

This week's news...



December 17, 2020

AN IMPORTANT COVID UPDATE FROM THE COVID RESPONSE TEAM

Dear members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Haddonfield:

With the rising number of cases, increases in transmission and mortality rates, and a few contact-traceable incidents at the church, the COVID Response Team (CRT) has regretfully decided to close the church building beginning Friday, December 18th until Monday, January 25th, at the earliest. The CRT meets again on January 13, 2021 and will re-assess the situation at that time.

This decision effectively shuts down the pre-school, church office, bell choir practices, youth group in-person meetings, and support programs. All virtual programming continues.

Only necessary church and preschool personnel, on a staggered and individual basis, will be in the building. Additionally, all streaming worship services will be limited to the essential participants (pastors, videographer, and organist). Any choirs or soloists will be remotely recorded and "dropped" into the service.

With the vaccine arriving in the area, we are hopeful that this national nightmare may be coming to an end; however until that happens, our goal is to see our entire community of faith through this crisis so that we may all stay healthy and worship together soon.

With hope for the future and the deepest concern for your wellbeing,

The COVID Response Team
Lee Federline, Chair
Doug Gerdts, Pastor



CHRISTMAS EVE ONLINE

On December 24, you can watch a virtual service that will include choir music and readings by members. Go to [Watch Live](#). Once it is streamed at **4 p.m.**, the service will be available in the archive to view at any time. Look for the link that says, "Play most recent Recording."

The Mission Committee is collecting **coats, hats, mittens, and socks** for the Camden Community Center. Bring them to the drive through. *Please, no other clothing donations at this time.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE TO THE STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



Many thanks for bringing, sending, and submitting your pledges for 2021! It is not too late. You can still submit your pledge via this [Google form](#) or by printing out and mailing or dropping off this [PDF form](#). There is one more video that highlights just one of the important missions of the church – missions your contributions support.

Here is Jill Mascena with the story of St. Wilfrid's Open Door Clinic.

And here are the latest numbers:



	<i>Units Pledging</i>	<i>Amount Pledged</i>
2015	256	\$698,844
2016	231	663,513
2017	210	606,051
2018	188	564,217
2019	165	488,058
2020 so far	90	322,877 updated 12/17

CONVERSATIONS ON RACE – Sunday morning discussions continue from 9-9:45 a.m. on Zoom at [this link](#). On December 20, last week's discussion of the video called [A Conversation with the Police - Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man](#) continues. Each week's resources are linked in the weekly email newsletter and on the [Adult Education](#) page of the website. Questions? Email Becky Bryan, rebeccabryan@me.com.



ADVENT FESTIVAL UPDATE: Please continue to send in pictures of your Advent Creations! We are loving seeing the finished products. Please also send pictures of your family ornaments. It is not possible at the moment to drop off ornaments for the Community Tree at the church. Here are some tabletop tree creations from the Heimerling house...



LAST CALL FOR CARING HEARTS DONATIONS:

Instead of filling **Caring Hearts stockings** this year, we are hoping you will contribute financially through Realm. Caring Hearts will take your donations and purchase gift cards to fulfill Wish Lists for the 51 families that they are working to give a better Christmas to this year. Donating is simple through [Onrealm.org](https://onrealm.org)! Simply select "Caring Hearts Gift Cards" in the drop down "Fund" menu. Realm not your thing? You can send a check to the church office with "Caring Hearts Gift Cards" written in the memo line. Please know that your donations are truly making another family's Christmas brighter, this year more than ever.

ADVENT SERIES LED BY NIKKI AND BECKY BRYAN CONTINUES FOR ONE MORE WEDNESDAY

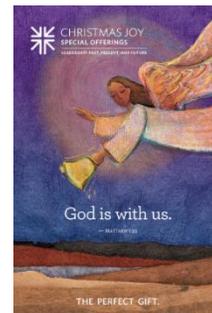
Join for an evening of prayer during this Unprecedented Advent from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 23, *Prayers for Hope, Peace, Joy and Love*. Since we are unable to gather physically for Christmas Eve this year, join us for this time of prayer. [Click here](#) for details. Zoom link [here](#).

