



First Presbyterian Church's Advent wreath in the Ministry Center chapel

28 November 2021
1st Sunday of Advent

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Established 1817

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Building Community ▪ Transforming Lives ▪ Engaging the World

Trusting that God's grace embraces and makes a covenant with all believers, First Presbyterian Church intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. All persons are welcomed into this fellowship and membership regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic or racial identity, economic or educational status, or political affiliation.

Order of Worship

Prayer of Preparation

*Faithful God, your promises stand
unshaken through all generations.
Renew us in hope,
that we may be awake and alert
watching for the glorious return of Jesus Christ,
our judge and savior,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

Welcome

The Chiming of the Trinity

Prelude *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Mier

Introit *Christ is Coming* Macduff/Neander

Advent Candle Lighting

8:30am: Ben and Sarah Allan Straight

11:00am: Trey and Beth Paul

On this day we bear witness to the light of Christ
with all the faithful of every time and place:

**With Isaiah and Jeremiah, prophets of Israel,
we await the promised salvation of the Lord,
and look for the coming of the one
who will bring justice and righteousness to the earth.**

Candle lighting

Sung Response from Hymn 106 v.1

**Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!**

**Let every hill and valley
a level way appear.**

**Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.**

**O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.**

The Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory.
Alleluia!

***Hymn 88 vs. 1-4** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Plainsong

Confession

**Coming Christ, you may not find us as you hoped.
We've looked away from signs we do not wish to see.
We've stopped listening to distress we do not wish to hear.
We are numb to inconvenient truths.
Keep us alert, O God, to the needs of our neighbors.
Revive our hearts laden with compassion fatigue.
Sharpen our minds clouded by worries.
Sober our lives addicted to privilege.**

(We pause for a time of silent confession)

**Show us the signs of your coming,
that we may stand before you, the Son of Man,
in whose name we pray. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Summary of the Law

Matthew 22:37-39

**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and
with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the
greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it,
‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”**

(11am) Children’s Moment

Marianna Dunn

**Hymn 95 Prepare the way of the Lord.
 Prepare the way of the Lord,
 and all people will see the salvation of our God. (repeat)**

Lord’s Prayer

Hymnal p. 35

*2nd-grade children or younger may depart for Children’s
Worship and Wonder in the Ministry Center*

Hymn 95

Anthem *People, Look East* Farjeon/French tune
arr. Rowlett

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson Luke 21:25-36
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon The Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight

***Affirmation of Faith**

We believe in God, robed in splendour, veiled in mystery, ruler alike of darkness and light. We encounter God in Jesus Christ, who was tortured and put to death, but whose radiance could not be quenched; whose touch brings a blaze of colour to a dull, drab world: reviving the weary, healing the wounded, dazzling the satisfied. We walk with God, guided by the light of God's loving spirit, who enters the shadowed places of our hearts and leads us into truth and life. We wait for God, and for the fulfilment of God's promises, for the time when the darkness will hold no fear and the light will no longer blind, but creation will be made whole once more and God's peace will reign forever. Amen.

***Hymn 357** *The Days Are Surely Coming* Gambrell/Welsh

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

The flowers in the Sanctuary this morning are given by Janelle Haggard and Emily Haggard Yang to the glory of God and to honor the women of First Presbyterian, past and present, whose strength and leadership inspire us still.

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Postlude *Prepare the Royal Highway* Held

If you have not already done so, please place your offering in the wooden collection boxes nearest the exit you use. We look forward to seeing you again next week.

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Organist: Vance Harper Jones

Ensemble: Members of the Daybreak and Sanctuary Choirs

WELCOME VISITORS! Please write your name on a visitor's badge for your blouse or lapel. Along with our members, please sign the Friendship Pad when passed to you during the service.

CHILDREN are welcome at First Presbyterian Church. The nursery is available for infants and preschool children in Room 1.23 in the Ministry Center from 8:15am-12:15pm. Following the Children's Moment, those in the 2nd grade or younger may depart for Children's Worship and Wonder in the Ministry Center. For all children in worship, there are worship bags available at the front and back of the Sanctuary.

