

OAK TREE-ISELIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mind, hearts, hands and voices in Christ

1295 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ 08830

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(732) 283-1188

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First Sunday in Advent

We request that you silence all electronic devices before service begins.

*Please rise in body or spirit.

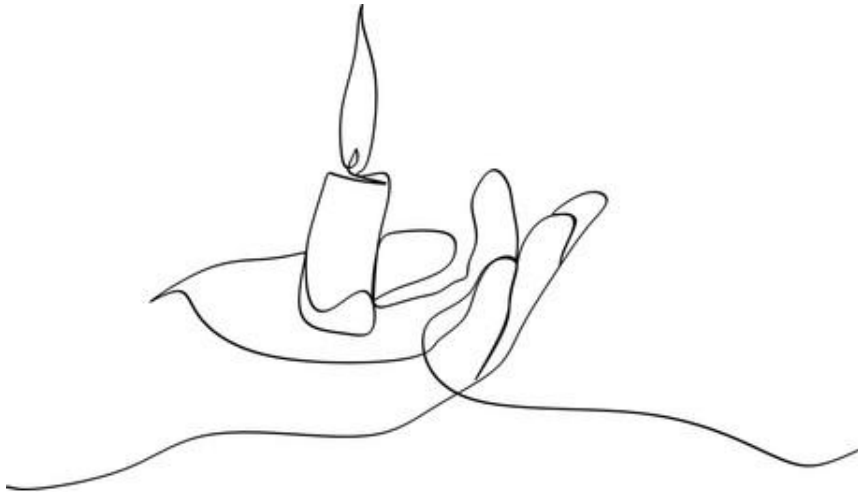
Sunday, November 30, 2025

10:30 a.m.

Service led by: Rev. Donald Pitches, Guest Speaker

Liturgist: Elder Ron Stamboly

Alaine Bolton, Director of Music



Let light banish darkness

Centering Thought

Christ is coming. He is coming to make all things new. Eternal God, during this season of Advent, help us prepare Christ's way, help us center our hearts, minds, and prayers on your holy presence in our midst.

PRELUDE

Alaine Bolton, Director of Music

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ron Stamboly

We light the Candle of Hope in Anticipation of Christ's Coming

Rev. Donald Pitches

Watch and wait for Christ's coming! During Advent, we will light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love and celebrate the promises of God through hymns, scripture, praise, proclamation, and prayer.

The Raghunandan Family

We light this candle in hope. Hear God's promise of hope from Jeremiah 33:14-16 (Easy English Bible):

The Lord also says, "A time will soon come when I do good things for the nations of Israel and Judah. I will do what I have promised to do for them. At that time, I will cause a descendant of David to be born. He will be righteous. He will grow like a branch on the tree of David's family. He will do what is right and fair in the land. When he rules, the people of Judah will be safe. Jerusalem's people will live in peace. People will give this name to the city: 'The Lord is our righteous Savior.'"

Rev. Donald Pitches

Let us pray: Faithful God, out of death you bring life, out of strife you bring peace, out of trauma you bring healing. Renew us in hope that we may be alert to the burgeoning of Christ's advent among us. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

CHORAL INTROIT # 85 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (vs 1)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah 85



1 Light one can - dle to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
2 Light two can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
3 Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the
4 Light four can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the



light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall bring sal -
light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall feed the
light ban - ish dark - ness. Lift your heads and
light ban - ish dark - ness. He is com - ing;



va - tion to Is - rael, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
tell the glad ti - dings. Let your light be shin - ing.

*THE CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

Ron Stamboly

We are entering the time of Advent,

A time of expectation in preparation for Christmas.

Advent reminds us that if God is to be born again in the most ordinary parts of our world and in our lives

We need to prepare for it.

We need to make space in our lives where hope, peace, joy, and love might be born.

Yes, Lord Jesus, Come!

***First Week of Advent Hymn # 744 Arise, Your Light Is Come**

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

Ron Stamboly

As the days grow short and the nights loom long, we praise you for these seasonal reminders that there is time for work and for rest. For those of us who know warm homes and soft places to sleep, we give thanks for these precious gifts. We pray for those who are unhoused and those whose homes are unsafe or financially insecure. May all your children get the rest they need to thrive. God of our salvation, hear our prayers.

And, all God's people say, Amen.

***HYMN # 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Ron Stamboly

**Let us honestly examine our lives and our hearts before Christ comes.
Let us turn to God in prayer to confess our sins.**

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (In Unison)

Ron Stamboly

Prince of Peace, the wars and rumors of wars betray our addiction to violence, our destructive and dehumanizing ways. We deserve your judgment and condemnation. Yet, you remain faithful, a steadfast source of peace amid our warring madness. Holy God, turn us from evil. Return us to Christ and his path of peace. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Amen.

PERSONAL CONFESSION

Ron Stamboly

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

(Silence is kept.)

