

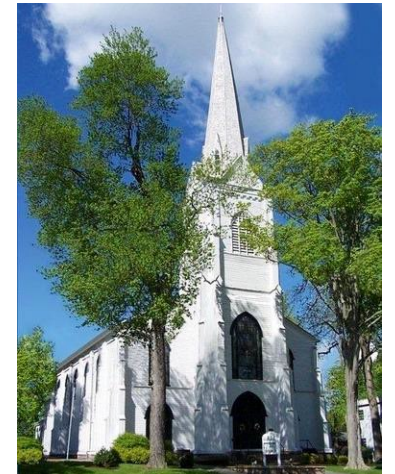
**First Presbyterian
Church
298 Main Street**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
298 MAIN STREET
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ 07840
REV. ERIN HAYES-COOK
OFFICE: 908-852-4011
e-mail: fpchnj@gmail.com
Church website,
<http://www.fpchackettstown.org>
Editor: MaryAnn Simmons
maryann.simmons3@verizon.net**

**DECEMBER
2024**



*Light
from the*



Steeple

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ
CHURCH OFFICE: (908) 852-4011**

Pastor: Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook
Choir Director/Organist: Lorinda Ravo
Treasurer: Al Ravo
Financial Secretary: Deborah Gulick-Shepherd
Head Usher: Kim Newton
Church Secretary: Pattie Huff

2024 SESSION

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Bruce Bergman	Donna Erickson	Bill Cors
Michele Cameron	Diane Hull	Geof Gohlich
MaryAnn Simmons	Ray Sookhoo	Sharon Heil

Clerk of Session: Donna Erickson

2024 BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Pat Gohlich	Ellen Bergman	Jackie Hammel
Janette Hendershot	Patricia Butts	Kathy Maier
Justin Simmons	Carol Miller	Lorinda Ravo

Moderator: Ellen Bergman

2024 HEAVEN SENT NURSERY SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICE: 852-2006

Director: Jen Bujno

Pam Venturini	- 2025	Pat Butts	- 2026
Meghan DeCree	- HS Parent	Toni Fryer	- HS Parent

Sharon Heil - Session Rep
Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook - Ex-Officio

A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

Welcome, FPCH, and Happy December!

Advent is upon us and that means we are in the spirit of finding our savior who came to us through the Glory of God, the child of Mary and Joseph.

This month, I encourage you to seek all that is good in this world as a result of the coming of our Lord, Jesus. I encourage you to be thankful for all that he has allowed you to have. I encourage you to listen to the stories that he has helped us to create along the way through his goodness and the light he has shed upon us.

Take time to think of all that is special in your lives. Think about the goodness you can spread as a result of the light he has shone upon us. To that end, find a way to use your time, talents, and treasure to assist others in a time of need. Also, consider attending our nightly Bible study held each Wednesday throughout December. Think about volunteering at a community event or at one of the missions the church holds. Ask your Deacons or Elders for ways that you can become involved in the church.

I want to wish you all a merry Christmas, as we are truly blessed to know that Jesus is among us.

Before I sign off, I want to remind you that as we head into the winter weather season, we want everyone to know that should we need to cancel church services, there are many ways you can find out. Cancellations will be posted on the church Facebook page and the church website, and Pattie Huff will send out an email via Constant Contact. You can also call the church office at 908-852-4011 where the answering machine will have a message about the status of church services.

Until next month...

Yours in Christ,
MaryAnn Simmons

DATES TO REMEMBER - NOVEMBER 2024

- 01: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 01: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Christmas Ornament sale after worship
- 04: Yarn Girls - 1 PM - Conference Room
- 02: Worship Committee Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 05: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 6: Advent Bible Study - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 08: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 08: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Veteran's Day Celebration; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Poinsettia Flower sponsorships due today; Christmas Ornament sale after worship
- 08: Second Sunday -11:30-1:30 PM at the church - Christmas, Christmas, Christmas
- 10: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 11: Advent Bible Study - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 12: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 14: Men's Breakfast - 8:15 AM - River Star Diner
- 14: Wreaths Across America - Ye Old Burial Ground Cemetery - 12 PM
- 14: Stone Soup Symphony concert - 3 PM in the Sanctuary
- 15: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 15: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Crazy Sweater and Tie Sunday; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Christmas Joy Offering
- 17: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM, in the Conference Room
- 18: Advent Bible Study - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 19: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 21: Ladies' Breakfast - 9 AM - River Star Diner
- 22: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 22: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; NO Sunday School; Christmas Pageant during service
- 22: Jazz Band Concert - 1 PM in the Sanctuary
- 24: Christmas Eve service - 7:30 PM
- 25: Merry Christmas! Church office closed
- 29: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; No Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 31: Happy New Year's Eve

