

The Pipe Organ

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
New Vernon, New Jersey

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Dear Friends,

Christmas is a time for stories that border on the edge of the possible. In particular, there is one story of a child born of a virgin called Mary, in a stable on a night when angels sang to shepherds in the fields, and a star would guide wise men to the scene.

In his book, *On Religion: Thinking in Action*, John Caputo says that "the religious sense of life awakens when we lose our bearings and let go, when we find ourselves brought up against something that exceeds our powers, that overpowers us and knocks us off our hinges, something impossible vis-a-vis our limited potencies."

"Here is a realm where things do not bend to knowledge or our will and we are not calling the shots. We are out of our element...exposing [ourselves] to the radical uncertainty and the open-endedness of life. This is God's element... God's realm or "Kingdom," where God rules...Love and hope and faith are the virtues of the impossible...Our hearts are restless, astir with the possibility of renewal and rebirth, pregnant with an absolute future, an absolute surprise, just like the Virgin Mary."

In America, we are familiar with Christmas as hunting season at the mall, open season to bag your gifts and lay them at the foot of the tree. We are prepared with the frenzy of television ads that come at us with scenes in milliseconds. Christmas may be a hassle, but it is hardly a time "when we find ourselves brought up against something that exceeds our powers, that overpowers us and knocks us off our hinges."

What has knocked us off our hinges is the daily news of our world. Just over 100 years ago, the world went into its First World War. Now a new kind

of world war has put many nations on alert. This year, we have seen some of the worst of what it means to be human this world.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Elena Bird Zolnick,
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Julia Buteux
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Deacons

Lisa Chapman, Moderator
Robyn Brown
Janet Bruns
Erin Castner
Fenton Chaney
Andrea Di Ruggiero
Sandy Finlayson
Olin Friant
Barbara Gill
Susan Morris
Judith Shelton
Anne Thomas
Eileen Urban

Continued from page 1

But Christmas means the birth of God into this world. Even more impossible than the virgin birth itself is the news that God came in this way in a child into our world. God entered humanity. Jesus is called Emmanuel (God with us).

With Christmas, God offers this element of the impossible: As God came in Jesus, God continues to come in humanity and works through our hearts and minds, our hands and feet. We in our church have a part in the best of what God will do as God works through us. Let your hearts be astir with the possibility of renewal in your life and the life of our church, be exposed to a little radical uncertainty, and along the way, knock someone off their hinges, tell those you love that you love them.

Peace on Earth,
Robert Gamble

PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Ann Talcott and Tricia Tiensch speak with Dr. Chris Taylor after his Sunday Speaker Series presentation of *The Middle East on the Edge of the Abyss*. This was a timely topic on Sunday, November 15, two days after the terrorist attacks in Paris. Picture submitted by John Thomas.

See more on page 5.



NOVEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



The following highlights are from the November 17, 2015 Session meeting.
The meeting began with Jane Coyle leading devotions.

Committee Highlights

Adult Education: The Adult Education program has been named the “Sunday Speaker Series.” Flyers are being posted throughout the community to encourage interested neighbors to attend programs. The plan to offer yoga to “Mothers and Others” is in the works. Babysitting services will be available for mothers with young children.

Youth Education: The November service weekend was a great success. Youth and adults helped out at the Soup Kitchen, Food Bank, and assisted some members in town with household tasks. The Confirmation Class has begun with six students in attendance.

Congregational Life: The Christmas Luncheon is on December 6. It helps for planning purposes to know how many are coming! The sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up and indicate how many people and which type of food you will bring: a side, salad, or dessert.

Finance: We are currently running at a deficit. Expenses have gone up. Keeping up with the general wear and tear on our beautiful old church is challenging. Plate offerings, as well as pledges, are down, making it difficult to cover the monthly cost of maintaining the Church.

Stewardship: Now Build Faith! Still missing: funds from 2015 pledges. If you haven’t done so, please send in the balance of your pledge to the Church for this year. As for 2016, please send in your pledge cards as soon as you can.

Administration/Communication: The Committee continues to work on addressing any gaps in the Church’s audio/visual system.

Buildings & Grounds: While the water issue itself has been resolved, we are awaiting clearance from the State. Until we receive the proper approval, bottled water will continue to be available.

Nominating: The Committee has a slate of nominees for 2016. The Congregational Meeting, for the purpose of electing the new members of Session, Deacons, Auditing and Nominating Committees, will be held on December 13 after worship.

