

# First Presbyterian Church Hackettstown, NJ

December 28, 2025



*Stay With Me*

by T. Denise Anderson

Inspired by Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23



First Sunday after Christmas | What do you fear?  
**LET FEAR FUEL A FIRE FOR JUSTICE**

**PRELUDE**



**THE RINGING OF THE BELL**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

In worship, we hear God's story and we ask,

**"What did God do long ago?"**

In worship, we hear God's story, so we ask,

**"What is God doing, here and now?"**

In worship, we hear God's story, then we ask,

**"What can I do to respond to it all?"**

Listen, God is speaking.

**Listen, it may be time to act.**

Let us worship our moving, inspiring, with-us God.

**Amen.**

**\*HYMN**

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

**132**

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;

ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;

now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!

He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forever more.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;

now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

**ANTHEM**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Emmanuel, God with us, scripture tells us that you were a refugee, but we love to forget that information. We love to forget every act of gun violence. We love to forget how many people go hungry, or how many students do not have access to good education. We love to forget the injustices in our world that feel too big for us to face. But you are a God who refuses to forget. So today we pray: make it impossible for us to overlook the stories of those in need. Make it impossible for us to sweep injustice under the rug. Open our eyes along with our hearts, so that the anger we feel around injustice might fuel a fire for action. With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, Amen.**

## **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Church family, even when we fail to do justice, even when we fail to love kindness, even when we allow fear to override action, freezing us in place, God still loves us. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

**On our best days and on our worst days, we belong to God. We are invited into community. We are held in God's grace. We are forgiven. And we are sent to serve.**

Thanks be to God for a love like that. **Amen.**

## **\*HYMN**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**121**

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark street shineth the everlasting light  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth  
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

### **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe. We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people. So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news. We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born. We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe. Amen.**

### **OFFERING INVITATION**

### **OFFERTORY**

### **\*DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise Him all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host,  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READING AND REFLECTION**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND INVITE TO SERVICE**

God we come to you grateful for all that we have and that you are a God who knows what we need before we ask.

**May the work of hands be blessed by your spirit now.**

They are each a tangible sign of our caring for others.

**Lord, let those who receive them feel our love.**

The shawls, blankets, and lap robes will be given to those who are in need.

**Lord, give comfort to those who grieve. Lord, give them strength to those who need healing in the body or spirit. Lord, give peace to those who know the pain of loss.**

May these pocket crosses that are small enough to fit in a pocket, be a reminder of God's steadfast love.

**May each one be a tangible reminder that whatever road we travel, we have a companion with us. God is with us always.**

**May these small care bags be another sign to anyone who receives them of your longing for all to be fed, housed and thrive in abundant life.**

May each member of our congregation be blessed: in the making, in the giving, in the receiving. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

### **\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

**\*RESPONSE**                      *Christ, Be Our Light*                      **314**

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

### **\*POSTLUDE**

#### **Serving Our Congregation Today**

***Worship Leader: Bill Cors***

***Music Director: Lorinda Ravo***

***Video: Erin Roguso***

***Greeting: Ellen & Bruce Bergman***

#### **WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH**

Interested in joining our church as a member? We would love to talk more with you about our ministry here. Feel free to fill out a visitors card and hand it to one of our ushers or Pastor Erin and we will make sure to reach out to you!

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Would you like to officially join the church? Have you already been a part of the community and are ready to say yes to being a member? Then join us for new members class in January. You are invited to come to all three in person meetings. We will discuss our church, what it means to become a member and how you might become more involved. Join us on **January 11, 18 and February 1.**

## JANUARY SECOND SUNDAY!

On January's Second Sunday, **January 11**, we'll be welcoming Ms. Diann Carrajat back to help us paint a winter scene. Please be sure to pre register so that Ms. Carrajat can have enough supplies for all participants.



First Sunday after Christmas | What do you fear?  
**LET FEAR FUEL A FIRE FOR JUSTICE**



### *Stay With Me*

by T. Denise Anderson

Inspired by Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

*18"x24" Acrylic on canvas board*

I used to think my mother was cheap. When we'd go on road trips, she'd spend the night before preparing food for the trip. I thought it was because she didn't want to spend money on fast food. She didn't. But her reasons had nothing to do with a drive-thru.

My mother was a Black child in the U.S. in the 1950s and 60s. When they went on road trips, they had to leave in the dead of night with everything they'd need for the trip. For Black folks, there was no casual stopping along the way. If you stopped at the "wrong" place, you might not make it home. Her elders taught her what they had to learn themselves, often the hard way. My mom grew up in the Steel Belt, but the family had moved there after leaving the Jim Crow South during the Great Migration for greener (and ostensibly safer) pastures. Her preparations were

vestiges of a circumspect upbringing designed to keep her safe.

I was well into adulthood when I realized my family had been refugees in their own country.

The story of the Holy Family's flight to Egypt takes new significance as I consider not only the experiences of dear ones around the world, but also my own ancestors. My piece focuses on a parent's desperate grip of their child's hand as they escape a despot's fiery wrath, possibly in the dead of night. The colors subtly recall the Pan-African, Palestinian, and Sudanese flags. I remember those left behind, and the lower part of the composition depicts the anguish of mothers whose children were not spared. Rachel still weeps (Matthew 2:18).

Our fears aren't unfounded. Salvation may have arrived, but the world still isn't safe. How will we remember Rachel's children as we resist and rebuild? **—REV. T. DENISE ANDERSON**

## **FYI-INFORMATION**

12/21/25	In Person Attendance	123
	Virtual Attendance	164
	Offering	\$5,129.58

## **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES at FPCH - Dec. 28, 2025-Jan. 3, 2026**

Sunday	10:00 am	Worship
	11:10 am	Joyful Noise Bells rehearsal
	11:20 am	Unity Chimes rehearsal
Mon/Fri	9:00 am-12:00 noon	Church Office Open
Thursday	7:30-8:30 pm	Senior Choir Rehearsal

## **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES in our Chapel - Dec. 28, 2025-Jan. 3, 2026**

Monday	10:30-11:30 am	AA Step by Step
	7:00-9:00 pm	Jazz Band
Tuesday	7:30-9:00 pm	NA Change or Die
Wednesday	7:30-9:00 pm	Stone Soup Symphony
Thursday	10:30-11:30 am	AA New Beginnings
Friday	Storage use only	Colonial Musketeers
	7:00-9:00 pm	Colonial Musketeers Sr.
	7:30 pm	GA Meeting
Saturday	7:00 pm	12 Steps



## **FOR PASTORAL CARE**

Pastor Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook

Cell: 908-963-8341

Email: [revehayes@gmail.com](mailto:revehayes@gmail.com)

Call the church office at: 908-852-4011

Church email: [fpchnj@gmail.com](mailto:fpchnj@gmail.com)

Church Website: [www.fpchackettstown.org](http://www.fpchackettstown.org)