

**December 31, 2023
10:00 a.m.
1st Sunday of Christmas**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Bob Toro

PRELUDE "O Little Town of Bethlehem" HYMN #44

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CALL TO WORSHIP

All creation, all people: praise the Lord!

stars shooting across the sky, sing glad songs to our God!

Snow clouds approaching, birds sitting on a branch: praise the Lord!

Sleeping cats and barking dogs, sing new choruses of praise!

Rich and poor, leaders and followers: praise the Lord!

Old and young, families and singles we will lift our joy to our God!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION Rev. Alice Batchner

OPENING HYMN #53 "What Child Is This"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We could proclaim Your name, God of this holy season, but we spend too much time talking about celebrities. We could tell others about all your gracious deeds but are comparing notes about the exploits of our favorite athletes. We could let Your Word guide our lives, but instead we do what the politicians think is best. Why? Because we forget who we are called to be. But you remember, Faithful God. You remember that we put our trust in others, not you; you remember how we chase after idols, not follow you; you remember to save us in our distress, which is why you sent Jesus to us, our Lord, our Savior.....(silence for personal confession)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS Rev. Alice Batchner
In the silence, in the dreams, in the wonder, in the words, God comes to save us and have mercy on us.

It is fitting that we offer our thanks and praise to the One who forgives us.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Apostles' Creed)

Let us confess the faith of the Church as one, using the words of the Apostles' Creed. Church, what do you believe?

I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic* church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.
(*universal)

HEARING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE Jeremiah 31:15-17 (O.T. pg. 734)
Matthew 2:13-18 (N.T. pg. 2)

Children's Sermon

ANTHEM "Born This Day" Ken Canedo

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

SERMON: "Responding to Christmas Bells"
Rev. Alice Batchner

SEALING AND RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*RESPONSE HYMN #49 "Once in Royal David's City"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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

CARRYING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

INVITATION TO TITHES AND OFFERINGS & PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*CLOSING HYMN #63 "As with Gladness Men of Old"

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Angels We Have Heard on High" HYMN#23

*Please stand if able

Rev. Alice Batcher Bio:

Reverend Alice Batcher is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in NYC. Originally ordained with the ABCUSA, Alice now has standing with the UCC. During the week, Alice is a hospice chaplain. In her spare time Alice enjoys working with her little poodles, COVID adoptees.

First Presbyterian Church of Avenel

621 East Woodbridge Avenue

Avenel, NJ 07001

Rev. Alice Batcher

December 31, 2023



Then *Joseph* Got Up,
took the child and his mother by night,
and went to **EGYPT.**

Matthew 2:14, NRSV

"Responding to Christmas Bells"

Prayers for those with long-term concerns

We ask that these friends have God in their lives, that they and their families feel His loving presence, and comfort during their continued struggles. Updates will be printed as available.

Jennifer Perez – RSD/CRPS, & gastroparesis

Maria - a friend of the Knotts and Haggerty families; she is in an acute care facility for traumatic brain injury.

Friends and Loved Ones in the Service and their Families

STATESIDE

Robert L. Gillis – invasive cardiovascular technologist in the US Navy and stationed at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington DC, grandson of Barbara & Bill Morgan.

Lauren Hansen-Salmond –Stephanie & Charlie Kurowsky’s niece

Jeffrey Hansen –Stephanie & Charlie Kurowsky’s nephew

Steven Stockl – Carolyn & Jake Stockl’s nephew

OVERSEAS

Daniel Hedner – deployed to Japan – Carolyn & Jake Stockl’s nephew

The children and youth in our congregation and our youth ministry
Racial equality reconciliation in Woodbridge Township and our nation.

Our ministry partners –

Boys Town

Christian Appalachian Project, Kentucky

International Justice Mission, Washington DC

Mr. Matt Barany Jr., who serves with Second Level Ministry

Reliant Redemption Church, Pennsylvania

Navajo Ministries

Salvation Army of Perth Amboy, NJ

Saint Jude’s Children’s Hospital of Memphis, Tennessee

Walter Hoving Home

World Vision

Prayer Concerns and Praises

December 31, 2023

The Prayer Chain - provides immediate prayer for *critical and emergency situations*. All other needs will be taken care of through the prayer list. To place someone on the prayer chain call Millie Knotts at 732-382-9391.

The Prayer List - provides opportunities to share prayer within our church family. Prayer requests will be published for up to 6 weeks unless updated. To add someone to this list call the church office at 732-634-1631.

(Note: Please be sure the person you are adding to this list has given his or her permission to do so).

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people”

Ephesians 6:18



New Joys and Concerns

2nd Week

3rd Week

4th Week

5th Week

6th Week

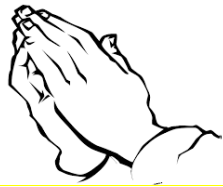
Prayers and Sympathies

SHUT-INS

Please continue to keep in your prayers those members who are unable to join us for worship on Sundays.

