

Ocean Heights

Presbyterian Church



www.ohchurch.org



A More Light Presbyterian
Congregation joyfully welcoming
people from all walks of life,
acknowledging the differences of race,
ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender
identity, and disabilities. We celebrate
all people as children of God.

4th Sunday after Epiphany
January 28, 2024

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GOD CALLS US TO GATHER

PRELUDE Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing by Becki Slagle Mayo

CALL TO WORSHIP (STAND)

Liturgist: Great are the works of God, and greatly to be praised. God's righteousness endures forever!

All: We gather as a congregation of those who would believe. We give thanks to God with our whole heart.

Liturgist: Awe before God is the beginning of wisdom.

All: Holy and awesome is God's name. We call on God to empower our worship.

HYMN 316 (STAND) Where Charity and Love Prevail by Lucius Chapin

JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND RECONCILIATION (UNISON)

One: God of justice and mercy, where there is bigotry,

All: let us envision love.

One: Where we hear cruelty,

All: let us speak kindness.

One: Where we see injustice,

All: let us act with righteousness.

One: Where we lose justice,

All: let us find mercy.

One: Facing the brokenness of this world,

All: we ask for courage to seek your healing.

One: When the money changers fill your temple,

All: let our anger be directed toward building your realm.

One: This morning – every morning that we draw breath,

All: we ask for strength to be your voice as we speak truth to power.

One: As we envision compassion and equity

All: we seek your justice, your energy, and your peace.

Call to worship:

*from Led by
Love, Lavon
Bayler.*

Hymn 316:

*This English
paraphrase is
based on a
longer Latin
hymn
traditionally
associated with
the footwashing
ritual on Maundy
Thursday, an
enactment of
Christ's "new
commandment"
that we should
love one another
(John 13:34).
For a chant
setting of the
first line of the
hymn see no.
205.*

Prayer of Reconciliation:

*from "A Child
Laughs: Prayers
of justice and
hope" Maria
Mankin and
Maren C.
Tirabassi*

Hymn 174:
Drawing on numerous scriptural images of Wisdom (Greek: Sophia), especially in Proverbs, this text offers an alternative perspective on Trinitarian theology. The Wisdom tradition has played a role in Christian mysticism for centuries, as witnessed by the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

SUNG RESPONSE HYMN 774 (Sing Twice)

There is Now a New Creation

**There is now a new creation, through the grace of Jesus Christ,
peace and reconciliation with the God of endless life.**

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST (STAND)

HYMN 174 (STAND) Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

by Ruth Duck

GOD'S WRITTEN AND SPOKEN WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Adonai, your God, will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; to that prophet you must listen. It was this that you asked of Adonai, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, "Let us not hear again the voice of Adonai, our God, nor see the great fire again, or we will die." And Our God said to me, "This is well said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their people, into whose mouth I will put my words, and that person will tell them all the I command. If any person will not listen to the words which my prophet speaks in my Name, I myself, will call that person to answer for this. But if a prophet presumes to speak in my Name a message that I have not commanded to be spoken, or speaks in the name of other gods – that prophet will die."

SMALL TALK

READING OF SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Now, concerning food sacrificed to idols. We all possess knowledge. But knowledge puffs up, whereas love builds up. You may think you know something, but you still won't know it the way you ought. But anyone who loves God is known – completely – by God. Well then, what about eating food sacrificed to idols? We know that idols have no real existence, that there is no God but the One. Even though there are so-called gods in the heavens – and on the earth as well, where there seem to be many gods and sovereigns – for us there is only One God, Abba God, from whom all things come and for whom we live, there is one Sovereign, Jesus Christ, through whom everything was made and through whom we live. Some people, accustomed to idol worship until recently, are consumed with guilt every time they eat meat they buy in the market, because they know that the meat had been sacrificed to idols – and their conscience, because it is weak, gets defiled every time they eat. But food cannot bring us closer to God. We lose nothing if we refuse to eat. We gain nothing if we choose to eat. Be on your guard, however, that this liberty of yours does not become a pitfall for the weak. Suppose someone who has this knowledge sees you eating in some idol's temple, won't this person be tempted to eat meat offered to idols? Realize that your knowledge – that idols are nothing and thus it is all right to eat this meat freely – might be the ruination of a weak sister or brother, for whose sake Christ died. By sinning against your sisters and brothers in this way and injuring their consciences, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if meat causes my sister or brother to stumble, I will never eat it again – I don't want to be an occasion for sin to them.

