



Transforming Lives,
Communities, and
the World for
300 Years

Cold Spring Presbyterian Church
780 Seashore Rd. Cold Spring, NJ 08204
Near Historic Cold Spring Village
www.coldspringchurch.com
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THE BRICKETTE

A community congregation of worship and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A National Historic Landmark Site.



A Christmas Message from the Pastor



Poinsettia's Trees Beautify Our Advent Experience

Advent begins December 2nd! Last year our amazing **Poinsettia Trees** added warmth and beauty to our worship experience. Share Christmas blessings with others by purchasing a beautiful red poinsettia plant in memory of a loved one, to honor someone, or recognize a special event in your life! Each plant may be purchased for \$11.00. Our two poinsettia trees will beautify the sanctuary during the Advent and Christmas season. A printed recognition of all those honored and remembered will be included in our worship bulletin. Celebrate the Good News of Christmas by purchasing plants online at: www.coldspringchurch.com, or in person. Look for inserts in the church bulletin. For more information, please contact Kevin Beare at 609-350-0314. Thank you for participating!

Once you open Christmas, God's Gift, nothing remains the same.

"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son. Generous inside and out, true from start to finish (John 1:14).

Hello friends,

Every day of the year is special. To someone. *Your* birthday is special, for example! In fact, every single day of the year has been co-opted to celebrate or commemorate one thing or another. Did you know that January is "National Bath Safety Month" and "Penguin Awareness Day" is January 20? The list is endless! Among thousands of personal, regional, national, and religious special days, Christmas, December 25, is unique. It's the day we have chosen to especially celebrate God's Gift when long ago, *"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood"* (John 1:14). What a day!

No doubt your memories of Christmas' past are expressed through today's traditions and customs. They help you unpack Christmas' meaning. Seasonal food favorites. Special ornaments and events. Christmas movies and holiday music. Gatherings and gift-exchanges. Christmas Eve candlelight worship. The traditions go on and on. Sometimes the *past* familiar traditions can overwhelm us as we miss loved ones, reminisce about by-gone days, or just feel a bit lonely during Christmas. Now is a great time to remember that from that First Noel, Christmas was always about the *future* invading our *present*.

Those former memories may be little more than nostalgic, but the real gift of



Christmas is anything but! All things can become new...again. ***Once you open Christmas, God's Gift, nothing remains the same.***

We can incorporate and build upon Christmas memories when we invest time to learn and grow. We can create new memories, making this Christmas, and every Christmas to come, vitally different, better.

Can you imagine a thriving Christmas, not merely surviving it?! This year, let's take all the best of Christmas' *past* and open our arms and spirits to new ways to receive God's gift of Christmas *now*? And help others do the same. Our greater Cape May community needs to experience Christmas anew this year, and you can be a part of that experience.

And what is that Gift ready to be opened this year? Jesus. Jesus is the Gift. The Gift that keeps on giving. It's Jesus moving into our neighborhood, now. Today. Sure, he was born in the *past* to Mary and Joseph among the animals in crowded Bethlehem. But it's (also) *today* that God is with us. *Today*, God can blossom afresh into our lives.

This week, all month, and as the new year unfolds, make time to talk with God. Pause long enough to listen, too. ([Check out our online resources for your very own 30-Day Challenge.](#)) Let God know you are grateful as you recall the best of your Christmas' past, but that you want the Spirit to energize your life this Christmas!

God wants to inspire your thoughts. (Pick up the Bible and take fifteen minutes to read Nehemiah, chapter 1 and Romans, chapter 12. Consider how Nehemiah responded to the cries of his community and how the Apostle Paul urged the house churches to renew their minds for action.) ***Once you open Christmas, God's Gift, nothing remains the same.***

This Christmas, God can empower us to live our very best selves. Or, sure, we can remain stuck in Christmas' *past*, repeating fine traditions but not learning or growing into God's preferred future. Overhearing the Greatest Story Ever Told is O.K., but not letting the radical Good News transform our life is just a missed opportunity. God Is With Us, *Emmanuel* (Isaiah 7:14, 8:8; Matthew 1:23), as God's emerging future unfolds with our every step. How exciting this Christmas could be!

The first New Testament letter was sent to the house churches in the city of Thessalonica, in modern-day Turkey. Paul begins his letter thanking God for the way their lives were changing. He praised them for how they let the Good News shape their community. Each believer responded to God's invitation to faithfulness in their own, unique way. It was all good. And different. Their "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" empowered them to revolutionize their neighborhoods, improve people's lives, and it elicited some of Paul's strongest affirmations and expressions of gratitude.

