

Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church

The First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich Township



**4th Sunday of Advent
Christmas Pageant**

**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.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE "PAPER BAG PAGEANT":

The Christian Ed Committee invites all ages to join us today for the pageant. Please let our costume provider know that you need a bag – in it will be your costume and a card which will let you know your part and when you should come up front during the pageant.

You will need to put on your costume and listen for when your character is called. There are five "scenes" which will help you figure out when you'll need to pay closer attention!

We are so excited to see all ages and actors up front today and we thank you for participating!

CAROL SING-ALONG

- see insert

PRELUDE

Tom DiGiovanni

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: **Love**

Jack & Judy Felch

INTROIT

"One Holy Night in Bethlehem"

2097, vv. 1 & 4

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

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Luke 1:46-55)

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, who has looked with favor on the lowliness of this servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is God's name!

God's mercy is for those who fear the Lord from generation to generation.

God has shown strength with the arm and has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

God has brought down the powerful from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly.

God has filled the hungry with good things and has sent the rich away empty.

God has helped servant Israel, in remembrance of God's mercy,

According to the promise God made to our ancestors, to Abraham, to Sarah, and to God's descendants forever.

*OPENING HYMNS

"The First Nowell"

56, vv. 1, 6

"Away in a Manger"

25, vv. 1, 3

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

31, vv. 1, 3

*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

We come each week to God, and especially on this day of Christ's birth, knowingly human, and bring our mistakes and wrong doings to Him. In the full assurance of God's love for us, let us pray:

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

God of Joy, we come to celebrate again the arrival of Love Incarnate here in our very midst. Your glorious arrival is enough to cause the forests to sing for joy, yet we still find reasons to complain and sigh. Your light of salvation is bright enough to illuminate every corner of our lives, yet we still find ourselves shrouded in worry and doubt. Your gift of Love is big enough for the whole world, yet we still find ourselves resentful that your love extends to those whom we deem to be unworthy. God, you invite us into the light of the stable where the overlooked and forgotten have gathered, to celebrate the miracle of your love. Give us the strength and courage to join you at the manger. Through Christ we pray these things.

*SILENT CONFESSION *with "Amen" played*

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Do not be afraid! Hear the good news of great joy for all people: a savior has been born this night for you! And through this savior, we are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen!

*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

As you greet those around you, offer these words: "Hear the good news!" Respond in kind: "A Savior is born!"

*HYMN

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

9, v. 2

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Surprising God, open our ears to hear this familiar story as if for the first time. Open our eyes to see the diverse cast gathered at the manger. Open our hearts to the power of your love, as revealed in this amazing story. Open our lives to the possibility of transformation, as we encounter, once again, God-With-Us, Emmanuel. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHORAL ANTHEM

"When Christmas Morn is Dawning"

- Kyle Pederson
Bruce Gaston, violin

SCRIPTURE READING – Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" - which means, "God with us." When Joseph awoke, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

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

"Go Tell It!" Medley

- Betsy & Bruce Gaston

*Doxology

592

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)

Dear God, we cannot thank you enough for the gift of your Son. Through your grace, you have given us everything, including our very lives. On this day, we celebrate the miracle of Christmas! But when the candles are blown out, when the ringing of the bells has ceased, when the angels and shepherds have gone home, may we continue to shine your light into the world through the giving of these offerings. And so, we offer you yet another gift: our partnership to build your reign here on earth. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

"Joy to the World"

40, vv. 1, 2, 4

Children sing vv. 1, 2

Congregation joins in v. 4

*THE SENDING

Do not be afraid. We go forth with courage! Share the good news. We go into the world to proclaim tidings of great joy! A savior has been born to you. Glory to God in the highest heaven!

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

"Rise Up Shepherd, and Follow"

2096

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 24, 2023**, we celebrate the **4th Sunday of Advent** and our **Intergenerational Christmas Pageant** 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.

The church office will be closed Monday, December 25, and Monday, January 1.

USHER TEAM SCHEDULE: Dec. 24 – Team 4; January 7 – Team 1

TODAY'S FLOWERS on the Communion table are in honor of Justin Smith, who was born on Christmas, dedicated by his Mom, Sharon Dachisen.

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT will take place during the 10 am worship service. Participants - please **arrive at 9:40 am** to get costumes and instructions. No drama experience needed - just the willingness to tell Jesus' birth story with others in worship.

ON THIS LAST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Tom DiGiovanni will play familiar songs of the season before worship begins, and all are invited to sing along! Come a few minutes early to be part of the fun!!

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

2023 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS DEDICATIONS

Tina Schulman

In Memory Of: ① Nicholas, Olga, Nick Jr., & Paul Stangil

In Memory Of: ② Madeline & Rylan Barsony

Sandy Friedman

In Memory Of: ① All of our loved ones no longer with us!

