



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

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December 2020- January 2021

Online Worship Only for Now

As you have heard, the Session recently decided to forestall a return to in-person worship until it is safe for us to meet again. So, we will continue to worship only online for now. We are not certain when we will be able to “open wide the doors” and gather us in. It will depend on how severe and how long the current COVID-19 increase in cases and deaths threatens to bring us harm; but re-opening isn’t likely to happen very quickly. Please continue to participate in worship on our YouTube channel: Springfield Presbyterian Church. The service is Livestreamed at 10:15am each Sunday, and once the Livestream is converted by YouTube to a video, it is posted on our website page:

www.springfieldpresbyterian.org

If you have a computer, you should be able to access YouTube easily using Google Chrome as your search engine. And, if you don’t have a computer but would like DVD’s of the service, we would like to make those available to you. But you will need to let us know if that is what you would regularly use to share in our worship experience. You can contact the church office 973-379-4320 to ask about worship opportunities.

Advent and Christmas Worship Calendar

November 29th, 10:15 a.m., First Sunday in Advent—The theme is Hope

December 6th, 10:15 a.m., Second Sunday in Advent—The theme is Peace

December 13th, 10:15 a.m., Third Sunday in Advent—The theme is Joy

December 13th, **7:30 p.m.**, Third Sunday in Advent—Blue Christmas Service (Note the time.)

December 20th, 10:15 a.m., Fourth Sunday in Advent—The theme is Love

December 24th, **7:00 p.m.**, Christmas Eve (Note the time.)

December 27th, 10:15 a.m., First Sunday of Christmas

We will worship at our customary time on Sunday morning. In addition, we will offer an evening time service on December 13th that is intended as a time of healing and prayer for those struggling with grief or loss during a time of year when tears of sadness are not usually welcomed. Note that the time for the Blue Christmas service is **7:30 p.m.** to allow our staff to fulfill their afternoon obligations. (The time posted in the pastor’s letter last month was incorrect.)

We will only have one Christmas Eve service this year due to changes prompted by COVID-19. The Christmas Eve service will be Livestreamed on our YouTube channel at 7:00 p.m., December 24th.

Stewardship Sunday—December 13th

Thank you for keeping your pledges current during 2020. We would not have been able to continue to serve our community with ministries of presence without your support. So, thank you, thank you, thank you. The Trustees are at work preparing a budget for 2021 and they hope you'll make it a point to pledge for 2021 as well, especially as expenses continue on whether we meet in person or not. Also, our hope is to call a new pastor in 2021 and proper funding for that step is important if there is to be a smooth transition from our interim pastor to an installed pastor. A letter and pledge card will go out in advance of Stewardship Sunday and we would ask that you try to complete the card and get it back to our church office before Christmas, if you are able.

Mission Study Team Update

Your Mission Study Team continues to meet on the First and Third Wednesday evenings of each month. They spent time this Fall looking at demographic data for the Springfield area and they are currently discussing and researching ways to re-connect with the community in meaningful ways. Our next step is to organize some Congregational Gatherings. They will be scheduling a Zoom gathering in early 2021 to listen to your stories of the church, discuss what the church means to us, and await a sense of the Holy Spirit laying before us our purpose and mission. The date for this Zoom gathering will be mailed to you in January 2021 and posted on our Website.

Advent Study—Tuesday Evenings @ 7:00 p.m.

Pastor Rhonda would like to offer you the opportunity this Advent to join in a study that will look at the meaning behind the names of Christ and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas. It will be a video study using Adam Hamilton's work, "***Incarnation.***" (You can Google it by that name if you want more details. Hamilton is pastor to the largest United Methodist congregation in the U.S. and one of the most influential of current-day mainline pastors, teachers and preachers.)

This will be a Zoom study. If you would like to be included in the Zoom invitation, please email Pastor Rhonda at: revrhon@aol.com and she will confirm your interest and send you the invitation for each Zoom session on the Monday before these 3 sessions: December 1st, 15th and 22nd. (Note: there will be no Zoom study on 12/8 as Pastor has a Presbytery meeting.)

Advent Devotions

The Presbyterian Outlook has published devotions for the season of Advent and Pastor Rhonda will send out these devotions on each of the four weeks of Advent to all who are on her church email list. If you prefer to receive a hard copy, let Linda Jurczak know by contacting the church office at 973-379-4320 and she will send you a hard copy by snail mail.



SANTA'S HELPERS WORKSHOP-DEC. 18th & 19th-Limited seating

Our annual Santa's Helpers Workshop has been revised to meet the current restrictions for distancing during the pandemic. Children, ages 6-13 will prepare crafts at their own distanced table with adult supervision to assist, if needed. Each child will receive a selection of kits to assemble at the workshop from 6:30-8:30pm. A pre-packaged snack will be provided. All children must wear a mask and temperatures will be taken at the door. The cost is \$15 per child and each must be pre-registered and pre-paid. Send checks payable to First Presbyterian Church or use Venmo to Lisa Guida. To register, please contact Lisa at 908-447-7399. Each session is limited to 8 children. Deadline is 12/11 or when sold out.



