

First Press Newsletter



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We are a welcoming community formed in Christ, committed to sharing his love with others – with feet that carry us out into the world, with hands that serve, and with hearts in fellowship and faith.

Dear Friends:

In just a few days on November 29, we enter the season of Advent, a season of preparation for the coming of Christ, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas. During Advent, we prepare our hearts and minds to receive Christ, who continually seeks to have a deeper relationship with us. It is a relationship defined by his grace and our response, one marked by his words and our obedience, a relationship characterized by his forgiveness and our gratitude.

Traditionally, Christians prepare to receive Christ into our lives anew by setting apart some quiet time, by reading the Scriptures or an Advent devotional, by acknowledging those things in our life which inhibit our relationship with God and seeking to change, by asking for spiritual direction and listening, by praying *come, Lord Jesus*.

This year First Presbyterian Church will offer an additional opportunity to assist with our Advent preparation in the form of a four-part Bible study offered on the Zoom platform. I will lead each one-hour study at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays December 2, 9, 16 and 23.

Using a curriculum offered by *The Thoughtful Christian*, we will explore familiar biblical passages through the lens of gifts. Embedded in these passages are gifts that God longs to give us and deeply desires for us to receive. They are the gifts of peace, justice, joy and salvation.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Gift</u>	<u>Biblical Focus</u>
December 2	peace	Isaiah 2:1. 5
December 9	justice	Isaiah 11:1. 10
December 16	joy	Isaiah 35:1. 10
December 23	salvation	Isaiah 7:10. 16

If you plan to participate, please email me at pastorbruce@firstpresridgewood.org or call me at 215-337-5623 and let me know by **Sunday, November 29**. I will then email you readings and the Zoom link for each gathering. I look forward to spending time with you as we consider how to effectively open ourselves to receive God's gifts of peace, justice, joy and salvation.

Yours in Christ,

Bruce

Thank you, First Pres Church Woman's Guild!!!

Last winter, the Woman's Guild graciously spearheaded the Paterson Habitat *Welcome Baskets* mission project. They generously donated items and their time in filling baskets with cleaning and kitchen supplies for new Habitat families. These baskets were to be given to the families at the October 2020 Home Dedication ceremony, which unfortunately was not held due to the pandemic.

Even during this challenging time, blessings were abound for five families. Due to the tremendous efforts of the building staff and volunteers, they were able to move into their new homes all on Hamilton Avenue in the 4th ward of Paterson during the last several months. Many youth and adult volunteers from First Pres actually worked on these homes during the past few years. So thank you, First Pres volunteers! And a shout out thanks to the Woman's Guild for their generosity and efforts!!!



Standing left to right: Judy Kaiser, Susan King (Trinity Church), Kali Roy Eklof, Greta Croucher, Carol Davidson
Seated left to right: Ann Hovan, Frances Dear, Saide Eliya Not shown: Peggy O'Hagan (Trinity Church)



On behalf of the Woman's Guild, Donna Flagg delivered the baskets to the five new homeowner families on Monday, November 9th. They were overjoyed, so appreciative and grateful for the gifts. Thank you, First Pres for being a blessing to others and putting your faith into action, joining hands as a church family to serve those less fortunate!



And thank you Donna!