Be a Part of the Advent Adventure. It All Begins December 2

Cold Spring Presbyterian Church enjoys many wonderful traditions during Advent and Christmas that will provide a foundation for experiencing the presence of God in our lives today. Everyone is welcome to come and worship with us every Sunday in December. Enjoy special music, an interactive and inspiring message from God's word, and a joyful community of faith! This year's Advent Message Series is titled *The All-Inclusive Story* featuring the animals of Christmas. Animals, you ask? Yes!

The pastor, Jerome (347-420 AD), helped early believers learn the four gospels using familiar creatures, each representing Mark (the Lion, 12/2), Luke (the Ox, 12/9), John (the Eagle, 12/16), and Matthew (men and women, 12/23). Let's open God's Gift of Christmas together using these traditional illustrations.

Melissa and I wish you a very merry Christmas. Remember: ***Once you open Christmas, God's Gift, nothing remains the same.***

In Christmas Hope,





Food Pantry Donations Needed

FOOD CUPBOARD NEWS FOR DECEMBER 2018

As we approach the holiday season, let us not forget there are still many people who are experiencing real hunger. We have been blessed here at Cold Spring Presbyterian Church with many generous people who donate to our weekly food drive. The food cupboard is an area we can and are making a difference in our community. ***Last month we collected over 320 items for our two food banks (St. Barnabas and the Church of the Nazarene).***

Through prayer and giving hearts we are responding to the need. I pray that we continue to meet the need and increase our sharing each month. With God's help, may we finish out the year by opening our hearts to others in need. The list below is items the food banks have given to us as a guideline of need. In addition we take almost any non-perishable food and personal items.

II Corinthians 9:7 NLT "For the Lord loves a person who gives cheerfully"
Acts 20:35 Remember the Words of Jesus "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Deacon Collection for December

- Dec. 2 Instant rice, canned soups, Ramen Noodles, crackers
- Dec. 9 Toothpaste & brushes, soap (bars), toilet paper, pasta and sauce
- Dec. 16 Peanut butter and grape jelly, fruit cups, canned vegetables
- Dec. 23 Hot and cold tea, hot & cold cereals, powdered milk, canned meat
- Dec. 30 Pet food, baby food and diapers

Your donations can be dropped off at Price Hall, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sunday in the sanctuary narthex. ~ Neil Oberlin, Coordinator



The December meeting of the Mary Circle will be at 7 p.m. on December 18th. We will be celebrating Christmas with songs, stories, poems and lots of holiday snacks. Roseann Paulits and Judy Lambert will be the co-hostesses and Barbara Cain will lead us in the singing. Come out and join us for an evening of celebration. We will be meeting as usual in Price Hall.

The Presbyterian Women wish to thank everyone who participated in the Christmas Bazaar. We were able make a profit of over \$1,700 for our Mission Work. We appreciate all the hard work that went into making this event so successful.

Annual Anniversary Dinner December 8th



**304th Anniversary
Friends & Family Dinner**

Our annual Anniversary Church Community Dinner featuring your choice of Prime Rib or Roasted Chicken will be held on Saturday, December 8th, at 5:00 p.m. in Price Hall. Make your plans and save this date in your calendar! Seating will be limited. Tickets can be purchased for \$20.00 each. (\$15 - Children) **BYOB (wine glasses are provided).** Celebrate the Christmas season by purchasing your Dinner tickets **online**, www.coldspringchurch.com or in person. Look for inserts in the church bulletin. **For more information, please contact Kevin Beare, 609-350-0314; or e-mail him at campus@coldspringchurch.com**

Experience Christmas with Cold Spring Church!

*Start a new family tradition at our
"Come as you are"*

Christmas Eve Service

5:00 PM Beautiful Candlelight Celebration



*Energize your Christmas experience
with Cold Spring Church...
Transforming lives for 305 years,
and we're just getting started!*

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Session Notes

These are the summary notes --or highlights-- of our most recent session meeting. For further details of these notes and additional session discussion matters, please refer to the next set of complete Session Minutes (upon session approval and publication).

Our Session approved the following agenda items on November 6, 2018:

1. Minutes of Session Meeting of October 2, 2018;
2. New ministry: AL anon weekly meetings;
3. Application of solar energy credits to 2019;
4. Review of Price Hall rental fee structure;
5. Protocol for hiring contractors.

The Session also discussed the following agenda items in progress:

1. Schedule of congregational fellowship events for January-March 2019;
2. Advent candle-lighting participation at Sunday worship services;
3. Advent Connections Focus: reaching out to our community;
4. Use of Memorial Fund.

