

OAK TREE-ISELIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mind, hearts, hands and voices in Christ

1295 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ 08830

www.oaktree-iselinpres.org

(732) 283-1188

Email: info@oaktree-iselinpres.org

Second Sunday in Advent

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

*Please rise in body or spirit.

Sunday, December 7, 2025

10:30 a.m.

Service led by: Elder Linwood Bagby, CRE

Liturgist: Elder Sue Ramirez

Alaine Bolton, Director of Music



Let light banish darkness

Centering Thought

“Repentance is more than just confessing our sins; it is a transformative process that restores us to relationship with God and one another”

- Ginna Bairby

PRELUDE

Alaine Bolton, Director of Music

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sue Ramirez

We light the Candle of Peace

Linwood Bagby

Watch and wait for Christ's coming! Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

The Bolton-Thieme Family

We light this candle in hope. We light this candle for peace. Hear Zechariah's song of hope for peace to the Christ child. A reading from Luke 1:76-79:

“You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Linwood Bagby

Let us pray: God of hope, Prince of Peace, You speak peace into the world in the Way of the Christ child. Help us embody your peace and live as peacemakers that we may be called children of God. God of hope, God of peace, into our darkness come. **Amen.**

Light One Candle to Watch 85 for Messiah



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)

Sue Ramirez

(based on Isaiah 11:1-10)

A shoot shall come forth from Jesse's stump,

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.

He will judge the poor with righteousness, and the meek with equity;

He will be clothed with righteousness and faithfulness.

The wolf and the lamb will live peacefully together,

The leopard and the kid will lie down side by side.

The cow and the bear will graze together; the lion will eat straw like the ox,
And a little child will lead them all.
They will neither hurt nor destroy on God's holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters fill the sea.

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

Sue Ramirez

Sovereign Lord,

We gather this morning in awe of Your holiness and gratitude for Your grace. You alone are worthy of all praise, for You have called us out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Prepare our hearts to worship You in spirit and in truth. Remove distractions and renew our minds so that every song, every word, and every thought glorifies Your name. Thank You for the gift of Christ, our Redeemer, and for the presence of Your Spirit among us. May Your Word dwell richly in us today, shaping our lives for Your glory. We offer this time to You, O God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—asking that You be exalted in our midst. In Jesus' name, Amen.

HYMN # 624 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Sue Ramirez

We hear the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord and make God's paths straight."

Let us prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ as we confess our sin together:

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (In Unison)

Sue Ramirez

God of Grace, we confess that we are not ready for you to come into our world — not quite yet. We cling to the known and familiar, afraid of the transformation your grace will bring. Yet you are always a step ahead of us, a voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting us into bold new ways of being disciples. Humble us, O God, and teach us to do the work of

repentance so that, fully reliant on your grace, we may know the richness of restored relationship with you and one another. Amen.

PERSONAL CONFESSION

Sue Ramirez

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

Linwood Bagby

Friends, hear the good news: God’s mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. Before we repent and change our ways, God’s love has already claimed us as God’s own. Proclaim with me the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! **Thanks be to God!**

***THE RESPONSE # 582**

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.

(Hymn continues next page)

(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**

Sue Ramirez

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

Linwood Bagby

CHORAL ANTHEM

Will We Know Him? (Besig & Price)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Sue Ramirez

“O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily. To us the path of knowledge show. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 1:14-20

Sue Ramirez

¹⁴Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

¹⁵When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of

blood! ¹⁶Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. ¹⁷Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

NEW TESTAMENT READING Matthew 3:1-12 Linwood Bagby

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” ⁴ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

THE MESSAGE

**Return to the King: Repentance That Restores
Linwood Bagby**

***HYMN # 163 Wild and Lone the Prophet’s Voice**

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH—Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Eucharist

THE OFFERING

Our offerings for the celebration of life in this place and beyond, and with grateful hearts, our gifts shall now be received.

***THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 655 What Shall I Render to the Lord (vs.1)**

(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 DEDICATION (In Unison) (*Glory to God #144*)

**“What can I give him, poor as I am?
... If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

***HYMN # 629 Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee**

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! They will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at the table in the kingdom of God. According to Luke, when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples, he took the bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. This is the Lord’s table. Our Savior invites those who trust him to share the feast which he has prepared

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with the choirs of heaven and with all the faithful of every time and place who forever sing to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, he took the cup and, pouring it, said, this is cup of the salvation, shed in my blood, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.

