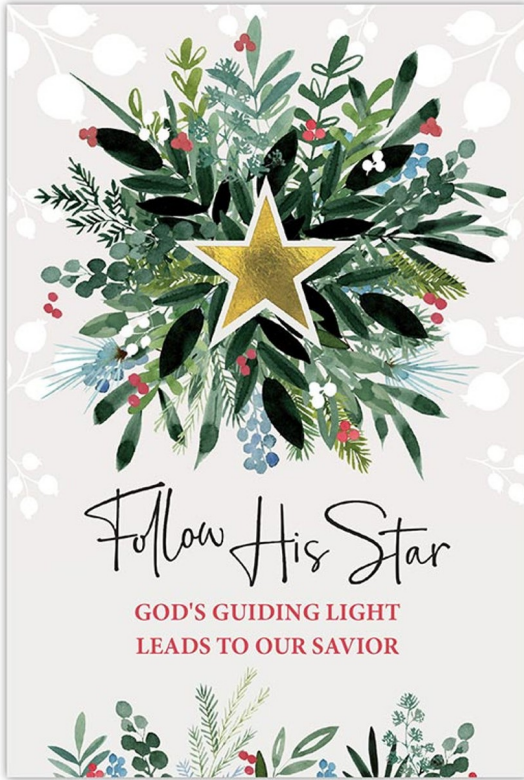


*FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*



**2nd Sunday of Advent**  
Sunday, December 10, 2023  
10:00 A.M.

119 WEST COMMERCE STREET  
BRIDGETON, NJ 08302  
PHONE (856)455-0809 [WWW.FPCBRIDGETON.ORG](http://WWW.FPCBRIDGETON.ORG)

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

**PRELUDE** “O Holy Night” arr. Judy Nishimura  
Beverly P. - Flute Jan S. - Flute

**WELCOME** Liturgist

### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

**CALL TO WORSHIP** Liturgist

Wilderness living calls us to seek God  
in the voice that cries out,  
**“Valleys will be lifted up  
and mountains will be made low,”**  
to seek God  
in the sound of the one who speaks of peace,  
**“The day of the Lord is coming,”**  
to seek God in the loud noise that foretells what  
will be made new.  
**In the wilderness,  
let us listen only for God’s voice.  
Let us worship God!**

**\*HYMN #22** “Angels, From the Realm of Glory”

**CALL TO CONFESSION** Rev. Norlita Kaul

Together let us confess our sin and lament the ways in which  
we have been separated from God, praying:

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** Rev. Norlita Kaul

Merciful God, as we watch and wait for signs of your expansive love,

**forgive our narrow thinking.**

As we repent in the wilderness with John,

**we confess that we often lack the imagination to testify  
to the coming light.**

As we visit the home of Elizabeth,

**we lament our loss of wonder and our failure to recognize miracles among us.** Even as we hear the witness of the angels and the shepherds, **we confess that we do not make haste to go and see the Christ. Forgive our apathy and small-mindedness. When the wait is over and all is finished, open our minds to recognize the strength and wisdom of Christ, God with us. Amen.**

Hear this good news:

in Christ there is strength and wisdom, expansive love and everlasting grace. We are forgiven and transformed to go and proclaim the wonder of the one who is coming.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Rev. Norlita Kaul

The invitation to follow Christ is filled with hope, peace, joy, and love. There is hope: a new journey with Christ brings transformation. There is peace: in Christ, the old has passed away and the new can now emerge. There is joy: nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. There is love: God so loved the world that God became human in Jesus, our savior. Now is the time to respond to God's love and accept the invitation to follow this Christ. Be filled with hope, peace, joy, and love!

### **\*GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.....**

### **THE ADVENT WREATH - ADVENT II ISAIAH 11:1-10**

**PRAYER :** Holy God, though Isaiah and John.....

.....through Christ who is coming to reign.

