



The Friendly News

The First Presbyterian Church of Woodbury Heights
December 2018 / January 2019



Dear Friends,

We are continuing our journey through the fourth chapter of Philippians and have reached Verse 7, which says: *“The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”*

That is one of the most important verses in the entire Bible – and most appropriate as we enter into the Christmas season.

For at least part of the message of Advent/Christmas is about peace. Of course, most of the central characters of the Christmas story had moments in which peace was lacking.

Zechariah, the aged priest whose turn it was to burn incense before the Lord in the temple, had his share of spiritual conflict. His wife, Elizabeth, was barren. And they were both too old to expect any conception. And when the angel appeared to him in the temple, he was greatly troubled.

Mary, the young girl from Nazareth, was greatly troubled as well when the same angel appeared to her and informed her that she would bear God’s son, exceeding all expectations she had for her life.

Her betrothed, the carpenter Joseph, was deeply troubled by the unbelievable story Mary told him about her conception, and he spent a long, partially sleepless night trying to understand what was happening.

And the shepherds on the hillside, as

Luke puts it, were “sore afraid,” when the angel appeared before them.

And yet, all of these people found peace. Not the kind that comes from treaties or cease-fires, and not what the world might hand us. They found the peace that only God can provide.

For there are two words that stand out in this verse: *transcends* and *guard*.

Transcends: When Paul says that God’s peace transcends all human understanding, he doesn’t mean that we can’t fathom it. He means that we can’t create it ourselves. We can’t build peace, delineate peace, construct it, or produce it, try as we might. It is simply God’s gift to us, and all we need to do is embrace it.

Guard: The Greek word Paul uses is a military term. It actually means to stand guard as a sentinel – to keep the enemy out. And there are a lot of enemies to our peace out there: illness, financial issues, broken relationships -- you name it, it’s out there knocking on the door of our souls, seeking a way in to disrupt our lives.

But the peace of God stands by the door of our souls, keeping out what should never come in.

That’s the peace God offers us in Jesus Christ. The kind that triumphs over the questions that trouble us. The peace that leaves us as victors, not victims, when the doubts and uncertainties enter our lives. The sense of calm that fills our souls when life threatens to undo us.

But if you go back to Verse 6, there is a condition to this incredible peace – the condition of prayer. In everything, by prayer and supplication, Paul says, let your

See PASTOR on Page 2



Youth in our Sunday School tell younger children about the candles in the Advent wreath and what they mean during a special program in Cooper Hall on Dec. 1. *Photo by Liz Billings*

Missionary Cindy Corell tells us about Haiti

On Nov. 11, we had a very special guest for Mission Sunday. Cindy Corell, the missionary our church supports, shared some touching stories and told of the wonderful work she and others are doing in Haiti. Many thanks to Kim DiNoia for hosting Cindy for two nights.

Our next Cathedral Kitchen date is Dec. 26. Please contact Mary Kay Reynolds if you want to volunteer. This would be a great opportunity for teachers and students who are off for Christmas vacation to participate. We meet in the church parking lot at 2:45 and return around 6 p.m.

December birthdays

1 – John David Geserick
 3 – Rachel Outten
 3 – Shannon Woodrow
 5 – Lilliana DeFinizio
 8 – Jimmy Clyde
 11 – Sarah Keedy
 12 – Ada White
 16 – Kayla Geserick
 24 – Matthew Davis
 24 – Stacey Spinosi
 25 – CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR
 26 – Michael Golding
 26 – Patrick Schoen Jr.
 27 – Holly Golding
 28 – Ellie Kate Lynch
 30 – Brett McMichael
 30 – Alexander Pizarro



December anniversaries

7 – Ken & Samantha Eachus
 17 – Charles & Joyce Elliott
 20 – Matthew & Melissa Woodrow
 21 – Patrick & Peg Schoen
 22 – Richard & Joy Love
 27 – Dave & Linda Kershaw

January birthdays

1 – Liz Billings
 2 – Isabella Sammacicci
 5 – Steve Antosky
 5 – Hayley Antosky
 5 – Jean Woodrow
 6 – Carl Kuehnappel
 9 – Luke Pheasant
 10 – Kim Lambert Sharp
 10 – Bonnie Lee Wilson
 11 -- Laura Seidelmann
 14 – Kathy Pedicone
 14 – Michael Urion
 15 – Nolan Becker
 16 – Jim Golding
 18 – David J. Belcher
 21 – Matthew Woodrow
 21 – Nicholas J. Zorio
 23 – Kay Pierson
 24 – Dave Kershaw
 25 – Amy Peterson
 26 – Linda Kershaw
 29 – Judy Milio
 29 – Robinson Guerra
January anniversaries
 29 – John and Denise Pitchford

News and notes from our pastor

Our sympathy is extended to Shirley and Jim Golding and their family in the recent death of Shirley's father, Herbert Miller.

