

# OAK TREE-ISELIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Mind, hearts, hands and voices in Christ*

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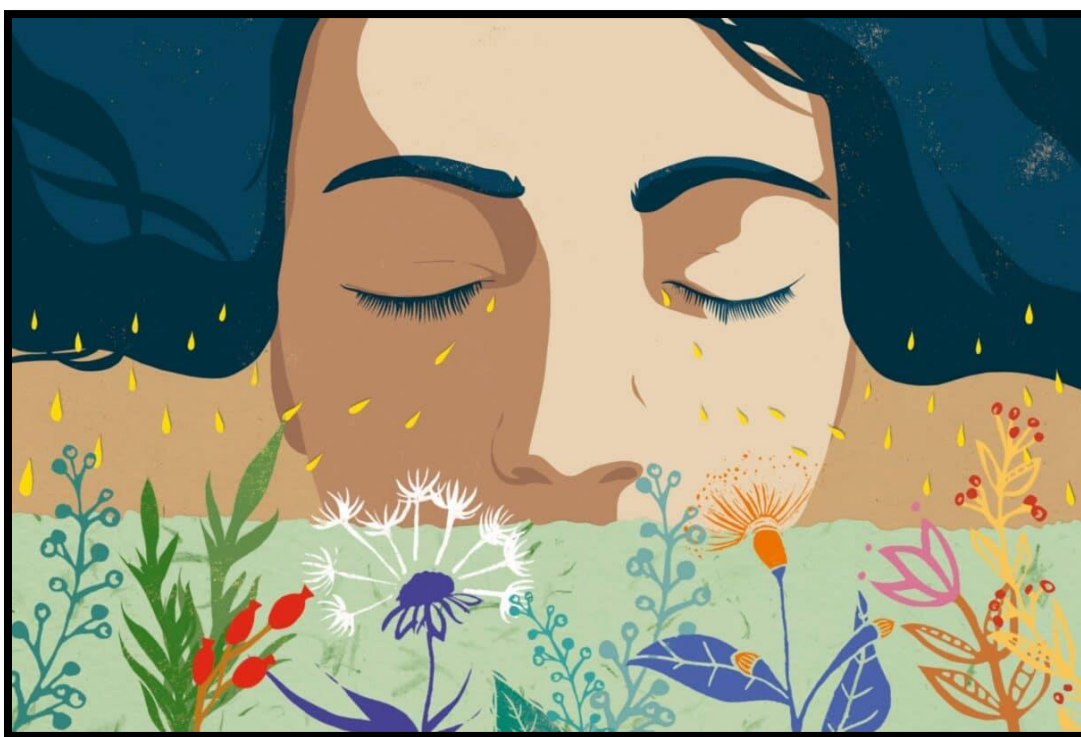
Sunday, August 20, 2023

10:30 a.m.

Service led by: Rev. Chris Houtz

Alaine Bolton, Director of Music

Liturgist: Elder Linda Sahayaraj



## *Gathering for Worship*

\*Please rise in body or spirit.

### **Centering Thought**

*“John is eager, anxiously eager, to prevent any of Jesus’ followers being sucked down into that dark whirlpool of wrath. Their part is to be patient, obedient, and faithful, knowing that death itself has been defeated, so as to become now a source, not of curse but of blessing.”*

(N.T. Wright— ‘Revelation for Everyone’)

**PRELUDE**

**Alaine Bolton, Director of Music**

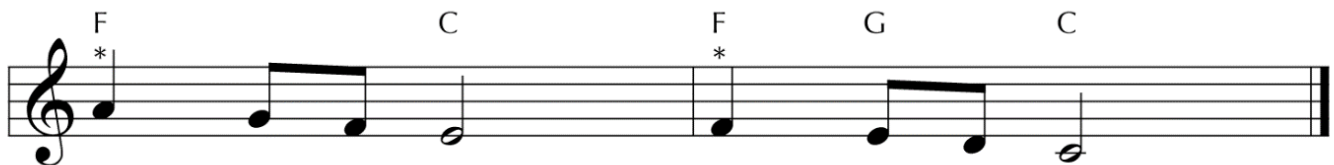
**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Linda Sahayaraj**

# Come into God's Presence 413



1 Come in - to God's pres-ence sing - ing "Al - le - lu - ia,  
2 Come in - to God's pres-ence sing - ing "Je - sus is Lord,  
3 Praise the Lord to - geth - er sing - ing "Wor - thy the Lamb,  
4 Praise the Lord to - geth - er sing - ing "Glo - ry to God,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia."  
Je - sus is Lord, Je - sus is Lord."  
wor - thy the Lamb, wor - thy the Lamb."  
glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God."

