Presbyterian Church' and put 'Giving Tree' in the memo.

Christmas Blessings,
Outreach Committee

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed the last 2 weeks in December, the 19th—30th. If you should need to speak with Pastor Ed, please contact him directly.

Editor:
CAB
office@1stpresrahway.org

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Saturday, December 24th
7:30 pm



Holiday Flea Market Update

A huge 'Thank You' to those who volunteered their time and came to lend a hand. We are so appreciative because we know this sale wouldn't have been as successful if it weren't for each and every one of you. Total of sales, a portion of which goes to our community outreach:



\$3,011.81



We also want to thank those who come out year round to collect donations, clean them up, price them, and pack them away for our next sale. Even in these challenging times we've done very well, and we owe that to all of you!

Our Spring Flea Market is scheduled for Saturday, April 22, 2023. Save the date!



Coffee or Tea Anyone?

For those who will be joining us for in-person services, we now have a Keurig machine in the Narthex for pre-worship refreshments. Hot coffee or tea is available, so please be sure to help yourself prior to our worship services.

We hope to see you on Sunday!



Young People's Group

Sue Krivenko, Diane Hoener, and Cheryl Anne Cammann will be leading a young people's group after worship on Sunday. Roughly ages 11 to 20 are welcome, and feel free to bring friends. Currently, meetings will take place at least once a month.



Dec.

- 6 - Samantha S.
- 9 - Ashley N.
- 11 - Kristen H.
- 13 - JoAnn R.
- 13 - Tara C.
- 14 - Scott N.
- 16 - Daniel D.
- 20 - Thomas J. M.
- 25 - Jesus
- 26 - Robin S.
- 27 - Charlotte K.
- 28 - Diana N.
- 29 - Carol D.
- 29 - Dawn M.



Dec.

- 5 - Megan & Andrew
- 11 - Terry & Arnold
- 29 - Laura & Randy

New Clothing Bin

A clothing & shoes donations bin has been placed in the parking lot by Squier Hall. The proceeds that the church receives once a month, after the items have been collected, will go towards community Outreach.



Spread the word...let others know!



Third Home Meeting Scheduled

Our Home meetings will fulfill two important steps of the interim process, and they will provide the opportunity to learn and share together in relaxed informal settings. (there will be light refreshments!)

The first step in the interim process, is to gather stories from the congregation that help us to understand who we are, what have been the most meaningful experiences in the life of our congregation. We want to identify both our greatest successes, *and struggles*.

The second step is to learn how the culture around the church has changed, and how the church may change in

response. We will be identifying old and new ideas, our core values, and *envisioning*, in order to set a *direction* for the church

Session has decided that we will cover *both steps in each gathering* so that these tasks are completed in a more efficient manner.

The next gathering:

JoAnn & Andy

Date: Tuesday, December 6th @ 1:30pm

RSVP to Joann

Please be sure to check these various social media venues. If you do not have access to social media, please contact the Church Office, and we will make sure you receive the information.



Manse Christmas Reception on 12.18

You are cordially invited to a Christmas gathering at the manse after church on Sunday, December 18. Diane will be sharing the bounty of her cookie-baking extravaganza. Please stop in for some Christmas cheer!

This event is open to all. Feel free to invite others you feel would enjoy getting to know this church family in a relaxed atmosphere.



We'd love to see you there!



Let's Prepare Our Hearts for Christmas Together!

Beginning the first Sunday in Advent, we are starting an intergenerational program for children and adults of all ages, gathering around the stories of Jesus' birth. Our time together on Sunday mornings will begin at worship in the sanctuary, during Children's time, when we will gather in Davis Hall after worship. Sundays will include story time, crafts, interactive activities, and each family will leave with things that families can do together at home.



Christmas Poinsettias

Poinsettias will be available in both red & white, however, in order to reduce waste / over ordering, only 15 plants were reserved - 12 red, 3 white.

If you're interested in a plant, please let Gail know. The cost of the plants are \$7 for red & \$7.50 for white. As in the past, your plant will need to be picked up no later than Christmas Eve.



THE SYNOD OF THE NORTHEAST IS PROVIDING AN ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICE

For congregations to be used to provide pastors a sabbath and also to bring the community together as we pray "Come Lord Jesus."

Isaiah 2:4 "He shall judge between the nations and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

THE SERVICE WILL INCLUDE CHOIRS AND MUSICIANS FROM ACROSS THE
SYNOD AND A SPECIAL ADVENT MESSAGE.

The video recording will be released on December 8.

The worship service can be viewed on the Synod of the Northeast's website and Facebook page. It can be downloaded to share with congregations on your own websites.

synodne.org | facebook.com/SynodNE

On Sunday, Christmas Day, there will be no in-person worship services at First Pres. Instead, the Synod of the Northeast has put together a special worship service that includes choirs & musicians from across the Synod.

The video will be released on December 8th and can be viewed in your home, at your convenience.

Stewardship 2022

'Tis the Season for Giving...our gifts to God!

