

DECEMBER NEWS FROM CPC

Updates and Highlights from Clinton Presbyterian Church



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From the Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter to you, just hours remain in the month of November. By the time you read it, it will be December 1. It's a good day to pause and set intentions for the month ahead and most especially our Advent journey. Jill Duffield asks in her book which we are using for Advent Small Groups,

“As we begin our Advent journey, where is our focus? On whom or on what are fixated? If we are not attentive to loving God with all our heart, soul and might, all of our other priorities will be disordered.”

Disordered. Jumbled. Muddled. Unsettled.

All those words resonate with how much of life has seemed since March of 2020. In our clamoring to claim back a sense of normalcy this Advent and Christmas season, what are we focusing on? Are we tempted to overfill our calendars, to overspend from our accounts and to overindulge in that which will do us more harm than good? Do we have our priorities in order? There's nothing wrong, of course, with celebrating at this time of year, we should. There is nothing wrong, of course, with buying gifts which will bring joy. We should. And there is nothing wrong with enjoying seasonal treats which we have waited all year for. Enjoy them. All these things are good. But all these things are not the center of the season.

The center is in a much deeper place. God with us. Emmanuel. What will help us pay attention and stay focused on this Center?

In worship, in prayer, in community, in service and in silence in these December days, may God be near.

Advent Blessings,

Tracey

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Advent and Christmas at CPC

Sunday Morning Worship

We are taking a journey through Advent with the Prophets this year, beginning with Jeremiah on the first Sunday of Advent and hearing from Ezekiel and Isaiah on the way. Join us each Sunday as we listen for God's word to us today.

December 5 - Communion Sunday

We'll share in communion with one another and enjoy a special musical offering from our Bell Choir. The second advent candle will be lit by members of our Women's Book Club.

December 12

Presentation Brass will fill our Sanctuary with the sounds of Christmas and our Confirmation Class will light the third advent candle, the candle of joy.

December 19 Christmas Pageant

"Did You Hear What I Heard?" We hope you'll join us to hear the beautiful old story of Jesus' birth as told through our confirmation students and our Sunday School classes, from the littles through high school!



5 pm Family Service

As a congregation we will retell the story of Christ's birth with the angels, the shepherds and the sheep. (For this service, we ask that all worshippers please wear a mask.)

11pm Candlelight Communion Service

Come and be lifted in joy through Word and Song as we welcome the Christ child and usher in Christmas Day at this candlelight service. (At this service, masks are optional for the fully vaccinated.)



The holiday season can be difficult for many reasons. It can be hard to come and worship God joyfully because of the loss of a family member or a friend, the end of a marriage, illness, loss of work or other trying change. This year we will offer a quiet meditative worship service that makes time for remembering, time for sharing our hurting places with God, and time for preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. All are welcome.



Our Drive Thru Living Nativity was a hit in 2020, so we are bringing it back for 2021. Live animals included!

All church members, friends and members of the community are invited to come by CPC on December 18 (rain date - December 19) from 5:00 – 6:30 pm for this special event. And be sure to tell all your friends and family in the area to join us too.

Advent Small Groups

Want to create some time to pause and reflect this Advent season?

Join a small group at a time/location that works for you. Groups will meet for three weeks, and study materials will be made available for your use.

Monday Nights at 7:30 pm Online

November 29, December 6 & 13

Saturday Mornings Men's Breakfast Study @ 7:30am

December 4, 11 & 18

Sunday Mornings @ 10:30am

December 5, 12 & 19

Sign up online [here](#)

or use the clipboard in the Sanctuary.



Advent Devotionals

As in years past we invite you to use the Advent Devotional published by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary as a companion for your Advent journey.

You can decide what format works well for you.

Printed copies: these are available at the back of the Sanctuary today.

Receive daily emails: Go to www.pts.edu/email click "Signup for Seminary News," and "Devotionals (Advent and Lent)."

Read and listen online: Visit www.pts.edu/devotional



Advent Wreaths for your Home

Last year as we worshiped from home, we made Advent Wreaths and Candles available to everyone.

Don't forget to get those out again this year.

If you do not yet have a wreath and candles or your home and you would like one, please take a set from the back of the Sanctuary.



Advent for Families

This year, we have purchased a copy of Advent for Faithful Families for each of our families with kids who are 5th grade and younger.

This is not a weekly or daily devotional but rather a resource of different ideas for you as you celebrate the season at home. You'll find prayers, practices, stories and more that you can adapt to make your own from year to year. Pick up your copy at the church office.

Worship on December 26

On Sunday, December 26th, we will share in a service of Lessons and Carols at 9:30 am.

If we haven't sung your favorite Christmas carol yet, you will have an opportunity to sing it that day!

Want to Help with Worship?

Everyone is invited to join us in worship leadership.

Children's Conversation - contact Tracey: tracey4cpc@gmail.com

Liturgist - contact Judy Beck

Greeter - contact Linda Schipmann-Pustai

Live streaming support - contact Ted Brancato: ted4cpc@gmail.com

All services in the Advent and Christmas season will also be available via livestream.

