



THE OPEN DOOR

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

What child is this?

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God’s Word made flesh — fully human and fully God — became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us — leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life. The perfect gift.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God’s perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us — past, present and future — who have pointed us to God. We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Jesus’ example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past, and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God’s perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering at work:

Supporting our past, present and future leaders

- ❖ \$1.1 million of gifts from 2021 are being used (cont’d on page 7)



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AT THE OPEN DOOR

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By December 19, 2023

PRAYERS & CONCERNS:

Georganne & Fred	Dolores & Dave	Bruce
June	Harry	Joyce
Sue B.	John	Harry Gedicke
Phyllis	Stanley	Gabby
Adelaide	Paulina	Melissa
Loraine	Carol	Mikaela
Cathy	Tom	Joey C.
Christina	Doris	Kerry



SESSION SNIPPETS

From the November 2023 Session Meeting:

Clerk's Report: No updates to report

Membership: 155

Action/Discussion Items:

- Pastor Ryon Herin of the First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway introduced himself as the Session's assigned Moderator
- Approved the minutes of the October 4, 2023 Session meeting
- Approved the minutes of the October 18, 2023 Special Session meeting
- Approved the minutes of the October 8 Special meeting of the Congregation
- Treasurers report was received, discussed and approved
- Motion approved to amend the October minutes for the session date change and the incorrect spelling of a name
- Approved blanket motion on photocopier future replacement
- Motion approved to replace the kitchen stove hood fire suppression system in order to meet the current building code
- Motion approved to reallocate the \$2,241 overage in the Pastor's Continuing Ed Fund to the Building Fund
- Discussion on pulpit supply which is currently covered through Dec. 17. Dec. 24 (family and evening services) and Dec. 31 are still open, but will continue to look. May have a Christmas pageant for the Christmas Eve family service
- Discussion on status of part-time office admin assistant. The Personnel Committee has approved job description.
- Discussion on the need to compose a Stewardship letter to send out by the first Sunday of Advent (with pledge cards). It was suggested to possibly enhance a letter from a prior year, or check out other church websites.
- Discussed to not have any more speakers on being an Elder
- Discussed the need to get a report from the Nominating Committee

Informational Items:

- December 2 is set for Home for the Holidays
- Wreaths Across America will be on December 16

Unfinished/Old Business:

- A new plaque will soon replace the chapel sign above the entrance that was removed
- Dawn Ward has been looking into the cost of an automated external defibrillator (AED) for the church which could cost up to \$2,000. Dawn will do a writeup of her findings

New Business: The next Presbytery meeting is not until January 2024



DECEMBER LECTIONARY

December 3

First Sunday of Advent

- First Reading Isaiah 64:1-9
- Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Gospel Mark 13:24-37

December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

- First Reading Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
- Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-15a
- Gospel Mark 1:1-8

December 17

Third Sunday of Advent

- First Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- Psalm 126:1-6
- Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
- Or alternate Second Reading Luke 1:46b-55
- Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24

Christmas Eve

- First Reading Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96:1-13
- Second Reading Titus 2:11-14
- Gospel Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 31

- First Reading Isaiah 61:10-62:3
- Psalm 148:1-14
- Second Reading Galatians 4:4-7
- Gospel Luke 2:22-40



SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We continue to explore Jesus's teachings in the book of Matthew. Join us in the chapel at 9 am on December 3, January 7, and January 28. Contact Cindy Medici with questions.



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Saturday, December 16, 2023

10am to 2pm

Come help to honor our Veterans by placing a wreath on a veterans grave in our cemetery. The service is in our church at 12 noon.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Family service at regular 10am service. Candlelight service at 9pm, our lessons and Carol service. All are welcome and hope to see you there.

We would love to have some extra voices for the choir for Christmas – Rehearsals will be on Thursday evenings, starting Nov. 30 from 8-9:15 in the sanctuary, and we will sing at the Candlelight Service at 9 PM. For more information, please e-mail jane Rufino at janemaryor@gmail.com.



Help is needed for Sunday mornings for usher, liturgist, fellowship time, nursery and counters. Sign up on the sheets in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!



Roxbury Library Gala Honors Bill Wilkins & Michele O'Halloran

Two members of our church family were honored by the Roxbury Library Foundation at their Annual Masquerade Gala on November 15, 2023.