Personnel: Committee Chairs, in conjunction with Debbie, are working on clarifying committee responsibilities and the proper chain of command.

Worship and Music: Hallelujah! The joyous Christmas Season is upon us! Some of our church’s offerings include:

- The Christmas Pageant on December 13 during worship,
- The Comfort and Joy Service on December 13 at 5:00 pm,
- The Choral Christmas Service on December 20 during worship, and
- Christmas Services on December 24: 5:00 pm family service and 11:00 pm candlelight service.

Pastor’s Report:

- Dr. Gamble attended the clergy retreat at Camp Johnsonburg.
- He paid visits to several church members who have recently been hospitalized.
- He plans to follow up with several visitors who attended church over the last month.

Communion will be served on Sunday, December 6, 2015.

The next meeting of Session will be on Tuesday, December 15 at 7:00 pm.

Dr. Gamble adjourned the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Coyle, Clerk of Session

CHRISTMAS OFFERING 2015 RECIPIENT: *This Child Here*



Closure to a workshop

Mission and Outreach has unanimously selected *This Child Here*, founded by Robert Gamble, to receive the 2015 Christmas Offering. Our congregation has a long standing tradition of identifying the needs in our community and being an integral part of addressing a solution. FPCNV members were there at the beginning of the Community Soup Kitchen and Homeless Solutions, to name just a few. We recognize the same loving, caring spirit that brought Robert Gamble to found *This Child Here*, a non-profit providing assistance to orphans and youth of Ukraine with funds from the USA. The Christmas Eve services are always special. Please come and know that your Offering is going to help a needy child.

This Child Here designs and funds programs to help homeless youth and children in Odessa—children on the streets, in shelters, schools, homes, or orphanages—with issues of personal boundaries, addictions, self-esteem, life in community, and trust. The organization works in the region of Odessa, Ukraine, with the aim of encouraging and motivating these youth and children to imagine a future and find hope. Homeless children, street kids, orphans, and children without acting parents are the most unprotected segment in any society. They buy clothes and medicine, pay for dental work, support summer camp, make available a variety of after-school activities for youth and children, and fund tuition and books for university. *This Child Here* also funds “at risk” groups in local public schools, teaches parenting skills to families with foster children, and trains and supports mentors to be matched with children in orphanages and shelters. They help these children with creativity, training, and compassion and often work with their sister organization in Odessa, the shelter and charity, *The Way Home*, as well.

Peacemaking: Odessa, Ukraine

In May 2014, *This Child Here* began a new initiative with youth and adults: Peacemaking and Reconciliation. Our work ranges from care for individuals who suffered emotional trauma in the recent violence in Ukraine to opportunities for reconciliation between those who oppose each other. But it is always work with and between people.

Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision: The vision of *This Child Here* is a world of children with the support of families, a world without children living on the streets. **Mission:** *This Child Here* has a mission to guide and encourage street kids toward a life with a family, in a shelter, or orphanage, and to provide these children with the love, encouragement, life skills, and motivation to lead healthy emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual lives. **Values:** *This Child Here* will practice accountability to the vulnerable children of streets, broken families and institutions.



Participants in a Workshop on Trust



A child's view from underground



Robert with at risk children in public school

November Sunday Speaker Series



TOP Ed Babbott, introduced by Julia Buteux, provided a slide presentation on *Into the Great Swamp*, his collaborative effort with daughter, Markie, on Sunday, November 8. Cynny Babbott read some of Markie's poems; books were available for purchase and autographs.

BOTTOM Dr. Chris Taylor presented *The Middle East on the Edge of the Abyss* to a packed room. The November 15 topic came two days after the attacks on Paris, and the audience was raptly attentive. A lively discussion with many questions followed.



Youth Mission Weekend in November



Our youth show their core value of SERVICE:

We demonstrate the importance of our faith by living and serving others with our hands and feet.



NOV 5 Community Soup Kitchen Project: Shopping and assembling 60 breakfast-to-go bags.

NOV 7 In-reach Workday: Assisting a church family with yardwork and outdoor winter preparation.