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Imagine with me the first signs of dawn breaking into the night. The shades of pink, deep blue, and purple scatter across the sky as the silence of a new day sets upon you. Woven into the mark of time is a connection to the eternal and to the rhythm of life. Dawn breaks forth whether we intentionally notice it. We move about our days and the sun rises and sets. Throughout the scriptures that we will encounter this Advent, we find the promise of a new day, of the power of God breaking into our human condition.

We will hear of mountains made low and valleys lifted up, a reversal of what we expect. The word will show us the story of God whose radical love and salvation are alive in a man named Jesus who came into a world longing for freedom.

I've found that our communities feel like God's action in the world is often hidden from our view. We wonder what God is up to and how we might be part of it. Just like the light that slowly comes in the dawn, we feel like it is a dance between what God has revealed to us and what we don't know. Again and again we come back to the story that the greatest reveal that God has shown us is in the life of Jesus. God's son came to us in the body of a young Jewish girl. His birth is the greatest revelation to the world, God's love wrapped in flesh.

We live in the spiritual practice of waiting for Jesus to come to us again. We ache for God's glory to be revealed around us. My prayer for you this Advent as you practice that waiting is that you will find the promise of the dawn. God has and will continue to uncover the work of Christ in us and the world. May you pay attention to that uncovering. May you offer your light to the world. God will uncover the dawn and we will stand in that glorious light.

In Christ,

Pastor Erin

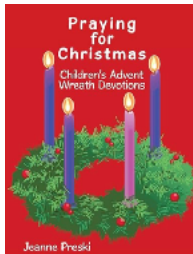


BOOKS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE

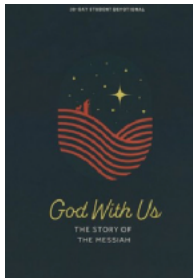
BY: MARYANN SIMMONS



This month, I recommend a variety of Advent devotionals available to all age groups. Advent is a time of reflection and connection with Jesus, our Lord. Therefore, take time out of your busy schedule each day during this month to get closer to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



This booklet offers daily prayer for use with the Advent Wreath at mealtime. Children can do the reading, focus on the concept for the week due to basic prayer repetition, and maintain peace at mealtime with brief devotions.



Although this is a 12-volume series, each 30-day devotional will point to the unchanging truth of God's love and anchor students in His Word as they walk through the holidays, seasons of change, and milestones that come with each passing year. Students will learn to *Discover* God's Word, *Delight* in the Lord, and *Display* God's work in their lives.



Taking time to pause for a few minutes each day can help us maintain balance in our lives, especially during the Advent and Christmas seasons. In this book, Trevor Hudson focuses on one biblical word of wonder for each day of Advent. His insightful reflections on the word for each day invite individuals and groups to a deeper understanding of Advent.

I hope you consider one of these books for the month of December.

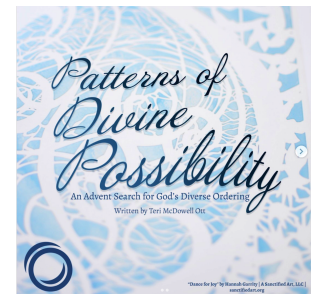
CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING IS SUNDAY DECEMBER 15th

Each year during Advent, PCUSA holds one of its four special offerings which focuses on faith-based action on shared concerns. This December 15th, FPCH will seek the Christmas Joy Offering. Fifty percent of your offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and 50% of your gift prepares students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

Won't you join me and PCUSA in supporting this worthwhile endeavor? Envelopes will be distributed the first week in December and you can then prepare it for the offering on December 15th. Thank you for your generous giving during this holiday season.

