



A Message from Pastor Becca

I have a little game I play during Advent, I try to spot covert theology in seemingly secular celebrations of Christmas. I pay attention for things that capture the promises of Christmas without ever outright saying it. I have found that it is hidden in movies, in stories, in music. A few years ago, as I was driving to a silent retreat, I heard *Someday at Christmas*. You can check it out here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaA7B9cu4kU>

Here are some of the lyrics that have captivated me ever since:

*Someday at Christmas
There'll be no wars
When we have learned
What Christmas is for
When we have found
What life's really worth
There'll be peace on Earth*

That song ended up inspiring an entire Advent series on the intersection of secular music and theology. The lyrics capture perfectly that which we wait for: peace on Earth. I feel as though I have been waiting a long time to see these things come into being. Can you relate? Advent is after all a season of waiting and preparing. On the surface, it appears we wait to celebrate the birth of Jesus once more. But in reality, our Advent waiting has dual purposes, yes to celebrate the birth but also we wait for Jesus' return. We believe that Jesus will return, and then this broken world will once and for all know peace.

I wonder, if Jesus did come back this Advent, would we recognize him, would we notice him? Would he be the sort of person that gets a two-minute feel good story on the morning news show? Or would he get a half hour long expose of investigative reporting about the man who claims to be the son of God? Where would he hang out? Who would he hang out with?

Once in a while, I see Jesus, in the here and now. Not as the second coming of the incarnational God but in the hands, feet, and heart of the people around me. Every so often, I will tell a person, "I see Jesus in you." We are after all to be the body on Earth. This Advent and Christmastide, I wonder if we might pay attention? If we might look for Jesus here among us, on purpose. I invite you to be on the lookout alongside me this season. Go looking for Jesus and let me know where he shows up and surprises you. It might be in music, a story, a movie, or in the heart of a fellow human.

Merry Christmas, Beloved Children of God!



Second Annual Pop Up Pageant!

December 22, 2019
9:30 am Worship

Arrive at 9:10 to
choose a costume
and part!

Kids and Kids at heart are welcome to join in our no rehearsal Christmas pageant. Join us for a time of celebratory worship as we reenact the arrival of Jesus.

Christmas Mission Offering

A Christmas Mission Offering envelope will be included in the bulletin for the next few weeks. Please use one to help us support 2020 local mission projects.

Envelopes may be put into the offering bag until Christmas Eve.

Sunday School Update

Lessons for December:

- 12/1 A baby is coming
- 12/8 Mary and Joseph
- 12/15 A baby is born
- 12/22 Pop-up Pageant (in lieu of Sunday School)
- 12/29 No Sunday School

The Sunday School Food Drive was a big success! We thank the members of the congregation and Small World families for their generosity. Some of the food will replenish our own food pantry; the rest will be delivered to St Vincent's food pantry next week for their Christmas gift baskets. We plan to make this food drive an annual tradition as part of our "Small Hands, Big Hearts" mission activities for Sunday School.

The Sunday School children will be participating, along with the teachers, in the readings and lighting of the Advent candles this year. On December 1st, we lit the candle of "Hope" and learned more about this special time of preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus.





Urban Promise Christmas

Once again it is time to remember our young friends at Urban Promise. This year, we will be giving gifts for all ages from kindergarten through 8th grade. Boxes are welcome but **please do not wrap the gifts**. Bring the gifts to church by **Thursday, December 12th at noon**. The Mission Christmas Tree is in the Fellowship Room with ornaments that indicate age and gender. Take an ornament or two and feel free to use the ornament to tag your gift. A list of ideas is under the tree.

**Happy Shopping and Thank You
from the Mission Committee!**



Poinsettia Donations

It's time to decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias! To make a donation for the flower purchase, please make out a check to Faith with "Christmas Flowers" written in the memo. The poinsettias come in a variety of sizes and colors and cost between \$5 and \$20.

Collection ends on December 15. If you donate, you are welcome to take home the flowers bought with your donation after the Christmas Eve service at 7 pm. If you have any questions, see Pat Cohill (pcohill@rcbc.edu) or Sondra Carroll (sondraRDH@gmail.com).





Update from the Deacons

Deacon's Brunch: Thank you to all who attended our first "Deacon's Brunch." As you know, if you were there, it was an overwhelming success thanks to the planning done by Paige Caracuzzo, Pat Carter, and Joyce Schreiner. **These super chefs are already planning our next brunch which will be in February.** Stay tuned for more information after the holidays.

Turkey Drive: Thank you to all who made a donation to the Deacon's annual turkey fund! **Over half of the amount needed to buy 175, \$15 Acme turkey gift cards came from you in the past few weeks.** The Deacons fund covered the rest so that the Christian Caring Center was able to help 175 families. Faith Church is traditionally the largest donor of the Acme turkey gift cards that the CCC specifically requests. Thank you again for your generosity!



Session Report

- During the November meeting, Session continued the review of the 2020 Budget draft.
- Since the number of pledges that have come in so far is low, an appeal for more pledges will be made so that the 2020 Budget won't need major cuts.
- The first fundraising event will be held at **Bonefish Grill in Marlton, NJ on the evenings of December 2-5, 2019 starting at 4PM.** Any member who can't attend the fundraiser at Bonefish can still participate by contributing a donation that is labeled Bonefish Grill Fundraiser.
- In addition, it will be important that Church members pay their individual 2020 Per Capita fee of \$38.75.
- Session discussed the church's computer software and computers that need upgrading and or replacing.
- A preliminary discussion was held on having committee meetings at the same time so that better communication can take place.



for Unto Us
a Child
is Born





Mat Workshops

Begin Saturday, January 4

Join us every **Saturday from 10:00 to noon during January, February and March** for our annual mat workshops. We'll prepare plastic bags to be made into waterproof sleep mats for the homeless.

This is easy to do and is suitable for all ages and skill levels. We will happily train you!

Please note that at this time, we do not need bags. We'll let you know if we need to collect them later! See Bonnie Halle with any questions.



Small World Update

Transitional Kindergarten kids will be learning about the five senses with the sights, sounds, smells, touch and tastes of Christmas. We can't wait to bake some Christmas cookies, make some special ornaments and have our birthday party for baby Jesus. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone.

Pre Kindergarten is eagerly awaiting Santa's visit on Christmas Eve! In December we will be learning about patterns during Gingerbread week along with decorating gingerbread houses with family and friends. Christmas and the season of giving will be our theme for the month. Throughout December we will be reading Christmas stories, singing holiday songs and talking about the reason for the season ~ Jesus! Merry Christmas to all!

Tis the Season! The 3's will be getting ready for our Christmas Program on Dec. 13th. If you are free, you are welcomed to attend. It is a short and sweet program of 7 holiday songs. With that looming, we will be very busy elves practicing singing, making gifts and crafts and taking time to check the list to make sure we are being good too! Merry Christmas to everyone at Faith Presbyterian Church.

December is all about Christmas and traditions in the 2s! This month we are excited to learn about baby Jesus and the nativity, experience a special visit from Mrs. Claus, and enjoy our Christmas party! All of our crafts will be Christmas themed and our color of the month is green. We will be reading several different books with topics ranging from the nativity to Christmas cookies for Santa! Merry Christmas from the 2s!

Small World Families and Staff wish everyone at Faith Presbyterian Church a very joyous Christmas season!!

