



THE TOWER

First Presbyterian Church

37 Church Mall

Springfield, NJ 07081

www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.com

973-379-4320

VOL.73 NO. 03

NOVEMBER 2020

WORSHIP WITH US!

We are hoping to return to in-person worship on Sunday, November 22nd unless the number of COVID-19 cases begins to get out of hand again. We will have to make the decision about in-person worship week by week at this time. And we would hope to make that decision by Thursday in each given week if we are going to close the Sanctuary and worship by Livestream only. We would communicate that decision primarily by email, the church website and Facebook page. So, if you have an email address but do not get regular emails from us, please contact the church office with that information: firstpcoffice@verizon.net

We will continue to Livestream our worship services each week. Many thanks to the Trustees, especially Russ Werner, for getting the hardware in place for Livestreaming. If you do not have a way to Livestream on YouTube but you do have a DVD player and would like to receive copies of the services, let us know and we will make the services available to you. (And if you don't have a DVD player but would like to view the services, let us know and we will get one to you.)



We are a grateful congregation, within a grateful community and we hope you will join in on the celebration of the veterans most dear to us. God Bless America!

The Springfield Community holds a Veterans Day ceremony each year. The American Legion Post 228 will lead the observance on **Wednesday, November 11th at 11am at Veteran's Park** on the corner of Shunpike Road and Mountain Avenue. If you are able and willing to attend, wearing of masks and social distancing will be expected – To all our veterans - THANK YOU!



THANKSGIVING INTERFAITH SERVICE—MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD @ 8PM

This is our year to host the Thanksgiving Interfaith Service for the community of Springfield. It was decided to make this an online-only service. We will have leaders of 6 different faith communities joining us, as well as Mayor Chris Capodice and a representative from the First Aid Squad, which we hope to support with our online offering. Please join us as we Livestream @ 8pm on Monday the 23rd on our Springfield Presbyterian Church YouTube channel.



3-Linda Chelis	13-Leo Shapiro
6-Kathleen Dubiel	14-David Maas
6-Ronald Dubiel	14-Heather Francis
7-Russell A. Werner, Sr.	16-Kayleigh Scott
9-Christian Finnerty	21-Arthur Biber
11-Dale Doremus	24-Harrison Jones
12-Isla Scott	25-Richelle Jones
12-Diane Mauriello	26-Greg Clarke
13-Ted Doll	28- Margaret Doremus

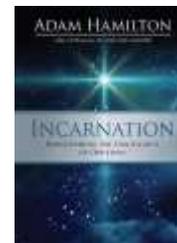
PLEASE NOTE: BIRTHDAYS ARE PROVIDED FROM OUR DATA BASE. (MONTH AND DAY ONLY) IF YOUR BIRTHDAY IS MISSING FROM OUR NEWSLETTER, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE WITH YOUR INFO SO THAT IT WILL BE INCLUDED NEXT TIME.

Advent Study—Join Pastor Rhonda on Zoom for “Incarnation”

His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

Even in the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians can faithfully reclaim the Christ Child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Join Pastor Rhonda for a 4-week online DVD study where we will reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for our lives and world today! The weekly themes include:

- Week One: Presidents and Kings
- Week Two: The Savior and Our Need for Saving
- Week Three: Emmanuel in the Midst of a Pandemic
- Week Four: The Light of the World



In order to make this opportunity available to the widest group possible, Pastor is offering this event on Wednesday afternoons at 3pm (12/2, 12/9, 12/16 and 12/23) as well as Tuesday evenings at 7pm. The Tuesday evening group will miss one week, however, due to Pastor's attendance at a meeting of the Presbytery of Elizabeth. So, the Tuesday evening group will meet 12/1, 12/15 and 12/22.

Please contact Pastor Rhonda at her email address to confirm which group you would like to attend: revrhon@aol.com



Faith Matters—November 2020

“Praise the LORD! O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.”
(*Psalm 106:1*)

My dear friends in Christ,

I hope this letter finds you well. This continues to be a very challenging time for all of us, I know. Many of us are prone to feeling isolated as a result of the pandemic and subsequent advice to shelter in place, maintain social distance, and avoid gatherings with others outside our household, including gathering for worship. We will, I'm sure, be grateful when “things go back to normal.” But we may have to console ourselves with the knowledge that there will be a new normal once “the dust settles.”

In the interim, it's important to remember that there is still goodness in the world, and that our God is the source of that goodness. In the book of Genesis, we hear it said that God created the world and called it “good.” If I were to sit at dinner with you tonight and asked you what you are grateful for, where the “goodness” is evidenced in your life, how might you answer me?

Despite the anxiety provoked by boorish new cycles, deadly illnesses, and a sea change in the way we connect with one another, we are still encouraged to see the light of God's substantial grace shining through even the darkness of this moment in time. And when we practice gratitude, we are better positioned to welcome that grace and see the hope of divine light.

We are called by God to experience and share gratitude as a way of life—not because God's ego is so huge that God needs to hear us say, “thank you” over and over again for every good thing that comes our way. But because gratitude is life-affirming and grace-filled. Gratitude brings with it the blessings of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Gratitude is a gift of God for the people of God.

Science indicates that people who develop an “attitude of gratitude” tend to be happier and healthier than those who live without a high attention to thankfulness. Gratitude can lead to better sleep, healthier hearts, and fewer aches and pains. It can improve our relationships with others. And there is evidence that people who are grateful for the blessings they receive in life may have higher immune functioning. So, who wouldn't want to be more grateful? Right?

