



# December 2024

## Thoughts in Print - from Pastor Sue

It's hard to believe that we have come to the beginning of another year in the life of the church, another holiday season, another season where we remember the Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace we are promised in the birth of our Savior. This year I am very mindful of the impact of those four words embodied in an infant in a manger. He comes into the world vulnerable, surrounded by all the chaos and potential hazards of human existence; his first home in a not so cozy stable with a bunch of farm animals. It is a poignant reminder that God comes down to us to live our existence, to honor the crown of his creation by his presence among us and, in so doing, validate the reality of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace in the midst of, in spite of, the realities of our everyday lives. I often wonder how different the world would be, how different we would be, if Jesus came as a conquering king to fix all the ills of the world and us. But I'm not sure I would have wanted that existence. The highs and lows of our lives bring depth and meaning in surprising ways and have a way of shaping us as people, and especially as people of faith. And in all things, the promised one walks with us! May you find the Hope, Love, Joy and Peace of the one who comes for YOU in the midst of, and in spite of, whatever life may throw at you. And may you always be grounded in the reality that HE is indeed the "Reason for the Season"!



Peace, Pastor Sue



## Family and Adult Advent Devotionals

Be sure to get your devotional for the Advent season. You can find them on the table in the narthex.  
(small and large print copies available.)

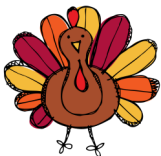


*Blessed are those who die  
in the Lord.*

*Margit West*

*November 3, 2024*

*Rest eternal grant them O Lord, and  
let light perpetual shine upon them.*



## Thanksgiving Dinner Update -

This year, we distributed **234** Thanksgiving meals!! That's the most that we've provided in many years! Thanks to all who made this happen—those who contributed food and/or money, those who cooked, those who served, those who cleaned up. A special thank you to Nikki Schley, Pastor Sue (head turkey-carver), Carol Dorn and Karen Brandt who organized the feast.

## The Grief & Loss Group

For anyone that may need extra support before the Christmas holiday, join us for a special December meeting. The gathering will begin immediately following service on December 8th, until 1:00 pm.

If you plan on attending, please email Lisa Fobian at [mppmsn@aol.com](mailto:mppmsn@aol.com) or text at 732-245-8070.

Also, if you plan on purchasing a memorial ornament, they are \$5 and you will need to bring a picture of you loved one. The size needed is 1 and 3/4" w x 2" L.



*Keep the following people in your prayers  
(long-term illnesses)*

Cindy Williams, Evelyn Hees, Leah Morgan, Valerie Horlacher, Maie Currie, Frank Lukasavage,  
Barbara Carlson, Dee Barbara, Lyn Fenwick, Robert Rively, Tom and Marge Herr, Kristine  
Schley, Susan and Sean Buglio, Jim Goubeaud, Carl, Carole and Jerry, Anna Ricciardelli,  
Jim Hardesty, Lynn and Paul Owens, Carol Sims

**Parish Center Update**

We are making great progress on the PC rebuild. Unfortunately, and per usual with this building, things are taking a little longer than we had hoped. Completion is now expected in 60 to 90 days. A few pics are included to give you an idea. They are working on HVAC and Electrical at the moment. The pictures give you an idea of the main part of the building as well as one of the two new rooms that will be in front of the area where the stage used to be. There is also a picture of our new patio area which I can't wait to use when the weather gets warmer. Please feel free to give the office a call if you have any questions.

As we say this time of year... "Soon and Very Soon!"



\* \* \* \* \*

**POINSETTIA ORDER FORM**



**Deadline for listing in Christmas Eve bulletin is Sunday, December 15th.**  
Poinsettias are \$9.00 each.

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print clearly)

# of plants ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PLANT(S) DEDICATION: (please print clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_ To the Glory of God

\_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of Loved Ones: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Special dedication: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Please place this form, with payment, in the offering plate, or send to the office. Thank you.*

# Christmas Worship Services

## Christmas Eve—Tuesday, December 24th

**4:00 PM** Family Service  
with Holy Communion  
(This service is *VERY* kid  
friendly!)



**7:00 & 9:00 PM** Traditional Candlelight Service  
with Holy Communion  
(choirs at the 7:00 service only)

*(The 4:00 and 7:00 will be broadcast on Facebook Live.)*

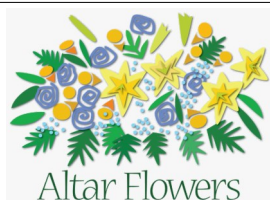


Christmas Day  
Wednesday, December 25th  
10:00 AM (in-person only)

1st weekend after Christmas  
Saturday, December 28 / 5:00 PM  
**AND**  
Sunday, December 29 / 10:00 AM  
Service of Lessons and Carols



We need ushers for Christmas Eve services.  
Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board.



## Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candle

Sign-up charts for 2025 are on the bulletin board.  
Altar flowers are \$25 per arrangement. Sanctuary  
candle dedications are \$12 for 2 weeks or \$24 for the  
entire month.



## FUN CHRISTMAS



## FACTS and TRIVIA

The term "Xmas" dates back to the 1500s.

Contrary to popular belief, "Xmas" is not a trendy attempt to "take Christ out of Christmas". "Christianity" was spelled "Xianity" as far back as 1100. X, or Chi, is the Greek first letter of "Christ" so "X" and back in the fourth century, Constantine the Great often referenced the shorthand version. Some say it was as early as 1021 that the abbreviation "XPmas" was used to reference the holiday, which was later shortened to "Xmas."

The eight tiny reindeer have had lots of names

Rudolph was almost named Rollo or Reginald and his crew also had lots of other names. They've previously been called Flossie, Glossie, Racer, Pacer, Scratcher, Feckless, Ready, Steady and Fireball.

Astronauts broadcast "Jingle Bells" from space.

Nine days before Christmas in 1965, astronauts Wally Schirra and Tom Stafford aboard the Gemini 6 told Mission Control that they saw an "unidentified flying object" about to enter Earth's atmosphere, traveling in the polar orbit from north to south. Just as things got tense, they interrupted the broadcast with "Jingle Bells," as Wally played a small harmonica accompanied by Tom shaking a handful of small sleigh bells.

Christmas decorating sends nearly 15,000 people to the ER.

If you've ever watched Clark Griswold decorate his house in "Christmas Vacation," this stat likely doesn't shock you. In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Commission's most recent news release estimates that 14,700 people visit hospital emergency rooms each November and December from holiday-related decorating accidents – which is about 240 injuries per day. The most common accidents involve falling, lacerations and back strains.



**COMING SOON** -  
Stewfest 2025  
Sunday, January 12  
4:00 pm

Stay tuned for more information!



Altar Flowers

## Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candle

Sign-up charts for 2025 are on the bulletin board.

Altar flowers are \$25 per arrangement.

Sanctuary candle dedications are \$12 for 2 weeks or \$24 for the entire month.



## The Silver Singers Chorus Christmas Concert

(directed by our own Carol Capor)  
Saturday, December 14th / 2:00 PM

Silver Ridge Park West Clubhouse  
145 Westbrook Drive, Toms River

Light refreshments will be served after the concert.  
Tickets are \$5.00 and will be sold at the door.



## Inclement weather

In case of bad weather, church services will NOT be cancelled unless a state of emergency by the governor is declared. As always, use your best judgement and keep safe!

**2024 Who's Who on Council**

**Pastor Susan Jones**  
sjones@holycrosstr.com

**President, Janis Provost**  
janis1455@aol.com

**VP, Janice Hutchison**  
jjhutchison47@gmail.com

**Secretary, Pam Walter**  
catgal5911@gmail.com

**Treasurer, George Phillips**  
GPhill497@aol.com

**Karen Brandt** *Community Outreach*  
kaybea@comcast.net

**John Burgdorfer** *Rebuilding Team*  
jburgdorfer@studio200arch.com

**Lisa Fobian** *Discipleship*  
mspmsn@aol.com

**Nicki Nesbihal** *Family Faith Formation*  
nickinesbihal@gmail.com

**Joe Ombres** *Fellowship*  
Joseph.Ombres@panalytical.com

**Peter Riemschneider** *Worship and Music*  
riemschneiderrecycling@gmail.com


**Nikki Schley** *Community Outreach*  
schley33@aol.com

**Andrea Stemmermann** *Fellowship*  
emmajane801@gmail.com

Dec. 8 Grief Support Group Program  
11:15 AM


Dec. 10 Church Council, 6:30 PM

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services  
4:00 PM and 7:00 PM




**Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, January 26,**  
**2025**  
Immediately following  
the 10:00 service.


To make an electronic donation  
using your phone, just scan the  
QR code.



**Coffee hour** - do you like to  
drink coffee? Good! We need  
people to help out with coffee  
hours. Coffee hour supplies  
will be provided. Sign-up on  
the bulletin board or talk to  
Diane McCabe.



LIFE IS  
**BETTER**  
WITH  
**COFFEE**



Have a Merry and  
Blessed Christmas  
and a VERY happy  
and healthy New Year.

**The office will be closed**  
**Wednesday-Friday,**  
**December 25-27**  
**and**  
**Wednesday, January 1st.**

**Church Office: P (732) 255-4455**  
**Christian Preschool & Day Care: (732) 255-3112**  
**info@holycrosstr.com**  
**www.HolyCrossLutheranNJ.com**  
**www.facebook.com/holycrosstr**  
**Twitter - @HolyCrossTR**

**Worship Services:**  
**Saturday, 5:00 pm**  
**Sunday, 10:00 am (and Facebook Live)**

**Office Hours:**  
**Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 2:00**