Complimentary copies of our approved Session Minutes are located on our information table in the church narthex; additional copies are available in the designated rack by the church office bulletin board in Price Hall. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the current meeting agenda items, kindly contact the pastor, a session member, or myself for clarification.

-- Rob Riehl, Clerk of Session

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

December 9 – Following Worship

The Session has called a **Congregational Meeting to follow worship on Sunday, December 9**, for the purpose of receiving the Nominating Committee's report and elect deacons and elders to office. The new terms will begin January 1, 2018. Please plan to remain after worship on the 9th for this important opportunity to recognize God's gifts of leaders to serve our community of faith.



On Sunday, December 9, the congregation will welcome our newest member, Ms. Beverly Mate. Beverly writes, "I am a Jersey girl who was born in Camden, grew up in Manasquan, graduated from Glassboro State College and has lived in Plainsboro, Hightstown, and Hamilton Square, involved with Presbyterian Churches over the years. My first job in accounting was at Princeton University. Then I worked for RCA and the Copeland Companies, eventually landing at McGraw-Hill. I retired in 2017 after 28 years as VP HR Operations, in Columbus, OH. I "came home" to New Jersey to live in Rio Grande with husband Kevin, son Eric, and two cats named Scamp and Bella. Two other sons are Brian (Columbus, OH) and Kevin (Lawrence, NJ)." Welcome, Bev, to Cold Spring Church!



Interested in performing a *hands-on* active ministry on behalf of our church within our local community? Deliver meals to home-bound persons in the North Cape May and Villas area on a weekday morning. You can set your own schedule, even if only one day a month! Volunteers for **Mobile Meals** are needed for this worthy cause. Fulfill the message of "feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty"! (Matt.

25:35) Contact Rob Riehl (609-889-3538; robriehl@verizon.net) for additional information.



December 15th
12:00 pm
At Our Veterans Memorial



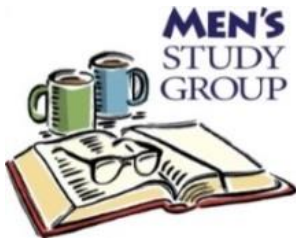
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Join the Wreaths across America Tradition at Cold Spring Church Cemetery

The annual Wreaths across America event, a nationwide ceremonial tribute to military veterans will be held on Saturday, December 15, 2018, promptly at 12 noon in the veterans' section of Cold Spring Cemetery.

The ceremony at our beautiful Veterans Memorial beneath the service flags is open to the public; it is located on Academy Road near the parking area of Cold Spring Church's Price Hall. For more than 300 years, Cold Spring Church has been at the crossroads of the greater Cape May area transforming lives and offering hope to its surrounding communities. The half-hour program includes the participation of several local veterans associations and civic organizations within Cape May County. Representatives of these groups will present ceremonial wreaths followed by the laying of the many donated wreaths upon the gravesites of the veterans interred here. Following this event, light refreshments will be available to all participants and attendees in the adjacent Price Hall. In the event of inclement weather, this ceremony will take place inside Price Hall.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Men's Group Ministry:

"If your dream doesn't scare you, it's too small." *New York Times* best-selling author Mark Batterson delivers a bold message to everyone with a big dream. His new book **Chase the Lion** proposes a radically different approach to life. Our dreams should scare us! They should be so big that without God they would be impossible to achieve. It's only when we stop fearing failure that we can fully seize the opportunity for God to show up and show His power! Join us for the reading and discussion of this life-changing book on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. All men are welcome!



Christmas Special Presentations (2):

December 12: "**The Star of Bethlehem**" - Miracle or myth? Examining Scripture, ancient writings, and astronomical facts, this DVD program reveals nine features of the star, how it dated Jesus' birth and death --and its significance for today! We gather together for coffee and fellowship at 10:15 a.m. with our feature presentation beginning at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome!



December 19: "**The Nativity Story**" - The most magnificent portrayal of the nativity ever! Epic in scope yet intimate in detail, this DVD feature presentation displays historical accuracy and cinematic power! We gather together at 10 a.m. with our program beginning at 10:15 a.m. Everyone is welcome! All classes meet in the Taylor Room of Price Hall. Note: There will be no meeting on Thursday, December 26.