We welcome our newest member, Elaine Miller.

Healing prayers are offered to Bonnie Dawson, who had knee replacement surgery; Dick Daugherty, who was hospitalized recently; Kim Sharp's husband, Doug, who was hospitalized with circulatory issues; and to Kayleigh Reim's mother, Holly Williams, fighting cancer.

PASTOR, continued from Page 1

requests be made known unto God.

Prayer is the key, the password, the door that opens up this incredible peace for us. For when we pray for the love of God, the wisdom of God and the power of God to take root in our lives, then what could possibly keep peace away?

Too often, we run ourselves ragged during the Christmas season, trying to get EVERYTHING done, whatever EVERYTHING actually is.

Let's take a breather, spend time in prayer, and open ourselves up to the peace, not just on Earth, as promised to the shepherds, but in our souls.

And THAT'S how to have a really Merry Christmas.

In Christ, John



DECEMBER 2018

Saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

-- Matthew 2:2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Deacons' decorating brunch, 9 am
2 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship and communion, 11 am	3	4 Esther Circle Christmas party, 7 pm	5	6 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am Bell choir practice, 6:45 pm Sanctuary choir, 7:45 pm	7	8 Men's Group breakfast, Piston Diner, 8:30 am
9 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, 11 am	10 PrimeTimers luncheon, Charlie Brown's, Woodbury, noon	11	12	13 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am Bell choir practice, 6:45 pm Sanctuary choir, 7:45 pm	14	15 Breakfast with Santa, Cooper Hall, 9 a.m.
16 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, 11 am	17	18	19 Mission meets, annex, 6:30 pm Session meets, annex, 7:30 pm	20	21	22
23 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, 11 am	24 Christmas Eve services, 4 and 7 pm	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!	26	27 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am	28	29
30 Worship, 11 am (No Sunday School)	31					



JANUARY 2019

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

-- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am Bell choir practice, 6:45 Sanctuary choir practice, 7:45	4	5
6 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, communion, 11 am	7	8 Esther Circle, 7 pm	9	10 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am Bell choir practice, 6:45 Sanctuary choir practice, 7:45	11	12 Men's group breakfast, Piston Diner, 8:30 am
13 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, installation of officers, 11 am	14 PrimeTimers' luncheon, noon	15	16 Mission meets, annex, 6:30 pm Session meets, annex, 7:30	17 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am Bell choir practice, 6:45 Sanctuary choir practice, 7:45	18	19
20 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, 11 am	21	22 Deacons meet, annex, 7 pm	23	24	25	26
27 Sunday School, 9:30 am Worship, 11 am	28	29	30	31 Quilters meet, lounge, 10 am Bell choir practice, 6:45 Sanctuary choir practice, 7:45		

Highlights from November meeting of Session

Session met on Wednesday, Nov. 14, in the annex. The minutes of the October meeting were amended and approved. The financial reports also were reviewed and approved.

Pastor's report: In October, Rev. Shedwick logged 207 miles and made 14 home visits, three hospital visits and offered communion to six people in their homes. He also participated in two counseling sessions. The ushers for December are: Connie Harley (Dec. 2), Jake Mangano (Dec. 9), Jeanne Mangano (Dec. 16), Denise Pitchford (Dec. 23), John Pitchford (4 p.m. Dec. 24), Lori Taylor (7 p.m. Dec. 24) and Nick Zorio (Dec. 30). ... Rev. Shedwick requested vacation time from Dec. 26 to 31, which was granted.

Pastoral search: Church members are asked to **not** email questions about the transition from Rev. Shedwick to a new pastor to Executive Presbyter Debby Brincivalli. Instead, questions should be sent in writing to Clark of Session Denise Pitchford, who will either ask our elders for answers or submit questions in an orderly way to the West Jersey Presbytery. ... Three elders -- Dave Geserick (buildings), Ollie Lambert (finances) and Barbara Daugherty (membership) -- will represent us at a committee meeting with the executive presbyter on Dec. 5. The committee will begin to study options and determine our needs for an interim pastor.

Mission: The CROP walkers from our church contributed approximately \$2,500. ... A group of 15 joined missionary Cindy Corell for lunch at the Hollywood Cafe after the Nov. 11 worship service. ... Our church will obtain a giant Christmas card for all to sign and send to Cindy, who works in Haiti.

