

“I Paul, am a servant of Christ, who was descended from David...promised through the prophets... declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. He is Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring faith to all the Gentiles for the sake of His name.” Romans 1:1-5

Dear Friends,

When I was in Rahway High School, one of the most memorable activities I did was to work on the stage crew for our school plays. There was something great about building things together. There was something great about the creativity we needed to figure out how to make sets that could change scenes with a minimum of effort, and a maximum of speed - and still look real. There was the exhilaration of being part of something spectacular - bright lights and the applause of the audience. There was the way that the music and the acting and the staging all needed each other in order to make the play work.

Paul, in the beginning of this letter, was setting the stage for the rest of his message to this church. He referred to Jesus' genealogy (descended from David) to point to the fact that Jesus was a human being like us – even as he was also God's Son. Paul referred to Jesus' resurrection, to indicate that it is the source of power God gives us for living a whole, new way through the Holy Spirit.

In this preamble to his letter, Paul was proclaiming that Jesus' incarnation set the new stage for God's redeeming work. He was proclaiming that the old sets have been moved into the wings, and a whole new scene has begun - but it's still the same play - the same story of God's loving agenda for the world. This is a central truth of Advent. In fact, it is a central truth for the way God's will for the church's mission is framed. For the church, all the world is *God's* stage and we are the players. That truth moves us to continually reflect on questions like, “What do we need to learn in order to play our part well? How can our church become the best cast we can be in God's production?”

Advent is our time to celebrate the “comforts and joys” of Jesus' incarnation – His unconditional love that accepts us as we are *and* takes us deeper into a greater life. Advent is our time to remember that we're called to become an *incarnational* community, whose lives show what can happen when Jesus enters in - no matter what stage we are in. All we need to do is follow his lead, and give the gift of ourselves. Then together, we can be a place where others can discover that, “Where meek souls will receive Him still”, a new and better way of living is found with God.

Peace and Blessings!

Ed

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 14 Issue 12

DECEMBER 2023

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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THE Giving Tree

The Christmas Season has arrived and the Outreach Committee needs your help in offering assistance to families for the holidays.

Since the beginning, the success of the Giving Tree, and the number of families aided by it, continues to grow due to the strong support this church have always offered.

This year, we hope to offer assistance to at least the same number of families as we did in previous years; families are in the process of being selected.

Please consider purchasing a gift card(s) from ShopRite, Walmart, or Target, and present it to Deacon Gail or a member of the Outreach Committee by **Monday, Dec 11th**. If sending a check, please make it out to 'First Presbyterian Church' and put 'Giving Tree' in the memo.

Christmas Blessings,
Outreach Committee

Do we have any Instagram users out there?

Yes, we are going to be on Instagram in December.

We hope that you'll follow us, interact with comments & likes, and enjoy our positive & inspirational messages we want to share with everyone!

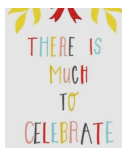
Editor:
CAB
office@1stpresrahway.org

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



We invite you to join us on this most joyous night!

A New Year's Celebration



Session members would like to celebrate the New Year, 2024, with a Sunday brunch immediately after worship on Sunday, January 7th. As you know, we are embarking on a new mission with Rahway Food for Friends. Their food pantry is being relocated to the gymnasium in Squier Hall at the beginning of 2024. We thought that it would be a great time for everyone to meet the people involved with the pantry, celebrate the beginning of a New Year and a new initiative, as we begin to create a Community Center for Rahway here at First Pres.

We hope you can join us when we celebrate the beginning of 2024 and Rahway Food for Friends new location for their food pantry!



Joyous News!



Diane and Ed welcome Theo, their grandson, to this world. Theo was born in mid November, weighing in at 6 pounds, 4 ounces. All are healthy, thriving, and ecstatic.

Congratulations!



On behalf of Jake & I, we want to thank everyone for their prayers, thoughts, cards, and attending the memorial visitation on behalf of our son, Jeff. It has been a sad time & we have been comforted by all of you. We wanted to thank everyone again.