RESTROOMS are available in the Ministry Center, (including a family restroom), the Session House, and the Fellowship Center.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES with ear coverings are available. Please ask an usher if you have need.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY is provided by ramps between the Ministry Center and the Sanctuary, in the back of the Ministry Center, along the side of the Session house, and at the front and side entrances of the J. Murphy Smith Fellowship Center.

MASKS (as of November 14) are no longer mandated in our worship services here at First Presbyterian Church, however we hope that each person will make their own decision as to what is wise and safest for them in terms of wearing a mask or worshipping in person (the video service and podcast can both be accessed through the website). There may be some classes or rehearsals who choose to remain masked, and we are leaving that to their discretion. This move was made in response to rising vaccination rates and lowering infection and hospitalization rates in Craven County. The Worship Commission and Session will continue to monitor the data and consult with our wonderful physician members for advice on how to proceed. If a change is made, we will communicate this on our website and by email.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fellowship Meal

Mark your calendar for our December Fellowship meal to be served on Wednesday, **December 1, 2021**, in the Fellowship Center. A Bar-B-Que chicken meal will be served. The meal will be served starting at 5:30 pm until 7:00 pm. Take-out meals will be available beginning at 5:30 pm. We ask that anyone requesting takeout meals come inside to pick them up. Please email or call the Church no later than Monday, **November 29th**, to indicate your intentions to attend. If you know that you would like take-out meals, please let us know. We look forward to seeing you on December 1st!

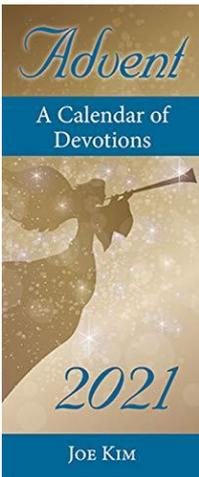
Hanging of the Greens

Please consider volunteering to help make decorations for the Sanctuary and grounds on **Friday, December 10th**, at 9:00 am. No experience is necessary! Even if you can't come, your donations of cypress, cedar, arborvitae, magnolia, boxwood, and holly are needed to create the beautiful decorations! Call Jackie Pollock or Janelle Haggard if you have questions.

Christmas Wreath Fundraiser

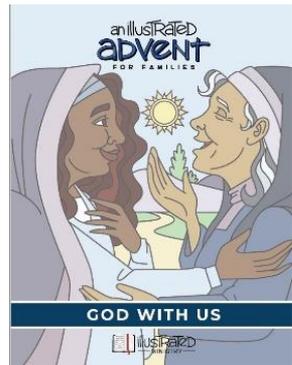
We are partnering with Vermont Wreath Center, Inc. again this year to purchase live wreaths as a fundraiser for our youth ministry! We are using their online purchasing option again this year, and therefore will not be having a bulk order shipped to the church. You can access the online ordering site through the church website or by going to www.vermontcenterwreaths.com/?ref=first OR you can still order through one of our JOY youth group members! **Ordering is open now until Dec. 1st**, and wreaths will be shipped directly to your home.

Advent Devotionals



Advent devotionals (one with readings and prayers for each day and another that is more interactive and was created with families in mind) are available for pick up in the Narthex on Sunday and in the church office during the week.

There are also several devotionals available online and by email each day, if you are interested in one of those, please contact Anna Pinckney Straight at anna@firstpresnb.org



Confirmation Choir will NOT meet this afternoon. Our next rehearsal is December 5 at 6:00 pm.

Children's Choirs are now rehearsing for Christmas services.

Covenant Choir (grades 2-5) will meet Monday from 4:00-5:00 pm in the Choir Room.

Kinderchoir (Kindergarten and First Grade) will meet Tuesdays from 4:00 to 5:00 pm in the Choir Room.

You may register online on our website, or by filling out registration cards available in the Narthex and Vestibule.

