



## December 17, 2023 ~ Third Sunday in Advent; Poinsettias

9:00 a.m. Traditional Worship (Sanctuary) -- Have you **checked in** for worship today?

\*please stand as you are able

### Welcome & Work of God's People

Rev. Stuart Spencer

### Way of the Week #8: Jump In

**8. JUMP IN.** Life is full of unexpected problems and needs, large and small. Pay attention to moments when God calls you to action, no matter how ordinary or extraordinary the situation may be. See “disruptions” as invitations to share Christ’s love. Write a note. Visit the sick or the grieving. Share a meal.

**Ideas for Action:** Practice one of the actions listed in this week’s description: Write a note, call or visit someone who lives alone, and/or share a meal.

### Music in Preparation for Worship

Kathy Gunsallus, Organ

#### *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Koch

### Introit

Sawyer McNab, Piano

#### *Prepare the Way*

Swedish

Primary Choir

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!  
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.

#### *God is Very Near*

Watlington

God is very near; He hears us when we sing and pray, God is very near.

### Lighting of the Advent Candle

Week 3: Joy (pink)

Lighters: Paul and Rachel Gordon; Avery, Isaac, Freddy and Caroline Gordon

## \*Call to Worship

Gordon Family

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Come, let us be about preparations for a new advent of God's love among us

**The wastelands of life around us cannot shut out the promise of life-giving water.**

Hatred and warfare, injustice and suffering, are not the last word, for they are not of God.

**We hear again the promise of peace, coming in the one who exemplified peace among all people.**

We see again the light God promises in the midst of our darkness.

**We are feeling again the joy that comes through partnership in the gospel.**

May our worship recall us to what is centered in life, to the One who give us breath and purpose.

**We come to embrace the new advent, to be renewed in faith, hope and love by the Spirit of the Living God - our redeemer, Messiah, Jesus the Christ.**

## \*Hymn No. 136

***On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry***

*\*\*\*Seating interlude*

## Call to Confession

Elder Leonard Fitts

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## Prayer of Confession

Elder Fitts

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Almighty God, you have surprised us with your presence in unexpected ways. In the expectation of our routine, we have missed the treasure that you place before us. We come to worship you in community often expecting nothing more than the usual. We begin our days, our weeks, assuming all will run as it always has. We do not look for the unexpected, for your active presence in our daily lives and for that we confess our sorrow. Forgive us for not allowing our eyes to catch the unexpected, to get a glimpse of your glory in the ordinary. In this season of advent, may we see the presence of your Son by the power of your Spirit in new and transformative ways. Amen.

*Time of silent and personal prayer*

## Assurance of Forgiveness (from Galatians 4: 4-7)

Elder Fitts

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"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption as sons and daughters of the Most High God. God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who call out 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."

**In Christ, we are forgiven, adopted into God's family, heirs to the kingdom! Hallelujah, amen!**

## \*Gloria Patri No. 805

### Anthem

Rebecca Neindorff, Piano

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#### ***Advent Carol***

Kenreich

Junior Choir (grades 2-4); Carol Manion, Flute

## Sharing with our Young Disciples

Rev. Wes Allen

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## Prayer of Intercession and the Lord's Prayer ('debts')

Rev. Stuart Spencer

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## Offertory

Rev. Spencer



*Throughout December, Christmas Green envelopes are in the pews for your holiday offering to First Presbyterian Church. Thank you for your faithfulness and for blessing FPC Moorestown with your giving. Your offerings allow us to sustain our church programs. Take advantage of secure [automatic withdrawal](#) or donate easily from your phone via the Church Center app. If you're watching via live stream, you can give online right now as well! To mail offerings, send to P.O. Box 868, Moorestown, NJ 08057.*

## Offertory Music

Kathy Gunsallus, Piano

### ***From the Rising of the Sun***

David Lockart

Adult Choir; Linda Lockart, Director

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same my name  
Shall be great among the gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered up unto my Name.  
For my Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. Malachi 1:11

*This piece, by my late husband, was composed a few years before cancer entered our lives. I shared it with Joel Krott and he invited me to conduct it. I had never heard it sung by voices, and had only played through it on the piano. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to Joel and the choir for allowing me this opportunity to hear and feel what David penned. There is such healing when the heart can find gratitude after loss. - Linda Lockart*

## \*Doxology No. 809

## Sermon

Rev. Wes Allen

### ***"Who Do You Serve?"***

**Scripture:** Psalm 96: 1-13 (NRSV) (Pew Bible page 550 OT)

**Sermon Series:** *"Moving Into the Neighborhood: When the Word Became Flesh"*

## \*Hymn No. 145

### ***Of the Father's Love Begotten***

## Music in Preparation for Service

Kathy Gunsallus, Organ

### ***O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee/Lo! How a Rose***

Manz

## Benediction and Going Forth; [Ways Video](#) (Kari Rotter)

Rev. Allen

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## 9:00 a.m. Worship Ministry