Building and Property: Approximately a dozen people participated in the church's autumn cleanup day Nov. 10. ... The sleeve around the bell tower rope is to be put in on Nov. 18. It will reduce the amount of water that enters the church vestibule from the hole in the roof where the bell rope hangs. ... The commission is talking to landscaper Tim Pheasant about handling snow removal this winter. ... AM Botte is to check on the new air conditioning unit near the back of the church that isn't working properly. ... Botte will also install reducers on the boiler, which should help us reduce oil costs. ... We still have no estimate on how much extra we were charged last winter by PSE&G for manse electricity. ... The thermostats will be programmed to start at 7 a.m. so there is sufficient heat for the Sunday School.

An adjustment will also be made to provide more heat for the quilters on Thursday mornings.



Christian Education: The Sunday School and nursery students completed their service project Nov. 11 -- placemats for Cathedral Kitchen in Camden as well as sun catchers and blankets for Hearts United Against Cancer, which is based in Glassboro. ... The children are scheduled to work on crafts and wreaths Dec. 2 for Advent.

Stewardship and Finance: The committee made a motion, which was passed, to tithe a minimum of 10 percent of all future bequests and to invest a minimum of 15 percent as well. ... Ollie Lambert will join Brad Gilmore and Steve Elliott on the investment-monitoring committee. ... The commission also recommended removing weekly financial information from the bulletin and instead going with a more complete quarterly update.

Worship and Program: Our church mourns the death of Tony Vattimo, who was to have been our new music director. He passed away in late October. ... Dave Taylor will continue to be our acting music director, and Laura Seidelmann will continue to be our organist until further notice as the search committee for a music director starts anew. ... The church will not hold its annual Christmas pageant this year. Instead, a Festival of Carols is planned for Dec. 16. ... Our elders are scheduled to serve communion on Dec. 2 and our deacons will do the same on Jan. 6. ... Liz Billings, the moderator of our deacons, will preach in Rev. Shedwick's absence on Dec. 30.

Communication and Outreach: The church continues to look for volunteers to take over the church website and newsletter when Barrie Dawson's term on Session ends in December.

Membership and Fellowship: An attempt was made to again install an undershepherd program, but some objections were raised and the idea was tabled until the new Session starts its work in January. ... The Session also asked some questions and tried to clear up some vagaries in the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy, which will eventually become part of our Manual of Operations. ... Four church members were moved to the inactive roll, while 27 who had been inactive were dismissed from the church.

Presbyterian Women: At their November meeting of Esther Circle, the women voted on how to disburse funds raised from April's chicken barbecue. Their money will be shared among Family Promise, the Greater Woodbury Food Pantry, missionary Cindy Corell, the five youths from our church who plan to attend Triennium next summer and the Presbytery's disaster relief commission.

Deacons: They plan to hold their annual church decorating brunch on Saturday, Dec. 1. All are invited to attend. ... The deacons also gave out gift cards and fruit baskets to needy families to help them with Thanksgiving meals.

West Jersey Presbytery: Elder Connie Harley will represent the Session at the next meeting, which will be Nov. 20 in Haddon Heights.

How the West Jersey Presbytery uses per capita

Editor's note: This narrative on how our presbytery will budget the per capita money it receives was provided by Executive Presbyter and Rev. Debby Brincivalli.

"The mission of the Presbytery of West Jersey is to nurture the Christian faith, life and common witness of our congregations and pastors.

Open to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we seek fresh ways to serve and grow; praying that in and through us, God will make all things new."

This is our mission statement, but how we live into this reality is an ever changing conversation.

The Presbytery's mission statement points to the work of the congregation being vital for the Kingdom of God. The mission of the presbytery is to provide support and resources to assist congregations in their work.

The following are ways that Presbytery lives out its mission through the budget approved last year and proposed for 2019.

Congregational Nurture and Resourcing, 26.4% of the 2018 budget; 27.5% in 2019: The committees and staff work with and walk alongside congregations and congregational leadership to provide support and resources.

This work is often seen through workshops, leadership development, hands-on resources and people-to-people support.

Budget items that relate to congregational support and nurture are: Commission on Ministry; Congregational Life events; Presbytery staff, including travel to visit churches.

Vocational Nurture and Pastoral Care, 14.3% in 2018; 16.5% in 2019: Discerning leadership for a congregation can be an exciting and daunting task at the same time. Answering God's call to serve as a Teaching Elder or Commissioned Ruling Elder is a path that no one should travel alone.

The Presbytery community provides resources, guidance and discernment for understanding and answering God's call through all

stages of ministry is important.

