



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.com

VOL. 72 NO. 04 and 05

December 2019- January 2020

HANGING OF THE GREENS – DECEMBER 1st

The Hanging of the Greens service will be celebrated on December 1st at 10:15am to welcome the season of Advent. Members and friends will take part in presenting some of the natural symbols of the season which we will continue to enjoy all month.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR CANTATA



This year, our choir, under the direction of our own Liliya Khobotkova, will present the Christmas Cantata, "Joy!" by Joel Raney during the worship service on Sunday, December 22nd. You won't want to miss this special event with beautiful Christmas music and the poinsettia display!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

As we do every year, all children, teens, young people, and even parents are invited to be part of our Christmas Eve Pageant that will be held this year at the 4:00pm worship service on December 24th. Costumes will be available the week before Christmas in the Chapel. Please see Lisa Guida about taking part in this seasonal tradition!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Two services 4:00pm. and 11:00 pm on Monday.

- **4:00pm** Family service with Christmas Pageant, and special choir music
- **11:00 pm** Candlelight Communion Service



PARENTS' NIGHT OUT AND SANTA WORKSHOP-DEC. 13th

Our annual Parents' Night Out and Santa's Workshop will be held on Friday December 13th from 6-9 p.m. in the Parish House. Pizza, movies, and our Santa's Workshop (under the direction of Lisa Guida) will be the activities for the children. (Santa's Workshop—from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.—provides the children with the opportunity to make and wrap 12 quality crafts for Christmas gifts for family members without their parents present). There will be certified teachers on hand to supervise the children that evening, allowing parents some free time out while the children are busy having fun. Youth members, grandchildren and friends of the church are welcome to participate. Pre-registration is required by Dec. 6th, but we are limited to the first 30 children, so don't wait! Member cost is \$10 per child and non-members are \$15 per child, paid at the door. Please call the office (973) 379-4320 to let us know your child/children will participate in the fun.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Presbyterian Women will be conducting their annual **Christmas Boutique*** after the worship service on **December 1st and 8th** in the Chapel. **Homemade baked goods and jams will be available while supplies last!** A display of new and gently used giftware will be in the Chapel. Members will sell these items during Fellowship Hour.



The PW Christmas luncheon and grab-bag gift exchange will be held in the CHAPEL on **Thursday, December 12th at 12 Noon**. All women of the church (PW members or not) are invited to attend and should RSVP to Janice Bongiovanni. The cost for the lunch is \$5 per lady. If you have not already done so, please send your payment to Janice Bongiovanni as soon as possible.

All ladies who choose to participate in the Grab-Bag gift exchange should bring their \$20 wrapped gift to the luncheon. Whoever brings a gift, will receive a gift.

The PW wishes to thank all the members and friends who have supported their 2019 programs and mission projects so generously. **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

(Please note: there will be no meetings in January or February 2019.)



*Your financial support of the PW fundraising events help to make the donations to Church World Service possible. This year, the PW will be donating 2 families of chickens, 1 pair of goats, 2 water filters, 1 rainwater catchment, 2 piglets, 2 kitchen kits, 2 bags of Moringa tree seeds and 2 sets of farming tools. These gifts help needy families survive and thrive! Thanks for the support.



“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.*” (Isaiah 9:2)

“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to *give light* to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:78-79, Zechariah’s song)

Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” (Matthew 2:1a-2)

To my good friends at the Springfield Presbyterian Church,

Light is a dominant theme in the Bible. God’s children are encouraged to see the light and dwell in the light—for with it comes warmth, clarity of vision, awareness, hope as one day passes to the next, and confirmation that life is ongoing. When divine light shines upon earthly beauty, it brings forth joy and celebration. And none of this is accidental. Light has its genesis in God. From the light that is separated from the darkness in the creation story to bring forth the first day, to the light that shines through the Holy Word as it brings forth wisdom and grace, the *gift of supernal light* is a treasure to be enjoyed and shared.

