

Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church

The First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich Township



3rd Sunday of Advent

OUR CHURCH'S MISSION:
To celebrate the love of
God in all we say and do.

If you are new or visiting, we welcome you to Old Greenwich! If you would like the Pastor to contact you, please fill out the Welcome Card found in the pew holders. If anyone has a prayer request, there is room on the reverse of the card to enter it. Please place the cards in the Offering Plate later in the service.

CAROL SING-ALONG

- see insert

PRELUDE

Tom DiGiovanni

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MINUTE FOR MISSION: Giving Tree 2023 Update

- Elder Melissa Hixon

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: **Joy**

Hope Rupell Duncan, Newal Duncan and friends

INTROIT

"People, Look East"

12, vv. 3, 4

Congregation is welcome to join in singing with the Choir, if so moved.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Ps. 8, excerpts)

Sandra Friedman, Lay Reader

Please stand, as you are able, and join in the Call to Worship which is prayed responsively.

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

*OPENING HYMN

"The Snow Lay on the Ground"

57, vv. 1, 2, 4

*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

God of the future, you are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule. We confess that we have not expected your kingdom. We confess that we ignore your promised justice. We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth, and refuse your peace. In your great mercy, forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your way, and to seek things that will endure when Christ comes to judge the world.

*SILENT CONFESSION with *"Amen"* played

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

*GLORIA PATRI

579

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be:

World without end! Amen! Amen!

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

TIME WITH THE YOUNG CHURCH

Elder Lisa Kolterjahn

*HYMN

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

O come, O come, great Lord of might,

Who to your tribes on Sinai's height

In ancient times did give the law

In cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Come, Holy Spirit, and be our light in the darkness. We are listening for you in the world. We are listening for you in music. We are listening for you in each other. We are listening for you in your Holy Word. Make yourself known to us. And help us respond to you with hope, peace, joy and love. In Christ we pray, the one who is coming, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING – Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14

These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord.

For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

"O, Poor Little Jesus"

- DiGiovanni

- Baritone Soloist: Rich Tarriff

SERMON

"Living in Exile"

The Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Tom DiGiovanni

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (with 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.

OFFERING

Offertory

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

- Bruce & Betsy Gaston

*Doxology

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Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below!

Praise God above, ye heavenly host! Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication (in unison):

God of hope, how often have we found ourselves in exile, separated from your presence! Restore us, and let us find you when we seek you. As we give back to you, may our gifts be a light to this world. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

44, vv. 1, 2

"What Child Is This"

53, vv. 1, 3

*THE SENDING

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Congregation is welcome to join in singing with the Choir, if so moved.

POSTLUDE

All are welcome to join for fellowship (coffee, tea, juice) in Memorial Hall following the worship service.



Today, **Sunday, December 17, 2023**, we celebrate the **3rd Sunday of Advent** at a 10 am worship service with preacher, **The Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy**. The service will be streamed on our Facebook Live feed at "Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church." (Facebook account is needed to access the Facebook Live feed.)

To view past worship services, please visit our YouTube page at "Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church." You can also find our YouTube page by visiting our website at www.ogpc.org, and scrolling down on the home page to "Watch a Service." To find prior live streams, click on the "Live" tab in YouTube.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: The Pastor or the Administrative Ass't, or both, will be in the church Monday through Thursday, 9 am – 1 pm. Offices are closed on Fridays.

USHER TEAM SCHEDULE: Dec. 17 – Team 3; Dec. 24 – Team 4

ADVENT BOOK STUDY: Join us in the Prayer Room **each Wednesday in Advent, at 7 pm**, as we explore the book "*Stay A While - Advent Lessons in Divine Hospitality*," written by Kara Eidson. Think of something special you set your Christmas table with and bring it along if it is not too big. Books available in Prayer Room.

2024 PER CAPITA: The Presbytery of the Highlands Per Capita for 2024 is **\$42.50 per active member**, which represents *no change* from 2023. This amount includes the Office of General Assembly assessment of \$9.80, Synod of the Northeast assessment of \$4.10 and \$28.60 for the work of the Presbytery.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS FOR OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY: OGPC is partnering with River of Life Church to help 25 families in need during the holidays. Please prayerfully consider signing up to donate using the link below. All donations should be **dropped off by today, December 17**, in the Green Room. **AND...** "Thank you!" to the wonderful folks from AA who donated \$350 in gift cards to this ministry from monies collected at their Thanksgiving Day Gratitude Meeting! If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Smith at 908-875-6784. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4DA9AD23A46-46396615-river>

CALLING ALL YOUTH!! (Middle and High Schoolers!) Our church is once again partnering with College Hill Presbyterian Church in Easton for the "**Fish 'n Chypps**" evening youth program, and we'd love to see you there! We meet **every 1st and 3rd Sunday evening**. Next meeting is on **this evening, Dec. 17, 6 - 7:30 pm**. This group meets at College Hill PC, 501 Brodhead St, Easton, PA. If you need a ride, let Pastor Mary Beth know, and we can carpool.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE – next Wednesday, December 20, at 7:30 pm. Not all of us feel happy-clappy this time of year. All are welcome to this service, where we will honestly acknowledge our grief during this time of the year, all the while pointing to the hope we have in God. Please invite anyone you know who might be struggling with grief or loss.

2023 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER FORM: Poinsettias are purchased by the congregation to decorate the church at the price of \$12 each. They are then taken to our Special People, members who are ill or homebound. Once that need is met, you may take the ones you purchased.