## \*THE CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

Linda Sahayaraj

God forgives us and draws us close.

**God reconciles us through Jesus Christ.**

With glad and grateful hearts, praise the Lord!

**Let us worship the Lord our God!**

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY (In Unison)

Linda Sahayaraj

**Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts. Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## \*HYMN # 726 Will You Come and Follow Me

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Linda Sahayaraj

Let us confess our sins without fear to the One who yearns to embrace us, forgive us, protect us, and bless us.

### PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (In Unison)

Linda Sahayaraj

**Holy God, we confess we have not been obedient to your will for us. We have sought justice for ourselves but neglected justice for others. We have insisted on our rights but**

have not lived rightly in our relationships. We have desired mercy for our sins, but we have not offered mercy to those who have sinned against us. By the power of your Holy Spirit free us from the prison of our disobedience. Help us to love as you have loved us that our lives may testify to your abounding grace through Jesus Christ.

Merciful God, hear now our own personal confessions that we lift up to you in silence.

**PERSONAL CONFESSION**

**Rev. Chris Houtz**

In the strong name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Rev. Chris Houtz**

Friends, the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Receive the gift of forgiveness and share that gift with others. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God!**

**\*THE RESPONSE #583 (2x)**

# Glory to God

# 583

*Gloria, gloria*

Capo 3: (Bm) (Em) (A) (D)  
Dm Gm C F (chords continue)

Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!  
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major with a capo on the 3rd fret. The first staff contains the first line of lyrics and chords: Dm, Gm, C, F, and '(chords continue)'. The second staff contains the second line of lyrics. There are asterisks above the first and third measures of both staves.

**\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**Linda Sahayaraj**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*(Please pass the peace with friends and loved ones)*

# Hearing and Responding to the Word Proclaimed

CHILDREN'S TIME

Rev. Chris Houtz

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Linda Sahayaraj

Lord, by the power of your Spirit give us your words of life that our faith may increase and our hearts be made whole. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle Reading:

Linda Sahayaraj

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

11 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Psalm Reading (Responsive):

Linda Sahayaraj

Psalm 96:10-13

10 Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!

The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.

He will judge the peoples with equity."

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar and all that fills it;

12 let the field exult and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

13 before the Lord, for he is coming,  
for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with his truth.

*Congregational Song Request*

#451 Open My Eyes, That I May See

## SCRIPTURE READING

### Hebrew Scripture Reading:

Rev. Chris Houtz

#### Isaiah 40:1-11

**40** Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

**2** Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her

that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

**3** A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**4** Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

**5** Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

**6** A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass;

their constancy is like the flower of the field.

**7** The grass withers; the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

**8** The grass withers; the flower fades,  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

**9** Get you up to a high mountain,

O Zion, herald of good news;

lift up your voice with strength,

O Jerusalem, herald of good news;

lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,

"Here is your God!"

**10** See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him

and his recompense before him.

**11** He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms  
and carry them in his bosom  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

**Epistle Reading:**

**Rev. Chris Houtz**

**Revelation 14:6-13; 11:15-19**

**6** Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people. **7** He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

**8** Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her prostitution.”

**9** Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, “Those who worship the beast and its image and receive the brand on their foreheads or on their hands, **10** they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. **11** And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the brand of its name.”

**12** Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.

**13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.”

**15** Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord  
and of his Messiah,  
and he will reign forever and ever.”

**16** Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, **17** singing,

“We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty,  
who are and who were,  
for you have taken your great power  
and begun to reign.

18 The nations raged,  
but your wrath has come,  
and the time for judging the dead,  
for rewarding your servants, the prophets  
and saints and all who fear your name,  
both small and great,  
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

19 Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple, and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

### THE MESSAGE

A Journey Through Revelation: Endurance to Triumph

Rev. Chris Houtz

\*HYMN # 463 How Firm a Foundation

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH—Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### JOYS AND CONCERNS