“Faith Matters”

December 2020

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

My dear friends in Christ,

I hope that this month’s edition of the Tower finds you and your household well. 2020 has been a challenging time for us all, on this we can surely agree. But what we may not agree on is how to manage the changes this health crisis has forced upon us. A case in point: I find that many are speaking of having COVID fatigue and wishing we could just “go back to normal.”

That is a reasonable reaction to a devastating experience. But, the truth is, what we once knew as “normal” will not be the “new normal” for our nation or community. We all have had to adjust our habits and behaviors to make a way through this time of isolation, fear and anxiety. Our meetings have become virtual. Our worship is virtual, too. Our outings are restricted; some still go out only to shop for necessities. Dining indoors and meetings in groups larger than 10 has been very limited and, with new restrictions, will be even more limited.

Our doctors and dentists, hairdressers and shopkeepers all must limit the number of people given entrance to their places of business. They must also take temperatures, keep a contact tracing log and ask a bevy of questions about health and safety matters. “Have you been out of the state in the last 14 days?” “Has anyone in your home or office contracted or been in contact with someone who has contracted COVID-19?”

We find these time-consuming questions and safety protocols intrusive and bothersome, and we want to be done with it all. Again, it’s understandable. But more worrisome is the number of health professionals, teachers and small business owners that are near ready to throw in the towel and say “enough.” They are burned out from all the extra hours at work and the increased loss—whether it be the loss of lives, the loss of personal interaction with students or the loss of business.

Blessedly, a vaccine is forthcoming and our national disaster will slowly ebb away. And for that, we are grateful: *grateful* for scientists and public health officials who have led the way in our recovery, *grateful* for online tools that have allowed us to remain connected despite social distancing, and *grateful*, most of all, for the God of Life who gives us the wisdom, intellect, compassion and fortitude to persevere in faith.

On the other side of this pandemic, we will have learned a great deal about being a resilient people, open to new ideas and new ways of thinking and doing and being, both in and of the world. On the other side of this pandemic, we will be grateful for new opportunities to be in community in a “both/and” fashion, meeting and sharing with others of God’s children *both* in-person *and* online.

On the other side of this pandemic, we will slowly re-enter our communities with care. On the other side of this pandemic, we will have witnessed, once again, the Christ child that is born for us and rules with God-given authority to offer us wisdom, power, grace and eternal life. On the other side of this pandemic, we will enter a post-COVID world where the questions we raise will be ones that lay claim to a new way of being as a people who have acted with “energy, intelligence, imagination and love” to come through one of the worst crises in a hundred years.

We will ask: How do we show our gratitude to God for showing us a way forward even as our fear caused the Light we see to temporarily waver? How do we respond with thanksgiving to the God of irresistible grace for speaking through the voice of prophets and angels to remind us that Christ comes for all and that, for a faithful people, disasters may kill us but they do not separate us from the love of God? How do we renew our commitment to Christ as his body on earth? And is going back to the “same old, same old” a proper response of gratitude for life made new in Jesus Christ?

My dear friends, Christ will come again this Christmas. His Light will be as bright and bold as ever. He will guide us into a new day and a new era. With trust in that good news, we will not, we cannot, simply go back to old patterns of being in community because, to do so, would be to profess defeat in the face of fear rather than victory over the threat of darkness and death.

A new church year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, November 29th. May we begin this new year with thanksgiving for all that God in Christ has given us, that we might see our way through this health crisis, and then make a plan to live and serve as those who have seen the Light and are willing to follow as it leads—even if it leads to very different places than we ever might have imagined before 2020.

Blessings for a holy Advent and a joyous, healthy Christmas,

Pastor Rhonda

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Presbyterian Women wish to thank Robert Bongiovanni for donating homemade jam in memory of his mother and our longtime member, Janice Bongiovanni. For every \$5 donation made to the Presbyterian Women, you may choose a jar from an extensive list of micro-batched jams and more. From old favorites to new flavors, we know you'll enjoy them. Some sugar-free items are included, and all while supplies last.

You may make arrangements by calling the office(973-379-4320) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9am-3pm or you can come to the drive-by fundraiser on **Saturday, December 5th from 10am-Noon.** On that day, you can follow the Parish House driveway to the side door. Stay in your car, and your order will be taken curbside for your donation of cash or check payable to *Presbyterian Women*. Gloria Southward and Robert will be wearing mask and gloves to keep everyone safe. If you are looking to do a good deed, see a friendly face and receive a sweet treat, don't miss this PW Mission fundraising opportunity!



The Sympathy of the Congregation is extended to the family and friends of Margarete Huber Grimm, beloved wife of Helmut Grimm, who died peacefully on November 18, 2020 at home.

A fifty-nine year member, Margarete joined this church with Helmut on November 30, 1961. Margarete served her church in many ways. She was ordained a Deacon in 1980 and then ordained an Elder in 1983. She officially served 5-three year terms as a Deacon, most of that time as Moderator. She lovingly prepared homemade bread for use at the communion table each month for decades, and provided the same for communion calls to the homebound.

