



Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

“I am the vine, you are the branches.”

December 2021

**141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, New Jersey 08848**

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A Note from Nick

Dear Friends,

One of the new phrases I hear a lot these days is, “a new normal.” Meaning, that in this Covid-19 world that we live in there are things that have become our new way of living and operating. We see these differences at the food store, in restaurants and at the doctor’s office. Of course, those that have kids in school know that there are a lot of Covid related challenges that had to be overcome . . . and so there is a “new normal” in our schools.

At our church we have settled into our own changes, and while they aren’t always fun, we have adapted nicely. Our “new normal” includes signing in when we arrive, doing our best to social distance, not shaking hands during the passing of the peace, and of course wearing masks. We do all of these things to ensure that we are as safe as we can be as we are a family of faith together. I will be honest and share with you that it hasn’t always been easy. At first it felt odd and uncomfortable. It didn’t quite feel right. It wasn’t how we worshiped in the past. It wasn’t what church looked like before



Covid. But slowly I have noticed all of us falling into a routine. We may mourn the church that “was” . . . but we are embracing the church that “is.” This is the way that we will be worshiping for a while, and it has become our “new normal.” This occurred to me two weeks ago when for the first time since Covid it really felt like church again. Choir members were singing, and we had minute for missions and bulletin inserts and Sunday school, and suddenly I realized that yes, this was church . . . we were back! We have settled into our “new normal” in exciting and hopeful ways!

In a few weeks we will be celebrating the birth of our Savior. Each year on Christmas we remember the light that came into our world. As the gospel of John tells us, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it.” But prior to Jesus’ birth the darkness was the norm. It wasn’t until God came in the flesh that the light entered our world . . . creating for us a new normal. Friends, let’s embrace the light of Christ anew this Christmas as we embrace the new normal of worshiping together! Please see inside of Branches for all of the details of our Advent and Christmas Eve services . . . invite a friend and share the light this Christmas!

In Christ,

Nick Hatch

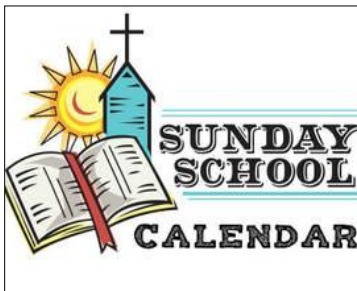
Tending the Flock

Baptisms

Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible event: the reconciliation of people to God. We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary this month. It was in December that Katelyn Heilig and Kyle Braeden Kunich were baptized. Congratulations and blessings upon being a child of God!

December Birthdays

1 Jason Czerna	9 Debbie Heinbach	18 Oscar Philkill	26 Audriana Stagg
3 Jack Bender	John McDowall	20 Cyndi McDowall	27 Ellie Lyons
4 Brad Bondor	11 Denis Goldman	21 Patti Bender	28 Bill Grundmann
Marie Knapp	Avery Schaefer	22 Ron Unkert	29 Lori MacWilliam
Eric Strangfeld	14 Alicia Apgar	Tammy Unkert	30 Tim Sassaman
5 Matthew Tiedeman	Tracy Folmar	24 Hailey Apgar	31 Olivia Pulsinelle
6 Emma Meyer	15 Jeremy Apgar	Christine Wenzel	



Christian Education News

Christmas season is here!! Do you want to be a part of the annual Christmas Eve play 12/24 @ the 6pm service?

We will need actors, actresses, prop help and general helpers!! If interested...please contact Cyndi McDowall ASAP!!!

Upcoming Sunday School schedule

Sunday 12/12--Christmas Sunday school lesson---make sure you are there for the Christmas fun!!!

Sunday 12/19--No Sunday School. Bring the whole family to the lovely Lessons and Carols service, refreshments will follow!

Sunday 12/26 and **Sunday 1/2**--no Sunday school due to Holidays

Sunday 1/9--**Save the Date!!** Sunday school fellowship. All ages welcome!! Join us for our annual Faithful based New Years resolutions workshop!!

Capital Campaign Update

More News Coming!

The pandemic threw a wrench in our capital campaign – right as we were finishing the projects and getting ready to celebrate, our world shutdown and everything was put on hold or canceled. Now that we are getting back into the swing of meeting in person again, the Capital Campaign Leadership team is going to regroup, make final decisions and communicate our success to the congregation. Thank you for patience and for your generous donations!

Advent and Christmas at Alexandria

Worship Every Sunday at 10 a.m.

**Discover the excitement of the Advent season
and rejoice in the Good News of Christmas!**

You are invited to our very special services and events this Advent and Christmas

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 12 at 1:30 p.m.

Carpool to local homes of church members bringing the joy of Christmas to their doorstep. Return to the church later for hot cocoa and Christmas goodies.