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WITH DOUG

Tuesdays at 8:00 a.m. on Zoom, Doug hosts an informal conversation about the scripture that will be the text for the following Sunday's sermon. The text for **Tuesday, December 22 is Luke 2:22-40**. Here's the Zoom [link](#).

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING – This offering goes to the PC(USA) to support the people who have dedicated their lives to the service of the church. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities. This offering provides for leadership development for communities of color, and support for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in times of need. The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected throughout the month of December, online, mailed, or during the drive through.



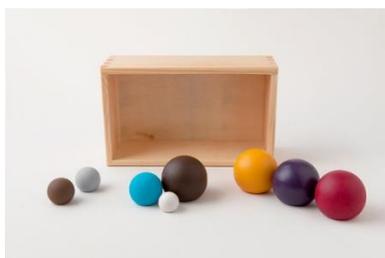
YOUTH GROUP NEWS!

THIS WEEK IN YOUTH GROUP: We took a breather last week so we could enjoy the beautiful Candlelight service. We are going to meet VIRTUALLY on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 5pm this week! We will present our Gingerbread Houses and announce the contest winners and play some virtual games so please send in your pictures! We need to have enough time for judging! Make sure to watch for the Zoom Info!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

THIS WEEK IN SUNDAY SCHOOL: We were feeling joyful and **PINK** this week for the 3rd Week of Advent. This week we learned all about Isaiah. In the younger grades we learned Isaiah was a prophet and told people many messages from God. Isaiah told people about God's house and how people who would live in God's house and use their weapons for farming tools and not fighting. Also ALL people are welcome! In the older grades we had an overview of the entire book of Isaiah. The takeaway? We must understand God had a plan from the beginning of time—and His plan was and is being fulfilled. We can believe in God's plan for His Son and realize He has a plan for each of us too. We also learned that minimalist nativity scenes are really funny. This is one of my favorites:



PRESCHOOL NEWS

The last two weeks were so special. Even a pandemic couldn't deter Santa and Elf William from visiting their favorite Preschool. The children were filled with delight as they discussed wishes and surprises at a safe distance. Visiting with Santa Claus is an exciting part of childhood and couldn't be missed at Presby. Last week, Mrs. Davis, our music teacher also led the children in traditional Christmas songs during their class time. At the end of last week, the Christmas spirit was truly among us all. Sometimes, we adults need a little magic in our lives too.

Our teachers finished the program this week with surprise visits to students' homes to deliver some very special things... snowflake ornaments, Christmas storybooks, handmade gifts for children to give their parents, and a scrapbook page of memories made this fall. I am so grateful to work alongside such dedicated and caring staff.

We could never have imagined a year like 2020 but we tried something innovative and found that even in a short amount of time, friendships were made, independence and creativity were fostered, and some fresh air was good for all! Most of the children enrolled in the fall program will continue when we reopen for the winter/spring program. We will also welcome many new students! Have a Merry Christmas and bring on 2021!



COMING IN JANUARY

Beginning Wednesday, January 6th, at 7:30 pm, Nikki will begin teaching and facilitating a 14-session class via Zoom, entitled, "Speaking the Truth in Love: How to Be an Assertive Christian," based on the book by Rev. Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk, founder and Executive Director of Stephen Ministries, and Ruth Koch. Details are available in the most recent [*Glad Tidings*](#). These sessions provide participants the opportunity to strengthen and improve their relationships with God and with others, all while developing a healthy love of self. Contact [Nikki](#) with further questions.



ADVENT ANTHEM FROM JAMES GUSHUE

[click on photo](#)

Thank you, James, for helping us prepare!

James Gushue, son of Jennifer Wesson and Jim Gushue, sings our Advent Song this week

Our thanks also to Nancy Ruth Wainwright for helping to keep music in our children's lives – and for sharing it!