**Come, let us follow the star's light, let us walk in the light of the Lord!**

**HYMN** "O Come O Come Emmanuel" (vs.1,2) **Booklet**

### **A TIME TO BE YOUNG**

**ANTHEM** "O Holy Christ, Come Down" J. Parker & J. Raney

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (HYMN)

“While We are Waiting, Come” (vs.1,2)

Booklet

### O.T. READING

Isaiah 40:1-11

Liturgist

#### **God’s People Are Comforted**

40 Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her

that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord’s hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> **A voice cries out:**

**“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> **Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”**

<sup>6</sup> **A voice says, “Cry out!”**

**And I said, “What shall I cry?”**

**All flesh is grass;**

**their constancy is like the flower of the field.**

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers; the flower fades,  
[[when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup> **The grass withers; the flower fades,]]**

**but the word of our God will stand forever.**

<sup>9</sup> Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;

lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;  
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,

“Here is your God!”

<sup>10</sup> See, the Lord God comes with might,

and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him

and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup> **He will feed his flock like a shepherd;**

**he will gather the lambs in his arms**

**and carry them in his bosom**

**and gently lead the mother sheep.**

## **GOSPEL READING**

Rev. Norlita Kaul

Mark 1:1-8

**SERMON** “Comfort Why? Prepare, Why?” Rev. Norlita Kaul

## **RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

\***HYMN** #10 “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Liturgist

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

## **INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** “O Thou That Tellest”

G.F. Handel arr. L. Smith

### **\*Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Let us pray now with confidence as children of God the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray saying:

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us  
our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not  
into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the  
kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**\*HYMN # 38 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS & BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE "On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry"**

David Cherwien

**A huge THANK YOU to our church family for your participation in the 2023 Bridgeton Holiday House Tour. You are all very much appreciated, whether you sponsored or hosted a tour site, helped decorate, provided music, refreshments or a craft for the wonderful Bonham Hall exhibit. The tour is a great way to share our blessings with our community.**

# Blue Christmas Service

Sunday,  
Dec. 10, 2023  
Time: 3:00 pm  
Bonham Hall

Going Deeper into the Scriptures:

How have you seen God's beauty in the wilderness of your life. Have you ever worried that God might "not care enough to show up?" What ups and downs are making your life bumpy right now? How do you see God's glory shining through, all the same (no matter what)?

Prayer: God of glory, teach me not to despair or be afraid, but to lift up my voice with strength, proclaiming to all, even myself, "Here is your God." Amen.

What was a time when.. waiting/yielding made a way toward reconciliation or peace in your life?

Prayer: God of patience, teach me peace as your way of salvation, that in waiting and yielding, I may find your righteousness and peace. Amen.

Spiritual Practice: Immanuel, God with us. How is Jesus, God with us, for you this year? Form a prayer or meditation or reflect in writing, drawing, doodling whatever practice is meaningful to/for you, describing what these words mean to you. Take a quiet moment, seek out God's presence, pray for the guidance of the Spirit. Consider your past week, recall specific moments/feelings that stand out to you. Choose one moment/feeling for deeper examination, thanksgiving, repentance. Let go, breathe deeply, invite Christ's love to surround/fill you for today and every day. Pray the Lord's Prayer.

## **Serving Today**

**LITURGIST-** Curtis H.

### **USHERS-Team 2-**

John A., Bruce C. & Ken F.

### **COUNTERS-Team 2-**

Marion C. & Heather N.

### **FLOWERS-**

Howard T.

### **ADVENT LITURGIST-**

Amy B., Yvonne C. & William F.



**Rev. Norlita Kaul, Pastor**

EMAIL: [BridgetonFPCPastor@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BridgetonFPCPastor@GMAIL.COM)

**CELL # (248) 342-6190**

**Gae Finch, Organist and Choir Director**

**Christie Sever, Administrative Assistant**

EMAIL: [firstpresbridgeton@gmail.com](mailto:firstpresbridgeton@gmail.com)

**John Ambrose, Clerk to Session**

**Bob Woodruff, Treasurer**