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

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Donald Pitches


(2 Corinthians 5:17; Book of Common Worship)

“Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun.” Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. **Amen.**

*THE RESPONSE # 582 Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me


582 Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

Capo 3: (G) (D) (G) (D) (G) (D) (Em) (D)
B^b F B^b F B^b F Gm F




1 Glo - ry to God, whose good - ness shines on me,
2 World with - out end, with - out end. A - men.

(D) (G) (C) (G) (Em7) (A7)
F B^b E^b B^b Gm7 C7




and to the Son, whose grace has par - doned me,
World with - out end, with - out end. A - men.

(A7) (D) (F#) (Bm)
C7 F A Dm



and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free.
World with - out end, with - out end. A - men.

(Bm7) (D) (Bdim7) (Em7) (Dm)(A7) (D)
Dm7 F Ddim7 Gm7 Fm C7 F



As it was in the be - gin - ning, is now and ev - er shall be. A - men.

***THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Ron Stamboly

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

TIME FOR CHILDREN OR THE YOUNG IN HEART

Rev. Donald Pitches

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Ron Stamboly

Savior God, guide us by your Word and Spirit that we might hear your truth, heed your call, and be prepared for Christ's coming this Christmas. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 2: 1-5

Ron Stamboly

2 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: ² In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. ³ Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many people. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. ⁵ Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

NEW TESTAMENT READING **Matthew 24: 36-44**

Rev. Donald Pitches

³⁶ "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,^[a] but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing

about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

ADVENT HYMN # 105 People, Look East (verses 1 & 5)

THE MESSAGE Preparing for a Special Guest Rev. Donald Pitches

***HYMN #102 Savior of the Nations, Come**

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND MISSION**

(From the Book of Common Worship and Our Congregation’s Statement)

We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus;
for we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God’s purpose.

We are convinced;

that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Knowing Christ’s love, we affirm:

“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 fulfill God’s purpose for our diverse community. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of our salvation, **hear our prayers.**

As your people gather in homes and churches to celebrate this season, let us be reminded of all the reasons we have to rejoice in you. Let us be reminded of your protective presence, of your gentleness and love, of your peace which passes all understanding. Guard our hearts and minds this Advent, Savior God, so that we can rejoice over your faithfulness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God of our salvation, **hear our prayers.**

As a people of faith, we lift these prayers to you, trusting you hear us and receive us. Finally, hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying together, **“Our Father ...”**

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 # 655 What Shall I Render to the Lord**

(Hymn begins next page)

THANKSGIVING

655 What Shall I Render to the Lord

(Psalm 116)

1 What shall I ren - der to the Lord; what
 2 Sal - va - tion's cup my soul shall take while
 3 Not light - ly dost thou, Lord, per - mit thy
 4 With - in God's house, the house of prayer, my

shall my of - fering be, for all the gra - cious
 to the Lord I pray, and with God's peo - ple
 cho - sen saints to die; from death thou hast de -
 soul shall bless the Lord, and prais - es to God's

ben - e - fits God hath be - stowed on me?
 I will meet, my thank - ful vows to pay.
 liv - ered me; thy ser - vant, Lord, am I.
 ho - ly name let all the saints ac - cord.

***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.

Christ calls us to live generous and grateful lives. Take these gifts we offer today, O God, and use them for the fulfillment of Christ's ministry. May these gifts help to free the captives, heal the sick, comfort the lonely, feed the hungry, and heal the wounded. As Christ's hands and feet, use us too, in service to building your beloved community. **Amen.**

Empowered to Spread God's Love

***HYMN # 104 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You**

***THE BENEDICTION**

Now may our God prepare us to serve our sisters and brothers.

We will devote ourselves to walking with others to Bethlehem.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ steer us into all the places we do not want to go.

We will throw ourselves into the mission of feeding those who hunger physically, emotionally, and spiritually, into the privilege of learning from people experiencing poverty, of living like Jesus in our world.

Now may the Holy Spirit move us to increase in love for others.

We will take up the cause of justice in every corner of our lives. We will help to bring the kingdom of hope near to everyone around us.

***CHORAL BENEDICTION # 384 Soon and Very Soon (vs 1)**

(Hymn begins next page)

Soon and Very Soon

1 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
 2 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 3 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 4 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Hal-le - lu - jah, hal-le - lu - jah, we're going to see the King!

THE POSTLUDE

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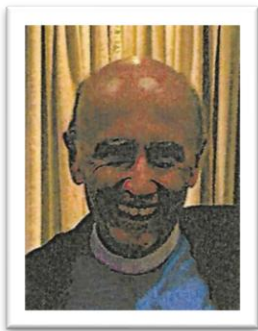
Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott, provided for free distribution, and adapted for the Oak Tree/Iselin Pres. Church by Rev. Donald Pitches For more resources, visit pres-outlook.org

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. Please make checks payable to: Oak Tree-Iselin Presbyterian Church. We appreciate every generous gift and want to make sure we have a proper record of it to say, Thank you!



Welcome!