Donations of Teacups and Saucers Needed

Habitat for Humanity of Craven County is hosting a Women's Tea Fundraiser for International Women's Day on March 8, 2022. Currently, they are looking for donations of teacups, saucers, teapots, and tiered trays. Before donating, please check your items for chips and cracks; cups and saucers do not have to be matching. Donations can be dropped off Wednesday-Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm at their ReStore located at 930 Pollock Street. For questions about donations, please reach out to Volunteer Coordinator, Catherine Campbell, at ccampbell@cravencountyhabitat.org or (252) 633-9599, ext. 104. A small donation like this can help build homes, communities, and hope in big ways!

Sock Tree

During December, the Sock Tree will be in the narthex. Church members and friends are encouraged to donate new socks for men, women, and children. The socks do not need to be Christmas socks. After the holiday season the socks are donated to the homeless shelter at RCS. The staff at the shelter appreciates new socks as socks are seldom ever donated. Questions--please phone Norma Morra 636-1010.

Operation Jammies for Coastal Women's Shelter

Each year we collect "new" pajamas for every mother and child receiving services from the Coastal Women's Shelter. For the children, size 6 months to 16 for both boys and girls are needed. The sizes needed for women range from small to XXL. There is a collection bin inside the main entrance to the Ministry Center. You can also drop off the pajamas on Sunday morning. Pajamas will be collected until **December 20, 2021**. Also, remember that you can always donate to Coastal Women's Shelter through Gifts of the Heart.

2021 Thank Offering of Presbyterian Women

In 1888, when Eliza Clokey of Springfield, Ohio, urged each woman to give one dollar over and above her usual contribution to the Women's General Missionary Society of the United Presbyterian Church of North America as a "thank offering to

her Lord,” women responded, and the Thank Offering was born. Women gave sacrificially and were credited with saving the worldwide missionary movement of the church at that time. Over the last 33 years, Presbyterian Women has granted \$27 million to more than 1,600 different projects at home and around the world through the PW Thank Offering. You do not have to be a woman or a member of Presbyterian Women to contribute. At least 40 percent of the offering funds health ministries. First Presbyterian Church of New Bern has received grants from these offerings for Backpack Blessings and ESL lab equipment! We welcome contributions from anyone in the congregation who wishes to do so! Please make your checks payable to “Presbyterian Women” and write “Thank offering” in the notation line. You may drop off your contribution at the front desk of the church office by **November 30**. Many thanks!

New Hope Volunteer Village – Donation Needed

The New Hope Volunteer Village (located at Neuse Forrest Presbyterian Church in James City) has begun hosting work teams from across the United States to repair homes damaged in Hurricane Florence. The Village is looking for two used or new stand mixers for use in the two kitchens at the village so that teams can prepare meals. Contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org) with questions or to learn more about the work of the Village.

Books Needed for Oaks Road Academy

There is a need at a local school, Oaks Road Academy Elementary School, which is supported by Congregations for Children, at Centenary United Methodist Church. Each year, Centenary provides each student at Oaks Road with a new book. This year the project has fallen short of the goal of one book for each student. We are supporting this good work of our sister church in our community by accepting donations of book(s) with the purpose of realizing the goal of one book for each child. We will have a bin in the workroom for your donations. We will be collecting from now through Sunday, **December 12**. Questions? Contact Carol Hale.

Education

Sunday School classes meet Sundays 9:40-10:40 am

Sunday School for Children

Children and Teachers are asked to wear masks in the classroom.

Preschool – active play in the Nursery

Kindergarten-5th Grade – Ministry Center Room 1.27 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living)

Middle & High School – Ministry Center Room 2.23-24 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living)

Sunday School for Adults

The Present Word/George Evans – Session House Parlor

The class is currently studying the series "Celebrating God," looking at passages in both the Old and New Testaments. The class will begin a new study on December 5 "Justice, Law, History" in Old Testament texts. Please contact George Evans (gkevans4@gmail.com) with questions. The book is available in the church office. ***Not meeting November 28.***

Advent Sunday School Class

Beginning today Sunday, November 28 and running for the four Sundays of Advent, Anna Pinckney Straight will be teaching a class based on New Testament scholar AJ Levine's book "Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent." Books will be available in the church office or can be ordered from Amazon. The class will meet in the Session House main room.