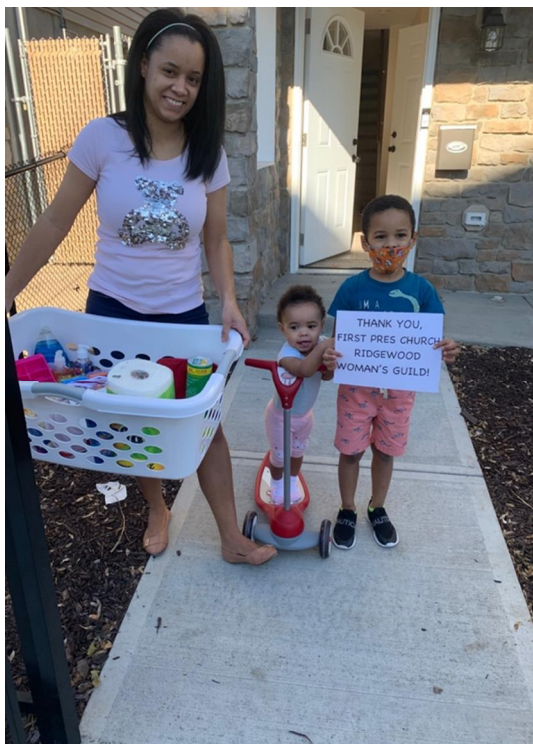
**Habitat Families (not all family members are pictured)
Says Thank You, First Pres Church Ridgewood Woman's Guild!**



Dafani & Ramon and their children



Jennifer & Andres, their two daughters and dog



Jennifer & Jochy, their son and daughter



Ana and her two children Sixto (Ana's son) & Gloria, who is expecting, and his two brothers (Duplex Home)



2020 CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL ORDER FORM

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER _____ POINSETTIA PLANTS TO BE USED IN THE
SANCTUARY DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON AND PLACED

IN HONOR or MEMORY OF:

****MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH WILL BE
THE LAST DAY TO ORDER****

Attached is my donation of _____ or
I will send my donation to the church _____ (\$12.00 per plant but more is welcomed)

I will pick up my plant after **JANUARY 1** _____
I would like my plant to be taken to a shut-in family on our prayer list _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF RIDGEWOOD.
*Checks and forms can be put in the offering plate, mailed to the Church Office or you
can drop it in the church mail slot OR VENMO @FirstPres-RidgewoodNJ*

You Can Support First Pres When You Shop Online!

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, **at no cost to you**. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

Here's how to sign up for:



1. Visit smile.amazon.com.
2. **Sign in** with your **Amazon.com** credentials.
3. Choose **First Presbyterian Church** Location: Ridgewood, NJ

And we will be smiling right back at you!



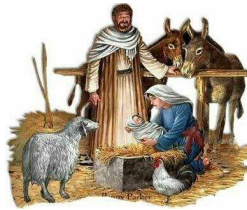
Ho Ho Ho,



Will Santa be wearing a mask this year as he slithers down our chimneys? Will Rudolph? Will the reindeer be six feet apart as they navigate the starry Christmas skies?

We'll all be rethinking the Christmas celebration this year. Gatherings may be smaller and many may be alone. There will be some disappointments and, no doubt, some whining and complaints. But if we can stop for a moment and consider what remains it might be a Christmas in which we realize that life itself is the greatest gift. The first Christmas celebration in a stable in Bethlehem was not a party, yet the world received the greatest gift of all, The Christ Child. It is our mission to live His message.

On this day
You are here,
You are loved,
Light a candle,
Say a prayer,
Be thankful
For what remains.



Blessings from Your Endowment Committee,
Richard Davies, (Chair) Don Dexter, Laura Magrath,
Al Schagen, David Shaw, Joanne Bonwick

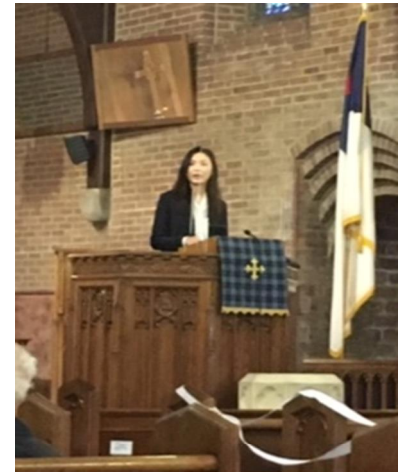
Matthew 25:35, 37, 40 NIV

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'



Our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who donated to the Fall Food Drive in support of Social Service Association of Ridgewood! Your donations helped so many individuals and families in need. Thank you for your generous support! God Bless you all!