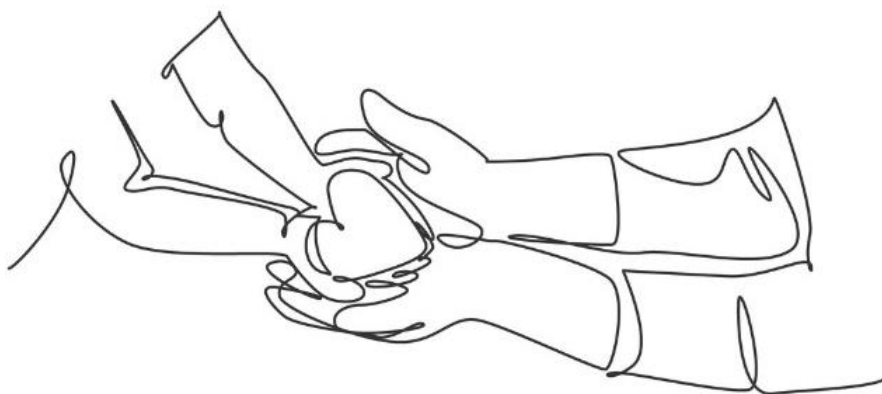
#### THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Each petition will end by saying, “Lord, help us. We trust in you.”*

#### THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

# The Thanksgiving



## THE OFFERING

With grateful hearts, let us bring our tithes and offerings to the God from whom they came.

## \*THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 608

### Praise God, from Whom 608 All Blessings Flow

G C Am7 Dsus D G  
Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise Christ, all  
D Am7 Dsus D Am7 D G Am7  
peo - ple here be - low; praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er -  
G C Am7 G Am7 D G  
more; praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore.

## \*THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**



Gracious Lord, you have given us more mercy than we could imagine and more blessings than we deserve.

Receive now these gifts as tokens of our gratitude to you, that your mercy may be multiplied and your blessings abound to embrace all those in need. Amen.

## *Sending Us into the World*

\*HYMN # 700 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION # 614

## Great Are You, Lord 614 Great Is the Lord

Great are you, Lord: you are ho-ly and just; by your pow-er we trust in your  
love. Great are you, Lord: you are faith-ful and true; by your  
mer - cy you prove you are love. Great are you, Lord, and  
wor-thy of glo - ry! Great are you, Lord, and wor - thy of praise.  
Great are you, Lord. We lift up our voice; we lift up our voice:  
great are you, Lord! Great are you, Lord!

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are placed below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: C, Dm, G, C, F, G, F, C, C, Dm, G, C, F, G, F, C, Bb, Bb, C, Bb, G, C, Bb, D, G, E, Am, Dm, G, Am, Am/G, Dm, G, C.

THE POSTLUDE

OFFERING: Whether you are just passing through town and wanted to stop in for church, this is your first visit of many future ones, or you are with us every week, we certainly appreciate your desire to give anonymously, but if you would like to receive a record of giving for tax purposes, please fill out a pew envelope, check ‘I am visiting’, and add your name and address. We appreciate every generous gift and want to make sure we have a proper record of it to say, Thank you!

**\*Notes on Revelation Readings**

**11:18**–“the nations raged” is a reference to Psalm 46:6.

**11:19**–the temple in heaven is the counterpart to the temple in Jerusalem. The “Ark of his covenant” is the heavenly counterpart to the sacred chest, representing the presence of God, placed in the holy of holies of the tabernacle of the temple. “Flashes of lightning” is common theophanic language (theophany is an appearance of God to humans).

**14:6-7**–the eternal gospel is not the message of Jesus’ death and resurrection, but the necessity of repentance in light of the imminent judgment.

**14:8**–Babylon is frequently used as a code name for Rome. Rome’s future fall is announced as if it were already past. “The wine of the wrath of God,” is a metaphor from Jeremiah 25:15-17; 51:7 (and repeated in Revelation 14:10; 17:2; 18:3).

**14:10**–wine unmixed with water was considered extremely potent and was a metaphor for severe judgment.

## *Friendly Reminders*

Rev. Chris	Not in office Wed. 8.23.23, Grand Jury Selection	
Fellowship Hour	Resumes 9/10/2023	
Sunday Bible Study	Resumes 9/10/2023	
Men’s and Ladies’ CLEF Women’s Breakfasts	Resume 9/09/2023	

## *Sunday School Teachers Needed!*

If you are interested in teaching or assisting with Sunday School on a rotating basis, see Heather Meyers. Sunday School takes place during church. We will resume classes after Labor Day.