For many reasons, our church has not had a formal “stewardship time” in several years. However, when we think about it more deeply, stewardship isn’t meant to be about paying dues for membership in an organization. It’s meant to be a way of life that is characterized by giving and receiving. Our faith teaches this explicitly.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son”...God’s very Self”
The Message

We are entering the Christmas season, and in spite of the pressure exerted by all the store ads, there is a part of us that seeks the warmth that comes from finding the gifts that will tell each recipient how much we love and care for them. This is the spirit of giving that *is* Christmas! The origin of this “Christmas spirit” comes from, our commemoration of the “gift” God gave to the world in the birth of Jesus Christ. In Advent we celebrate Jesus’ coming into the world, to set in motion a bright, unmistakable way of living a life in the Spirit.

The mission Jesus set in motion is about showing the world what God, and God’s will is like, through self-giving love. God invites human beings to live this way – not out of obligation or requirement - but because it is the secret to what Jesus called an abundant life. We experience the evidence of this all the time. When a smile given to a harried waitress is returned. When giving or receiving a hug lifts the spirits. When a gift brings joy to someone else. C.S. Lewis said, “In self-giving, we touch a rhythm not only of all creation, but of all being.”

Advent marks the beginning of a new year in the Christian calendar. During Advent, our congregation will be exploring what living in this “giving rhythm” can be like. Each of the four Sundays in Advent there will be an opportunity to bring our gifts to Christ and Christ’s ministries in our church. To help our members discern what God may be calling us to give, there is a daily devotional available to everyone via email. (If anyone would like a copy sent via the post office, please contact Carol Anne.)

The devotions and weekly reflections will lead to presenting our “Acts of Giving” for the life and mission of First Presbyterian Church , at each Advent worship service, and to be formally dedicated to Christ’s service, on December 18th.

Peace,
Pastor Ed

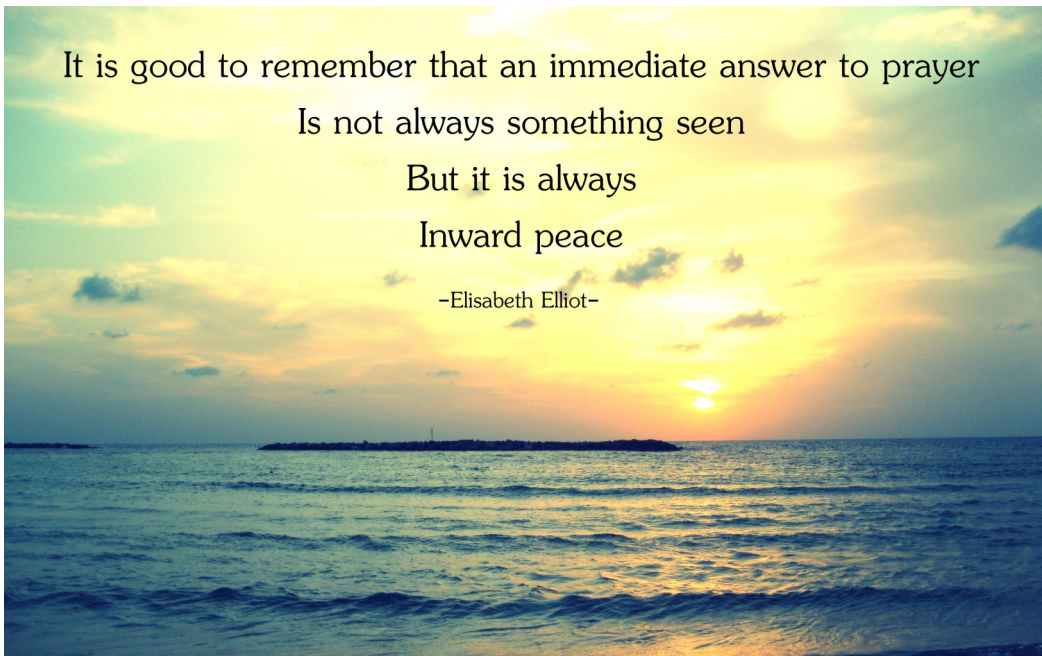




Please consider either calling or sending a card to church family who are homebound; call the church office (732-382-0803) if you need phone numbers and/or addresses.

Prayer Requests

Alyne B., Angel M., Anthony N., Christine H., Dan M., Debbie C., Diane W., Ed L., Eileen P., Emmanuel, Eric R., Evan’s mom, Evelina D., Gail, Gene S., Gladys B., Jamie & Michael, Jane S., Janet S., Mark A., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Molly, Patty-Kenny-Travis R., Russ G., Savannah B., Tommy, Tracie W., Ukranian Sisters & Brothers



Prayer Persons

DECEMBER

- Dec. 4th - Al & Robin Shipley**
- Dec. 11th - Sean Simpson**
- Dec. 18th - Ruth-Noemi Belonni-Rosario**
- Dec. 25th - Donna Gutches & Family**

JANUARY

- Jan. 1st - Betsy Trafficante**
- Jan. 8th - Craig Ludington**
- Jan. 15th - Hazel Rickes**
- Jan. 22nd - Kenneth MacFarlane**
- Jan. 29th - Mary Ellen Sforza**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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PERMIT NO. 111

**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH**



**Worship with us
Each Sunday at 10:30AM**

**In-person / Facebook & YouTube Live Streams
Recorded Video Available Also**

**Office: office@1stpresrahway.org
Rev. Ed Hoener: edhoener1@gmail.com**



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