



First Presbyterian Church

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2023, 10:00 AM

GATHERING

Handbell Chimes – *The ringing of the chimes invites you to a time of Rest...Renewal...Hope*

Prelude "A Child is Born" -Thad Jones

Lucas Brown, organ

Call to Worship and Ritual of the Advent Wreath

Stephen Ministries

One: We have waited long enough!

All: For some, it has been a time of restless anticipation,

One: for others, a time of frenzied preparations.

All: For still others, a time of wearisome travel,

One: for some, a time of nostalgia, perhaps even melancholy.

All: But our time of waiting ends this night.

One: On the first Sunday of this blessed season,

All: We lit the Candle of Peace, reminding us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, demonstrating how we can realize God's kingdom in this world.

One: On the second Sunday of this blessed season,

All: We lit the candle of Hope, celebrating the hope of Israel, and the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

One: On the third Sunday of this blessed season,

All: We lit the candle of Joy, giving thanks for the gift of Jesus who sets all people free.

One: On the fourth Sunday of this blessed season,

All: We lit the Candle of Love, declaring that Jesus was born into our world to show us how to love one another.

One: On this blessed eve of Christmas, we light the Christ Candle as a sign of the light of Christ which enters our world once again, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that

All: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined."

One: Allow that light to touch you, to heal your wounds, to renew your flagging spirit, to provide guidance for your journey.

All: Let us worship God on this holiest of nights.

*Hymn #9

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

***Invitation to Experience God's Grace**

One: Ask and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

All: For every one who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

One: Friends in Christ, God knows our needs before we ask, and in our asking prepares us to receive the gift of grace. Let us open our lives to God's healing presence, forsaking all that separates us from God and neighbor.

Let us be mindful not only of personal evil but also of our communal sins of family, class, race, and nation. Let us confess to God whatever has wounded us or brought injury to others, that we may receive mercy and become for each other ministers of God's grace.

***Laying Down Our Burdens**

All: Dear Lord, we come to you this day to express our failures and confusion regarding our relationship with you:

You know that we come to you with heavy hearts that we find hard to unburden. It is particularly in this time of year when the darkness of long nights collides with the brilliance of Christmas lights, that we find it hard to express our losses.

We feel confused, sad, and lonely. We feel our losses without feeling your support for us. We tend even toward anger at you, Lord, because we feel in some way it is your will that we are unhappy.

Open us to the understanding that you are the source of all love and we need not feel so alone in our grief. Grant us wisdom to know that you – most of all – can be trusted, and that you are with us, especially when we are at our absolute worst.

***Silent Prayer**

***Declaration of Forgiveness**

One: Let us open our lives to God's healing presence and receive our Lord's acceptance of us!

All: We know, God of Love, that you are always with us even in our very darkest of times. We know that you forgive our many sins, and that by leaning on your infinite patience and strength, we receive your mercy, your care, and your grace today. Amen.

*** We Celebrate God's Forgiveness Hymn #584 "Glory, Glory, Glory"**

Glory, Glory, Glory 584

Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry be to God on high!
¡Glo - ria, glo - ria, glo - ria, en las al - tu - ras a Dios!

And on earth peace to all peo-ple in whom God is well pleased.
Y en la tie - rra, paz a la gen - te que a - ma el Se - ñor.

TEXT: Based on Luke 2:14; Pablo Sosa, 1989
MUSIC: Pablo Sosa, 1989
Text and Music © 1989 GIA Publications, Inc.

CUEQUITA

***Sharing the Peace of Christ (Colossians 3:12-14)**

One: As God's own people, be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind. Be always ready to forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Time with the Children

Celebrating the Life of the Church

THE WORD

All: God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves, and for our families and friends who struggle with illness and loss. We ask for your strength as we hear your Word read and proclaimed. We ask these things in the name of Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40: 1-5; 28-31

One: Holy wisdom, holy Word.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"

Rev. Marvin Lindsay

*** We Affirm our Faith (Colossians 1:15-20)**

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible. All things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen.

GIVE THANKS

Offering of Our Lives to God

One: I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Silent Reflection

Prayers for Healing

One: God, our creator, your will for us and for all your people is health and salvation:

All: have mercy on us.