## Scheduled Liturgists!

<b>August 2023</b>	
<b>Today</b>	Linda Sahayaraj
08/27/23	Karen Carlomano

<b>September. 2023</b>	
09/03/23 Communion	Ron Stamboly
09/10/23	Andrea Harrison
09/17/23	Betsy Christensen
09/24/23	Chris Alonso
<b>October 2023</b>	
10/01/23 Communion	Chris Alonso
10/08/23	Ron Stamboly
10/15/23	Andrea Harrison
10/22/23	Susan Sendelksy
10/29/23	Betsy Christensen

## Ongoing Initiatives

Per capita for 2023 is \$40.00



Purchase a ShopRite gift card and our church will receive 5% back. Order forms are available in the back of the sanctuary. Please place your completed order form in an envelope with your payment and place in the offering plate. Our goal is to distribute the gift cards on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. Order forms must be received by the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month in order to receive your gift card on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Orders can be turned in any other Sunday; however, you will not receive your gift card until the following month.



We will continue our collection of aluminum can tabs to donate to the Ronald McDonald House in New Brunswick throughout the year. Please place your donation of aluminum can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in New Brunswick in the container in Fellowship Hall or give them to Heather Meyers. Tabs can come from a variety of cans (soda or other beverages, pet food, soup, etc.), but must be aluminum. How can you tell? Aluminum won't stick to a magnet.



**Registration is now open for the Women's Fall Reflective at Johnsonburg – October 17-29!** This fall's women's retreat will be led by Lorelei Oelschlager and Amy Clarkson. Plan to enjoy comfortable lodging, delicious meals, time for fellowship around the campfire, activities like hiking, boating, and zip-lining, opportunities for massages (cost not included under the retreat fee) and, most importantly, the chance to rest, refresh, rejuvenate, and renew. The retreat will start with dinner at 6:00 pm on Friday, October 27 and end with lunch on Sunday, October 29. Housing is on a first come, first served basis, with choices of lodging and rooming preferences. Please note, only a limited number of single rooms are available for this retreat. I anticipate this retreat will fill up quickly, as Lorelei has been a beloved part of the Johnsonburg family for decades. If you have questions or are interested in attending, see Heather Meyers. Visit the camp website for more information or to register: [www.campjburg.org](http://www.campjburg.org)

## *Regular Activities*

Church Office is open Monday - Friday, 9 am to 1 pm

Wednesday Morning Bible Study at 11 am

Rev. Chris' Congregational Call - Every Thursday at 11 am

Phone Number: 978-990-5000

Access Code: 533696#

Men's Breakfast & CLEF Ladies Breakfast,

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month at 9 am

(Men's & CLEF Ladies' Breakfast will resume on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

Sunday Bible Study - 9:00 am

Session meeting every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month

Choir practice: 1<sup>st</sup> and last Sunday of the Month at 9:30 am

(Choir takes a break in July and August)

Divine Worship: In the sanctuary and on Facebook Livestream, Sundays at 10:30 am

# The Session

Rev. Chris Houtz, Moderator  
Laura Reeves, Clerk of Session

Chris Alonso	Christian Education
Betsy Christensen	Mission
Jim Durgana	Treasurer
Andrea Harrison	Human Resources, Officer Nominating Committee
Len Mesonas	Finance Chair, President of Corporation
Heather Meyers	Christian Education
Sue Ramirez	Worship and Music
Jeff Reeves	Buildings and Grounds
Ron Stamboly	Financial Secretary

# The Board of Deacons

Nancy Abel	Moderator/ Prayer Concern List/Board Secretary/Ministry of Compassion Chair
Roseanne (Cookie) Anthony	Hospitality Chair
Kate Scott	Session Board Liaison
Nikkie Hayase	Literature Chair
Nancy Abel / Cookie Anthony	Flowers Co-Chairs
Joan Moscomagas	Deacon Assistance Fund / Welfare Chair / Deacon Nominating Committee
Sara Schweitzer	Ministry of Compassion
Pat Lillie	Cards Chair / Hospitality Co-Chair

# Our Mission Statement



We are a warm and welcoming community of faith, living the teachings of Jesus Christ and open to God's presence through the power of the Holy Spirit. We seek new pathways of ministry and service to fulfil God's purpose for our diverse community.

-approved by the merger committee on Wednesday, July 20, 2022 and ratified by congregational vote, June 11, 2023.

*Dear Members and Guests, if you'd like to know more information about the latest news,*



Visit our website [www.oaktree-iselinpres.org](http://www.oaktree-iselinpres.org), using your mobile device, scan QR Code. To participate with us on social media, 'Like' our Facebook page, 'Follow' us on Instagram, or 'Like' and 'Subscribe' our YouTube channel! All the platforms use @oaktreeiselinpresnj as the identifier. Email us at: [info@oaktree-iselinpres.org](mailto:info@oaktree-iselinpres.org)