Budget Items that relate to Vocational Nurture: Commission on Ministry; Committee on Preparation for Ministry; pastor services events; Presbytery staff.

Mission Partnerships, 32.8% in 2018; 33.4% in 2019: Studies and experience have shown that when congregations and leaders partner together in mission and ministry, they are stronger, more vibrant and more effective in living out the coming of the Kingdom of God in new ways.

Budget items that relate to mission and partnership development are: Hispanic leadership development initiative; Emerging Mission and Ministry, such as 1,001 new worshipping communities support; Mission Committee; Council and Leadership; Synod of the Northeast; PCUSA; Continuing mission commitments; Presbytery staff, including the bookkeeper.

Note: These expenses are administrative for mission and separate from the mission budget and gifts sent to those ministries.

Discernment and Vision, 6.7% in 2018; 7.9% in 2019: When there is no vision, the people perish according to Proverbs 29:18.

Discernment, or understanding of where God is calling, and a vision for the future is imperative for moving forward in the world today as people of God.

Process, resources, support for these important components for leaders and congregations is provided by our staff, communications, and various leaders through workshops, conversations, resources and working together.

Vital congregations will be important in the coming years as is the New Jersey Missional conversation.

Budget items that relate to Discernment and Vision: Council; COM; Presbytery staff.

Infrastructure/Administration, 19.8% in 2018; 14.7% 2019: Wouldn't it be great if we didn't need support systems and administration? We do.

Our infrastructure includes our facilities, insurance, staff support, legal, office cleaning, website and communication support. A lot of this behind the scenes structure and

support is quiet and very important.

Budget items related to Infrastructure/Administration: Office staff; trustees; Finance Committee; Office expenses and travel.

Total expense budget: 2018 -- \$436,960; 2019 -- \$429,720.

Presbytery of West Jersey per capita

Per capita dollars make possible the ministry of the Presbytery Commission on Ministry and Committee on Preparation as well as Presbytery staff to support the committees and provide resources for congregations.

Locally, the per capita dollars provide for staff support, resources and workshops that equip church leadership for the present and future ministries of the church.

Per capita dollars also make possible a welcoming office space for conversations, meetings and workshops. They also provide the platforms for various publications, our website, social-media management and critical record keeping.

No "mission giving" of any kind is allocated to per capita.

We give thanks for those who regularly contribute to per capita.

Together, we can meet **Presbytery's 2019 per capita goal of \$377,363.**

* \$326,000 annual contribution to support Presbytery infrastructure for mission in Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Camden, Gloucester, Salem and Atlantic counties.

* \$39,141 annual contribution to the Synod of the Northeast, which consists of presbyteries across New York, New Jersey and New England.

* \$95,432 annual contribution to the Office of General Assembly, which supports our synods, presbyteries, Historical Society and congregations.

2019 per capita assessment per member: \$37 (\$23.95, Presbytery; \$4.10, Synod; \$8.95, General Assembly.)

The presbytery will use reserves to make up the differences. We pay in full the amount to the Synod of the Northeast and General Assembly even if these funds are not received.



Christmas Poinsettias

for our church sanctuary

2018

The poinsettias that fill the chancel on *Christmas Eve* are gifts from our congregation. If you would like to participate, please complete this form and mail it along with your payment to the church office. You may also drop the form and payment, in an envelope, into the offering plate. *Thank you!*

The deadline for orders is: **Sunday, Dec. 16**

\$12 for first plant. **\$8** for each extra plant.

Quantity ordered ____ Total amount \$ ____

These flowers are given to the glory of God:

In memory of

In honor of

Given by

**Additional gifts can be listed on the back of this form.
Contact Erin Zorio with any questions (856) 889-6808.**

Narthex display to show how church was decorated for Christmas years ago

As we celebrate the Christmas season, our Narthex display case will feature items reflecting how our church and community have celebrated this wonderful season over the years.

The display, which can be viewed beginning Sunday, Dec. 9, will highlight our church decorations over the years and how our members have enriched our holiday season with their unique ideas and creativity.

You are encouraged to stop by the display case to see Christmas then and now, particularly how the chancel was decorated with live trees that were almost as tall as the ceiling in the sanctuary and adorned with Christmas handcrafted by members of our church family.

May you all have a blessed Christmas!

Our PrimeTimers observe Veterans Day, pick officers

The PrimeTimers sat around a table beautifully decorated for the November luncheon meeting by the Milio family with help from Nancy MacDermott. Rev. Paul Milio led all in prayer before chips, pretzels and beverages were served to accompany our bagged lunches.

Nancy and Pat McDonnell provided a dessert of fresh fruit salad and apple cake. In honor of Veterans Day, the group sang "God Bless America."