COME TO ADVENT BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS IN DECEMBER

Advent is a time for reflection and what better time to do that than at Bible study? This Advent season, Pastor Erin will be meeting on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 8 PM in the Conference Room to discuss Rev. Teri McDowell Ott's devotional, ***Patterns of Divine Possibility: An Advent Search for God's Divine Ordering***. This book explores the complex, beautiful patterns of our world and asks us to seek the "more" of God's creation, which is not just a world of opposites. Please consider joining Pastor Erin and others from the congregation for the next three weeks to seek a divine understanding of how and why God created the universe.



NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some highlights of our November worship services, children's music, All Saint's Day, and Thanksgiving Harvest donations. Photos from Second Sunday and the front steps project can be found with their respective articles. Enjoy these memories.



NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

BY: JUSTIN SIMMONS

The Deacons continue to work diligently to maintain their missions throughout the year.

The Little Pantry had a slight set back with food supplies but their stock has been replenished due to the donations provided by Heaven Sent and the congregation collection on November 24th. Diane Hull reported about the ongoing work in the chapel. The Deacons have donated \$2000 towards this work. We will consider purchasing metal cabinets for the upstairs pantry storage area.

Our 2025 Clothing Drive is confirmed for May 3, 2025. Panther Valley Ecumenical Church donated about 30 large bags of clothing. Diane and Lorinda picked up the items and thanked the church for their generosity.

We have approved plans for a pergola for Scout, Kyle Larga. Construction will begin in Spring, 2025.

Forms for our annual Christmas Poinsettia Flower sponsorship have been distributed in church November 17, 24, and will continue during the first two Sundays in December. Last day for sponsoring a flower is December 8th and on December 14, poinsettia flowers will be placed in the sanctuary at 6 pm. Some flowers will need to be re-arranged for children's program and concert.

The Deacons completed creating Christmas ornaments which include a note on the history of the stained glass window. They went on sale November 24th and will continue every Sunday thereafter. The cost is \$10 each.

Members of the Deacon board have shown an interest in a town-wide garage sale for next year. Therefore, consider donating unwanted items for this endeavor.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our missions. If you have any questions or suggestions, please be sure to reach out to a Deacon.

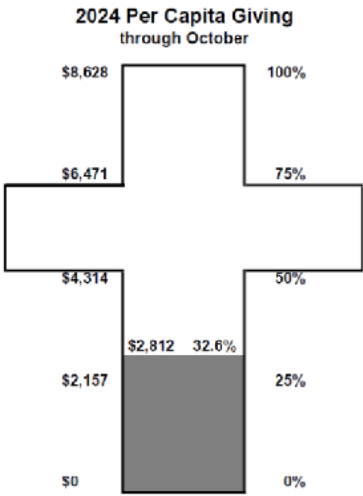
NOVEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

BY: AL RAVO

The Expenses Paid and Income amounts below do not include the funds transferred from the Endowment to meet the church operating expenses.

	OCTOBER	Year to Date
Income	\$14,974.49	\$164,190.22
Expenses Paid	\$14,757.03	\$182,135.54
Net Operating Income /(Deficit)	\$ 217.46	\$ 17,945.32
Amount of Schwab/Edward Jones funds used to pay operating expenses	\$ 0.00	\$ 9,000.00
Amount Needed from Endowment	\$ 0.00	\$ 10,000.00
Total amount of Endowment, Schwab & Edward Jones funds used to pay Operating expenses in 2024	\$ 0.00	\$ 19,000.00

Financial Comments / Observations:



1.The five largest operating expenses in October were:

- 1.) \$7,445.23 – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).
- 2.) \$4,249.99 – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.
- 3.) \$824.40 – Facilities (Chapel kitchen outlet & cleaning supplies).
- 4.) \$501.48 – Comcast.
- 5.) \$490.75 – Electric expenses (3 buildings).

2.The operating net income / (deficits) were \$217.46 in October and (\$17,945.32) Year To Date.

