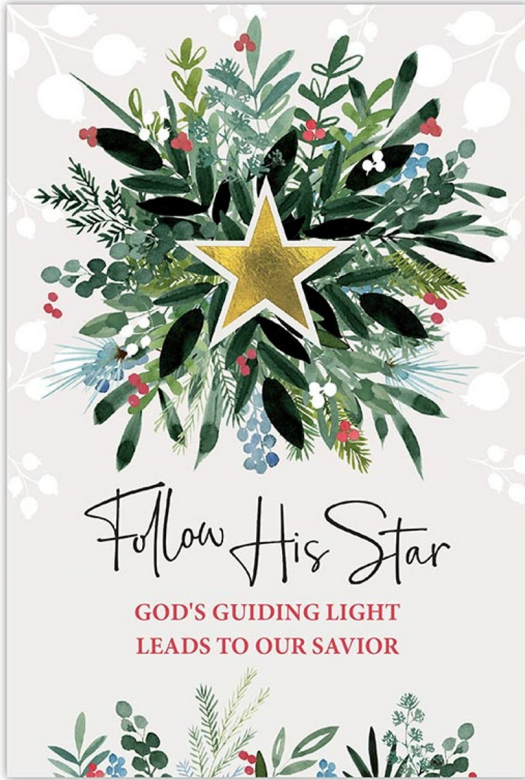


*FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*



3rd Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 17, 2023
10:00 A.M.

119 WEST COMMERCE STREET
BRIDGETON, NJ 08302
PHONE (856)455-0809 WWW.FPCBRIDGETON.ORG

ORDER OF WORSHIP

| | | |
|---------|--------------|-----------|
| PRELUDE | “Wachet Auf” | J.S. Bach |
| WELCOME | | Liturgist |

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CALL TO WORSHIP Liturgist

With open hands, we proclaim:

God promises to bring good news to the afflicted, the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the tormented, the grieving, and the imprisoned.

With open spirits, we shout with joy.

God calls us to rejoice, pray, and give thanks constantly.

With open minds, we gather in God’s covenant.

God sanctifies us so that we will be ready for the coming of the Lord. Let us worship God!

***HYMN** #8 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

CALL TO CONFESSION Rev. Norlita K

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

PRAYER OF CONFESSION Rev. Norlita K

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 K

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 III ISAIAH 35:1-10

PRAYER : Holy One, you have come among us in paths of righteousness. Guide our feet though the wilderness toward the living water of your grace, following in the steps of our savior:: Jesus Christ, the light of the world. John 1:6-8, 19-28

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& 3) **Insert**

DUET -

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” Tate Grey
Jeanne G & Harriet S - sopranos

A TIME TO BE YOUNG

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (HYMN)

“While We are Waiting, Come” (vs.1,2& 3) **Insert**

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD THROUGH SONG

“Christmas is Coming” Joel Raney

“The Colors of Christmas” John Rutter

“Still, Still, Still” Austrian Carol arr. Luboff

“Ding Dong Merrily! He Is Born” arr. Anna Laura Page
Beverly P - piccolo

“Mary, did you know?” Lowry Greene arr. Schrader

“Go Tell It on the Mountain” Traditional arr. John Carter

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 Pi-
late, 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 Trio on “Angels We have heard on High”
David Lasky

***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 # 31 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

“May the Lord watch over between me and thee, while absent, one from the other.” (*Mizpah Benediction*)

POSTLUDE “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” arr. Fred Bock
Rev. Norlita K - organ
Gae F - piano

The Rev.’s Questionings 3rd Sunday Advent

How is God calling us to rebuild our lives as individuals and/or corporately as Christ's church, and our world?
Why is God calling us to do so?



Where are there intersections of God's call, gladness in our lives and the world's hunger? What connections do these intersections offer to you? (questions asked by Glen Bell in his commentary on Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11).

How is God calling us to grow in our faith/spiritual life as individuals/church?

Why does God favor the lowliest, the oppressed and those on the margins? Why doesn't God favor people in the same way the world does?

For this 3rd Sunday in Advent, how, why, and in what way, is the Holy Spirit of God tugging at your heart, mind, and spirit? Reflect and pray on these things.





*Thank you to the choir members
for their faithful singing all year.
I love making music with you.*

Gae F

Soprano

Debbi BG
Yvonne C
Jeanne G
Norlita K
Harriet S

Alto

Debbie A
Jennifer C
Beverly P

Tenor

Amy B
Bob W

Bass

Robert D
Bill F



Serving Today

LITURGIST- Curtis H

USHERS-Team 3

Marie D, Joyce I & Heather N

COUNTERS-Team 3

Yvonne C & Debbie H

FLOWERS

Anne S

FELLOWSHIP

Jane H & Debbie H

ADVENT LITURGIST

Marie D, Heather N & Bob D

Rev. Norlita Kaul, Pastor

EMAIL: BridgetonFPCPastor@GMAIL.COM

CELL # (248) 342-6190

Gae Finch, Organist and Choir Director

Christie Sever, Administrative Assistant

EMAIL: firstpresbridgeton@gmail.com

John Ambrose, Clerk to Session

Bob Woodruff, Treasurer