One: Jesus Christ, Son of God, you came that we might have life and have it in abundance:

All: have mercy on us.

One: Holy Spirit, dwelling within us, you make us temples of your presence:

All: have mercy on us.

One: To the triune God, the source of all love and all life, let us offer our prayers. For all who are in need of healing,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: For all who are disabled by injury or illness,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: For all who are troubled by confusion or pain,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: For all whose increasing years bring weariness,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: For all about to undergo surgery,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: For all who cannot sleep,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: For all who practice the healing arts,

Silence

One: Lord, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

One: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray, saying,

The Lord's Prayer

All: 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.

Thanksgiving and Invocation

Anointing with Oil

Practicing Abundant Generosity <https://onrealm.org/FirstPresbyteri11244/give/now>



Offertory: "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" -Elizabeth Poston; Kelly Leibensperger, soloist

* Doxology #609 *Glory to God,*

SERVICE MUSIC

609 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow



Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow. Praise God, all crea-tures
high and low. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ial Praise
God, in Je - sus ful - ly known: Cre - a - tor, Word, and Spir - it
one. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ial Al - le -
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

* Prayer of Dedication

LEAVE TO SERVE

*Hymn #24 "Away in a Manger"

Charge and Benediction

Sending Music "Awake My Soul" -Peter Leibensperger Lucas Brown, organ

Please use the Postlude time and music to reflect on today's worship experience and how it will support you in the week to come.

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WELCOME TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH! It is good to have you here in person or online. Please be in touch if you have news to share or would like more information or to talk to a pastor. Staff contact information is below. Read full announcements in our weekly [email newsletter](#), available on the church website. Subscribe on the [Contact Us](#) tab.

FLOWERS: If you are interested in having a live flower arrangement placed in the sanctuary in 2024 please contact Diane Thorne at dthorne31@comcast.net or 609-707-8122.

NURSERY care is available during worship (9:30 - 11:15) for those with young children. The nursery is located in the Preschool (level 1R) in the Red Balloon Room near the Preschool office.

Nursery Care is available during the 10am and 4pm Christmas Eve Services. No nursery care is available on December 31.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Parents, please register your preK-5th graders for Children's Church using the QR Code. PreK-Kindergarten must be signed out from the Sunday School room. First-fifth graders will reunite with their families in the Bean Parlor after worship. **Reminder: No Children's Church for preK-5 on Dec. 24 and 31**



NEWS AND EVENTS

CPR CLASS Marsha Reed, certified CPR instructor, is offering the AHA Heartsaver class to any interested members of First Presbyterian on Sunday, January 21. The class covers CPR, AED use, and choking rescue for adults, children, and infants. Two time slots are available: either 12:30-3:30 or 4:30-7:30. There is no charge unless you would like a certification card, which is \$20. Please reach out directly to Marsha at marsbarr83@gmail.com or phone 318-446-6095 if you are interested or if you have questions.

**Class size is limited and advance registration is required.

THE PORCH BIBLE STUDY In January, we will return to the Colossians & Philemon study. For additional Porcher information, see Deb Nussbaum or Jill Mascena at church or email Deb at debranussbaum1987@gmail.com.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN: CHERISHED women of First Presbyterian! If you're looking for a Bible study, a walking group, a quilting group, or any number of things, click her to check out the fall activities that Presbyterian Women are offering: at www.haddonfieldpres.org/presbyterian-women.

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CLASS DECEMBER 24 AND 31 NO CLASS

BLOOD DRIVE: The American Red Cross will be in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, December 27th from 2:00pm to 7:00pm for the annual blood drive. To schedule an appointment, please visit redcrossblood.org and enter the sponsor code: First Presbyterian.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE 12/17/23: 183 in person and 47 online

2023 CHURCH OFFERING UPDATE Please note that target numbers on the right now represent a 12-month budget.

	<u>Received to date</u>	<u>Twelve-month budget goal</u>
Envelope Giving:	\$ 580,280.00	\$ 570,270.00
Loose Offering:	\$ 11,266.00	\$ 12,000.00
Per Capita:	\$ 9,399.00	\$ 16,000.00

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER LIST

Please pray for these individuals and situations throughout the week. If you would like to add a personal prayer request, please contact one of the pastors. In making requests on behalf of others, please obtain the permission of the person needing prayer. The requestor will have their name printed as the originator of the request. Pastors will revisit these requests every 30 days.