You can find services [here](#).

Music and Song at CPC

A Note from Ted Brancto, Director of Music Ministry

I hope that everyone had a happy Thanksgiving! We celebrated the first Sunday of Advent on November 28th, lighting the first Advent candle signifying "hope". The musical selections reflected this theme and we welcomed a familiar but somewhat rare voice to the microphone, Kim Bieksha, who has been pursuing a degree in Environmental Engineering at the University of Delaware. She was joined by Carol Kotopoulis on a rousing rendition of "Soon & Very Soon".

On the second Sunday of Advent, December 5th, we will unveil the 2021 CPC Bell Choir. I was gratified when 15 volunteer bell ringers showed up to our first rehearsal in October! Unfortunately one of our members, George Milligan, has been hospitalized with complications from kidney surgery (he was most recently admitted to a rehab facility). I have been learning about how to lead a Bell Choir right along with my volunteers! We have been preparing two pieces. One, "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence", will be performed "live" on Dec. 5th. The other piece, which is a medley of Christmas carols, will be recorded in the sanctuary and broadcast on our livestream and presented in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Thank you to Kristen Madriz for bringing her two daughters to bell choir practice each week! Thanks also to a couple of new faces at CPC, Abby Dougherty and her son Adam. Bell Choir is a great way for people of all ages to be safely gathered together to make music.

On the third Sunday of Advent, December 12th, we will be blessed by a brass quintet led by one of our members, Lawrence Kursar. I am looking forward to the uplifting and spirit-filled music this quintet brings to CPC every holiday season!

Even with Covid protocols in place, I hope that you have enjoyed our musical offerings and find that they add to your worship experience. I'm excited about adding Dr. Zan Struebing on bass guitar to our ensemble whenever I can. She, along with Betty Ann Dhein on percussion (and Abby Dougherty on shaker recently) provide strong instrumental support for the songs and hymns we sing. As always, I'd like to invite YOU to take part in our music-making activities! I strive to keep these activities fun and rewarding. Please don't be shy!

In time, we will transition back to our familiar Chancel Choir and Praise Team - hopefully sooner than later. But in the meantime, I will strive to present music that will lift your spirits during these difficult times.



Children's Ministry

Pre-K thru 5th Grade



How many days....?

Advent has begun. We have an Advent calendar for each PreK-5th grade Sunday School family to help count down the days until the 25th. Calendars were distributed during class in November. If your family did not receive one, please contact the church office.

As you count down each day, remember also to count your blessings. We have counted 33 in our PreK-5th grade program. These "little blessings" colored Thanksgiving cards which accompanied CPC's Thanksgiving basket deliveries. Along with the congregation's food donations, their Thanksgiving wishes reminded recipients of God's goodness and unending love. Thank you, kids, for blessing our community this season.

Our children will continue to bless others as they present the Christmas story during worship on Sunday, December 19. We will hold practices during Sunday School on December 5 and 12. They also will participate in the Christmas Eve Children's Chorus. We will hold singing practice for Christmas Eve during Sunday School in December.

Sunday Funday/December 12 11:30 am

Calling all 4th and 5th graders - meet in Fellowship Hall after Sunday School! We'll be breaking out some Santa hats and practicing our dance moves while we spin some tunes!

Sunday School Schedule Pre-K thru Grade 5

December 5

Sunday School (children's pageant practice)

December 12

Sunday School (children's pageant practice)

December 19

Christmas Pageant during worship

No Sunday School

December 24

Christmas Eve Family Service

Children's Chorus 5 pm

December 26

No Sunday School

January 2

No Sunday School

January 9

Sunday School resumes



**Merry Christmas,
Sunday School friends!
from your
Children's Ministry Team
and
Sunday School Teachers**

Youth Ministry

Confirmation Class 8th - 10th Grade

We have loved being able to gather together in person this school year for Confirmation! We started off strong by launching our newest Confirmation class, gathering 8th, 9th, and 10th graders to deepen their faith and find their place in our church family as “adult” members. We have been navigating important faith questions through the Presbyterian confirmation curriculum, “Big God, Big Questions”.

At the end of November students enjoyed some time with their mentors and displayed their stellar baking skills, making mini loaves for each of our Thanksgiving Baskets. In December, they are turning their hand to directing as they oversee the Christmas Pageant. Be sure you are in church on December 19th!



CHAOS Youth Group

***Please note a change in the Chaos schedule!**
Chaos will now be held for those in 8th grade and up and will be meeting the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month from 7pm – 8pm at CPC!

***IF your young person/people are in 6th & 7th grades, we will now be meeting on the 1st Sunday of each month from 5:45 – 6:45 pm at CPC! (New Name TBA)**

Our Chaos Crew has loved gathering this year – lots of games, lattes, and laughs!