God Is On The Move! Volunteers With A Car Needed! Are you looking for a way serve others in a very practical way, have room in your car and enjoy company? Consider volunteering to be on our ***God Is on the Move!*** Riding team. "Holiness is best demonstrated by generosity" (Lk 11:41, LB). **Need a Ride?!** If you know of someone who would appreciate a ride to worship, or to our other events, please let us know. We want to put them in touch with volunteers who can assist with that! Cold Spring Presbyterian Church, where God Is On the Move!



Stephen Ministers are members of local church congregations who receive special training to provide one-on-one Christian care to people experiencing challenges in life - grief, loneliness, divorce, hospitalization, disability, job loss, and many other life difficulties. Add a "higher-calling" purpose to your life: provide confidential Christian care to someone in need of your help! To learn how to become a Stephen Minister or to receive care from one, contact Rob Riehl (609-889-3538; robriehl@verizon.net) for a confidential conversation.

"Of Time and Timing"

It is said that "Timing is everything!" be it in sales proposals, military strategies, sports play, television advertising, music and dance productions, decision-making, and even world history!

The timing was right. In the fullness of time, God entered into His own creation as the Son, Jesus Christ, was born into our world. It was not a glorious heralded grand entrance that would gain the immediate attention of all those in His presence; rather it was a quiet, subdued, unnoticed, yet momentous appearance. It was as if He came in through the back door; the lowly bondservant's entrance, rather than approaching the front door as an anticipated honored guest. The awesome God of Creation set aside His infinite power and humbled Himself by assuming the form of a human baby, innocent and vulnerable. Who would expect such a baby from an occupied backwater territory of the empire to undermine the might of "the Roman peace" and forever change the course of human history! The Will of the Father made manifest in the person of Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit would be, *and continues to be, unstoppable.*

After thirty years, the time had come for the Son of Man to proclaim his mission and ministry. At that time, the Holy Spirit hovered above Him and pronounced "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" (Mt.3;Mk.9;Lk.9) Soon the time had come for Jesus to personally summon His first recruits; and not one refused His call to "Follow Me" Over time, this small group of twelve Apostles grew to 72 disciples (Lk.10); within the first century, the Christian faith had by the exponential power of the Holy Spirit exploded into all parts of the then known world. The time will come when all the earth has heard His call; Jesus Christ will come again in the fullness of His glory to reconcile all things to Himself. (Col. 1) This redemptive plan of God to save mankind is an undeserved gift freely given to us; it is not an entitlement. As with any other gift, we must first accept it, then open it, and then use it. Let not anyone be found rejecting God's gift, keeping it closed or on the shelf, or attempting to destroy it. As followers of Christ, we welcome and are thankful for God's gift, we use God's gift for ourselves and for others, and we promote God's gift to all who are willing to receive it. God the Father gave us the most gracious and undeserved gift of His Son. Since time is of the essence: what are you and I doing with this infinite and eternal gift?

At this time, as you and I gather together with family and friends in this Christmas season, let us imitate Christ by extending His peace and our gracious goodwill to all those we encounter. The time is right to touch other lives! Is there someone you need to reconcile and restore a damaged or estranged relationship? It may seem to you that he/she is undeserving, but consider that you and I were once undeserving. As the immortal and eternal God has reached out to reconcile and restore His ever-loving relationship with us mere mortals, how can we not do likewise with our fellow man or woman? Now is the time to "reach across the aisle" to reconcile and extend the Lord's friendship to those who disagree with you, oppose you, or even hate you! Let the power of the Holy Spirit flow through you to melt the hardened hearts of your perceived enemies. Whether your overture produces a sudden change of heart or a delayed one, the time involved is unimportant. You have planted the seed; give it time to germinate and bloom. It is "a gift that keeps on giving", passing from one who receives it to then --in time-- pass on to another who needs it.

Whether you call it a "ripple effect" or a "domino effect", the result of the initial contact can be contagious, powerful, and oftentimes unexpected! It can produce change instantly or it can incrementally over time set a new trajectory. Give yourself the joy of *witnessing* the power of a transformational gift of reconciliation changing attitudes, lives, and values! Even the secular world advances the idea of "peace and goodwill toward men" through greeting cards, holiday songs, television specials, and movies. You and I can rise above this impersonal and passive approach; we can demonstrate the Peace of Christ and God's Will to men in a personal and pro-active way. Praying for the help of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit *beforehand*, you and I can muster the courage to boldly say face-to-face that we love and care about "that certain someone"! We can further extend this personal ministry beyond those people we already know. Each one of us has opportunities to reach out to the unsaved, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised. At Christmastime, the timing is right. Let us reflect the light and radiate the love of Christ to the people in our world --and watch what happens!

~ Rob Riehl