

Absecon Presbyterian Church

PRESBY BITS AND PIECES

Sunday, December 10, 2023



MATTHEW 3:1-3

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."' '



THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

Each year, for those of us who do not love writing Christmas cards but want to wish our church family Christmas blessings, we have a special offering -- "The Gift of the Magi". This year we will donate our Gifts of the Magi to the Food Bank. A list of contributors will be published so everyone will know you have them in your thoughts and wish them a very blessed Christmas season!

Our offering will be delivered to the Food Bank before the New Year. If you wish to give, please mark your envelopes or checks for "The Gift of the Magi" and/or Food Bank and leave it in one of the offering plates. Should you wish to give online, please mark the "Special Gift" box, and indicate under "Notes" it is for the Magi Fund or the Food Bank. Our Gift of the Magi will be delivered to the Food Bank before the New Year.

Thanks in advance for your Gift of the Magi and wishes to each of you for a very blessed Christmas season!

**SERVING
THIS MORNING:**

LAY ASSISTANT:
Karen Little

USHERS:
Barb and Bob Hudak

**ATTENDANCE
LAST WEEK:**
Worship – 35

SUNDAY WORSHIP
at 10:30 In Person or Online
on APC Facebook page at
[www.facebook.com/
abseconpresby](http://www.facebook.com/abseconpresby)

REV. JIM SHANLEY
is with us again this Sunday
as our Temporary
Pulpit Supply Minister

SERMON TITLE:
"The Core Story"

Isaiah 11:1-6
Matthew 3:1-12

SESSION SPOTLIGHT

December 5, 2023

Sunday, December 10

The elements (prepackaged) will be distributed during The Communion part of the service by two Elders. And after the Communion closing prayers by Rev. Shanley, we will sing “*The Lord’s Prayer*”.

The morning service will be followed by our “**Birthday Party for Jesus**” luncheon in Madden Hall. Please remember to bring your socks, socks, and more socks, hats, scarves, and gloves/mittens, which will be given to the Rescue Mission.

New Manger

Please make sure you walk or drive by our new manger. It is a beautiful addition to our Christmas decorations and will be enjoyed by us, our neighbors and all who drive by.

Session welcomes **Michelle B. Roff**, who wished to activate her membership.

Michelle and her husband Don will be in church and at the luncheon Sunday so everyone will have the chance to personally meet and welcome them.

Gift of the Magi

This year our gifts will be given to the Food Bank. Please mark your checks and/or envelopes with Magi Gift or the Food Bank. If you wish to contribute electronically, please mark the “Special” box, and indicate under “Notes” it is for the Magi Fund or the Food Bank.

Christmas Eve offering

This year our offering on Christmas Eve will be given to Sister Jean’s. Please mark your checks and/or envelopes with Sister Jean’s. If you wish to contribute electronically, please mark the “Special” box, and indicate under “Notes” it is for Christmas Eve, Sister Jean’s.

Children’s Sermons

Rev. Judy will be here once a month during the next several months and will be doing a children’s sermon. So please be sure to read your *Bits n Pieces* to know when she will be leading us in worship and bring your children and grandchildren.

Sunday, February 11

Our Annual Meeting, following the morning service, is when we will elect new officers (Elders, Deacons, and Trustees), review the Annual Report, and elect a Nominating Committee for 2024. After, we will have a time for fellowship and lunch.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ADULT BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

The four-week Advent Bible Study is from the book
The Grinch and the Heart That Grew Three Times.
Wednesday mornings at 11:00 am with Rita Abelson
Wednesday evenings at 6:30 with Tina Harvey

BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

Today, Sunday, December 10, 2023
Potluck luncheon immediately following service.
We will be collecting hats, mittens, scarfs and socks for those in need.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Saturday, December 16, 2023 at 10:00

CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year we will again have a box for you to drop off your Christmas cards and the Good News Express will prepare a gift bag for each of you with Christmas cards, your 2024 Offering Envelopes and little treats. Details on dates for dropping off your cards and picking up your gift bags will follow.