Blue Christmas Service

Tuesday, December 14 at 7 p.m.

For those not quite up to celebrating the holidays, this is a quiet and prayerful time in the midst of all the glitter and lights of the season.

A Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 19 at 10 a.m.

This beloved tradition continues as we celebrate the birth of Jesus as told through scripture, music, and prayer. The story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is told in nine short Bible readings, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choir music.

Christmas Eve

December 24 at 6 p.m.

Our children will present their Christmas pageant on Christmas Eve. Join us for a lively and meaningful performance by the youth of our church that tells a great seasonal story.

Christmas Eve

December 24 at 9 p.m.

The 9:00 p.m. service is quiet and intimate. Special music, candle-light, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper will open our hearts once again to the wonder and awe of Christmas morning. Please join us.



Blue Christmas Service

*A Service of Remembrance,
Comfort, and Hope*

All Are Welcome

December 14 at 7 p.m.

*Alexandria First Presbyterian Church
141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, New Jersey*



Blue Christmas Service

December 14 | 7 p.m.

The idea behind a Blue Christmas service is to provide a quiet, contemplative moment as an alternative to more traditional holiday gatherings. It is a way to care for those who are sad or struggling, while those around them are caught up with celebrating. Blue Christmas services are also known as Longest Night services and are a good fit for those who are care-worn with different kinds of pain, loss, and those who are not feeling very “Christmassy.”

A blue Christmas service provides an opportunity to hear about the God of love who comes to us in the midst of the mess and pain we know in our own everyday lives and the lives of those around us.

Advent Devotionals

Pick one up!

Advent devotionals are made available by the Worship & Music Team and can be picked up in the narthex of the church. There are a variety of devotionals to choose from . . . each can be your guide during this season of Advent!

Winter Fellowship

Join us for fellowship fun!

Looking for things to do during the long days of winter? Our Membership Team is here to help with these fun activities:

Annual Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 12 at 1:30 p.m.



Join us on Sunday December 15th to spread Christmas cheer to some special members of our church family. We will meet at church at 2:00, weather permitting, to carpool to a number of homes where we will sing a few carols at each house we visit. Dress warmly! Carolers are invited to enjoy some cookies and hot chocolate in Fellowship Hall when we return. All ages welcomed!

Lunch Bunch
Tuesday, December 14 at 12 p.m.

It's fun! It's free! It's local! What more is needed for a great way to spend time with friends? Join us in Fellowship Hall and bring your own lunch. We'll provide the drinks, chips, and dessert. Get ready for a good time!

Christmas Joy Offering

Make your Offering on Christmas Eve.

A cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. Because Advent and Christmas shine a light not only on our world's greatest hope but also on our world's greatest need, PCUSA provides this timely opportunity to support causes specifically designed to bring Good News of great joy to the poor in circumstance or spirit. The receipts from the offering are distributed equally to The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and student scholarships at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Look for giving envelopes in the pew racks this month. Your gift may be placed in the offering plate on Sunday mornings and will be received

in worship on Christmas Eve. Thank you for your continued and heart-felt generosity.



Office Change

Temporary Hours 10-11am each weekday

We are sad to share that because of family responsibilities and personal reasons, Annie will no longer be working in the office. We are thankful for our time with her and grateful for the many ways she contributed to life and ministry of our church.

During the transition the Personnel Team is arranging to have volunteers staff the office from 10am to 11am each weekday.

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2. If your Amazon account does not already have you logged in, go ahead and log into your account
3. Click 'Supporting' under the white Amazon search bar for the drop down menu
4. Type in 'Alexandria First Presbyterian Church' in the box, click 'Search'
5. Alexandria First Presbyterian Church Milford, NJ will appear, click 'Select' and start shopping!

Seuli Update

Congratulations!

Good news to share about our former Director of Music Ministry, Seuli Koo. On October 9th she and her fiancé were married in South Korea! Please keep them both in your prayers as they start their adventure together.



Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:00 Session materials due	2	3	4
5 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:15 Refreshments	6	7 9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 7:00 Building & Property 7:30 Boy Scouts	8 7:00 Session	9	10	11
12 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:15 Caring Hands Crafters 1:30 Christmas caroling	13	14 9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 12:00 Lunch Bunch 7:00 Blue Christmas Service 7:30 Boy Scouts	15	16 9:00 Deadline for January's newsletter	17	18
19 10:00 Worship, Lessons and Carols	20	21 9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 7:30 Boy Scouts	22	23	24 6:00 Family worship 9:00 Candlelight & Communion	25 Rejoice! Christmas Day
26 10:00 Worship	27	28 9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 7:30 Boy Scouts	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	

Deacon of the Week

Dec 5 Laurie Gregory
 Dec 12 Carol Moran
 Dec 19 Doug Bondor
 Dec 26 Athena McDowall