FPCNV Book Club

December Meeting, Meeting Dates, and Book Selections

Café Beethoven
December 8
5:30 pm



Meeting Dates and Book Selections

Where: Library **When:** 7:30 pm

DEC 8	Café Beethoven Dinner
JAN 12	<i>The First Salute</i> by Barbara Tuchman
FEB 9	<i>Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania</i> by Erik Larson
MAR 8	<i>Spies Among Friends</i> by Kim Philby
APR 12	<i>The Wright Brothers</i> by David McCullough
MAY 10	<i>All the Light We Cannot See</i> by Anthony Doerr
JUN 14	<i>Bach</i> by Tim Dowlay (?)

New members are welcome.

Christmas Choral Program

Sunday, December 20 at 10:00 am

The Choir will present a Christmas Choral Program during the Worship Service on Sunday, December 21.

You Are Invited

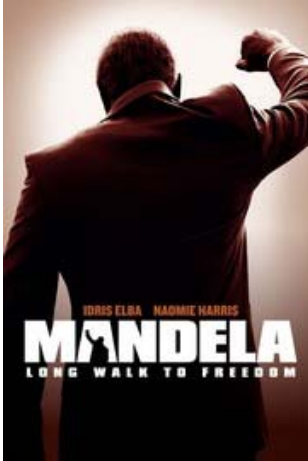
The Christmas Spirit of Giving has almost arrived! Please consider giving some of your time and talent to our choir for Advent and Christmas. Rehearsals for Christmas music began the first week of November.

Please join the choir on Thursdays from 7:30-9:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. Singers of much, or even no experience are invited. Email Elena or Amanda for more information at:

elenatbird@gmail.com or amandatsukamoto@msn.com



December Movie: *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*



Wednesday, December 16

7:00 pm

Chaneys' Home

Golden Globe-winner Idris Elba stars as Nelson Mandela in this in-depth biopic that portrays the groundbreaking South African leader from his rural childhood through his long imprisonment to his election as the country's first black president.

The Congregational Life Committee is Hosting

2015 Christmas Luncheon

Sunday, December 6

Immediately following the Worship Service

Sign-ups will continue through November 30th in Fellowship Hall, or a reservation can be emailed to me at nodgem@aol.com.

Please include name, number attending, and whether contributing a side, salad, or dessert.

Please bring a side dish or salad that will feed eight (8) people.

RSVP on the poster at Coffee Hour or
RSVP to Meg Richardson at nodgem@pcnv.org



*We wish everyone a
Joyful, Healthy, &
Happy Holiday
Season!*

The Deacons

Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, December 24 ~ 5:00 pm and 11 pm



There will be two services on Christmas Eve in our festively decorated Fellowship Hall. The first is at 5:00 pm. Many families with little ones attend this service. The second service begins at 11:00 pm and ends at midnight.

Both of these are candlelight services that will warm our hearts and help us all prepare to welcome the Christ Child into our lives.

Comfort and Joy Service

Sunday, December 13

5:00 pm

On Sunday December 13 we will hold a service of Comfort and Joy at 5:00 pm . We realize that, in the midst of all the celebrations around the Christmas season, it is a difficult time for some. If you have lost a loved one or suffered other hardship this year, you know how the season can be a mixture of joy and sorrow.

In this quiet service, we will seek to be of comfort to each other as we approach Christmas. If you are not mourning the loss of a loved one or dealing with some other painful issue, then be thankful. Come and be a part of this service because you care about the ones who are hurting.



Christmas Ornaments depicting our historic church may be purchased at the Church Office. If you would like to reserve yours, please call Debbie at: 973-538-8394 or send an email to: officeadmin@pcnv.org





2015 Stewardship Campaign Reminder

The “**Now Build Faith**” stewardship campaign is well on its way to the finish line! Our campaign goal for the 2016 budget is \$420,000, and we have asked all church members to raise their pledge from last year by at least 5% to move us toward that amount. Thus far, we are roughly three-quarters of the way to that goal and are reaching out to those who have not yet pledged to ask them to join us in this important effort. Please think deeply and prayerfully about what our church means to you and return your pledge card to the Church Office when you can.

Remember there are now other ways to contribute. As mentioned on the website, we are able to accept appreciated securities to fulfill your pledge. The directions are on the website or please call me. We are deeply thankful for your support, especially in this holiday season.

“ So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” *Romans 12:5*

God bless our church.
Jonathan Shelby, Stewardship Chair

December Women's Tea

Wednesday, December 9
2:30-4:00 pm
Village Bistro

All women of the church and their guests are welcome.