Margarete gave of her time and talents willingly and lovingly. For many years, she was in charge of the Ladies Benevolent Society's Pot Roast dinner - a fundraiser that always sold-out. She meticulously kept the church and chapel organized while a Deacon. She and Helmut decorated the church and chapel for years and were usually the last ones to leave each Sunday, to be sure everything was in its place. We were spoiled by her attention to detail, and have missed her presence in church in recent years, as her illness made it too difficult to attend.

A loving wife, mother and grandmother, Margarete is now at peace with our Lord. Notes of sympathy may be sent to Helmut at 35 Hampshire Drive, Mendham, NJ 07945.



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 Kitsko, Treasurer & Heather Francis, Treasurer's Assistant

Lisa Guida, Christian Education Assistant

Liliya Khobotkova, Music Director

Steve Wichik, Sexton & Dorothy Torres, Custodian

We miss our office volunteers and hope to put you to work in 2021!



December 2020

2-Rita Dauser, Helen Gallardo
4-Carol Kaiser, 5-Lisa Guida;
8-Samantha Werner; 10-Robert Meringer;
13- 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 2021

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

December 2020

A Welcoming Church for 275 Years...

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SPRINGFIELD

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 Fax: 973-379-8883
 E-mail: FirstPCOffice@verizon.net

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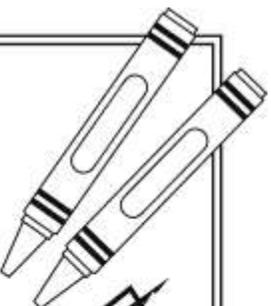


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 Presbyterian Women's Drive-through Jam Fundraiser 10am-Noon at PH
6 <i>Second Sunday of Advent: Peace</i> 10:15am live-streamed worship service	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 <i>Third Sunday of Advent: Joy</i> 10:15am live-streamed worship service Stewardship Sunday Blue Christmas live stream service 7:30pm	14	15	16	17	18 Santa's Helpers Workshop 6:30-8:30pm Pre-Registered only.	19 Santa's Helpers Workshop 6:30-8:30pm Pre-Registered only.
20 <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love</i> 10:15am live-streamed worship service	21	22	23	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Virtual service 7pm	25 Christmas Office Closed	26
27 First Sunday of Christmas 10:15am live-streamed worship service	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		



For our computer-abled members and friends, we live-stream the Sunday worship service at 10:15am and all special services at their publicized times on Facebook and a recording is posted on YouTube later in the day. Look for Springfield Presbyterian Church

on Facebook and YouTube or find the link on our website: www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.org For members who would like a copy of the worship service on a dvd, please contact the office. (973-379-4320).



PUZZLE

WHITE AS SNOW

Jesus, our Savior, came to earth to purify sinners.

Directions: Figure out which path through the puzzle is correct. Choose one to try, starting at the first picture under the "Path" box. Follow each picture's directional cues to see if the words make sense when placed in order in the blanks below. If not, try a different path until you figure out the Bible verse.

MOVE	MOVE	MOVE	MOVE	MOVE	MOVE
⬅️	⬆️	➡️	⬆️	➡️	⬆️
PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4	PATH 5	PATH 6
❄️ for	❄️ give	❄️ come	❄️ together	❄️ around	❄️ after
❄️ self	❄️ into	❄️ settle	❄️ eternal	❄️ thanks	❄️ forgive
❄️ God	❄️ Lord	❄️ says	❄️ without	❄️ Christ	❄️ warmth
❄️ love	❄️ sins	❄️ scarlet	❄️ other	❄️ light	❄️ praise
❄️ red	❄️ star	❄️ white	❄️ snow	❄️ winter	❄️ peace

EXIT

"_____ now, let us _____ the matter," _____ the
 _____, "Though your _____ are like _____,
 they shall be as _____ as _____."

ISAIAH 1:18, NIV

Answer: Path 3; come, settle, says, LORD, sins, scarlet, white, snow

Puzzle

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
 R S T U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q

10 23 13 17 14 6 18 21 21

11 14 12 10 21 21 14 13

6 24 23 13 14 1 15 4 21

12 24 4 23 2 14 21 24 1

22 18 16 17 3 8 16 24 13

14 5 14 1 21 10 2 3 18 23 16

15 10 3 17 14 1 25 1 18 23 12 14

24 15 25 14 10 12 14

ISAIAH 9:6, NIV

AIN '9:6

Answer: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.



POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Our CHRISTMAS SUNDAY POINSETTIA display will be
on December 20th

The cost is \$15.00/plant.

Please place your orders with payment to the Church as
soon as possible and no later than the 15th 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 12/20 worship service for those who would like it before 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 12/15 to be included in the dedication roll.

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

- Advent study via zoom with Pastor Rhonda. Tuesdays at 7pm or Wednesdays at 3pm. Details inside.
 - Saturday, December 5th – PW “Drive-thru” mission fundraiser 10am-Noon –Parish House.
 - Sunday, December 13th – Blue Christmas live-streamed service 7:30pm
 - Friday, December 18th and Saturday December 19th- Santa’s Helpers Workshop for ages 6-13. 6:30pm-8:30pm, Parish House –Pre-Registration and prepayment is required by 12/11. \$15 per child. See details inside this newsletter.
 - Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24th , 7:00pm