Health and Healing

Jen Perez



The mission of First Presbyterian Church is **to grow in Christ and make Him known**. This is based on John 15:5: "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches, apart from me you can do nothing." The Holy Spirit strengthens us to:

1. **Connect** to the vine,
2. **Grow** to maturity,
3. **Share** the fruit

STEWARDSHIP 2023

In an effort to help our congregation track our annual budget as it compares to giving, the Session has decided to include a brief monthly report. We are a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, and are completely dependent upon tithes, offerings, and donations to fulfill our budgeted expenses.

General Fund Balance	Net for the month		YTD
12/31/2022	\$ 83,459.40		
01/31/2023	\$ 80,730.57	\$(2,728.83)	\$(2,728.83)
02/28/2023	\$ 79,873.93	\$ (856.64)	\$(3,585.47)
03/31/2023	\$ 79,283.62	\$ (590.31)	\$(4,175.78)
04/30/2023	\$ 79,248.48	\$ (35.24)	\$(4,210.92)
05/31/2023	\$ 80,317.20	\$ 1,068.72	\$(3,142.20)
06/30/2023	\$ 85,270.39	\$ 4,953.19	\$ 1,810.99
07/31/2023	\$ 90,105.95	\$ 4,835.56	\$ 6,646.55
08/31/2023	\$ 91,709.07	\$ 1,602.12	\$ 8,249.67
09/30/2023	\$ 94,254.05	\$ 2,544.98	\$10,794.65
10/31/2023	\$100,771.56	\$ 6,517.51	\$17,312.16
11/30/2023	\$100,415.69	\$ (355.87)	\$16,956.29

CHURCH PROPERTY ACTIVE STEWARDS NEEDED (for pay) – When we rent church property such as the gym (Westminster Hall) or Jacob Morgan Hall, a church member must be present on site. Stewards open/close the building and oversee good property stewardship. For their service, stewards are paid \$14/hour (by renters). If you are able to serve in this way (occasionally or regularly), or have questions or would like more information, please call the church office from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP THIS MORNING. WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE! WE BELIEVE YOU ARE HERE FOR A DIVINE PURPOSE. LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN SERVE YOU TODAY!

THIS WEEK IN OUR CHURCH

SUNDAY, December 31, 2023

10:00 a.m. Worship Service (Guest Minister-Rev. Alice Batchler)
Live Stream-Facebook

MONDAY, January 1, 2024

NEW YEAR'S DAY

TUESDAY, January 2, 2024

2:00 p.m. Missions/Outreach Mtg – CO
6:00 p.m. Worship Committee Mtg – CO
7:30 p.m. CE Mtg – SSO

WEDNESDAY, January 3, 2024

THURSDAY, January 4, 2024

8:00 p.m. Prayer Gathering – Dial In
(425) 436-6302 then enter code 773724#.

FRIDAY, January 5, 2024

SATURDAY, January 6, 2024

9:30 a.m. Sit & Knit (Crochet) – CR

SUNDAY, January 7, 2024

10:00 a.m. Worship Service
Live Stream-Facebook

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE OR SHARE

CHANCEL FLOWER AVAILABILITY – The following dates are open: 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, & 1/28. Please make reservations through the church office. The cost is \$30.00 for two arrangements and must be paid in advance.

PRAYER GATHERING – is now back every **Thursday** evening at 8 pm. Dial (425) 436-6302 then enter code 773724#. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Kosakowski at 908-930-3628.

WORSHIP SERVICE LIVE STREAM – via Facebook every Sunday at 10:00 am. We hope you will join us online if you will not be attending church. Please tell your friends, especially shut ins.

BULLETINS – are now on our website.

SIT AND KNIT (and CROCHET) – is now back on **Saturdays** from 9:30am to 11:00am in the Sanctuary's Choir Room. Bring your projects, a friend, and any patterns you would like to share or may need help with.

PRAYER REQUESTS – sheets are located in the bulletin bin.

BIBLE STUDY – a 13-week course every Wednesday beginning January 10th at 4:40pm will be taught by Rev. Misick in the CE Bldg. Please see bulletin flyer for details.

WELCOME TO OUR WORSHIP SERVICE!

Visitors, we welcome you to this morning's time of worship. If you are looking for a church home or would like to explore the meaning of membership at Avenel Presbyterian Church, please ask an usher or the worship assistant.

*Joseph Fernandez
Michael Peterson
Belinda Kerchner
Linda Vassallo
Susan Smolsky*

*Music Director
Sexton
SS Superintendent
Church Office
Webmaster
Church Email
Church Website*

*resolutjoe@gmail.com
avenelpres@gmail.com
For 2023
(732) 634-1631
rustisioux@comcast.net
avenelpres@gmail.com
avenelpresbyterianchurch.org*

Scripture for Sunday, January 7th

**Genesis 1:1-5
Mark 1:4-11**



Please join Rev. Dr. Glen C. Misick

for an Exciting 13 Weeks Bible Study Course:

**“Journey Into Overcoming: Rising Above Life’s
Toughest Problems”**

-Start Date: January 10, 2024

- Day: Every Wednesday

- Time: 4:40 PM

**- Place: Christian Educational Building
The First Presbyterian Church of Avenel
621 East Woodbridge Ave., Avenel, NJ.**

Please Register:

Email: gmsick@yahoo.com or Call: 917 679-5676



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