CHRISTMAS POINTSETTIAS

In honor or memory of a loved one, please fill out the form
at the end of Bits and Pieces.
Forms and monies will be due no later than Sunday, December 10, 2023.

CHRISTMAS EVE SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday, December 24, 2023 at 10:30

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Sunday, December 24, 2023 at 3:30 pm

Prayers of the People

Each week the people of God at APC join in prayers of thanksgiving, praise and petition to pray as one community for needs in the church. Praying for others keeps our focus outward and opens us up to know the will of God in our own lives. Consider making these prayer lists part of your daily prayer life. Doing so, may just help your feelings of isolation. Through prayer, the Holy Spirit brings others, even strangers, closer to you.

Please Keep These Requests In Prayer

The prayer book is on the table in the vestibule by the side entrance to the sanctuary.

Please write any requests/praise items you wish to be included in prayer during worship.

Keep in mind that Facebook comments and requests read by the minister during worship are being recorded for broadcast and can be heard by the general public worldwide. For the privacy of those you are praying for, consider using just a first name or making your prayer requests general in nature.

- † For victims of gun violence and their families
- † Peace in Ukraine, Middle East and other countries experiencing conflicts.
- † For God's guidance as we continue the process of calling a new pastor.
- † Members of our armed services.
- † For confidence to know that in the struggle, God is with us.
- † For renewed commitment to God's purpose in us all.
- † For us to come together in the bond of self-giving love.
- † For renewed energy in finding our place in God's church,
as people who pray, share and volunteer.
- † For wisdom and discernment when facing the unknown.
- † For God's church to embrace the poor and marginalized,
to see God's image and be God's image in this broken world.
- † For a revival in our faith to live boldly for God's Kingdom.
- † For these individuals and families in acute need right now who are connected to your church in Absecon.
- † For those on our standing prayer list and for the needs of your church not listed here, including those intentions held in our hearts and those shared in the comments of Facebook.

For these the individuals and families in acute need right now who are connected to your church in Absecon:

Kathy Bordanora, Olive Brown, Maddie Caracozzo, The Carpenter Family, Chip Channell, Don Croneberger, Robin Deaver, Julie Dougherty, Jerry Falivene, Cathy Follansbee, Wendy Garwood, Christopher Green, Carol and Dave Guenther, Margareta Gustafasson, John Harvey, Jack Heil, The Hughes Family, Carol Johnson, Susan Lobrano, Walter Koteles, Sr. Carol McDowell, Jim McManus, Sam Mitchell, The Morris Family, Lisa Nagle, Betty Price, Jan Rogiers, Minerva Stadlmeir, Dave Stebbins, Judy Stebbins, Sandy Sylvester, Ann Marie Taggart, Stan Weir, The Family of Doug Winkler, Bill Young.

Continued prayers always for:

Rita Abelson, Kathy Boyte, Edith Budd, Emilia Carboy, Lucy Cronberger, Darryl, Kristen and Quetin, Olga Davies, Carol DeLaurentis, Jean Delesantro, Marie C. and Carmen Devece, Gail Driscoll, Kavonna and Essence, Dorie Keener, Eric Lajeuness, Aiden and Wendy Licolli, Marge Loeb, Robin McBrearty, JoAnn Morgan, Essie Newell, Rob Perry, Joyce Pfeiffer, Marilyn Rosado, Irene Smith, Georgina Umoren, Mary Umoren and Family, Ethel Washington, Frances Weir, Dirk Williamson

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP

Please note that the Prayer Shawl Group will not meet in December.

Please join us for

Coffee Mingle

All are welcome to gather in Madden Hall following Sunday worship.

Brought to you by your Church Family and Fellowship Committee.

Help is needed with set up, clean up, and providing baked goods, cookies, etc.

If you are able to assist in any way please sign up on the clipboard in the vestibule.