•The actual October operating expenses were \$4,576.30 below the average monthly budgeted ex-
penses.

•The actual October operating incomes were

\$1,858.84 below the average monthly budgeted incomes.

- The Year-To-Date operating expenses were \$11,197.79 below the average YTD budgeted amounts.

CONTINUED - SEE NOVEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL

NOVEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

- The Year-To-Date operating incomes were \$4,143.11 below the average YTD budgeted amount.
3. In October, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts decreased \$6,603.59 to \$358,061.18.
 4. The total endowment fund at the end of October was \$363,110.91. The total endow-
ment fund was down \$6,631.41 since the beginning of October and up \$23,445.28
since January 1, 2024.
 5. The October community dinner expenses were \$0.00. The donations collected at the
dinner were \$61.00. The total cost to the church for all community dinners since
October 2021 is \$693.02.
 6. The Men’s breakfast expenses for October were \$16.24. The donations collected at
the breakfast were \$66.00.

The 2024 Per Capita is \$42.50 for each of the 203 members of our Church. (The number
is the membership of FPCH on December 31, 2022.) The total amount due in 2024 is
\$8,627.50 or \$718.96 monthly. In October, \$42.50 was received for Per Capita raising
the total received in 2024 to \$2,811.78 or 32.6% of the amount due. A payment of
\$42.50 was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in October raising the total sent
in 2024 to \$2,811.78 or 32.6% of the total amount due.

Please contact Al Ravo for questions or to discuss the Church’s operational finances, the Endowment Funds, Per Capita or the Building On Generosity Capital Campaign.

BUILDING ON GENEROSITY (BOG) CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

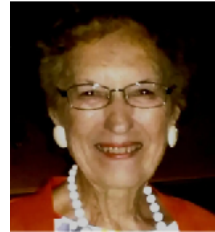
- Donations received during October, \$99.00.
- Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from
September 2019 (the BOG Kickoff dinner) through the last day of October 2024,
\$647,359.02.
- Expenses paid using the BOG funds in October, \$0.00.
- Total BOG funds are \$13,758.26. The breakdown is \$8,908.26 for the next BOG
project with an additional \$2,500.00 designated for parking lot pavement and
\$2,350.00 designated for the Chapel range hood replacement.
- Donations breakdown by source:
 - 5.3% - \$34,224.76 from nonmembers
 - 86.0% - \$557,052.05 from members
 - 8.7% - \$56,082.21 from anonymous & dinners
 - 100.0% - \$647,359.02 Total

Please contact Al Ravo for questions or to discuss the Church’s operating finances, the Endowment Funds, Per Capita or the Building On Generosity Capital Campaign.

GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

We are saddened to learn of the passing of Rose Green, 89, on November 14 at Hackettstown Medical Center.

Born in Great Meadows, NJ on May 31, 1935 to the late Alexander and Eva (Muzyka) Koshinchuk, Rose was the last surviving of 10 children.



Rose was a graduate of Hackettstown High School Class of 1954. She was married to the late Philip R. Green on October 9, 1954. Rose was a devoted wife and together they enjoyed being with family, camping, and traveling with friends.

Rose worked in retail for much of her life until retiring from Lord & Taylor at the age of 75. She had an eye for putting together clothing and accessories which was obvious to anyone who knew her, always matching from head to toe.

A devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown, Rose served many years as an Elder, Deacon and Sunday School Teacher.

Rose is survived by her three children, Sharon (John) Wojcicki, Philip (Brenda) Green, and Thomas Green, grandchildren, John Mark (Camerin) Wojcicki and Sarah (Mike) Rabuano, great-grandchildren, Emma, Nicholas and Alexander, three step-grandchildren, Mason, Kayla and Blake, as well as many nieces and nephews.

A viewing was held at Cochran's Funeral Home on Tuesday, November 19 followed by a Celebration of Life Service on Wednesday, November 20 at 11 am at the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown. She was buried at Hazen Cemetery, Belvidere, NJ.

In Lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown Building on Generosity Fund.