Please sign up at Coffee Hour or
RSVP to Debbie at
officeadmin@pcnv.org





Decking the Hall

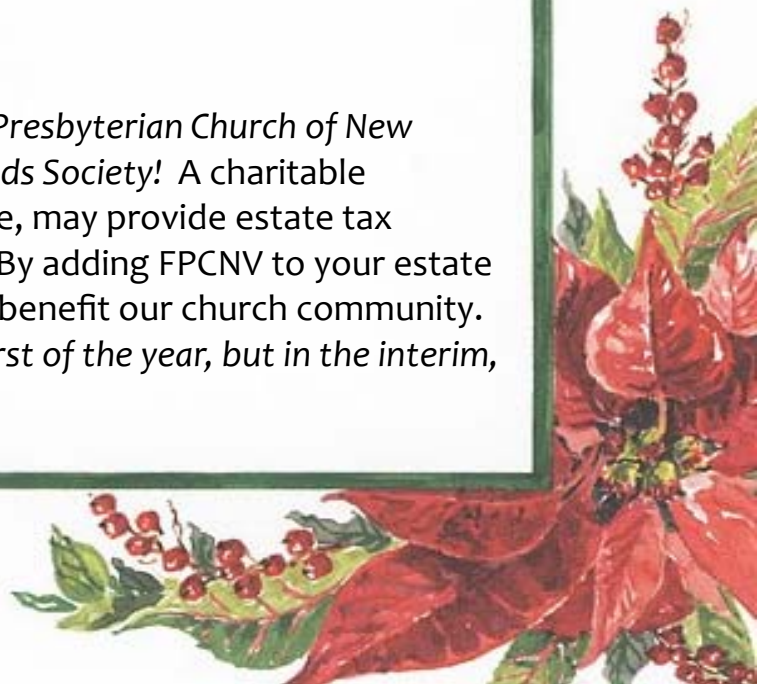
We are looking for helpers to decorate Fellowship Hall for the holidays.

If you would like to take part in the festivities or if your committee is already thinking about this, please contact Debbie in the Church Office at:

973-538-8394
or
officeadmin@pcnv.org

The Church in Your Will

Have you considered adding the First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon to your will? Join the Crossroads Society! A charitable bequest is one way everyone can give, may provide estate tax benefits, and can be in any amount. By adding FPCNV to your estate plan, you can leave a legacy that will benefit our church community. There will be more on this after the first of the year, but in the interim, see Jonathan Shelby for information.



Christmas Donations

Morris County Correctional Facility

Drop-off deadline is December 20

The following is a list of items that have been approved to be donated for the approximately 400 inmates' Christmas gift bags.

- Men's white **crew** neck t-shirts in lg, X-lg, 2X, and 3X (*no V-necks or pockets allowed*)
- Men's white briefs
- White crew socks
- Envelope with a check made out to **Chaplaincy Program of MCCF** for \$10 or more for toiletry items (these products will be purchased by coordinators so that all gifts will be the same brand/size/color, etc.)
- Home-baked cookies (5 cookies per plastic baggie—no frosting or metal tins, please)

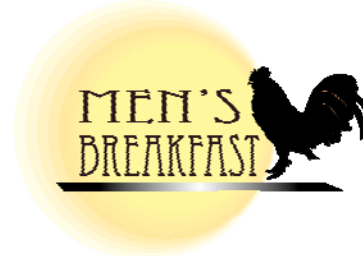
The above items are the **only ones** that will be accepted by security. Please **do not gift wrap** your donations.

The holidays are an especially difficult time for inmates and their families. This is a time when your generosity will truly touch the hearts of the men and women who are incarcerated at MCCF. Your acts of kindness may be seen by a prisoner as the brightest beacon of God's love.



No Time to Bake Cookies?

Nancy Barrett's young neighbor, who likes to bake, will bake cookies for the jail for \$20 a batch. Each batch is about 38 nice-sized cookies. If anyone would like to order cookies from her, you can contact Nancy Barrett at 973-425-1414. When dropping cookies off, it would be helpful if individual baggies hold 5 cookies per bag.



Next Men's Breakfast

**Wednesday,
December 9th
7:30 am
Nautilus Diner**

*All men of the Church
and their guests
are welcome.*

Meeting of the Congregation

**Sunday, December 13
11:00 am**

There will be a meeting of the Congregation for the purpose of electing Deacons, Elders, Auditing and Nominating Committee Members for 2016.