Deposit made on December 1, 2023

General

Envelopes Undesignated (includes Loose Offerings)	\$744.72
Envelopes Designated Initial Offering	\$2,645.00
Per Capita	
Energy	\$25.00
Online - Undesignated	
Online - Designated	

General Total

 \$3,414.72

Benevolence

Envelopes Undesignated (includes Loose Offerings)	\$85.60
Envelopes Designated	\$50.00
Online - Undesignated	
Online - Designated	

Wreaths Across

Benevolence Total **\$135.60**

Capital Expendi-

Envelopes Undesignated (includes Loose Offerings)	\$25.68
Envelopes Designated	\$600.00
Knee Wall Fundrais-	
Online - Undesignated	
Online - Designated	

Capital Total

 \$625.68

Combined Total

 \$4,176.00

Word Search Puzzle

From WhenWeWordSearch.com

Words in a straight line left to right or top to bottom

December 10, 2023

MATTHEW 3:1-3



Words in the puzzle are printed in **bold italics**

In those *days John the Baptist appeared* in the wilderness of *Judea, proclaiming, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’* This is the one of *whom the prophet Isaiah spoke* when he said, ‘The *voice* of one *crying* out in the *wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”*’

Absecon Presbyterian Church

Advent and Christmas 2023



December 3 at 10:30 AM First Sunday of Advent
Lighting of the Candle of Hope

December 10 at 10:30 AM Second Sunday of Advent
Lighting of the Candle of Peace

December 17 at 10:30 AM Third Sunday of Advent
Lighting of the Candle of Joy

December 24 at 10:30 AM Fourth Sunday of Advent
Lighting of the Candle of Love

December 24 at 3:30 PM Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols
Lighting of the Candle of Light

December 10: Following our morning service there will be a Potluck luncheon to celebrate "Birthday Party for Baby Jesus." Please bring a dish or dessert to share with others.



Most importantly, bring a gift of warm socks (most requested item), hats, mittens and gloves for those children and adults less fortunate than ourselves.





SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2023

10:00 AM

ABOUT THE NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY

ANNUAL TRADITION OF HONORING OUR VETERANS AT HOLIDAY TIME

As we prepare to gather with family and loved ones to celebrate the holidays, we must not forget those that have left us. That is the meaning behind the commemoration of National Wreaths Across America Day.

National Wreaths Across America Day is a day to remember our fallen U.S. veterans by placing wreaths on their graves, and saying the names of the fallen, so as to not forget their sacrifices. Wreaths are laid as family and friends remember both those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and those who currently serve in the armed forces.

The Annual Holiday Tradition of honoring America's lost veterans will take place not only at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, but at over 4,000 locations across the U.S. and worldwide in 2023. This important day is an annual event that takes place every year on the third Saturday in December. This tradition helps family members, friends, neighbors and volunteers all across the country lay wreaths at the grave-stones of those who have served our country.

National Wreaths Across America Day has a simple mission: "Remember fallen U.S. veterans; honor those who serve; and teach your children the value of freedom."

THE CHRISMON TREE

Our church Christmas tree is decorated with white and gold Christian symbols called Chrismons. The word Chrismon is a combination of two words – MONograms of CHRIST. Our first Chrismon Tree was made by the Mariners group and put on display December 16, 1973.

Chrismons, as Christmas tree decorations, were originated for use in the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia in 1957 and since then they have been used in many countries throughout the world. In order to make the tree more meaningful and expressive to those who would see it, the decorations were made in the form of symbols which have been used by Christians since the time of the early church. These symbols were incorporated into many designs which you see on our tree.

Chrismons are made in combinations of white and gold; white symbolizing Christ's purity and perfection, gold His majesty and glory. The tiny lights remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world.

May your Christmas be blessed with a new awareness of the love Christ brings to each of us as you share in the symbolism of our Chrismon tree. And remember, Jesus is the Reason for the Season.



Chi (X) Rho (P) with Alpha (A) and Omega (Ω) – XP stand for the first two letters of the Greek word Christos (XPISTOS). Alpha and Omega are the beginning and the ending of the Greek alphabet.



Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega – The Latin Cross is the form most often used by the church to denote the cross on which Christ died. The early church often combined the A and Ω with the cross to declare the divinity of the Savior.



