

# Absecon Presbyterian Church

## PRESBY BITS AND PIECES

*Sunday, December 24, 2023*

### LUKE 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.



### 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.

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:**  
Rita Abelson

**USHERS:**  
Betty Lloyd and Mary Bew

**ATTENDANCE**

**LAST WEEK:**

Worship – 52  
Sunday School - 3

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

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

**REV. JUDY FIOCCO**

is with us again this Sunday  
as our Temporary  
Pulpit Supply Minister

**SERMON TITLE:**

"Room for Jesus"

Luke 2:1-20

# 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

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## 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.

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## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Sunday, December 24, 2023 at 3:30 pm  
The offering at this service will be given to Sister Jeans

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## THANK YOU!

A very special thank you to everyone who helped us  
decorate our church for the Christmas season.  
The church looks beautiful!

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Veterans Day -Betsy Eberhard is honoring her cousin John Wesley Eberhard  
who served in the US Air Force.

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## *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:**

Skip and Sarah Belino, Kathy Bordanora, 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 Gustafsson, John Harvey, Jack Heil, The Hughes Family, Carol Johnson, Susan Lobrano, Bob Kitchell, 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, Khristen 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

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### **PRAYER SHAWL GROUP**

The Prayer Shawl Group meets the first Saturday of every month at 9:30am in Madden Hall. All are invited who enjoy knitting or crocheting or who would like to learn.

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**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 8, 2023 and November online giving

### General

Envelopes Undesignated (includes Loose Offerings)	\$898.71
Envelopes Designated	\$410.00
Initial Offering	
Per Capita	
Energy	\$50.00
Christmas Flowers	\$35.00
Online - Undesignated	\$1,530.34
Online - Designated	\$24.55
Online - Energy	\$101.17
<b>General Total</b>	<b>\$3,049.77</b>

### Benevolence

Envelopes Undesignated (includes Loose Offerings)	\$103.30
Envelopes Designated	\$130.00
Mission Bouquet	\$5.00
Online - Undesignated	\$175.90
Online - Designated	
Wreaths Across America	
<b>Benevolence Total</b>	<b>\$414.20</b>

### Capital Expenditures

Envelopes Undesignated (includes Loose Offerings)	\$30.99
Envelopes Designated	\$130.00
Online - Undesignated	\$52.77
Online - Designated	
<b>Capital Total</b>	<b>\$213.76</b>

### Combined Total

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**\$3,677.73**

# Word Search Puzzle

From WhenWeWordSearch.com

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

December 24, 2023

**LUKE 2:1-7**



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

In those **days** a **decree** went out from **Emperor Augustus** that all the **world** should be **registered**. This was the first **registration** and was taken while **Quirinius** was **governor** of **Syria**. All went to their own **towns** to be registered. **Joseph** also went from the town of **Nazareth** in **Galilee** to **Judea**, to the **city** of **David called Bethlehem**, because he was **descended** from the **house** and **family** of David. He went to be registered with **Mary**, to whom he was **engaged** and who was **expecting a child**. While they were there, the **time** came for her to **deliver** her child. And she **gave birth** to her **firstborn son** and **wrapped** him in **bands** of **cloth**, and **laid** him in a **manger**, because there was no **place** for them in the inn.



## OUR GIFTS TO THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN US

On December 7, the **Salvation Army** came to pick up the Angel Tree gifts. We filled twenty-five children's wishes and the gentleman from Salvation Army was thrilled. It seems some groups were returning tags, unable to make a child smile.

On December 10, the Worship Committee instituted serving the elements (prepackaged) during the Communion portion of our service and singing the Lord's Prayer at its conclusion. I hope everyone found it as meaningful as I did. Then in Madden Hall was our **Birthday Party for Baby Jesus**. We were asked to bring much needed socks, hats, scarves, and gloves or mittens, and these were given to the **Rescue Mission**.

Between now and year end, if you would like to wish your church family a *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year* without writing cards, we have the **Gift to the Magi**. Please note on your check or on your envelope that your gift is for the Magi. Then on the first Sunday of January, everyone will receive a card listing all who donated. These offerings will be given to the **Food Bank**.

And at our Christmas Eve service at 3:30pm, the collection will be for **Sister Jean's**, which is serving monthly 3,000 less fortunate people with bags of food, getting ready to serve hot lunches, and setting up a "gently used" clothing barn.

Thanks to everyone for your generous gifts for our neighbors needing our help!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## 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.



**RYMIN' REASONS TO DECK THE HALLS  
A CHRISTMAS TALE**

by Jack Heil

It is the day before Christmas and in every town  
Everyone is out shopping and looking all around  
For presents to buy for everyone on their list  
And hope that there will be no one that they will miss.

Now it is the night before Christmas and all are asleep  
You try not to make any noise as downstairs you creep  
To help Santa Claus with his bundles of joy  
As you try and make sure there is enough for each girl and boy.

All the children are snuggled up in their bed  
And in the morning they will call you a sleepy-head  
But the joy in their eyes is your dream come true  
To see them all happy and smiling just being with you.

As you try to put everything together on that special night  
You hope all the children are sleeping with their eyes shut tight  
So much has to be done before the crack of dawn  
Even though you are so tired you must carry on.

Now the tree is all trimmed and everything is in it's place  
You look around once more with a smile on your face  
It gives you such pleasure to see all that you have done  
And you know in the morning the children will all have fun.

So off to bed you go with happiness in your heart  
The feeling of Christmas is a joy from the start  
As you lay down your head to get some rest  
You think of all that you have and how much you are blessed.