CHILDREN'S

SAVE THE DATE

Children's Christmas Program

December 13
10 AM

PROGRAM



Christmas Eve Services
Donations for Sanctuary Decorations

To include a dedication in the Christmas Eve Bulletins, please fill out the form below and make sure it gets into the Church Office with your donation by 9 am on Monday, December 21.

Christmas Eve Decoration Donation Form

I would like my donation to be dedicated as follows:

Your Name: _____

In Memory of In Honor of

THANK
You

Thank-you to the Deacons for the delicious variety of pantry goodies you prepared for the Deacons' Pantry Sale. Your dedication and your culinary talents are appreciated by all.

Thank you to the Congregation, as well. Your purchases at the Pantry Sale brought in \$585 to the Person In Need (PIN) Fund.



Nursery Care On Sunday Mornings

There is Nursery Care for ages 4 and under every Sunday from 10 to 11 am in Fellowship Hall by our Nursery Sitter, Kelly Williamson.

Thank-you Coffee Hour Hosts

We couldn't do it without you:

November

The Conine Family

Suzie Morris

Caroline Ford

Janet Bruns

The Thomas & Di Ruggiero Families



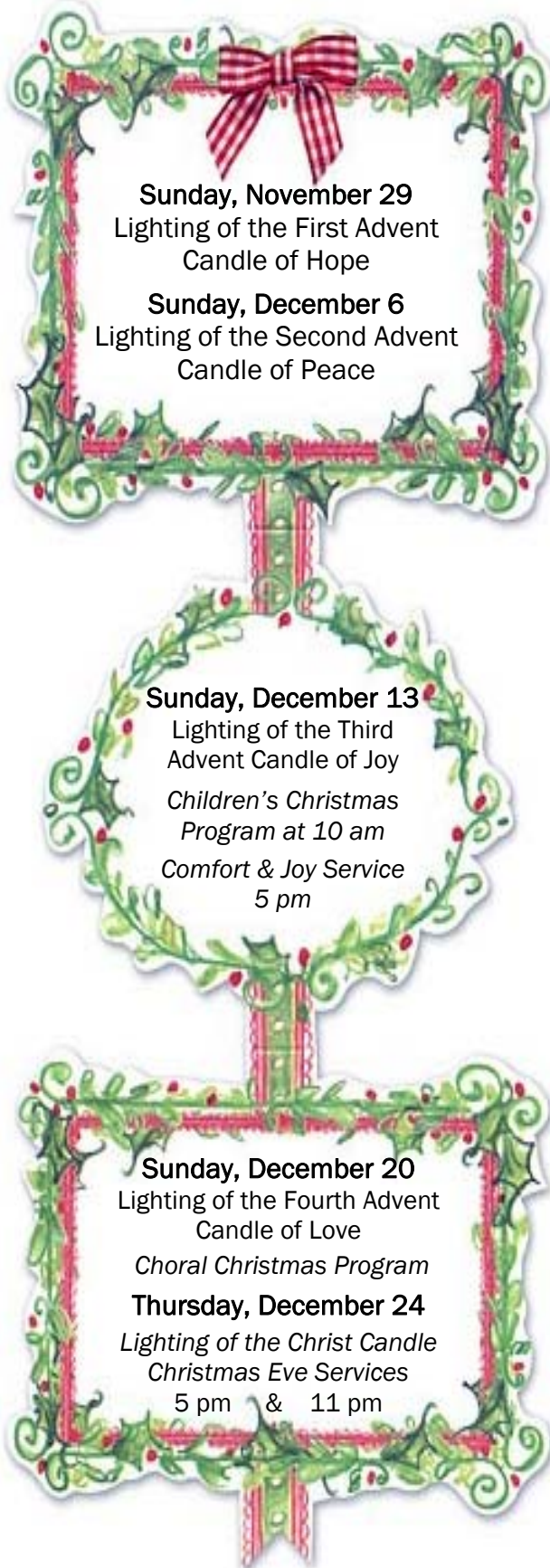
Toner Cartridge Recycling

We are still collecting empty ink cartridges to recycle at Staples. We receive credit for each cartridge, and this helps defray the cost of running the Church Office. Recycling is good for our planet, as well.

There is a box on the landing at the top of the stairs in Fellowship Hall where you may drop cartridges. Thank you for all of your donations. Every one is a help in keeping our costs lower and our planet greener.