Both medical professionals and spiritual leaders insist that it's possible for us to train ourselves to be more grateful, so that thankfulness is not an experience that is here one moment and gone the next, but an actual way of life. They suggest a good way to work on becoming more grateful is to:

- Look for it—there is always something for which to be grateful, even in difficult times.
- Dig for meaning—savor and appreciate the positive attributes of things in your life.
- Assign a gratitude time—whether it be when you wake up or go to bed, think of it like exercise for the soul. When you do it at the same time every day, it becomes a part of your routine.
- Keep a gratitude journal, writing down the things for which you're grateful.
- Make gratitude a choice, while also understanding its limitations. Gratitude alone may not cure you of cancer or COVID-19, but gratitude mixed with resilience enables us to find our way through traumatic situations of stress with less emotional and spiritual trauma.
- Pray—pray often, pray with conviction, and pray with confidence that God will never let you go. For nothing in life, not even death, will separate you from God's love in Jesus Christ.

During this season of Thanksgiving, I invite you to spend time asking and answering these questions: What you are grateful for? And where is “goodness” evidenced in your life? May God help you discern the answers! Happy Thanksgiving, from my house to yours,

Pastor Rhonda



PUZZLE

Glad gatherings

The first Christians met together over a meal. Today church families still gather to break bread and thank God.

Follow the instructions below. Then write the remaining words in order from left to right and top to bottom to complete the verses.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	They	found	broke	bread	acts	in
2	houses	their	homes	beautiful	and	round
3	ate	words	beginning	together	happy	follow
4	with	numbers	glad	disciples	gathering	lesson
5	thanks	sincere	praises	Christian	hearts	and
6	celebrate	good			God	tradition
						river



- Cross out all words in column E with double letters.
- Cross out all words that are books of the Bible.
- Cross out all words in column B that end in d.
- Cross out all words in column A that have more than 4 letters.
- Cross out all words in row 5 with 3 syllables.
- Cross out all words in the table with 9 letters.
- Cross out all words in column F with 2 or more vowels.

ACTS 2:46-47, NIV

Answer: They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God. Acts 2:46-47, NIV

Puzzle

Write the words below in alphabetical order inside the squares. Then read down the second column to discover the sentence that begins and ends Psalms 146, 147, 148, 149 and 150.

- FEAST
- KHAKI
- MOUTH
- ESSAY
- LLAMA
- ORBIT
- CARRY
- UDDER
- BRUSH
- ITEMS
- APPLE
- LEARN
- CIDER

A							

Answer:

Answer: Praise the LORD!

CHURCH OFFICERS' VIRTUAL MEETINGS VIA ZOOM:

Trustees: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 7pm in PH – Note date change!

Session: Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7pm

Mission Study Team Update

Our Mission Study Team is made up of Dawn Clarke, Heather Francis and Angela Ruebling-Jass. They have been meeting regularly with Pastor Rhonda for quite a while now. The process they are following includes looking first at the church's history—the stories, events, members and leaders that helped form and drive the ministry of the Springfield church for many years, with God's help. Then looking at the church in the current day, with consideration given to its place in the community. This portion of the study includes detailing the church's resources (talents, skillsets, relationships, assets etc.), researching local demographics (looking especially for significant shifts in ethnicity, family make-up, languages, housing types etc.), as well as interviewing members and nearby residents, and then reflecting on how the church ministers to its community today.

And this is where they are right now—they are looking at the changing community and asking, "What are we doing to serve the community that we love and in which we reside?" The next step in the process will be to seek discernment about how God is leading us to be ambassadors of Christ in coming years. Once this Mission Study is done, we will complete a report for ratification by the Session and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, after which we can complete a Ministry Information Form and begin to seek a candidate for our next pastor. Please continue to keep our Team in your prayers.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Due to the pandemic, the Presbyterian Women have been unable to meet or conduct the traditional flea market. The funds raised at the flea market provided the source for end of year donations to mission programs such as Elizabethport Presbyterian Center, Mission at the Eastward, PCUSA programs, Church World Service school kits and Christmas gifts for children in El Centro in Plainfield.

In memory of his mother Janice, Robert Bongiovanni has prepared an array of "Jan's Jams" that will be made available through the church office. For a donation of \$5 per jar (cash or checks payable to Presbyterian Women), members and friends can choose their favorite flavors or try something new!

The supply of jams will arrive in time for mid-November and will be sold during front office hours of 9-12 & 1-3pm on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. Curbside pick-up at the Parish House can be arranged. Call Linda J. in the office for details. 973-379-4320.

KEEP YOUR OFFERINGS UP TO DATE, AND SAVE A STAMP IN THE PROCESS!

You no longer have to write out a check, find an envelope and put a stamp on it, and mail it. Your bank can do it for you.

Every bank and credit union has a free, online bill pay feature. You can schedule your payments by logging into your bank and setting up the Church as a vendor. Use your envelope number as your "account number". The bank will mail the check to us.

If you want the money to reach us faster, use your bank's Zelle feature. It doesn't cost you or the Church anything to use. We are listed on Zelle as donate@springfieldpresbyterian.org. Zelle payments are processed immediately after being authorized.

Our website is being updated to accept online donations via the Presbyterian Foundation and PayPal. Please watch for further announcements!

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

stamp

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PLACE LABEL HERE



Our virtual worship services have been enhanced with the addition of live piano and solos/duets under the musical direction of Liliya Khobotkova.

We are so thankful for the soloists who have shared their gift of song with us during the COVID-19 restrictions that prevent our choir from singing together.

Kristin and Charles Ruebling-Jass, Lory Anello, Clarence Davis, and Ken Young: Thank you for your gift of song that lifts us up!

Joshua Myers, Russ and Russell Werner: thank you for sharing your talents with the live-streaming process so that we can reach our homebound members!