



**December 1, 2024**  
***First Sunday of Advent***

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD**

118 WEST MAIN STREET

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Rev. Dr. Alan Olson, Pastor

Pastor's Office Hours: Mon-Thur. 9:30am-12pm

Director of Music: John Cavicchio

Church Office Hours: Mon-Fri. 9am-12pm

Telephone: 732-462-0234

Email: [fpcsecretary2@gmail.com](mailto:fpcsecretary2@gmail.com)

Web Page: <http://www.fpcfreeshold.org>

\*Please stand if you are able

**Chiming of the Hour**

**Prelude** *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper* Matthew DeMarco, soloist

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray you hear us when we call.

People: **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them.**

Candler #1 Today we light one candle to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens.

Candler #2 We name this candle Hope. (*Light the candle.*)

**People:** We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of hope. Even when better days seem very far away and the weight of the world seems to crush your promises, we set our face steadily towards the light.

**Leader:** Listen now to the prayer of an ancient poet:

“For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.” *(Psalm 67:5-8)*

**People:** Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of hope this week, help us to *become* the signs of hope that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven’s hope. Amen.

## Hymn Sing

### Call to Confession *(Spoken by worship leader)*

Prepare the way of the Lord! Let us make our confession to God.

### Prayer of Confession *(unison)*

Merciful God, always with us, always coming:

We confess that we do not know how to prepare for your Advent. We have forgotten how to hope in miracles; we have ignored the promise of your kingdom; we get distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God. Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds, the intelligent courage of the Magi, and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph, that we may journey with them to Bethlehem and find the good news of a child born for us. Now, in the quiet of our hearts, we ask you to make us ready for his coming. Amen.

*(Please take a moment for silent confession.)*

### Assurance of Pardon

As we hear the ancient prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, we long for the day when death will be swallowed up and every tear will be wiped away. As we wait expectantly for Christ’s promised return, we live in the assurance of God’s gracious forgiveness.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### \*Gloria Patri

*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.*

### \*Passing of the Peace

**A Time for Children** *(Children are invited to the front pew for a message from the pastor)*

### Anthem *Advent Prayer*

### Prayer for Illumination *(unison)*

Creator God, you remind us that the darkness of ignorance and doubt cannot overcome your life-giving Word. May your Holy Spirit, who first inspired these words of Scripture, shine your light and once again awaken us to the hearing and living of this radiant truth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16** *(Old Testament pg. 738)*

**Scripture Reading: Luke 21:25-36** *(New Testament pg. 85)*

**Sermon *Fear and Foreboding*** *Pastor Alan Olson*

**\*Hymn #503 Lord, We Have Come at Your Own Invitation**

**Responding to the Word**

**Christ's Invitation and Words of Institution**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right for us to give our thanks and praise.**

**Thanksgiving for the Work of God in Creation**

. . .Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of your name.

**Acclamation of Praise (sung)**

## Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, \_\_\_\_\_  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_ Ho -



heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

**Thanksgiving for the Work of Christ**

We give thanks to God the Father that our Savior, Jesus Christ, before he suffered gave us this memorial of his sacrifice, until he comes again.

**Memorial Acclamation**

Leader: Therefore we proclaim our faith as signed and sealed in this sacrament:

**People: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

**Prayer for the Work of the Spirit**

**Communion**

(We will celebrate communion by intinction. Please form a line in the aisle between the pews in the center and right-hand side of the sanctuary. If you need a gluten-free host, or if you would prefer not to receive communion by intinction, please tell the pastor as you approach the communion table.)

**Offering *While We Are Waiting, Come***

**\*Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**\*Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)**

We give our thanks through our talents, our time, and our treasure. Thanks be to God; whose love creates us!  
Thanks be to God; whose mercy redeems us! Thanks be to God; whose grace leads us into the future! Amen.

**Prayers of the People**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**\*Hymn #88 O Come, O Come Emmanuel**

**Benediction**

**Postlude *Variations on Savior of the Nations, Come***

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***A "Blue Christmas" Service will be held this evening at 6:00 PM in the sanctuary.***

*This special service is an informal service of prayer and worship that acknowledges the grief and pain that some of us feel during the holiday season. Whether you've lost a close loved one in recent years, or you're just having difficulty finding the joy in this season, the Blue Christmas service is a reminder that you are not alone, even in challenging times.*

**Christmas Carol Sing-Along:** Please join us on Saturday, December 7th from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM for our community-wide Christmas Carol Sing-along, held in our sanctuary. This festive gathering is free and open to everyone. Bring your friends and family and enjoy an hour of beloved Christmas carols and community cheer.

**Coffee Hour:** Please join us next Sunday, December 8th following worship for coffee hour. A time for fellowship and refreshments! We look forward to seeing you there!

**Cookie Sale:** Presbyterian Women is sponsoring a cookie sale on Sunday, December 15th following worship in Room A/B. Bakers are needed! Cookie drop-off will be on Saturday, December 14th between 9 AM and 10 AM in Room A/B. If you have any questions regarding the cookie sale, please speak with Marie Schlechtweg.

<b>LITURGIST</b>	Larry Moran
<b>USHERS</b>	Mike Mancuso & Bob DiSogra
<b>Next Week</b>	Samantha Daesener & Bill Canning
<b>OPENER</b>	Pat Kirk
<b>Next Week</b>	Samantha Daesener
<b>CLOSER</b>	Samantha Daesener
<b>Next Week</b>	Property Commission
<b>COUNTERS</b>	Beth Nadolny & Samantha Daesener
<b>Next Week</b>	Bill Canning & Bob Musser

***Today's Music Guest: Matthew DeMarco, Soloist***

