



**December 14, 2025**

**10:00 AM**

***Third Sunday of Advent***

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD**

118 WEST MAIN STREET

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Rev. Dr. Alan Olson, Pastor

Director of Music: John Cavicchio

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

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

**\*Please stand if you are able**

**Chiming of the Hour**

**Prelude   *Selection*   *Youth Bells***

**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.**

Barbara & Susan      Today we light three candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens.

Barbara & Susan      We name this candle Hope. (*Light the first candle*) We name this candle Peace. (*Light the second candle*) We name this candle Joy. (*Light the third 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 joy. Even when despair is all around us and apathy seems the order of the day, we set our face steadily towards the light.

**Leader:** Listen now to the prophecy of Isaiah:  
“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.” (*Isaiah 61:1-3*)

**People:** Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of joy this week, help us to *become* the signs of joy 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 joy. Amen.

**\*Hymn #107 Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn**

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

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

**Prayer of Confession** (*unison*)

O promised Christ: We are a world at war. Our peace depends on your coming. We are a sinful people. Our pardon depends on your coming. We are full of good intentions but weak at keeping promises; our only hope of doing God’s will is that you should come and help us do it. Lord Christ, Word made flesh, our world waits for your peace, for your pardon, and for your grace. Even so: come, Lord Jesus. 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** (*Hymn #581*)

*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 up front to meet with the pastor for a message,  
after which they’ll be dismissed to Sunday School*

**Anthem**    ***My Soul Proclaims***

**Prayer for Illumination** (*unison*)

O God, our beginning and end, by whose command time runs its course: bless our impatience, perfect our faith, and, while we await the fulfillment of your promises, grant us hope in your Word. Amen.

**Scripture Reading:** **Luke 1:46b-55** (*New Testament pg. 57*)

**Scripture Reading:** **Matthew 11:2-11** (*New Testament pg. 11*)

**Sermon**    ***The Thief of Joy***    *Pastor Alan Olson*

**Responding to the Word**

**\*Hymn #100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout (Canticle of the Turning)**

**Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed (unison)**

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

**Offering**   *Sheep Safely Graze*   Edith Bailey, piano

**\*Doxology (Hymn #606)**

*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 (Hymnal pg. 35)**

*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.*

**\*Hymn #134 Joy to the World**

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude Selection**

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*Flowers are given today by Judi & John Cavicchio  
in loving memory of their son, John.*



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### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**



Presbyterian Women is sponsoring a **Cookie Sale** next Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> following worship in Room A/B. **Cookie drop-off** will be on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> between 9 AM and 10 AM in Room A/B. If you have any questions regarding the cookie sale, please speak with Marie Schlechtweg.

There will be a **Christmas Eve worship service** on Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in our sanctuary.



**The church office will be closed** Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup> for Christmas and Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup> for New Year's Day. Church staff will be working remotely 12/26, 12/29 to 12/31 and 01/02/26.

**Sunday School Calendar:** There will be no Sunday School on December 28<sup>th</sup> and January 4<sup>th</sup> for Christmas recess. Class will resume on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

There will be a **Congregational Meeting** on Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup> following worship. At this meeting we will dissolve Pastor Alan's terms of call for FPC. A **Farewell Coffee Hour** will follow as we wish Pastor Alan all the best as he starts the next chapter in his ministry.

**Year End Giving:** As we approach the end of 2025, please remember any year end contributions need to be received in the church office or submitted online by December 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be included for charitable contribution tax deductions for 2025. If you have any questions regarding year end giving, please reach out to Bill Canning or the church office.

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*Please join us today for coffee hour following worship.  
A time for fellowship and refreshments!  
We look forward to seeing you there!*

## CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS



Poinsettias will decorate our sanctuary and remain on display through the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

If you wish to remember or honor loved ones, you may purchase a poinsettia or make a contribution to the Building Preservation Fund in their name. The cost of a poinsettia is \$10.

If paying by check, please make your check payable to *First Presbyterian Church of Freehold* and indicate *Christmas Memorials* on the memo line.

Please put your order/donation in the offering plate during Sunday worship or send it to the church office at 118 West Main Street, Freehold, NJ, 07728.

The deadline for poinsettia orders and Memorial Fund donations is **Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD

## Purchase of Poinsettias

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the purchase of \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettia(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ I will take it home after the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will leave it for a shut-in.

My poinsettia memorial should read as follows:

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_



## Memorial Fund Donation

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Building Preservation Fund.

My Memorial Fund donation should read as follows:

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

# Welcome

We're Glad You're Here!

***First Presbyterian Church of Freehold – December 14, 2025***

<b>LITURGIST</b>	Yvonne Lindner
<b>CANDLERS</b>	Barbara Jean Keune & Susan Croft
<b>USHERS</b>	Bill Canning & Samantha Daesener
<b>Next Week</b>	Carol Matino & Bob Musser
<b>OPENER</b>	Samantha Daesener
<b>Next Week</b>	Chris Pilla
<b>CLOSER</b>	Property Commission
<b>Next Week</b>	Chris Pilla
<b>COUNTERS</b>	Bill Canning & Bob Musser
<b>Next Week</b>	Rick Baptista & Kevin Truex



***Today's Guest Musicians:***

*Edith Bailey, Pianist  
Youth Bells*



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Follow Us on Facebook!**



When you follow us on Facebook, you'll enjoy:

- ✓ **Photos** from recent church events and activities
- ✓ **Reminders** about upcoming services and special programs
- ✓ **Clips** from worship services and sermons
- ✓ **Music highlights** from our talented musicians
- ✓ A chance to **connect** with your church family throughout the week

***Let's grow our online community and share the love and life of our church with each other!***