Mid-Week Formation Opportunities

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study

The group meets on Mondays from 7:00-8:30 pm, via Zoom. Join us as we accompany Amy-Jill Levine, one of our favorite authors and teachers, and author of "The Difficult Words of Jesus," as she guides us through that struggle to a place of greater understanding of what it is that our Lord is requesting of us.

For more information, call Wendy Moeller 252-876-7259 or Marice Debruhl 252-637-5468 or Cathy Wingfield 828-767-0975.

Tuesday Afternoon Grief Support

The group meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 12:00 to 1:00 pm in the Chapel. This ongoing group provides its members with companionship, understanding, support, and guidance as we seek to go on living when someone we love dies. All are welcome. Come and bring a friend. Contact Lloyd for more information.

Life of Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Living

Led by Lloyd Griffith on Wednesdays noon-1:00 pm and meets in Ministry Center Room 2.21 and by Zoom in a hybrid format to begin the fall. The group will be studying “Soul Force” by Lloyd Griffith and “Immortal Diamond” by Richard Rohr.

Wednesday Evening Contemplative Worship

Led by Lloyd Griffith and meets in the Chapel in the Ministry Center. This contemplative, or reflective, approach to worship is offered each Wednesday from 5 to 5:30 pm in the Chapel. This quiet service is focused on silence, prayer, and reflection on the Biblical text chosen for preaching the coming Sunday. The Lord’s Supper is observed on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Come when you can and bring a friend.

Thursday Morning Women’s Bible Study – Advent Book

We will begin a new book for Advent on Thursday, December 2, “Advent in Plain Sight: A Devotion through Ten Objects” by Jill Duffield. Our Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study meets weekly 10-11 am by Zoom. The book is available for purchase on Amazon (Kindle version also available). If you need help acquiring the book or want to be added to the email list for the class, please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

Presbyterian (and friends) Wine and Theology Open to anyone interested in wine AND theology! We will meet the first Sunday of the month, **December 5**, at Cravin’ Wine (2500 Trent Rd Suite 16, located in Trent Road Plaza) at 4:00 pm. This will be a casual gathering for fellowship and conversation around topics of theology and faith. Wine will be available for purchase for \$5 a glass with some small bites to go with it. Questions? Contact

Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org). Topic for discussion for December 5: Advent is the special season before Christmas that is the start of the Liturgical year which guides the Church calendar. What are the symbols, traditions, practices that guide you through the Advent season? How do the practices change through the season? How has your faith changed through your cycle of life? Do you see the cycles of the church calendar reflected in your life? How do we carry these practices beyond the Advent season and into our daily lives?

Church Nursery

Our Nursery, located on the first floor of our Ministry Center, has resumed regular hours (8:15 am-12:15 pm). We have a team of paid, trained, and background-checked nursery workers to care for infants and preschool-aged children during Sunday school and both worship services. Stop by and say hi to our new nursery workers Cindy and Kimberly and Carolyn, and our nursery coordinator Bailey.

Fellowship Café

Join us from 9:30 until 10:45 am in the Fellowship Café (on the first floor of the Ministry Center) for a cup of coffee, a bite or two, and to renew your church friendships, or stop by and grab a coffee on your way to Sunday School!

Church Email List and Church Newsletter

We communicate a lot of things happening in the life of the church through emails through Constant Contact. If you would like to receive regular announcements or the newsletter, or both, please contact Cathy Wingfield (cathy@firstpresnb.org) or sign up on the church website!

Nametags

We want to encourage everyone to get in the habit of wearing their nametags again! If you have misplaced yours, Marcy, our Office Administrator, is happy to make you another one (marcy@firstpresnb.org). There is a board in the Narthex where you can leave your nametag at the end of the service, and it will be waiting for you the next Sunday.