Advent Schedule at a Glance



PIN Fund

The PIN Fund (Persons In Need) was created to help meet critical financial needs of members of our congregation and residents of the greater community.

Procedure:

A request for financial assistance is to be made through the Pastor and approved by the Pastor and one or more representatives from the Board of Deacons.

A voucher requiring two signatures (Pastor and Deacon representative) is then submitted to the Manager of Accounting for distribution of funds.

All requests are confidential.

Checks will be written to the creditor requiring payment—e.g., utility company, landlord, doctor, or medical institution—and never directly to the applicant.

THE PIN FUND IS SUPPORTED BY THE PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR CONGREGATION

HERB Fund

The HERB Fund is an endowment fund established to provide grants to the greater community, not confined to members of the New Vernon Presbyterian Church, who are in need of financial assistance for college, graduate school, and other post-secondary education expenses.



This fund is under the stewardship of the Board of Deacons and is allocated at the discretion of the Pastor in consultation with one or more Deacons. The investment responsibility resides with Session.

Detailed information regarding the procedure process—such as deadline dates, grant criteria, and application forms—can be obtained through the Church Office and, in the future, from the website.

Application deadline for the Spring 2016 semester is December 15, 2015.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS WORTHY FUND ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p>There will be a Congregational Meeting Sunday, December 13 Immediately following Worship</p>					
		1 <i>Women's AA Step Meeting</i> 12 noon	2 Morristown Garden Club 8 am-1:30 pm	3 <i>Bible Study</i> 9:00 am Choir 7:30 pm	4 AA Meeting noon	5
6 Communion Christmas Luncheon 11 am Fellowship Hall	7 <i>Women's Bible Study</i> 9:30-11 am <i>Deacons Meeting</i> 7:00 pm	8 <i>Women's AA Step Meeting</i> 12 noon	9 <i>Men's Breakfast at Nautilus Diner</i> 7:30 am <i>Women's Tea Village Bistro</i> 2:30-4 pm <i>Movie Night at Chaney's</i> 7 pm	10 <i>Bible Study</i> 9:00 am Choir 7:30 pm	11 AA Meeting noon	12
13 Children's Christmas Pageant Congregational Meeting 11 am Comfort & Joy Service 5:00 pm	14 <i>Women's Bible Study</i> 9:30-11 am Finance Com. Mtg 7 pm	15 <i>Women's AA Step Meeting</i> 12 noon Session Mtg 7 pm	16	17 <i>Bible Study</i> 9:00 am Choir 7:30 pm	18 AA Meeting noon	19
20 <i>Choral Christmas Service</i> <i>No Sunday School</i>	21 <i>No Women's Bible Study</i>	22 <i>Women's AA Step Meeting</i> 12 noon	23	24 <i>Church Office</i> Closed at noon <i>Christmas Eve Services</i> 5:00 pm 11:00 pm	25 <i>Church Office Closed</i> <i>Christmas Day</i> AA Meeting noon	26
27 Worship Service 10 am	28 <i>No Women's Bible Study</i>	29 <i>Women's AA Step Meeting</i> 12 noon	30	31 <i>Church Office Closed</i> At noon		

DECEMBER WORSHIP PLANS

Sunday, December 6

Second Sunday of Advent

COMMUNION

Preacher: Dr. Gamble

10:00 am Worship Service

Sunday, December 13

Third Sunday of Advent

Children's Christmas Program

10:00 am

Comfort and Joy Service

5:00 pm

Sunday, December 20

Fourth Sunday in Advent

10:00 AM Choral Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

5:00 pm Family Service

11:00 pm Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 27

First Sunday after Christmas

Preacher: Rev. Charles Thompson

10:00 am

Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth *peace,*
good will toward men.



Luke 2:14



The Pipe Organ

First Presbyterian Church
2 Lee's Hill Road, PO Box 218
New Vernon, NJ 07976-0218

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

December 6

Christmas Luncheon at 11 am

December 13

Children's Christmas Program 10 am

Meeting of the Congregation 11 am

Comfort & Joy Service 5 pm

December 20

Choral Christmas Service 10 am

December 24

5 pm and 11 pm Christmas Eve Services



O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come, ye, O come
ye, to Bethlehem!



E-mail Addresses

The Church Office is still collecting and correcting e-mail addresses from our members. If you would like to be included in various e-mail mailings, please e-mail Office@pcnv.org or call 973-538-8394.

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THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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