Judy Milio led the meeting and thanked those who helped and to all for attending. "Happy Birthday" was sung to Dana Milio, and we wished a happy anniversary to Paul and Judy Milio.

A welcome was extended to new members Pat McDonnell and Liz Swanson, and a hearty welcome back was offered to Carolyn Ronketty.

Esther Culbert read the minutes of the October meeting, and Jesse Butler gave an informal treasurer's report.

With Rev. Milio, our president, stepping aside for health reasons, Judy Milio asked if she could assume that role for next year, and the members gave her a vote of confidence. Esther and Jesse have agreed to serve another year.

Our Christmas party will take place at noon Monday, Dec. 10, at Charlie Brown's restaurant in Woodbury.

Members will gather at the annex parking lot at 11:30 a.m. and car-pool to the restaurant.

Following a discussion about the cost for our teens attending the Triennium, it was decided that financial support from the group will be determined at a later time.

The "medical staff" from the Cheapo Surgical Center appeared and sang "Cruising Down the Liver" and "Them Bones."

FYI: Nancy MacDermott, (the good nurse), Judy Milio (the evil nurse) and Janet Koehler (the cut-rate surgeon) decline making house calls!

Nancy Butler re-established decorum by leading the group in a recitation of facts about important documents from American history.

The meeting adjourned, but friendly conversation continued.

DEACONS CORNER: Next meeting 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2019, annex

News:

Food Collection for November: Wow!! 292 items collected. Thank you for your help

Suggested Food Items for December: Peanut butter and jelly. These are only suggestions. All nonperishable foods are welcomed.

November visitations: The deacons made 35 visits

Greeting cards: 35 were sent in November. They include birthday, anniversary, special-member, get-well and sympathy cards.

Special projects: The deacons held their annual church-decorating brunch on Dec. 1. The Giving Tree was also set up that day. Thanks to all who take tags from the tree and provide gifts for families in need. The deacons will send gift cards to our members who are in college.

Please continue to put your donations to the deacons in the **green** offering envelopes! And most importantly: Please tell Rev. Shedwick of anyone in need of help, a visit, or prayer.

God Bless - In Christ's service, your Board of Deacons: *Steve Antosky, Nolan Becker, Kris Brenner, Nancy Butler, Madison Kratzer, Nancy MacDermott, Carol Martino, Joan Mullin, Kayleigh Reim, Sue Reim, Andrew Reynolds, Peg Schoen, Dottie Shedwick, Ada White and Liz Billings - moderator*

In 1910, mouse family felt at home in church

Have you met our church mouse? Grandpa Mouse has kept diaries of people and events going back to 1896. In the past, we have shared some of those stories with you, and we hope you shared them with your children. We wanted to introduce the whole family to our Sunday School, and we hope you will stop to visit the Mouse Family Open House (see photo) at the 4th Avenue entrance. Whimsical, yes, but Christmas is the perfect time for a bit of whimsy!

It is December 1910, and the family has settled into its new home in the church on Elm Avenue. Mother Mouse has tried to make her rooms look very much like those in John and Henrietta Mayhew's home, where they used to live. Everyone is excited as they prepare for the coming of the new born King.

Psalmantha Mouse has been practicing the same songs she heard Mrs. Mayhew playing on the organ. Tonight, Mr. Joseph Avis will lead his choir and this first service in the new sanctuary. Psalmantha will sing her heart out as she joins our choir members, although she can only squeak.

Mother has her tea table prepared, with sweet treats ready to serve. She helped clean after the Ladies Aid Society held their decorating brunch, and she was able to rescue many pieces of the festive fare to share with the family.

Uncle Moses Mouse has ordained himself pastor of those rodents living locally. He has prepared his sermon for the evening and stands ready to welcome the baby Jesus.

Matty Mouse is as excited as a 6-year-old can be. He has been behaving since Santa visited Sunday School last week!

The baby is asleep. He was named after John and Henrietta's son, who leads the teens' Christian Endeavor Society. He is an outstanding young man! His Sunday School class is popular with the young people, and we pray our little Paul will be as devoted as he is.

Charity Mouse is all a-twitter about how beautiful the new sanctuary looks dressed in winter greenery and lit by lanterns. She has checked to make sure all the Giving Tree gifts are ready to be taken to the families who have been facing hard times. Tonight, she is dressed much like Mrs. Gillingham was at the choir party.

Father Mouse has returned with the first of the presents for the family, a new sled for the children. He will hide it until they are asleep. Merry Christmas to all from your Presbyterian Church Mice!