We Give Our Time and Talents...



Gratitude Mission
Generosity
Blessings Stewardship
Story Abundance
Faith
Grace



í . And we remember



Santa & a Christian Ed Elf greeted members of all ages on Saturday, November 14th in the church back lot. Pledge boxes, Advent booklets and treats were handed out - contactless! Food donations were accepted and appreciated as well! It was a beautiful day - all around. Let Advent begin....



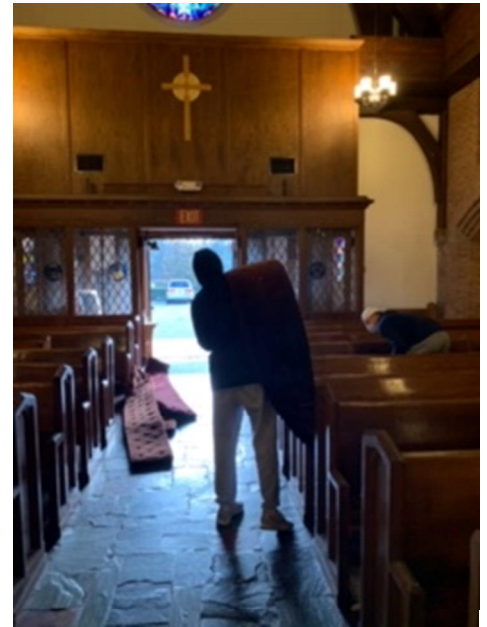
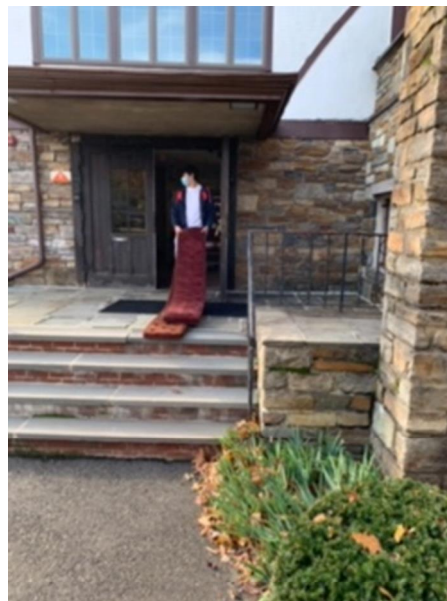
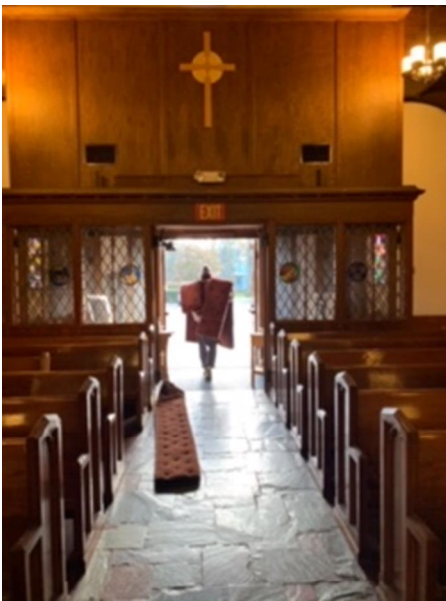
Most members stayed in their cars!



HO HO HO!



