

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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Sunday, January 4, 2026

10:30 a.m.

Service led by: Elder Linwood Bagby, CRE

Liturgist: Elder Sue Ramirez

Alaine Bolton, Director of Music



Gathering for Worship

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

*Please rise in body or spirit.

Centering Thought

*In the midst of life's searching, we find Jesus where He has always been—
about His Father's work. Are we seeking Him in the right places?*

PRELUDE

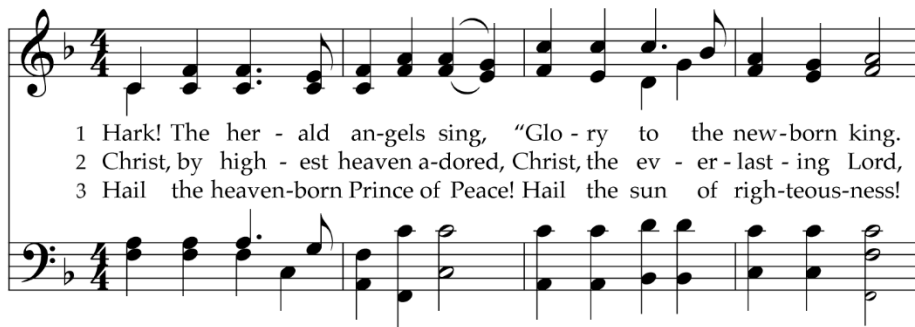
Alaine Bolton Director of Music

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sue Ramirez

CHORAL INTROIT # 119 Hark the Herald Angels Sing! (verse 1)

119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! The her - ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king.
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a-dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!



Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
late in time be-hold him come, off-spring of the vir-gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail the in - car - nate de - i - ty,
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) (Jeremiah 31) Sue Ramirez**

For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say 'Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.' See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; A great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back.

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

Sue Ramirez

Gracious God,

On this second Sunday after Christmas, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, the light of the world. Renew our hearts with gratitude and joy as we worship You. Forgive our sins and guide us by Your Spirit to walk in obedience and love. May Christ be exalted in all we do today. In His name we pray, Amen.

***HYMN # 401 Here in This Place**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION (*Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-16*) **Sue Ramirez**

Wisdom delivers a holy people from a nation of oppressors. She enters the soul of a servant of the Lord, withstanding dread kings with wonders and signs. As we confess that our strivings for Holy wisdom fall short, we lament the oppression of the nations. As we confess that we don't always act as though our servant souls are imbued by God's wisdom, we lament the power of dread kings. Let us offer, therefore, prayers of lament and confession.

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (In Unison)

Sue Ramirez

Redeem your world, O Lord. We lament the destruction caused by worldly rulers extending their power through force. We lament the ways that the tendrils of oppression have taken hold among your people, your creation. Redeem your people, O Lord. Too often, we fail to act in ways that reflect your love. Too often, we fail to speak your truth. When it is easier for us to do nothing, help us act. When it is easier for us to say nothing, give us words to speak. Turn us away from sin, liberate us from the grasp of oppression, and lead us towards new life in Christ. Amen.

PERSONAL CONFESSION

Sue Ramirez

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

(Silence is kept)

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

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(John 1:16)

Linwood Bagby

The Gospel of John reminds us that “from Christ’s fullness, we have all received grace upon grace.” Hear this good news with joy: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and, in Him, all things are being made new. **Amen.**

***THE RESPONSE # 581 Glory Be to the Father**

Glory Be to the Father

581

Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the

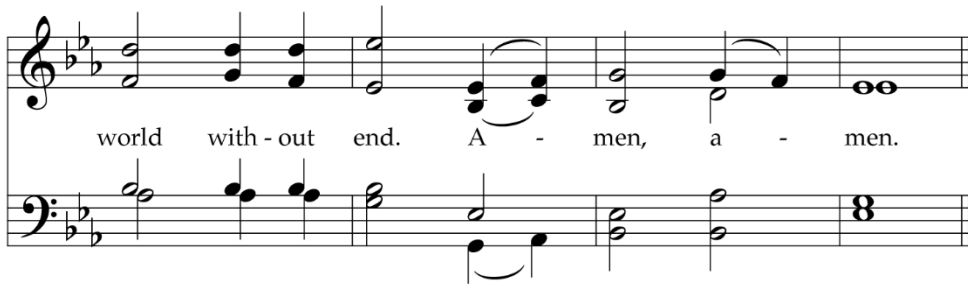
The first system of music consists of a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody in the treble staff begins with a dotted quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords.

Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the be -

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff features a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note Bb4. The bass staff continues with chords.

gin - ning, is now, and ev - er shall be,

The third system concludes the phrase. The treble staff has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note Bb4. The bass staff continues with chords.



***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

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION *(John 1:1-5)*

Sue Ramirez

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him.

As we read and reflect on your Scriptures, O Lord, we pray that your Spirit will move among us so that we might hear your Word, your light shining in the darkness. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Psalm 84:1-8

Sue Ramirez

¹How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! ²My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. ³Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar,

LORD Almighty, my King and my God. ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. ⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. ⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.⁷ They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. ⁸ Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Luke 2:41-52

Linwood Bagby

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." ⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"^[a] ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

THE MESSAGE

"Did You Know Where I'd Be?"

Linwood Bagby

(Understanding Jesus' Mission and Our Priorities)

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

***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 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

The Eucharist

THE OFFERING

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

*THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 606

606 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise *him, all creatures

here be - low; praise *him a - bove, ye heaven-ly host; praise

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

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

We thank you for all of the spiritual and material gifts that you have given us, O Lord. We dedicate these gifts to you in gratitude and in hope for the day where all will be fed, all will be sheltered, and all will be safe. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***HYMN # 145 What Child Is This**

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 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.

(Guest speaker will share a prayer)

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."

In the same way he took the cup, saying: “This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes in glory.

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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died,

Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious God,

We thank You for feeding us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation. Through this holy meal, You have strengthened our faith and renewed our hope. Keep us in Your grace as we go into the world. Help us to live as witnesses of Christ’s love, serving You with joy and walking in obedience to Your Word. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Empowered to Spread God's Love

***HYMN # 143 Angels, From the Realms of Glory**

BENEDICTION (John 1:12)

Children of God, go forth into the world and join God's work. May the God of all times and places continue to guide you here and now; may the Holy Spirit that swept over the waters of creation continue to give you strength; and may the light of Christ, through who all things came into being, continue to shine through each of you until we are all gathered together again. Go in peace

CHORAL BENEDICTION # 143 Joy to the World

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	Service Led by Elder Linwood Bagby	
Monday, 1.5.2026	M. Estrada - Vacation	
Tuesday 1/6/2026	M. Estrada – Back in Office	
Saturday, 1/10/2026	Men’s Breakfast and CLEF Ladies’ Breakfast	9 am

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.

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

February 2026	
02/01/26	
02/08/26	
02/15/26	Betsy Christensen
02/22/26	Ron Stamboly

To all who answered the call to serve as liturgists, Thank you!
Please email Margarita Estrada at info@oaktree-iselinprs.org or call her at (732) 283-1188, if you’d like further opportunities to serve as liturgists.

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, every other Thursday at 7 pm, Choir Room

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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