



# *THE TOWER*

*First Presbyterian Church*

*Sanctuary: 210 Morris Avenue*

*Office/Parish House: 37 Church Mall, Springfield, NJ 07081*

*Phone: 973-379-4320 Fax: 973-379-8883 website: [www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.org](http://www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.org)*

VOL. 76 NO. 04

December 2023



## **ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP CALENDAR**

December 3rd, 10:15 a.m., First Sunday in Advent—"Hope"

December 10<sup>th</sup>, 10:15 a.m., Second Sunday in Advent—"Peace" -Christmas Cantata.

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 10:15 a.m., Third Sunday in Advent—"Joy"

December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve (Two services) Fourth Sunday in Advent—"Love"

**10:15am** Service includes Pageant and communion.

**9:00 p.m.**, Service includes candle lighting, special music and communion.

December 31<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Eve Service of Lessons and Carols followed with a brunch.

## **SANTA'S HELPERS WORKSHOP** – Friday, December 15th

All pre-registered/prepaid children will enjoy making quality crafts that are wrapped for gift giving, while their parents take some time to themselves. Pizza will be served to the children at 6:00pm followed by supervised crafts. Parents return at 9pm for pick-up. The cost is \$20 per child and the rewards are priceless! Sign up at the info table, or call the church office 973-379-4320. If you would like to volunteer or have questions, please contact Lisa Guida, Christian Education Director (and Head Elf) [christianed@springfieldpresbyterian.org](mailto:christianed@springfieldpresbyterian.org).



The entire church staff wishes you all a very Blessed and Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year!

*Rev. Jen VanZandt, Bridge Pastor*

*Rev. Roberto Fois, Associate Pastor of Outreach and Community Engagement*

*Linda Jurczak, Office Administrator*

*Steve Kjetsko, Treasurer*

*Heather Francis, Treasurer's Assistant*

*Linda Amiano, Financial Secretary*

*Lisa Guida, Christian Education Director*

*Liliya Khobotkova, Music Director*

*Dorothy Torres, Custodian*

*Chris Ortiz and Katie Zarembor, AV Tech. Team*



### ***December 2023***

2-Rita Dauser  
4-Carol Kaiser  
5-Lisa Guida  
8-Samantha Werner  
10-Robert Meringer  
15-Tom Hale

WE ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY. IF IT  
DOES NOT APPEAR IN THE TOWER, PLEASE SHARE YOUR INFO  
WITH THE OFFICE STAFF. MONTH AND DAY ARE FINE. THANK YOU!

### ***January 2024***

7- Akachukwu Ihekwoaba Obiako  
15- Marie Parry;  
21-Dawn Hartman  
23-Daniel Donnelly;  
26-Virginia Meringer;  
29-Eugene Schramm;



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray you all had a wonderful and restful Thanksgiving and are easing into the Advent season, which you may have noticed is later than usual in the Christian calendar. In most years, the first week of Advent is the last Sunday in November. This year Advent begins this Sunday Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> and 'Advent 4' is not only Christmas Eve, but Christmas eve is also a Sunday.

You may have also noticed that the Stewardship drive is later than usual. That was intentional.

Given the fact that this congregation has had so much change in the last number of years, sending out a 1-dimensional pledge form letter didn't seem to reflect the energy, enthusiasm and hard work that is happening in this faith community.

If you've been able to be present in worship or attend on-line, you've seen the joy, gratitude and depth that is being shared among members, friends and visitors alike. While I've only been with you a short time, I believe there are many ways in which to honor, celebrate as well as plan for your future together.

Admittedly, I'm a bit of a stewardship nerd, but I think that there are lots of creative and meaningful ways to discern how to dedicate time, treasure and talent beyond filling out a pledge card and dropping it in the plate or the mail.

To that end, this year, we will be recognizing and dedicating stewardship through a theme of giving gifts of **frankincense, gold and myrrh** on Dec 17<sup>th</sup>. As you all know, these are the gifts thought to be brought by the magi in response to the birth of the Christ-child.

To be clear, we are NOT expecting you bring bars of gold, myrrh oil and incense to worship that day (I'll take care of that!) but we will be inviting you to fill out 3 separate cards as part of your offerings for 2024, one of which will be your 2024 **pledge commitment** (i.e. gold). The other 2, will be commitments for how YOU can bring good news and to this faith community with your **ideas and participation** (frankincense), and how you can help bring **hope and healing** to this church and the community through volunteering/supporting current and future missions (myrrh).

On Dec 17<sup>th</sup> we will have a special service and dedication for all three of your offerings. If you are unable to attend worship, you can mail or email your (confidential) choices to me, Dawn Clarke, or Steve Kitsko. We will also send you a mailing so you can fill out your cards ahead of time.

I hope this will inspire you to not only look at stewardship differently but also Advent as whole. If three outsiders got the message that the world was about to change...stopped what they were doing and journeyed to Bethlehem with their best with deep for hope for a new dawn, maybe you can too.

Grace and Peace,

Rev Jen





# SPRINGFIELD UNITY PROJECT

## HOLIDAY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

## DISTRIBUCIÓN DE ALIMENTOS

# December 9, 2023

**12:00 noon to 4:00 pm**

at the Parish House:

**37 Church Mall,  
Springfield NJ 07081**



SPRINGFIELD  
UNITY PROJECT



RENAISSANCE  
CHURCH

**Families in need will receive a frozen turkey and other food items.**

**Familias necesitadas recibirán un pavo congelado y otros alimentos.**

This initiative is made possible through the generosity and coordination of our community's organizations and Springfield's congregations.

Esta iniciativa se hace posible gracias a la generosidad y coordinación de las organizaciones comunitarias y las congregaciones de Springfield.