Prayers for the Church

- Pray for the people, government, and country of **Ukraine** as war continues.
- Pray for **Gaza** and the **people of Israel and Palestine** as war continues.
- Please **pray for all those who experience sadness, depression and are suffering** during the holiday season **(12/20-pastors)**
- Please keep **Kevin** in your prayers as he recovers from heart surgery**(12/20-J. Wackes)**
- Continue in prayer for Linda's brother **Roy**, as he undergoes radiation and further cancer treatment **(12/20- L. O'Neill)**
- Pray that **Nancy** would feel God's love as she recovers from extensive surgery **(12/19-C. Carty)**
- Continue in prayer for **Jean Yount**, her medical team, and her family **(12/18-C. Yount)**
- Continue in prayer for **Isabel Pross** as she continues cancer treatment **(12/17-pastors)**
- Prayers for **Lauren**, a young mother with metastatic thyroid cancer **(12/17-J. Stout)**.
- Pray for **Vivian**, who has been diagnosed with lymphoma **(12/16-J. Grantham)**.
- Pray for **Amy** as she begins treatment following surgery **(12/16-J. Russell)**.
- Prayers for **Tom Rowe** and wife **Suzanne**, as Tom receives experimental cancer treatments **(12/15-J. Blank)**.
- Lift up **prayers of praise for family friends' safety in both Israel and New Jersey**. Pray for God's continued provision for this family **(12/15- P & D Nussbaum)**
- Pray for courage and faith for **Savannah**, a mother of two undergoing chemotherapy. **(12/14-L. Kirsch)**.
- Continue prayers for **Jake** who is battling childhood cancer **(12/14-L. Kirsch)**

- Pray for Peter's sister **Sarah**, his brother-in-law **Chris**, and their children **Amelia and Asher (12/13-P. Liebensperger)**
- Pray for **Olivia** as she recovers from surgery **(12/11-L. Willison)**
- Please pray for **Joe** that he would gain enough strength to return to his home, and for **Jackie** who awaits his return **(12/10-P. Woodland)**.
- Pray for **Emily's** successful recovery from spinal surgery **(12/10-P. Woodland)**
- Continue in prayer for **Patrick and his family (12/9-pastors)**
- Pray for **Yamile and Chrystle and their families**, that they all would have the strength to get through the everyday at Camden County Jail **(12/1-G. Ladies)**
- Pray for **Marlena and Morgan**, that their court cases would be resolved successfully, and also pray for their children and families **(12/1-G. Ladies)**
- Please pray that **God will continue to be by Taniyah and her family** through this difficult situation. Prayers for continued love and protection for her family **(12/1-G. Ladies)**
- Pray for **June** who is humbly asking for the restoration of her family and life through Jesus **(12/1-G. Ladies)**
- Pray for **Ananda and her mother**. While Ananda is in jail, her mother is taking care of Ananda's four nieces. Pray for the youngest child (one-year old) who overdosed on fentanyl. She is alive and doing well and needs our prayers **(12/1-G. Ladies)**
- Please pray for the King, Lewis, and Perrine families on the sudden death of Paul **(12/1-N. Passante)**
- Please pray for **Carlie and her husband John** who are both incarcerated. Pray specifically for their health and safety **(12/1- G. Ladies)**
- Pray for **Iyanna, Zuinda, and Alyssa, and their families** while these ladies are in Camden County Jail **(12/1-G. Ladies)**
- Pray for **Vani and her family - Adam, Grace, and Hope-** on the passing of Vani's father over Thanksgiving. Praise the Lord he had a very full 97 years! **(11/24-pastors)**

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Marvin Lindsay, Ph.D., Senior Pastor and Head of Staff- mlindsay@haddonfieldpres.org
 The Rev. Nikki Perrine Passante, Associate Pastor - npassante@haddonfieldpres.org
 Peter Leibensperger, Minister of Music - pleibensperger@haddonfieldpres.org
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