Sun of Righteousness – “But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in his wings.” Malachi 4:2



Cornerstone – “Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone.” Ephesians 2:20



Iota Chi (X) – I, the first letter of the Greek word for Jesus. X, the first letter of the Greek word for Christ.



Orb with Cross Triumphant – the world united under Christ's dominion.



Greek Cross – A cross with arms of equal length.



Eight pointed star – This design refers to man's regeneration through Holy Baptism.



Circle symbolized Eternity – This Chrismon says by the resurrection (butterfly) of the Christ (X) from the death of the cross (+), we may look to eternal life (O) with Him who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God (Trinity) in a world without end.



The Trinity in Eternity



Cross and Chi – The Chi (X), first letter of Christ, combined with the cross (+).



Shepherd's Crook with Alpha and Omega – The Good Shepherd.



Iota Eta Sigma on Greek Cross – IHS, first three letters of Jesus in Greek IHSUS.



Iota and Chi woven through two circles – The outer circle refers to the infinite life, the inner one to the infinite.



Stylized Fish and Fish in a Circle – ICHTHUS (IXOYC) the Greek word for fish, is an acrostic on the first letters of Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. Christians have been using the fish to symbolize the Christ since the second century. Fish were drawn on the walls of the catacombs to direct worshippers to meeting places.



Three Fish united to form a Circle and Triangle—The triangle form suggests the Trinity and the circle, Eternity.



Three Entwined Circles – the Trinity.



Cross in Eternity



Jerusalem or Crusader Cross – This cross appeared on the shield of the Crusader Kings of Jerusalem.



Serpent on a Tau Cross – As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up. John 3:14



Triangle and Trefoil – Two symbols for the Holy Trinity.



Epiphany Star and Rose – The rose symbolizes the Nativity, Christ's humanity, and the star refers to His divinity.



Celtic Cross



Lamb with Banner of Victory – Isaiah was the first prophet to refer to God the Son as the sacrificial lamb. Here the lamb is depicted with the banner of victory over sin and death.



Crown – Symbolized the Kingship of our Lord, Jesus Christ. KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Birthday Party for baby Jesus!



**Come celebrate
with fellowship and fun!**

**Potluck luncheon immediately following service,
sign up and tell us what you're bringing.**

**We will be collecting hats, mittens, gloves but
especially SOCKS, THE MOST NEEDED ITEM
by those less fortunate.**



**Sunday, December 10 from 12pm-2pm
in Madden Hall**

Sister Jean's Food & Clothing Pantry

Believe it or not, the otherwise helpful government program SNAP, does not cover these essentials!?!

There is a big demand for dish soap and toilet paper and other cleaning products. They need the sizes for home use, not bulk containers as these are for individuals. Even just grabbing a few items at a dollar store will help. Don't forget dish cloths and sponges... you know, the essentials.





Please help
replenish our
homemade soups
and breads for
our shut-in
members.

— — — — —
| LABEL your soups and breads and |
| please, DO NOT use nuts in your |
| recipes as many people have an |
| allergy to them. |
| Please put DATE on label. |
— — — — —

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER FORM 2023



We will once again be beautifying our sanctuary this Christmas season with poinsettias. To give a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one, please fill in the form below and return it to the church office no later than **Sunday, December 10th**. The cost is \$7.00 each. Make checks payable to the Absecon Presbyterian Church and write "poinsettia" on the memo line.

I would like to order _____ poinsettia(s) to be dedicated as follows:

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____ Phone: _____

MISSION BOUQUET ORDER FORM 2023



Mission Bouquet donations in the amount of your choice will once again be received. A plant will not be placed on the altar. Instead, all funds donated will go to our Mission programs and projects of the church. If you would like to give a Mission Bouquet, please fill in the form and return to the church office no later than **Sunday, December 10th**. Make checks payable to the Absecon Presbyterian Church with "Mission Bouquet" on the memo line.

I would like to give \$_____ in Mission Bouquet(s) to be dedicated as follows:

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____ Phone: _____