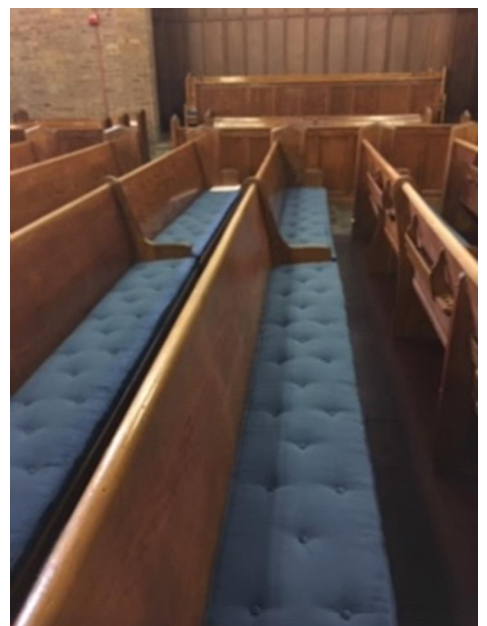
Four Ridgewood High School Football Players helped to remove over 100 hundred, heavy and old Sanctuary cushions on Thursday, November 5th. Seated: Edward Chanod, Collin Feeney (church member), Aidan Flynn & Patrick Dermott.



Our new pew cushions were made possible due to a generous bequest from Paul & AlphaJo Haffey.



We are truly blessed and grateful to AlphaJo and Paul for remembering First Pres in their will, their legacy will live on in our hearts!



Mission Giving

On November 1, the McDevitt family delivered dinner, provided by our volunteers, to the men at St. Paul's shelter in Paterson.

We're thrilled to say that we had 3 first-time volunteers among our cooks this month! Fay Reid made 2 trays of Chicken Francaise, Diane Eliya made 2 trays of stuffed peppers and brought some Halloween candy, Suzy McDevitt made 2 trays of Au Gratin Potato & Ham Casserole and 2 trays of Brownie-Cookie bars, Donna Flagg made a lovely green salad, and Rebecca Burger provided generous amounts of fruit and bread.

Although we're still not able to go into the shelter and serve the men because of Covid, we could see the excitement on the men's faces as they saw the amount of food to be taken in. They were very appreciative! We were told earlier in the week that they have not been receiving the amount of food, or pastries/desserts that they did prior to the pandemic. So we were happy to be able to bring smiles to their faces!

If you feel called to help with the St. Paul's mission, we welcome any and all volunteers! We provide dinner on the first Sunday of every month, and we try to plan ahead by at least 3 weeks. You can email Sam McDevitt at sammcdev99@gmail.com or text 201-820-8056 with questions, or to volunteer for the meals on December 6, or January 3, or February 7.

A note from the Mission Committee ~

Christmas has always been a time for giving and during a pandemic the need for generosity has only grown. The Mission Committee has set up donations to the following organizations during the holiday season:

- CUMAC/ECHO - Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community Ecumenically concerned helping others - Paterson - \$500 in food/grocery gift cards
- Eva's Village - Comprehensive Social Service Organization - Paterson - \$500 in grocery gift cards
- Oasis - A Haven for Women and Children - Paterson - \$500 in grocery gift card and a toy drive (infants to 16 yo) to be collected at the tree lighting on 12/5/20
- Center for Food Action - Hunger and Homeless Prevention - Mahwah - \$500 in food/grocery gift cards
- St. Paul's Community Development Corporation - Comprehensive, Supportive Social Services - Paterson - \$500 in food/grocery gift cards
- Heifer International - 2 Water Buffalo for \$500 - Water buffalo are gentle giants that allow farmers to plant four times as many crops, allowing them to sow fields in days that once took weeks to plant by hand. Your gift of a water buffalo will provide rich milk that is high in protein and nutrients. Water buffalo also make farming easier by tilling fields and providing fertilizer. People in the marshlands of India, southeastern Asia and parts of South America depend on water buffalo more than any other animal.

The above \$3,000 reflects how incredibly blessed we are to be able to help our brothers and sisters this holiday season, both near and far.

"I will bless you so you will be a blessing"
Genesis 12:2



Mom taking morning temperature



On behalf of the entire staff at First Pres. Nursery School, we wish each of you a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Sunday School Events

We are collecting **NEW** hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to support Center for Food Action in Mahwah. Our Mitten tree is located in the Sanctuary.