We give thanks to the God of the Resurrection whose love brings us hope everyday.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS FRONT STEPS PROJECT COMPLETE

BY: DIANE HULL

The church grounds has been given a makeover during the past two months. Back in late October, another project began on the front steps of the church. During the summer when the resetting of the walkways was being done, we discovered that the bottom two steps in the center were sinking in.



In the interest of both appearance and more importantly safety, Structure Worx is shown here replacing the steps. We appreciate the generous donation that has made this work possible. Photos courtesy of Diane Hull.

COLORING FUN



DECEMBER GREETERS

- Dec 1:** Jose and Della Irby
- Dec 8:** Kathy Maier and Bev Saunders
- Dec 15:** Pete and Carol Miller
- Dec 22:** Jean Zetterberg and Maddox Fucetola
- Dec 24:** The Roguso Family
- Dec 29:** Bruce and Ellen Bergman



SPECIAL DAYS IN DECEMBER

December at FPCH is very busy, so here is a preview of some special dates to remember regarding our worship services.

- Dec 1:** Decorating of the Chrismon Tree
- Dec 8:** Worship with Advent Candle Lighting; Peace Sunday - Let There Be Peace on Earth Choir and Church members
- Dec 15:** Worship with Advent Candle Lighting; Ugly Christmas Sweater and Tie wearing; fellowship and photo opportunities after worship
- Dec 22:** Christmas Pageant - The Friendly Beasts
- Dec 24:** Christmas Eve Service with Advent Candle Lighting - 7:30 PM

Please see Pastor Erin if you are interested in being a candlelighter during this advent season.

MUSIC NOTES

Music for the month of December will be:

- Dec 1:** Child of Peace-Sr. Choir
- Dec 8:** Let There Be Peace on Earth-Congregational Choir

Dec 15: Emmanuel-Unity Chime Choir

- Dec. 22:** Christmas Chimings- FPCH Ringers
- How Quietly-Senior Choir



- Dec. 24:** Angels Watching Over Me-Senior Choir
- O Holy Night-Senior Choir

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN

If you've been thinking about being a part of any of our music ensembles here at FPCH - Senior Choir, FPCH Ringers (adult chimes), Joyful Noise Bells (for young ringers) or Unity Chimes (for kids grade 3 and up) - please be sure to speak with Lorinda for more information! People are welcome to come in and give it a try at any time throughout the year.



Sharing God's Bounty

Gold, Incense, and Myrrh . . . and a Message to All

How much do babies appreciate the gifts they receive when they are born? Did Jesus, being the Son of God as well as the son of Mary, value the gifts the Magi brought? We would think those gifts impractical for a baby, but then this was not an ordinary baby. That gold bought food and lodging and everything that was needed by the holy family as they fled to Egypt and then got established in a new home. The incense was burned as their prayers ascended to the Father in Heaven, and the myrrh was used some thirty years later to anoint the body later of the Baby grown to be our Savior.

"The gifts are traditional gifts of the East," the Concordia Commentary on Matthew 2:11 tells us. We can be sure that these gifts were appreciated by our Lord, for St. Paul writes, *"If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have"* (2 Corinthians 8:12).

Were the gifts of the shepherds that first Christmas night acceptable as well? What did the shepherds bring? The Bible does not record their bringing any gift at all – except, that is, the gift of their running to the stable with anticipation, the gift of their humble worship as their anticipation turned to realization, and the gift of their *"spread[ing] the word concerning what had been told them"* as they returned to their flocks, *"glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen"* (Luke 2:17, 20). It is obvious the willingness was there as the shepherds brought gifts according to what they had. Therefore, according to Scripture, their gifts were acceptable.

We, too, can be sure that our gifts are appreciated by our Lord – the gifts of our treasures – our gold and silver and the gifts of our praise and adoration as we witness to what we have heard and seen. Like the Magi and the shepherds, we are drawn to the manger bed. Like them, we kneel in awe and adoration. Like them, we use the gifts God gives us, wherever we are, wherever God places us, to *"spread the word concerning what [has] been told [us]."*

"If you want to live longer give the other driver the right of way."

"There will always be roses, but someone has to take care of them."

"People who spend their time finding fault usually have little else to do."