Congratulations to Bill Wilkins and Michele O'Halloran and thank you for all your contributions to our library and community. For more information on the event and the Roxbury Library Foundation got to <https://roxburylibrary.org/foundation>



Roxbury Arts Alliance offers wonderful entertainment for all of us to enjoy!

Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 7:30pm come hear "Forever Simon & Garfunkel". Saturday, January 13, 2024 at 7:30pm come hear "Big Hix" featuring country & western music.

For tickets go to www.RoxburyArtsAlliance.org or call 973 945-0284.

DECEMBER EVENTS



HAVE YOURSELF A THRIFTY LITTLE CHRISTMAS
Earth Friendly, too!

Saturday, December 2, 11am–3pm (during Home for the Holidays) Sunday, December 3, 11am–12pm (following worship) It's our second annual Christmas décor sale, held in Fellowship Hall! A wide selection of **gently-used holiday and Christmas items** including wreathes, ornaments, candles, garland, even a tree or two! Prices to fit anyone's budget. Checks, credit cards and cash accepted. All proceeds will benefit the community mission outreach of the First Presbyterian Church of Succasunna.

Re-purpose, recycle, re-use! First Presbyterian Church of Succasunna is an Earth Care congregation



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

Our church will be having a Bake Sale table to make some money. If you can help by baking your delicious goodies for us to sell, it would be fantastic!

If you are able to help that day to “man” the tables or serve drinks in the kitchen, please contact Sue Anderson at 973 584-3816 or email at sueanderson14@verizon.net.



The Annual Giving Tree

A Christmas tree with tags of needed toys and books is in the Narthex. Just select a tag and purchase the suggested gift. The toys will be collected on **Sunday, December 3rd** at the Toy March during worship.

If you are unable to make it to church on Sunday but would like to participate you can either drop off a toy/book of your choosing or send a check to the church, made out to FPCS and in the memo put “Toy March”. Kindly do not donate any toys that replicate guns. The toys will be going to Child and Family Resources in Mt. Arlington, an agency that serves families who are low income by providing financial assistance for their child care needs.



CEMETERY TOUR THANK YOU

A huge THANK YOU to the many members & friends who participated in making our 2023 Cemetery Tour such a big success! We had 113 visitors go on the tour this year, and we raised over \$1,430 - WOW!

This would not have been possible without each of you who shared your time, talents, and support in preparing for and carrying out such a great tour. It takes many hands to plan this event. Thank you to our church members and friends who came and enjoyed the tour.

Thanks again to everyone, we're counting on you to do it again next year. We really are so lucky to have such a great crew of friends in our church family.



ROXBURY SOCIAL SERVICES

Milk and Eggs to Feed Hungry Families

Wednesdays, December 13 and 27

Help Roxbury Social Services Feed Families in our Community!

We are making regular donations of milk and eggs to Roxbury Social Services to help families who continue to struggle with providing the basic necessities to their families. Please consider joining this important mission to help feed hungry families in our community.

Here's how it works: Simply pick-up an extra dozen eggs and ½ gallon of milk when you are grocery shopping. Put your donations in the refrigerator at church on Sunday morning or no later than Tuesday for our Wednesday delivery. You may also make a monetary donation to the church towards the purchase of milk and eggs by placing it in an envelope labeled Roxbury Social Services envelope or by indicating Roxbury Social Services in the memo line on your check. Thank you!



DEACONS DOINGS

The Deacons continue to care for our church members and those in the community. We served homemade soup at the blood drive on November 5. The NY Blood Center collected 49 units of blood. The next blood drive will be March 3. Thank you to all who donated items to the health and wellness drive. The items were taken to Roxbury Social Services. Between six and eight quarts of soup are delivered monthly to our members who need a little extra care. If you would like to make soup, please contact Rick Lansing.

Donations to the Deacons will help us continue to support our members with meals and cards and to support local organizations such as Faith Kitchen, Family Promise, and Homeless Solutions.