In Celebration Of: ② Stephen's Birthday (12/26)

Susan & Edward Gardner

In Memory Of: ① Mary Lou Gardner

In Memory Of: ② William & Agnes Nagy

Ed & Cathy Ahart

In Memory Of: ① F. Edward & Florence Ahart

In Memory Of: ② Harry S. & Ruth Pursel

In Memory Of: ③ Endress H. Folk

In Memory Of: ④ Freda Scheetz & Frances Ward

Joan & Harry Pursel

In Memory Of: ① Loved Ones

Barb & Charlie Frinzi

In Memory Of: ① F. Edward & Florence Ahart

In Celebration Of: ② Joseph & Minnie Frinzi

In Memory Of: ③ The Frinzi Children & Grandchildren

Amy Ahart & Tom DiGiovanni

In Celebration Of: ① Kathryn & James DiGiovanni

In Celebration Of: ② Catherine & Edward Ahart

In Memory Of: ③ William Monteverdi & Marco DiGiovanni

In Memory Of: ④ Florence & F. Edward Ahart

In Memory Of: ⑤ Endress Folk

Maddie, Ellie, Mia, Lucy, Wyatt, Scarlett, & Esperanza

In Celebration Of: ⑥ Moma & PopPop Ahart

Tanya Segal

In Memory Of: ① Jerome Segal

Linda & John Oakes

In Memory Of: ① J. Alvin & Beatrice Oakes

In Memory Of: ② Raymond & Dorothy Voorhees

Marlin & Sally Quick

In Memory Of: ① Homer & Marian Schweppe

In Memory Of: ② Harry & Shirley Quick

Ellen & Mike Viscel

In Memory Of: ① Rosalie Viscel, John & Ann Caprio

Susan Tintle

In Celebration Of: ① Robert Tintle

Ralph Wolverton

In Memory Of: ① Bessie & Paul Wolverton

Deborah Smith

In Memory Of: ① My Father, Ralph Seifert

Carl Guthardt

In Memory Of: ① Virginia Guthardt

Robin Glosser

In Memory Of: ① The Voorhees & Rush Families

In Memory Of: ② Teri Lea Whitney & Sam Bartha

Rob & Kristen Todd

In Memory Of: ① Elizabeth Wiley and Anna Johnson

In Memory Of: ② Earl G. Todd & Bernice Todd Witt

In Memory Of: ③ Irvin & Anna Swope

In Memory Of: ③ David & Louis Pickel

In Memory Of: ④ Aunt Rose Leonardo

Walter & Anita Campbell

In Memory Of: ① Margaret & Otto Steiner and Dorothy & Walter Campbell, Sr.

Fritz & Sally Hamlin

In Memory Of: ① Our Parents

Al & Lorraine Brown

In Celebration Of: ① Emily Brown's engagement to Joe Kelly

In Celebration Of: ② Our Grandchildren, Emily, Carolyn, Liam and Ryan

In Memory Of: ③ Jeffrey Alan Brown

Trish & Phil Millon

In Memory Of: ① In Loving Memory of Our Family

John & Lizzy Columbus

In Memory Of: ① Robert Seibert

George & Susan Bradlau

In Celebration Of: ① Christmas at Old Greenwich Presby. Church

Edward Gardner

In Memory Of: ① William & Agnes Nagy

In Memory Of: ② My father, Ralph Seifert

In Honor Of: ③ Mary Lou Gardner

Lori, Jeff and Randy Metz

In Memory Of: ① Our one-of-a-kind Dad, Donald Metz

In Memory Of: ② our grandparents, Preston and Edith Metz and Aunts Erma and Rose

Micha Fell, Michael Cecere and Marissa Winter

In Memory Of: ① Our beloved Poppop, Donald Metz

Bob Luzietti

In Honor Of: ① My wife, Doris

In Honor Of: ② My parents, Giacomo & Augusta Luzietti

In Honor Of: ③ Doris' parents, Emil & Eudora Perini

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.

LET'S GO BOWLING! All children and their families (elementary age, more or less) are welcome to join the Greenwich Nursery School and Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church for a bowling outing!!

Date: **Monday, January 15.**

Location: Oakwood Lanes (Washington, NJ).

Time: **10 am-12 pm.**

Cost: \$12/child

Please RSVP by emailing Amy Anderson at director@greenwichnursery.com. You may also register by grabbing a form from the table in the back of the church and turning it in to Pastor Mary Beth. Hope to see you there!

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: Presbyterian Women's Bible Study, "*Sacred Encounters*," will be meeting on **Tuesday, January 16**, (the THIRD Tuesday) at **noon**, in the Prayer Room. We'll be looking at "A Bleeding Woman Encounters Christ," chapter three. No book? Join us anyway, the sessions stand alone, you won't be lost to jump in now.

And the **PW WEEKLY ZOOM LUNCH STUDY** will resume **Thursday, January 18**, at **noon**. We are beginning a NEW BOOK - "*A is for Alabaster*," 52 reflections on the stories of scripture. It contains Old and New Testament with some names you've never heard of, like B is for Balaam, R is for Rhoda. It also does words like M is for memory and P is for poet. It can be ordered on (PCUSA.org) Presbyterian Store, or other online sites. For an invitation, call or text Lisa Gray 973-476-4720.

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: **Lori Metz, Sharon Dachisen and Marcia Taylor, all recovering from surgeries; the family of Robin Glosser's friend, Douglas Risley, who died 12/19 after years of battling heart disease; John Oakes, who had surgery on his knee the week of 12/15;** Susan Jones, and her husband, David; Jennifer Miller, who was in a car accident and thankfully was not injured; *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; Reinhard, recently in the 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.	Joshua 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	