For as long as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the resurrection of our living savior until he comes again. Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body; for it is one loaf of which we partake. When we break the bread, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? When we give thanks over the cup, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? Friends, these are the gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER SUPPER

Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts, we take this bread and this wine from the gifts you have given us, and celebrate with joy the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ. Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the one crucified and risen. As we wait, during this blessed rest known as the season of Advent, we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (In Unison)

Nourished at this table, O God, may we know Christ's redemptive love and live a new life in him. Help us who recognize our Lord in the breaking of bread to see and serve him in all whose lives are broken. Give us who are fed at his hand, grace to share our bread with the hungry and with the

hungry of heart. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory, and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. Through Christ, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit in the holy church, now and forever. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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

Empowered to Spread God's Love

***HYMN # 96 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry**

***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 the hungry, into the privilege of learning from the poor.

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

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!



Today, we welcome Elder Linwood Bagby, CRE to our pulpit.

Linwood Bagby is a native of West Deptford, New Jersey who received his Bachelor of Science degree from The College of New Jersey and his Master's Degree from Kean University. Both degrees were in Speech and Language Pathology. He resides in Union Township and retired in July 2021 as a Speech and Language Specialist with the Elizabeth Public Schools Board of Education.

Linwood is active in the community where he worked. In 1994, he founded Restore Ministries, Inc., and currently serves as its Chief Executive Officer. Restore Ministries, Inc, provides academic help, recreational, and cultural activities and experiences for children and teenagers.

In 2012 he was elected to serve as the Moderator for the Elizabeth Presbytery (now Northeast Presbytery of New Jersey). Linwood was the Chair of the Presbytery Cabinet (2014-2017). Linwood is an active member and leader within the Northeast Presbytery of New Jersey and serves on its

Vision Team. In addition, he serves as a Ruling Elder at his church, Second Presbyterian in Elizabeth. He works part time as the Lead Facilitator where he coordinates and delivers the worship services and other pastoral duties.

Linwood’s hobbies are reading fantasy and mystery novels, playing his acoustic guitar, cooking, and riding his bike.

Friendly Reminders

Today & 1/4/2026	Service Led by Elder Linwood Bagby	Also, Session meeting after worship.
Today 12/07/2025	Baby Shower for Mary	See SPIRE newsletter for details
Wednesday 12/10 & 12/17	Advent Fellowship: Light refreshment, song and scripture.	6-8 pm Fellowship Hall
Sunday 12/14, 12/21, 12/24, 12/28	Service Led by: Elder Herb Williams	
Wed. 12/24 & Fri. 12/26	Office Closed – Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & Day After	
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	

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		

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.

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

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

Per Capita

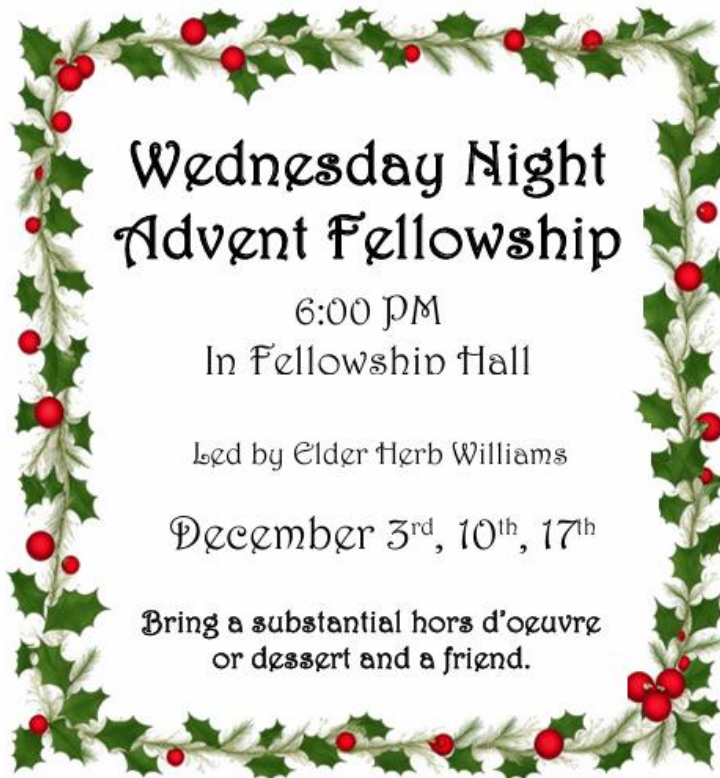
The per capita for 2025 is \$40.00

A Message from Your Director of Music

"Ring in the Christmas season with joy!"

We're preparing for the celebration of our Lord's birth with choir rehearsal every Sunday morning until 9:30 am and Bell Choir practice after worship.

Please see me for further information – Alaine Bolton



Christmas Eve

*Service of
Lessons and Carols*

7:00 PM



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,



Visit Scan QR code to website! Visit us on Facebook and Instagram, @oaktreeiselinpreschurchnj and YouTube @oaktreeiselinpresnj. Email us at: info@oaktree-iselinpres.org

Cover Photo: vector.com