"A church member who feels no responsibility for his Church does not really belong."

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE HYMN?

Beginning in January, we'd like to help you celebrate your birthday by playing your favorite hymn during the worship service: it might be the prelude, offertory, or the postlude on the Sunday closest to your birthday! Please use this short form, and give it to Lorinda. She'll be happy to play your favorite for you!

Name _____

Birthday (day/month) _____

Favorite hymn _____

SPECIAL THANKS TO HEAVEN SENT

FAMILIES DONATE FOOD ITEMS TO OUR LITTLE PANTRY

The Deacons and First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown would like to express their sincerest thanks to the students and their families of Heaven Sent Nursery School for their donation of food items for our pantry. The local citizens who access the pantry on a daily basis are truly appreciative of your generosity.

Thank you for making their Thanksgiving one to remember with food on their tables.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone at Heaven Sent!



SECOND SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER

On Sunday, November 10, we welcomed Hackettstown art teacher Diann Carrajat and her daughter to our “Juice Box ‘n Paint” activity. Photos are available on the church’s Facebook page. The kids and assisting adults also enjoyed a light lunch, and learned two Bible verses: Ephesians 2:10 and Ecclesiastes 3:11. Thanks to all who were part of November’s Second Sunday!

Second Sunday in December will focus on our “Christmas, Christmas, Christmas!” event as we paint some Christmas ornaments to use in our Christmas play, make a Christmas craft with Mrs. Bergman, and decorate Miss Winnie’s AMAZING Christmas cookies! To help us insure that we have enough supplies, please be sure to preregister on the sign up sheet in front of the church.

As always, thanks for allowing your kids to take part in this worthwhile monthly event to learn about the Bible and enjoy a fun craft to help make the lesson remain in their minds.

If you know of anyone who would like to host one of our Second Sundays, please see Lorinda Ravo with your ideas.



SIP AND PAINT FINAL ARTISTIC CREATIONS.
PHOTO COURTESY OF LORINDA RAVO.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PLAY 12/22

Our Sunday School students will present an original Christmas play based on the English carol “The Friendly Beasts” on Sunday, December 22. This play explores the part that each of 5 animals played in the Christmas story: cow, donkey, dove, sheep, and camel will all tell how they contributed to birth of our Lord. We hope you’ll join us for this special performance!

MAZE FUN

Hey, kids. To prepare you for Christmas, try to solve the maze, beginning at the top of the tree with the star, and ending at the stem of the tree. Then, draw some gifts under the tree. Enjoy.



TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO PRAY

A CHRISTMAS TREE BLESSING

Welcome back to our “Teach Your Children How to Pray section. This tradition allows families to bring a moment of spirituality to the secular tradition of decorating the tree. Try having a different family member read the blessing each year.

DESIGNED FOR ALL AGES

TIME INVESTMENT: 1-2 minutes

MATERIALS:

1. Blessing (printed below)
2. Christmas Tree (before decorating)
3. Manger scene/creche scene (optional)

HOW TO:

1. Before the tree is decorated, gather everyone together and read the following blessing:

God who created the birds in the air, the fish in the sea, the stars in the sky, and the trees in the ground, bless this tree as we decorate it and make it a joyful symbol in our home. May its branches remind us of the shade and shelter you provide for us and for many creatures. May its trunk remind us of your strength. May its lights bring us peace. May we remember your gift to us this season, the fit of the baby Jesus. Amen.

2. Optional (see note below) After decorating the tree, set up a creche or manger scene below the tree.

NOTE:

In the United States, there seems to be a sharp division between secular Christmas trees (the tree, the stockings, Santa) and Christian traditions (the manger scene, attending church, singing Christmas carols). As the tree is the focal point in many homes during Christmas, blessing the tree and setting up a manger scene under the tree (as opposed to gifts) can highlight the Christian significance of the day, something culture has lost sight of.

VARIATIONS:

1. Print the blessing on an ornament and say it as the ornament is hung on the tree.
2. Write a new blessing each year and collect them from year to year.
3. Cut down your own tree and say this blessing before the tree is cut down and brought home.
4. Adapt the language of the blessing to the age of your children or your own traditions and culture.