Sometimes *that gift* is overpowering—such as the light that literally blinds Saul the Zealot on the Road to Damascus; an event that results in Saul’s transformation, so that, from that point forward, he is forever known to Christians as the Apostle Paul, one of the greatest disciples ever to live.

But sometimes *that gift* is precisely what we need to find our way through times of darkness. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105) Whether the darkness we feel is internal or external—personal or communal—physical or spiritual—the light of God’s abiding presence and persistent peace offers us hope: the hope of a new day and a new way forward.

And sometimes *that gift of supernal light* announces a miracle in the making, such as the starlight that leads the Persian magi to discover Jesus “lying in a manger.” Academics and theologians have, for years, gone back and forth on whether the Bethlehem Star really existed at the time of Jesus’ birth or whether it was a literary device intended to bring drama to the story of a poor boy who rose to be King of kings. Some say the Star was a comet. Others say it was an alignment of planets that produced a spectacular light. Some say it was a supernova, or exploding star, that blazed across the night sky with incomparable brilliance.

Still others say it couldn’t have been any of these things because even the untrained eye would notice such an heavenly event—so wouldn’t Herod and his minions have been able to find Jesus, too? (I don’t know about that—sometimes we miss even those things that stare us right in the face, especially if we’re not looking for them.)

I don’t know that the mystery of the Bethlehem Star will ever be solved. And that’s okay. It seems to me that, if God *offers us light as a treasured gift*, it’s wise not to dismiss its importance. Does it really matter whether God used a comet, a supernova or ordinary planets lined up in extraordinary fashion to tell us that the Messiah is coming to bring us peace? No. What matters is that, like the Wise Men, *we seek the light and travel toward it with confidence that God is both the source and destination of that holy light.*

As we conclude the year with the birth of Jesus and begin a new year walking beside the Wise Men, may we strive to look for and be led by the *light of God*—especially precious during this season of hope.

With love and blessings at Christmas,

Pastor Rhonda



A special “thank you” to our office helpers, aka “Office Angels”

Who return week after week, year after year, to assist the staff in countless ways:

**May Smith, Janice Bongiovanni, Linda Amiano,
Raffaella Conetta, Jen Werner and Loretta Werner.**

To those of you not listed by name, who have stepped in to help with answering the phones,
Tower newsletter and bulletin assembly, setting up tables and chairs for events,
decorating our buildings and just being there when we needed the extra hands,

We thank you, most sincerely.

To Russ, Russell and Russell “RJ” Werner, -thanks, beyond measure!

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

Rev. Dr. Rhonda Myers, Interim Pastor

Linda Jurczak, Office Administrator

Steve Kjetsko, Treasurer & Heather Francis, Assistant Treasurer

Lisa Guida, Christian Education Assistant

Liliya Khobotkova, Music Director

Steve Wichik, Sexton & Dorothy Torres, Custodian



SPECIAL ADVENT LUNCH AND CHRISTMAS SING-ALONG – DEC. 15th

You are invited to attend an Advent Lunch in the Parish House Auditorium on Sunday December 15th following the 10:15am service. Lunch will be served by noon. The menu will include baked ham, mashed and sweet potatoes, mixed vegetables, and salad, with apple and pumpkin pies for dessert. There is NO CHARGE for this delicious meal—it is a gift from our Outreach Committee to our members and friends—but RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST! Please call the church office or sign up at coffee hour after church by Sunday, December 8th. To ensure we all have “holly, jolly Christmas” spirit, our own Liliya Khobotkova will lead us in a Christmas sing-along between courses. Oh what fun!

LESSONS AND CAROLS - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29TH

The 10:15 a.m. Service of Lessons and Carols combines scripture passages with carols, providing the perfect way to keep Christ in Christmas. If you plan to attend this most enjoyable Sunday service, and would like to participate by reading one of the lessons, please speak with Pastor Rhonda.