CONFRONTING ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Chenoa Stock, PCUSA Mission Co-Worker Peru

Chenoa Stock, who we support as a Mission Co-Worker to Peru, offered a series of dialogues via Zoom with members of supporting congregations and our partners in Peru. The series ended in November but all dialogues are available on YouTube to view. Here is the link to the October session on confronting environmental injustices brought by industrial and human activity in their wetlands, coast, and hills. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-tpGuNH29w>

Please contact Chenoa Stock Chenoa Stock: chenoa.stock@pcusa.org or Kathy Ritchey if you would like to links to the other discussions in the series.



CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET

Do you have someone on your list that is difficult to buy for, or has everything? Why not give a gift that makes a difference? It's as easy as 1,2,3!

1. Use this sheet to indicate which organization(s) you wish to make a donation(s).
2. Submit a check made out to FPCS. Be sure to add Alt Gift in the memo line.
3. Mail or leave your check and form in the church office no later than December 19.*

Gift donation cards are available by request. Any questions, please contact Kathy Ritchey at kritchey@optonline.net.

Your Name: _____	Phone or e-mail: _____
Non Profit	Gift Amount
Homeless Solutions , Morristown NJ – offering shelter, services and supportive housing to the homeless and working poor in Morris County.	\$_____
Family Promise , Morristown NJ – dedicated to ending the crisis of homelessness in Morris County.	\$_____
Faith Kitchen , Dover, NJ – provides nutritious meals daily to those in need.	\$_____
Morris Habitat for Humanity – brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.	\$_____
Camp Johnsonburg , Johnsonburg, NJ – year round camp and conference center serving all people in a beautiful and natural environment.	\$_____
Presbyterian Missions – the ministry and mission agency of the Presbyterian Church.	\$_____
Heifer International – works to end hunger and poverty around the world by providing livestock and agricultural training.	\$_____
Total amount	\$_____
Gift Cards	No. requested _____

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

Continued from Page 1

- ❖ To provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need.
- ❖ Income supplements from the Board of Pensions (BOP) helped nearly 278 individual recipients, retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves.
- ❖ Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 227 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care.
- ❖ Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 246 individual recipients facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

Preparing the way for future leaders

- ❖ \$1.1 million of gifts from 2020 are being used to provide education and leadership development skills at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.
- ❖ Many of the students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color are the first in their families to enroll in higher education.

We will receive the Christmas Joy Offering on Sunday, December 17. Please give what you can to the Christmas Joy Offering. For if we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

For more information, visit: <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>



Stewardship is More Than Your Financial Pledge

Stewardship is a way of life where we seek to use our resources through the lens of our faith.

Through our faith in the Lord, our small, but mighty congregation continues to demonstrate strength, resilience and flexibility. But to secure our place in God's plan, we need to give whatever is needed, whenever and wherever it is needed most. Each of us needs to *pledge* to give generously of our time, talent and treasure. In the year ahead:

- Will you answer "yes" when asked for your time to serve as a Deacon, Elder, committee leader, or member?
- Will you offer your skills and abilities as they fit our needs, as a teacher, liturgist, musician, usher or fellowship time host?
- Will you make a meaningful financial commitment to our church to help support our mission, staff and programs?

Stewardship is a matter of discipleship. It is not just a short-term effort but a foundation for a deepening of faith and a way of life.

Keep in mind that your financial pledge is important, key to the establishment of a viable, working budget. The church is thankful to all who have made their financial pledge and continue do so! It's a commitment to our church's future and God's divine plan.

Kindly return your pledge card to the church by Sunday, December 10 or at your earliest convenience. If you didn't receive a pledge card please contact the church office.



Christmas Flowers



We will be ordering poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas from Lakeland Florist. If you wish to order plants, please use this form and drop it in the offering plate or Church Office. You may also mail it to: First Presbyterian Church of Succasunna, 99 Main St, Succasunna, NJ 07876. **Please make your check out to: FPC Succasunna and write FLOWERS on the memo line.** The cost of each plant is listed below. The last day to order plants is **December 5**. You may pick up your plant(s) to enjoy at home any time after the 9PM Candlelight service on Christmas Eve.

Please print Clearly!!!

Number of 6 in. poinsettias (\$16 ea.) _____ Number of 4 ½ in. poinsettias (\$10 ea.) _____

Total enclosed _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

From _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

First Presbyterian Church

99 Main Street
Succasunna, NJ 07876

Time Dated Material

Published Monthly

Address Service
Requested