Rev. Donald Pitches



I was ordained by the Hudson River Presbytery in 1976 in the Dayspring PC in Yonkers, NY. My first church was the Immanuel PC in Amsterdam, NY, and The First Presbyterian Church of West Galway, from 1976-1984. Moving to New Jersey in 1984 I became a member of the Presbytery of the Palisades. In September 1984, I was an occasional Pulpit Supply at the First PC of Carlstadt, NJ

In January 1985, I became the part-time Stated Supply Pastor for the Frist presbyterian Church of Carlstadt, while also serving as a hospice chaplain in Montclair and as NJ State Correctional Chaplain. From 1991-2019, I served the Carlstadt church full-time, retiring at the end of December 2019. During my Pastorate I was active in many Borough, civic and community organizations,

including the Bergen County Council of Churches, serving as President for four years. I was a Child Assault Prevention Educator with NJ-CAP for twenty years. I also participated in the Bergen County Brotherhood and Sisterhood Committee. I served the Carlstadt Fire Department as Chaplain from 1986 to 2019, and from 1998 until 2019 as a firefighter with Engine Company 1, rising to the rank of Captain.

Following retirement, my wife and I moved to Franklin Park, NJ to be near our daughter and her family in Kendall Park, NJ. Since then, my primary retirement occupation has been caring for two granddaughters, Beatrice, and Emily, before and after school. In addition, I served a term as session moderator and pulpit supply at Grace Presbyterian Church in Kendall Park, where I was privileged to work with the student minister, Rev. J. Warner. Since then, I have served as pulpit supply in numerous presbytery churches.

Friendly Reminders

Today	Donald Pitches, Guest Speaker	
Today 11/30/2025	1 st Sunday in Advent	
Friday 12/05/2025	M. Estrada – Vacation Day	
Sunday 12/07/2025	Baby Shower for Mary	See SPIRE newsletter for details
Wednesday 12/3, 12/10, 12/17	Advent Fellowship: Light refreshment, song and scripture.	6-8 pm Fellowship Hall
Sunday 12/07 & Jan 4, 2026	Service Led by Elder Linwood Bagby	Also, Session meeting after worship.
Sunday 12/14 thru 12/28	Service Led by: Elder Herb Williams	
Wednesday 12/24	Christmas Eve Service – Lessons & Carols, service by Elder Herb Williams - No Communion	7 pm
Monday , 12/29- 12/31; Jan 2 & 5	M. Estrada - Vacation	

Scheduled Liturgists!

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) context, a liturgist sets the tone for worship. They welcome everyone, lead and guide both the congregation and guests through the various parts of worship and assists the pastor throughout the worship service to create an atmosphere of peace, cohesiveness and unity. (). Please email Margarita at info@oaktree-iselinprs.org if you'd like an opportunity to serve as a liturgist.

November 2025	
Today (1 st Sunday in Advent)	Ron Stamboly

December 2025	
12/07/25 (2 nd Sunday in Advent)	Sue Ramirez
12/14/25 (3 rd Sunday in Advent)	Ron Stamboly
12/21/25 (4 th Sunday in Advent)	Betsy Christensen
12/24/25 (Christmas Eve)	Len Mesonas
12/28/25	Jim Durgana

Year 2026

January 2026	
01/04/26	Sue Ramirez
01/11/26	Len Mesonas
01/18/26	Betsy Christensen
01/25/26	Ron Stamboly

A Message from The Ministry of Compassion: Thanksgiving and Christmas is a difficult time for many families in our community. We are requesting donations for the following items so that we can include them in the distribution packages for December 15th:

Instant Potatoes	Stuffing Mix	Gravy
	Cranberry Sauce	Frozen Turkeys
Turkey Breasts	Frozen Yams	Canned Yams
Frozen Chickens		

Session

Laura Reeves, Clerk of Session

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

The Board of Deacons

Rose Anne Anthony, Moderator

Nikkie Hayase, Board Secretary

Kate Scott, Session Liaison

Cards	Marion Feliks, Chair
Deacon's Assistance Fund	Joan Moscomagas, Chair
Deacon's Nominating Comm.	Joan Moscomagas, Chair
Flowers	Joanne Mesonas & Karen Wallner Co-Chairs
Hospitality	Rose Anne Anthony, Chair
Literature	Nikkie Hayase & Nandai Sookho, Co-Chairs
Ministry of Compassion	Nancy Abel / Sara Schweitzer (non-deacons)
Prayer Partners	Nikkie Hayase, Chair
Welfare	Joan Moscomagas, Chair

Regular Activities

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

Men's Breakfast & CLEF Ladies Breakfast meet 1st Saturday in Fellowship Hall.

Session meetings are held monthly (dates will be posted in the Friendly Reminders section).

Prayer Shawl Ministry, Thursdays at 7 pm, Choir Room. For dates, connect with Elder Sue Ramirez.

Choir practice: Every Sunday at 9:30 am

Divine Worship: In the sanctuary
Sundays at 10:30 am

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,



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