Please join the Revs. Rhonda and Dave Myers for a Christmas Open House at the Manse on Epiphany Sunday, January 5th, from 2-4pm. It's a great way to close out the twelve days of Christmas and wish all a Happy New Year!



December 2019

2-Rita Dauser, Don Rathjens, Helen Gallardo
4-Carol Kaiser, 5-Lisa Guida;
8-Samantha Werner; 10-Robert Meringer;
13- Fred Danneman, Herbert Gallardo;
15-Tom Hale, Terrence Hecking; Ryan Wahlers
17-Jack Amiano;
26-Marilyn Madison, 28- Christine Faraone.

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

January 2020

1-Michele Faraone;
5-Marian Briggs; 6- Aiden Jimdar;
7- Akachukwu Ihekwoaba Obiako ;
9- Richard Scott;
15- Chad Jimdar, Marie Parry;
16 – Allison Lau; 19 – Lucas Peter Gutin
21-Dawn Hartman, Charlotte Kotch
23-Daniel Donnelly; 26-Virginia Meringer;
27- Amelia Kotch; 29-Eugene Schramm;
30-Donald Auer; 31-Laura Dauser Boehler



POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Our CHRISTMAS SUNDAY POINSETTIA display will be
on December 22nd

The cost is \$15.00/plant.

Please place your orders with payment to the Church as
soon as possible and no later than the 18th 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.

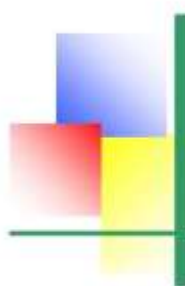
If at all possible, we would like to keep as many of the plants in the sanctuary until after the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

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 or put it in an envelope and place it in the offering plate on Sunday. Thank you.



First Presbyterian Church of Springfield

DECEMBER 2019

A Welcoming Church for 274 Years...

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Advent Begins 1 9am Confirmation 10:15am Communion Worship Service 11:15am Fellowship PW Bake and Jam sale & Christmas boutique	2 SCCC 4-5 Session 7:00pm	3 Bible Study 7pm	4 SCCC 4-6:30pm	5 Choir 7:30pm	6	7
8 9am Confirmation 10:15am Worship 11:15am Fellowship PW Boutique Noon-Outreach trip 2pm Great Shepherd Church Cantata-PH	9 SCCC 4-5	10 No Bible Study	11 SCCC 4-6:30pm	12 PW Christmas Luncheon—Chapel Noon Choir 7:30pm	13 Santa's Helpers Workshop 6-9pm—PH	14
15 9am Confirmation 10:15am Worship Noon-Christmas luncheon—PH	16 SCCC 4-5	17 Last Bible Study 7pm	18 SCCC 4-6:30pm Trustees 7pm	19 Choir 7:30pm	20	21
PONSSETIA DISPLAY 22 9am Confirmation 10:15am Christmas Cantata	23 No SCCC	24 Christmas Eve 4pm Family Pageant 11pm Candlelight Communion Service	Christmas Day 25 	26 Office Closed No Choir	27	28
29 10:15am—Service of Lessons and Carols 11:15am—Fellowship	30 No SCCC	31				

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

stamp

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PLACE LABEL HERE

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sunday, December 1st & 8th – PW Christmas Boutique and Bake and Jam Sale
- Thursday Dec. 12th, Presbyterian Women's Christmas Lunch at the Chapel-Noon.
- Friday, December 13th Parents' Night Out and Santa's Workshop. 6-9 pm, Parish House –
Pre-Registration is required by 12/6. \$10 per member child \$15 per non-member child
- Sunday, December 15th , Christmas Luncheon, -Noon in the Aud. – Free-reservations are necessary.
- Sunday, December 22nd Christmas Cantata, "Joy" at 10:15am
- Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24th , 4:00pm Family Service with Pageant
- Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24th , 11 pm Candlelight Communion Service
- Service of Lessons and Carols – Sunday, December 29th, 10:15am



- Open House at the Manse – Epiphany Sunday, January 5th, 2-4pm