**Acolytes:** Sam and Alex Long; **Beadle:** Elder Leonard Fitts; **Audio Technician:** Harris Ransom; **Live Stream Technician:** Jonathan Nawrocki; **Ushers:** Paul Lewis, Barry Leatherman, Leonard Fitts; **Trustee Greeter:** Joe Molloy; **Sanctuary Greeter:** Stephen Minister Peg Pierce; **Check-In Volunteer:** Deacon Gail Sorin; **Nursery Caregiver:** Amy Coombe; **Coffee Hospitality:** Chelsea Margerum (*volunteers needed for this ministry*)

**Worship flowers** today are the Christmas poinsettias given by congregation members in honor of or in loving memory of beloved friends and family. **See insert for a list of these donations.** **A special thank you to Deacons Bobbi Voglesong, Gail Sorin, and Rachel Long for coordinating poinsettia deliveries to our members.**

## [Work of God's People \(See \*Connections\*, eblast, website and Church Center app for details\)](#)

**TODAY: Poinsettias Displayed** -- Poinsettias ordered will be available after worship today, **Sunday, Dec. 17** in both worship spaces. Please see the deacon volunteer to pick up the plant(s) you ordered.

**TODAY: Education Hour 10:15-11:15 am -- Adult Spiritual Formation** – Lissa Herman & Lorenzo Eagles conclude “A Clear View of the Birth of Jesus” in Fellowship Hall. **Children’s Sunday School classes** enjoy a Christmas Party in their regular classrooms. *There is no Adult Spiritual Formation or Children’s Sunday School Dec. 24 or Dec. 31.*

**TODAY:** Visit the [Mitten Tree](#) in the Commons Lobby presented by the Knitting Network and decorated with handmade mittens, hats and scarves. You are welcome to add your handmade objects to the tree, or purchase others for your own use. All items will be donated to Urban Promise and local charities.

**Christmas Eve Worship:** 11:00 am Sunday, Dec. 24, 4:00 pm Family Service, 6:00 pm Lessons and Carols (Miller Commons); 8:30 pm Communion Service; 11:00 pm Lessons & Carols with 10:40 pm Chapel Choir concert

**Sunday, December 31:** Combined Fifth Sunday worship service in the Sanctuary at **9:30 a.m.** There will be no Sunday School, Adult Spiritual Formation or Nursery Care on Dec. 24 (11:00 am) or Dec. 31 (9:30 am).

**Year-End Gifts** -- Thank you for blessing the church in your year-end giving. Each and every gift makes a difference. Gifts over and above one’s pledge may include stocks, *Christmas Green* offering for the church and General Budget Help. *Online donations must be received by midnight Dec. 31, 2023 and checks postmarked by Dec. 31, 2023. Checks may be received in the offering plate up to Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023 with a date of Dec. 31 on the check.*

**Advent Resources:** Pick up a copy of the comprehensive [2023 Advent Activity Guide](#) detailing events and activities of the Advent season. A daily [Advent Devotional](#) (Dec. 1-25) has been created by the Prayer and Discipleship Committee and features writings from church members and staff. Pick up copies of both in the Narthex or Miller Commons, or download from our website (see Resources tab) or Church Center event page.

**NEW: Evening Advent Devotional Series** -- Wednesday evenings in Room 3-4 from 7:00-8:00 pm, Jim Cole leads an Advent Devotions, studying the Devotional from the Discipleship & Prayer committee. All are welcome.

Our [Alternative Gift Fair](#) will be available in person after services **Dec. 17 and Dec. 24**, as well as virtually through our website [fpcmoorestown.org](http://fpcmoorestown.org). Alternate Gifts allow donations to worthy causes in the name of the gift recipient. Download the catalog from our website or Church Center event page. *Open through Christmas Eve AM.*



**Youth Group Parties** -- Middle School (Dec. 20) and High School (Dec. 17) groups conclude with their Christmas parties. Wednesday groups and Family Dinner will be on Winter Break and will return Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024.

**Holiday Office Schedule** -- The church campus will be CLOSED Dec. 25 and Dec. 26, and open with a limited staff Dec. 27-29. The office will be closed January 1, 2024. *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your church staff.*

**Emerson Toy Drive** – Look for the red box in the Commons Lobby for **unwrapped** toys for Your Food Shelf clients. Steve and Mary Emerson continue this tradition started 30 years ago by Skip and Annette Emerson.

**Moravian Love Feast Concert:** Please join us on **Sunday, January 7, 2024** at 7:30 p.m. for a Moravian Love Feast concert featuring the Choristers (grades 5-8), Chapel Choir (grades 9- 12) and Adult Choir. Choirs will perform carols, songs, and anthems of the season in context of historical Moravian tradition; corporate sharing of singing, Christmas cookies and fellowship in the sanctuary to celebrate Epiphany.