There will be a box in the Cloister Hall marked Mitten tree donations as well. Please help someone stay warm this winter season!



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On Sunday December 6th

We are giving a gingerbread



house or gingerbread train kit



to each Sunday School family to
involved, just assemble and decorate!

make together on this fun craft at home! NO baking

We have one request.... TAKE A PHOTO!

We want to see our church school families enjoy working on their gingerbread projects and show off their creative masterpieces! We will post our families on our church Facebook page and in our January Newsletter!

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Virtual Bake Sale



SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, December 13th via ZOOM at 11:00 AM

A fundraiser to support CAMP LOTS OF FUN!

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CHRISTMAS MART

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13TH AND 20TH



**ALL STUDENTS WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOP
FOR THEIR FAMILIES DURING SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE SACRISTY!**



We invite you wear a mask and join us for

A Celebration of Light

First Pres Church Tree Lighting!

SATURDAY, December 5, 2020 (rain date Dec. 12th)

TIME: 4:30PM-5:30PM

First Pres. Church parking lot (on East Ridgewood Avenue)

Music provided by Brian Princing

Come and enjoy hot cocoa and hot apple cider and snacks!

There will be a craft table for all youth!

We will listen to music of the season and sing carols around the tree!

We will be collecting unwrapped toys for infants to 16 year olds.

Please bring a new toy to the tree lighting or drop off in the cloister by 12/12/2020.

The toys will be donated to Oasis, a haven for women and children.

PLEASE RSVP by calling church office 201-652-2504

Or email church office at fpoffice@firstpresridgewood.org

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Angel Tree 2020

The Mission Committee has once again partnered with Prison Fellowship to serve the children of prisoners this Christmas season.

This Virtual Angel Tree allows us to sponsor a child of a prisoner for \$22. They will receive a Christmas package on behalf of their incarcerated loved one. The Christmas package will include: a gift card to Walmart, the prisoner parents message, and a free Adventure Bible.

We pledged to sponsor 25 children this Christmas. Please help us spread a little joy to a child, by copying and pasting the link below in your browser and enter the access code.

<https://vat.angeltreetool.org/fa4a0660-254d-40cd-b519-cbc685084919>

First Pres Access Code: 5LNQF

Thank you for your participation in this ministry!



We Show Our Gratitude!



On Sunday, November 22nd, Pastor Bruce presented Jessica Strader with a leaf for the Tree of Life, a gift from the Session in gratitude for her assistance and creativity allowing our church to go virtual in the midst of the pandemic. And yes, she was surprised!



CHRISTMAS IS COMING AND WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS!



Do you put up a nativity set for the holidays? An Advent wreath? A Christmas tree? Do you have a special Christmas decoration or ornament that you look forward to displaying every year?

We may not be able to entertain friends and family & celebrate Christmas the way we want to this year, but we can share our traditions with one another.

Send your Christmas photos to Davies333@aol.com or the church office and it will be posted in the January Newsletter!

Thursday, December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:30 p.m.



Join us in person or online and have your spirit nourished during this traditional Service of Lessons and Instrumental Carols ~ a service rich with familiar readings and beautiful music! Musicians will include Linda Sweetman Waters, Chancel Bells, Emma Schmiedecke and Brian Princing.

Pastor	Rev. Bruce Ballantine
Director of Children & Families	MaryEllen Castaldo
Director of Music	Dr. Edward Schmiedecke
Organist	Linda Sweetman Waters
Director of Youth Music and Handbells	Carol Schmiedecke
Administrative Manager	Dana Feeney
Youth Leader	Jessica Strader
Tom Carozza	Sexton
Custodian	George Wood
Director Nursery School	Julia Bolt
Newsletter Editor	Joan Davies (Volunteer)

Church Phone (201) 652-2504

Pastor Bruce: (215) 337-5623 Please contact him directly for Pastoral Care

www.firstpresridgewood.org