THE GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:21-28

They came to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and began to teach. The people were spellbound by the teaching because Jesus taught with an authority that was unlike their religious scholars. Suddenly a person with an

unclean spirit appeared in their synagogue. It shrieked, "What do you want from us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked the spirit sharply: "Be quiet! Come out of that person!" At that the unclean spirit convulsed the possessed one violently, and with a loud shriek it came out. All who looked on were amazed. They began to ask one another, "What is this? A new teaching, and with such authority! This person even gives orders to unclean spirits and they obey!" Immediately news of Jesus spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

SERMON

"Speaking for God"

Rev. Dr. Judy Kohatsu

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

WITNESSING TO OUR BELIEF (UNISON)

We trust in God, Creator of all things, who is pure compassion, who loves us unconditionally, who is present with us in good times and bad, who is our salvation. We trust in Christ, the embodiment of God's love, the love and healer of our souls, who saves us, forgiving our failures, washing away our betrayals, who teaches us life's deepest things: how to pray, how to love, how to be gentle with each other. We trust in the Holy Spirit, God's power flowing in us, that comforts the faithful, empowers us to love as we have been loved, and joins us together as the Body of Christ. We believe we are sent in that Spirit to heal, to forgive, to do justice, to radiate the love of God, in the name of Christ.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF JESUS (UNISON)

**Holy Love in heaven, who is with us, blessed be your name.
May your way of loving be a reality here on earth.
May we share our bread with those who hunger.
May we learn to forgive as well as receive forgiveness.
Help us through times of temptation.
Lead us to holy innocence, beyond the evil of our day.
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One. Amen.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY (STAND)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise God all creatures here below! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (STAND)

HYMN 315 (STAND)

In the Midst of New Dimensions

by Julian B. Rush

BENEDICTION

Prayer of Jesus:
paraphrase of prayers written by Parker Palmer and Manny Santiago.

Hymn 315:
In this simultaneous y-created text and tune, the author was seeking to incorporate imagery from both Native American and Hebrew spiritual traditions. Also included is the mythological phoenix, which has received a Christian interpretation as early as the first century.



MONTH AT A GLANCE

- 1/28 Worship 10am and New Member Class
- 1/30 Bible Study 10am
- 2/2 Meditation Trail Clean Up 9am till ??
- 2/4 Worship 10am, EE Sale, Adult Ed Class
- 2/11 Worship 10am, Children's Ministry, Soup Drop Off, Soup Sale, Adult Ed
- 2/13 Heart & Soul 10am
- 2/18 Worship 10am
- 2/20 Bible Study 10am
- 2/23 High on the Hog Dinner 6pm
- 2/25 Worship 10am and Communion
- 2/27 Heart & Soul 10am



If you would be willing to make at least 4 quarts of soup, please sign up at the HUB. We will provide the containers, both quart and pint.

Prepare your soup at home, put it in the provided containers, label the containers with a sharpie with the type of soup and bring it to church by February 11. Community Events and Hospitality Committee will take it from there.

The soup will be sold after worship for \$5 pint/\$10 quart.



covnetpres.org



mlp.org



We are looking for help to enhance our social media presence.

If you know how to post on sites such as Instagram and Facebook and would like to help to spread the word about our church, let Betsy Phillips know.



**ADULT
EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

Information and description of the classes can be found in the ENews. Below are some scheduled classes, more will follow.

2/4 Antisemitism—Jeff Eaton

2/11 Book Swap—Carol Petters

2/18 Local & Global Mission—Diane Falk

Thank you to this week's liturgist:

Carol Petters

Clerk of Session – Betsy Phillips
President of the Board of Trustees – Lorene Gilman

Director of Music – Bob Helsabeck
Pianist – Heera Ghorashi
Office Administrator – Alison Walter

2116 Ocean Heights Avenue
 Egg Harbor Township, NJ
 08234

609.788.0271

office@ohchurch.org



Session

Class of 2024

Art Farnum
 Betsy Phillips
 Carol Petters

Class of 2025

Sharon Eaton
 Walter East
 Dianna Lease

Class of 2026

Brenda Brown
 Lorene Gilman
 David Prescott