Follow us on Instagram!
@chaosyouthministry



Next Meeting Dates:

8th Grade & Up/Chaos Date 7-8pm: Dec 5

6th & 7th Grades 5:45–6:45pm: Dec 5

6th & 7th Grade Sunday School

If your student is in 6th or 7th grade, they are welcome to join the middle school Sunday school class for to develop their faith and have fun! Thanks to Paul Morrissette and Bob Tombs for leading this class. Blessings and prayers as we journey through these next months together!



We're Hiring!

Spread the word! If you know of an awesome person who would love to work with our kids and teens, helping them to grow in faith and share in fellowship with one another, please send them our way! The full job description can be found [here](#). We can't wait to see who God will bring to us!

Mission Ministry

Thank You from the Mission Team

Thank you to our wonderful, generous and caring congregation for this season of giving!

Thanks to your generosity, 25 families received two full boxes of food for their Thanksgiving dinner and to help stock their pantries. These families received their choice of meat, a bounty of canned goods, coffee and tea, homemade breads from our youth and a Thanksgiving card from our little ones. What a special treat from all of our members!

Thank you for all the donations of food and money as well as your time putting boxes together, shopping at ShopRite and then delivering to families. We also thank ShopRite for their annual generous discount on our food purchases at their store.

Thank you to everyone who took a tag from our Christmas tree to buy gifts for children and their parents at Family Promise, to buy gifts for single moms and their children at Friendship Center for New Beginnings, to buy gift cards for ShopRite, gasoline, Walmart or Target.

“Thanks to all of you who bought VISA gift cards for families who lost so much in the Manville hurricane flood. You are helping them to rebuild their lives.”

Some of you bought gifts for children in Maine or bought books for kids or hats and mittens. Some of you bought much needed underwear for little children at Head Start Preschool in Flemington. And some of you bought gifts for several local families.

Thank you one and all for all your generous contributions to make this a happy holiday season for so many in our community and across the miles to old friends in Maine. When you have so much, it's hard to realize how difficult life can be for those with so little. You have all helped to make life a little easier for our friends in need this season.

Merry Christmas and many thanks to all
Your Mission Team



Anderson House

Anderson House is a halfway house for women dealing with addictions. A small group of volunteers from CPC has been volunteering their time to provide a craft night once a month for years. The ladies love this night. Their schedules are very regimented and this is often the only "fun" thing they get to do.

CPC has been offering the residents Bibles geared towards addicts every Christmas for over 10 years. The women who accept this gift are so appreciative and surprised that they would be given this gift.

Thank you CPC for providing this gift! This is such a sign of God's love shown to women who so need it.

Update on Pathways to Generosity and Capital Campaign News

Thank you to each and every person who has already submitted an estimate of giving for 2022. We are so grateful for your generosity and for your ongoing commitment here. If you have not yet had a chance to submit your pledge for next year you can do it [online](#) or you print an Estimate of Giving Card [here](#) and mail back to the church office.

We look forward to sharing the results of this year's campaign with you in a few weeks.

In other exciting news, the results of our feasibility study to determine our readiness and willingness to embark on a capital campaign in the near future, was very favorable. Not only are we ready and willing, but we are also excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. At their November meeting, Session voted to proceed with a capital campaign in the Spring of 2022. We are in the process of forming a Capital Campaign Team and you can expect to hear more updates in the new year. Stay tuned!

December Birthdays

- 1 Alice Korab
- 3 Ryan Twigg
- 4 Glenn Gray
- 7 Lora Pelose, Zan Struebing
- 9 Dennis Kotopoulos
- 15 Gail Saltvedt
- 16 Mollie Little, George Milligan
- 17 Thea Henry, Jason Krushinski, Karen Kursar
- 19 Mackenzie Ahmed, Victoria Ahmed
- 20 Rich Jackle
- 21 Tina Martin
- 24 Evie Lebron, Stephanie Wood
- 26 Kim Perez, Bill Sowder
- 28 Henry Kvarta
- 31 Melissa Bieksha

December Anniversaries

- 11 Jonathan & Sharon Rosenberg
- 15 Jonathan & Karen Sauers
- 26 Steve and Nancy Hovey
- 27 Ralph and Gwili Marsh
- 28 Scott and Sandie Lundeen
- 31 Colin and Jessica Bruno



Poinsettia Order Form

Deadline for ordering is December 16

If you would like to order a Poinsettia Plant in memory or in honor of someone, use the form below. Your plant will be used to decorate the sanctuary during the Christmas Season. Complete the order form below and return it to the church office. Orders will not be filled unless a check is included with the form. Check should be made out to Clinton Presbyterian Church, 91 Center Street, Clinton, NJ 08809 (\$15.00 for each plant). **Please do not place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning.**

I would like to order _____ plant(s) at \$15.00 per plant for a total of \$_____.

_____ pink _____ red _____ white

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____



Clinton's Boy Scout Troop 121 Pancake Fundraiser

ADULTS - \$8
CHILDREN UNDER 12 - \$4
ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKES, EGGS AND SAUSAGE
BRING YOUR CAMERAS!



Breakfast with Santa



December 11th, Saturday | 8:00-12:00



Clinton Presbyterian Church
91 Center Street
Clinton, NJ 08809