Carol & Jake



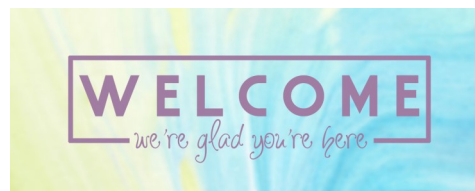
Dec.

- 6 - Samantha S.
- 9 - Ashley N.
- 11 - Kristen H.
- 13 - JoAnn R.
- 13 - Tara C.
- 14 - Scott N.
- 16 - Daniel D.
- 20 - Thomas 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



Wonderful news! Please give a warm welcome to ...

*Levi,
Carmen,
& Pattie*

who have decided to join the membership, mission, and fellowship of FPC. Their membership service will be held on Sunday, December 10th during worship.



Mid Week Advent Services

The Christmas Season is here! Even among those who don't belong to churches there's something inside us all that perceives Christmas as a special time of year. People everywhere want to believe that peace on earth and good will to all is possible!

This year our church and Zion Lutheran church are joining to offer mid-week Advent services on December 6, 13, and 20 at 7 pm. We're calling the services "Carols, Candlelight, and Communion", and we will be gathering at the Rahway Train Station plaza on Irving Street! This is something you can invite your friends to (especially if they like to sing, and even if they don't). So, bundle up and let's bring some Christmas cheer to our community!



Are you up to date on paying your per capita and your pledging?

As 2023 comes to an end, please review if you are up to date on the financial commitments you made to our Church. One of the blessings of being a member of a connectional church is that we are able to support the work of our denomination through per capita giving. For example, the per capita assessment for a couple on the active Church rolls would be \$80 (2 X \$40). Also note that young members who have been confirmed are also assessed per capita.



Our Church has always been faithful in sending our Presbytery the full amount that we are assessed. As the year closes, please remember to complete your per capita assessment and to complete your 2023 pledge.

Thank You, Finance Committee



**Manse Christmas Reception,
Sunday, December 17**

Ed and Diane are hosting coffee hour in the manse following the worship service on Sunday, December 17th. All are welcome to stop in for some fellowship and holiday cheer.

Feel free to invite others you feel would enjoy getting to know this church family in a relaxed atmosphere.



Life Group Fireside Gatherings

Fireside gatherings are held @ 7pm on the manse patio (weather permitting) on the 1st & 3rd Fridays of each month. Feel free to call Ed or Diane if you want confirmation. Come, relax, and receive what emerges!

December Friday Gatherings: 1st & 15th





Christmas Poinsettias

We will have our usual beautiful display of poinsettias in the Sanctuary for the holidays. If you would like to purchase a plant, they will be available in both red & white for \$8. The plan is to reduce waste / over-ordering by only buying 15 plants. If that should change, we'll let you know (depending on availability).

If you're interested in a plant, please let Deacon Gail know. As in the past, your plant will need to be picked up no later than Christmas Eve.



Helpers Needed - Get involved with this *Outreach Opportunity*

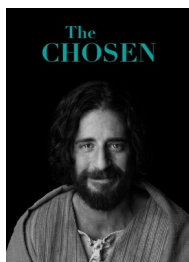
There are many things that need to be done in order for Rahway Food for Friends Food Pantry to begin operating from First Pres. and there is very little time to get things done. **That's why we need your help!**

Before they can move their shelving over, we need to remove the cobwebs, scrape and wash the walls, then paint them and the ceilings in the two offices off of the gymnasium as well as the gymnasium. We need to clean the kitchen downstairs, as well as the old skate room. Then we need to paint those areas too. The floors in the hallways outside of the gym need to be washed and the walls there also need to be scraped and painted. There are many other things that need to be done, like upgrading the electric, installing a conveyor belt, and renovating the bathrooms, but these will be done by professionals. After the gymnasium is painted, we need help to install the shelving and possibly help in bringing the food they have in stock over to First Pres.

As you can see, there's much to do and we need the help of everyone who is able to assist in this urgent plea. Please call Andy and let him know that you can help.