LAST DAY TO ORDER – Wednesday, December 20

A list will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletins, noting the purchaser and who is being remembered, honored, etc. Please make checks payable to “OGPC Deacons.” **Dedications should be emailed** to Rob Todd at ogpcflowers@gmail.com, **or call Rob** at 908-235-9322 if you do not have internet access. You can scan the QR Code to electronically send dedication. (Payment may be placed in Offering Plate or mailed, with “Poinsettia” as notation.) Forms with payment may be placed in the box outside the sanctuary, in Offering Plate, or mailed to: OGPC, Att; Flower Coordinator, 17 Greenwich Church Road, Stewartsville, NJ 08886

of plants _____ x \$12 = _____

Purchased by: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Celebration of: _____

To the Glory of God: _____

Please give ____ plants to our Special People.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES SCHEDULE:

Inter-generational Pageant	Sunday, December 24	10 am
Readings and Carols	Sunday, December 24	8 pm
Candlelight Communion Service	Sunday, December 24	11 pm

CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE ON CHRISTMAS EVE: Do you have battery powered candles at home that you would be willing to lend the church for Christmas Eve? The Worship and Music Committee is asking for donations of battery powered candles to illumine our Candlelight Communion Service at 11 PM on Dec. 24th. If you would like to donate, please bring them in during office hours (Mon-Thurs 9-1) and drop them off in the Green Room. Attach your name so that we can return them to you afterwards. Questions? See Lisa Kolterjahn for more information!

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES: We have two different age-group Sunday Schools: (1) Pre-K / Elementary School, (2) Middle / High School. The Pre-K / Elem group, Sunday School is held **every Sunday (except for the first Sunday of the month)**. Families should bring their children to worship in the sanctuary at **10 am**, and right after Time with the Young Church (10:15ish), the children will be dismissed to their classrooms. For the Middle / High School group, Elder Jen Miller and Pastor Mary Beth are co-teaching a class on "welcome" the **2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, from 9 - 9:40 am**, in Room 22, next door to the Pastor's office. Please see Pastor Mary Beth or Elder Jen Miller nijmillers@msn.com with any questions you may have.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY: The group meets **the third Tuesday of the month, at noon**, in the Prayer Room (behind Memorial Hall) at the church. See Advent study announcement below.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY ZOOM BOOK GROUP: If you cannot make the in-person Advent Study on Wednesday evenings at the church, using "*Stay Awhile - Advent Lessons in Divine Hospitality*" by Kara Eidson, you can attend a **Thursday Zoom study from noon - 1 pm** on this book by asking Lisa Gray (973-476-4720) for an invite. Copies available at church.

COME SEE BEAUTIFUL ART... right down the hall! Our wonderful community of artists that meet every Tuesday for watercolor and fellowship are displaying some of their work in Trinity Wing (right next to the pastor's office). The works that are displayed change regularly and some pieces are for sale. Check out our mini art gallery!

SUNDAY FLORAL DEDICATIONS: The cost to purchase arrangements for the communion table is **\$20 each**. You may sign up for dedicated flower arrangements to honor or remember loved ones. Please contact Robert Todd at ogpcflowers@gmail.com / 908-235-9322 to place an order and arrange dedication. Please place order *only one to two weeks prior* to the date which you would like the dedication to appear in the bulletin.

HOME COMMUNION: Want to receive home communion or know of someone who would? Please contact Deacon Moderator, Mike Lemons, at ML12504@gmail.com or Pastor Mary Beth.

NAMES ON THE PRAYER LIST will remain for four weeks. The first week, the names will be **bolded**. The last week, the names will be *italicized*. If you would like a name to remain longer or would like a name added, please email or call the church office.

Please pray for: **Those struggling with mental illness and their families; those who struggle with addictions and their families; Anita Campbell, who will be having foot surgery on January 9; Walt and Anita Campbell's son-in-law's mother, Geraldine Waterman; Marcia Taylor, who had surgery two weeks ago and her husband Jack as he cares for her. John Oakes, who was in the hospital for a knee infection, and his wife, Linda; Jennifer Miller, who was in a car accident last week – thankfully she was not injured; Lori Metz, recovering from hip surgery on 12/13; Sharon Dachisen, who had surgery on 12/ 4, and her husband, Peter, as he cares for her; Betsy Gaston's dear friend Charles (Chip) Custer, who has had a stroke; Dottie Davidson and family, mourning the loss of her brother, Lee, who died on 11/24; Don Reinhard, at home from hospital with cardiac issues, and his family, Sally, Andrew and Jack; Sandy & Fritz Hamlin's daughter-in-law, Robin, who has cancer; Carol Lee Doeringer; Stephen Toman; Debbie Mowrey; our homebound members; those serving in our Armed Forces; the citizens of Ukraine; the citizens of Israel and Palestine**

“BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS”
WE ARE A GUN-FREE CHURCH – BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

Visit our Church’s Web Site at: www.ogpc.org
Church Office e-mail address: oldgreenwich@ogpc.org

The Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy	pastor@ogpc.org /515-979-9681
Kathleen Scala, Admin. Ass’t	oldgreenwich@ogpc.org/908-479-4449
Harry & Joan Pursel, Sextons	Tom DiGiovanni, Music Dir./Organist
Betsy Gaston, Ass’t Music Dir./Choir Dir.	Jennifer Miller, Clerk of Session
Katie Rienzo, Treasurer; Comm. & Marketing Dir.	Josh Miller, Media/Comm. Ass’t.
Tom DiGiovanni, Leader, <i>Gr’wich Ringers</i>	Bruce & Sandy Frey, Leaders, <i>Sonshine Singers</i>
Betsy Gaston, Leader, <i>Rejoicing Rhythms</i> drummers	