“This practice is excerpted from the book **Faithful Families: Simple Practices for Daily Family Life** by Traci Smith, published by Chalice Press, 2017, All rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

CHRISTMAS BIBLE TRIVIA

Hey, Kids. Play this trivia game with your family. Earn one point for each correct answer. The person with the most points after all questions are answered is the winner.

1. Which angel appeared to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus?

- a. Gabriel b. Michael c. Raphael

2. According to the Bible, in which town was Jesus born?

- a. Jerusalem b. Nazareth c. Bethlehem

3. How many miles did Mary and Joseph travel in order to get to Jesus’ birthplace?

- a. 90 miles b. 50 miles c. 30 miles d. 100 miles

4. What did Joseph and Mary use to travel to Bethlehem?

- a. A horse b. A camel c. A donkey

5. What guided the wisemen to Jesus’ birthplace?

- a. A comet b. A moonbeam c. A star

6. Who was the ruler of Judea when Jesus was born?

- a. Augustus Caesar b. Herod the Great c. Pontius Pilate

7. What did the angel tell the shepherds in the field?

- a. A Savior is Born b. A New King is Crowned
c. A Prophet has Arrived

8. What did the angel Gabriel tell Mary to name the baby?

- a. Jesus b. Immanuel c. Emmanuel

9. Who prophesied that the baby would be born in Bethlehem?

- a. Malachi b. Amos c. Micah

10. What did the angels sing when Jesus was born?

- a. “Hallelujah b. “Glory to God in the Highest”
c. “We Three Kings”

11. What gift did the wisemen NOT give Jesus?

- a. Gold b. Myrrh c. Frankincense d. Silver

12. What did the wisemen do after visiting the newborn baby?

- a. Went back home by another route
b. Returned to Herod c. Stayed in Bethlehem

13. In which Gospel does the story of Jesus’ birth appear?

- a. Matthew b. Mark c. Luke d. John

Good luck and have fun!!!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA



In celebration of the 2024 Christmas Season the Deacons are asking you to help fill the sanctuary with color by sponsoring a silk Christmas Poinsettia. Sponsorships are \$5.00 per plant. May be *In Thanksgiving for...* anyone dear to you or *In Memory of...* friends or family that have enriched your life.

Please make checks payable to The Deacons and mail to: First Presbyterian Church, c/o The Deacons, 298 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ 07840 or you may drop off your forms and payment in the church mailbox.

All forms and payment must be received no later than Sunday, December 8th.

Please return this form with your payment. If you need additional space you may use the back of this form or submit an additional piece of paper, thank you!

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Have questions? Need more Information?
Please contact: Pat Butts – 908 391-2006
or Pat Gohlich – 201 925-7158

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 2: Diane Hull
- 3: Scott Annunziata
Pattie Huff
- 7: Noah Ligarzewski
- 8: Jackie Hammel
- 13: Cathy Van Orden
- 15: Carol Miller
- 23: Alex Annunziata
- 24: Ani McDonagh
- 26: Matt Erickson
Mark Gulick
- 27: Veronica Aquino



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 4: Stephen & Danielle
Carpenter
- 9: Richard & Margo Gregory
- 13: John Mark & Camerin
Wojcicki
- 23: Chris & Jennifer Bramley

PRAYER LIST

**Please keep the following
in your prayers:**

Eris Bunnell
Rod Cameron, father-in-law of
Michele Cameron
Eugenie Chetangie
Churches throughout
the U.S.
FPCH and Friends of
FPCH
Dan Gardner
The Family of Rose Green
Dick Gregory
Terry Gretchen
Joan Grover
Barbara Hall
Carol Levine, mom of Michele
Cameron
Maikuu congregation,
Kibwezi Kenya
Members of the Armed Forces
Barbara Pace, niece of the
Prestopines
Alice Phoebus
Pam Sampson, sister of Jan
Courtright
Carol Spitzer
Muriel Stellingwerf
Gail Thompson, cousin of
Diane Hull
The food insecure
The homeless
Those struggling with
addictions and mental health
Those recovering from surgery
Richard Westby
Barbara Yankiv