**Please share this information with any family in need.**

***Por favor comparta esta información con familias necesitadas.***

**To register scan this QR code or call 848-221-7163 for questions**

***Para registrarse escanee este código QR o llame al 848-221-7163 para más información. Se habla Español***







MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK! THANKS TO MEMBERS OF THIS CHURCH, THE ROTARY CLUB, HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS AND SPRINGFIELD UNITY PROJECT.





**SANTA'S WORKSHOP  
AND  
PARENT'S NIGHT OUT  
2023**

**The First Presbyterian Church at Springfield  
37 Church Mall  
Springfield, New Jersey 07081**

**SANTA'S WORKSHOP  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023  
6:00-9:00 PM**

**\$20.00 PER CHILD  
PREREGISTRATION is REQUIRED!**

**CRAFTS**

(Quality crafts made by the children and wrapped for gift giving)

**PIZZA**

(Served at 6:00 pm)

**SNACKS**

**PLEASE CALL TO REGISTER:  
973-379-4320 (Church Office) or email  
christianed@springfieldpresbyterian.org  
(Lisa Guida)**

## What Are We Waiting For?

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.*

*Luke 2:25 NIV*

Drive to the Dr's office. Sit. Wait. Go to the bank. Get in line. Wait. Pick up your mail. That letter you've been expecting is not there. Wait. The test results are not in yet. Wait. That phone call from your child you've been hoping for hasn't come yet. Wait. Wait. Wait.

A disproportionate part of our lives is spent waiting for the next thing, waiting for some good news, waiting for something to happen, something to change, something to finally start, or something to finally end.

We are not alone in the waiting. We are in good company. From the Gospel of Luke, we read the story of Simeon, an old man who had been waiting for the consolation of Israel, for something to change, for something to end and something new to begin. Well, Simeon finds that his waiting might be coming to an end when presented with a child. A child. A defenseless, harmless, innocent child, not even able to walk or talk. What kind of consolation would that child bring to Israel? What kind of change would a little baby bring about that would fulfill Simeon's dreams? Simeon would have to wait to find out, but now he waits **with a new hope in his heart, full of the Holy Spirit**.

Is everything that Christ promises to bring about readily available to us right here, right now? Yes, and not yet. As we travel the Advent journey, we find ourselves in a liminal space. In the space between the "already and the not yet." In the space where we are called to wait for the completion of what Christ has already done through birth, his ministry, his healing, his words, his sacrificial life.

As we enter the season of Advent, we are presented with the same questions. "What are we waiting for?" And yet, that very question can be turned into a statement, "Christ is what we are waiting for"; Christ, bringing about reconciliation between God and God's creation; Christ, inaugurating a time of hope, of peace, of joy and of love; Christ, modeling for us a better way to live with each other, a better way of regarding each other, a better way of caring for each other, of loving one another.

*Let us pray: "God of expectations, maybe we be enabled to wait patiently like Simeon, through the help and sustenance of the Holy Spirit, until your realm is brought to fulness and completion. Through Christ we pray. Amen."*





## POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Our CHRISTMAS SUNDAY POINSETTIA display will be  
on December 24th

The cost is \$15.00/plant.

Please place your orders with payment to the Church as  
soon as possible and no later than the 19<sup>th</sup> so your name will  
be on the dedication list.

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY/HONOR OF \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be leaving my plant

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be taking my plant after the Christmas Eve service.

**We will make the plants available for pick-up after the 12/24 worship services for those who would like it for the holiday.**

Number of plants \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00= \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Envelope # \_\_\_\_\_  
(if available)

Please mail this form with your check payable to *First Presbyterian Church* to the church office: 37 Church  
Mall, Springfield, NJ 07081 . It must arrive in the office by 12/19 to be included in the dedication roll.



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SPRINGFIELD

## December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<b>First Sunday of Advent: HOPE</b> <b>3</b> Communion Worship Service 10:15am	<b>4</b> Session Meeting 7pm- PH	<b>5</b> Town Hall Tree Lighting & Concert 6-8pm	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Food distribution Noon-4pm PH parking lot
<b>Second Sunday of Advent: PEACE</b> <b>10</b> Worship service with Cantata, "Joy" 10:15am	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Wreath Across America Convoy at High School 4:30pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Santa's Helpers Workshop 6pm-PH (Pre-registered)	<b>16</b>
<b>Third Sunday of Advent: JOY</b> <b>17</b> Worship Service with Distortion Band 10:15am	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent: LOVE</b> <b>24</b> 10:15am Christmas Eve Pageant & Communion 9:00pm- Communion, Candlelight and special music	<b>25</b> Christmas (no services) <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Middle School Bash (Details to follow) 7-10pm
<b>First Sunday of Christmas</b> <b>31</b> 10:15am Service of Lessons and Carols 11:30am NYE Brunch	<b>We Wish You a Very Merry Christmas And Happy New Year!</b>					

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**(corner of Church Mall)**  
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**office@springfieldpresbyterian.org**

THE FIRST CONGREGATION  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT SPRINGFIELD  
37 CHURCH MALL  
SPRINGFIELD, NJ 07081

stamp

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PLACE LABEL HERE



### **Come Worship With Us!**

- Sunday, December 3rd – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – “Hope”- 10:15am
- Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – “Peace” 10:15am- Cantata.
- Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunda of Advent – “Joy” at 10:15am
- Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve Service-“Love” at **10:15am** with Pageant.  
**And 9:00pm** Christmas Eve Service with Candlelight, special music and Communion.
- Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>– Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:15am followed with brunch.
- Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany Communion Worship Service at 10:15am.