## SONGS OF CHRISTMAS

by Jack and Dee Heil

Away in The Manger no crib for a bed  
There lay the baby Jesus just turning His head  
Three wise men came that had followed a star shining bright  
To see a King born on this Christmas night.

O Little Town of Bethlehem is where the baby lay  
And people from near and far came to kneel and pray  
To give thanks and praise to the Lord up above  
For sending us someone to teach us of His words of love.

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear it was true  
A savior was born to help guide me and you  
He was to arrive on Christmas Day  
To help all of the people and show them the way.

Silent Night was for all to come and see  
That Mary was to have a child, Jesus, was His name to be  
The baby was sent from the Lord up above  
To give and share with us all of God's love.

O Holy Night was a special night for everyone on earth  
It was to be the night of our dear Jesus birth  
The angels sang and the shepherds came from afar  
They knew a savior was to be born as followed that star.

The Little Drummer Boy who went to play for the King  
He beat his little drum and heard the angels sing  
It was all that he could offer to the baby laying there  
So he just played his drum for all to hear.

All of these Christmas songs tell of that special night  
That our savior was to arrive and how the star was so bright  
How three wise men knew that a new King would be born  
On this special day that we call Christmas morn.



### **CHRISTMAS POINTSETTIAS**

Ann Wallace in loving memory of her parents and Alex Hall

Pat Allen in loving memory of her parents: Blanca and Joel Allen

Bob and Barbara Hudak in memory of their parents: Bob and Patricia Hudak  
Richard and Deborah Fredricks  
in memory of Marge McGuigan

Betty Lloyd in memory of: Mr. and Mrs. Earl H. Lloyd, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Lloyd and  
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Lloyd

Mary Bew in memory of: Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Bew and Mr. Cameron Lockard

Janet Gee in memory of: Catherine and Joseph Oteri  
in honor of: Her Children and Grandchildren

Bruce and Sharon Winter in memory of: The Winter and Luhrs families

### **CHRISTMAS MISSION BOUQUETS**

Dottie McCaffrey in memory of the Mong Family: Harry and Pearl, Jean, John, Jim,  
Donald and Wayne  
in honor of her children and grandchildren

Betsy Eberhard in memory of her parents: Gus and Ruth Eberhard

Ellie Miller in memory of Martin and Millie Stein Rauer

Bruce and Sharon Winter in memory of the Winter Family

Louise Speitel in memory of Joseph Marshall

## 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.



# 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. |  
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## Tips for Healthy Eating on a Budget

*Get the biggest nutrition bang for your buck*

- **Plan out a few meals** for the week and make your shopping list based on these ingredients.
- **Choose meatless meals.** Plant proteins such as beans and tofu are generally more affordable than meats and fish.
- **Don't shop on an empty stomach.** Munch on a piece of fruit or some nuts before entering the store.
- **Allow for flexibility in your shopping list** if fresh produce or poultry and fish are on sale, purchase extra quantities and freeze them for later use. Meats, fish, bananas, berries, avocados, broccoli, cauliflower, and corn freeze well.
- **Purchase nonperishable foods in bulk.** It may cost more up-front to buy "family-sized" products like whole grains, lentils, and dried beans, but the cost per unit is usually cheaper.
- **Buy store-brand items.** They're generally cheaper because less money is spent on advertising and fancy food labels.
- **Use what you have before buying more.** Take inventory of all the food in your kitchen twice a month. Bring forward the buried items and plan meals based on these ingredients.

### Low cost, nutritious foods:

#### Proteins

Beans, Peas, Lentils (dried, frozen, canned)  
Canned fish (tuna, salmon, sardines)  
Lean ground turkey, Chicken thighs (remove the skin)  
Peanut butter, Low-fat cottage cheese  
Tofu, Eggs

#### Produce

Leafy greens (kale, collards)  
Whole heads of lettuce or cabbage  
Broccoli, Radishes, Carrots  
Apples, Bananas  
Frozen unsweetened fruit  
Frozen or canned vegetables (no salt added)

#### Whole grains and pastas

Store-brand high-fiber cereals (plain shredded wheat, bran)  
Whole rolled oats  
Whole grains (brown rice, millet, barley, bulgur)  
Whole grain pasta

#### Snacks

Peanuts, Popcorn cooked in an air-popper, String cheese

It's not too late  
to get your  
Flu Shot  
Protect Yourself  
and Others

### Free Flu Vaccination

for adults 18 years and older

No appointment  
needed

Walk-In Tuesdays  
9am - 12noon  
201 S. Shore Rd, Northfield

Walk-In 3rd Tuesday  
10am - 12noon  
310 Bellevue Ave, Hammonton

**Pediatric Flu Vaccination**  
for children 6 months – 18 years old  
**Available by appointment.**  
Call 609-645-5933

## Beat the Winter Blues

Feeling sad when the weather and seasons change is common. To beat the winter blues, get moving. 20 minutes of activity four times a week has been shown to lift your mood. Get out in the sunlight or brightly lit spaces, especially early in the day. Set your alarm clock and stick to a sleep routine. Try to spend time with family and friends. Eat healthy foods and avoid overloading on sugar and carbohydrates like cookies and candies.

See a mental health professional if sadness doesn't go away or interferes with your daily life. For mental health resources visit [www.mhaac.info](http://www.mhaac.info). If you or someone you know is struggling or having thoughts of suicide, call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org). In life-threatening situations, call 911.