AN ADVENT GIFT FROM MARK

"Still, Still, Still," arr. Lavawan Riley

[Listen here](#)

The melody for "Still, Still, Still" is a traditional folk tune from the Austrian state of Salzburg. The carol appeared for the first time in 1865 in a folksong collection (*Salzburgische Volks-Lieder mid ihren Singweisen*) by Maria Vinzenz Süß (1802-1868), founder of the Salzburg Museum. The lyrics describe the peacefulness of the infant Jesus and his mother as the baby is sung to sleep.

*Still, still, still
One can hear the falling snow
For all is hushed
The world is sleeping
Holy Star its vigil keeping
Still, still, still
One can hear the falling snow*



ST. WILFRID'S OPEN DOOR CLINIC

Report from the Open Door Clinic at St Wilfrid's Dec 14, 2020

Christmas is a time of giving...and receiving gifts. The Volunteers of the Open Door Clinic wish to thank all of our sponsors for their efforts to do good. Think of your gifts as a seed. A jar of peanut butter, or can of tuna, becomes a food bag to be given to one person, which becomes meals for the family for much of the week. The seeds grow...they multiply. A toy at Christmas is a seed of generosity as a parent gives it to a child at Christmas. Or a jacket: a warm jacket that someone will now wear not only to keep them warm, but to remember the kind soul who gave it to them, as we remember the kind soul who put it in our care (continued)

to distribute their jackets. Gifts. Seeds. We have received a lot of seeds which multiply with food, clothes, toys, love and goodwill. It is easier to think of donations or gifts as seeds...seeds to be planted; seeds which can grow. "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering, produce a crop." Luke 11:15



This week marks the 39th straight Saturday that the Open Door Clinic at St Wilfrid's has distributed food during the pandemic; 146 bags, 3,495 total. Over 87,000 pounds of food and dry good, distributed by the all-volunteer, everything donated, nobody gets paid, Open Door Clinic at St. Wilfrid's. And we gave away lots of coats and jackets; I'm told nearly a hundred. On a beautiful warm winter day.



Some of our favorite patrons, Arielis, Annabela, and our newest, Alaya, attended the Open Door Clinic Saturday. Many of the regular volunteers received handmade, custom Christmas cards from Arielis. The greetings were as different as the front of the cards, in both Spanish and English. The "gift" greeting card read "Although other things are lost over the year, the days of Christmas are shiny." The Grinch greeting is "This is the message of Christmas: we are never alone."

Current needs for St Wilfrid's are...peanut butter, tuna, pasta, diapers-sizes 4-5-6 and adult medium and large, wipes and more wipes, paper grocery bags to line Shoprite, Whole Foods or Aldi's plastic bags (also needed), and newspaper bags to hold hygiene products, winter coats and jackets and sweatshirts - all sizes, hats and mittens, and scarves...and blankets. Help is needed picking up from Food Bank Monday, December 21st. We need assistance transporting the goods to St. Wilfrid's. If you can help, please contact Rose Guthrie at intrepidrose@hotmail.com

Other questions, please call Jill Mascena at 856-428-7342. Or check the website www.opendoorcliniccamden.org

There will be no email newsletter on December 24 or 31

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Dec. 20 - 9 a.m. Conversation on Race
Dec. 20 - 10 a.m. Worship - Third Sunday of Advent
Dec. 21 - 7 p.m. Session meeting
Dec. 22 - 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study
Dec. 24 - No Children's Choirs
Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Online - Available beginning at 4 p.m.
Dec. 25 - ***Merry Christmas!***
Dec. 27 - 10 a.m. Worship - First Sunday of Christmas
Dec. 29 - 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study
Jan. 3 - 10 a.m. Worship - Communion
Jan. 5 - 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study
Jan. 6 - 7:30 p.m. Nikki's class "Speaking the Truth in Love" begins