Together we can get this done!



Feel free to drop in, even if you haven't seen Season 1.

If there is a small group of people wanting to view and discuss Season 1, Diane would be happy to lead the group at an agreed upon day and time. Contact Diane if interested in either Season 1 or 2.

Please mark these Sundays at noon on your calendars. We meet at the manse.

- December 3, and 17 (at 12:30 pm for the 17th only)

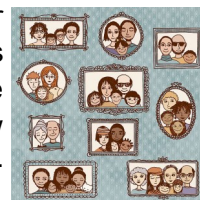


Church Angels

The church angels will meet on Thursday, December 7th, to work on several areas that need our attention. We would welcome anyone, male or female, who would like to join us in our endeavor to make our church more organized and cleaner. Please consider coming. We begin at 10:00 a.m. and work for several hours. Come when you can and leave when you must. Just call JoAnn's cell phone when you arrive as the doors are locked.

Pictures Needed for Our Church Bulletin Board

Several months ago I asked everyone to submit a photo of themselves and/or their families to Diane Hoener. We want to create a bulletin board with everyone's photos on it. This will help everyone match a name with a face. We're happy that we have new members and friends, and we want them to get to know us as we get to know them. With the holidays fast approaching, we are sure that you are going to be taking photos. Please be sure to send one to Diane's email.



We hope to have the bulletin board up by the first of the year. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

grateful
THANKFUL
AND
blessed

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all for the wonderful luncheon & the Count Basie Theatre tickets you gave me on October 29. It was wonderful to see all of you and to get to meet new family & friends. Thanks to those who made the luncheon possible - JoAnn Roesch, I know that you worked hard to make it happen! I am grateful to all those who shopped, baked/cooked, served, and cleaned up afterward. Thank you, Evan, for playing music ... from my special parody song to Black Sabbath (must admit, I never heard them played on a piano before, but you rocked it! LOL). Thank you, Richard, for paying for my delicious cake. And a special shout out to Dana & Patrick who sent messages (you got me teary-eyed but, shhhh, don't tell anyone!).

Through the 16 years, I have been truly blessed to have been a part of many events but two always come to mind when I count my blessings with First Pres: the Fall Funfest, which was opened to the community, with adults and their children laughing, talking, and playing games in Davis Hall. As well as being a witness to the church helping a family get a Diabetic Awareness Dog (DAD) for their toddler with funds coming from the Second Pres Mission Fund. I'm excited to see where God leads us as we begin 2024 with RFFF coming to the church and plans for even more community interaction. I'm truly grateful, thankful, and blessed for all of you. I can't wait to see where our faith journey takes us together in the years ahead.

Much love always,
Carol Ann



*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., Avril Muller & family, Bob H., Bruce & family, Bryant family, Carlos B., Celeste & Doris, Christine H., Danny M., Eileen P., Gail, Gladys B., Gladys S., Jane S., Joan Cubino & Roy's family, Joe K., John H., Kristen & family, Laura W., Mary Ann, Mary Ann R., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Molly, Nancy T., Olga S., Patty-Travis & family, Rachel's grandmother, Robert S., Savannah B., Tina Marie & family, Tom P., Toni B., Whitney S.,
Those in war-ravaged areas

Those that are homebound—Caroline Balla, Doris Kapus



Our heartfelt condolences to...

Orieji Awa & family on the passing of her mother in October. Please lift the family up in prayers of comfort and strength during this most difficult time.

Prayer Persons

DECEMBER

- Dec. 3rd - Aleya Daye Hall**
- Dec. 10th - Gladys Bond**
- Dec. 17th - Mykelti Thomas**
- Dec. 31st - Sola Family**

JANUARY

- Jan. 7th - Richard McCarthy**
- Jan. 14th - Doris Kapus**
- Jan. 21st - Caitlyn Gutches Camuccio**
- Jan. 28th - Will Marsh**

Sunday, December 24th is the Candlelight Service

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



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May hope, peace, joy, & love be yours this Christmas!